

NanHua

Monthly NEWSLETTER

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To Live is to Move

N a n H u a | Dharma Talks

By Grand Master Hsing Yun



We all engage our physical selves in motion or in movement. Those who are ill move less frequently or not at all; and in death we cease to move altogether. In nature, water needs to run freely in order to be clean, while air has to move in order to be fresh; similarly, as humans we need to be active to stay alive. The body and mind are constantly on the move: hands, heart, emotion, hearing, pulse, spirit, strength, action, motivation, and feelings—even including temper and anger. Therefore, the easiest way to cultivate oneself is to practice beneficial movement and to eliminate bad movement. Beneficial movement harmonizes and purifies the body and mind.

Movement expresses energy and liveliness. According to the Amitabha Sutra, beings who live in the Pure Land carry daily “offerings of wondrous flowers to present to the Buddhas of the ten directions.” In the Diamond Sutra, “The Buddha would put on his robe and carry his alms bowl to the city to beg for food. After the meal, he would practice walking meditation.”

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva “would manifest in thirty-two forms to liberate sentient beings.” Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva vowed, “If I do not enter hell to liberate the beings there, who will?” All of these actions can be considered beneficial movement. Alone, Tang Dynasty’s Venerable Master Xuanzang traversed eight hundred miles of desert on foot to get to India in order to bring Buddhist scriptures to China. Without this movement, Chinese culture and art would not be as rich as it is today. Columbus traveled thousands of miles across the ocean to explore the American continent; without this journey, the United States might not exist in the same form it does now.

Movement is the meaning and energy of life for, because of movement, we can progress and be active. Through movement,

we can learn with others and integrate into society, thus gaining the necessary support of others in what we do. A person’s movements should not be judged alone, for we also need to look at the person and the event, as well as the action and the mind. If our speech is of no benefit to others, then we should not speak; and if our thought does not benefit others, then we should not think. If the steps we take have no benefit to others, then we should not proceed; and if the actions we make with our hands are not beneficial, then we should not move. Therefore, we should only move when it is necessary, and only restrict our movement when it is not.

Self-cultivation is necessary for us to understand Buddhism. Similarly, in anything we do, practice is more important than theory, just as actions have more impact than mere empty words. People who know how to do things know how to make things come alive and develop their potential. People who know how to play chess know how to make their game come alive and triumph over their opponent. People who know how to write know how to make their words come alive and touch the hearts of others. People who know how to speak know how to make their speech come alive and engage their audience.

Flowers bloom with all their fragrance while trees sway with the wind. We appreciate them because they are alive. Birds chirp in the trees, and we delight in their songs. Clouds gather and scatter in the sky, and we are relaxed by the peacefulness. Water in the brook cascades over the rocks, and we are refreshed by its coolness. We derive these positive feelings because all these movements are alive. To convey the hope and joy of life, then, we should always be on the move, as long as we live.

Temple Hosts Winter Youth Camp for Future Leaders

1st - 5th July 2009

Over 80 Buddhist youths from Johannesburg, Pretoria, New Castle, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Cape Town spent a fun-filled learning experience at Nan Hua Temple in its Winter Youth Camp from 1st July to 5th July.



At the opening ceremony, Venerable Hui-Fang, Camp Principal and Abbot of Nan Hua Temple, shares with campers, "Our society nowadays is in disarray filled with greed, anger and ignorance. Parents undergo all sorts of hardships for their children's lives. Teachers work diligently and tirelessly for their pupils' education. Youth enjoy the result achieved by society and blessing left by their family. What is your contribution to society? You are the future leaders and pillars of our country. Your behaviour will affect the rise and fall of our nation. Your conduct and morality will determine the security or danger of our nation."

Courses were carefully designed to help today's youth to improve self-confidence, self-esteem and participation in leadership building activities. Interactive workshops such as Hip-Hop aerobic and active sign language were introduced to promote a healthy lifestyle, classes on environmental awareness empowered campers to have a better understanding and reconnection with nature.

Winter's Talent Camp for Children 6th - 10th July 2009

More than 90 children spent a fun-filled week at the annual Winter's Talent Camp for Children at Nan Hua Temple from 6th July to 10th July.

The children were grouped into different teams and were asked to think of its war cry and drill routine. During the week through various tasks and competitions they developed their own sense of group spirit and fellowship. Campers participated in classes, excursions, arts, recreational activities and team building exercises. The children had a lot of fun, but it also geared toward teaching them compassion, respect and responsibility.



