

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 magazines 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 and Awareness Place Well-Being Centre at Bras Basah Complex #03-39 or visit media.kmspks.org. May the Dharma bring light to your life!

Community Development & Training

Community development and training department's mission is to empower individuals and groups of people with knowledge and skills they need to effect change in their own lives and in the community. Training opportunities and materials will be organised where individuals and groups of people can acquire, practise, experience and share skills and knowledge to make life meaningful and fulfilling for themselves and others. Dhammic values and principles are the essence of all the department's programmes. Call 6849 5300 or email community@kmspks.org

Dharma Courses & Activities

Understand what Buddhism really is about. Learn various authentic methods of Buddhist meditation, or realise deep insights through guided retreats by qualified Dharma masters. For these and more, visit kmspks.org/featured and kmspks.org/events/prayers

Pujue E-Newsletter

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 media.kmspks.org/category/enewsletter to view past issues.

Saturday and Sunday School

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

TLC Student Care Centre

Looking for a place where your child can learn about the spirit of compassion? Tender Loving Care Student Care Centre nurtures your child's self-esteem, mental attitude and ethical conduct with a modern holistic educational approach. Call 6310 6410, e-mail enquiry@tenderlovingcare.sg or visit tenderlovingcare.sg to find out more.

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 kmspks.org/services/recycling-kiosk to find out more.



InVibes is a light Dharma and music podcast site for those who seek ancient wisdom and wish to integrate it into their daily lives... InVibes hopes to keep you resonant with the Dharma wherever you are. Dedicate a prayer to someone you care or transform yourself.

www.inVibes.net DHARMA. MUSIC. PRAYERS PODCAST.

Experience The Art of Happy Living

Take a breather from the hustle and bustle of the city and step into **Awareness Place Well-Being Centre**. Leave all your worries and anxiety behind as you engage in a variety of holistic activities. From Yoga and Taiji to art therapy and vegetarian cooking workshops, there is bound to be an activity that suits your needs.

We are situated on the 3rd level of Bras Basah Complex, just a 5-minute walk from City Hall or Bugis MRT station.

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



Emulating the Noble Bodhisattvas in words and deeds

Some may think that Buddhas and bodhisattvas are beings who reside far away from us in purelands. Actually bodhisattvas can be either ordinary people or noble ones (pg 63). The four well-known bodhisattvas of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism (pg 50) are the noble ones. But there are also bodhisattvas right here, all around us (pg 41). When you care a lot about helping others and vow to become a Buddha to relieve their suffering, you are a bodhisattva (pg 44). Taking progressive steps on the path to Buddhahood (pg 52), the bodhisattva practises the perfections (pg 56, 58, back cover).

I was utterly inspired when I read the life story of Gyalse Ngulchu Thogme (pg 60). In this day and age in which the sad and tragic incident involving two-year old Wang Yue can happen, it is hard to believe that a being so completely selfless and all-compassionate can exist. Yet, there are many such stories of great Buddhist masters, in their words and conduct, even till today (pg 59). Like beacons of light in darkness, they offer to us ordinary beings models of virtue and selflessness to emulate and learn from.

As we live in a way that allows the baby Buddha in us to grow and shine, we emit light that will help transform others in our encounter with them, bringing ease, peace and joy to all (pg 53). But if we abuse or criticise a bodhisattva, our own bodhicitta and altruism will suffer (pg 36).

Elsewhere in this issue, FM 100.3 DJ Ah Dong talks about how Buddhist teachings influence the way he works and views life (pg 48).

Striving for a spiritually enriched life radiant with the glow of selflessness for the sake of all sentient beings is not an easy task. Along the way, one may get discouraged (pg 40) but the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are always supporting us in our quest for full awakening.

So go ahead, start 2012 on a meritorious note and fill someone's 'bucket' with kindness (pg 39). I believe all bodhisattvas will smile as you do so.

Have a happy, peaceful and auspicious new year.



Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

Editor: The accident of Wang Yue shocked the world when the toddler was ran over by two trucks and none of the 18 passers-by stopped to help her as she lay motionless on the road. Finally, a garbage collector came to her assistance but she died in hospital subsequently.

KMSPKS Youth Activities

Y.talk

A lifestyle sharing programme for young professionals to relax and discover Buddhism and its relevance in daily life.

Date/Time : Every 2nd and 4th Thu of the month,
7.30pm – 9.30pm

Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre

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

Y.cultivation

Learn the profound Dharma and walk the Buddha's path through simple practices led by Venerable. Expect chanting, Sutra and Dharma Teaching.

Date/Time : Every 1st & 4th Sun of the month,
1.30pm – 3.30pm

Venue : Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery,
1st floor, Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall,
Classroom 5

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

Y.lifestyle

Programmes that aim to promote the confidence, personality and well-being of the individual

Date/Time : Every 2nd Sun of the month (timing and location may vary)

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

Diet & Earth (Mandarin)*

Date/Time : 8 Jan, Sun, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Fee : \$5

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

Dances with Vegetables (English)*

Date/Time : 5 Feb, Sun, 3.00pm – 5.00pm

Fee : \$15

Instructor : Mr Wong Kew Yew

One Day Local Organic Educational Tour (English)*

Date/Time : 10 Mar, Sat, 8.30am – 6.00pm

Fee : \$70 (includes organic breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Instructor : Mr Wong Kew Yew

Metta Meditation (Mandarin)*

Date/Time : 19, 26 Feb & 4, 11 Mar, Sun, 3.00pm – 4.30pm

Fee : \$30 (4 lessons)

Instructor : Ven Chuan Ren

Yoga for General*

Date/Time : (1) 4 Feb – 7 Apr, Sat, 9.15am – 10.45am

(2) 6 Feb – 9 Apr, Mon, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)

Instructor : Ms Helen Goh, Certified Yoga Instructor

Gentle Yoga*

Date/Time : 6 Mar – 29 May, Tue, 3.00pm – 4.30pm

Fee : \$140 (10 sessions)

Instructor : Ms Ong Ju Lee, Diploma in Teaching the Science and Art of Yoga

Lunch-time Yoga*

Date/Time : (1) 21 Feb – 15 May, Tue, 12.45pm – 1.25pm

(2) 5 Apr – 7 Jun, Thu, 12.45pm – 1.25pm

Fee : \$140 (10 sessions with 1 free organic take-away every session)

Instructor : Ms Ong Ju Lee

Yoga for General*

Date/Time : (1) 21 Feb – 15 May, Tue, 10.30am – 12.00pm

(2) 4 Apr – 6 Jun, Wed, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

(3) 5 Apr – 7 Jun, Thu, 10.30am – 12.00pm

Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)

Instructor : Ms Ong Ju Lee

Dharma @ Cinema*

Date/Time : 14 Feb – 20 Mar, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Fee : \$30/- (6 sessions)

Instructor : Bro Shen Shi'an, MA (Buddhist Studies)

Project Rebirth: Rediscover, Reflect, Recharge*

Date/Time : 27 Mar – 5 Jun, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Fee : \$40/- (10 sessions)

Instructor : Bro Shen Shi'an

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

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

Basic Meditation Workshop

Date/Time : 11 Feb – 12 Feb, 8.00am – 5.00pm

Offering : \$40

Meditation Class Module 1: Relaxation

Date/Time : 14 Feb – 13 Mar, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Offering : \$20

Meditation Class Module 2: Metta

Date/Time : 10 Apr – 22 May, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Offering : \$30

1-Day Meditation Retreat

Date/Time : 3 Mar, 8.00am – 5.00pm

Offering : \$20

Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Family Mindfulness Retreat led by Plum Village

Date/Time : 14 – 18 Mar

Fee : \$150

Concession : \$70 (student & senior citizen)

Venue : Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300 or visit www.kmspks.org

English Buddhism Course

Year 1 Module 1

Date/Time : 12 Feb – 15 Apr, Sun, 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Year 2 Module 1

Date/Time : 13 Feb – 16 Apr, Mon, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Sutta Discussion Module 1

Date/Time : 9 Feb – 12 Apr, Thu, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Venue : 2nd floor, Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas

Fee : \$30 per Module

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Pureland Perspectives: The Zen of Pure Land, The Pure Land of Zen

Date/Time : 11 Feb – 17 Mar, Sat, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Fee : \$30

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Understanding Amitufo Via the Amitabha Sutra (10th run)

Date/Time : 31 Mar – 9 Jun, Sat, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Fee : \$30

Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300



What happens if we criticise bodhisattvas?

Q: What happens if we criticise a bodhisattva?
— Curious

A: Abusing or criticising bodhisattvas or the Mahayana is very detrimental. Bodhisattvas are working for the benefit of all sentient beings, so if we interfere with a bodhisattva's good deeds, we're really interfering with what's beneficial for others. Disparaging and criticising a bodhisattva creates obstacles for the good he or she is doing for all sentient beings, and our own bodhicitta and altruism will suffer as a result of it.

If we want to become bodhisattvas and do those altruistic deeds that give vast benefit to others, criticising the people who are our role models for acting with altruism will prevent us from becoming like them. We need to respect what we want to become. If we don't, we're not going to become it.

Spiritual masters often teach that since we don't know who is a bodhisattva and who isn't, we shouldn't criticise anybody. That is very good advice in terms of helping us to subdue our judgmental attitudes. However, a doubt may arise, "Does that mean we should keep quiet about others' unethical or harmful actions?" For example, if I see John

cheating Harry, should I just ignore it because maybe John is a bodhisattva? If I point out John's unethical action, do I run the risk of creating negative karma and impeding the growth of my own bodhicitta?

Or maybe if I see two people on the street having a fight, and one guy is beating up the other one, does it mean I shouldn't intervene, because maybe one is a Buddha and he's just using these fierce actions to subdue the mind of somebody else?

I'm taking what the great masters tell us and carrying it to the extreme in posing these questions. In a conference I attended, His Holiness commented, "In the teachings, we talk about not criticising anybody because we don't know who is a bodhisattva and who isn't. So to my understanding, John could be a bodhisattva. From that point of view, I shouldn't criticise him. But from the point of view of John cheating Harry, I have to point out John's detrimental actions, because they harm another person."

In saying this, His Holiness makes the delicate distinction between what we hold in our mind and how we act in the world. In our mind, we might hold John as a bodhisattva, and from that viewpoint, we don't disrespect him as a person from the depth of our mind. However, from the point of view of his actions, and how those actions manifest in the world and affect others, we point them out and explain that they are harmful.

In doing this, we differentiate the person from his or her actions and comment not on the value of the person but on their actions.

