

生命的规律

生命的规律是什么呢？佛学告诉我们，一切生命均是由业力而形成，有什么样的业力就有什么样的生命，因为一切生命现象不过是业力的显现。

通人性的熊

一苇渡江之由来

夹竹桃欲望的辩证法

What's Next After
Taking Refuge?

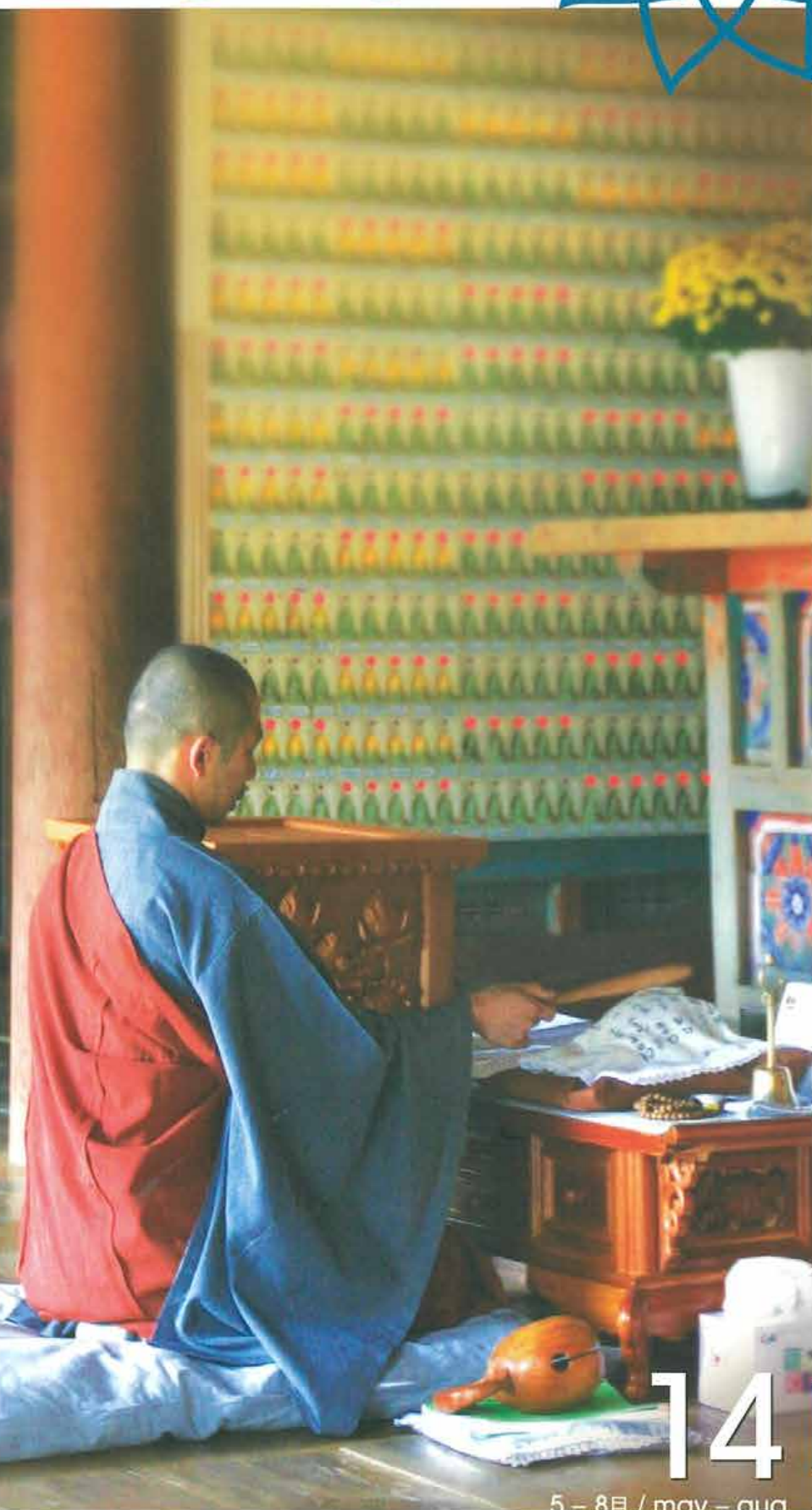
The Power of Keeping
Even Just One Precept

Stones Can't Talk But
They Can

From Boys to Men
(The Thai Way)

The Healing Power of
the Precepts

The Path to Genuine
Happiness



Founder's Message

Stir Up Your Passion for Propagating the Dharma

Like the coming and going of the seasons, it is Vesak Day once again. Looking back at year 2008, I realised there were many poignant moments. With a strong faith and urge to propagate the Dharma to benefit all sentient beings, we strove towards the "shore" of liberation in the face of difficulties. Still, we need to adopt a more active and vigorous stand.

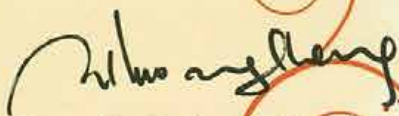
Although massive talented people are required for Buddhism to develop further, what is more important is the enthusiasm and spirit of the Sangha and laity to take Buddhism a notch higher in society. This spirit is the innate fervour to propagate the Dharma, or what the Buddhist calls "aspiration-making" (发心).

When you interact with some Buddhists, you may often hear them say, "Live in accordance with conditions" (随缘). I detect a sense of helplessness in their speech whenever they use this pet phrase. In many situations, this phrase is used passively in a self-consoling attitude, for they do not understand how to use "aspiration-making" to encourage themselves. If you believe that "living in accordance with conditions" means allowing conditions to ripen by themselves, without making demands and doing nothing, then you are wrong. If after learning the Dharma, everybody passively "lives in accordance with conditions", then Buddhism would have no value in this world. If the past great masters and Venerable monks behaved likewise, we would not have witnessed Buddhism today being ranked as one of the three world's great religions. Therefore, everyone must understand clearly that behind the principle of "living in according with conditions" lies a steadfast heart of "aspiration-making" that unwaveringly supports our faith.

"Living in accordance with conditions" should be combined with the unfaltering heart of "aspiration-making". Only then can one truly abide by this principle of "living in accordance with conditions". That which is unwavering is the spirit of faith which we pursue, our passion to propagate the Dharma and our aim to realise our vision. Regardless of the conditions and circumstances we face, these will not change. Such spirit is likened to the resolve and determination displayed by the great Venerable Xuan Zang in pursuing the Dharma in his journey to the West. Every step was fraught with danger and hardship which could jeopardise his life, but he never once wavered. This spirit is essential to Buddhism.

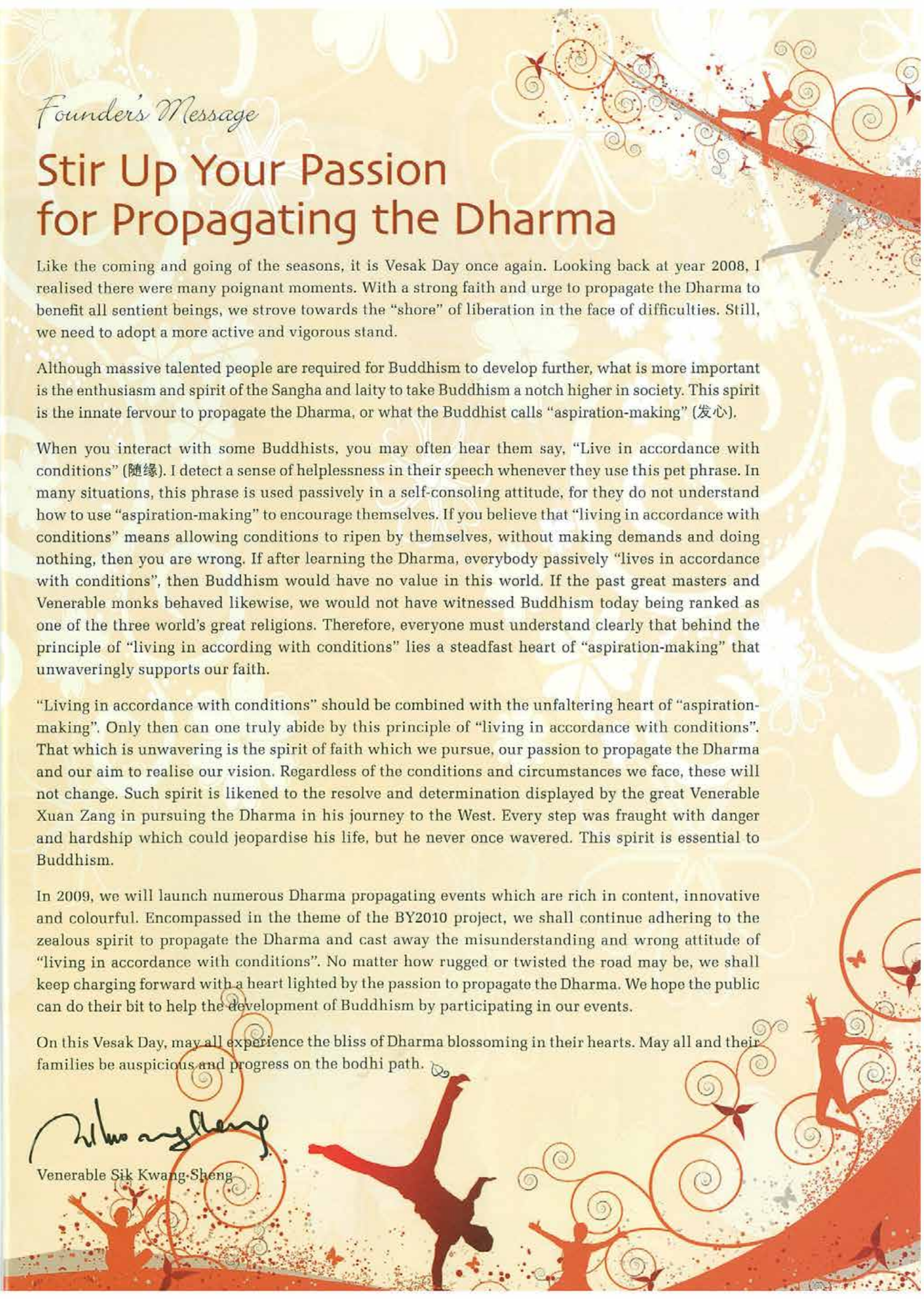
In 2009, we will launch numerous Dharma propagating events which are rich in content, innovative and colourful. Encompassed in the theme of the BY2010 project, we shall continue adhering to the zealous spirit to propagate the Dharma and cast away the misunderstanding and wrong attitude of "living in accordance with conditions". No matter how rugged or twisted the road may be, we shall keep charging forward with a heart lighted by the passion to propagate the Dharma. We hope the public can do their bit to help the development of Buddhism by participating in our events.

On this Vesak Day, may all experience the bliss of Dharma blossoming in their hearts. May all and their families be auspicious and progress on the bodhi path.



Venerable Sik Kwang-Sheng

Venerable Sik Kwang-Sheng





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

Awaken Publishing & Design

Do you yearn for words of timeless truth that talk straight into your heart? Looking for means to overcome your problems, difficulties and the challenges you face in life? Everyone wants to be happy and free of problems. The free Dharma books, CDs, DVDs and magazine published by the monastery tell you simply and clearly how you can achieve happiness in this life and the next... Get them from the monastery, Awareness Place at Bras Basah Complex #01-63 or visit www.kmspks.org/publication. May the Dharma bring light to your life!

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Pujue is an interesting weekly Chinese Buddhist e-mail newsletter that encourages all to live each day mindfully. It also informs readers of the latest local Buddhist activities. Sign up for the e-newsletter at pujue-subscribe@yahoo.com or visit www.kmspks.org/pujue to view past issues.

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Established to sow and nurture the seeds of Buddhahood in our younger generation, it shares the Dharma with the young in a warm, supportive and inspiring environment. Call 6849 5329, visit <http://www.kmspks.org/education/sunschool.htm> or e-mail: sundayschool@kmspks.org to be a Dharma volunteer, or sign up for the school.

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88 Recycling Kiosk

All plants, animals and human beings complement one another's survival. Rejuvenate our environment and practise compassion at the same time through recycling. Collection hours: 7.00am - 7.00pm daily. Call 6849 5357 / 9299 2138, or visit <http://www.kmspks.org/community/> to find out more.

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**WATCH OUT,
Youth!**

***w*s*d*p**

A weekly event organised by the Youth Ministry to support personal and spiritual development of young adults. They are relevant, practical and designed to help youth increase their personal effectiveness.

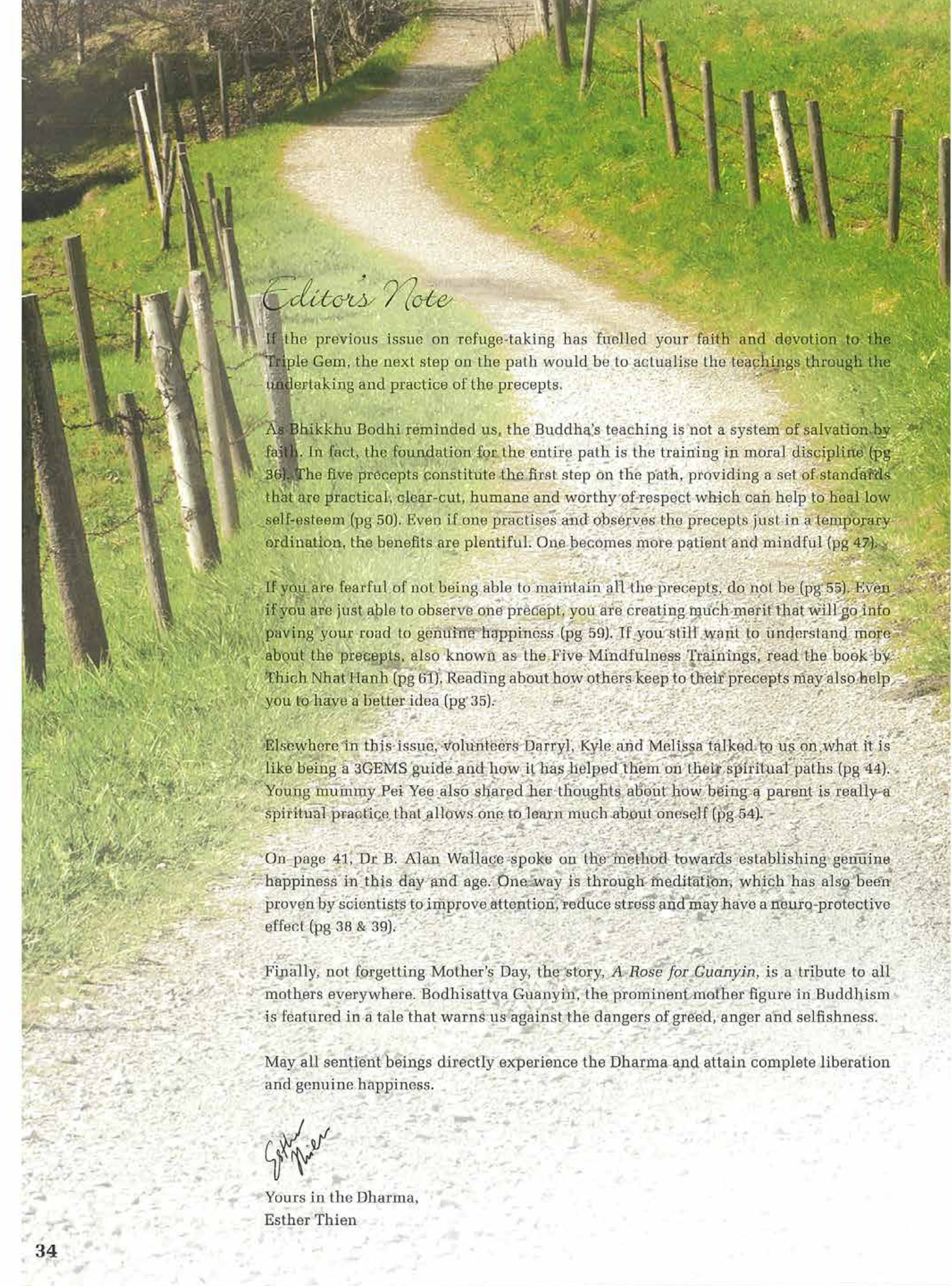
Be it movie screenings, Dharma sharing, holistic workshops, or music sessions, book reviews, personal sharing sessions and more... *w*s*d*p is where you will find them. To find out our latest line-up each week, just visit our website or contact us directly!