The highlight of the camp was the farewell evening where every team was required to get on to the stage to show the panel of judges with their best performance. The beautiful singing, dancing and laughter broke the usual silence in the temple. Finally, a prayer for the parents concluded the evening, "Oh great, compassionate Buddha, our parents have raised and educated us. We have received so much love and kindness from them ..."

The closing ceremonies took place on Friday morning. Each camper received a certificate and was congratulated by Venerable Hui-Xing, Temple Manager. He recognized all the instructors and volunteers who made the camp possible. Campers bid their farewell and vowed to meet up again in the December Summer Camp.

Eastern Cultural Excursion for the Local Community

17th - 18th July 2009

Due to growing demand from the local community in Cultura Park, employees working at Nan Hua Temple and the nearby township, Nan Hua Temple has organized its first overnight Buddhist Excursion for non-Chinese speaking children between the age of 7 to 13 on 17 July 2009.

Over 40 children in the greater Bronkhorstspuit area arrived early in the morning and could not wait to explore the Temple. The excursion set forth a temple tour and an exhibition on Chinese traditional embroidery and artifacts. During the excursion, children participate in different cultural classes and recreational activities such as Chinese martial art, traditional paper cutting, Buddhist singing and monastic dining.

The graduation took place at 2pm on Saturday with the presence of their parents and family every child received a certificate and souvenir from the Temple. Feedbacks from the parents have been phenomenal and expressed their appreciation to Nan Hua Temple for promoting traditional Chinese culture and racial diversity for all South Africans.



Seven-Day Advanced Meditation Retreat 13th - 19th July 2009

Over 30 participants from Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Bloemfontein and Ladysmith took part in the biannually Seven-Day Advanced Meditation Retreat at Nan Hua Temple 13th July to 19th July.

Venerable Hui-Fang, presiding master and abbot of Nan Hua Temple, led the retreat with assistance from Venerable Hui-Sang and Venerable Hui-Liao. In his opening talk, the presiding master reminds fellow participants, "One needs to maintain balance in the Middle Path when practicing meditation. It's like when a violinist adjusting the tension of the string in his violin, he will not be able to get the perfect tune if it is too loose or tight." Similarly, one may not attain the optimal effect of meditation if he rush through or lay back with his practice, Venerable Hui-Fang explains, do not force yourself to meditate for an one to two hour session as this will pressurize yourself resulting a deviation from the Middle Path. The Buddha has passed down many different ways of practice of which none is better or worst than the other, he continues, it is a matter whether you can relate to it and if you could apply the technique diligently and tirelessly until you attain your goal.

Among the participants, Reverend Shadrack Lekoeane, a Christian priest who lived 600km away from Bronkhorstspuit, joined the beginner's meditation retreat at Nan Hua Temple a year ago and practiced his way up to intermediate and advanced meditation.

"I observed a significantly improvement in both my physical health and spiritual practice with God. I shared what I learned at Nan Hua with my church and youth in



my community," says Reverend Shadrack Lekoeane. "The youth and their parents recognized and appreciated the difference I made to the community and sponsored me to attend this advanced retreat."

*Please let all participants
Follow in the footsteps of ancient virtuous and wise one,
To quiet the body and mind,
To broadly enlighten sentient being;
May we endure what is difficult
May we strengthen our minds that seek enlightenment*

7 Day

Meditation Retreat

FEEDBACK

13th-19th July 2009



Rev Shadrack Mpho Lekoana

It is with great pleasure that I write these comments about the retreat. Allow me to detail a few of the things that I have learned on this retreat:

1. I started to realize and to develop a more positive attitude and reaction to daily events in my life.

2. I have developed an intuitive feeling that I am more in control of conditions in my life, rather than conditions controlling me.

3. Through this retreat I learned that I am psycho-physical unit, which means my mind affects my body through meditation, and in turn my body affects my mind.

4. I have learnt that I don't have to allow myself to be influenced by those around me who love to talk about hard times.

Through the teachings I have learnt that our life is so miserable and has no direction, because we don't have control of our mind. This retreat taught me that meditation is a method that is used to bring the mind to one focal point of concentration. This helps the mind to have a clear picture without interruptions from outside forces. When we need joy, it should not be of this world, but rather it should be joy of the mind, for this world is full of pain and disappointment that make people lose focus.

What I liked about the MASTERS of the retreat was that they never let things get out of their hands. When things were not done as they wished, they immediately corrected the wrong doer with humbleness and respect. They never called by name or pointed out who was doing the wrong thing. One's own consciousness will immediately judge itself. The silence which was the order of the retreat really cools down our boiling minds that we bring with us from different backgrounds. I believe I will never lose the benefits of this retreat. I will also encourage more people to come and experience this wisdom that I have received.