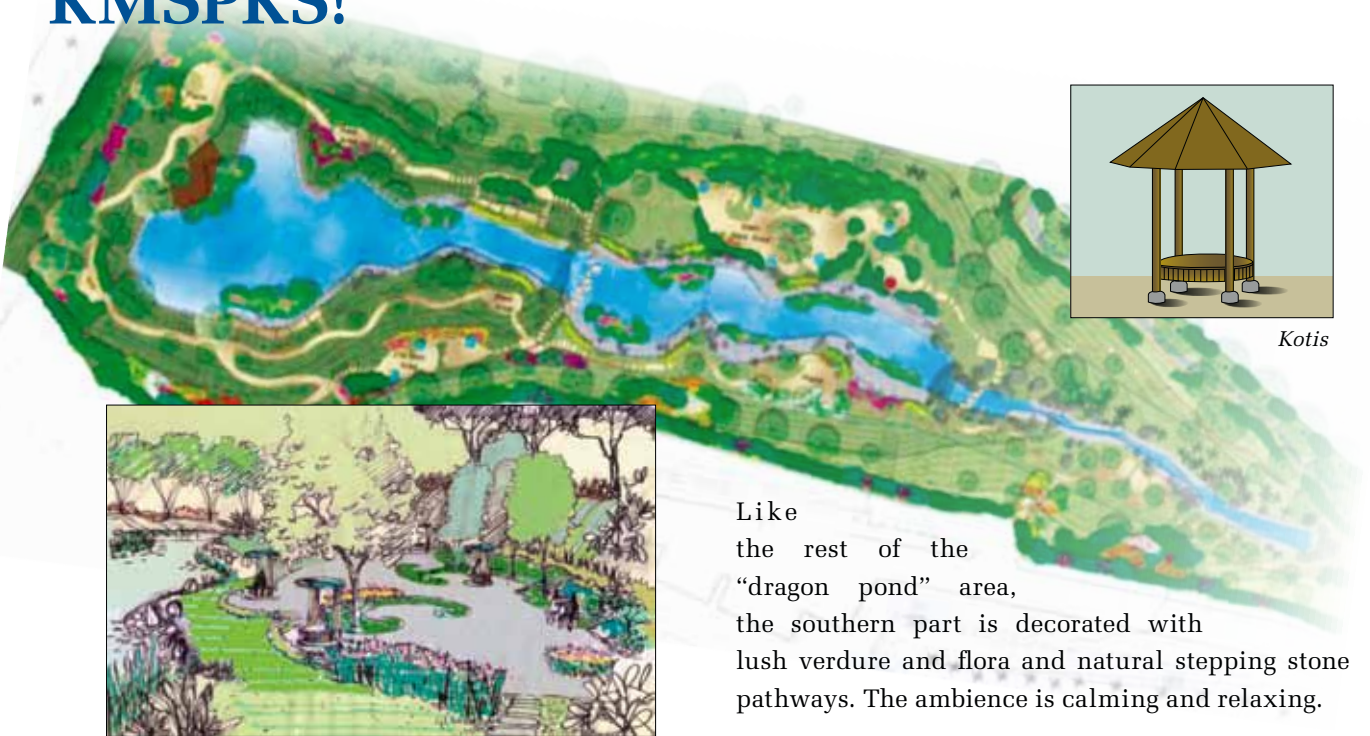
In addition, we call to attention the harmful action not because we are angry, but because we have compassion for both parties involved. John's cheating Harry harms not only Harry but John as well, because he accumulates negative karma. Having compassion for both people, we do what we can to correct the situation. ☸

— Ven Thubten Chodron

www.thubtenchodron.org
www.sravasti.org

Now You Can Meditate in the Outdoors at KMSPKS!

BY | Esther Thien



Like the rest of the “dragon pond” area, the southern part is decorated with lush verdure and flora and natural stepping stone pathways. The ambience is calming and relaxing.

Singapore – As the canal at Bishan park is being transformed by the government into a natural meandering river with lovely landscape, offering more green and blue spaces to busy urbanites, the front yards of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) are also undergoing a transformation that will offer Singapore meditators another option to meditate in the tranquil outdoors of its lush greenery.

Housing five *kotis* or meditation huts, the “dragon pond” area as it is fondly called, contains motifs of dragon, cloud and bodhi leaf throughout, marking its quintessentially Chinese inspiration. A modern interpretation of the Chinese landscape architecture, the “dragon pond” area comprises turns and twists of picturesque surprises through its interplay of space, foliage and Chinese elements.

Loosely demarcated into three parts, the central part holds the landscaped pond with aquatic plants, a stone bridge, meditation huts and a public plaza with interesting stepping stones.

The northern part contains a secondary meditation area where portable meditation shades could be put up, a public plaza, a timber deck and rest areas.

It is scheduled to open in March or April to the public. For more information on booking of the meditation huts or other enquiries, please call 6849 5300 or visit kmspks.org closer to the date. ☺

Buddhist Film Festival Gives Back

Singapore – Organisers of the *Asian Buddhist Film Festival* presented cheques of \$15,000 each to the Children's Cancer Foundation and the Japanese Tsunami Relief Fund from funds raised from the 2nd film festival held in Singapore in May 2011. The Children's Cancer Foundation aims to improve the quality of life of children with cancer and their families through enhancing their emotional, social and medical well-being. The Japanese Tsunami Relief Fund helps to rebuild areas in the north coast of Japan which were hit by a tsunami after a 9.0 magnitude earthquake in March 2011. The fund also supports organisations providing relief and aid to the survivors. The cheques were received by the respective representatives of the organisations at a presentation ceremony last October. ☺

US researchers have reported that regular consumption of ginger root or its supplements could reduce the risk of colon cancer, a top killer in Singapore. The findings of this new study were published last October in the *Cancer Prevention Research* journal.

Scientists have linked chronic inflammation in the gut to colon cancer. This research shows that regular intake of ginger decreases colon inflammation by 28 percent; suggesting that easing gut inflammation could reduce the risk of the disease.

In this issue, we feature some mouth-watering festive dishes that contain the goodness of ginger.

Teppanyaki Vegetarian Pork Ribs 铁板素排



Ingredients 1:

Homemade vegetarian pork ribs – 12 pcs fresh beancurd skin, 4 water chestnuts (cut into 24 pcs). Wrap 2 pcs of water chestnut with 1 pc of fresh beancurd skin and pan-fry till done. Transfer to a heated hot plate.

Ingredients 2:

5 mushrooms, 100g straw mushrooms, 10 young corn, 10 snow peas, 4 slices of ginger, 6 slices of carrots

Seasoning:

1 cup water, ½ tsp mushroom essence, ½ tsp salt, ½ tsp sugar, a dash of pepper, 1 tsp sesame oil, 1 tbsp oyster sauce. Thickening: add 1 tbsp of water into ½ tbsp of corn flour. Mix well.

Method:

1. Use 1 tbsp of oil to fry ingredients (2).
2. Add seasoning and bring to boil. Add in thickening. Pour onto the vegetarian pork ribs. Ready to serve.

用料:

自制素排 — 生腐竹12片、马蹄4粒 (切24条), 以一片腐竹包2条马蹄, 包好煎熟盛在烧热的铁板上

配料:

冬菇5朵、草菇100克、粟米芯10条、荷兰豆10条、生姜4片、红萝卜6片

调味料:

清水1杯、香菇粉1/2茶匙、盐1/2茶匙、糖1/2茶匙、胡椒粉少许、麻油1茶匙、素蚝油1汤匙、另粟米粉1/2汤匙加清水拌匀, 埋献用

做法:

1. 用1汤匙油炒香以上配料。
2. 下调味料, 煮滚, 再埋献, 倒在素排上, 就可以享用了。

Deep Fried Vegetarian Prawns 炸素虾



Ingredients:

3 round beancurd skins, ½ carrot (diced), 100g diced bamboo shoots or water chestnuts, ½ can button mushrooms, 20g mushroom (diced)

Seasoning:

½ tsp sesame oil, a dash of pepper, ½ tsp sugar, ½ tsp salt, 1 tsp ginger juice, a dash of mushroom essence

Batter:

1½ cups self-raising flour, ¾ cup water, a dash of salt, 2 tbsp oil

Method:

1. Cut the beancurd skins into 3"x3" pieces.
2. Fry the carrot, mushrooms, button mushrooms and water chestnuts with some oil. Add seasoning. Filling is ready.
3. Wrap filling in each beancurd skin to form a 'prawn' shape. Dip it into the batter and deep fry till golden brown and crispy. Drain oil. Ready to serve.

用料:

圆形腐皮3张、红萝卜1/2条 (切粒)、马蹄 (或竹笋) 100克、蘑菇1/2罐、冬菇20克 (切粒)

调味料:

麻油1/2茶匙、胡椒粉少许、糖1/2茶匙、盐1/2茶匙、姜汁1茶匙、香菇粉少许

脆浆:

自发粉1 1/2杯、清水3/4杯、盐少许、油2汤匙

做法:

1. 腐皮剪或 3寸x 3寸。
2. 少许油炒红萝卜、冬菇、蘑菇及马蹄, 再倒入调味料, 即成馅料。
3. 用腐皮包馅料, 包成虾形。沾脆浆炸至金黄色, 沥油上碟。

By Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*, and Founder of the Inner Kids Foundation which developed the Inner Kids mindful awareness programme for children, teens and families.

(www.susankaisergreenland.com)

There is a book about kindness called “Have You Filled a Bucket Today?” The authors are Carol McCloud and David Messing who wrote that one way of thinking about kindness is to imagine that everyone in the world has an invisible bucket. The young, the old and people of every size, shape and colour each has a bucket that is all their own. You have your own bucket and other people have their buckets too.

When you are kind to people, it’s as if you’re filling up their buckets with kindness. As people’s buckets fill up, they become happier. The more kindness you put in others’ buckets, the happier it makes them.

But when you or someone else is mean to another person, it’s as if kindness is being taken out of that person’s bucket. The more that’s taken out of a person’s bucket, the less happy he or she becomes. If too much is taken out of someone’s bucket, he or she might become very, very sad.

Tell your kids about this imaginary bucket, and ask them how they could add some kindness into another person’s bucket or their own buckets.

Here are some bucket-filling ideas to kick-start the conversation with your children:

1. Smile at people, friends or strangers
2. Give others a compliment
3. Do them a favour
4. Tell mum and dad you love them
5. Say “hi” to the bus driver.
6. Invite a new student at school over to play.
7. Write a thank-you note to your teacher, a friend, a relative or even a stranger who has helped you, such as Mr Postman or the admin staff at school
8. Spend time with your grandpa.
9. Give up your place in the queue.
10. Take a friend’s dog for a walk.
11. Be nice to someone else
12. Stop and feel your in-breath and out-breath

Have You Filled a Bucket with Kindness Today?



How the Bodhisattvas Inspire

BY | Toh Sze Gee

Dignaga was a great Buddhist logician who lived around the sixth century. He was born in Simhavakta in Southern India to a Brahmin family. Demonstrating exceptional brilliance from a young age, he later received Buddhist ordination and became very proficient in the various branches of Buddhist scriptures. After his studies, he spent years in intensive practice in a jungle cave in the region of Odivisha. At one time, many non-Buddhist opponents gathered at Nalanda University to challenge the Buddhists in debate, prompting the monks at Nalanda to invite Dignaga to come forward and help avert an impending defeat. Living up to his reputation, he won the debates.

A prolific author, Dignaga was said to have composed a hundred scriptures on logic. After returning to the same cave in Odivisha, he realised that the treatises he had written were too scattered and decided to write a text that would summarise all their salient points. On a slate in front of his cave he began to write, and upon completing the introductory verse of homage, the earth quaked, thunder roared, and light shone from the sky, which he took as auspicious signs.

A non-Buddhist sage Krishnamuni divined the source of these signs and became jealous of Dignaga. When Dignaga went in search of alms, Krishnamuni sought out his cave and erased the verse from the slate and disappeared into the jungle. When the Buddhist master returned, he discovered the blank slate. Undeterred, the next day he again wrote the first verse of his composition, but when he returned from his alms round, the same thing had occurred. When the incident repeated itself on the third day, Dignaga wrote on the bottom of the slate: "If you are erasing this as a joke, please desist, for it has great meaning; if it is because you wish to debate with me, then show yourself, and debate we shall."

The next day when Dignaga returned from his alms round, Krishnamuni was seated before his cave. They engaged in debate, and Dignaga emerged victorious. Feeling sore, Krishnamuni released a burst of flames from his mouth, burning up all of Dignaga's possessions, including his robes, and then vanished.

