

Editor's Note

Last year, during National Day Rally, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong drove home a point that was particularly crucial for Singapore's long-term success, prosperity and peace: racial and religious harmony.

Bearing this message close to heart, we start off the new year of 2010 in this issue by examining how one should view inter-religious sharing (pg 36), and how Buddhists, here and elsewhere, can contribute to religious harmony and peace in the world (pg 42). The fund-raising *Voices of Harmony 2009* concert and the *China-Singapore Religious and Cultural Exhibition 2009*, both held late last year, were unique events mooted by local Buddhist leaders that aimed to promote racial and religious harmony (pg 38).

Buddhists and non-Buddhists should understand that there is a time for everything (pg 58). Instead of forcing something to take place, isn't it better to have compassion, empathy and sincerity (pg 63) for others, cherishing them as you would yourself, and in the process earning their true friendships (pg 59)? It is an ancient law that hatred in the world is appeased only by loving-kindness (pg 60). Instead of warring with others with a sports team mentality, we fight our greed, our aversion and our delusion with the Dharma through patient endurance (pg 54).

Read also what other Singaporeans have to say about establishing racial and religious harmony (pg 41) and how Buddhist teachings offer precious insight into establishing that harmony (pg 62).

Elsewhere in this issue, Ven. Chuanhou recounts the interesting stories of a pilgrimage to China's eminent Mount Jiuhua and Mount Putuo (pg 47) while Ven. Chonyi talks about her firm decision to be ordained (pg 44). For Janice Goh, meeting Ajahn Brahm in 2004 caused a profound impact on her life (pg 57).

May we not forget what it means to be a human being — remembering our innate goodness and, in the words of PM Lee, opening our hearts to all.

May you find the inner peace, fulfilment and realisation you seek on your path.



Yours in the Dharma,
Sister Esther Thien

*Human contact and warmth
come through sharing
the experience of being human beings,
not through holding
the same philosophies.*
- Ven. Thuten Chodron



Taiji (Yang Style) – Beginners*

Date/Time : (1) 6 Jan – 17 Mar, Wed, 10.30am – 12.00pm / 2.30pm – 4.00pm
Fee : \$120 (10 lessons)
(2) 31 Jan – 18 Apr, Sun, 12.45pm – 2.15pm
Fee : \$150 (10 lessons)
Conductor : Ms. Jasmine Koh, accredited coach with The Singapore Sports Council

Taiji Jian*

Date/Time : 17 Jan – 18 Apr, Sun, 9.30am – 11.00am
Fee : \$150 (12 lessons)
Conductor : Ms. Jasmine Koh

Focus in 10 Mins*

Date/Time : 17 & 24 Jan, Sun, 3.00pm – 5.00pm
Fee : \$50 (2 lessons)
Conductor : Mr. Sean Liew (Bear), a psychotherapist with more than 10 years of experience in coaching and training. He is a Certified Human Behaviour Consultant and provides individual and group therapy focusing on relationships and communication.

Support & Connecting With The Elderly*

Date/Time : 9 & 16 Mar, Tue, 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Fee : \$50 (2 lessons)
Conductor : Mr. Sean Liew (Bear)

Organic Educational Tour*

Date/Time : 30 Jan, Sat
Fee : \$65 (inclusive of 3 organic meals)
Conductor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew (Bach. Biotech), dedicated to public education including interviews and cooking demos on Capital 95.8FM

Simple Detox Workshop*

Date/Time : 2 Apr, Fri (public holiday), 8.30am – 5.30pm
Fee : \$80
Conductor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew

The Basics of Healthy Vegetarian Diet 1 & 2*

Date/Time : 4 & 11 Apr, Sun, 3.00pm – 5.00pm
Fee : \$30 (2 lessons)
Conductor : Mr. Wong Kew Yew

Morning Yoga*

Date/Time : 23 Jan – 10 Apr, Sat, 9.15am – 10.45am
Fee : \$160 (10 lessons)
Conductor : Ms. Helen Goh, Certified Yoga Instructor

Afternoon Yoga for Golden Years*

Date/Time : 12 Jan – 23 Mar, Tues, 3.00pm – 4.30pm
Fee : \$120 (10 lessons)
Conductor : Ms. Ong Ju Lee, diploma in teaching the Science and Art of Yoga

Metta Meditation (conducted in Mandarin)*

Date/Time : 7 – 28 Mar, Sun, 3.00pm – 4.30pm
Fee : \$30 (4 lessons)
Conductor : Venerable Chuan Ren

Buddhist Art Therapy*

Date/Time : 23 Mar – 25 May, Tues, 6.30pm – 8.00pm (Group 1), 8.00pm – 9.30pm (Group 2)
Fee : \$200 (max 12 pax only)
Conductor : Ms. Yen Chua, certified Art Therapist. She holds a Masters Degree in Arts & Art Therapy. She has years of experience in conducting art workshops and lectures which have garnered good response and feedback from participants. She is also an award-winning and practising local artist who has held several solo and group exhibitions.

* Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre, Bras Basah Complex #03-39
Details : Please visit www.awarenessplace.com, email sem@kmspks.org or call 6336 5067 to register or enquire.

*w*s*d*p

Weekly Spiritual Development Programme
Date/Time : Every Thurs from 25 Feb, 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Venue : Awareness Place Well-Being Centre
Details : 1st session of each month is in Mandarin
To get latest updates, join our Facebook Group: GUM – Stick With Us. To register, call 6849 5346 or email wsp@kmspks.org

Ushering Chinese New Year with a Resounding “gong”

Pujas & prayers • 108 Bell Resonances
Date/Time : 13 Feb, Sat, 11.30pm
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion
Details : For more information, please call 6549 5300

Basic Vipassana (Insight) Meditation Class

Date/Time : 5 Mar – 14 May, Fri, 7.30pm – 9.30pm
Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall
Fee : \$30
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Relaxation Meditation Course

Date/Time : 2 Mar – 4 May, Tues, 8.00pm – 9.30pm
Venue : 4th floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall
Fee : \$20
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

English Buddhism Course

Year 1 Module 1

Date/Time : 7 Mar – 9 May, Sun, 2.00pm – 3.30pm
Venue : Dharma Hall

Year 2 Module 1

Date/Time : 1 Mar – 3 May, Mon, 7.30pm – 9.00pm
Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Year 3 Module 1

Date/Time : 4 Mar – 6 May, Thurs, 7.30pm – 9.00pm
Venue : 1st floor, Ven Hong Choon Memorial Hall

Fee : \$30 per Module
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

Medicine Buddha Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sat, 7.45pm
Venue : Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas, 2nd Level

Pureland Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 9.00am
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

Diamond Sutra Recitation (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every Sun, 2.00pm
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

The Great Compassion Puja (Chinese)

Date/Time : Every 27th of the lunar month, 10.00am
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion

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

Date/Time : Every Fri, 8.00pm
Venue : Hall of Great Compassion
Details : For more information, please call 6849 5300

How Should We View Inter-religious Sharing?

Q: How should we view inter-religious sharing? What are its challenges? What are its benefits?

— *Anonymous*

A: Inter-religious sharing helps us to become more open-minded. It also sharpens our abilities to investigate and to examine ourselves and our beliefs. Spiritual people want their limited views to be expanded. They seek to have their ignorance removed; they want their capacity for understanding and acceptance to be stretched. Inter-religious contact presents this possibility. However, what happens if we are not prepared for this and the dialogue instead causes defensiveness or confusion about our own practice? Seen from the proper perspective, this too presents an opportunity for growth. For example, when we talk with a person from another religion and find ourselves becoming defensive, we must examine our minds. Have we fallen into the trap of subtly competing with the other person to prove one religion right and the other wrong? If so, we need to let go of our "sports team mentality"* towards religion and remind ourselves of the real purpose of our conversation. No one else can make us feel inferior: this attitude arises from our own competing mind. When we cease this, then there are no winners or losers.

Are we defensive because we worry about the other person liking and approving of us? Has our religion become part of our ego-identity so that if our religion is criticised, we feel misunderstood and rebuked? We have to question our need for external validation of our beliefs. Why do we need other people to believe the same thing that we do in order to feel secure in our beliefs? We may have forgotten that people have different aptitudes and temperaments and will therefore see things differently. If we have checked the foundations for our spiritual beliefs and



have confidence in them, there is no need to become defensive because others disagree with them.

But what if we have not examined our beliefs deeply? What if the other person asks a question that we do not know the answer to and we become confused about what to believe? What do we do if inter-religious discussion causes our ignorance to become evident or doubts to arise in our mind? Although this may initially feel uncomfortable, it could be valuable for our practice. When we do not know the answer to a question or cannot explain it clearly, we are motivated to ask our teachers and spiritual friends for more information. In addition, we need to spend more time reflecting on what we already know in order to understand it properly. When we listen to teachings, we sometimes think we have correctly understood the entire topic. In fact, we may have understood the words, but because the meaning is multi-layered, we need time to explore it in depth. It is unrealistic to expect ourselves or others to be able to "know all the answers." Doubt or confusion can be helpful stimulants arousing us from complacency. We do not need to be afraid of these things. We simply need to deepen our practice,

researching the answers to questions and reflecting on their meaning.

Human contact and warmth come through sharing the experience of being human beings, not through holding the same philosophies. Self-confidence is developed by remembering that we — and others — have a potential to be enlightened. We may not be totally wise or compassionate now, but we can become that way. This awareness of our internal goodness and potential is a more stable basis for self-confidence and self-esteem than other people's opinions of us. If we are aware of this, we will not be disturbed by what others think of us, but will continue to relate to them with a kind heart.

As we mature in our own spiritual development, inter-religious sharing becomes a way to deepen and enrich the practice of our own spiritual tradition.