Every Thursday evening, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Awareness Place Well-Being Centre, #03-39 Blk 231 Bain Street, Bras Basah Complex 6849 5346 | wsp@kmspks.org
www.kmspks.org/youth

weekly personal and spiritual development activities supporting young adults
organised by the Youth Ministry of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery



A gravel path winds through a lush green field, bordered by a rustic wooden fence made of vertical posts and horizontal rails. The path leads towards a dirt road in the distance, flanked by trees and foliage. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast across the grass and gravel.

Editor's Note

If the previous issue on refuge-taking has fuelled your faith and devotion to the Triple Gem, the next step on the path would be to actualise the teachings through the undertaking and practice of the precepts.

As Bhikkhu Bodhi reminded us, the Buddha's teaching is not a system of salvation by faith. In fact, the foundation for the entire path is the training in moral discipline (pg 36). The five precepts constitute the first step on the path, providing a set of standards that are practical, clear-cut, humane and worthy of respect which can help to heal low self-esteem (pg 50). Even if one practises and observes the precepts just in a temporary ordination, the benefits are plentiful. One becomes more patient and mindful (pg 47).

If you are fearful of not being able to maintain all the precepts, do not be (pg 55). Even if you are just able to observe one precept, you are creating much merit that will go into paving your road to genuine happiness (pg 59). If you still want to understand more about the precepts, also known as the Five Mindfulness Trainings, read the book by Thich Nhat Hanh (pg 61). Reading about how others keep to their precepts may also help you to have a better idea (pg 35).

Elsewhere in this issue, volunteers Darryl, Kyle and Melissa talked to us on what it is like being a 3GEMS guide and how it has helped them on their spiritual paths (pg 44). Young mummy Pei Yee also shared her thoughts about how being a parent is really a spiritual practice that allows one to learn much about oneself (pg 54).

On page 41, Dr B. Alan Wallace spoke on the method towards establishing genuine happiness in this day and age. One way is through meditation, which has also been proven by scientists to improve attention, reduce stress and may have a neuro-protective effect (pg 38 & 39).

Finally, not forgetting Mother's Day, the story, *A Rose for Guanyin*, is a tribute to all mothers everywhere. Bodhisattva Guanyin, the prominent mother figure in Buddhism is featured in a tale that warns us against the dangers of greed, anger and selfishness.

May all sentient beings directly experience the Dharma and attain complete liberation and genuine happiness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Esther Thien', written in a cursive style.

Yours in the Dharma,
Esther Thien

The Nature of Interbeing

*If you know how to look deeply
into Shakyamuni Buddha
you will see the Buddha of the cosmos
everywhere at anytime.
He is not limited to time and space
because there are many manifested bodies
of Shakyamuni in the world
for you to see, to teach, to touch
and to learn from.*

*If you know how to listen,
the sound of the wind
can be the teaching
about the Four Noble Truths.
If you know how to listen to the birds,
The sounds of the birds can be
The teaching of the Noble Eightfold Path.
If you know how to contemplate
the sunflowers,
The sunflowers can reveal
the Buddha-land to you.*

*If you know how to look,
how to touch deeply,
you will become birthless and deathless.
Because that is the nature of everything.*

*You are in everything else,
everything else is in you.
Birth and death are just notions
That scare us.
And if you are able to remove the notions,
You get the gift of non-fear
And only with non-fear
can true happiness be
possible.*

— *Thich Nhat Hanh*



Why Precepts are For Me...

I take on precepts not because I'm confident of being moral. On the contrary, it is precisely because of my lack of discipline, that I use precepts as a form of mindfulness training. Anyway, most precepts are not difficult to follow, such as the first precept to abstain from killing. Most of us don't kill simply because we don't have the time, guts and a chance to kill. So why not keep it as a vow? We still don't kill, but now we're doing it mindfully. Better still, we can do it with the altruistic motivation of benefiting others.

— *Huang Jing Rui, 28, Curriculum Executive*

To me, precepts provide guidance in life. They guide me to handle my everyday dealings wisely. For example, observing the first precept to abstain from killing, I refrain from choosing a livelihood or business dealings that involve causing harm to the lives of other beings. In this way, I practise compassion to all living beings. Although it is not easy to keep to the precepts at times, most of the time, they protect me from making mistakes that I might regret later. Keeping precepts has helped me to handle the situations I face in life with more wisdom. If I unwittingly break a precept, I seek repentance and resolve to be more alert so that I won't repeat the act.

— *Ken Tay, 35, Director, Business Operation and Investment*

What's Next After Taking Refuge?

Q: I'm really serious about practising the Buddhist path. I have just taken refuge in the Triple Gem. What should I do next? — *Anonymous*

A: Once we have made the initial commitment by taking refuge, it is necessary to go further and to put the teaching into actual practice. For the Buddha's teaching is not a system of salvation by faith. It is essentially a path leading to nibbana, the end of suffering. At the outset we need a certain degree of faith as the incentive for entering the path, but progress towards the goal depends primarily upon our own energy and intelligence in following the path through each of its successive stages. The teaching takes the attainment of deliverance away from every external resort and places it into our own hands. We have to realise the goal for ourselves, within ourselves, by working upon ourselves with the guidance of the Buddha's instructions.

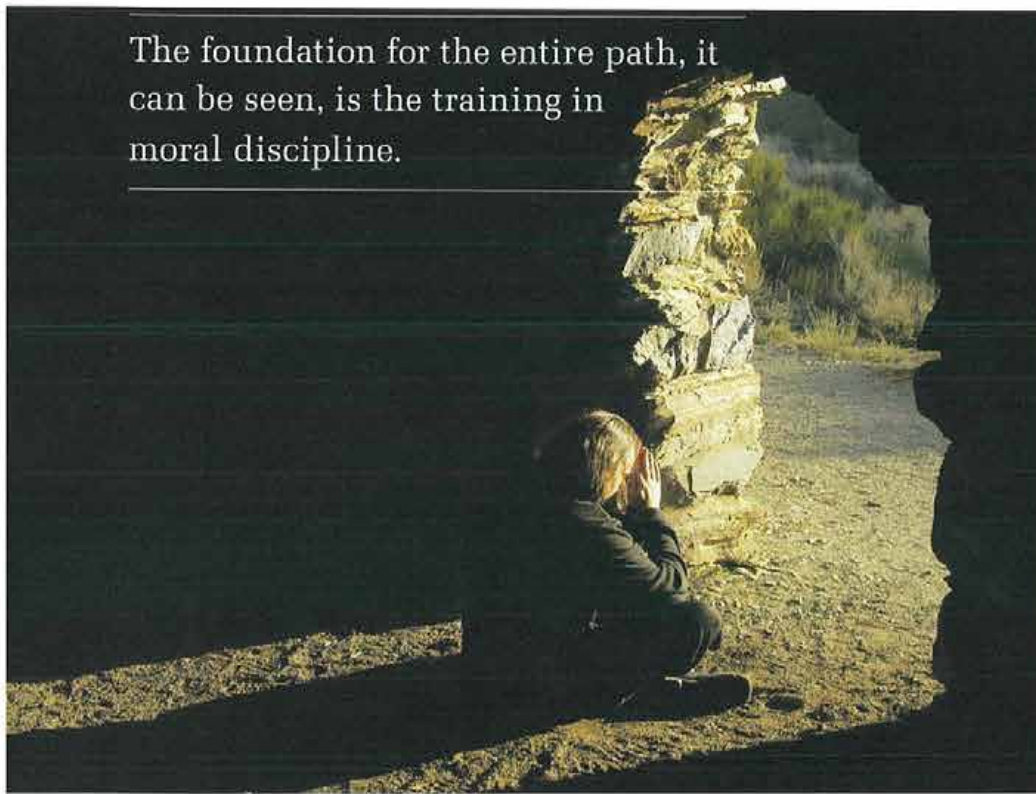
The path of liberation that the Buddha points to is the threefold training in moral discipline (*sila*), concentration (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*pañña*). These three divisions of the path rise up each in dependence upon its predecessor — concentration upon moral discipline and wisdom upon concentration.

The Pali word for moral discipline, *sila*, has three levels of meaning: (1) inner virtue, i.e., endowment with such qualities as kindness, contentment, simplicity, truthfulness, patience, etc.; (2) virtuous actions of body and speech which express those inner virtues outwardly; and (3) rules of conduct governing actions of body and speech designed to bring them into accord with the ethical ideals. These three levels are closely intertwined and not always distinguishable in individual cases. But if we isolate them, *sila* as inner virtue can be called the aim of the training in moral discipline, *sila* as purified actions of body and speech the manifestation of that aim, and *sila* as rules of conduct the systematic means of actualising the aim. Thus *sila* as inner virtue is established by bringing our bodily and verbal actions into accord with the ethical ideals, and this is done by following the rules of conduct intended to give these ideals concrete form.

The Buddhist texts explain that *sila* has the characteristic of harmonising our actions of body and speech. *Sila* harmonises our actions by bringing them into accord with our own true interests, with the well-being of others, and with universal laws. Actions contrary to *sila* lead to a state of self-division marked by guilt, anxiety and remorse. But the

observance of the principles of *sila* heals this division, bringing our inner faculties together into a balanced and centred state of unity. *Sila* also brings us into harmony with other men. While actions undertaken in disregard of ethical principles lead to relations scarred by competitiveness, exploitation and aggression, actions intended to embody such principles promote concord between man and man — peace, co-operation and mutual respect. The harmony achieved by maintaining *sila* does not

The foundation for the entire path, it can be seen, is the training in moral discipline.



stop at the social level, but leads our actions into harmony with a higher law — the law of kamma, of action and its fruit, which reigns invisibly behind the entire world of sentient existence.

The need to internalise ethical virtue as the foundation for the path translates itself into a set of precepts established as guidelines to good conduct. The most basic set of precepts found in the Buddha's teaching is the *pañcasīla*, the five precepts, consisting of the following five training rules:

- 1) abstaining from taking life;
- 2) abstaining from taking what is not given;
- 3) abstaining from sexual misconduct;
- 4) abstaining from false speech; and
- 5) abstaining from fermented and distilled intoxicants which are the basis for heedlessness.

These five precepts are the minimal ethical code binding on the Buddhist laity. They are administered regularly by monks to the lay disciples at almost every service and ceremony, following immediately upon the giving of the three refuges. They are also undertaken afresh each day by earnest lay Buddhists as part of their daily recitation.

The precepts function as the core of the training in moral discipline. They are intended to produce, through methodical practice, that inner purity of will and motivation which comes to expression as virtuous bodily and verbal conduct. While moral virtue admittedly cannot be equated flatly with any set of rules, or with outward conduct conforming to rules, the rules are still of value for aiding the development of inner virtue. Only the very exceptional few can alter the stuff of their lives by a mere act of will. The overwhelming majority of men have to proceed more slowly, with the help of a set of stepping stones to help them gradually cross the rough currents of greed, hatred and delusion.

If the process of self-transformation which is the heart of the Buddhist path begins with moral discipline, then the concrete manifestation of this discipline is in the lines of conduct represented by the five precepts, which call for our adherence as expedient means to self-transformation.

The precepts are not commandments imposed from without, but principles of training each one takes upon himself through his own initiative

and endeavours to follow with awareness and understanding. The emphasis here, as throughout the entire path, is on self-responsibility.

The precepts engender virtuous dispositions by a process involving the substitution of opposites. The actions prohibited by the precepts — killing, stealing, adultery, etc. — are all motivated by unwholesome mental factors called in Buddhist terminology “defilements” (*kilesa*). By engaging in these actions knowingly and willingly we reinforce the grip of the defilements upon the mind to the point where they become our dominant traits. But when we take up the training by observing the precepts we then put a brake upon the current of unwholesome mental factors. There then takes place a process of “factor substitution” whereby the defilements are replaced by wholesome states which become increasingly more deeply ingrained as we go on with the training...through repetition.

We generally begin in the grip of negative attitudes, hemmed in by unskilful emotions. But if we see that these states lead to suffering and that to be free from suffering we must abandon them, then we will have sufficient motivation to take up the training designed to counter them. This training starts with the outer observance of *sīla*, then proceeds to internalise self-restraint through meditation and wisdom. At the start to maintain the precepts may require special effort, but by degrees the virtuous qualities they embody will gather strength until our actions flow from them as naturally and smoothly as water from a spring. 🐾

— *Bhikkhu Bodhi*

Extracted from Going for Refuge & Taking the Precepts

Threefold Refuge; Five Precepts Ceremony
Threefold Refuge; Five Precepts Preparation Class

Date: In the month of August
Preparation class consists of 4 sessions focusing on the benefits, merits of taking Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts, and the way of integrating precepts into our daily life

For more information or to register, please call 6849 5300.

1-day Eight Precepts Ceremony

Dates: In the months of May, June & July
For more information or to register, please call 6849 5300.

Passing On of a Great Zen Master

Taiwan – Venerable Master Sheng Yen, founder of Dharma Drum Mountain and one of the most influential and greatest Zen masters of this century passed away peacefully on 3 February 2009 at the age of 80.

Voted as one of Taiwan's fifty most influential people in the last four hundred years, his life is a story full of tribulations and dramatic turnarounds. Regardless of the difficulties he faced, he always found a way out and dedicated his whole life towards uplifting humanity and building a pure land on earth through body, speech and mind.