Dignaga felt extremely discouraged, and gave rise to the thought that he would no longer be able to work for the welfare of living beings. Tossing the slate into the air, he told himself that when it hit the ground, he would give up his aspiration for Buddhahood and instead seek his own liberation. He waited, but nothing happened. Looking up to see what had happened to the slate, he beheld Manjushri holding it. Manjushri said to him, "Your text cannot be harmed by any of the myriads of non-believers. Do not be despondent. Until you have actualised Buddhahood, I shall care for you. In future years, this text of yours will be the sole eye for all beings."

With newfound courage, Dignaga went on to complete his treatise titled *Compilation of Prime Cognition*, (Sanskrit title: *Pramanasamuccaya*). Till this day the entire text is available in Tibetan and Chinese, and serves as the foundation for many studies in Buddhist logic.

Treading the Mahayana path for the sake of all sentient beings is by no means an easy task, but as this account illustrates, the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are always behind us in our quest for full awakening!



Who is the Buddha?

Thich Nhat Hanh explains in a simple, child-friendly manner who exactly the Buddha is



Some years ago, I visited a village in India called Uruvela. Two thousand six hundred years ago, a man named Siddhartha lived near the village. Siddhartha is the man who later became known as the Buddha.

The village of Uruvela remains very much the same as it was back then. There are no big buildings, no supermarkets, no freeways. It is very pleasant. The children have not changed either. When Siddhartha lived there, children from that village became his friends and brought him food and simple gifts.

There is a river that runs near the village. It is where Siddhartha used to bathe. A grass called “kusa grass” still grows on the banks of the river. It is the same kind of grass that one of the children gave Siddhartha to use as a cushion to sit on. I walked across the river and I cut some of the kusa grass and brought it home with me.

On the other side of the river, there is a forest. That is where Siddhartha sat in meditation under a tree called the “Bodhi tree”. It is under that tree that he became the “Buddha”.

A Buddha is anyone who is awake – who is aware of everything that happens inside and around him or her, and who understands and loves deeply.

Siddhartha became a fully awakened being – a Buddha. He is the Buddha that we have accepted as our teacher.

He has said that each one of us has a seed of awakening within us and that all of us are future Buddhas.

When he was very young, a student of mine struggled with the question of “Who is the Buddha?” The student’s name was Hu, and this is his story.

When Hu was six or seven years old, he asked his father and mother if he could become a monk. Hu loved going to the Buddhist temple. He used to go there with his parents on new moon and full moon days to offer flowers, bananas, mangos, and all kinds of exotic fruit to the Buddha.

In the temple, Hu was always treated with kindness. When people came to the temple, they seemed more relaxed and friendly. Hu was also aware that the head monk liked him. He would give Hu a banana or a mango every time he came. So that’s why Hu loved going to the temple.

One day he said, “Mommy, I want to become a monk and live in the temple.” I think he wanted to become

a monk because he liked to eat bananas. I don't blame him. In Vietnam, there are several kinds of bananas that are so good.

Even though he was young, his father and mother decided to let him go to the temple as a novice. The head monk gave Hu a tiny, brown robe to wear. In his nice new robe, he must have looked like a baby monk.

When he first became a monk, Hu believed that the Buddha loved bananas, mangos and tangerines because every time people came to the temple, they brought bananas, mangos, tangerines and other

Hu imagined that Buddha sat very still all day long, and when the hall was empty, he reached out for a banana. Hu waited and watched, hoping to see the Buddha take one of the bananas piled in front of him. He waited for a long time, but he did not see the Buddha pick up a banana. He was baffled. He could not understand why the Buddha did not eat any of the bananas that people brought to him.

Hu did not dare ask the head monk, because he was afraid that the monk would think he was silly. Actually, we often feel like that. We do not dare ask questions because we are afraid we might be called silly. The same was true for Hu. And because he didn't dare ask, he was confused. I think I would have gone to someone and asked. But Hu did not ask anyone.

As he grew older, one day it occurred to him that the Buddha statue was not the Buddha. What an achievement! This realization made him so happy. But then a new question arose. "If the Buddha is not here, then where is he? If the Buddha is not in the temple, where is the Buddha?" Everyday he saw people come to the temple and bow to the statue of the Buddha. But where was the Buddha?

In Vietnam, people who practice Pure Land Buddhism believe that

the Buddha stays in the Pure Land, in the direction of the West. One day, Hu overheard someone saying that the Pure Land was the home of the Buddhas. This made Hu believe that the Buddha was in the Pure Land, which made him very unhappy. Why, he wondered, did the Buddha choose to live so far away from people? So this created another question in his mind.

I met Hu when he was fourteen, and he was still wondering about this. I explained to him that the



fruit, and placed them in front of the Buddha. In Hu's little head that could only mean that Buddha loved fruit very much.

One evening, he waited in the temple until all the visitors had gone home. He stood very quietly outside the entrance of the Buddha Hall. He checked to make sure no one else was around. Then he peered into the Buddha Hall. The Buddha statue was as big as a real person. In Hu's very young mind, the statue was the Buddha.

Buddha is not far away from us. I told him that the Buddha is inside each one of us. Being a Buddha is being aware of what is inside of us and around us at every moment. Buddha is the love and understanding that we each carry in our hearts. This made Hu very happy.

Anywhere you see love and understanding, there is the Buddha. Anyone can be a Buddha. Do not imagine that the Buddha is a statue or someone who has a fancy halo around his or her head or wears a yellow robe. A Buddha is a person who is aware of what is going on inside and around him or her and has a lot of understanding and compassion.

Whether a Buddha is a man or a woman, young or not so young, a Buddha is always very pleasant and fresh. In my experience, there are Buddhas and bodhisattvas present here, in our midst.

A bodhisattva (pronounced “bo-dee-sat-va”) is a compassionate person, someone who cares a lot about helping other beings – someone who vows to become a Buddha.

Statues or pictures of bodhisattvas sometimes show a being with many arms. They are shown this way because a bodhisattva is someone who can do a thousand things at one time. Also, the arms of a bodhisattva can be extremely long and reach very far, helping people in faraway lands. With only two arms, we can only do one or two things at a time. But when you are a bodhisattva, you have many arms, and you can do many things simultaneously. Most of the time, we do not see all the arms of a bodhisattva. One has to be very attentive in order to see the many arms of a bodhisattva.

You may already know someone who is a bodhisattva. It is possible! Your mom, for example, could be a bodhisattva. She needs an arm for cooking. Isn't that true? But at the same time she takes care of you and your brothers and sisters – so she needs a second arm. And then at the same time, she has to run errands. So she needs a third arm. And she has many other things she does that require more arms – she may have a job or she may volunteer at your school. So your mom could be a bodhisattva. The

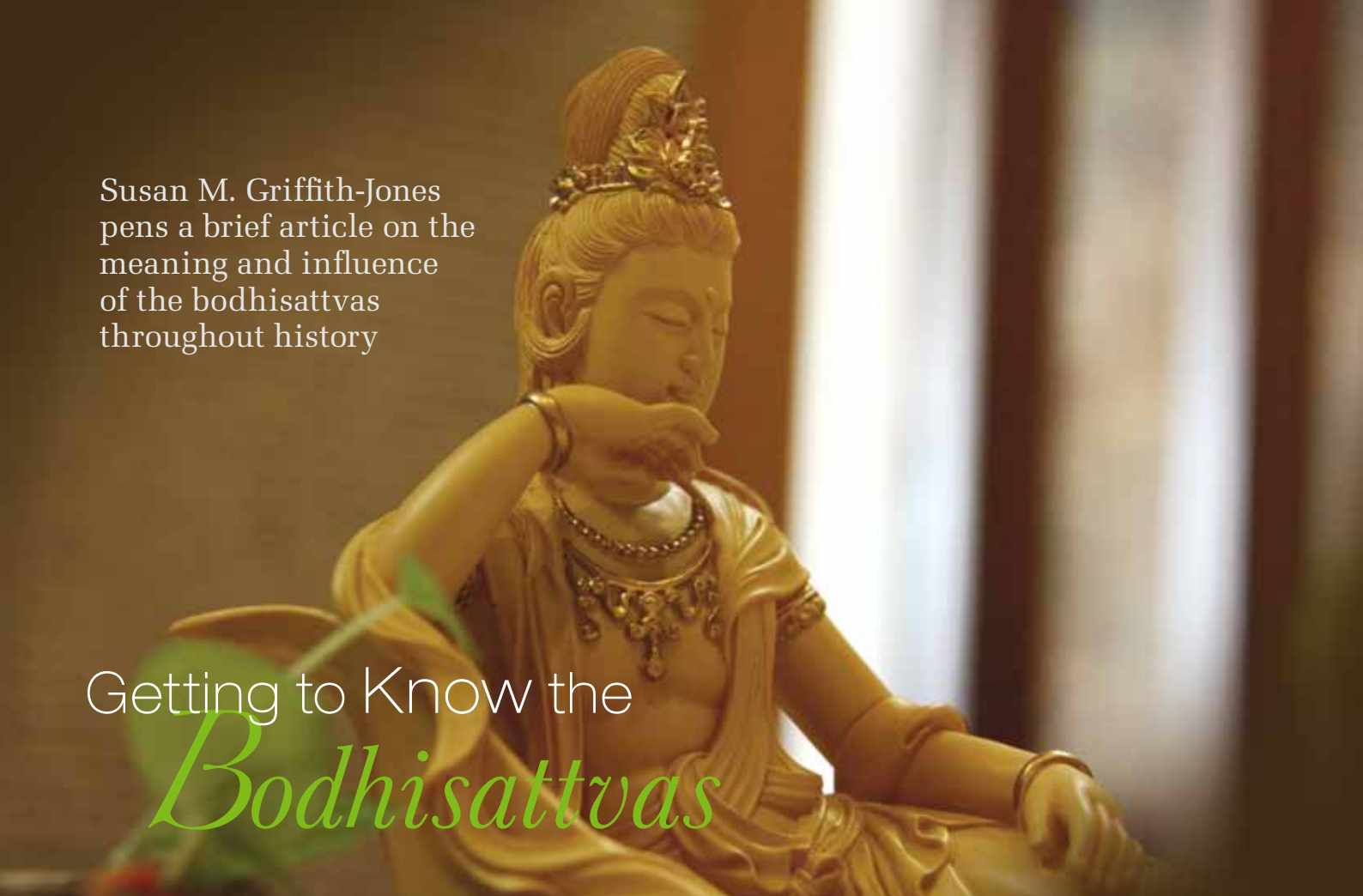
same is true for your dad. Look more deeply at your mother and father and you will see that they have more than two arms.



Do not think that Buddhas and bodhisattvas are beings who exist in heaven! They are right here, all around us. You too can be a bodhisattva if you think of others and do things to bring happiness to them.

If you are awake, if you are present in the moment, here and now, you too are a Buddha. The only difference between you and the Buddha is that he is a full-time Buddha. You are only a part-time Buddha. So you have to live in a way that gives the baby Buddha inside you a chance to grow. Then the baby Buddha will radiate light in all the cells of your body, and you will begin to shine this light. ☺

Excerpts from *A Pebble for your Pocket* by Thich Nhat Hanh. Available for purchase from Awareness Place bookstore.



Susan M. Griffith-Jones
pens a brief article on the
meaning and influence
of the bodhisattvas
throughout history

Getting to Know the *Bodhisattvas*

Everyday in the news, we hear stories of suffering from around the world. The Buddha told us that all living beings have a mind, whose mode of existence is characterised by suffering due to the fact that it is deeply rooted in the fundamental ignorance of believing this world and its phenomena, to be real. As one who is ignorant limitlessly pursues worldly projects and pleasures, he or she only accumulates either positive or negative karma that will inevitably return to the doer in time, keeping one inside the realms of Samsara.