During the Jewish-Buddhist dialogue that occurred in 1990 in Dharamsala, India, Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man and I met each morning and meditated together on the porch of his guesthouse, in the cool morning air. Although we spoke a little before or after, the deepest communication occurred during the silence.

Another time, I went with a few Buddhist monastics to visit a Catholic monk who was a hermit in the mountains of Spain. We had heard that he had once met the Dalai Lama and we wanted to speak with him. He had no idea we were coming, but when we finally found his hut, he welcomed us in. On his altar were the white scarf and picture of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion, that the Dalai Lama had given him. He suggested we meditate together first, and for about an hour while the late afternoon sun shone into his hut, we did. Having concluded our meditation, all of us found that speaking was unnecessary; what we had to say had been communicated without words and our hearts were full.

Yet another example occurred during a visit I paid to Mt. St. Mary's Abbey, near Boston. I had met two sisters from this Trappistine order in Dharamsala, India. I relished our discussion over lunch, in which we spoke of qualities to look for in people who aspire to a monastic life, how to train them so as to actualise their potential, and how to live together in

a monastic community. Then, I discovered, much to my surprise, that they had arranged for me to give a talk about the development of love and compassion to the entire community of 54 cloistered nuns. This audience was alive with feeling and each word we spoke reverberated on many levels and in many ways due to the intensity of their practice of love and compassion. We could speak honestly and unabashedly of how our self-centredness would sabotage our compassion or how our anger would unexpectedly appear and waylay our love. As we discussed ways to tame our disturbing attitudes and enhance our positive ones, our feeling of common purpose — to transform our minds and become more loving — was palpable.

Such experiences indicate to me that although there may be philosophical differences among religions and although they may or may not lead to the exact same ultimate goal, there are commonalities that are mutually enriching.

For example, true practitioners of all faiths seek to cultivate qualities free from the self-centred ego with all of its wants, needs and opinions. They believe that lasting happiness for themselves and others comes through this internal cultivation, not through accumulating material objects. They know that a simple lifestyle emphasising non-attachment allows for the development of impartial love and compassion for all beings, and they engage in daily self-reflection and religious practices so that their spiritual qualities will be integrated into their lives. 🌸

— Ven. Thubten Chodron

** Sports team mentality: We identify with our religion like it is a sports team and then, juxtaposing it with another, think that ours has to be the best. We cheer for our religion, and try to convert others to it so that it will have more members. We think that the more people who believe in it, the truer it must be. We put down other religions in an attempt to prove to ourselves that ours is supreme. This is a useless pursuit, one that leads to disharmony and even violence in society, and is contrary to the real intent of all religions. Born from fear, it is an activity that does not solve our insecurity but instead accentuates it.*

Voices of Harmony Concert Raised Funds for



In the economic downturn, more people are turning to SBFC for medical treatment. More than 800 patients a day consult the SBFC. Out of this, 62% are seniors above the age of 60 and enjoy free medical treatment, while the remaining 38% foot just S\$1 for the registration fee, consultation and medications. Due to the vast subsidies, S\$3.2 million is needed yearly to cover the operational expenses of its six free clinics which include 21 physicians, and 57 medical assistants and administration staff.

Singapore – A grand mega charity concert with Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean as its Guest of Honour was held last November for the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic (SBFC). Founded in 1969 to uphold the spirit of the Buddha’s great unconditional compassion for all beings, the SBFC offers free medical services to the sick and needy, regardless of their race or religion.

Aside from the charitable cause, *Voices of Harmony 2009*, a sequel to the first *Voices of Harmony* concert in 2006, also aims to foster and promote racial and religious harmony. For this reason, the concert kick-started with a silent prayer for world peace, prosperity and harmony by representatives of the 10 religions from the Inter-Religious Organisation of Singapore – Baha’i Faith,

Over 1,300 Rare Religious Artefacts from China and Singapore on Display

Singapore – A week-long multi-faith exhibit of more than 1,300 religious artefacts, many priceless, was showcased in Singapore last December.

Put together by Singapore’s non-governmental group, the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) and China’s State Administration of Religious Affairs, about 300 items came from 10 religions in Singapore — Baha’i Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism.


The remaining items were on loan from China’s five official religions — Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. Many of the artefacts — including a wood carving of Guan Yin, the Bodhisattva who embodies the great compassion of all Buddhas — are priceless and have never been displayed outside of China before this event.

“Many of the artefacts are one of a kind, with great historical and religious significance,” said Mr.



Ameerali Abdeali, the IRO’s honorary secretary and chairman of the event’s organising committee. Through the exhibits, mem-

bers of the public can learn about the beliefs and cultures of the different religions, and about the inter-faith practices in China.

The idea for the exhibition was first brought to the IRO by Mr Lee Bock Guan, who heads the Singapore Buddhist Lodge. This *China-Singapore Religious and Cultural Exhibition 2009* was IRO’s biggest project in its 60-year history, and included interesting side events such as traditional costume performances, martial arts show, classic folk music and dance by Chinese-Muslims etc; as well as seminars and talks by speakers from both countries. The event was graced by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. 


the Needy and Sick Amid Prayers and Music

Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism.

“*Voices of Harmony* is an expression of our universal wish for world harmony. Just as we all appreciate medical care in times of need, which helps heal our bodies, I’m sure all of us appreciate the beauty of music and the arts, which helps inspire and purify our minds,” explained Ven. Kwang Sheng, Abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery who mooted and organised the fund-raising concerts.

Through the interesting and varied performances by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Tsung Yeh, R&B popstar David Tao, the China Disabled People’s Performing Art Troupe and others, the audience experienced musical enchantment in its simplest and most authentic form.

Hearing the inner voices of countless others, Buddhists, non-Buddhists and even those with physical disabilities, the audience’s hearts were touched by the heart-warming performances. Said one spectator, Madam Janice Ong, “I particularly enjoy and am impressed by the dynamic performance *Sounding the Bell and the Drum*. Sitting there, feeling the vibration, and listening to the rhythms of the interesting, coordinated drumbeats coming from all areas of the stadium just revitalise me. I especially like the fact that the audience were invited to participate and sing along in the finale during the crescendo of *Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha*.”

About \$1.5 million was raised from the concert. Visit www.sbfc.org.sg if you would still like to make a donation to support its cause. 

The Merits of Producing Buddhist Teachings and Buddha Images

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

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

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

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Where did you obtain this magazine?

Compounds found in soy have been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer, lower cholesterol levels, and lessen some of the discomfort of menopause. It is also believed to help lower the possibility of prostate cancer. Savour its goodness in our vegetarian version of the local favourite Chicken Rice.

In another dish, Laska, lemongrass is a very useful medicinal plant with antioxidant qualities that scientists note of having the ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cells. It contains anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties, helps to detoxify the liver, pancreas, kidney, bladder and the digestive tract, and is said to alleviate indigestion and gastroenteritis.

Chicken Rice 素鸡饭



Ingredients:

Rice 1 cup, ginger 20g, lemongrass 20g, sesame oil 20ml, pandan leaves 3pcs, water 1 cup, salt 1 - 2 tsp (to taste), mock chicken 2pcs.

Method:

1. Wash the rice, and fry ginger and lemongrass with sesame oil till fragrant, add the rice and fry for about 5 mins.
2. Add water, seasoning and pandan leaves to cook.
3. Poach the chicken in water with a pinch of salt till it is soft.
4. When the rice is cooked, slice the chicken, place it on top of the rice and serve with chicken rice chilli and dark soya sauce.

Serves: 4

材料:

白米1杯、姜20克、香茅20克、芝麻油20ml、香兰叶3片、水1杯、盐1 - 2茶匙、素鸡2片

做法:

1. 用麻油爆香姜和香兰叶，加入洗净的白米炒约5分钟。
2. 把水、调味料及香兰叶加入米里去煮。
3. 将素鸡放进水里煮，加入少许的盐把素鸡煮软。
4. 把素鸡切成片摆放在煮好的饭。素鸡饭可配搭辣椒和黑酱油。

分量: 4人

Laska 素叻沙



Ingredients:

Vegetarian laska paste 4tbsp, soy milk 2 litres, bean sprouts 100g, laska noodles 640g, mock prawns 200g, mock abalone 200g, tau pok 4pcs

Method:

1. Place the laska paste and soy milk in a pot and bring to boil.
2. Cut tau pok into strips, together with bean sprouts and prawns, put to cook.
3. Blanch the noodles and put in bowl, then add the laska gravy. Lastly add the abalone and some laska leaves.

Serves: 4

材料:

素叻沙酱4汤匙、豆浆2公升、豆芽100克、粗米粉640克、素虾200克、素鲍鱼200克、豆卜4个

做法:

1. 把素叻沙酱及豆浆倒入锅里煮。
2. 将豆卜切成条状，把它及豆芽、素虾倒入叻沙汁里煮。
3. 粗米粉用热水泡软后倒入碗里，加入素鲍鱼和几片叻沙叶，淋上叻沙汁即可食用。

分量: 4人

Recipes courtesy of Green Room Vegetarian Cafe.
Bishan Park 2, 1382 Ang Mo Kio Ave 1, Singapore 569931
www.greenroomcafe.com.sg
Tel: 6556 1533

greenroom
VEGETARIAN CAFE


WATCHING THE Snow Globe

By Susan Kaiser Greenland, Founder of the *Inner Kids Foundation*

This is a very handy method. It is also my favourite when it comes to calming over-excited and upset children.

I will fish out a snow globe, wind up the musical box at its base, shake it and place it on a table. Then I will put my hand on my abdomen, and ask the kids to put their hands on their tummies.