Calling himself humbly “a monk amidst the rain and snow”, we witnessed his compassion in times of hardship, and his unwavering determination and wisdom through Chan practice. To him, life is a journey of practising and realising the Buddha-Dharma.

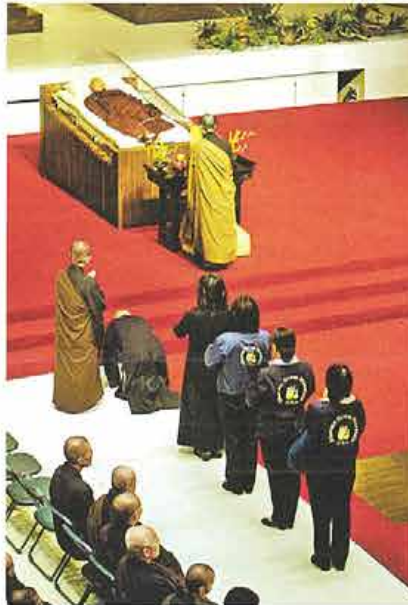


Image: <http://mag.udn.com/mag/people/storypage>

In accordance with his wishes, instead of a traditional funeral ceremony, a Buddhist memorial rite was held, and his ashes were returned to the earth and buried in the Life Memorial Garden.

Venerable Guo Dong took over as the Abbot President of Dharma Drum Mountain. Together with its Sangha community and its followers, they will continue to support the vision of Dharma Drum Mountain and jointly fulfil the wish of the Master in the building of the Dharma Drum University.

Where there is life, there must be death.

If one cannot face this reality it will become one's greatest barrier in life.

If one can regard death merely as a fraction within the eternal time and space,

then death is not an end to life but the beginning of the next.

— Chan Master Sheng Yen

Short-term Mindfulness Meditation Improves Attention and Reduces Stress



Image: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2483717>

USA – If you're still of two minds on whether to pick up meditation, this piece of news may just help you to decide.


According to a clinical trial published in *The National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, five days of 20-minute mindfulness meditation practice each day significantly improves attention and stress control, compared to a group given relaxation training.

Conducted by researchers from the Dalian University of Technology and the University of Oregon, the study also found meditation to lower anxiety, depression, anger, fatigue and perk up the moods of participants in the first group.

“Attention consists of three separate functions and underlying brain networks: alerting, orienting and executive attention,” said Michael I. Posner, a prominent scientist in the field of cognitive neuroscience, and a professor of neuroscience at the University of Oregon. “Alerting helps us to maintain an alert state, orienting focuses our senses on the information we want, and executive attention regulates our emotional responses and sensory

information,” explained Posner. The findings in this study demonstrated that short-term mindfulness meditation could influence the efficiency of the executive attention, which would in turn improve the self-regulation of emotions, he revealed. This means meditation can enhance positive moods and reduce negative ones.

According to the researchers, the meditation group also reported significantly better reaction to mental

stress when asked to do mental arithmetic sums than the relaxation group. Five days of training had reduced the stress response to the mental challenge. However, the scientists stated that a qualified instructor or trainer is crucial to obtain the desired state in the participants at each level of teaching and practice. Without coaching, it is impossible or very difficult to practise the meditation, said the study. 

Meditation May Safeguard Brain Matter Loss

USA – A study conducted by Emory University scientists last year found that long-time meditators don't lose grey matter in their brains with age the way most people do, implying that meditation may have a neuro-protective effect.

Although people lose neurons or grey matter and have more problems concentrating as they age, the Emory researchers discovered this wasn't true of Zen practitioners.

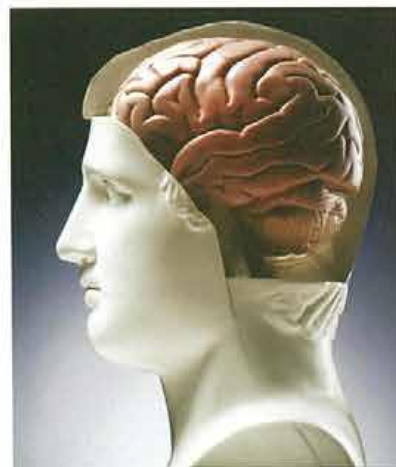
“What we saw in the meditators was pretty much a straight line,” said Milos Cekic, a member of the Emory research team. “There was no decrease with age in their grey matter volume.” In fact, the effect of meditation on grey matter was most pronounced in the putamen, a brain structure linked to attention. “We can't say causally that meditation prevents cell death, but we did see in our sample that the meditators did not see a grey matter loss with age,” Cekic said.

Other recent studies meanwhile reported that practitioners of insight meditation (*Vipashyana*) have evidently thicker tissue in the prefrontal cortex (the region responsible for attention and control) and that experienced Tibetan monks practising compassion meditation generate extraordinarily strong and coherent gamma waves in their brains.

Harvard University researcher Sara Lazar made headlines in 2005 when she reported that Western practitioners of insight meditation — a non-judgmental awareness of present-moment experience that is similar to Zen meditation — had noticeably

thicker tissue in their prefrontal cortex and insula than non-meditators.


Lazar performed functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans on 20 experienced meditators and 15 control subjects with no meditation experience. Her experiment established the first concrete evidence linking meditation practice to modified brain structure. “The nice thing about (studying) the



structure is it's something solid,” she said. “It's not performance on a task. It's your brain.”

The greatest differences were seen between the cortical tissue of meditators and control

subjects who were in their 40s and 50s, she said, while the insula — which integrates sensory processing — was thicker in meditators of all ages.

Andrew Newberg, a University of Pennsylvania researcher who has conducted brain scans of meditating Tibetan monks believes that the science shows meditation works. “The overwhelming evidence is that meditation has benefits,” he said. “If it makes your mind clearer and helps you focus your attention better, it should help you.” 



The Path to Genuine Happiness



Dr. B. Alan Wallace, a former Buddhist monk, Buddhist teacher and translator, and founder and director of Santa Barbara Institute of Consciousness Studies spoke to Esther Thien on what truly gives rise to pure bliss and happiness.

There is a profound air of gentleness and love when you speak to Dr. B. Alan Wallace. Even though a former university lecturer with a wealth of Buddhist knowledge and in-depth meditative experience, he has no airs of superiority. In fact, he makes you feel very relaxed and at ease as he interacts with you. He also makes the path of the Buddhist philosophy very clear and simple.

Root of all problems in life

According to Dr. Wallace, the root causes of suffering in life are firstly not-knowing and the active misapprehending or misperception of reality. To illustrate, he gave an analogy of a person walking in the forest in twilight. “You see a coiled rope along the path but because you can’t see very clearly in the dark, you mistake it for a snake. You then become afraid, angry and may even harbour thoughts of killing it. This scenario is akin to being clouded by ignorance. Troubles arise often because of our own active imagination, our misapprehending or getting reality wrong.”

In the book, *Discover Roots*, an American historian pointed out the fact that dating back to the times of ancient China, the impediment to scientific discovery is not simply ignorance but the illusion of knowledge — thinking you know something when in fact you have gotten it wrong. “That has been the greatest impediment to discovery. So it is ignorance of not-knowing and the active illusion of knowledge, of misapprehending that lead to suffering.”

Hedonic pleasure is not genuine happiness

Our misperception of reality also causes us to believe that hedonic pleasures give rise to genuine happiness when in fact it brings about the opposite effect. “An American psychologist, Tim Kasser once studied with his colleagues very carefully that if a person focuses on extrinsic values, or values outside of oneself, such as having more wealth, more fame, more prestige, more sensual pleasures, more power as the priorities in life and the more that person focuses on those in his pursuit of happiness, the greater this gives rise to depression, anxiety and frustration,” Dr Wallace revealed.

Conversely, he noted that the research which was published in a book called *The High Price of Materialism* found that if one focuses more on intrinsic values, not necessarily religious, but inner values such as wisdom, compassion, patience, mindfulness, equanimity, virtues and of finding greater meaning in life, as the pursuits in one's life, the less depression, anxiety and the greater happiness one experiences regardless of one's religious beliefs.

“Researchers are discovering that if you focus on what Buddhism calls the eight mundane concerns — more praise, more sensual pleasure, more reputation, you don't end up happier.” Explained Dr Wallace, “When you don't have enough food, clothing, shelter and medication, your happiness quotient does go up as you satisfy the basics since life was hard previously. But once you enjoy sufficient financial security having reached the middle-class strata, even if you have twice, 10 or 100 times as much as you need, it doesn't make you happier.”

He elucidated that, however, as we are alike in wanting happiness and not suffering, we mistakenly and narrow-mindedly think that we will be twice happier if we have twice as much. This is the basis for the consumerism led by the West which sadly only destroys the planet as external resources are limited to support such a huge world population. “Inevitably, this will give rise to conflict between people because there are only so much external resources and limited goods but people always want to be happier. It is a human characteristic, religious or not.” And so when we continue to focus our

attention on the outside, this will lead to greater and greater consumption.

“There is nothing wrong with hedonic pleasures itself, but because the pleasure comes from an external stimulus, like a happy marriage, children, wealth, good reputation etc, if it is taken away, all the happiness vanishes and it becomes suffering to one. Such joy doesn't have depth and is not lingering, being very transient and short-term, so it is not a true source of happiness,” Dr Wallace clarified.

Genuine happiness stems from within

Genuine happiness is profoundly different. It is a quality of well-being that is different from one given by an external stimulus. “It is not something we take from the world. It is something we cultivate and bring to the world, by living an ethical way of life, treating other people with kindness and consideration, doing our best not to injure and whenever possible trying to help, even if it is in the little things.” Said Dr Wallace, “By living what the Buddha called a blameless way of life, you are at peace with yourself and at the end of the day, you look back and say that has been a good day. Not because of something pleasurable that happens to you but because of what you have brought to the world, being able to help this person or that and holding good motivations.”

And on a deeper level if you are able to develop qualities of the heart and mind, you will find your mind very peaceful and happy even if you are just quietly sitting there. As you engage in Buddhist wisdom practices, *prajna* or *vispashyana*, you will find an even deeper sense of well-being, of knowing reality as it is. “This bliss is much more lingering so you don't have to constantly pump it up with an external stimulus and hungrily or restlessly go looking for the next high. This quality of well-being is one that comes from within.”

The beauty of this? Nobody has less of anything, unlike hedonic pleasure that comes from an external stimulus out of limited resources. “If one has genuine happiness, one will radiate it. This spreads and others start feeling happier too. Its effect is the very opposite of hedonic pleasures. So once we have enough, it shouldn't be about getting more and more and more, as this will only give rise to dissatisfaction. Shift your emphasis to

cultivating intrinsic values for genuine happiness,” he advised.

Cultivating genuine happiness through meditation

Normally, the mind is very turbulent, restless and distracted. Psychologists have studied and found that ordinary people can focus single-mindedly on an object for about three or at most seven seconds. And the mind that is very distracted is between the fangs of mental afflictions, said Indian bodhisattva Shantideva, and very vulnerable to anger, craving, jealousy and so on. “When the mind is constantly oscillating between hyperactivity (attention hyperactivity disorder) or dullness and listlessness (attention deficient disorder), it is not happy and at ease as it is out of balance.”

Shamatha meditation is designed to restore balance to the mind from excitation and laxity, addressing the natural habitual turbulent tendencies of the mind to establish calm stability, clarity and vividness, a mind that is relaxed. “Even if one practises only 20 to 30 minutes a day, it is bound to give rise to mindfulness and a greater sense of tranquillity. And when you put in eight to 10 hours a day similar to studying eight to 10 hours a day in graduate school, your mind descends into a deeper space into the *alayavijñāna* or storehouse consciousness. It settles into a state that is more fundamental than our ordinary psyche. Your mind is programmed by your background, your nationality, your brain chemistry, culture and language but when you practise shamatha very deeply, these specific characteristics such as being a young woman, from Singapore, speaking Mandarin and so forth will go into a deeper level until your mind settles into the storehouse consciousness and when you are resting in that state of consciousness, you are no longer a woman, not from your perspective. From your perspective, you are much deeper than man or woman, deeper than human or non-human. It is not the ultimate level of Buddha nature but the natural resting state of the mind and when you rest in that state of consciousness, its primary characteristics are bliss, luminosity and vividness. It is non-conceptual and quiet. We slip into that when we fall into deep sleep and at the time of death.”

“The aim of shamatha practice is to make the mind very supple, malleable, stable, clear and relaxed,

so that when we want to cultivate vipashyana, bodhicitta, zen or other deep wisdom practices, the mind is very serviceable, fine and well-prepared just like a bowl is sparkling clean before you put in delicious fine gourmet food,” enlightened Dr Wallace. “Shamatha doesn’t bring about lasting happiness but it is like a clean bowl so that when you pour in vipashyana, it doesn’t get ruined,” he explained.

“Vipashyana is like a contemplative science,” he went on to say, “an insight practice that is designed to explore who you are, what your mind is, what the origin of your consciousness, of happiness, of suffering, of virtue and your capacity for virtue is.” It opens up the full depth of your insight. Together with bodhicitta, the union of wisdom and method is the essence of the bodhisattva way to enlightenment, and as the Buddha said, our capacity for virtue becomes infinite.

“The purpose of Buddhist meditation is really about establishing genuine happiness. The greater the well-being, happiness and compassion one experiences, the greater this flows out to others and inspires them to want to practise too.”

Mindfulness of the present moment builds genuine happiness

“If we are not mindful, we tend to be caught up in our thoughts and our thoughts tend to be of a very static view. For instance if on one occasion, John witnessed Tom being rude, selfish and disagreeable, then John would think that Tom is very selfish, devious, manipulative and develops a static notion which he projects the next time he sees him. This is exactly what ordinary people are doing. But this brings one out of touch with reality as one is living in concepts, locking in and freezing notions in their minds instead of seeing it fresh in the present moment. Mindfulness is like a wake-up call, a training which engages one in reality from moment to moment instead of recycling stale old ideas.”

As we tend to each and everyone in a loving and caring way with our full attention, this can be very healing and opens up the hearts in one's relationships with all. Tending with an open heart, this brings greater genuine happiness as one understands that one has the inner resources to be happy, regardless of the situations and conditions one faces.

On facing disagreeable people...

"We have to assess each situation on its own. Sometimes, just practising patience will do. Just being very relaxed and patient can be very disarming and completely throws your opponent off as he expects you to react and be defensive. But if there is real danger of physical harm, put a stop not by being hostile or hateful but by recognising with wisdom and compassion that you need to protect yourself and others from the harmful act."

On dealing with people on an ego trip...