The Bodhisattva

In Mahayana Buddhism, a being who is determined to free all sentient beings from Samsara and its cycle of death, rebirth and suffering is known as a bodhisattva. The bodhisattvic path includes meditation on emptiness, contemplation of the four boundless states of mind and arousal of the bodhicitta of compassion (mind of awakening), which marks the distinction of a bodhisattva. Out of compassion or rather, sensibility to respond spontaneously to the demands of the outer world with an immense variety of skilful means, the

bodhisattva forgoes Nirvana in order to save others by alleviating their suffering.

Prior to the enlightenment of Buddha Gautama, he too was a bodhisattva, along with other individuals destined to become Buddhas. The number of bodhisattvas is theoretically limitless, and the title has been applied to many great scholars, teachers and Buddhist kings. Celestial Bodhisattvas like Avalokiteshvara and the Taras are considered manifestations of the eternal Buddha.

The Three Categories of Bodhisattva

King-like bodhisattva: one who aspires to become a Buddha as soon as possible and then untiringly help sentient beings.

Boatman-like bodhisattva: one who aspires to achieve Buddhahood along with other sentient beings

Shepherd-like bodhisattva: one who aspires to delay Buddhahood until all other sentient beings achieve Buddhahood.

Mahayana Buddhism, which is principally based upon the bodhisattvic vow, encourages everyone to take the vow to formalise the commitment to progress on the spiritual path towards Buddhahood, as it is the fertile ground from which Buddhahood will eventually spring. With this vow, one makes the promise to work for the complete enlightenment of all sentient beings by practising the six perfections (paramitas) of generosity, ethics, patience, enthusiastic effort, meditation and non-discriminating wisdom.

The Bodhisattva Vow

In general, there are two aspects to the bodhisattva vow. The first is the intention where mind is set upon the goal. The second is activating the vow, firstly by reducing negative actions that cause suffering; secondly by accumulating positive actions that generate positive results for ourselves and for others and thirdly, by behaving and acting to benefit others. Indelibly entwined with the bodhisattva vow is the dedication of one's merit to all beings.

One begins by working on oneself to be liberated from one's own suffering and confusion. By being concerned with the conditions of existence of all beings and their suffering, one develops authentic compassion. Putting the wish into action by honestly developing the aspiration for all beings to be completely and permanently liberated from suffering, one thus develops the state of mind known as bodhicitta and thereafter, complete and perfect awakening - the state of Buddhahood - whereby one may help liberate others in a spontaneous way. The development of bodhicitta, or the enlightened aspiration, is the cause of full awakening.

According to many traditions within Mahayana Buddhism, a bodhisattva, on the way to becoming a Buddha, proceeds through ten bhumis or ten grounds, those of Great joy, Stainless, Luminous, Radiant, Very difficult to train, Obviously transcendent, Gone afar, Immovable, Good discriminating wisdom and Cloud of Dharma. After the ten bhumis, one attains complete enlightenment and becomes a Buddha. A bodhisattva above the seventh ground is called a mahasattva.

The Mahasiddhas

Between roughly 750 CE - 1150 CE, there existed a class of yogis throughout the Indian and Himalayan

region known as Mahasiddhas. The Sanskrit term, Mahasiddha means 'a great adept', where 'maha' means 'great' and 'siddha' means 'accomplished'.

Openly codifying their realisation in songs that exposed wonderful mystical poems written in the vernacular tongues, they thus maintained the Dharmic tradition. By carrying and accomplishing teachings of countless lineages to Tibet from India, they thus preserved the teachings from destruction by negative forces that desecrated North India in the thirteenth century.

The Mahasiddhas were often referred to as 'saints' or 'magicians', whereas in truth they were ordinary people, inconspicuously rooted in mainstream society as workers, royalty, monastics, street cleaners, smiths, weavers, shoemakers, tailors, and even beggars and servants. They were remarkable for the diversity of their family backgrounds, variety of lifestyles and dissimilarity of their social roles.

King Indrabhuti was one such Mahasiddha. Having received instruction from his teacher, he practised whilst still a rich and busy king and tirelessly helped his subjects by being an honest, wise and meritorious being. Another was Nagarjuna, who was a great and brilliant scholar. He composed a large number of commentaries on the Buddha's teachings whilst taking care of an enormous number of students.

Yet the thing they all had in common was that they were all bodhisattvas, meaning that they had the spiritual abilities to enter Nirvana whenever they pleased, but were so compassionate that they resolved to remain in Samsara to help others.

Having gained sufficient understanding of the meaning of Dharma through cultivating those teachings that lead to becoming a whole or perfect being, they were able to act upon their experiential, existential knowledge and help others towards the spiritual goal of enlightenment with selfless love and constant awareness of what is necessary to override.

With the Bodhisattva Vow permeating his being, the siddha was driven to action, yet was uninhibited by any social or moral norm. The siddha's behaviour is often characterised as 'spontaneous' as he would operate in total selfless response to the ultimate needs of the situation, thus acting to liberate those he encountered from the confines of their emotional and mental prisons. Totally absorbed in awareness of the moment, the siddha, free of thought or effort and in such harmony with the natural flow that he may appear as an authority with the elements at his command, his action is said to be 'no-action'.

The Celestial Bodhisattvas

Some siddhas were initiated by the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara, Tara or Manjusri. These celestial Bodhisattvas would appear to the yogis in divine form either in the sphere of visionary enjoyment (sambhogakaya) or as incarnate emanations (nirmanakaya) and give them instruction.

Among these, it is Avalokitesvara who has the largest number of forms and is perhaps the most venerated and popular Bodhisattva. Avalokitesvara is known from very early on in the development of the Mahayana doctrines and until Buddhism disappeared from India, enjoyed great favour there. Avalokitesvara practice passed from India to South-East Asia and Java, Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea and Japan.

Many legends have sprung up around the goddess Tara. Some mention that she was born in a beam of blue light emanating from one of the eyes of Avalokitesvara, whilst another says she was born from a lotus flower floating in a tear on his face. It was however generally believed that Tara is reincarnated in every virtuous and pious woman.

Manjusri represents wisdom, intelligence and willpower. He is worshipped for his divine wisdom, mastery of the Dharma, an infallible memory, mental perfection and eloquence. Manjusri, as both the father and the mother of the bodhisattvas as well as their spiritual friend was the initiator and master of the Buddhas of past ages and will be that of the future Buddha, Maitreya.

Helping Dedicated Practitioners

Bodhisattvas often appear to help dedicated practitioners along the path. One time when Nagarjuna was offering flowers to a statue dedicated to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the latter appeared in person, accepted the offering and placed a flower upon Nagarjuna's head. Thus seeing this, a man named Pankajapa complained that he never received such a favour from the statue even though he had been offering flowers every day for twelve years.

Nagarjuna told him that his mind was impure and thus Pankajapa became one of Nagarjuna's students and eventually one of the 84 Mahasiddhas. This occurrence, however, was inspired by this action of Avalokiteshvara.

Prior to his enlightenment, the Mahasiddha Aryadeva was the abbot of Nalanda monastery, but not having realised his full potential even through his vast study, he set out to try and meet the great Nagarjuna. On the

way, he met the Bodhisattva Manjushri in the form of a fisherman, who told him exactly where to find the teacher. Thus he was able to reach his master, receive instruction and gain liberation.



Statue available at Awareness Place stores

As we practise diligently and supplicate to the Triple Gem with genuine aspiration and hold the bodhisattva vow in our hearts, we too may encounter Bodhisattvas on a daily basis as humans who give us short messages of inspiration and encouragement along the path. They may appear as our teachers or as ordinary beings on the street.

You never know who may be a Bodhisattva in disguise! 🐞

The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

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

Dear Reader,

"The Gift of the Dharma Exceeds All Other Gifts."

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

Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
AWAKEN Magazine
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

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

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

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

Name:

E-mail:

Highest educational level:

Occupation:

Address:

Tel: (O) (H) (Hp)

Amount: (Cash*/ Cheque No:)

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

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

Where did you obtain this magazine?

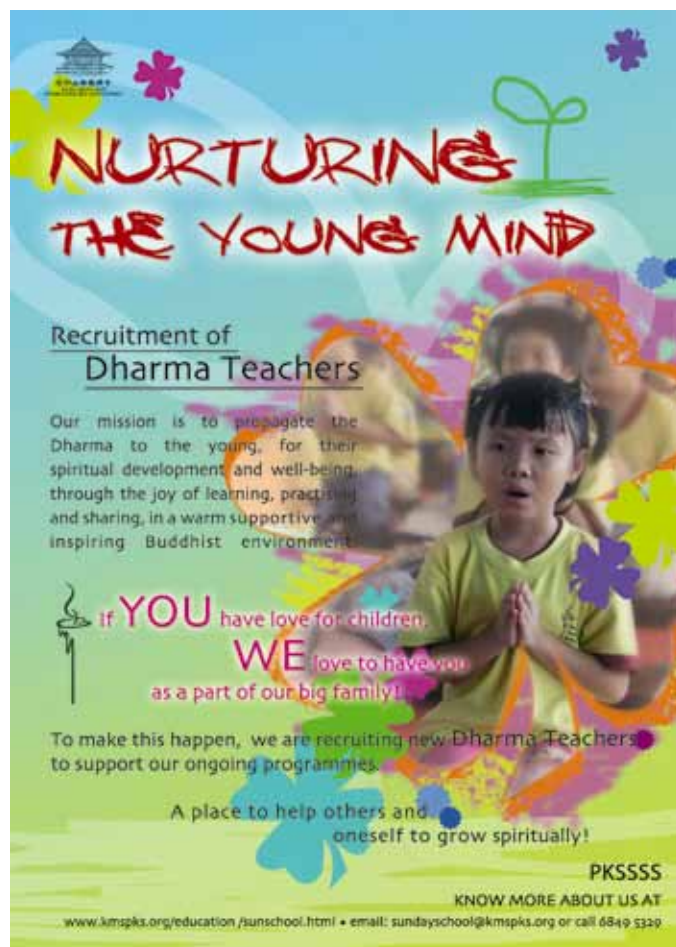
Issue 22

YOUR Feedback Matters

We value your comments and welcome your suggestions for improvements to AWAKEN. Tell us how we can improve our magazine to better cater to your spiritual and holistic needs. What new column would you like to see; which articles would you like to read? Send us your praises and flames. E-mail your feedback to awaken@kmspk.org or send them to:

AWAKEN, The Executive Editor
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
Dharma Propagation Division
Awaken Publishing & Design
88 Bright Hill Road
Singapore 574117

*Please include your full name and personal particulars



NURTURING THE YOUNG MIND

Recruitment of Dharma Teachers

Our mission is to propagate the Dharma to the young, for their spiritual development and well-being, through the joy of learning, practising and sharing, in a warm supportive and inspiring Buddhist environment.

If YOU have love for children, WE love to have you as a part of our big family!


To make this happen, we are recruiting new Dharma Teachers to support our ongoing programmes.

A place to help others and oneself to grow spiritually!

PKSSSS

KNOW MORE ABOUT US AT

www.kmspk.org/education/sunschool.html • email: sundayschool@kmspk.org or call 6849 5300



“Spiritual Wisdom is Even More Important than My Life!”

Awaken: You started learning about Buddhism from your mother at the age of seven. What is the most important Buddhist teaching to you?

Ah Dong: My master, Ven. Sheng Kai taught that we must cultivate and apply the Buddhist teachings in our daily lives. This is actually quite difficult. Everyone has an ego-grasping mind and is ruled by ignorance. Our attachment, aversion and delusion often cause us to lose our way. Many people allow their arising thoughts to bring about all kinds of negative emotions and actions. We have to understand the nature of thoughts, their arising and their cessation, so that we will not perform foolish actions, but lead a life of wisdom.

Awaken: How do you apply the Dharma in your line of work in the entertainment industry?

