



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

Ti-Sarana

NEWS

90, DUKU ROAD, SINGAPORE 429254. TEL: 6345 6741 Fax: 6348 0844
Email: tisarana@singnet.com.sg Website: www.tisarana.org.sg

NEWSLETTER ISSUE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

Lunar New Year Message from Bhante:

HOW TO PROSPER IN THE LUNAR NEW YEAR OF THE RABBIT?

Last year, people in many parts of the world were talking about the economic downturn that manifested due to disturbance in commercial activities, crumbling of businesses, collapse of banks, bursting of the housing bubble, unemployment, minimization of workforce, rising cost of living and prices of food and imbalances in economic activities. Due to various reasons, some aspects of these may have been magnified or overestimated and yet others may have been minimized or underestimated. When taken as a whole, the simple truth behind it is not difficult to understand. Any individual or society enchanted and hooked on consumerism would look for ways and means of satisfying desires for “wants” rather than their “needs”. Let us not worry about irresistible forces beyond our control.

Nevertheless, with favourable prospects of the future, we are about to step into the Lunar New Year of the Rabbit. Certainly the rabbit symbolizes agility, innocence and harmlessness. The Rabbit character appears in several Jataka tales as well. In the famous Sasa Jataka, a popular folk belief of a rabbit’s reflection on the moon has been employed to impart the significance of practising generosity. Sakka, the king of gods, pleased with a rabbit’s devotion to moral conduct and generosity is said to have drawn its picture on the moon.

With most indexes of economic growth turning positive, there is an optimistic outlook of confidence about the success and progress of everyone’s career in the forthcoming year of the rabbit. Evidently, the success and prosperity of an individual depend upon his thoughtful planning and programming of life’s demands. The Buddha brought out this fact with reference to a young man called Kumbhaghosaka, who had inherited four hundred million from his father but lived as a wage earner in the servant’s quarters attending to the work of waking up city dwellers in the morning. Since he had a thunderous and resounding voice, he had been appointed on a low wage to wake up the dwellers in the city at dawn. When the entire suburb, where his family lived had been infected with a dreadful infectious disease, the ailing father, who was on his deathbed, told the young son that his wealth was buried in such and such a place and instructed him to leave the infected village and return only when things were back to normal and make use of the wealth.

On returning after a few years, he dared not take out the wealth outright, lest anyone should know he was rich, but he took out only one coin at a time over the interval of several days. However, later the king having discovered who he was, made him admit that he was wealthy, arranged for his wealth to be carried to the palace and appointed him to the royal post of treasurer and also gave his daughter in marriage to him.

(Continued on page 2)

- Lunar New Year Message from Bhante

- page 1

- Continuation of Message from Bhante

- In Appreciation

- page 2

- Welfare Activities - MYC Revisited

- India Pilgrimage 2010

- India - Land of Contrasts

- page 3 & 4

- Our Reflections

- page 5 & 6

- Activities of the Sunday Dhamma School

- Resumption of Classes

- Annual Speech Day

- Sunday Dhamma Talks / Discussions

- page 7

- Special Blessing Service on Lunar New Year's Eve

- Inauguration of the Pagoda Lamps of Blessings

- page 8

(continued from page 1)

One day the king took the young treasurer to the Buddha and said to the Buddha in front of him that he had never seen such a wise young man before and related how he discovered his identity and his wealth. The Buddha, confirming that he was wise and righteous, said that if the young treasurer had exposed his riches at once he could have fallen prey to robbers and enemies. Praising the young treasurer, the Buddha made use of the opportunity to preach seven contributory factors for one's prosperity and happiness:

Uṭṭhānavato satimato – sucikammasa nisammakāriṇo
Saññātassa ca dhammajīvino – appamattassa yaso'bhivaḍḍhati

(Dhammapada, 24)

According to the stanza, the following seven factors contribute to the prosperity and happiness of everyone:

- Exertion
- Ever presence of mind
- Purity of deeds
- Circumspection of deeds
- Self-control
- Righteous living
- Heedfulness

Even at a glance, one can see the importance of these factors for one's welfare. In order to achieve prosperity and happiness, let us adhere to the Buddha's admonition of these seven factors in the coming Lunar New Year of the Rabbit.