Together we will feel our breaths move up and down as we watch the snow fall and settle in the globe. When the snow has settled to the bottom of the snow globe, I will shake it again. As we watch the water in the globe gradually clear, we feel ourselves breathing. The children's breathing will slow down, which in turn calms and relaxes their little bodies.

I often use this breathing technique to calm children when they're overwhelmed. Each time, the transformative power of breathing never ceases to amaze me. Breathing is the most natural thing in the world, and the foundation of our lives. We do it every moment of our lives without thinking about it, but by tapping into the power of this simple act, we can better manage stress and live happier lives. 



What do you think are the key elements that foster racial and religious harmony?

Mutual respect and understanding between the various races and religions.

— Nur Hidayah Razali, 20, Customer Service Agent

For me, it's mutual acceptance and appreciation of the different cultures, practices and beliefs of the different races and religions.

— Ernest Thivy Anthony, 65, Unemployed

Treating others with magnanimity. Do unto others as you would wish them do unto you. It is also important to forgive and forget.

— T. Tay, 37, Designer





Contributing to Religious Harmony and Peace

Adapted from a speech delivered at the *Seminar on Peace, Harmony and Universal Values from Islamic and Buddhist Perspectives*, Ven. Chuan Cheng speaks about a particular Buddhist value that's vital for maintaining peace and harmony.

One great Buddhist value that is especially crucial for maintaining peace and harmony among humanity is tolerance or forbearance.

In Buddhism, the basic meaning of tolerance or *ksanti* in Sanskrit is two-fold. The first is 'no anger' (let alone hatred) for others' wrongdoing towards oneself. The second is 'no complaints' about all undesirable conditions and encounters. Thus, forbearance is the ability to tolerate any pains inflicted by others without becoming angry.

A peace-loving religion

Buddhism has always been a peaceful religion since its inception more than 2500 years ago. Right from the Buddha's time, the value of tolerance has been extended to indicate both broad-mindedness and respect for other religions. One famous role model to demonstrate this is Emperor Asoka, probably the greatest Buddhist ruler to exist. After becoming a Buddhist, he stopped warring and conquering others by force and instead promoted the Buddhist

teaching of non-violence and respect for all religious traditions that existed in his territory. He made offerings to non-Buddhist religious organisations as well as to Buddhist communities.


Respecting other religions

On this aspect, the Buddha taught us a great lesson through an incident.

Once, the Buddha was approached by a general who had long been a disciple of Mahavira (founder of Jainism) but who wanted to take the Buddha as his teacher after listening to the Buddha's teaching. He made the request thrice, but the Buddha remained silent. On the third occasion, the Buddha replied that he would be accepted only under the following two conditions: first, he should continue to respect and provide material support to his original teacher; second, he should not slander his original religion. What a noble and respectful quality the Buddha demonstrated!

Finally, for a Buddhist, practising tolerance also means rejecting retaliation or harbouring no revenge. That is why in the history of Buddhism you can only see Buddhists being persecuted by non-Buddhist rulers, but you won't find a Buddhist ruler persecuting other religions. When being attacked, pious Buddhists would choose to accept being killed by others as a result of their karma rather than to resist or fight back.

The above illustrates how a true Buddhist practises the virtue of tolerance, and I think anyone who loves and promotes peace and harmony among all sentient beings should do the same. To many people, the approach may sound overly submissive. Yet peace and harmony can never be obtained without genuine tolerance that on the surface is nothing but passive and submissive.

May you all be well and happy! May we all live in peace and harmony, always! 

Cultivating forbearance

Here are some techniques on how we can achieve forbearance:

1. Recall the Buddha's words that no conqueror is nobler than a person who conquers his own anger, a Buddhist requisite for Enlightenment. Thus anyone pursuing Enlightenment should conquer his or her anger.
2. Remember what the Buddha said: "Hatred can never be extinguished by hatred; it can only be extinguished by compassion".
3. Realise that the one who gets angry or harbours hatred is harmed and poisoned by the anger and hatred himself.
4. Anger not only destroys our virtues which are needed for attaining Enlightenment, it also creates new karma which fetters us to the cycle of birth and death, and of suffering. Thus, if we cannot bear the pain of the present attack, we must nip anger in the bud because if we don't, the karmic result caused by the anger will drag us down to lower rebirths where the pains experienced will be much more severe than those caused by the present attack.
5. Contemplate on the teaching of rebirth. Think "the attacker used to be one of my relatives in one of my past lives, therefore I owe him or her kindness. How can I get angry with someone who used to be kind to me?"
6. Be grateful to the attacker for providing you with an opportunity to practise the virtue of forbearance. Unpleasant experiences deepen our understanding of life's true nature. An ordeal is a fortunate experience to those who are determined to perfect their virtues.



An Interview with a Newly Ordained Monastic

Awaken: Ven, what spurred you to want to be a fully ordained Bhikshuni?

VEN.: I aspire to bhikshuni ordination. I will be eligible for that next year. I have been a student of Ven. Thubten Chodron for many years. I went to almost every retreat and teaching she taught in the city I lived in. Over the years, I received numerous teachings — the nature of suffering, the causes of suffering, the fact that our afflictions and karma can be purified and eliminated, that Nirvana is peace and that there is a path to liberation and enlightenment. Listening to and digesting those teachings, it slowly started to sink into me that what the Buddha said was true. Turning 50, I also began to really question what my life is about. I started to reflect that I don't have much time left before death strikes and when that happens, what sort of mind-state would I want to be in? With that thought some years back, I began to think about ordination. I was initially resistant to the idea as I enjoyed my 19 years of full-time work in Reiki healing. It only became crystal clear to me that I want to embark on this path after being a founding member of establishing Sravasti Abbey, and realizing that as a layperson I couldn't practise as deeply or as fully as I want to. It also helped that my teacher has established a monastery in the US and said, "If you want to practise deeply, come in."

Awaken: How did your family take it? Was your family supportive of your decision?

VEN.: I'm blessed. I faced no obstacles of family or children. However, at the beginning, my 73-year old mother wasn't too happy. Although she was

Ven. Chonyi, a novice nun of Sravasti Abbey, tells Esther Thien candidly of her decision to take a less beaten track.

supportive of me being a Buddhist for a long time, the very idea of shaving my head, giving up my career, and not having much contact with family didn't go down too well with her. My mum always tells my siblings and me that we have to live our own lives. "I cannot dictate that for you," she said. With that firm belief, she was trying to work out her great discomfort with me becoming a Buddhist nun. The change in mindset started for her one day when she was having a pottery lesson. She told someone in class about my plans to receive ordination, and that person broke into a huge smile and said: "Aren't you happy? Aren't you proud of her? That is the most wonderful thing a person could do. You should be so happy for your daughter." That statement helped her to turn her thinking around. She then visited Sravasti Abbey with me so she could see the monastery I would be living in and also to meet Ven. Thubten Chodron. A year and a half later when my mum visited again, she went up to Ven. Thubten Chodron and told her, "I have never seen her happier in her life." And she's happy that I'm happy.

Awaken: How is a householder's life different from a novice monastic's life?

VEN.: A monastic schedule is very structured. Our day starts at 5.30am and is dedicated to practice, prayers, study, and offering service to the Three Jewels and to sentient beings. I could never achieve such structure in my lay life. Even though I had very stable morning and evening practices, they were sometimes long and sometimes short. Imagine doing just 20 or 30 minutes of sitting practice a day as compared to two or three hours of practice. I was also very socially engaged with friends and clients before becoming a monastic. But now, each day, the focus is on practising, offering service and sharing the Dharma in outreach work such as counselling, prison work with inmates, answering emails on Dharma questions from all over the world, participating in interfaith gatherings, conducting Dharma teachings, meditation and life-skill classes in churches. I'm also absolutely clear that the benefit I'm offering in my work of sharing the Dharma is not just in this life, but in many, many lives, as we are planting seeds that would help people in the long-term. My quality of life has increased significantly. Even though as a householder I enjoyed a good livelihood, did what I wanted, had good friends and relished a good relationship with a good Dharma



teacher, I still experienced dissatisfactions. But being a monastic, I am working to pull away and get freed from the attachment that drives us in our lives, which is why my mum could see that I am happier.

Awaken: What have you learned now that you are a novice nun?

VEN.: It's so much more than I thought — to be able to spend my day and night just studying and working with my own mind through observing and overcoming the mental defilements. It is also an incredible privilege to be given the responsibility to share the Dharma whenever possible as much as I can. I learn something about myself, about the Dharma and what it means to be a monastic every day.

Awaken: How do you wish to contribute back to the Buddhist Community?

VEN.: I realise that just by assisting my teacher, Ven Thubten Chodron, for a few days is so much more helpful and beneficial to so many more people than I had ever been able to help in my previous full-time job. I'm committed to giving the Abbey a strong footing and to devoting myself in whatever ways it takes to get this monastery going solid and strong in America. This is how I hope to contribute to the

Buddhist Community, to serve the Dharma and to serve all sentient beings.

Awaken: Ven., do you have any anecdote or interesting personal experience to share after becoming a novice nun?

VEN.: Well, I have a story on the impact the abbey has had in our local community. It is a testament to the kindness of the nuns before me. I was the third nun ordained in the abbey. At the abbey, before receiving novice ordination, the candidate trains with the eight *anagarika* precepts, shaving the head and donning a grey training uniform. So the first time I went out to run errands and go to

Awaken: What advice would you give to someone who is also thinking about getting ordination?

VEN.: Meditate frequently on the Four Noble Truths. I strongly believe that the only reason one should become a monastic is on the basis of a conviction that liberation is desirable and possible. We have to fully understand and deeply internalise that cyclical existence cannot provide us any true satisfaction.

Awaken: Any Dharma advice or last words to give to laypersons who would like to practise the Buddha's teachings in this modern age?