Ah Dong: Many people demand high pay at their workplace, and are very concerned about their personal gain and loss. They are consumed by jealousy when they see that others are successful. They feel disappointed and frustrated if things do not go their way and they fail to achieve what they want. You will not find such frustration or unhappiness in me. Recently, my colleagues and I were assigned to do a ‘live’ outdoor radio programme. But something cropped up and the radio station was unable to receive our signal. Everyone started panicking. At that time, I focused all my thoughts on solving the problem. Whatever we could have done, we did it. Such unforeseen circumstances are beyond our control. Therefore it is pointless to worry and feel frustrated. The Dharma teaches us how to face difficulties in life, resolve them and let go of them.

Sunny FM 100.3 DJ Ah Dong speaks to Awaken about the influence Buddhist teachings have on his life.

Awaken: Looking back at the past year, was there anything particularly memorable?

Ah Dong: I went through many life experiences in 2011. My mum passed away in April last year due to cancer. Before her life ended, she went through a difficult period. Suffering the side-effects of chemotherapy, she lost her hair and her face turned ashen. In spite of that, she remained unperturbed with her treatment. She understood that the body is only a shell and will not last forever. She was also unconcerned with her bodily pain and discomfort. Through her, I could see the power and the strength of the Buddha-dharma. She had transcended beyond seeking the desirable and pleasurable. My mum's death gave me the conviction that many of life's pursuits are actually not important. What is important is to seek what is permanent and indestructible and that is spiritual wisdom. To me, spiritual wisdom is even more important than my life! Spiritual wisdom is also what the Buddha called the very essence of innate nature. These days, many Buddhists are very adept at cultivating merits, but they forget that it is equally important

to cultivate wisdom. If we pray and supplicate to Buddha only for worldly benefits like fame, fortune and power, this will only hinder and obstruct us on the Buddhist path.

Awaken: What are your wishes or aspirations for the new year of 2012?

Ah Dong: I feel that there are many people in society who need our love, our care and attention. I hope through my humble, individual effort and contribution, I can help more people. We have a radio programme called "Setting Off from Love". Every month, we do an in-depth report on various topics, such as AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, spinal muscular atrophy et cetera. We hope the programme will allow more people to better understand these chronic illnesses and to prevent misconceptions or fears. We also hope through our effort, many more people will show greater concern, love and care to these patients. ☺

Translated by Esther Thien. Read the original Chinese interview on page 10.




Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

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

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

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

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

AWAKEN to...

Compassion & Wisdom on the journey of life...

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



Get your free copy from these outlets:

- SINGAPORE BUDDHIST FEDERATION**
59 Lorong 24A, Geylang S(398583)
- SINGAPORE BUDDHIST LODGE**
17 Kim Yam Road S(239329)
- TAI PEI BUDDHIST CENTRE**
2 Lavender Street S(338823)
- CI YAN VEGETARIAN HEALTH FOOD**
8/10 Smith Street S(058917)
- AWARENESS PLACE**
Blk 231 Bain Street #01-63
Bras Basah Complex S(180231)
- THE HERBS HOME**
101 Upper Cross Street #02-55
People's Park Centre S(058357)

*whilst stocks last



The Four Well-known Bodhisattvas of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism

The word *bodhisattva* is a Sanskrit term. *Bodhi* means ‘wisdom’ or ‘enlightenment’ and *sattva* means ‘essence’ or ‘being’. Thus, a bodhisattva is a wisdom-being who wishes to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Manjusri Bodhisattva



Manjusri Bodhisattva is the embodiment of transcendent wisdom. The oldest and most significant bodhisattva in the Mahayana literature, the Sanskrit name Manjusri can be translated as “Gentle Glory”. He appears to those who meditate on him, instructing them in the Dharma and encouraging them to develop wisdom.

His right hand holds a flaming sword, representing the sharpness of wisdom which cuts through ignorance and the net of wrong views such as duality. The flame dispels darkness, just as the light of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance. His left hand holds a magnificent lotus flower in full bloom, on which rests the Prajnaparamita Sutra (Great Wisdom Sutra). This sutra contains the essence of the great wisdom teachings of the Buddhas. The lotus is the promise of the future for all beings who follow the teachings.

Manjusri Bodhisattva is often shown seated on a golden or blue lion. This represents the use of wisdom to tame the mind, which is compared to riding or subduing a ferocious lion.

Prayer Mantra of Manjusri Bodhisattva:

Om Ah Ra Pa Tsa Na Dhi

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva

The Sanskrit name “Avalokiteshvara” means “the lord who looks upon the world with compassion”. In Chinese, the name “Guan Shi Yin” means “One who regards the sounds (of suffering) in the world”, be they verbal or mental pleas for help. In the Lotus

Sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha taught that if anyone in suffering, such as when one is caught in a fire or facing an attack, hears the name of this Bodhisattva and earnestly calls out to her, she will hear the call and relieve that person from suffering.

The embodiment of great compassion, this Bodhisattva is seen holding a willow branch in her right hand and a vase of blessed water in her left. The willow branch is used for sprinkling the water to heal illnesses or bring fulfilment to devotees’ requests. The dew of compassion has the ability to eradicate suffering, purify defilements of body, speech and mind and lengthen lifespan.



According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva can manifest in countless forms to suit the nature of those in need of help. With great powers to help all sentient beings, her skilful means are limitless and she can appear anywhere in the six realms of existence. When we are practising compassion in our own ways to help others, and sincerely helping to bring peace and tranquility to others, we are like her in the moment.

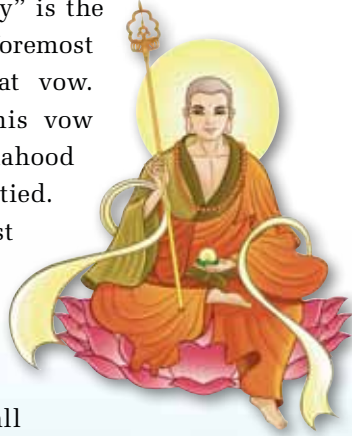
Prayer mantra of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva for universal protection:

Om Mani Padme Hung

Recited with a sincere heart and pure motivation, one establishes a closer connection with Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. This practice also purifies the body, speech and mind, helping one to gradually uncover the qualities of compassion and wisdom within oneself. Praying wholeheartedly, one will constantly experience joyfulness and a clear mind. This aids us to handle challenging situations that manifest in life with a more positive and compassionate mindset. People around us will also feel a sense of gentleness and calmness. The blessings and protection of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva will always be there.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva whose name means “Earth Store” or “Earth Treasury” is the bodhisattva who is foremost in strength of his great vow. He is well-known for his vow not to achieve Buddhahood until all hells are emptied. The Sutra of the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva tells of the great filial piety of the Bodhisattva, which led to his vast vows to save all living beings. This Sutra was spoken by the Buddha to the beings of the Trayastrimsa Heaven as a mark of gratitude and remembrance for his beloved mother.



In the distant past aeons, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva was once a maiden called ‘Sacred Girl’, who was deeply troubled when her mother who often slandered the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha died. To save her mother from the great pains of hell, she sold whatever she had and used the money to buy and make daily offerings to the Buddha of her time, making fervent prayers for Buddha's help to spare her mother from hell. One day, while pleading for help, she heard the Buddha advising her to go home and meditate on his name so as to know where her mother was. When she did so, her consciousness was transported to the hell realm, where a guardian told her that with her piety, her mother had accumulated much merits and was already reborn in a heaven. Though she was greatly relieved, the sights of the hellish suffering urged her to vow thus, “I shall do my very best to relieve beings of their sufferings forever in my future lives of kalpas to come.” She later became the accomplished Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva through her great acts of compassion.

In a sitting or standing posture, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva always has a benevolent look and carries one or both the Cintamani (wish-fulfilling jewel) and the Khakkhara (ringed-staff). The staff is often carried by monks in their travels, so that sounds from the jingling rings can warn small animals and insects of their approach. He is also often depicted seated upon a lotus throne with his hands holding the precious flaming Cintamani, which has vast supernormal powers beyond description, and wears

the robe of a Northern Buddhist monk with a ‘five-leaf crown’, representing the five Dhyani Buddhas.

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's compassion is not just for the benefit of hell-beings. He also gives blessings to comfort the poor, oppressed, sick, hungry and those who are troubled by spirits and nightmares. Those with firm faith can easily receive his protection by reciting his name or mantra.

Karma purifying mantra of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva:
Om Pramardane Svaha

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is the bodhisattva of great conduct and represents the quality of cultivation and practice. Seated on a six-tusked white elephant, Samantabhadra Bodhisattva holds a lotus flower or book. He is well-known for his limitless offerings to the Buddhas. His Ten Great Vows, which are directed to benefiting all beings, are:



- 1) To pay homage and respect to all Buddhas.
- 2) To praise all Buddhas.
- 3) To make offerings to all Buddhas.
- 4) To repent and reform all misdeeds.
- 5) To rejoice in the virtue and happiness of others.
- 6) To request the Buddhas to continue teaching the Dharma
- 7) To request the Buddhas to remain in the world.
- 8) To follow the teachings of the Buddhas at all times.
- 9) To accommodate and benefit all beings.
- 10) To share and dedicate all merits for the benefit of all beings.

In the Sutra of Meditation on Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, the Buddha lavished great praise on him. Like all other great Bodhisattvas, he is able to grant those who have firm faith in him, all kinds of favours that they are seeking, so long as they are in line with the Dharma. Those who cultivate according to his Great Vows will enjoy a long lifespan and will never fall into a lower rebirth as a hell-being, hungry ghost or animal. They will also be protected by this Bodhisattva from dangers such as floods, fires, wars and poison, and be rewarded with position and abundant wealth.

In *The Dasabhumika Sutra*, or *Sutra of the Ten Stages of Bodhisattva*, the Buddha taught the ten stages of the bodhisattva path leading to Buddhahood. With the perfection of six (generosity, virtue, patience, diligence, concentration and wisdom) or ten paramitas (the former six plus skilful means, vows, strength and knowledge), the bodhisattva attains these spiritual levels one by one and finally completes the journey with the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment (Samyaksambodhi).

The ten stages are:

1. Pramudita - Joyous
2. Vimala - Pure
3. Prabhakari - Luminous
4. Arcismati - Radiant
5. Sudurjaya - Difficult to Conquer
6. Abhimukhi - Approaching
7. Durangama - Gone Afar
8. Acala - Immovable
9. Sadhumati - Good Intelligence
10. Dharmamegha- Cloud of Doctrine

He cultivates his bodhisattva path with the practice of giving followed by the other paramitas. At this level the bodhisattva is in a higher state of knowing the importance of giving and other Dharma properly. For instance, now he knows the true nature of giving, the distinction between

the giver and the receiver. He gradually attains the non-conceptual awareness of emptiness. He realises that there is no inherent qualities among these three. As a result of the development of good qualities, wisdom and compassion, he attains the Joyous Stage, the first bhumi or level of a bodhisattva path on this spiritual journey.