A BLESSED LUNAR NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahāthera

In Appreciation

The Management Committee wish to record its appreciation to all our Resident Religious Advisers, including Bhante Dr. R. Chandawimala Thera and especially the Venerables who came from Sri Lanka, Bhante Dr. U. Wangeesa Mahāthera, Bhante M. Buddhasiri Mahāthera, Bhante M. Amitha Mahāthera, Bhante P. Seevali Thera, Bhante M. Kassapa Thera, Bhante U. Jinasiri Thera, Bhante B. Kolitha Thera and Bhante A. Chandawimala Thera to conduct the overnight recitation of the Suttas and Parittas to invoke blessings of the Triple Gem on all our members and devotees for the year 2011.

We would also like to thank all our members and devotees who made this annual event such a success.



Arrival of Mahā Sangha to Shrine Hall



Bhantes who conducted the Overnight Chanting



Buddha Relic carried by Bro. Khemaka Chew



Bro. Asoka carrying the Ola Leaves



Reading Names for Blessing



Inviting Mahā Sangha to chant



Mahā Sangha inside the Mandapa



Queuing for blessed thread after overnight chanting

Welfare Activities - MYC Revisited

After a year's hiatus, Subhā and I eagerly headed for Mettā Youth Centre (MYC) on 15th Nov., 2010 to spend 3 weeks with our wonderful "children" and friends who always look forward to our return. When we arrived at MYC, we were met joyously with bouquets of flowers presented by the boys, a function normally reserved for the girls. I felt a surge of happiness and emotion seeing the familiar faces interspersed with some new faces from the Methmal Home.

My teaching days at MYC were busy. I wanted to group the children according to their English ability but faced scheduling issues with some children either preparing or sitting for exams or attending school at different times. As a result, my lessons were informal and spontaneous. Conducting such impromptu sessions with children from Grade 1 to Grade 11 simultaneously did wonders for me. I managed to sharpen my wits and think on my feet as I went along - skills that I have not practised for many years. Will I do it again? Yes! I enjoyed the challenges and am already looking forward to my next visit and many more challenges.

Subhodā Evelyn Tan



All ready for lessons



Eager to serve guests



Tidying the garden



A game of "5 stones"

India Pilgrimage 2010

India - Land of Contrasts

It is difficult to describe India in words – you have to *feel* India, *see* India and *hear* India. I had the privilege to experience India for myself this year, along with 37 fellow Buddhists and Bhante Ānanda. We left behind the bright city lights of home on 27th November 2010 in the wee hours of the morning and landed at the impressive newly opened Delhi airport in the evening after transiting in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The next day was devoted to getting to Bodhgaya. After a short domestic flight to Patna, the capital of the state of Bihar, it took us another 6 hours to reach Bodhgaya by bus. A practising Buddhist would know the Four Noble Truths – suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path to Nibbana. This trip, someone once said, would enable us to experience the first three Noble Truths taught by the Buddha.



We first visited the Mahābodhi Temple in Bodhgaya, the location where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment and became the Buddha. This is the most sacred site for Buddhists. We saw many locals struggling to eke out a meagre living – many of them waved stalks of fresh flowers in the air, while others hawked Buddhist CDs and beads, urging us to purchase them. It then occurred to me that while they are living in Buddhism's holiest site, they probably do not have the means to learn more about the Buddha's Teachings. Yet, for many of us Singaporeans who have the opportunity to hear, learn and apply the Buddha's Teachings, we do not seem to seize and make full use of such opportunities.

We were very fortunate to do two morning pūjās and one evening pūjā at the exact spot where Siddhartha gained enlightenment, right under the green rustling leaves of the Bodhi Tree. It is interesting to note that the Bodhi Tree in the Mahābodhi Temple is not the original Bodhi Tree, but a direct descendent of the former. It was planted by Alexander Cunningham in 1880 at the exact place where the original Bodhi Tree stood and provided shelter for the Buddha. Besides the Bodhi Tree, we visited the places where the Buddha spent the first 7 weeks after His enlightenment which are located within the temple grounds as well. There are little signs built at the different places to describe how He spent each week.

(continued from page 3)

Next, we visited the orange copper coloured ruins of Nalanda University which reminded me of Indiana Jones on one of his adventures. We trawled the place and inspected the worn out bricks of what must have been an impressive university that operated more than 1,600 years ago. I am sure many of us found the place fascinating as our tour guide, Mr Rambali Singh, gave a detailed and animated description of the daily lives of the scholars residing at Nalanda University while we maneuvered our way through the steep walkways.