May the creature of the universe bless you all.



Lesley Naidoo

The greatest experience that can ever be achieved is that of being aware of a higher state of mind.

The seven days where we focused on disciplining the mind in order to achieve a stable state of awareness, was in itself a mind-blowing experience. Every aspect of the retreat had been designed so that we could concentrate on our mind. The schedule was well planned, giving us time for everything within a disciplined routine.

The room that I slept in was simple and comfortable. All the meals that I ate were delicious and well prepared. One can really feel the love that went into the making of those meals, which according to the teachings are referred to as 'Medicine Food'. What I enjoyed very much about the temple, was the simple and happy way the people go about their daily practice.

For a week, I was not aware of what was going on in the outside world. We know that we cannot change the world, but we can change our destiny by practicing using the awareness of our mind, which in turn will make the world a better place. This is what the Seven Day Retreat can teach us. The meditation coupled with wonderful wisdom and the great people that taught us, made this a journey which, now that I have started, I believe will go from strength to strength.

However, nothing worthwhile comes easy in this life. While meditating I experienced pain in my legs, but I worked hard to be aware of my breathing, no matter how great the pain became and this stopped me from giving up.

I want to express my appreciation to everyone who made this retreat possible and especially to Buddha – our Teacher.



Ben Yi

For the first day of the retreat I was so eager, peaceful and focused. The early part of the first day was successful for my calmness, until in the evening, when the former Kaizer Chiefs soccer player, Gary Bailey came to join us for the dharma talk. Mr Bailey sat right next to me. After noticing and recognizing him, I began to lose my

focus as I started to think of a way in which I could have a photograph taken with Mr. Bailey. By the third day I was very impatient to finish the retreat so I could try my luck on Mr. Bailey. Unfortunately, by the time I completed my meditation retreat on the fourth day, he had already gone home. I was so disappointed. So, the bottom line is, I need to detach from worldly concerns. I now realize that in a meditation retreat everyone is the same, regardless of where they come from. Thus I have a lot of work to do on my personal growth. Should there be any celebrity on the next retreat, I hope to be able to ignore them.



Ben Zhen

This was my second 7-day retreat. I can see that the experience gained from the previous retreat, as well as our regular meditation sessions here at the seminary has helped my practice a lot. The physical pain is still there, but I can now sit for most of the sessions throughout the day without having to lower my legs. I am

also finding it somewhat easier to focus on the breath. Unfortunately, because of other responsibilities, I could only attend the first 3 days of the retreat. But I will definitely take part again and next time I hope to attend the full 7 days. I wish all of you a successful practice. Thank you to all the venerable masters who made the retreat possible. Amitofo!



Ben Dun

The recent meditation retreat was quite a wonderful experience for me because although I felt pain in my knees, I still experienced a good boost in my concentration. This was from following the instruction of the meditation master which was all about being aware of each moment, which is fundamental to meditation. Being aware of moment

will make one aware of things that are happening within oneself, as well as in the surrounding area. Then one is able to understand things more easily and develop the capability of calming down the mind.



Ben Zhao

Being a young person at the crossroads of life, I have found that meditation has brought me to a deeper understanding of life and in turn it has relieved my pain and increased my joy in living. In the past, I have been frustrated and heart broken by my understanding of the nature of life and the world itself, but now meditation has

guided and helped me to realise that I was disturbed by unnecessary things. I have now realised that Human beings are busy seeking various ways to gain pleasure in the rat race.



Ben Jie

I was well prepared for the last meditation retreat and as a result I sat quiet comfortably throughout the sessions. I began each session by concentrating for half an hour on my breath and then I switched for the rest of the time to reciting the Buddha's name. My mind was so tranquil and peaceful due to the fact that I sit in the

lotus position during the meditations. I learnt a lot during the retreat. I improved in the letting-go of the pain of the body, patience, diligence and determination. Silence also was very pleasant and conducive to the establishment of a good retreat. A peaceful mind and liberation prove to go hand in hand. To me, the retreat was a great achievement.



Ben Yuan

On this seven day meditation retreat I was able to concentrate on one thing at a time and I feel now that I have improved a lot. In the past I was always dissatisfied, but since I started practising meditation I have been able to develop and maintain my mind and slowly gain self confidence in solving daily problems. From this I realise that

on the lower levels, higher levels can be built and this is a great success for me.