The second bodhisattva stage, the Pure or Stainless stage, is the result of his great morality. He becomes perfectly pure and even in his dream he remains pure. At the Luminous Stage, he is very patient now due to his practice of patience. The Bodhisattva is free from quarrel and his mind is pacified at this stage. The fourth bhumi, Radiant Stage, is the result of diligent effort by the bodhisattva. Diligent effort is the antidote for laziness or sleepiness. With the practice of meditative concentration, the bodhisattva attains the stage of Difficult to Conquer. At the sixth stage of Approaching, the bodhisattva has perfected the paramita of wisdom and understands dependent origination. The bodhisattva continues practising Skilful Means at the seventh stage, Gone Afar. On this level the bodhisattva completely destroys the moral taints or removes the veil of conflicting emotions, and there will be no more rebirth for him. The next three highest stages are called pure stages connected with Buddhahood. On these stages the bodhisattva is free from obstruction to omniscience. At the eighth stage, Immovable, the bodhisattva achieves omniscient status. Even during moments out of meditation, he looks at the world (phenomena) in a different way from others. He is now like a person awakened from a dream. All his activities are instinctive. There is no more striving. This is because of his perfection of great vow. Completing the great perfection of strength, the bodhisattva attains the ninth stage, Good Intelligence. At the final stage, Cloud of Doctrine, he sits on a jewel lotus seat surrounded by other bodhisattvas. Light emits from his body illuminating the universe and many sufferings are eradicated. All the Buddhas from the ten directions appear and consecrate him as a Supreme Buddha. This is the attainment of Samyaksambodhi. ☸

- Ven Dr Rangama Chandawimala Thera

Infinite Blessings On The Great Path Of Light

BY | Dr Lai Chiu Nan

Miracles are common when we live in the presence of the Great Self. A businessman lent a large sum of money to two friends who persistently did not repay the loan. For two years, he could not find them even though he hired a private investigator. When he was at his wits' end, he decided to use light to bless them. Every morning and night, he would

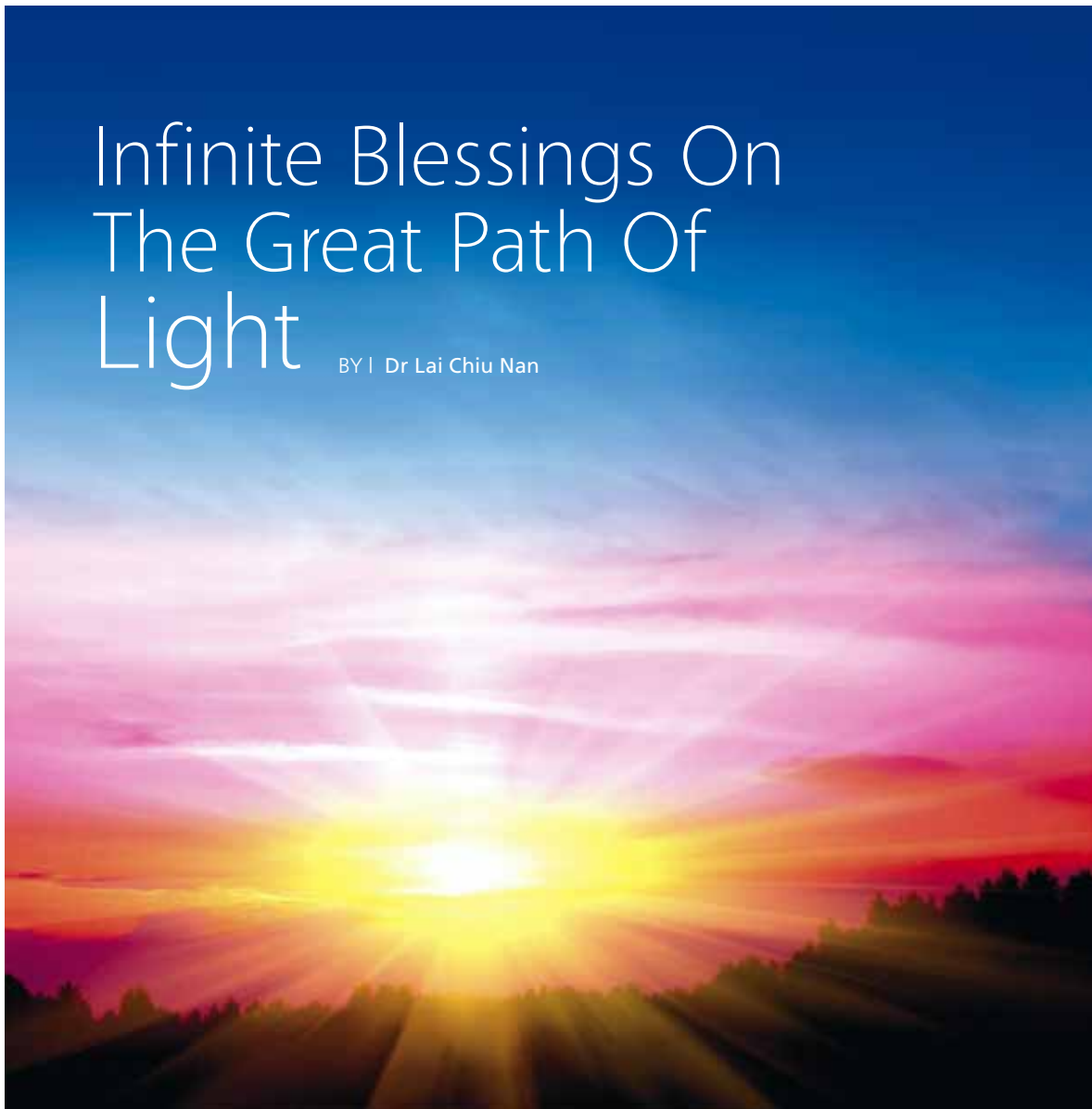
spend seven minutes to think about them and use light to dissolve all negative emotions and habitual tendencies. He then visualised that they were filled with and protected by light, and that only positive energy can permeate their circle of light. He also visualised that they were filled with gratitude for everything. Within five days, these friends appeared in his office to repay their loan. This businessman originally firmly held onto a three-dimensional materialistic view of the world. Once he was willing to let go of his restrictive views, miracles appeared.

An AIDS patient in Singapore followed his teacher's instructions and spent a few minutes every day praying to take on the sufferings of all AIDS patients. Every time he prayed, he was moved to tears. Within a week, a hospital checkup indicated that he had

fully recovered. When we shift our attention from ourselves to praying for the well-being of others and the whole earth, our own health would invariably improve.

A patient sincerely prayed for the well-being of another seriously ill friend. When he did that, both of them recovered from their illnesses. The doctor was very surprised. In contrast, another lady had, for many years, prayed for her own recovery and had sent light to herself, but without much improvement. However, when she sent her blessings and light to the whole world, she fully recovered from her illness.

I have a good friend who, many years ago, followed her teacher and a group of fellow students to pray and send blessings to different parts of the world that



encountered disaster or hardship. They primarily used light to send blessings, and took turns to do so 24 hours a day. She went to many countries in Africa and South America. Once, she continuously sent light and love for eight hours to the area she was in and the entire earth. She felt that she herself had turned into light and energy. In fact, when she was in Ethiopia, she saw light coming from the earth. I asked this friend to share in detail the method of sending light blessings. She explained as follows. Fill ourselves with light, and then let light emanate from our solar plexus to the surroundings and the entire earth. Continue to send this light to the universe before letting the light return to ourselves. Repeatedly remind ourselves that we are light, and then send light to every life form. Light is love.

Shakyamuni Buddha pointed out that every life has a clear luminous nature or Buddha nature. Every life possesses light. Our thoughts and emotions can influence the colour of our light. Similarly, light can influence our thoughts and emotions, and light visualisation can influence our body.

Dr. Mitchell May is a living example of this. He used light visualisation to repair his legs that had been broken in forty fragments.

Another American lady fortuitously found out that breathing light can have rejuvenation effects. In her forties, she was beginning to look aged with wrinkles on her face, and also put on weight. One night around midnight, she saw a very pretty pinkish-purplish circle of light outside her window, but didn't know its significance. Two weeks later, she understood that she needed to breathe in that light. After praying continuously, a method dawned upon her. Every morning, she first spent ten minutes breathing in that pink light. After that, during her out-breath, she visualised the light radiating to the part of her face where there were wrinkles, and imagined that there were no longer wrinkles on that part of her skin. She focused on a small part of her face each time, three rounds each time. Her friends started to notice the improvement in her features, and asked her what kind of special nutrients she

was taking. After nine months, her body and face had reverted back to what she looked like when she was younger. When she was in her fifties, she looked no more than thirty years old. Her modelling school students requested that she teach them this method. Those who practised the method had the same effect. Whenever she completed her light breathing exercise, she would always express her gratitude, and reflect that her purpose in asking for rejuvenation is to help others.

A co-author of this lady also tried this method with very good results. She elaborated that she visualised golden light being emitted from her solar plexus to her scalp, where new hair would grow. Within two weeks, new hair actually grew on her scalp. Whenever one is uncertain about the colour to use for other parts of the body, it is safe to use the golden colour. Sometimes while visualising golden light, the colour that our body needs will appear before us. For instance, light green is good for the eyes. Once we experienced the miracles with light visualisation on our body, we will then have the confidence to extend healing to the entire earth.

The following are exercises that use our mental thoughts and light to protect ourselves, our living environment and the earth (our larger body). These are only suggestions and serve as a starting point. Everyone can make adaptations based on the guidance they receive from their inner light.

Sky-blue light – letting go, forgiveness and unconditional love

Visualise blue light, representing the universe's perfect unconditional love, entering through your head into the chest, abdomen and all the way to your toes. Your head, bone marrow, blood, lymphatic fluid, nervous system, organs, hormonal secretions and skin are filled with blue light. Accept the nourishment of the blue light, letting it heal all deficiencies, regret, guilt, hatred and worries. Let the sky-blue light purify the etheric body, astral body, and mental body. From the solar plexus area, send the sky-blue light to the physical and mental memories needed most. Then spread the light to our workplace and home. Let the light shine on our home, workplace, city and all beings living in this environment. Let them receive love, dissolving disharmonious energy. Send the light to the province, state and country we live in, and

extend it to the continent and entire earth, from the mountains to the bottom of the sea, and further to the core of the earth. The earth becomes the sky-blue sun, and every life receives love. From the earth, send the light to the entire universe, blessing every life with love and good fortune. Then, return the sky-blue light to ourselves, bring back the entire universe's love. Quietly experience the light, thanking every living being, every life experience, everything.

Golden light – elevating, transforming and wisdom

Visualise that golden light, representing the universe's perfect wisdom and energy, entering through your head, letting your entire body be filled with golden light. Then from the solar plexus, send light into the etheric body, astral body and mental body, enabling fulfilment of all that needs to be elevated and transformed. The golden light allows our speech, emotions and thoughts to be guided by wisdom. Send the golden light to the people around us and the environment, and visualise everyone shimmering in the golden light. Then send the golden light to the earth and the entire universe. The golden light brings the universe's perfect wisdom to earth, our city, our home, and to ourselves. We are one with the golden light, and we quietly bask in the golden light.

Now, I wish to use Bodhisattva Shantideva's prayers to bless the earth. Shantideva was a great compassionate enlightened monk from Nalanda Monastery, who lived in India during the 8th century. His fellow monks thought that he only knew how to eat, sleep and defecate. His classmates had lost patience with him, and wanted him to leave. They figured that if they asked Shantideva to teach the Dharma, he would be so embarrassed that he would leave. Shantideva asked them if they wanted to hear familiar sutras or something new. His classmates replied that they wanted the latter. To make fun of him, they made a very high throne for him to deliver his discourse. When the time came for the discourse, they found that he was already seated on that high throne. His discourse was later known as "A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life". When Shantideva came to the end of his discourse, he rose higher and higher, and his voice became more distant. It has been said that he was the manifestation of Bodhisattva Manjushri.

The following are excerpts from his dedication of merits:

May all beings everywhere, plagued by sufferings of body and mind,

Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy, by virtues of my merits.

May no creature suffer, commit evil or ever fall ill.

May no one be afraid or belittled,

And may their minds be free from worries and stress.

May the blind see form, the deaf hear sound.