Being sentient beings, people have *kleshas*, mental afflictions. Sometimes the *kleshas* overcome the person, even a Buddhist. When we encounter such people the one thing is to have equanimity and think, "Ah that person is suffering from anger, or craving for power." We don't have to be a doormat for people to walk on. We wish them well not with anger or arrogance but simply recognise that we don't find their behaviour acceptable. We release our own *kleshas* with mindfulness breathing, resting in awareness without grasping and expectation. As one cultivates greater peace, inner equilibrium and calm through shamatha, even when we see other people behaving unacceptably, engaging in unwholesome behaviour, we rest in our own peace through the cultivation of the Four Immeasurables and when we see that the

other person is receptive towards us we can then help by pointing out. Even the Buddha did not impose or force people to practise virtue if he saw that the people did not respect him, were disinterested or very rigid in their own thinking. Sometimes people learn better through mistakes as we watch mindfully what are the consequences of our body, speech and mind. Wisdom can then develop as we investigate what will lead to conflicts and suffering and what to peace, joy and happiness."

On knowledge and practice...

"It is very important that as we study, everything we learn must be implemented in our practice. So if you know a little, practise a little. Then as we learn more, we practise more and more until our mind becomes saturated by the Dharma and abides in the spirit of service motivated by bodhicitta. This is the union of our knowledge and practice or practical experience."

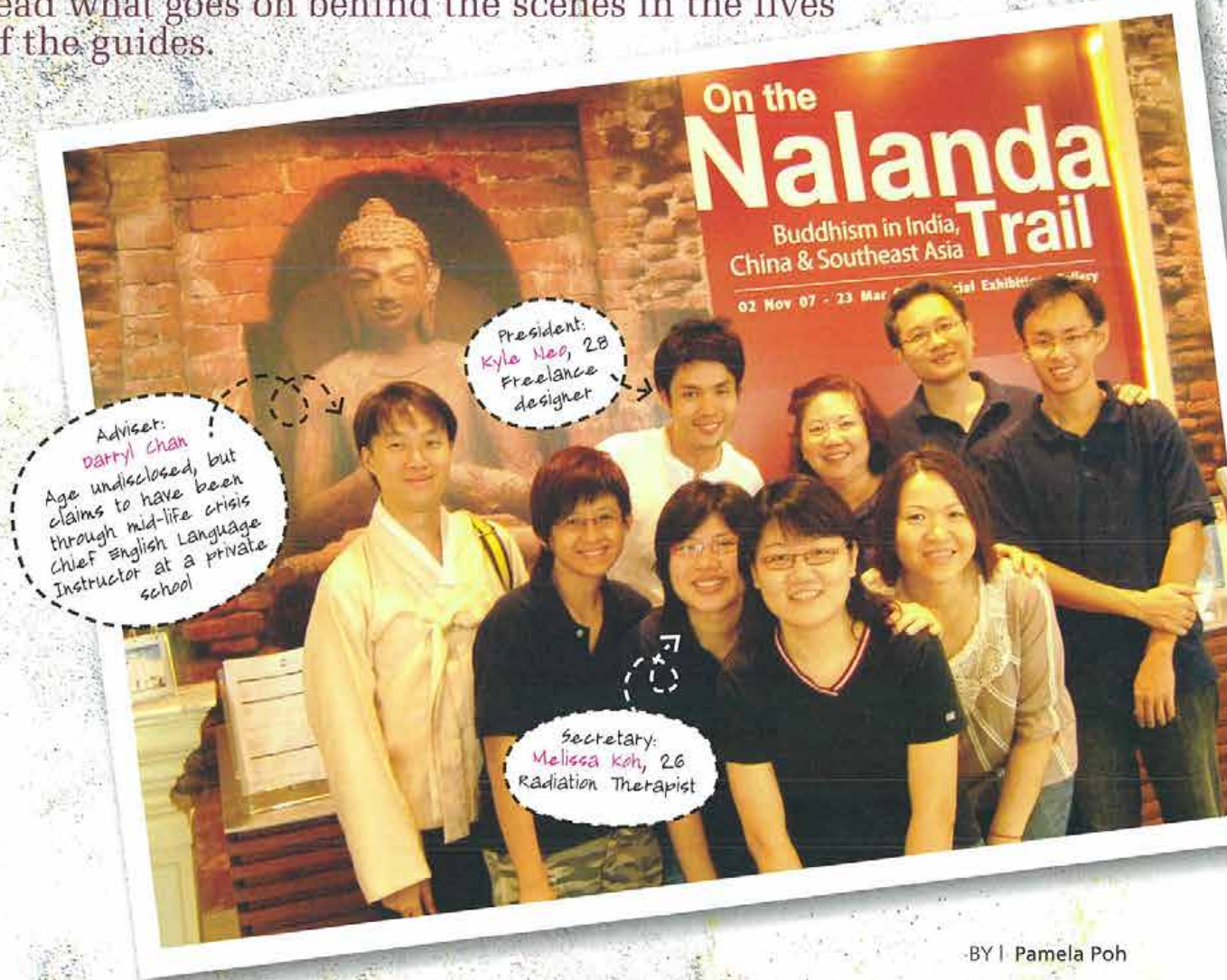
On bodhisattva and bodhicitta...

What differentiates a bodhisattva from a non-bodhisattva is the fully engaged bodhicitta rooted in very great compassion. To achieve this effortless bodhicitta which is with you 24/7 you must have this 'clean bowl', this healthy stable mind achieved from shamatha. When we are still like little toddlers on the path, we need a conducive environment — retreat centres and monasteries until you can achieve the 'clean bowl'. When you have achieved that, then like an adolescent you can go on to achieve bodhicitta and vipashyana as a fully grown Dharma adult and proceed on the bodhisattva path. ☸



Stones Can't Talk, But They Can

If you have attended one of 3GEMS tours before, read what goes on behind the scenes in the lives of the guides.



BY | Pamela Poh

All of them are pioneer members of 3GEMS, a volunteer group with the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, Youth Ministry, specialising in guided tours of Buddhist temples and exhibitions. Started in 2004, it now has 20 active volunteers who conduct tours to temples like the Burmese Buddhist Temple, KMSPKS, Wat Ananda Temple; and exhibitions such as *On The Nalanda Trail* and *Serenity in Stone*. 300 people have joined the *Serenity in Stone* tours at press time, and the number is growing fast!

3GEMS guides come from all walks of life and are aged 20 to 50 years old. They include students, accountants, teachers, and homemakers, among others.

Awaken: How did 3GEMS get involved with *Serenity In Stone*?

Mel: Since the successful conclusion of our guided tours at the *Nalanda Trail* exhibition held in the Asian Civilisations Museum last year, we have maintained a positive and friendly relationship with the museum's management. Therefore, when we heard about the *Serenity In*

Stone exhibition, we offered to do Buddhist guided tours for the ACM again and they readily accepted our offer. Guiding for the *Serenity in Stone* exhibition is aligned with our mission of continuously exploring new platforms where we can share Buddhism with others in a fun and interesting way.

Awaken: What are we missing out on, if we do not visit *Serenity in Stone*?

Mel and Kyle: Let's just say you're missing a thousand years of Chinese Buddhism and the intricate details of Buddhist art.

Darryl: Visitors to *Serenity in Stone* will miss out on a whole lot more when unaccompanied by a 3GEMS guide. As the exhibition is targeted at the general public, the information on the explanatory panels tends to be more generic.

So without our guides, visitors will not be able to enjoy our more insightful commentary on the artefacts. Stones can't talk but we can!

Awaken: Why was 3GEMS started?

Darryl: 3GEMS was started to project a professional image and to facilitate marketing of our services. Before we started 3GEMS, our identity was directly tagged to the word 'monastery' which has a rather strong religious connotation. To establish Buddhism as a universal way to understand our true nature, at least from our point of view, a neutral identity has to be adopted so that Buddhism is accessible to the community-at-large. Bearing a universal brand name also gives us access to national museums and galleries!

Awaken: So what do you do?

All: Definitely not a simple question to answer! We do a whole lot of things from setting up booths, registering tour participants, receiving them, making phone calls, planning tour routes, briefing and training guides, to formulating training modules, managing crises, taking care of old folks, clearing trash...the list goes on.

Awaken: Why are you doing this?

Kyle: I want to broaden my horizons and learn something different from my daily work. Looking back, it's very rewarding to see how I've grown from knowing nothing to becoming a guide.

Mel: I've seen in my own life how applying Buddhist teachings have benefited me. Like most of our guides, this is my motivation for sharing the Dharma with others. At the same time, I hope to promote an appreciation of intriguing Buddhist history, arts, culture and architecture.

Awaken: How did you amass such a treasure trove of Buddhist knowledge?

Mel: All of us will read up on the subject area and come together to discuss and share information with one another. Of course, we also make the effort to attend talks given by Venerables, curators and scholars.

Awaken: Ever felt like pulling your hair out?

Kyle: Yes, but as a Buddhist I try to deal with every challenging situation without losing my hair.

Mel: Yep, but I try to catch myself when I'm feeling frustrated and try to breathe in and out calmly. Sounds simple, but it works like magic.

Awaken: Why should the public join a 3GEMS tour? Can't they just pick up a brochure about a temple/exhibition or Google the net?

Mel and Kyle: We bring people to the Dharma in an interactive and personal way – an experience they can't get by reading a brochure. Also, each guide tends to emphasise different aspects of an artefact – you might be surprised by the many different perspectives our guides can offer to the same thing. A picture is worth a thousand words and a guided tour is worth a hundred pictures.

Awaken: What's the greatest change you've seen in yourself after being a guide?

Darryl: Hmm...I am more diligent in studying Buddhism-related topics and more mindful of my own ego. As I gain seniority, junior members regard me as a senior 'teacher'. Pride and arrogance will breed from within if I'm not careful. When I discovered that a while ago, I realised I had to humble myself.

Mel: I have a greater sense of responsibility and a stronger desire to learn more about Buddhism so that I can share the knowledge with my tour members.

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Awaken: A good 3GEMS guide must be articulate, outgoing and great at memorising facts and figures. **Soft-spoken wallflowers are out. True or false?**

Darryl: True and False. 3GEMS guides are required to exercise flexibility in every situation as our participants have different backgrounds and needs. Guides must adapt their pitch, tone, voice quality, facial expression and intensity of information in order to 'speak the same language' as the participants. This aligns with what Buddha has taught about impermanence: nothing stays the same. Outspoken or not, being mindful and thoughtful in all situations helps a lot.

Kyle: False, some soft-spoken guides start with a passion of sharing the Dharma and slowly, they pick up what is needed to improve their tours through hands-on experience. That includes speaking a little louder, knowing when to ask questions, injecting jokes and sharing personal anecdotes.

Mel: I, for one, was definitely not an articulate or outgoing person when I first joined 3GEMS. In fact, I'm not one even now! But I must say that joining 3GEMS has made me more confident in interacting with all kinds of people.

Awaken: List three things on the 3GEMS Wish List!

Darryl: Harmony, Loving-kindness among member-guides and Rapport.

Mel: Passionate people to join us as guides, more tour participants, suitable teachers/scholars familiar with Buddhist arts, architecture, culture, history to share their expertise with us.

3GEMS would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of Youth Ministry, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, for giving them so much support over the years.

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From Boys to Men (the Thai Way)



BY | Vincent Lim Sui-Leong

In Thailand, it is customary for young men to undergo temporary ordination to repay their parents' kindness, and to prepare them for marriage and leadership roles in society.

A Thai Custom

The sonorous chanting of the monks resonated throughout the spacious and plush interior of the *bot* (ordination hall) of Wat Pho. I could not help but marvel at the perfect acoustics of the hall—no sound amplifying system was used. On a well-proportioned altar, ten statues of *shravaka* disciples framed a graceful Ayutthayan Buddha image containing the ashes of Rama I, the founder of Bangkok. In front, on a low platform, two rows of saffron-clad monks sat facing a young man in his twenties, with freshly-shaved head and eyebrows. The solemnity of their expressions signalled that something important was happening. I had unexpectedly walked into an ordination ceremony in progress! At one point, the doors and the window shutters were closed. The young man walked to the edge of the hall and stood

facing the master preceptor with his head slightly bowed, while the latter asked a series of questions to confirm his fitness for ordination such as whether he is human, male, has perfect senses, has not committed any heinous crimes *et cetera*. I gathered from his relatives who were also there to witness this special occasion that he was to be ordained for one month only.

In Thailand, every male, including royalty, is expected to enter monkhood for a brief period at some point in his life. So deeply ingrained is this practice that paid leave is granted by the Thai government and some private companies to their male employees for time spent in monkhood. Ideally, this should take place after the completion of one's education and before marriage as a rite of passage into adulthood. The three-month rainy season retreat period (*vassa*) beginning in July is considered the best time for ordination. The man is expected to remain a monk for at least this three-month period, if not longer.



Repaying Parents' Kindness

In recent times, the custom has been modified because young men increasingly have to consider the effect their prolonged absence may have on their career prospects. Hence many men now choose to enter the monkhood for a brief period after the death of a parent, to make merit both for the deceased and for the rest of the family. The duration of ordination has also been condensed to one month or even one week. The ordination need not take place during the rainy season retreat; it can be done any time at the young man's convenience, provided it is an astrologically auspicious date. The novice ordination and the full ordination may even be bestowed on the same day if the lack of time is an issue.

Temporary ordination is seen as a means for a young man to repay his parents' kindness in raising him, because the merit from his ordination accrues to them as well.

Young men who have undergone ordination are perceived as mature and suitable partners for marriage. Unordained men are euphemistically called "raw", while those who have been ordained are said to be "cooked" or "ripened". A period spent as a monk is a prerequisite for leadership positions within the village hierarchy. Most village elders or headmen were once monks, as were most traditional doctors, spirit priests, and some astrologists and fortune-tellers. Particularly in rural areas, temporary ordination has traditionally given peasant boys an opportunity to gain an education in the temple schools.



On the first day, the man is ordained as a novice monk and is expected to observe ten basic precepts. The novice will be clad in white and carried about on friends' or relatives' shoulders. His parents and close relatives will follow behind, circumambulating the temple with donations of money, food and necessities such as washing powder and mosquito repellent. They are often joined by dancers and travelling musicians hired for the occasion. The full ordination usually takes place on a separate day and can only be granted if the man is more than twenty years of age. The fully ordained monk is expected to observe 227 precepts.

Mr Pok, an elderly Thai man who has been guiding tourists around the ruins of Ayutthaya for the past 30 years, was a monk for one-and-a-half years in his youth. What was unusual in his case was that he was already married and even had a child before he was ordained. Therefore he had to seek his wife's permission for ordination, a practice that is more commonly seen among the Laotians than the Thais. Finding the simple life of prayers and contemplation in the *wat* attractive, he had originally intended to remain a monk for life. But he had to disrobe because of problems at home that needed his attention.