VEN.: I'm inspired by those who lead a householder's life and yet have a strong practice, simply because it is not easy to practise in a householder's life. So first, rejoice in the fact that you have a practice. Don't feel guilty about being a householder but make time for practice.

Schedule time daily for your practice such as meditation in the same way you make time to eat, sleep, shower and go to work every day. Make it just as essential and necessary as the way you treat your mundane activities.

Then again, don't feel guilty about not meditating if you really cannot, because that is no good either. We can

practise by observing the Dharma principles in our daily life, for instance, abiding by the precepts in all that we do, practising contentment with who we are and what we have, setting our motivation each morning when we go to school or work to benefit all sentient beings; that is practice too, everyday practice. So there are many ways to apply the Dharma in everyday life. As we let go of attachment, we will face less dissatisfactions. 🙏



the bank as an *anagarika*, I was uncertain what I would encounter. But when I entered the bank with the deposit in my hand, facing the teller, who was a complete stranger, she started talking to me very warmly, "Oh, hi! It's so good to see you," and she continued talking as if she knew I was from the abbey! The same thing happened at the other store. All because the previous nuns had been so warm and kind to them.

A Pilgrimage to the Two Great Mountains of Buddhism

BY | Ven. Chuan Hou



The Importance of a Pilgrimage

In Buddhism, the arising of Dharma does not occur on its own, it depends on causes and conditions (法不孤起，仗境方生). Due to the requests of devotees, Kong Meng San Phor Kar See Monastery organised a Pilgrimage to China for the very first time in June last year. I was very pleased; this trip held great significance to me as it would allow our devotees to better understand Chinese Buddhism, Chinese culture and Chinese history in the course of this travel, just as the previous India Pilgrimage imparted to the pilgrims a deeper understanding of Buddhism in India.

When we go on such a pilgrimage, we trace the Buddha's steps towards attaining enlightenment. The most important aspect when embarking on a pilgrimage is in keeping our mind pure and clear.

We are always thinking about this and that. The mind is forever grasping external phenomena or

objects that are by nature impermanent and unreal. Through the pilgrimage, we receive blessings from the Buddha or Bodhisattvas, amassing the energy from the temple and its people. Meanwhile, we will also develop our wisdom, and as a result, we will be able to control our mind and concentrate single-pointedly, when reciting the Buddha's name or chanting the sutras. With greater practice, we will then know how to meditate and enter into a silent state.

The Journey

More than 80 participants enrolled for the 8-day Pilgrimage last June. Including Venerables and monastery staff, a total of 96 persons travelled on this trip. Abbot Ven. Kwang Sheng was the group leader.

The flight from Singapore to Nanjing took about five hours. When we arrived, we separated the group into three teams of Pink, Yellow and Blue before

following the itinerary. We stayed in Nanjing for one night before travelling to Mount Jiuhua (九华山) and Huangshan or Yellow Mountain (黄山), then to Hangzhou city (杭州) and Mount Putuo (普陀山), and finally to Shanghai (上海).

This was first time that I had stepped foot on Mount Jiuhua, although I had visited Hangzhou, Mount Putuo and Shanghai many years ago.

Mount Jiuhua

Mount Jiuhua is one of the four sacred mountains of Chinese Buddhism. It is located in Qingyang County (青阳县) of Anhui Province (安徽省) and covers more than 100 square kilometres. Popular for its spectacular peaks and perilous cliffs, Mount Jiuhua is endowed with a myriad of springs, streams, waterfalls, grotesque rocks and ancient caves. Covered with lush green pines and bamboo groves, and gleaming with crystal-clear waters, it offers enchanting scenery. It is also famous for the large number of temples and nunneries, which are unique in style and magnificent in architecture. At the height of prosperity, the temples numbered 300 and the monks and nuns more than 5,000. At present, there are about 79 well-preserved temples, over 1,500 Buddha statues and more than 1,300 pieces of cultural relics like Buddhist scriptures, musical instruments etc.

Mount Jiuhua was originally known as Jiuzi (Nine-Peak) Mountain. But the mountain was renamed as Mount Jiuhua ever since Li Bai (李白), the celebrated poet in the Tang Dynasty, wrote the following prose of the mountain:

*Sailing down the Jiujiang River the other day,
I saw the Jiuhua Peaks in the distance.
Looking like a heavenly river hanging in heaven,
Its green water embroidering cottonrose hibiscuses*

(昔在九江上，遥望九华峰；天河挂绿水，秀出九芙蓉)

According to historical records, the first temple was built in 503 AD. During 713-755, Kim Kyokak (金乔觉), a Korean aristocrat, came to Mount Jiuhua and lived in a stone cave. His austere practice moved the local people who contributed money to build a temple for him named Huacheng Monastery (化城寺). 75 years later, Kim attained Nirvana and he was widely believed to be the incarnation of





Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva (地藏菩萨). As his body did not decompose even three years later, he was respected as the Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. His body was wrapped with earth and preserved till today. The Flesh (肉身) Pagoda was built to revere him, and thus Mount Jiuhua became the place where Ksitigarbha

Bodhisattva rites are performed. This is the history about Mount Jiuhua and its significance in Buddhism. Today, over hundreds and thousands of devotees from all over the world come to Mount Jiuhua for their pilgrimage every year.

Mount Putuo

When we arrived at Mount Putuo, it was nearly 7pm, for we had stopped at Ningbo City for two hours to see the Buddha's relic in Asoka Temple. I could feel the joy and heightened mindfulness of the participants after seeing the relic. That night, we stopped over in the hotel called *Xiaoxilei*, which is on the right side of Puji Temple, the biggest temple in Mount Putuo.

Mount Putuo, located on Lianhua Ocean (莲花洋) of Zhoushan Archipelago (舟山群岛) to the east of Hangzhou Gulf, covers an area of only 12.5 square kilometres. Mount Putuo has beautiful sandy beaches; the loveliest of them is the Thousand Step Beach (千步沙). This stretches along the eastern coast and is separated from Hundred Step Beach (百步沙) by a headland and cave. There are many other wonderful scenic sites on the island, including temples and nunneries, Exotic Rocks (奇异岩石), The Sounds of Two Caves (两洞潮音), Lotus Pool's Night Moon (莲池夜月), Pantuo Evening Glow (磐陀夕照), Pantuo Morning Dawn (磐陀晓日), The Lights of Luoja (洛迦灯火) etc. Thus it is known as "the Buddhist Kingdom amidst the Sea and Sky" (海天佛国).

Mount Putuo first became a Buddhist Sanctuary during the Tang Dynasty. In AD 863, there was a Japanese monk named Hui'e who visited and studied on Mount Wutai (五台山) in China. When it was time for him to leave the mountain, he asked for permission to bring a Guanyin statue back with him to Japan for worship. Hui'e carried the sacred statue carefully by himself, and travelled by land to Kaiyuan Temple (开元寺) at the port city of Ningbo (宁波).



He planned to take a boat from Ningbo back to Japan. When he tried to board the boat, however, the Guanyin statue suddenly became heavy. It was so heavy that he couldn't carry it. Left with no choice, he asked for help and eventually about a dozen people gathered together to lift the statue and put it onto the boat. The boat soon sailed to the lotus sea near Mount Putuo.

To everyone's surprise, the originally smooth and calm ocean suddenly became choppy and turbulent. Among the high waves, countless iron lotus flowers were also scattered. There was just no way the boat could sail further. At night, Hui'e had a dream. He dreamt of a monk telling him that "as long as you let me remain in this mountain, I'll give you the wind that will send you back to Japan". That woke Hui'e up and he revealed this dream to his companions. After worshipping Guanyin, they were able to sail to the shore of Mount Putuo, and Hui'e built a simple straw hut near Chaoyin cave (潮音洞) to house the Guanyin statue. Once done, the boat was able to leave the lotus sea, and Hui'e sailed smoothly back to Japan. As the Guanyin statue didn't want to leave for Japan, it was named "reluctant to go" Guanyin. A local resident, Mr. Zhang (张氏), learned of the story and modified his own house into a small temple. The *Reluctant to Go Guanyin* was then moved to this temple and he named it *Reluctant to Go Guanyin Temple* (不肯去观音院).

Today, there are more than 500 monks and nuns living on Mount Putuo serving in a myriad of temples. In 1214, the Guanyin statue was enshrined and from then on, Mount Putuo became a designated spot to perform Buddhist rites especially for enshrining Guanyin statues. The main scenic spots are the three large temples named Puji (普济寺), Fayu (法雨寺) and Huiji (慧济寺). Puji is surrounded by beautiful camphor trees. This temple is located at the island's tourist centre. It was built in the 11th century, although the current temple is far newer. With 200 halls piled up against the flank of a hill overlooking the sea, Fayu is a

charming temple. Huiji Temple stands close to the top of Foding Shan (佛顶山). It stands resplendent amid tea bushes and bamboo groves, dating back to 1793. A cable car links a minibus stop to the summit of Foding Shan from where there are wonderful views across the island and out into the sea.

Every year, over one million pilgrims visit Mount Putuo. Especially on the three holy days of Guanyin (19th February, 19th June and 19th September in the Chinese lunar calendar), pilgrims surge like the tide to congregate here. Mount Putuo proves itself to be a famous Buddhist destination and tourist spot. On our trip, some of our participants wanted to buy some souvenirs from Mount Putuo and requested me to help them bargain with the stall owners. That was an interesting experience as the stall owners were none too pleased with a local monastic helping Singaporean tourists to obtain better prices.

After visiting Mount Putuo, we went on to Shanghai and stayed there for our final two days in China. When the coach arrived in dazzling Shanghai, the participants went shopping immediately and bought a lot of souvenirs, clothes, luggage bags etc. They not only embarked on this pilgrimage in a joyous state of mind, but also came back with 'fruitful' results, armed with bags of gifts.