May those whose bodies are worn with toil be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing, the hungry find food,

And the thirsty find water and delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth, those weak with sorrow find joy;

May the forlorn find hope, constant happiness and prosperity.

May there be timely rains, and bountiful harvests.

May all medicines be effective, may all wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill quickly be freed from their ailments,

Whatever diseases there are in the world, may they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid,

May those who are bound be freed.

May the powerless find power.

And may people think of benefiting one another. ☸

Excerpts from the full article published in Lapis News.
Reprinted with permission from Lapis Lazuli Light
(Singapore) www.lapislazulilight.com

LOOKING DEEPLY

*The more we practise looking deeply,
the more light is present,
the more flowers there are,
the more oceans, space, parasols,
jewels, and clouds there are.*

It depends on us.

*When you emit light,
you help people see because
your light wakes them up.*

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Prince Mahasattva and the Starving Tigress

RETOLD BY | Esther Thien

Once upon a time, there lived a devout and powerful king. He had three good and obedient sons, Maha Prashada, Maha Deva and Mahasattva.

One bright sunny day, the princes accompanied their father and his retinue on an excursion to a forest park. As the young princes admired the enchanting beauty of the flora and fauna, they wandered deep into the thick forest until they were soon separated from the king and his men. Noticing the princes' absence, the attendants reported the matter to the king. He ordered his ministers to go in search of them and returned to his palace.

Meanwhile, the three princes came to a mountain top, and saw a starving tigress almost on the brink of death with five malnourished cubs.

"Look there," said the first brother. "That famished tigress is about to eat her own cubs. How miserable is that!"

"What is their staple food, brother?" asked Mahasattva, the youngest brother.

"Flesh and blood is the staple food of lions and tigers, dear brother," answered the eldest.

"The tigress seems very weak due to childbirth. She must have starved for days. How noble if one could sacrifice one's body for their sake. But who would make such a sacrifice?" asked Maha Deva.

"Surely no one would be able to do that," replied Maha Prashada.

"Ignorant people like us may be unable to sacrifice their bodies for the sake of another. But there may be selfless men of boundless compassion who would willingly do so," replied Prince Mahasattva in a benevolent tone.



Casting a last glance at the helpless tigress, they left.

"I must sacrifice this impermanent body for the sake of this starving tigress and her cubs. Foul is this body; it is subject to decay and death. One may adorn and perfume it, but soon it will stink and perish," thought Prince Mahasattva.

Reflecting thus, he said, "Brothers, please go ahead. I feel a little tired and would like to rest for a while. I will catch up with you soon."

He went back to the mountain top, and as he hung his clothes and jewellery on a tree, he thought, "We must be compassionate towards all beings. To offer assistance and service to those who are in need of help is our paramount duty. I will sacrifice this impermanent body of mine and save the tigress and her five cubs. By this virtuous act, may I gain supreme Buddhahood and save all beings from the ocean of suffering and cyclical existence. May all beings be well and happy."

Moved by stirring compassion and selflessness, he jumped off the cliff towards the tigress.

The fall did not result in an instantaneous death. The tigress, though ruthless by

nature, pitied the bodhisattva and would not even touch his body.

"Obviously the poor animal is too weak to devour me!" thought the bodhisattva. He searched and saw a bamboo splinter. Going up to the tigress, he slit his neck and fell dead in a pool of blood.

The hungry tigress quickly lapped up the warm, flowing blood and ate the flesh. It is said that the moment the bodhisattva sacrificed his body, the earth quaked, the waters of the ocean were disturbed, the sun's ray dimmed, eyesight was temporarily blurred, heavenly beings gave cries of "holy one", and celestial flowers rained down.

Affected by the earthquake and guessing that their brother had sacrificed himself, the two elder brothers turned and hurried back to the mountain top. They were horrified to see not their youngest brother but human bones stained with fresh blood and his clothes hanging on a tree.

They wept and fainted. On regaining consciousness, they proceeded to return home with a heavy heart. Some ministers who had gone earlier to search for them returned to the palace with the heartbreaking news. Hearing it, nobody was able to stop sobbing. The king, however, comforted the queen and, mounting an elephant, sped to the forest with his attendants and brought back the other two inconsolable sons.

So great was the princes' grief that initially they were speechless. Slowly, they recounted the heroic deed of their noble brother to their bereaved mother. The king, queen and their entourage went to the spot where the youngest prince had sacrificed himself. Seeing the blood-tainted bones of their beloved son, the king and queen fainted. When they regained consciousness, the king ordered his ministers to gather all the hair, bones and garments of Prince Mahasattva and heaping them together, worshipped them. With a grief-stricken heart, he then ordered them to build a memorial to enshrine the relics and returned to his palace.

To d a y in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, stupas and shrines stand at the ancient holy site where this legendary story took place. ॐ



The Selfless Hare

RETOLD BY | Esther Thien
ILLUSTRATIONS | Bee Li

2. Once every 10 days, they would meet to talk about doing good.

3. One day, the hare said

Dear friends, it's full moon day tomorrow, let's be more virtuous and observe the ethical training guidelines of conduct. If anyone should ask anything from us, let's be charitable and give what we have. Generosity practised with morality is surely very meritorious.

Help others, do good, give alms, be kind and virtuous, observe the new moon and full moon days.

5. The next day, they all observed the ethical training guidelines of conduct. The hare thought with all sincerity

It is impossible for me to offer grass. If anyone comes to me seeking food, I will gladly offer my flesh.

6. It is said the power of the hare's sincerity and virtue heated up the white marble throne of Lord Sakka, the king of the gods. With his divine eye, he understood what had happened and so decided to test the hare.

1. Long, long ago, in a particular forest lived four very good friends: a hare, a monkey, a jackal and an otter. Of the four, the hare was the wisest.



4. The others agreed and got ready for the following day. The hare obtained some grass, the otter found some fishes lying on the river bank; the monkey prepared some sweet mangoes and the jackal found some dried fishes and a gourd.

7. In the guise of a holy man, he took turns to appear before the hare's friends, and declined their kind offer of food.

Finally he came to the pure-hearted hare and begged for something. The hare was overjoyed.

Oh holy one, it is very kind of you to come to me for food. I will give you something I have never given before.

Please kindle a fire. Then let me know. I will gladly jump in and offer my body. Please feast as you like and then observe the ethical training guidelines of conduct.

8. Lord Sakka magically conjured up a fire. The selfless hare shook his body thrice to prevent killing any insect that may be on his body, and joyfully jumped into the scorching fire.

9. But lo and behold! The hare was not burnt, or even hurt in any way.

Wise hare, I'm Lord Sakka. I have come to put your virtue to the test.

It is not just for you. Even if all the beings of the world have come to test me, they will not find in me any unwillingness to give

This was how the Buddha practised the Perfection of Giving while he was still a bodhisattva.

SEEN

Emulating the Noble Bodhisattvas

> **For The Benefit Of All Beings: The Extraordinary Life of His Eminence Garchen Triptrul Rinpoche**

Directed by: Christina Lundberg

For The Benefit Of All Beings is an experiential immersion into the Tibetan Buddhist view of the world, as lived by His Eminence Garchen Triptrul Rinpoche. Rinpoche was recognised at an early age as a reincarnate lama. His early years were spent in monastic training, and in particular, being taught the stark reality of suffering through the wrathful means of his father. External forces invaded Tibet when Rinpoche was 20 years old, in the midst of a three-year retreat.



Aware of the suffering of his people and the danger of extinction for the Buddha-Dharma in Tibet, Rinpoche joined the Kham Resistance Fighters and took up arms against his invaders. He was subsequently captured and imprisoned for 20 years. He endured the unthinkable yet never lost his compassion. While in prison, Rinpoche met his root guru, who gave him pith instructions on the path to enlightenment, which he practised in secret. When released he emerged as an awakened master and took up the mission of re-establishing the Buddha-Dharma in Tibet, at risk of further imprisonment, torture and execution.

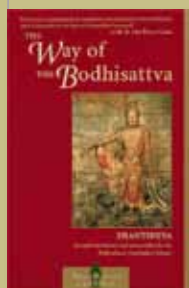
After becoming deathly ill, Rinpoche was brought to Nepal by a close student who then arranged for Rinpoche to begin teaching in the West. Many years later, Rinpoche returned to his beloved country, fully victorious in what he has become, an embodiment and messenger of Love to the world.

This very moving and brilliant film documents this extraordinary life story in a unique way, relying upon the engaging storytelling of Garchen Rinpoche himself, interviews with high lamas and peers from Tibet and other countries, and through unprecedented access to this revered lama's private life and public persona as he travels to over 15 countries. Rather than "teaching" Buddhism to its audience, this documentary beautifully and powerfully portrays how this particular world view affects one man's life directly in the face of unthinkable adversity and the results that emerge when one human being unequivocally commits to living "For the Benefit of All Beings."

Highly revered in the Drikung Kagyu lineage of practice, Garchen Rinpoche inspires and instructs us, in a uniquely universal way, to embody pure love, the highest potential of the human mind. Totally heart-opening and life-changing! Visit forthebenefitofallbeings.com for more info.

READ

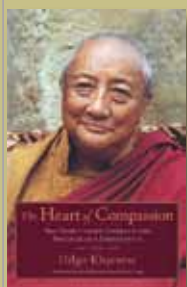
The way of the bodhisattva is through the heart of compassion



> The Way of The Bodhisattva

By Shantideva

This version, translated from Tibetan, is a thorough introduction to the much treasured and important text *Bodhicharyavatara* that has been studied, practised and expounded upon in an unbroken tradition for centuries in India and Tibet. It is an essential guide, outlining the path of the Bodhisattvas in verse form, to anyone who would like to cultivate the mind of enlightenment and generate the qualities of love, compassion, generosity and patience. Priced at S\$25.00 from Awareness Place.



> The Heart of Compassion: The Thirty-Seven Verses on the Practice of a Bodhisattva

By Dilgo Khyentse

Be inspired by the life story and the deeds of Gyalse Ngulchu Thogme, the composer of a much precious text, *The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva*. In this commentary, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche explained in great detail the ways presented in this classic text on how we can work with our own hearts and minds, unravelling our small-minded preoccupations to discover our own potential for compassion, loving-kindness and wisdom. Get it from Awareness Place for S\$27.95.

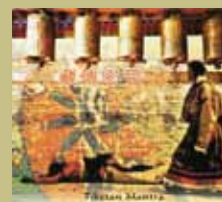
HEARD

Experience profound healing and ease with the mantras and sutra of the bodhisattvas

> Tibetan Mantra

By Wang Jun (Celebrity Music)

In an ethereal voice, singer Wang Jun conveys the serenity and blessings of the Green Tara mantra, the six-syllable great compassion mantra, *Prajna Paramita* Heart mantra, Shakyamuni mantra and Vajrasattva mantra in a melodious and beautiful manner. Feel the descending calm as peace pervades your heart and mind when listening. Retail at S\$18.00 from Awareness Place.



> Heart Sutra

By Imee Ooi

If you feel a connection to the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or Guanyin, deepen the connection by listening to this CD. Sung in Mandarin, this CD contains two melodic tracks of the *Heart Sutra*, one of the Mahayana sutras commonly associated with Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. Said to be the pure distillation of wisdom, it is the shortest and perhaps best-known text of Mahayana Buddhism. Listen to the profound and subtle teachings in this lyrical rendition of the Heart Sutra and create further imprints of this sutra in your mind-stream to strengthen your connection with this Bodhisattva. Available at Awareness Place for S\$15.00.



WHAT'S NEW

Appreciate the beauty of fine *liuli* art in the form of bodhisattva sculptures

If you are a lover of the rich beauty of fine *liuli* sculpture, check out the precious noble bodhisattva sculpture range at Awareness Place. Ranging from one kilo to about six kilos in various sizes, these sculptures were specially brought in to Singapore, and are seen for the very first time here in very limited quantity each!