He feels that he has acquired a strong sense of discipline and responsibility during his brief stint as monk — qualities that go a long way to help him face the challenges in life. Rash and impatient as a teenager, the time spent in the monastery has moulded him to become more patient and mindful. Pok added that in the old days, the *wats* provided young men with an education and the opportunity to learn skills such as massage, medicine and martial arts (*muay thai*). The men would use these skills to earn a living when they leave monkhood. When asked whether he would let his daughter marry a man who has not been through monkhood, or who does not intend to do so, he replied, "It is up to her, I will let her have the freedom to choose who she wants to marry." ☺

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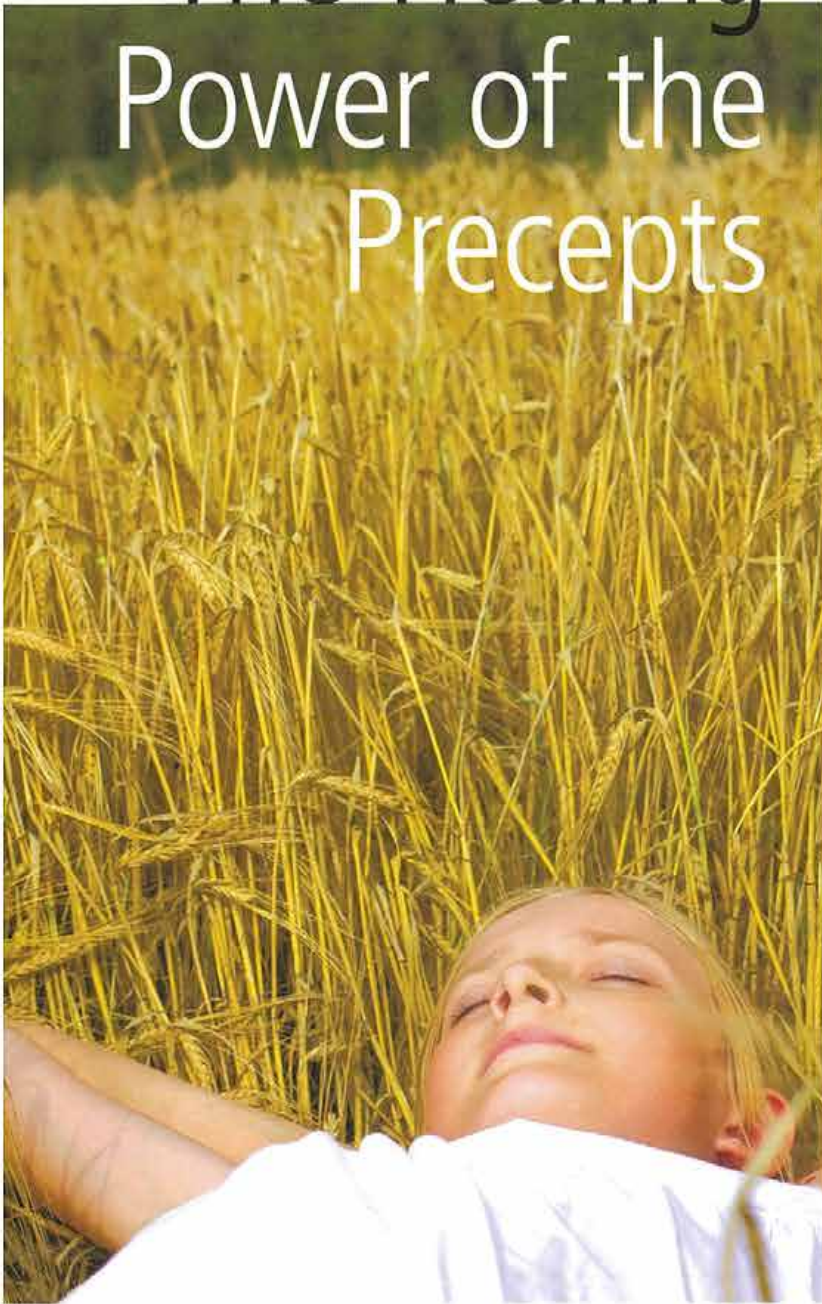
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The Healing Power of the Precepts



BY | Thanissaro Bhikkhu

The Buddha was like a doctor, treating the spiritual ills of the human race. The path of practice he taught was like a course of therapy for suffering hearts and minds. This way of understanding the Buddha and his teachings dates back to the earliest texts, and yet is also very current. Buddhist meditation practice is often advertised as a form of healing, and quite a few psychotherapists now recommend that their patients try meditation as part of their treatment.

After several years of teaching and practising meditation as therapy, however, many of us have found that meditation on its own is not enough. In my own experience, I have found that Western meditators tend to be afflicted more with a certain grimness and lack of self-esteem than any Asians I have ever taught. Their psyches are so wounded by modern civilisation that they lack the resilience and persistence needed before concentration and insight practices can be genuinely therapeutic. Other teachers have noted this problem as well and, as a result, many of them have decided that the Buddhist path is insufficient for our particular needs. To make up for this insufficiency they have experimented with ways of supplementing meditation practice, combining it with such things as myth, poetry, psychotherapy, social activism, sweat lodges, mourning rituals and even drumming. The problem, though, may not be that there is anything lacking in the Buddhist path, but that we simply haven't been following the Buddha's full course of therapy.

The Buddha's path consisted not only of mindfulness, concentration and insight practices, but also of virtue, beginning with the five precepts. In fact, the precepts constitute the first step on the path.

There is a tendency in the West to dismiss the five precepts as Sunday-school rules bound to old cultural norms that no longer apply to our modern society, but this misses the role that the Buddha intended for them: They are part of a course of therapy for wounded minds. In particular, they are aimed at curing two ailments that underlie low self-esteem: regret and denial.

When our actions don't measure up to certain standards of behaviour, we either (1) regret the actions or (2) engage in one of the two kinds of denial, either (a) denying that our actions did in fact happen or (b) denying that the standards of measurement are really valid. These reactions are like wounds in the mind. Regret is an open wound, tender to the touch, while denial is like hardened, twisted scar tissue around a tender spot. When the mind is wounded in these ways, it can't settle down comfortably in the present, for it finds itself resting on raw, exposed flesh or calcified knots. Even when it's forced to stay in the present, it's there only in a tensed, contorted and partial way, and so the insights it gains tend to be contorted and partial as well. Only if the mind is free of wounds and scars can it be expected to settle

down comfortably and freely in the present, and to give rise to undistorted discernment.

This is where the five precepts come in: They are designed to heal these wounds and scars.

Healthy self-esteem comes from living up to a set of standards that are practical, clear-cut, humane and worthy of respect; the five precepts are formulated in such a way that they provide just such a set of standards.

PRACTICAL: The standards set by the precepts are simple no intentional killing, stealing, having illicit sex, lying or taking intoxicants. It's entirely possible to live in line with these standards. Not always easy or convenient, but always possible. I have seen efforts to translate the precepts into standards that sound more lofty or noble — taking the second precept, for example, to mean no abuse of the planet's resources — but even the people who reformulate the precepts in this way admit that it is impossible to live up to them. Anyone who has dealt with psychologically

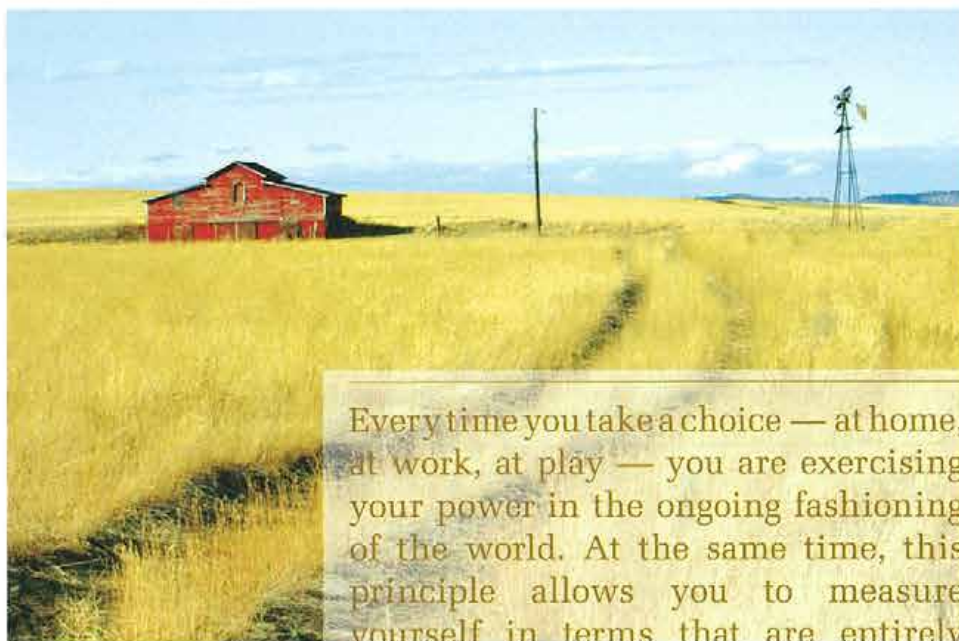


damaged people knows that very often the damage comes from having been presented with impossible standards to live by. If you can give people standards that take a little effort and mindfulness, but are possible to meet, their self-esteem soars dramatically as they discover that they are actually capable of meeting those standards. They can then face more demanding tasks with confidence.

CLEAR-CUT: The precepts are formulated with no *ifs*, *ands* or *buts*. This means that they give very clear guidance, with no room for waffling or less-than-honest rationalisations. An action either fits in with the precepts or it doesn't. Again, standards of this sort are very healthy to live by. Anyone who has raised children has found that, although they may complain about hard and fast rules, they actually feel more secure with them than with rules that are

vague and always open to negotiation. Clear-cut rules don't allow for unspoken agendas to come sneaking in the back door of the mind. If, for example, the precept against killing allowed you to kill living beings when their presence is inconvenient, that would place your convenience on a higher level than your compassion for life. Convenience would become your unspoken standard — and as we all know, unspoken standards provide huge tracts of fertile ground for hypocrisy and denial to grow. If, however, you stick by the standards of the precepts, then as the Buddha says, you are providing unlimited safety for the lives of all. There are no conditions under which you would take the lives of any living beings, no matter how inconvenient they might be. In terms of the other precepts, you are providing unlimited safety for their possessions and sexuality, and unlimited truthfulness and mindfulness in your communication with them. When you find that you can trust yourself in matters like these, you gain an undeniably healthy sense of self-respect.

HUMANE: The precepts are humane both to the person who observes them and to the people affected by his or her actions. If you observe them, you are aligning yourself with the doctrine of karma, which teaches that the most important powers shaping your experience of the world are the intentional thoughts, words and deeds you choose in the present moment. This means that you are not insignificant.




Every time you take a choice — at home, at work, at play — you are exercising your power in the ongoing fashioning of the world. At the same time, this principle allows you to measure yourself in terms that are entirely under your control: your intentional actions in the present moment.

In other words, they don't force you to measure yourself in terms of your looks, strength, brains, financial prowess or any other criteria that depend less on your present karma than they do on karma from the past. Also, they don't play on feelings of guilt or force you to bemoan your past lapses. Instead, they focus your attention on the ever-present possibility of living up to your standards in the *here* and *now*. If you are living with people who observe the precepts, you find that your dealings with them are not a cause for mistrust or fear. They regard your desire for happiness as akin to theirs. Their worth as individuals does not depend on situations in which there have to be winners and losers. When they talk about developing loving-kindness and mindfulness in their meditation, you see it reflected in their actions. In this way the precepts foster not only healthy individuals, but also a healthy society — a society in which the self-respect and mutual respect are not at odds.

WORTHY OF RESPECT: When you adopt a set of standards, it is important to know whose standards they are and to see where those standards come from, for in effect you are joining their group, looking for their approval, and accepting their criteria for right and wrong. In this case, you couldn't ask for a better group to join: the Buddha and his noble disciples. The five precepts are called "standards appealing to the noble ones". From what the texts tell us of the noble ones, they are not people who accept standards simply on the basis of popularity. They have put their lives on the line to see what leads to true happiness, and have seen for themselves, for example, that all lying is pathological, and that any sex outside of a stable, committed relationship is unsafe at any speed. Other people may not respect you for living by the five precepts, but noble ones do, and their respect is worth more than that of anyone else in the world.

Now, many people find it cold comfort to join such an abstract group, especially when they have not yet

met any noble ones in person. It's hard to be good-hearted and generous when the society immediately around you openly laughs at those qualities, and values such things as sexual prowess or predatory business skills instead. This is where Buddhist communities can come in. It would be very useful if Buddhist groups would openly part ways with the prevailing amoral tenor of our culture and let it be known in a kindly way that they value good-heartedness and restraint among their members.

In doing so, they would provide a healthy environment for the full-scale adoption of the Buddha's course of therapy: the practice of concentration and discernment in a life of virtuous action. Where we have such environments, we find that meditation needs no myth or make-believe to support it, because it is based on the reality of a well-lived life. You can look at the standards by which you live, and then breathe in and out comfortably — not as a flower or a mountain, but as a full-fledged, responsible human being. For that's what you are. 

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The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

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

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

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ISSUE 14

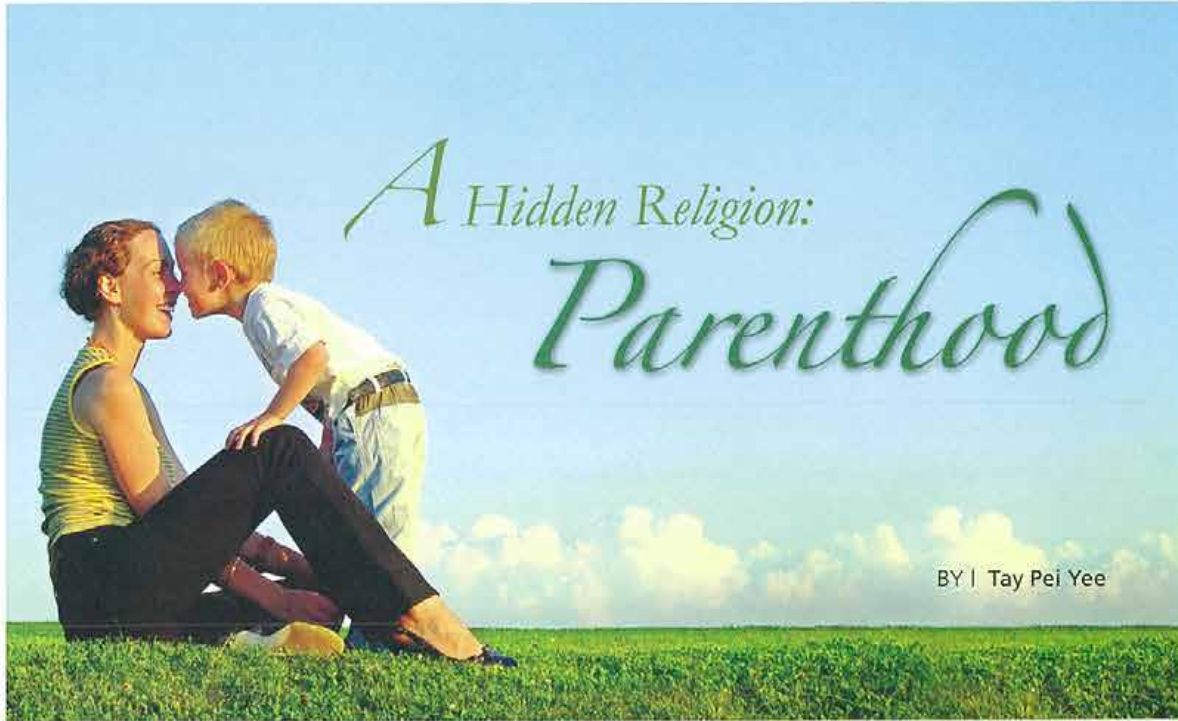
I | t struck me recently that besides Buddhism, I have a hidden religion. It's called parenthood. In parenthood, I conduct the daily routine rituals of caring for my son, Tristan, religiously. In parenthood I surrender to his momentous growth and changes. I have to learn to let go of my egoistic and wilful control. Though I have a certain amount of control over my son as his mother, even this power, I have to release as it is no match against Tristan's own karma.