There is always a first time for everyone, including the Buddha. Sarnath was the place where the Buddha gave His very first sermon to His first 5 disciples. Various stupas marked the place where the Buddha delivered His sermon on the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (setting in motion the Wheel of the Law), which proved to be a meaningful place for us Buddhist students. Most stupas are however, in a sad state having been subjected to the ravages of time and looting by both foreign invaders and locals.

At the Ganges River in Varanasi, a spectacular view awaited us as we arrived to see the beautiful sun rise, a blazing round red yolk against the dusky canvas sky. Such a beautiful sight is fitting for a sacred river - the Ganges River is greatly revered by all Hindus. It is because of its holiness that along the bank, families can be seen cremating their deceased relatives. The ashes of the dead are then scattered into the Ganges River after cremation. Further away from the cremation site, many people could be seen bathing themselves in the holy waters of the Ganges too. Imagine seeing these sights everyday – people cleansing their bodies after witnessing the sight of dead bodies turning to ashes within minutes.

The Buddha passed away (parinibbāna) at Kushinagar, where He was also cremated. The Mahāparinirvana Temple currently houses a serene, golden Buddha statue in parinibbāna state, reminding us that death does not spare even the most Enlightened One. It is said that if you stand at three different angles, the Buddha would take on three different expressions that varied for everyone. There was only one expression of His which was very striking to me – His serene, peaceful and unshakeable expression when He passed away.

The Buddha mentioned that a Buddhist should visit four sacred places – the place where He was born (Lumbini), the place where He gained Enlightenment (Bodhgaya), the place where He gave the First Sermon (Sarnath) and the place where He passed away (Kushinagar). We had already visited the last three places. Lumbini Park, Prince Siddhartha's birthplace was one of the last stops. It is interesting to know that out of the four sites, Lumbini is the only one that is not located in India but in Nepal. It was definitely worth crossing the Indian border to look at baby Siddhartha's footprint imprinted in the soil.

Our next stop, Lucknow, proved to be a fascinating sight - I could see a bustling city in the midst of rapid development. Huddling together at the jam packed railway station while waiting for the train to come, I took in the sights and sounds of the city. When the train finally arrived, everyone got on the train in a hurry (it had been repeatedly signalling that it was leaving the platform), shoving our luggage and ourselves into the cabins, behaving very much like the ubiquitous Singaporean. All of us spent the night in the rattling train and alighted, bleary eyed at Agra, home to one of the 7 wonders of the world. The Taj Mahal certainly lived up to its reputation and is truly an impressive mausoleum for Shah Jehan and his beloved wife Mumtaz.

A rather healthy dose of shopping followed, much to the delight of several aunties and us ladies. I have to say, this trip definitely made us more close knitted as we shared common experiences: answering nature's call in the bushes; switching seats in the bus so as to relieve the people seated in the back who kept bumping in their seats while the bus trundled along; and attending to one another when we started falling ill. This trip also gave me a glimpse of life in a developing country. I certainly view the country that we live in – Singapore, in a newer and more appreciative light.

Lastly, a thousand and one thanks to Ti-Sarana Management Committee and Uncle David Chew - for organizing this trip to India, herding us from one place to another safely and seeing to the well-being of the group. A thousand and one thanks to Bhante Ānanda too, who was our spiritual guidance on this pilgrimage tour, and to Bhante Ratanasiri, who accompanied us in the early days of the tour and saw to the arrangements for the rest of our trip in India before he left for Sri Lanka.

Amarā Chia

Aged 16, Sunday Dhamma Student

2010 India Pilgrimage - Our Reflections



Kusalā

Makes me feel proud and grateful to my mum for giving birth to me



Si Fu

Peaceful

An inspiring dream...



Francis

Good



Bui Lii

Happy & excited to be able to see the Asoka pillar with inscriptions



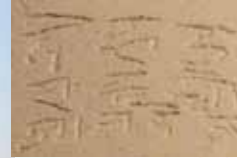
Sunitā

Lumbini



Asoka

The place where Buddhism was born



Appreciate Buddha being born to this world to teach us the true path



Jonathan



Dolly

Lumbini exudes a sense of happiness and hope as a Great Being was born to guide us out of samsara



Buddha was born in this place. Brought the great Teaching into this world



Fang Cheng



Bhaddā

It's such a wonderful place that I would like to visit again



Amalā

Before, only reading books; now able to see for myself the Diamond Throne, Bodhi Tree, footprints of the Buddha



Sarah

It was an eye opener. Very interesting



Bhante Ratanasiri

Having attained Enlightenment, the Buddha devoted the rest of His life to serve humanity both by example and precept

Very impressive temple, inspiring to see so many different Buddhist traditions practising side by side



Ivan

Bodhgaya

This is the spot where Siddhartha Gautama attained Enlightenment.