Be mesmerised by the intricate details and facets, and the natural flow of vibrant colours that emerge from the sculptures under the play of light and shadow. To find out more, call 6337 7582 or visit awarenessplace.com.

*Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara
On a single leaf*



Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha



Bodhisattva Manjusri



Bodhisattva Green Tara



Bodhisattva White Tara

Dharma Apps

One good thing about having a smartphone or tablet is that if used in a good way, it can bring you closer to the Dharma, as a tool that connects you to the wisdom of the Dharma 24/7.



> iDharmabook

By Astragro

Looking for words of wisdom to perk up that draggy bus or MRT ride? Check out the iDharmabook, a collection of 21 easy-to-read ebooks on Buddhist teachings for lay Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

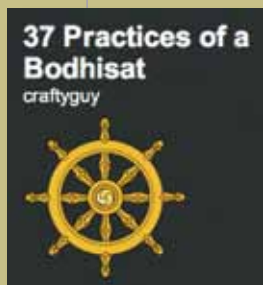
Mostly penned by eminent Buddhist teachers, including the late Ven Dr K Sri Dhammanada, this free download, which is a collaborative effort between Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery and Astragro, contains practical advice for daily living, interesting character-building pictorial books for children and more in-depth teachings for the practising Buddhists. Only available on the iPhone and iPad.



> Buddha Vacana

By Shi Chuan Guan

Literally, *Buddha Vacana* means the *Words of the Buddha*. *Buddha Vacana* is a free app that automatically brings you a verse of the Buddha's teachings daily on your android smartphone or iPhone and iPad. Receive daily verses and wake up to a new day on a note of mindfulness with the chime of a bell! Also available as a free download for PC, Facebook, other handheld or supported devices and platforms from buddhavacana.net.



>

37 Practices of a Bodhisattva

By Clayton Craft

Featuring verses translated by Ken McLeod, this convenient app packs all the verses of the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva. Handy on the go when you just want to refresh these important practices in your day-to-day life. Only available on the Android Market.



Use your smartphone's barcode scanner to scan these QR codes for the apps.

If your phone doesn't have one, download a barcode scanning app from iTunes or Android Market.

Bodhisattvas are enlightened sentient beings who are aware of all sentient beings' sufferings, feel sympathy for others' plight, and act to give help to them.

Bodhisattvas are those who have faith in the Buddha's teachings and seek to practise them, who then vow to liberate themselves and others, and who can even disregard themselves in order to save others.

Bodhisattvas can be either ordinary people or noble ones.

The bodhisattva path consists of 52 stages. Bodhisattvas on any of the first 40 stages before the 10 grounds are ordinary beings, whereas those on any of the last 12 stages are noble ones.

– Chan Master Sheng Yen

In his relations with beings, the bodhisattva should not allow himself to forsake them. As befits the abilities determined by his powers, he should always strive to draw them in.

From the very beginning, the bodhisattva should accord with the power of his abilities and use skilful means to instruct beings, causing them to enter the Great Vehicle.

In that which is done for the benefit of beings, do not succumb to either weariness or negligence. Bring forth vows for the sake of realising bodhi. Benefiting the world is just benefiting self.

So long as he has not yet gained irreversibility, in the bodhisattva's striving for bodhi, he should be as intensely diligent in practice as someone whose turban has caught on fire.

– Nagarjuna

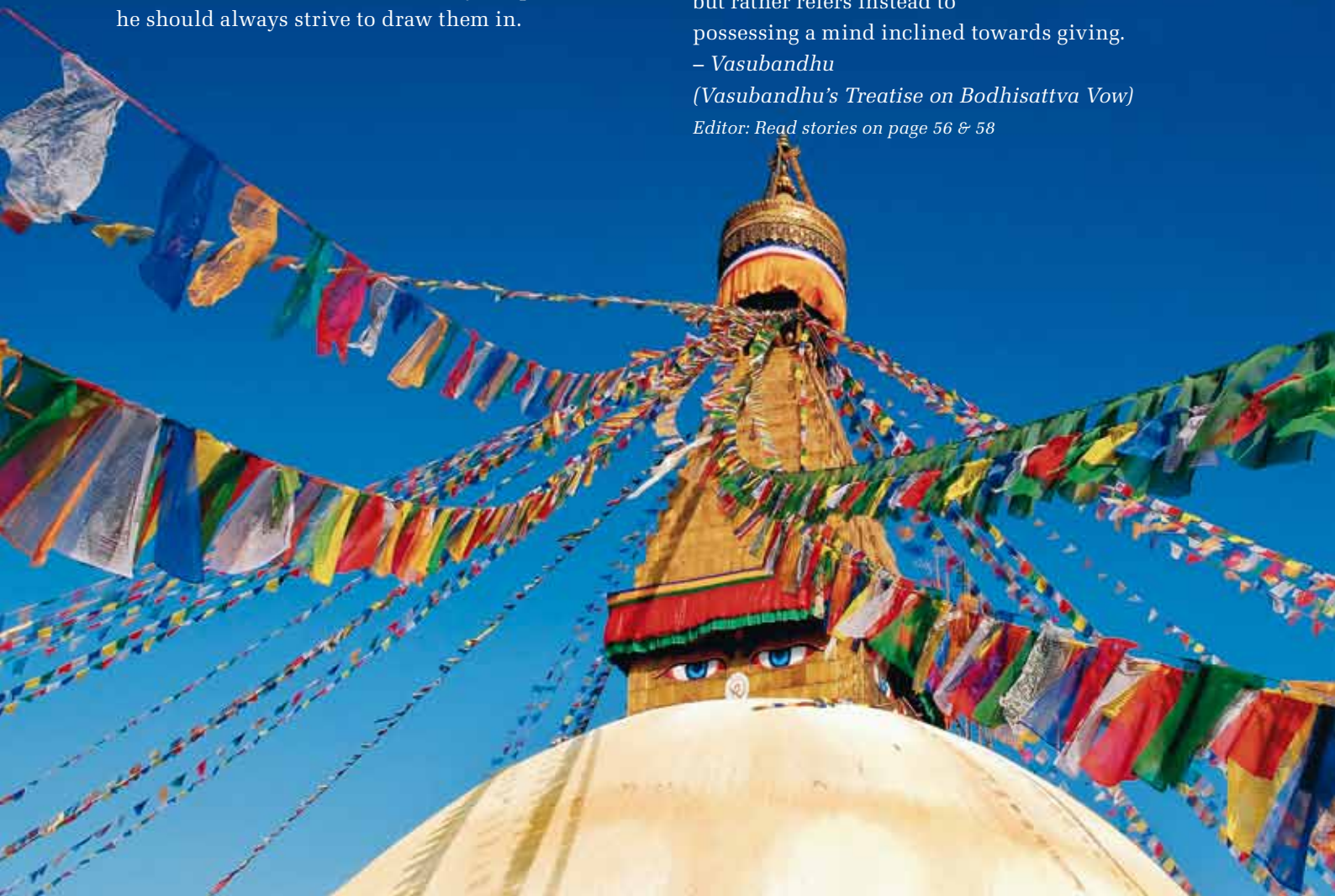
(Nagarjuna's Guide to the Bodhisattva Path)

One who is a bodhisattva is defined by being one who is universal in his giving. Being one who is universal in his giving does not refer to a circumstance involving an abundance of material wealth but rather refers instead to possessing a mind inclined towards giving.

– Vasubandhu

(Vasubandhu's Treatise on Bodhisattva Vow)

Editor: Read stories on page 56 & 58



Amitabha (Amida, Amita, Amitayus): Amitabha is the most commonly used name for the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. A transhistorical Buddha venerated by all Mahayana schools particularly, Pure Land. Presides over the Western Pure Land (Land of Ultimate Bliss), where anyone can be reborn through utterly sincere recitation of His name, particularly at the time of death Amitabha Sutra is one of the three cardinal Pure Land Sutras.

Attachment: Attachments are what keep us turning on the wheel of rebirth. In the Four Noble truths, Buddha Shakyamuni taught that attachment to self is the root cause of suffering: From craving [attachment] springs grief, from craving springs fear; For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear. (Dhammapada) Becoming enlightened is nothing other than severing all our attachments. What is meant by “attachment”? It is the investing of mental or emotional energy in an “object”. We can become attached to people, things, experiential states, and our own thoughts and preconceptions. In Buddhist teachings attachments are usually divided into two general categories: attachments to self and attachments to dharma. For the seasoned practitioner, even the Dharma must not become an attachment.

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva: Guanyin; the Bodhisattva who personifies the perfect Compassion of all Buddhas, who hears and heeds the cries of the world.

Bodhicitta: The enlightenment-mind. The mind dedicated to attaining Buddhahood in order to help all sentient beings.

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.

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

Cyclical existence: The cycle of death and rebirth, taking uncontrolled rebirth under the influence of defilement and karmic imprints. The process arises out of ignorance and is marked by suffering.

Dharma: An aspect of the Triple Gem - the teachings of the Buddha or the general teachings of Buddhism.

Emptiness: The truth that all mind and matter are constantly changing, thus being empty of any fixed self.

Enlightenment: same as Buddhahood, full enlightenment/awakening. Highest level of development, having forever eliminated all defilements and karmic imprints, and having developed all good qualities and wisdom to their fullest extent.

Five Dhyani Buddhas: The five Buddha-families of Vairocana, Akshobya, Amoghasiddhi, Ratnasambhava and Amitabha Buddhas.

Ignorance: The quality of lacking Wisdom, not knowing the reality of all things. Same as ‘delusion’.

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.

Lama: Spiritual teacher. An honorary title in Tibetan Buddhism given to one who has completed particular scholastic and yogic training. It is possible to renounce one's monkhood without renouncing one's lama status, for the purposes of marriage.

Liberation: The state in which defilements and karma have been eliminated and no longer subjected to uncontrolled rebirth in cyclic existence.

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

Mahayana: The dominant Buddhist tradition of East Asia that emphasises on the Bodhisattva ideal.

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.

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. ‘Satipatthana’ in Pali language.

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

Nagarjuna: Great Indian Buddhist Master who revived the Mahayana in the 1st. century AD, after its' virtual disappearance, by bringing to light the Perfection of Wisdom.

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.

Perfection: Refers to the six practices, the perfection of which ferries one beyond the sea of suffering and mortality to Nirvana.

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 Amitabha 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.

Rinpoche: An honorific used in Tibetan Buddhism to mean “precious one”.

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

Samyaksambodhi: Buddhahood, state of perfect enlightenment.

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

Shantideva: 8th-century Indian Buddhist scholar at Nalanda University and an adherent of the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nagarjuna. Renowned as the author of the Bodhicaryavatara or A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way Of Life, which is a long poem describing the process of enlightenment from the first thought to full buddhahood.

Six Realms of Existence: Also called the Six Paths of Rebirth, it refers to the six categories of living beings who are not enlightened. They are 1) Gods, 2) Humans, 3) Asuras, 4) Animals, 5) Ghosts, 6) Hell-dwellers. The particular category that one finds oneself reborn in depends upon one's karma at the time of rebirth.

Suffering: The physical and mental feeling of dissatisfaction.

Sutra(s): The recorded teachings of the Buddha. Spelt as ‘Sutta’ in Pali language.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Venerable: An honorific addressing of a member of the Sangha.

Wisdom: The understanding or discernment based on the direct realisation of the Four Noble Truths, Impermanence, Interdependent Origination, Non-self and Emptiness. The Buddha taught that all things are impermanent, arising and passing away, subject to change, and that knowing this — not in a rational, but empirical manner — is wisdom.

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