The Imperial Master and the Emperor

By Grand Master Hsing Yun

One day, Emperor Shunzhi of the Qing Dynasty invited imperial Master Yulin to the palace, asking for instruction in the Dharma. Shunzhi asked, "In the Surangama Sutra, there is the so-called 'search for the mind in the seven locations,' asking where the mind is. Now, may I inquire, is the mind in the seven locations or not?"

Imperial Master Yulin replied, "Seeking the mind is impossible?" Emperor Shunzhi then said, "The person who has awakened to the Way, does he still have joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness, or not?"

Imperial Master Yulin responded, "What is joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness?" Emperor Shunzhi said, "The mountains, rivers, and this great earth arise from deluded thoughts. If deluded thoughts cease, then do the mountains, rivers, and this great earth still exist or not?"

Imperial Master Yulin said, "Like a person waking from a dream, do the things in the dream exist or not?" Emperor Shunzhi then said, "How do I practice this?" Imperial Master Yulin replied, "Act righteously, and let things take their course." Emperor Shunzhi asked, "What is great?" Imperial Master Yulin replied, "The right spreads in four directions and reaches above and below." Emperor Shunzhi said, "How do I contemplate the original face?" Imperial Master Yulin replied, "As the Sixth Patriarch said, 'Don't think of good, don't think of evil, At that moment, what is the original face?'"

Afterwards, whenever Emperor Shunzhi met people, he would say, "Having a conversation with Imperial Master Yulin really

makes me regret meeting him so late."

Shunzhi was an emperor whose capacity for the Dharma was great. From his poem, "In Praise of the sangha," we can know this thinking was very much in accordance with the Dharma.

**Before I was born, who was I?
When I was born, who was I?
When I grew into an adult, that is I;
When I close my eyes who am I?
Not as good as not coming and not going,
Happy when coming, sad when going
Sorrow, joy; separation, and reunion, many worries,
Who knows when I will be at ease?**

Emperor Shunzhi was the ruler of a country, yet he envied the life of a monastic. He said,

**Gold and jade are not precious,
Only wearing the kasaya over the shoulder is difficult;
One hundred years, thirty-six thousand days,
Is not as good as a half a day of a monk's ease.
The purple kasaya exchanged for the yellow imperial robe
Only because that year's one erroneous thought;
Originally, I was to be a monk in the West,
Why was I born in this Imperial House?**

One could well imagine his respect for Imperial Master Yulin. Imperial Master Yulin was an eminent monk of dignified bearing. Usually, he preferred silence and did not like to talk. Even when the emperor asked him about the Dharma, he was terse and to the point. Unwilling to say too much, he made people feel that a word of the Chan gate is not easy to seek.

Learning Experiences of ABS Students

African Buddhist Seminary



by Ben You

What is the difference between illusion and reality and how can it help when practicing?

The difference between these two is that one sees that all phenomena are illusionary because they are due to causes and conditions. Consequently they are impermanent and temporary. For example our bodies exist due to causes and conditions and one day this body will die, so where is the reality of the body? When we understand that all phenomena are illusionary we will reduce our attachments to our body and worldly materials. In so doing we will lessen our worries and suffering of losing what we have and of being unable to get what we want. When we see things as real, we are not aware of the original nature of all phenomena and as a result think that all things are permanent. Then we become attached to self and material things and are selfish and self-centered. We are always worried about losing possessions or being unable to obtain what we want and as a result we create our own suffering.

By understanding the temporary nature of all phenomena we will reduce our arrogance, anger, hatred and greed which hinder our cultivation.

Why Should We Practice Generosity?

We have to practice generosity in order to express our concern and compassion towards others. We have to donate because we will help other beings that are in need of those particular materials we donate. It gives joy both to the donor and the recipient. It helps us to reduce our selfishness and attachment towards material things and also to eradicate greed. In fact we have to give, in order to help all living beings and share our joy with them. One can give material things, time, knowledge, effort and also body parts e.g. donating blood. One can also donate the dharma.

What are the Merits & Virtues Gained Through Generosity?

The following are the merits and virtues gained when practicing generosity:

It helps you to have worth and happiness in this present life or hereafter and also creates the karma for you to be reborn in higher realms of existence. It assists by reducing suffering and greed and helps one to possess great

knowledge. You are enabled to create good affinities with others whereby others are willing to come to your assistance when you face dangers or difficulties.

What is the Highest Generosity of All?