Ten must-see sights of Mount Jiuhua

1. The mountain scenery by the Five Streams (五溪山色)
2. The waterfall at Taoyan (桃岩瀑布)
3. The moon mirrored in the Shutan Pool (舒潭印月)
4. The serene form of the East Cliff (东岩晏坐)
5. The snow mantle over the Flat Terrace (平冈积雪)
6. Evening Bell Tolls at Huacheng (化城晚钟)
7. The Sea of Clouds around the Lotus Peak (莲峰云海)
8. The Singing Stream at Jiuzi (九子泉声)
9. Celestial Presence at the Heavenly Pillar (天柱仙踪)
10. Sunrise at the Heavenly Terrace (天台晓日)

Inspiring accounts from the Pilgrims

I had my first pilgrimage in June 2009, and it was a trip I will never forget.

When I first heard of the China Pilgrimage tour to Mount Putuo, Mount Jiuhua and Mount Huangshan organised by Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery, I was both excited and worried. Excited because this trip would be different from my past sightseeing tours; worried because I was afraid that, being a couch potato, I might not have the physical stamina to endure all the mountain climbing. However, after much deliberation, I decided to proceed with the trip.

The first stop was at Mount Jiuhua, one of the four holy Buddhist mountains located in Qingyang County in Anhui province. Mount Jiuhua is dedicated to Ksitigarbha, a bodhisattva and a protector of beings in hell according to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Among the locals, Mount Jiuhua is known to have 99 temples throughout the mountain. Although we did not visit all of them, we did however visit a number of well-known temples including the one that housed the skeleton of Venerable Wu Xia that has been preserved for more than 350 years. After a night's

stay, I left the mountain in an exceptionally calm and serene state of mind.

The next stop of our trip took us high up into Mount Huangshan via a cable car ride. Renowned for its sunrise and sunset, uniquely-shaped pine trees, peculiarly-shaped granite peaks and the views of the clouds from above, many of us hoped to see all the four wonders during our one-night stay in the mountains. Despite being told by the local tour guide that there was only a 40% chance for us to see the sunrise clearly the next day, a number of us were unperturbed and decided to wake up at 4am to catch a glimpse of the famed sunrise. Armed with torch lights and strong determination, we made our way up to the mountain peak and waited patiently among many other like-minded tourists. When the sun finally arose, we were in awe and overjoyed to see the spectacular view.

Our last stop was at Mount Putuo, another sacred Buddhist mountain that is dedicated to Avalokitesvara (Guan Yin), the Bodhisattva who embodies the great compassion of all Buddhas. Mount Putuo is not a mountain as its name suggests but is actually an island located in Zhoushan Islands, off Ningbo city. While there, we visited the many temples located on the island and also chanted the Heart Sutra in one of the temple halls.

Before our last stop in Shanghai city, we also visited an ancient town, Xitang in Jiashan County, a water town famous for its local life beside the rivers.

As I recount my experience from the trip, I am thankful that I am blessed to be able to visit the sacred temples with many fellow Dharma brothers and sisters. I also treasured the time when Venerable Chuan Hou gave us an impromptu Dharma talk at the teahouse. My sincerest thanks to Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery for organising this wonderful trip and making it a memorable one for me.

— Ms Aw Yeong Yuk Chin and Ms Lee Su Won

The “Buddhistic” aspects of this trip left a deep impression on me. At Mount Jiuhua’s Rou Shen Dian monastery, I felt at peace, captivated by the account of the Hundred Year Bodhisattva, and in awe of the huge Buddha and Bodhisattva images found at the third temple we visited.



On Mount Putuo, we visited two of the three key sites on the island — Fa Yu Monastery, Pu Ji Monastery, as well as Bu Ken Qu Guan Yin monastery. But the most striking memory I have of the island is the very tall Nan Hai Guan Yin statue.

Standing in front of this colossal statue, I thought I could feel the benevolence and compassion of the real Guan Yin Bodhisattva, standing quietly but majestically, being there for all sentient beings.

On my return, I told a friend that Mount Putuo is a place that all practitioners chanting Guan Yin’s name or mantra should go. I came back with my faith in the Bodhisattva strengthened. I am thankful to all those who built the statue, from the late Venerable who initiated the project to those involved in maintaining the site. This destination is a must-go!



taking in the super-fresh air and walking amidst the lush pines of Huangshan. I also finally got to visit the all-famous West Lake (Xi Hu), though I admit the experience might have been more idyllic had it been in the evening amidst the sunset. We also visited a water-village preserving some of the Ming Dynasty heritage.

It would have been a pity if we had left China without incorporating some of these sites in our itinerary, and I'm glad for the foresight of our organisers.

Last but not least, the “human” factor throughout the trip made it a most unforgettable journey. Our group leaders from the monastery, Cai Fei and Felix, were very approachable and fun. Our group tour guide, Mr Lu, was also knowledgeable and mixed jokes with his in-depth knowledge of the people, history and bargaining tactics (!) related to the places we went to. Each member of the group looked out for the other and this made the group feel closer and more connected. The Venerable attached to our group also joked with us and took time to give us a brief sharing about this pilgrimage, while Ven. Kwang Sheng made it a point to give an “opening” and “closing” speech to remind us to treasure this opportunity of being able to visit the holy Buddhist mountains and to make sincere vows of liberation and enlightenment.

My father and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we are very grateful to the Venerables, monastery staff, tour guides, fellow trip-mates and the conditions that made this trip possible and for ensuring we could happily and safely pass these eight days in China. ☺

— Mr Wong Bein Siong

While we were at A Yu Wang Temple in Zhejiang, the Abbot granted us special permission to go to the Relic Hall to see a Buddha's relic. This Hall is not normally open to visitors, and I believe we were fortunate enough to be granted a glimpse of the relic thanks to the presence of our accompanying Venerables. Coming in close contact with the relic was a sobering and inspiring experience.

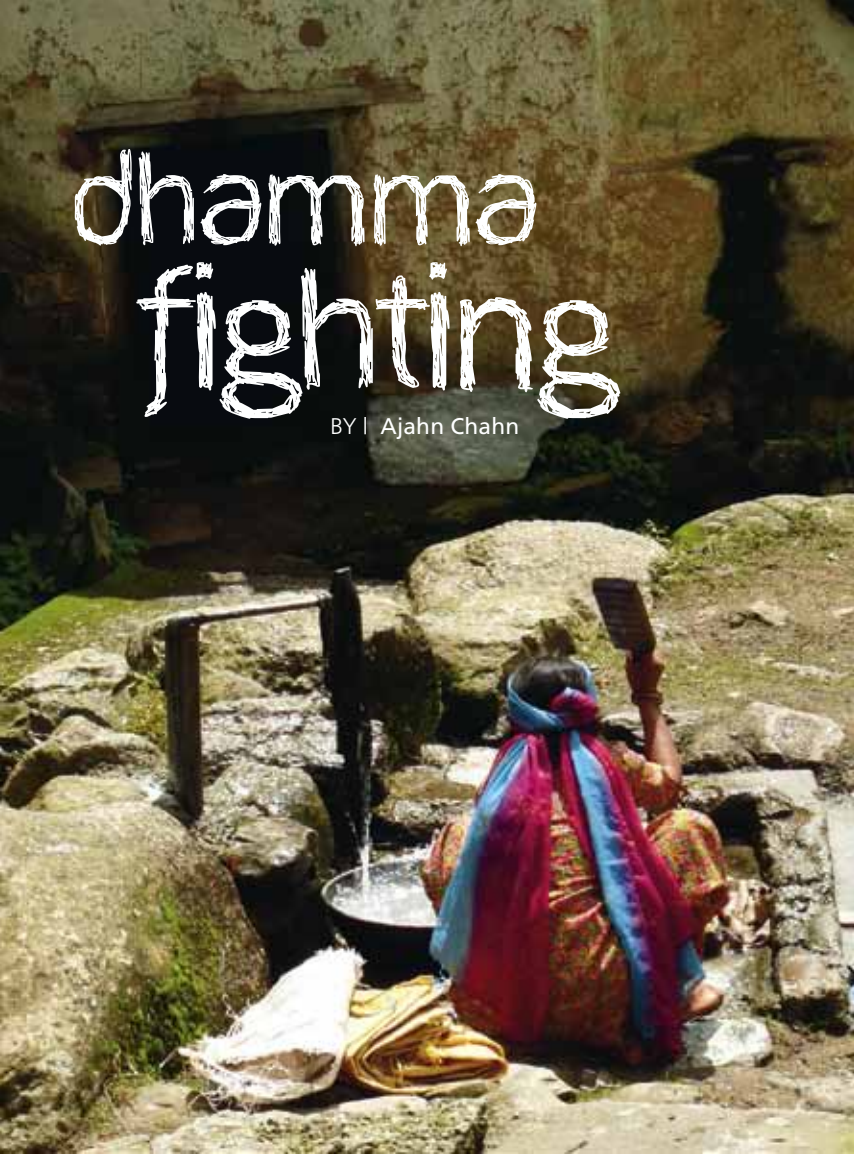


The scenery and rich history of some of the sites we visited were also awe-inspiring. For those interested in Chinese culture, travelling to the heights of Huangshan and looking at the pine trees afar really drive home the essence of many famous Chinese poems about the magnificent mountains and their majesty. Even if you're not a fan of Chinese culture, it's still an amazingly invigorating experience

To register or enquire more about the 2010 China Pilgrimage to Mount Emei and Mount Wutai in June, please call 6849 5300 from March onwards.

dhamma fighting

BY | Ajahn Chahn



Fight greed, fight aversion, fight delusion... these are the enemy. In the practice of Buddhism, the path of the Buddha, we fight with *Dhamma*, using patient endurance. We fight by resisting our countless moods.