Lilian

I felt peaceful and calm while I was meditating



Doing pūjā in the Bodhgaya temple is a great life experience



Kwong Weng



Amarā

The place where Buddha spent after He gained Enlightenment was very calm and peaceful. It is so different from our modern and hectic city life



Love the serene & peaceful feeling; want to visit again many times....



Nirodhā



Swee Hoon

Glad that I am here to feel the energy of the Buddha's enlightenment place



Subhodā

Upon stepping into temple, I felt a powerful surge of awe and reverence. This feeling continued like big waves ebbing & flowing with the tide

Felt good & lucky to enjoy a glimpse of the bliss the Buddha experienced



Senaka



Contemplate on Buddha's Teachings with gratitude and calmness

Goon Hwa



Puay Imm

The Tilakahana Stupa was a very significant feature to remind us of Buddha's Fundamental teaching besides the 4 Noble Truths

Sarnath



Seok Mui

Good experience

Good

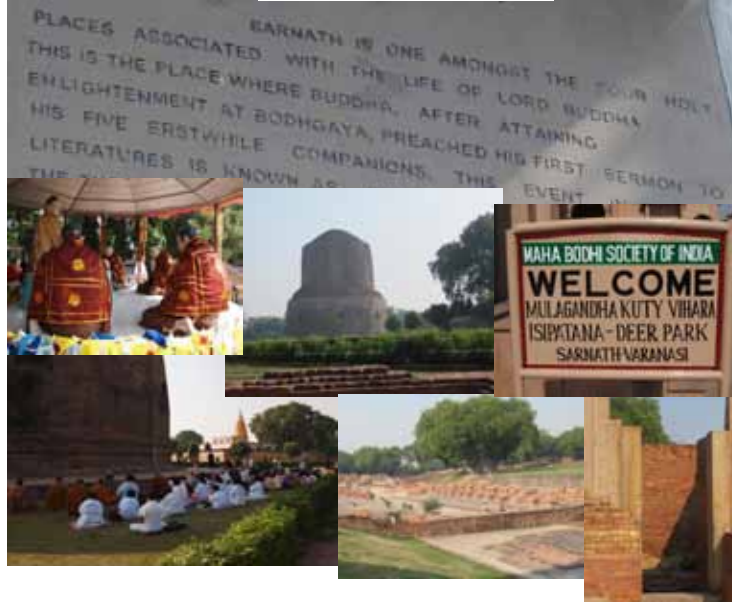


Aunty Ang



Aunty Tan

Pleasant feelings; appreciate various Buddha statues



...It was delightful to be where the Buddha started the Wheel of Dhamma



Jotiya



Angie

I am grateful for the events that took place in Sarnath so long ago

The pūjā session under the Bodhi Tree in the Deer Park was a very good experience



Josephine



Gary

Knowing that this is the place that the Buddha passed away made it very significant for me. It was a bittersweet feeling



Bhante Ānanda

I saw many devotees touched the Buddha's feet with their forehead; thus I thought it's better to touch the Dhamma with our mind

I stood in awe at the sight of the reclining Buddha at Mahā Parinibbāna temple, a feeling which is inexplicable



Sumanā

Kushinagar



Andy

Peaceful



Sadness... but Truth lives on



Khemaka



Hui Choo

...The best part is having pūjā



Even though the Buddha has left us, His Teachings continue to inspire me



Richard

This was a most memorable visit. Would like to come back as part of my cultivation



Subhā



Hemanta

Different angles of the Buddha image give us the 3 feelings of life



Wendy

Very sad to see the Buddha statue in the state of Parinibbāna; remind me of His last words...Strive on with diligence

I think Kushinagar is the best place to meditate



Koon Ngan

Activities of the Sunday Dhamma School

Resumption of Classes

After a five-week break, the YMBA (Young Men's Buddhist Association) students will resume their Dhamma School on 9th Jan. 2011 at 9 am. As for the children in the pre-YMBA classes, the Dhamma teachers look forward to meet them and their parents for Morning Pūjā at 10.15 am before proceeding for their lessons.