For me, everything in parenthood is about learning and working on myself, just like all other relationships in life.

I realise that one's Dharma teacher can be anyone in life — husband, parents, colleagues, friends, siblings, children ... anyone! Like Sudhana, there is something to be learnt from every situation and every person we encounter and meet. And this means

the lesson does not have to come from someone in robes or who is reputable.

F r i e n d s sometimes tell me, "Oh how lucky you are, you know so many Rinpoches and practitioners and you even have a few that you can connect with and hold close to your heart! I wish I have your good fortune."




With the birth of my son, I have come to understand what it means to love with greater responsibility, creativity, flexibility, patience and stability. I learn to love unconditionally. I learn to receive purity, innocence, joy and love as they are. All these I have learnt in the short span of two years since Tristan was born.

Being a parent is my spiritual practice. Tristan is more than just a son; to me he is my little teacher, Rinpoche, Bodhisattva, Buddha. I experience the magic and miracle of life, right before my eyes, in his being. I am deeply humbled by him.

Having said so, I am grateful for all the Dharma and inner work support I have received, for they are guides necessary to navigate me in this maze and path on parenthood.

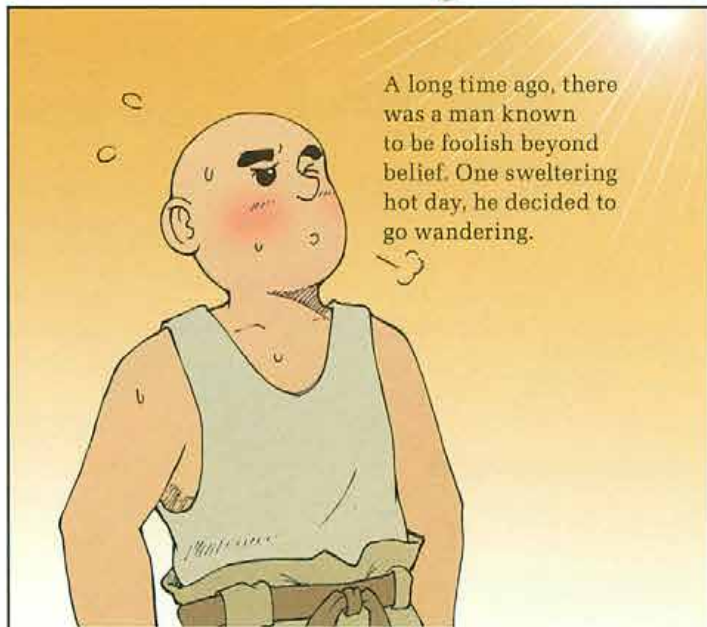
Actually, our life teacher could be someone around us all along, or maybe even the one in us. The key sometimes is to stop searching and look at the people already in our lives or inwards within our own mind. Then, we apply the principles of the Buddha's teachings in its essence religiously in our daily lives, with ourselves and others.

The challenge is that sometimes, it becomes too difficult to work with these people and learn from them, as we probably held unrealistic ideas that our guru would be an awe-inspiring teacher who would enlighten us with swiftness and ease. So we run away when our teacher appears, contrary to our expectations.

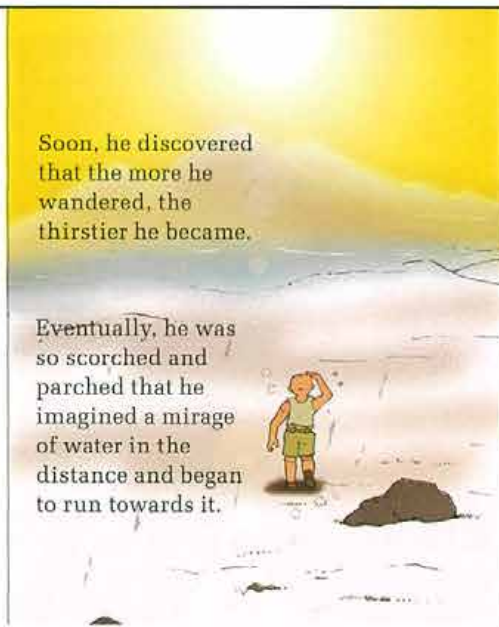
With this, I end my writing, wishing that all beings, parents or not, can find the peace and contentment, strength and valour to walk the path they seek. 

The Thirsty Man

ADAPTED BY | Esther Thien ILLUSTRATIONS | Bee Li

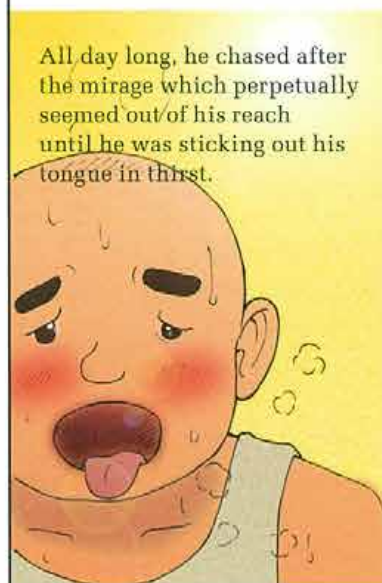


A long time ago, there was a man known to be foolish beyond belief. One sweltering hot day, he decided to go wandering.



Soon, he discovered that the more he wandered, the thirstier he became.

Eventually, he was so scorched and parched that he imagined a mirage of water in the distance and began to run towards it.

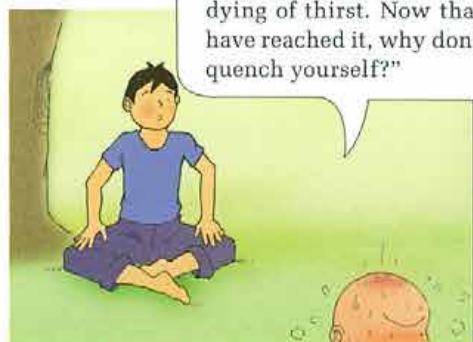


All day long, he chased after the mirage which perpetually seemed out of his reach until he was sticking out his tongue in thirst.

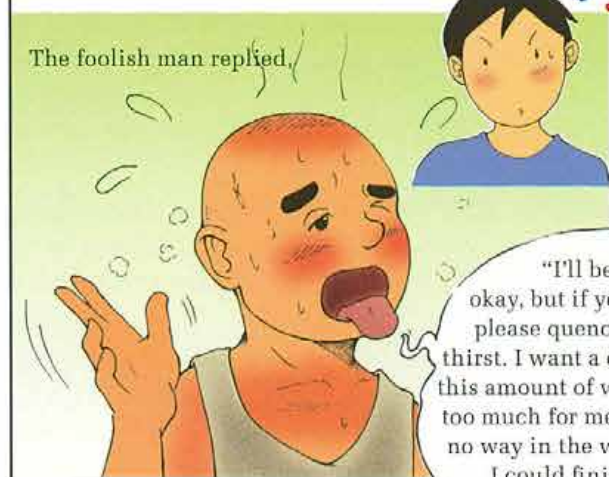


As luck would have it, the man had travelled so far that he actually came to the banks of the Indus River. Though he was badly dehydrated and desperate for a drink, he stood at the river's edge without taking a single sip.

Seeing his condition, another man, who happened to be sitting near him on the riverbank then asked,



"My friend, you have run to the river and are obviously dying of thirst. Now that you have reached it, why don't you quench yourself?"



The foolish man replied,

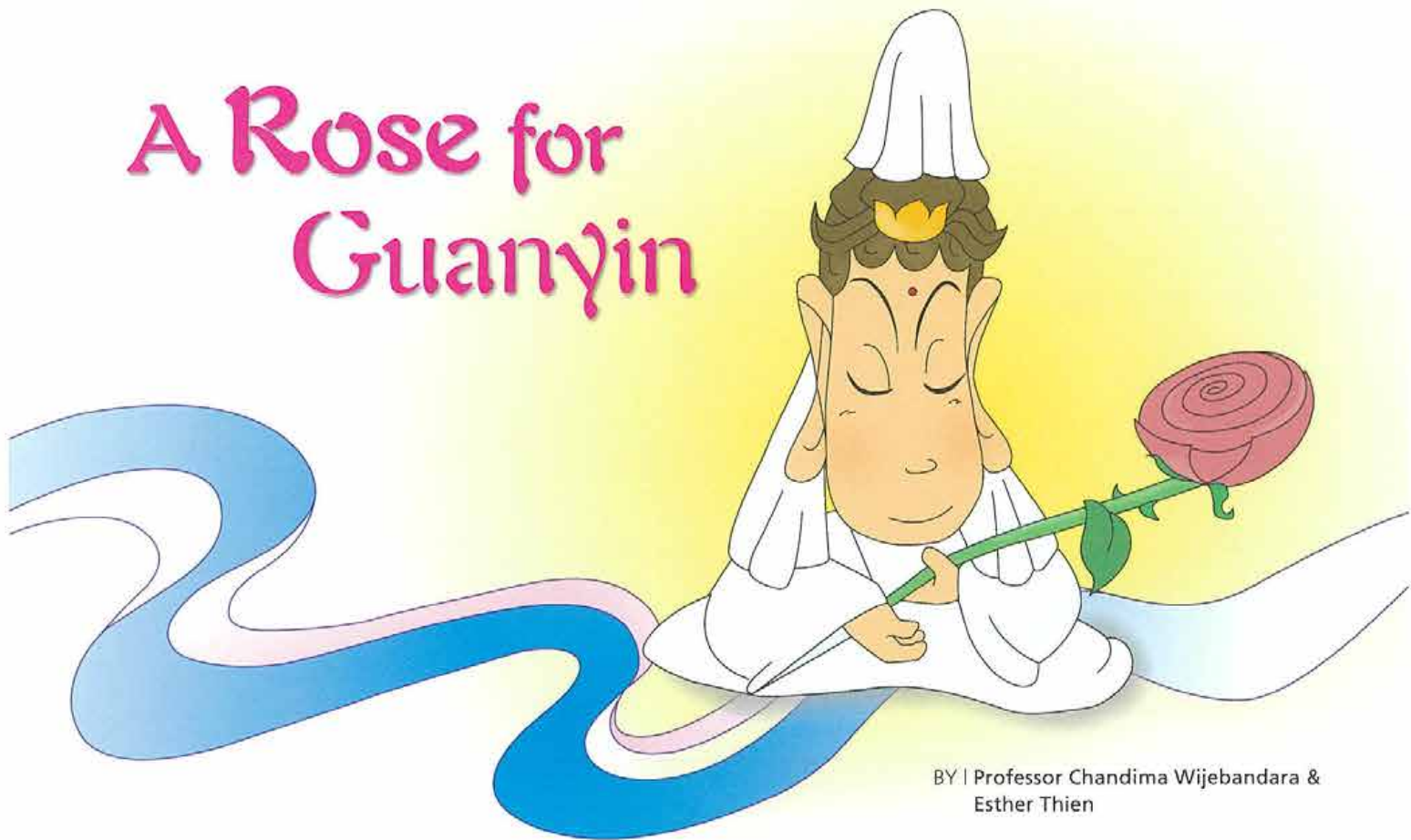
"I'll be okay, but if you like, please quench your thirst. I want a drink, but this amount of water is far too much for me. There is no way in the world that I could finish it."

This fool is like the person who misunderstands the basic teachings of the Buddha. Afraid that he will never be able to maintain all of the precepts, he refuses to receive even one. Due to this, it is likely he will never attain true understanding but be doomed to roam forever in samsara. Do not be such a fool.

~ story adapted from The One Hundred Parable Sutra



A Rose for Guanyin



BY | Professor Chandima Wijebandara & Esther Thien

It was a full moon day. Samantha was up early. She would wake up early on every full moon day to visit Phor Kark See Monastery to offer fresh flowers to Guanyin Bodhisattva. She loves the beautiful serene face of Guanyin.

Known as the Bodhisattva who heeds the cries of the world, Guanyin embodies the great compassion of all Buddhas. Also known as *Avalokiteshvara* and *Chenrezig*, Guanyin has great powers with limitless skilful means and can help all sentient beings by appearing in any form in all the six realms of existence to relieve their suffering.

Samantha also aspired to become a bodhisattva and help everyone just like Guanyin. That morning, she went to her garden to pick some flowers to take to Guanyin. To her delight, there in the midst was a beautiful rose that had just bloomed. Vibrant and dewy in a bright pink hue, it was just what she was thinking of. Elated, Samantha went closer and reached out for the flower. She felt rather sorry to pick it from the bush. "But it is for the offering, so it is alright," she thought. "The rose may enjoy being offered to Guanyin." With that thought, she spoke

softly to the flower, "Don't be upset, sweet rose. I'm taking you to Guanyin, the most benevolent Bodhisattva. Only a very fortunate flower has the chance to be offered to Guanyin. You are very meritorious indeed. That is why you are born on this full moon day and will be taken to Guanyin."

The rose seemed to be listening, and Samantha continued, "I will give you a nice name too. What shall I call you? Well, how about *Merit*? You love it, don't you? I'm sure you do."

The rose remained silent but as if it approved of what Samantha was saying, it nodded gently in the morning breeze. "Okay, I think you are signalling to me to take you there now, aren't you?"

Walking cheerfully along Bright Hill Road, Samantha came to the monastery. Walking up to the lovely stone statue, she sat on the lush soft grass close to the feet of the statue, cupping the flower in her hands. Samantha looked up to see whether Guanyin was pleased. As if in answer, Samantha saw the beautiful and loving smile on Guanyin's face. Samantha felt bliss and joy all over her body.

“What a very blessed morning this is. I’m also growing to be a loving being just like Guanyin,” she thought happily.

She put the rose gently near the feet of the Guanyin statue and felt very joyful. “The little novice monk statues around the Guanyin statue are looking at the rose,” thought Samantha. And she thought the rose also looked as if it were smiling. Samantha kneeled on the grass carefully, placed her palms together and started chanting: “Namo Guan Shi Yin Pusa, Namo Guan Shi Yin Pusa...” After her prayer, she murmured, “Dear Bodhisattva, please accept my rose. Her name is *Merit*.”

“I have to go now, sweet rose. Mummy is waiting for me. You will be happy with Guanyin. Remember if anyone asks, your name is *Merit*, okay,” she said softly to the flower.