Dhamma and the world are inter-related. Where there is *Dhamma* there is the world, where there is the world there is *Dhamma*. Where there are defilements there are those who conquer defilements, who do battle with them. This is called fighting inwardly. To fight outwardly people take hold of bombs and guns to throw and to shoot; they conquer and are conquered. Conquering others is the way of the world. In the practice of *Dhamma* we don't have to fight others, but instead conquer our own minds, patiently enduring and resisting all our moods.

When it comes to *Dhamma* practice we don't harbour resentment and enmity amongst ourselves, but instead let go of all forms of ill-will in our own actions and thoughts, freeing ourselves from jealousy, aversion and resentment. Hatred can only be overcome by not harbouring resentment and bearing grudges.

Hurtful actions and reprisals are different but closely related. Actions once done are finished with, there's no need to answer with revenge and hostility. This is called "action" (*kamma*). "Reprisal" (*vera*) means to continue that action further with thoughts of "you did it to me so I'm going to get you back." There's no end to this. It brings about the continual seeking of revenge, and so hatred is never abandoned. As long as we behave like this the chain remains unbroken, there's no end to it. No matter where we go, the feuding continues. (Ed: See story on page 60 which illustrates the above point)

The supreme teacher (the Buddha) taught the world, he had compassion for all worldly beings. But the world nevertheless goes on like this. The wise should look into this and select those things which are of true value. The Buddha had trained in the various arts of warfare as a prince, but he saw that they weren't really useful, they are limited to the world with its fighting and aggression.

Therefore, in training ourselves as those who have left the world, we must learn to give up all forms of evil, giving up all those things which are the cause for enmity. We conquer ourselves, we don't try to conquer others. We fight, but we fight only the defilements; if there is greed, we fight that; if there is aversion, we fight that; if there is delusion, we strive to give it up.

This is called "*Dhamma* fighting". This warfare of the heart is really difficult. In fact it's the most difficult thing of all. We become monks in order to contemplate this, to learn the art of fighting greed, aversion and delusion. This is our prime responsibility. This is the inner battle, fighting with defilements. But there are very few people who fight like this. Most people fight with other things, they rarely fight defilements. They rarely even see them.

The Buddha taught us to give up all forms of evil and cultivate virtue. This is the right path. Teaching in this way is like the Buddha picking us up and placing us at the beginning of the path. Having reached the path, whether we walk along it or not is up to us. The Buddha's job is finished right there. He shows the way, that which is right and that which is not right. This much is enough, the rest is up to us.

Now, having reached the path we still don't know anything, we still haven't seen anything, so we must learn. To learn we must be prepared to endure some hardship, just like students in the world. It's difficult enough to obtain the knowledge and learning necessary for them to pursue their careers. They have to endure. When they think wrongly or feel averse or lazy they must force themselves before they can graduate and get a job. The practice for a monk is similar. If we are determined to practise and contemplate, then we will surely see the way.

Ditthi-māna is a harmful thing. *Ditthi* means “view” or “opinion”. All forms of view are called *ditthi*: seeing good as evil, seeing evil as good... any way whatsoever that we see things. This is not the problem. The problem lies with the clinging to those views, called *māna*; holding on to those views as if they were the truth. This leads us to spin around from birth to death, never reaching completion, just because of that clinging. So the Buddha urged us to let go of views.

If many people live together, as we do here, they can still practise comfortably if their views are in harmony. But even two or three monks would have difficulty if their views were not good or harmonious. When we humble ourselves and let go of our views, even if there are many of us, we come together at the Buddha, Dhamma and *Sangha* (the Monastic Order, or those who have realised the Dhamma).

It's not true to say that there will be disharmony just because there are many of us. Just look at a millipede. A millipede has many legs, doesn't it? Just looking at it you'd think it would have difficulty walking, but actually it doesn't. It has its own order and

rhythm. In our practice it's the same. If we practise as the Noble Sangha of the Buddha practised, then it's easy. That is, *supatipanno* - those who practise well; *ujupatipanno* - those who practise straightly; *ñāyapatipanno* - those who practise to transcend suffering, and *sāmicipatipanno* - those who practise properly. These four qualities, established within us, will make us true members of the *Sangha*. Even if we number in the hundreds or thousands, no matter how many we are, we all travel the same path. We come from different backgrounds, but we are the same.

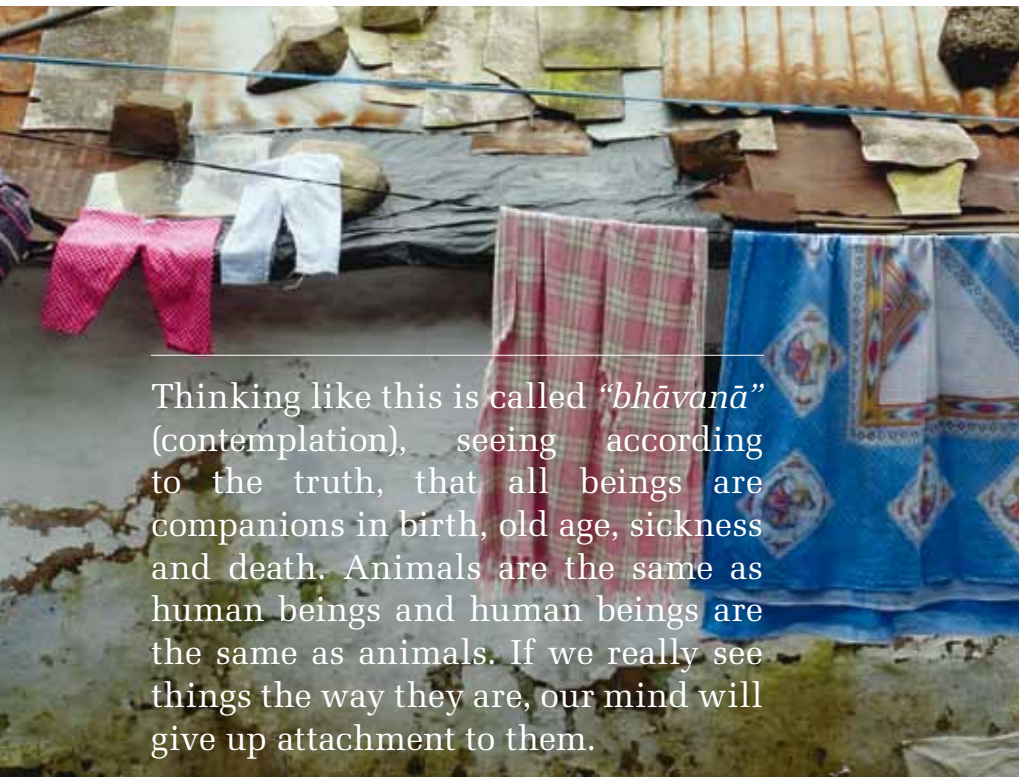
Even though our views may differ, if we practise correctly there will be no friction. Just like all the rivers and streams which flow to the sea... once they enter the sea they all have the same taste and colour. It's the same with people. When they enter the stream of *Dhamma*, it's the one *Dhamma*. Even though they come from different places, they harmonise, they merge. But the thinking which causes all the disputes and conflict is *ditthi-māna*. Therefore the Buddha taught us to let go of views. Don't allow *māna* to cling to those views beyond their relevance.

The Buddha taught the value of constant *sati*, recollection. Whether we are standing, walking, sitting or reclining, wherever we are, we should have this power of recollection. When we have *sati* we see ourselves, we see our own minds. We see the “body within the body”, “the mind within the mind”. If we don't have *sati* we don't know anything, we aren't aware of what is happening.

So *sati* is very important. With constant *sati* we will listen to the *Dhamma* of the Buddha at all times. This is because “eye seeing forms” is *Dhamma*; “ear hearing sounds” is *Dhamma*; “nose smelling odours” is *Dhamma*; “tongue tasting flavours” is *Dhamma*; “body feeling sensations” is *Dhamma*; when impressions arise in the mind, that is *Dhamma* also. Therefore one who has constant *sati* always hears the Buddha's teaching. The *Dhamma* is always there. Why? Because of *sati*, because we are aware.

Sati is recollection, *sampajañña* is self-awareness. This awareness is the actual *Buddho*, the Buddha. When there is *sati-sampajañña*, understanding will follow. We know what is going on. When the eye sees forms: is this proper or improper? When the ear hears sound: is this appropriate or inappropriate? Is it harmful? Is it wrong, is it right? And so on like this with everything. If we understand we hear the *Dhamma* all the time.

So let us all understand that right now we are learning in the midst of *Dhamma*. Whether we go forward or step back, we meet the *Dhamma* - it's all *Dhamma* if we have *sati*. Even seeing the animals running around in the forest we can reflect, seeing that all animals are the same as us. They run away from suffering and chase after happiness, just as people do. Whatever they don't like they avoid; they are afraid of dying, just like people. If we reflect on this, we see that all beings in the world, people as well, are the same in their various instincts.



Thinking like this is called "*bhāvanā*" (contemplation), seeing according to the truth, that all beings are companions in birth, old age, sickness and death. Animals are the same as human beings and human beings are the same as animals. If we really see things the way they are, our mind will give up attachment to them.

Therefore it is said we must have *sati*. If we have *sati* we will see the state of our own mind. Whatever we are thinking or feeling we must know it. This knowing is called *Buddho*, the Buddha, the one who knows... who knows thoroughly, who knows clearly and completely. When the mind knows

completely we find the right practice. So the straight way to practise is to have mindfulness, *sati*. If you are without *sati* for five minutes you are crazy for five minutes, heedless for five minutes. Whenever you are lacking in *sati* you are crazy. So *sati* is essential. To have *sati* is to know yourself, to know the condition of your mind and your life. This is to have understanding and discernment, to listen to the *Dhamma* at all times. After leaving the teacher's discourse, you still hear the *Dhamma*, because the *Dhamma* is everywhere.