Annual Speech Day

The Sunday Dhamma School will be holding its Annual Speech Day on Sunday, 16th Jan. 2011. All are welcome to witness this event and to encourage your friends to sign up for the Pre-YMBA or YMBA Classes - a structured course to know more about Buddhism; the Life of the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths, Kamma and explanation of well known Suttas.

Programme on 16th Jan. 2011 (Sunday)

- 11.00 am Buddha Pūjā
- 11.45 am Vegetarian Lunch
- 12.30 pm Opening Address by the Principal
- 12.40 pm Address by the President, Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association
- 12.45 pm The year in focus
- 12.50 pm Presentation of Certificates
- 1.00 pm Testimony by Students
- 1.15 pm Closing Address by the Vice-Principal
- 1.20 pm Blessings by the Venerables

**A new YMBA Class will commence in July 2011.
Registration is now open. Please sign up at the office.**

Sunday Dhamma Talks/Discussions

The following are the scheduled Dhamma Talks/Discussions for January/February 2011:

- 2nd Jan. 2011 New Year Break
- 9th Jan. 2011 The Meaning of Life - Peace of Mind - Recorded talk by Ajahn Brahm
- 16th Jan. 2011 Sunday Dhamma School Annual Speech Day
- 23rd Jan. 2011 Vyaggapajja Sutta – How to achieve blessings in this life and the next life by Ven. R. Ānanda
- 30th Jan. 2011 Lunar New Year Break
- 6th Feb. 2011 Lunar New Year Break
- 13th Feb. 2011 Talk your way to Happiness – Recorded talk by Ajahn Brahm
- 20th Feb. 2011 Path to Liberation (I) – Skilful Living by Ven. R. Ānanda
- 27th Feb. 2011 Path to Liberation (II) – Mental Development by Ven. R. Ānanda

The Bhantes and the Management Committee look forward to the participation and support of all members and devotees in our activities.

Special Blessing Service on Lunar New Year's Eve

To usher in the auspicious year of the Rabbit, we will be holding a Special Blessing Service on Lunar New Year's Eve (Wed., 2nd Feb. 2011). Do come with your family and friends to participate in the Blessing Service and be blessed. Members and devotees are cordially invited to come for blessings by the Venerables during the 15-days of the Lunar New Year's celebration. May the coming Lunar New Year of the Rabbit bring abundant love, joy, peace, harmony and prosperity to you and your family!

Programme on Lunar New Year's Eve (2nd Feb. 2011, Wed.)

10.00 pm	Invitation to the Venerables to commence the Blessing Service
10.05 pm till 12.15 am	Parittas and Suttas Recitation
12.20 am	Blessings by the Venerables
12.25 am	Light Refreshment

Inauguration of the Pagoda Lamps of Blessings

We will be holding the annual Inauguration of the Pagoda Lamps of Blessings on 11th Feb. 2011 (Fri), the ninth day of the Lunar New Year. Suttas and Parittas will be recited for good health, peace, happiness and success for all members and devotees. Come and join us to experience the efficacy of Paritta chanting and feel the joy, confidence and overall sense of well-being.

Every Tuesday evening names of donors whose birthday fall during the week will be read out for blessing before the recitation of Suttas/Parittas from the Great Book of Protection. All members and devotees are encouraged to participate in the recitation to invoke the blessings of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

We appreciate the annual contribution of \$40 for a niche on the Pagoda Lamps by our members and devotees. All funds raised are used for welfare of the Bhantes, Sunday Dhamma School activities, maintenance of the Association premises, Sangha Abode and welfare activities.

Enclosed with this newsletter is the form for renewal/new application for placement of names in the niches of the Pagoda Lamps of Blessings.

Programme on 11th Feb. 2011 (Fri.)

7.30 pm	Evening Pūjā
8.00 pm	Suttas and Parittas recitation by the Venerables at Buddha Relic Chamber
9.00 pm	Blessing by the Venerables to members and devotees
9.15 pm	Distribution of Blessed Rice Packets, Oranges, Yellow Blessed Threads and Blessed Water
9.30 pm	Gilanapaccaya for the Venerables
9.35 pm	Light refreshment for members and devotees

**Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahāthera, Ven. W. Ratanasiri Mahāthera,
Ven. R. Ānanda Thera and The Management Committee
wish all Members and Devotees
A Very Blessed and Prosperous Lunar New Year!**