After Samantha left, an ant soon came up to the flower. “What a beautiful and fresh rose this is. Aren’t I lucky this morning,” thought the ant. “May I obtain some nectar from you, sweet rose?” asked the ant.

“Why not? By the way, call me *Merit*. That is the name I have been given, and Guanyin Bodhisattva knows it too.” “Surprise, surprise! A rose with a name,” and the ant started sucking sweet nectar from the rose. It wasn’t long before the ant heard a humming noise and saw a bee approaching him. “This rose is mine.

The nectar here is just for me. I will not allow the bee to come to my flower,” thought the ant. To chase his opponent away, he started singing aloud, “Fragrant and sweet, I’m having a treat, No one should come, If not for a fight.”

“Who goes there?” asked the bee.

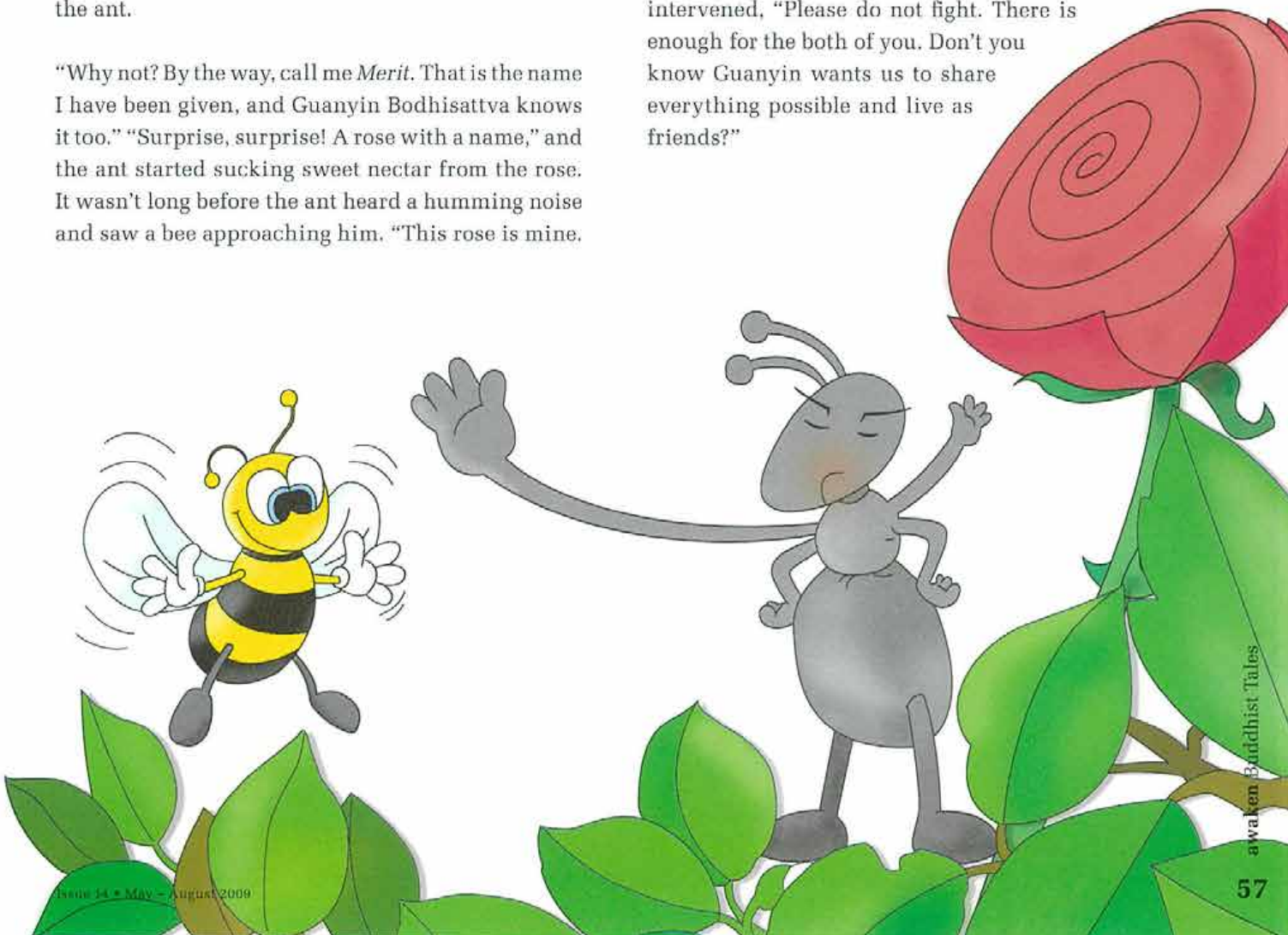
“It’s me, the owner of the rose, who else?” answered the ant.

“Owner of the rose? How can anyone own a bloom offered to Guanyin?”

“Well, this is a special flower with a name and it’s mine.”

“Stop this nonsense my friend, and let us enjoy the sweet nectar together. I’m hungry too,” replied the bee.

The ant was still unwilling to share, and ready to fight. The bee, being a peaceful fellow, wanted no quarrel. He wanted only some nectar. *Merit* the rose intervened, “Please do not fight. There is enough for the both of you. Don’t you know Guanyin wants us to share everything possible and live as friends?”



But the ant wouldn't listen, and he was getting annoyed with *Merit* too. "You keep quiet. Let me deal with him. Charity can wait, I want to enjoy my meal first, okay."

"You are behaving foolishly by being greedy and angry. Be warned that you will regret it one day, and that day may not be far," signed *Merit* the rose.

Listening to the conversation, the bee asked the ant, "The Buddha instructed people to root out greed and anger, and Guanyin Bodhisattva teaches compassion and loving-kindness. You come everyday just to enjoy the nectar? Have you not listened to any sermon at the monastery?"

"I do not care about sermons or teachings. I only want you to go away and leave me to eat my meal in peace. Or are you spoiling for a fight?" the ant repeated.

"Why should I get into so much agitation just for some nectar? There are many flowers around here." And so the bee flew to a red flower that was placed next to the rose. A caterpillar was chewing on a soft petal.

"I heard everything," said the caterpillar. But the bee merely smiled in reply. The caterpillar continued to enjoy the petals while the bee sucked the nectar. The next moment, thunder roared and raindrops started pelting down. It was as if the heavens above opened the floodgates and let loose a torrential blanket of rain. The caterpillar found shelter under a petal, whilst the bee flew and obtained solace in the robe folds of the Guanyin statue. But the greedy ant did not want to move.

He continued to enjoy the delicious nectar of *Merit* the rose. Before long, the rose was steeped with water like a little pond.

But to the ant it was like a huge pond.

The ant only realised his foolishness when he saw he could not get out of the rose and would drown.

"Help! Help!" he shouted.

"Somebody, help me please!

I'm going to die!" he screeched.

Merit the rose was worried. Even though she felt like asking the ant whether he realised by now the price he had to pay for being greedy and selfish, she did not. "It is not the time to moralise when someone is in trouble," she thought. She wanted to save the ant, but what could she do? Even though saving lives is meritorious, she was only a flower. "Somebody, please help the ant. He will drown. Please save him, please!" she cried.

The caterpillar heard the plea and immediately rushed to the ant's aid. He allowed the ant to crawl onto his setaceous body. The ant felt safe out of water. The rain subsided too. Everything was fine except for one thing. The ant was itchy all over his body, as the caterpillar setae were poisonous. They cause itching on contact. Now, the ant was howling in pain.


"It is not as bad as death, is it?" laughed the caterpillar at the ant.

"Please, this is not the time to laugh," begged the ant. "Please do something. I might die in pain." Having seen what children do when they experienced such problems, the bee suggested the ant anoint oil for relief from the itch. "My friend, do not worry. There is some oil in a lamp near the shrine. It will heal you in seconds."

The ant rushed there and dipped himself in oil. No sooner had he done that, the pain disappeared. The ant was smiling again as he was alright now. Everybody had a good laugh at what happened.

But for the ant, he learned a very good lesson about life and benefited much. "I will never be greedy again," he promised.

"You must control your anger too," said the bee. "And be humble and listen when someone gives a good piece of advice," added *Merit* the rose. "You must also help others when they are in trouble," chimed in the caterpillar.

"I promise. In the presence of the compassionate Guanyin Bodhisattva, I will do all that," pledged the ant solemnly. 



The Power of Keeping Even Just One Precept

ADAPTED BY | Esther Thien

The Buddha Shakyamuni had many great disciples and each of them had a special skill. Some had miraculous powers, while others had wisdom etc. There was one who had the great special skill of being able to tame the minds of people in the uncivilised border areas and he was the highly realised *Arya* being, Katyayana.

Once, when Katyayana was out begging for alms, he came to the house of a butcher. He explained to the butcher all the demerits that come from killing and finally the butcher said to him, "I can't promise to stop slaughtering animals during the day, but I

can promise to never kill an animal at night." And true to his words, the butcher never did.

When the butcher's life ended, he was reborn in one of the ephemeral hells, where for everyday, he was tormented in a house built of red-hot metal during the day, but come nightfall, he would be enjoying his time in a beautiful palace happy and comfortable in the company of four goddesses.

The Buddha explained that as the butcher had taken a vow not to kill at night, but continued to slay during the day, he had to suffer in the daytime for the negative karma he had created for slaughtering animals during the day. However, as he kept his precept of not killing at night, he gathered merits and thus everything was lovely and enjoyable at night.

Arya: A person who has achieved direct realisation of the true nature of reality. This person has achieved the third (path of insight) of the five paths.

Bhikkhu: A fully ordained male Buddhist monastic, who lived by the vinaya's framework of monastic discipline. Their lifestyle is shaped so as to support their spiritual practice, to live a simple and meditative life, and attain Nirvana. Called bhiksu in Sanskrit.

Bodhicitta: The aspiration to help all beings attain True Happiness by becoming Buddhas, by being Bodhisattvas.

Bodhisattva: One who aspires to save all beings from suffering, while saving oneself.

Buddha: An aspect of the Triple Gem - The Awakened or Enlightened One. A Buddha is one who has attained liberation from all suffering, attaining True Happiness, Perfect Wisdom and Perfect Compassion, among all other virtues for the sake of helping all sentient beings. "The Buddha" refers to the historical Shakyamuni or Gautama Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism in our world.

Buddha-Dharma: Buddhists do not call the teachings of the Buddha, which they follow, Buddhism; they call them Buddha-Dharma, the Dharma of the Buddhas.

Buddha-nature: The original nature present in all beings which when realised leads to enlightenment. It is often called the *essence* of Buddhahood or enlightened essence.

Compassion: The quality that makes us aspire to help others with no selfish intention; the ending of selfishness.

Defilements: Our negative qualities - chiefly Greed (Craving), Hatred (Aversion) and Ignorance (Delusion).

Delusion: The quality of lacking Wisdom, not knowing the reality of all things. Same as 'ignorance'.

Dhammapada: A collection of sayings by the Buddha.

Dharma: An aspect of the Triple Gem - the teachings of the Buddha or the general teachings of Buddhism. 'Dhamma' in Pali language.

Dukkha: The truth that life is full of dissatisfactory experiences.

Enlightenment: The realisation of the reality of all things as they truly are, True Happiness is the result.

Equanimity: The calm and balanced state of mind of not being affected by attachment or aversion to anything.

Four Immeasurables: Also called the Four Sublime States, it includes love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. They are immeasurable because they extend to all beings, who are immeasurable, and because we create immeasurable positive energy and purify immeasurable negative energy through developing them.

Four Noble Truths: 1. Life is full of dissatisfactory experiences - ageing, sickness, separation, death etc. 2. Causes of dissatisfactory experiences - craving, aversion and ignorance. 3. Life can be without dissatisfaction - by attaining Enlightenment or Nirvana. 4. The path leading to the end of dissatisfactions - The Noble Eightfold path.

Guan Yin: Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva; the Bodhisattva who personifies the perfect Compassion of all Buddhas, who hears and heeds the cries of the world. Also known as Chonzeig in Vajrayana tradition.

Impermanence: All compounded things are constantly changing, as a result or effect of changing causes and conditions. All living and non-living elements are thus subject to decay and renewal.

Karma: The moral law of cause and effect which states that what we experience is the result of what we had done, that what we do will result in what we will experience. Karma in Pali language.

Loving-kindness: The quality which makes us wish for the happiness and well-being of others. 'Metta' in Pali language.

Mantra: Prescribed syllables (in Sanskrit) to protect the mind from defilements. They express the essence of specific energies. Recitation of mantras is always done with specific visualisations.

Meditation: A practice to habituate ourselves to positive and realistic states of mind.

Merit: Blessings, positive potential. Imprints on the mindstream of positive actions, leading to future happiness.

Mindfulness: An aspect of the 'Noble Eightfold Path' - the quality that enables us to remember, and keep our awareness and attention on what is beneficial to one and all in terms of thoughts, speech and actions.

Nirvana: Nirvana is a Sanskrit term that is interpreted in various ways: 1) cessation, or extinction, referring to the elimination of the afflictions at the time of enlightenment; 2) freedom from desire; and 3) no longer either coming into being or ceasing to be. 'Nibbana' in Pali language.

Noble Eightfold Path: A systematic and complete formula to rid dissatisfaction and attain true happiness and peace by following Perfect Speech, Perfect Action, Perfect Livelihood, Perfect Effort, Perfect Mindfulness, Perfect Meditation, Perfect Understanding, Perfect Thought (pls read Be A Lamp Upon Yourself published by KMSPKS for detailed info).

Prajna: In Sanskrit it means "perfect knowledge" and can mean wisdom, understanding, or discrimination. Usually it means the wisdom of seeing things from a high (e.g. non-dualistic) point of view.

Pureland: A world without defilements created by a Buddha out of Compassion, for sentient beings to seek birth in, to perfect the practice of the Dharma. The best known being Sukhavati Pureland created by Amitayus Buddha.

Refuge: In the Buddhist context to take refuge means to accept the Buddha and the Buddhist teachings as the path one wants to take.

Repentance: The recognition of misgivings and the resolution to rectify and never repeat them.

Samsara: This world of rebirth and suffering. Also known as Saha world.

Sentient Beings: Living beings with feelings in the six Samsara realms of hells, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods and gods.

Shamatha: tranquility meditation. This is basic sitting meditation in which one usually follows the breath while observing the workings of the mind while sitting in the cross-legged posture. The main purpose of shamatha meditation is to settle or tame the mind so that it will stay where one places it.

Shantideva: A great bodhisattva who lived in the 7th and 8th century India known for his two works on the conduct of a bodhisattva. He was a Buddhist scholar at Nalanda University and an adherent of the Prasangika Madhyamaka philosophy.

Shravaka: Hearer. One who hears, practises and proclaims Buddha's teachings. Followers of the Theravada tradition, concentrating on Renunciation and pacifying emotions, in order to attain Liberation.

Sudhana: The boy who practised the perfection of energy by learning tirelessly from every situation and people he met with.