So therefore, all of you, be sure to practise every day. Whether lazy or diligent, practise just the same. Practice of the *Dhamma* is not done by following your moods. If you practise following your moods then it is not *Dhamma*. Don't discriminate between day and night, whether the mind is peaceful or not... just practise. It's like a child who is learning to write.

At first he doesn't write nicely - big, long loops and squiggles - he writes like a child. After a while the writing improves through practice. Practising the *Dhamma* is like this. At first you are awkward... sometimes calm, sometimes not, you don't really know what's what. Some people get discouraged. Don't slacken off! You must persevere with the practice. Live with effort, just like the schoolboy: as he gets older he writes better and better. From writing badly he grows to write beautifully, all because of the practice from childhood.

Our practice is like this. Try to have recollection at all times: standing, walking, sitting or reclining. When we perform our various duties smoothly and well, we feel peace of mind. When there is peace of mind in our work it's easy to have peaceful meditation, they go hand in hand. So make an effort. You should all make an effort to follow the practice. This is the training.

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BY | Janice Goh

Miraculously, the magazine editor published my story and even paid me for it. In retrospect and with more writing lessons learnt, the article could have been written better. But, hey, it was my first published story and it featured a prominent monk in the Buddhist community. By virtue of these two combined factors, that story bears more value than do any of my published stories to date.

Buddhism lessons learnt

One of the salient points I gained from the one-to-one meeting with Ajahn Brahm was that one should explore and question and not just accept things as they are.

Buddhism encourages one to investigate and challenge indoctrination, I learnt.

This principle strikes a chord with me, as I am more a pragmatist most of the time. I question conventions and seek changes, with varying extent of success. At the start of this year, I started taking formal basic Buddhism studies. I am glad to say I always look forward to the class, even when I am battling yawns, caused by fatigue. Dharma teachings expand my mind, torture it sometimes with the questions that follow, but if I'm clear-minded enough at the right time and place, my consciousness emits a fleeting but powerful feeling of clarity, which I would like to think comes close to, in Buddhist parlance, one-pointedness.

At other times, I am happy to note that the teachings are very much aligned with my personal values. One of the five precepts, for example, teaches us not to indulge in idle gossip. While I cannot say that I am completely guilt-free of complaining about people and their actions, I do try to steer clear of the inevitable gossip sessions at work.

I have much more to learn about the Dharma. The same goes for writing and the English language. And I would always like to think that the fortuitous meeting with Ajahn Brahm five years ago had brought me closer to some of the things that I now hold close to my heart. 🙏

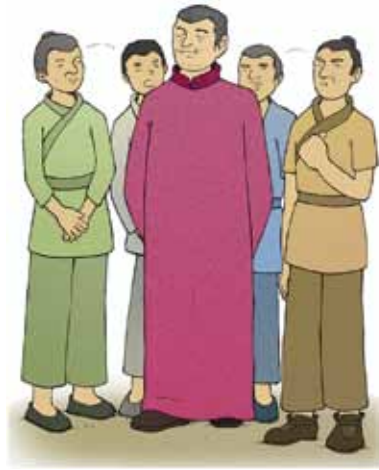
It was by chance that I met the venerated Ajahn Brahm in August 2004 when he visited Singapore to launch his book *Opening The Door Of Your Heart*, and to lead a meditation retreat at Sentosa. I was not a student of the Dharma then, but to this very day, I believe the turn of events that had led to the unplanned meeting heralded a momentous point of my life and the start of Dharma learning.

I was working for a distributor firm and had arranged for a local magazine to feature Ajahn Brahm. The editor later declined the interview after I told her that a major local newspaper would also be profiling the British monk and would probably publish the article earlier than the magazine would. Little point in featuring a subject in the magazine that would have been read by many in the daily newspaper, the editor reasoned. On the day of the interview, I received a call from the newspaper's writer who said apologetically she was unable to do the story after all owing to some last-minute changes. Dazed for a few minutes, I sat at a bus stop, tuning out the surrounding chatter and children's laughter, wondering how I would explain to the Venerable and his minders about the botched interview.

I decided to take a chance. I would interview him and offer the story to the magazine that had earlier declined it. At that time, I was an aspiring writer who had no formal writing experience and could only dream of owning a byline in newspapers and magazines. So it was with pluck, trepidation and excitement that I approached the Venerable.

The Rich Man's Spittle

ILLUSTRATIONS | Bee Li



1. Long ago, there was a very rich man who had many treasures. Wanting to gain his favour, he was often surrounded by people who were quick to please him at every chance.

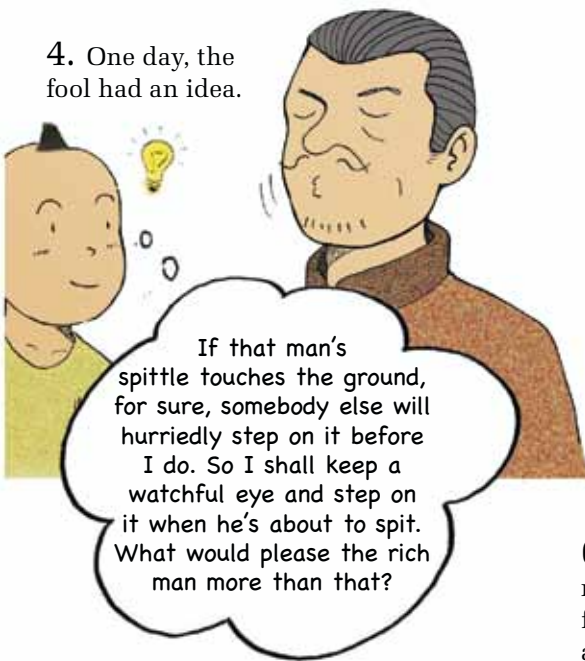


2. The rich man could not even spit without somebody in attendance hurrying to tread his spittle into the ground.



3. But there was a fool who never had an opportunity to do this.

4. One day, the fool had an idea.



5. Sure enough, the very next day, as the rich man was about to spit, the fool dashed up and kicked him in the mouth, splitting his lips and breaking his teeth.



6. The wealthy man recoiled from the thrust and shouted at the fool



Are you mad? Why did you kick me in the mouth?

I did it to gain your favour, sir... Whenever the spittle ejects from your mouth and falls to the ground, one of the flatterers tramples it into the earth before I can even lift my foot. That's why I put my foot on the spittle before it came out. Now that you know the reason, I sure hope you are pleased!

Certainly he is a great fool not to understand that there is a time for everything. If someone tries to force good results before their time is ripe, he will only create pain, hardship and difficulty. For this reason, people should realise when it is the time to do something, and when it is not.

~ story adapted from *The One Hundred Parable Sutra*



The Holy Man and the Animals

Far off in the Himalayan Mountains there once lived a holy man who wanted badly to achieve a deeper understanding of life and its nature. One summer it got so hot that all the nearby streams dried up and the holy man was forced to dig his own well.

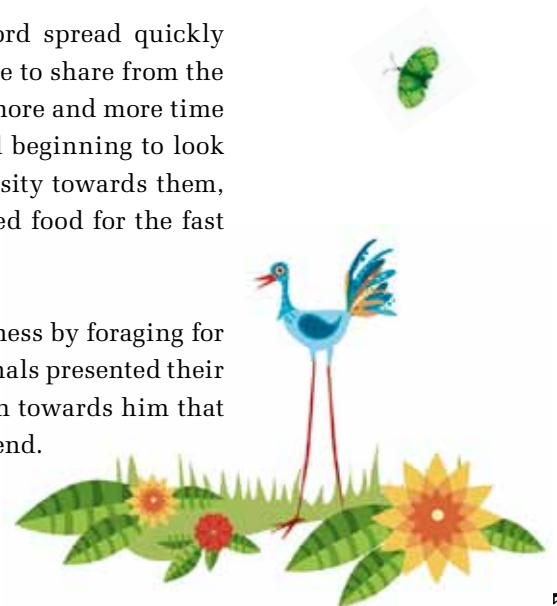
During the course of his difficult labour, the holy man noticed that many animals were also suffering from lack of water and many of them were slowly dying. Feeling great compassion and empathy for these creatures he decided to build them their own trough.

The holy man spent hours and hours in the sweltering heat working on this trough for the animals. First, he had to chop down a large tree and scrape out the wood to make a basin. As soon as this was completed he started bringing buckets of water from his well to fill the trough. This effort took up all of his time.

Soon, the animals in the area became aware of the water and word spread quickly through the region. Birds, rabbits, mice, deer and even a tiger all came to share from the same trough made by this very generous man. As the animals spent more and more time at the trough, they noticed that the holy man was losing weight and beginning to look ill. They also noticed he was growing weaker and that in his generosity towards them, he had greatly neglected his own needs and had not properly stocked food for the fast approaching winter.

The animals spoke among themselves and decided to repay his kindness by foraging for him and collecting all kinds of things for him to eat. Together the animals presented their gift to the holy man, who was so touched by the animals' compassion towards him that he continued to fill their trough until the drought finally came to an end.

Although the drought did end and the streams did refill, the holy man and the animals continued to remain friends. 🍃



Once upon a time, there lived a man who longed for children. He was getting impatient with his wife for not being able to bear him any children of his own. At the same time, his wife was getting increasingly anxious as she was not able to give him the offspring he yearned for.