In Buddhism the highest generosity of all is the dharma. The generosity of dharma is when you teach others the truth of the dharma. The dharma can liberate all beings from suffering. The generosity of the dharma has great powers to change a life.

When people receive the dharma with a pure mind and practice the truth with earnestness, they can not fail to change. They will experience greater happiness, peace and joy in their heart and mind. If they were once cruel, they become compassionate. If they were once revengeful, they become forgiving. Through the dharma, the hateful become more compassionate, the greedy more generous and the restless more serene. When a person has experienced the dharma, not only will happiness be experienced in this present life time, but also in the lives hereafter. So teaching people the truth of the dharma is vital, and that is why generosity of the dharma is the best of all.

What is the Difference between Dharma Generosity and Material Generosity?

The generosity of the dharma is when you teach the Buddha dharma to people in order to help them to get rid of their suffering, whilst material generosity is practiced through giving material things to those who need them.

The generosity of the dharma can help people to reduce their worries and can lead them to liberation. Material generosity however, only gives joy and solves problems in the present, but does not solve the problems developed over many lifetimes.



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Personal Retreat at Nan Hua

by Gary Bailey

13rd-15th July 2009



How do you figure out your life's purpose, or solve relationship issues that keep occurring with different partners? ...those were 2 of the main questions that I have felt for a while now, and I needed to give some deep thought to both questions - at home, with phones ringing, kids running around, business decisions needing to be made, these questions were never going to get properly answered.

That's where the Nan Hua temple comes in – I had heard of this Buddhist retreat in Bronkhorstspruit, and it seemed like the perfect place to come and sit quietly for a few days and let the stillness help me answer my pressing questionsand that's exactly how it turned out! Within a few hours of solitude in the peaceful gardens, and a few meditation sittings (of only about 15 minutes or so), the answers started to appear....answers that I believe can add huge amounts of value to my life. The amazing thing is that the answers have probably been available to me for some time, but in our hectic lives we rarely spare enough time for these answers to manifest themselves.

That wasn't the only benefit though.....the stillness during meal times that helped me focus on the pleasure of eating, and the gratefulness for the provision of food. Too often these days we just consume food and watch TV or chat at the same time, and never consider the effort behind the food, or the miracle of it's growth, but the moment you do appreciate this food is the moment for me that it took on greater significance and pleasure for me.

Then there was the absolute quiet at night.....no parties, or loud TV, or dogs barking, or sirens going off, just pure stillness, and a lovely sleep that followed !

And lets not forget the learning's from the monks lectures, or the books that were available to read, or even just the rub off effect of the calmness of all those around me.

So what to take with me after 3 days of retreat – a resolution to find a quiet spot 3 times a day for meditative prayers (only about 15 mins each time), and to instruct those around me to respect my desire for stillness. Then to create a focus at meal times so that I along with my family can appreciate the wonder of food, and that effort behind it's provision. And finally, that if I need to create an environment for real peace and tranquility for a few days, then the Nan Hua Temple is only a couple of hours drive away!

Gary Bailey – Supersport Presenter, ex Manchester United and Kaizer Chiefs goalkeeper

The Freedom of Expression

by Siphon Segubudu



Buddhism is a way of life, it educate us to do good, think perfectly and to have correct freedom of expression.

The freedom of expression is considered an essential phenomenon of Personal liberty. To say that one is enjoying the freedom of expression amounts to a public announcement of

one's independent personal thoughts or views, without any external constraints or domination whatsoever.

Of course, the exercise of freedom to express is to be carried out within certain limits of legal bidding. Today, in principle, this has been recognized as a civil right of each and every individual human being living on the globe, But very often than not, obviously in some countries, freedom of expression is denied by adopting very vulgar methods of extermination. Suppression of opposing views is usually carried out under the banner of authorized censorship.

Buddhism is an education which clearly shows that the Buddha has accepted the rights of others to express their views. Everybody's view will be listened, be scrutinized and be digested. What is considered essential is critical evaluation. By cultivating awareness one must exercise one's freedom of rational choice.

Sometimes a prosperous material life such as that created by flourishing economy, does not necessary alleviate the suffering of life. More money and material possessions can give people more troubles. But the joy of Dharma is the peace and happiness that we can all experience when we are at ease with ourselves, joy is derived from the understanding of Chan and the realization of truth. People are more happy when they are given freedom to express themselves, they normally feel great when their voices are heard. What I've learn in Buddhism is to listen and for others to listen to me as well, and we all turned to develop good listening skills and mindful speaking or expression to our speech.

Siphon Segubudu
ABS Graduate(SA)

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