Suffering: The physical and mental feeling of dissatisfaction.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Also known as the Three Jewels.

Vipashyana: Vipassana in Pali. Means insight. A form of meditation that develops insight into the nature of the mind.

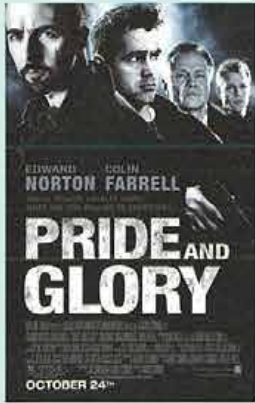
Virtues: Blessings which transcend Birth and Death and lead to Buddhahood. Depending on the mind of the practitioner, that is, on whether he is seeking mundane rewards (merit) or transcendence (virtue), the same action either to merit or virtue.

Zen: A school of Buddhism. Also known as Chan.

SEEN

Isn't goodness worthier than pride and glory?

> **Pride and Glory**



Directed by: Gavin O' Connor

Starring: Edward Norton, Colin Farrell

Pride and Glory is a dark yet illuminating exploration of grey issues within the police force — the possible corruption of cops. Fictional or true, it's always good to be forewarned of what might go wrong if left unchecked.

All good movies raise good questions, with thoughtful morals to tell. And this is one such film. Its protagonists straddle the fine line that demarcates good from evil, challenging the audience to decide which side they should be on.

What happens when the very ones sworn to protect and to serve abuse their power? When cops become more ruthless than the robbers they are supposed to police, who do you call? How do you know the one you are calling is not one of them? Is it necessary for cops to deal with the 'devil' to control crime? Does this exploit crime? Is it not criminal? Who is the 'authority' that decides? The cops, the robbers, or both?

Is anything that makes cops look bad undesirable? Doesn't uncovering the hidden ugliness urge them to make things better? An ex-cop commits suicide out of guilt, for having let his conscience gone to rot. But is he not still hankering for worldly pride and glory? Is he not badly twirled and twisted around by the eight worldly winds of gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, pain and pleasure? Has he really crossed a point of no return?

If multi-generations of family pride and glory come from being in the police force, is it foolish not to protect it at all costs? But will it be worth it... when concealed scandals are eventually exposed? How much pride and glory can you cling on to before it becomes an empty shell? Should you cling to it at all? Should protection of the family name be at the expense of losing its moral core? Isn't goodness worthier than pride and glory?

How far can one's principles and sense of justice be stretched without fear or favour before they snap? Can family always be trusted? Should a clean cop betray his family when the unit becomes corrupted? Is loyalty to family not a virtue? How good can it be to cover up what is evil? Is true protection and restoration of genuine pride and glory not achieved by declaring the truth and expressing repentance?

Should investigations of the sacrificed innocent end to protect the living and guilty? Does a good leader let the bad guys in his charge go, lest they mar his own 'good' record? Who is really answerable? Is it okay to let some corruption take place among the cops? Is it alright to 'give and take' a little? Would this not legalise corruption gradually? How much leeway is okay? Some or none? How much is too much?

The Buddha warns and encourages so in the *Dhammapada* —

*Think lightly not of evil, saying
'It will not come to me',
Drop by drop is the water pot filled
Likewise, the fool,
Gathering it little by little
fills himself with evil,*

*Think lightly not of goodness, saying
'It will not come to me',
Drop by drop is the water pot filled
Likewise, the wise man,
Gathering it little by little
fills himself with good.*

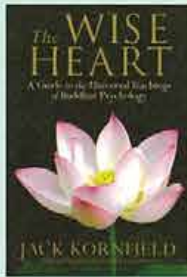
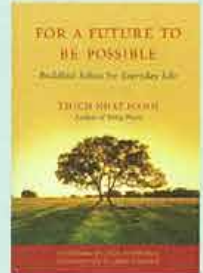
READ

Let The Wise Heart arise with the Five Mindfulness Trainings

> **For a Future to be Possible: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life**

By Thich Nhat Hanh

If the theme of observing precepts in this issue has kindled your interest to learn more, read this book. Thich Nhat Hanh calls the Five Mindfulness Trainings “a diet for a mindful society” and offers insights on how these trainings play a vital role in our personal lives and in society. A beautiful, wise and sensitive book. Buy it from Awareness Place at S\$23.30.



> **The Wise Heart: A Guide to the Universal Teachings of Buddhist Psychology**

By Jack Kornfield

We all have within us unlimited capacities for love, for joy, for communion with life and great freedom. This is one book which can help us to unlock and awaken them. Providing a most accessible and illuminating guide to Buddhism's transformational psychology, this book offers an extraordinary journey from the roots of consciousness to the highest expression of human possibility. Profoundly inspiring. Read it to experience its transformative effect. Priced at S\$46.20 from Awareness Place.

HEARD

Attracting Wealth & Prosperity by having Reverence for Life and the Dharma

> **Reverence**

By Bodhicitta

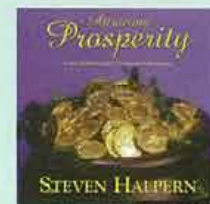
If you have always found it easier to be inspired by soothing music or catchy pop-tunes, let your heart be touched by the latest offering from local Dharma-inspired music group, Bodhicitta. Comprising two CDs, the first showcases acoustic pop-styled tunes while the second plays melodious and lovely mantra-singing along the style of Imee Ooi. Get the Free CDs from the monastery.



> **Attracting Prosperity** By Steven Halpern

The Secret to Attracting Wealth By Kelly Howell

If your life — financial or spiritual — is in the doldrums and attracting wealth, abundance and prosperity is all you can think about, give these two CDs a try. As the Buddha said, everything is created by the mind, so true prosperity, abundance and affluence too begin in the mind. Your thoughts emit vibrations that literally act as magnets drawing to you people and circumstances that resonate with what you're thinking and feeling. You'll become what you think by aligning your conscious and subconscious mind with your highest good. *Attracting Prosperity* costs \$28.00 and *The Secret to Attracting Wealth* sells at \$23.90. Both are available at Awareness Place.



With even a little intuitive wisdom
we will be able to see clearly
the ways of the world.
We will come to understand
that everything in the world
is our teacher.

How does the dharma teach the proper way of life?

It shows us how to live.
It has many ways of showing it —
on roots or trees or
just in front of you.
It is a teaching
but not in words.
So still the mind,
the heart, and learn to watch.
You'll find the whole dharma
revealing itself here and now.
At what other time and
place are you going to look?
— Ajahn Chah

Any experience, whether it be
an ordinary experience
a shallow enlightenment
or a profound enlightenment,
cannot be fully described in words.
— Chan Master Sheng Yen

We polish our mirrors
with virtue, concentration, and discernment.
When you train your mind
with concentration until
it's fully tempered and strong,
it'll be calm and cool,
bright and glowing
like still water in a deep well.

or like the stars in the sky.
The hindrances won't be able
to walk all over you,
for the level of the mind
will keep growing higher and higher
at all times.

The quality of its awareness
is heightened through
training its concentration and discernment.
When this happens,
you'll be able to see
the causes and effects
of everything true and false.
You'll see the dangers of wandering
on through death and rebirth,
and gain a sense of disenchantment
with birth, ageing, illness and death.
You'll be intent solely on
developing the heart
to gain release
from all defilements.
— Ajahn Lee Dhammadhara

The point of the precepts is to *see*,
to live in accordance with Reality,
not to follow rules blindly.

Seeing alone carries us
to greater levels
of moral development.
Through *seeing*,
be and *do*,
we need not live merely by rules.

The *saṅgh* simply lives by *seeing*.
Some Buddhists call such a person a
bodhisattva.
They avoid lying, stealing and
killing
because they see the natural
repercussions
of such behaviour.
They see that it leads
to confusion, to suffering
— to *dukkha*.

They don't do it
because they *see* the Whole scene.
— Steve Hagen

Do you know wakame seaweed is chock-full of much needed vitamins and minerals, including some relatively rare trace elements, essential to the human body?

Deeply nourishing, its various nutrients help lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol levels. It also contains alginic acid and fukodein, which are well-known to counteract against viruses causing stomach ulcers and cancer. Rich in protein and unsaturated fatty acid, it is said to have anti-obesity properties, and that the combination of wakame and miso soup is effective against nicotine-related disorders.

So give this healthy and nutritious food a try with our recipes and let it be a part of your daily diet.

Cold "Fried" Wakame Seaweed 凉拌海带芽



Ingredients:

Dried Wakame seaweed ½ cup
Light soy sauce ¼ cup
Hot water ¼ cup
Large red chilli 1 pc
Large green chilli 1 pc
Sesame oil ½ tbsp
Raw black sugar 1 tbsp
Baked white sesame seeds ½ tbsp

Method:

1. Mix raw black sugar, soy sauce and hot water in a bowl. Stir till the sugar dissolves.
2. Add dried wakame seaweed into the bowl and let it stand for four to five minutes.
3. Add in the remaining ingredients and stir-fry briefly. It is now ready to serve.

材料:

干海带芽1/2杯
生抽1/4杯
烧水1/4杯
大红辣椒1条 — 去籽切丝
大青辣椒1条 — 去籽切丝
麻油1/2汤匙
蔗糖1汤匙
白芝麻1/2汤匙 — 微烤

做法:

1. 将蔗糖, 生抽, 麻油和烧水倒入碗中。搅拌待蔗糖融化。
2. 把干海带芽倒入碗中使之吸收汤水4 - 5分钟。
3. 再把芝麻, 红青辣椒倒入碗中搅拌即可。

Simple Miso Soup 味噌



Ingredients:

Radish 1 cup, diced
Kelp 1-2 pcs
Water 8 cups
Wakame seaweed 1 tbsp
Miso 2 tbsp
Soft tofu, 1 pc, diced

Method:

1. Mix radish and kelp with water and cook at high flame
2. When water is boiling, remove kelp, and add in tofu and miso. Let it boil for another two minutes.
3. Place wakame seaweed into a bowl and pour in the hot soup. It is now ready to serve.

材料:

白萝卜1杯 — 切丁状
昆布海带1 - 2条
水8杯
海带芽1汤匙
白味噌2汤匙
豆腐1块 — 切丁状

做法:

1. 把萝卜和昆布加入装满8杯水的锅中用大火煮。
2. 待水煮沸将昆布捞起再把豆腐和味噌放入, 煮多2分钟再把火关上。
3. 享用时, 把海带芽放入碗中再把热汤倒入即可。

Dharma Talk by Ven. Thubten Chodron

Does Happiness Really Depend on the State of the Economy?

Date/Time : 2 May (Sat), 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Overcoming Procrastination – Getting Ourselves to Do What We Want to Do

Date/Time : 3 May (Sun), 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Candle Light Offering

Date/Time : 2 May, 7.30pm

Venue : KMSPKS Monastery, Hall of Great Compassion
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

3-Steps-1-Bow

Date/Time : 8 – 9 May, (Fri) 5.00pm – (Sat) 7.00am

Venue : KMSPKS Monastery

- Free tickets are available on 3 May, 9.00am at Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas (1st flr). Tickets are given on a first-come-first-served basis and limited to 2 tickets per person.
- The ceremony is open to all without tickets after 10.30pm on 8 May until 7.00am on 9 May.
- The ceremony takes about 2½ hours to complete.

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Insight Meditation Retreat conducted by Ven Chuan Ren

Date/Time : 15 – 17 May

Venue : KMSPKS Monastery

Fee : \$60

Registration: Starts from 28 Mar onwards, 9.00am – 4.00pm, at the monastery's Reception Office

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

PKS English Dharma Class

Year 1 Module 2

Date/Time : 18 May – 20 July, Every Mon, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Year 2 Module 2

Date/Time : 17 May – 19 July, Every Sun, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Venue : KMSPKS Monastery, Dharma Hall

Abhidhamma in Daily Life Module 2

Date/Time : 21 May – 23 July, Every Thur, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Fee : \$30 per Module

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Medicine Buddha Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sat, 7.45pm – 9.45pm

Venue : Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas, 2nd Level

Pureland Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 9.00am – 11.30am

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Diamond Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 2.00pm – 3.45pm

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

The Great Compassion Puja (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every 27th of the lunar month, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Recitation of 25th Chapter of the Lotus Sutra (Pu Men Pin)

Date/Time : Every Fri, 8.00pm – 9.30pm

Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

*w*s*d*p

Lifestyle programmes to discover Buddhism & its everyday application

Date/Time : 14 & 21 May, 4 & 18 June, 2, 16 & 30 July, 13 & 27 August, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5346 or email wspd@kmspks.org

Y Fellowship

Fortnightly cultivation (puja/prayers, Dharma Talk, hymns) & fellowship for youths between 17 to 35

Date/Time : Alternate Sunday morning, 10.00am – 1.00pm
10 & 24 May, 7 & 21 June, 5 & 19 July, 2, 16 & 30 August

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5345 or email yfellowship@kmspks.org

Young Artists Club (July 09 Intake)

Performing arts course to awaken the creativity of aspiring artists aged 17 to 30

Date/Time : Commencing 3 July, Every Fri (12 lessons)
7.30pm – 10.00pm

Venue : Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Details : For more information, please call 68495346 or email arts@kmspks.org

3GEMS Guided Tour @ KMSPKS

Guided tours of Buddhist cultures, histories, arts and architectures in Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Date/Time : 1 June, 5 July & 2 August, 10am – 12pm

Details : For more information, please call 68495345 or email 3gems@kmspks.org

Yoga for General

Date/Time : 20 May – 29 July (no class 3 June),
Every Wed, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)

Morning Yoga

Date/Time : 23 May – 8 August (no class 6 & 20 June),
Every Sat, 9.30am – 11.00am

Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)

Afternoon Yoga

Date/Time : 22 May – 24 July, Every Fri, 3.00pm – 4.30pm

Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)

Vegetarian Wellness Course

Date/Time : 26 Apr, 3 May, 24 May, 31 May, 14 Jun, 21 Jun, 5 Jul, 12 Jul, 19 Jul, Sun, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Fee : \$200 (9 lessons – lectures, cooking, organic trip)

Conductor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew (Bach. Biotech), dedicated to public education including interviews and cooking demos on Radio FM 95.8

Children's Art Class

Date/Time : 16 May – 8 Aug (no class 6 Jun), Every Sat,
2.00pm – 4.00pm

Fee : \$50 (12 lessons)

Conductor : Mr. Soh Chin Bee, graduate from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts

Building Strong, Everlasting Love and Romance for Couples – Experiential Workshop

Date/Time : May 4, 6, 11 & 13, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Fee : \$180 (per couple) max 12 couples only

Conductor : Conducted by Mr. Sean Liew (Bear), Psychotherapist with more than 10 years experience in coaching & training. Certified Human Behaviour Consultant and provides individual/group therapy focusing on relationships and communication.

Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre,
Bras Basah Complex #03-39

Details : Please visit www.awarenessplace.com, email semd@kmspks.org or call 6336 5067 to register or enquire.