Fearing that her husband would one day forsake her, she coaxed him into taking another wife. But each time she realised that the second wife was pregnant, she caused her to miscarry by putting some drugs into her food. The second wife eventually figured out what was going on, but it was too late to do anything, for she was already near death's door from being poisoned so often.

Before exhaling her last breath, however, the second wife vowed revenge for all the suffering she had endured at the hands of the first wife should their paths cross again in future lives. And indeed their paths did cross again.

Once, they were reborn as a cat and a hen, and another time as a leopardess and a doe, and each time one was after the other's offspring, which only created more and more hatred between themselves. Finally, they were reborn as the daughter of a nobleman and an ogress.

One day, the ogress in all her fury was chasing after the nobleman's daughter and her baby. The mother, in desperation, fled to the monastery where the Buddha was staying and begged the Buddha to save her child from the hungry ogress. Instead, the Buddha admonished her and the ogress for the folly of their unabated vengeance. He then recounted to them how their mutual hatred began and how, because of that hatred, they had been slaughtering each other's babies in their successive lifetimes. He made them realise that hatred only fuelled more hatred, and that hatred could cease only through good-will and compassion. The lady and the ogress felt great remorse for their past actions and asked each other for forgiveness. Finally, after many lifetimes of unbroken rivalry filled with hatred, they finally made peace with each other. ❧

The Lady and the Ogress



*Hatred in the world is indeed never appeased by hatred.
It is appeased only by loving-kindness.
This is an ancient law. ~ The Buddha (Dhammapada)*

SEEN

Follow Your Heart

> Little Note

Directed by: Royston Tan

Starring: Chue En Jye, Desmond Tan, Chen Jing Jun

Little Note is a heart-warming tale of the bond between a mother and her son and how they overcome the difficulties that life presents them with.

The young Zhiren is a social outcast in school, who is teased and ostracised by his peers for having no father. His mother isn't always there for him physically, but throughout the film, we see how she always strives to ensure that he knows that he has her support, through the titular little notes that she passes to him. These notes are spartan, comprising of only a few Chinese characters that simply say "No fear".

But it is through these notes that she guides him through the trials that he faces, be it the first day of school or a performance in front of the entire school.



And it is through these notes that the director Royston Tan encourages us to face the challenges of life and to chase our dreams without fear of what the unknown might bring. In light of the economic downturn that we're facing right now, his message is especially apt; what better way is there to forge ahead, other than to take each setback as a new opportunity to follow your dreams?

The final message Zhiren receives from his mother is just as simple and profound as the previous notes: "No regrets". The best way to live life is to follow your heart. Only then will you be fully satisfied, no matter the trials and tribulations that might come your way.

Get the DVD today at major stores island-wide! The specially designed DVD set also includes the trailer, *The Making of Little Note*, photo gallery and 8 postcards. Retail price: \$12.90.

READ

All Over the Sky, Bodhisattvas are Seen, And the Buddha's Hand is in Mine

> Peaceful Action, Open Heart: Lessons from the Lotus Sutra

By Thich Nhat Hanh

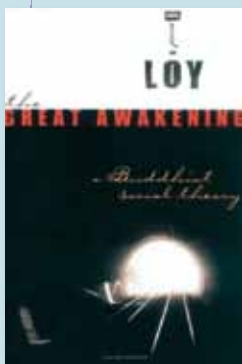
Unspeakable joy, faith and inner peace flooded into my being as I read this book. Using one of Mahayana Buddhism's most revered texts, the Lotus Sutra, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh expresses with great clarity how each human being has the capacity to transform his or her individual suffering, and develop compassion to help create more peace in this world. A truly beautiful, meditative and inspiring book. Priced at S\$28.80 from Awareness Place.



> The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory

By David Loy

All our individual suffering arises from only three sources, known in Buddhism as the three poisons: greed, ill-will and delusion. In *The Great Awakening*, scholar and Zen teacher David Loy examines how these three poisons, embodied in society's institutions, lie at the root of all social maladies as well. The Buddha's teachings present a way that the individual can use to counteract these poisons to ease personal suffering; and Loy boldly examines how these teachings can be applied to institutions and even entire cultures for the alleviation of suffering on a collective level. It provides a theoretical framework for socially engaged members of society to apply Buddhist spiritual principles to collective social issues. Buy it from Awareness Place at S\$28.00.



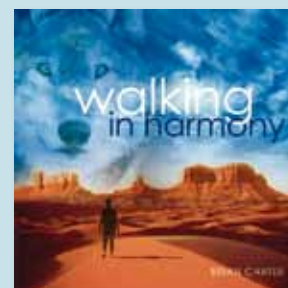
HEARD

Healing Music to Soothe the Heart & Mind

> Walking in Harmony

By Brian Carter

Relax with the calming melodies played out on delicate keyboards, acoustic and electric guitars and soothing piano to the occasional wolf howls and sounds of crashing thunder and gentle waves. Track one is especially mesmerising and superbly comforting. *Twilight Saga: New Moon* fans may like this. Buy it from Awareness Place at S\$22.90.



A spiritually enlightened person
is likely to be more tolerant than others.
A tolerant person does not like to interfere
with another's freedom of thought,
which is the birthright of every individual.
Tolerant people are not stubborn
or unreasonable with their views.
...never will they force their views on others.

Patience is mentioned as one of the
exemplary characteristics of a religious person,
along with sincerity,
swiftness in understanding
and tenderness.

One who has these four qualities
is said to be worthy of respect.

– *Ven. K Sri Dhammananda*

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas do not come from space
but from the inner mind.
We all wish to be freed
from the sufferings of Samsara.
We cannot do so from outer phenomena and objects,
we need to completely transform
the inner thoughts of dualistic fixation
into the luminous pure wisdom.

What is Samsara?

It is afflictive emotions and habitual tendencies
of dualistic discrimination and fixation.

What is Nirvana?

It is when all the gross afflictive emotions
and subtle conceptual thoughts
are thoroughly transformed into clarity.

– *Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche*

Chan says there is no coming or going,
So it does not matter where you are born.
What matters is now, this life.
What matters is your practice
in the present moment.
Don't worry about Dharma Ending Ages
And other worlds.

Just practise and cultivate the Buddhadharma.

– *Zen Master Sheng Yen*

Afflictions: Another name for negative or disturbing emotions, also known as kleshas. The three main emotional obscurations are passion or attachment; aggression or anger; and ignorance or delusion. The five kleshas are the above three plus pride and envy or jealousy.

Anagarika: Refer to a lay attendant of a monk, a term used in Theravada Buddhism. The monastic rules or Vinaya restrict monks from many tasks that might be needed, including the use of money, or driving to another location, so lay attendants help bridge this gap. All anagarika take the Eight Precepts, and often have the intention of becoming monks at a later point, though not always.

Anapanasati Sutta: This is a discourse (sutta) that details the Buddha's instruction on using the breath (anapana) as a focus for mindfulness (sati) meditation. The discourse lists sixteen objects on which one may meditate in order to bear insight and understanding into the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana), the Seven Factors of Awakening (Bojjhngas), and ultimately Nirvana.

Arhat: Foe or Enemy Destroyer. One who has destroyed the enemy of dualistic ego-grasping/clinging, and thus accomplished liberation of cyclic existence. There are three types of Arhats: Shravaka, Pratyekabuddha, Buddha.

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

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 dharmas. For the seasoned practitioner, even the Dharma must not become an attachment.

Avalokiteshvara: See Guanyin.

Aversion: Exaggerated wanting to be separated from someone or something.

Bhikkhuni: A fully ordained female Buddhist monastic, who lives by the vinaya's framework of monastic discipline. Their lifestyle is shaped so as to support their spiritual practice, to live a simple and meditative life, and attain Nirvana. Called bhikkhuni in Pali language.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Five Precepts: The basic guidelines of moral conduct - not killing, not stealing, not having sexual misconduct, not lying and not taking intoxicants.

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

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

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

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

Insight Meditation: A form of meditation that develops insight into the nature of the mind.

Interdependence: Also called dependent origination or conditioned arising. The principle that nothing exists independently, but comes into existence only on dependency of various previous causes and conditions. In other words, a phenomenon exists on condition that the other exists; it has on condition that others have; it extinguishes on condition that others extinguish; it has not on condition that others have not.

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

Ksitigarbha: A Bodhisattva known for his vow not to achieve Buddhahood until all hells are emptied; therefore, he is regarded as the bodhisattva of hell beings. Usually depicted as a monk with a nimbus around his shaved head, carrying a staff and a wish-fulfilling jewel.

Liberation: State after removing the defilements and karma which cause 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.

Lotus Sutra: The Lotus Sutra or *Sutra on the White Lotus of the Sublime Dharma* is one of the most popular and influential Mahayana sutras in Asia.

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.

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

Middle path: The Buddha's Nirvana-bound path of moderation away from the extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification and towards the practice of wisdom, morality and mental cultivation.

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

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

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

Novitiate: The period of training that a novice or prospective member of a religious order who has not yet been admitted to vows has to undergo in order to be found eligible or qualified for admission.

Rebirth: The continual cycle of birth and death.

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

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

Samadhi: Meditative stabilisation, concentration. One-pointed involvement in meditation where the meditation object and the practitioner are experienced as inseparable and indistinguishable. As there are many types of Samadhi, the term does not infer anything about the practitioner's realisation or accomplishment.

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

Sangha: An aspect of the Triple Gem - the holy community of monks and nuns.

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

Suffering: The physical and mental feeling of dissatisfaction.

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

Tathagata: One who has found the truth, and is beyond all coming and going. It is the name the historical Buddha used when referring to himself while he was alive.

Three evil paths: The three lower realms of rebirth — Animal realm, Hungry Ghost realm, Hell realm.

Threefold Refuge: Taking refuge in the Triple Gem.

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

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

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

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