



Monthly Guide



International Buddhist Meditation Center

June 2009

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Palmo Ling Nunnery Welcomes the Drepung Gomang Monastery 2009 Tour To International Buddhist Meditation Center

Please join **IBMC** for a week-long inspirational event with the monks of Drepung Gomang Institute, June 6th-15th 2009. The tour group is led by Geshe Lobzang Samdup. Teachings and presentations will include workshops on Buddhist Art, cultural presentations of Temple chants, debate presentation, Tibetan Yak Dance, and much more! Please check our **Special Events** section for the detailed schedule. The Monks of Drepung Gomang Monastery are also available for private blessing ceremonies. Please contact **IBMC** for information and appointments.

Ven. Karuna is mobile again!

Warm appreciation to all for the support and donations that helped to make Ven. Karuna's stair lift chair a reality. She wants you all to know how that the chair, which was installed last month, has been a great blessing to her as she's now able to leave her apartment, come to Sunday Service, and of course, go to coffee! Ven. Karuna extends her gratitude and blessings to you all.



Sri Ratana Vihara International Buddhist Temple opens in Anaheim

We are pleased to share the news that Ven. Bogole Sumana a long time student of our Vice Abbott, Ven. Hanvanpola Shanti, and a former resident monastic of IBMC, has opened a new temple in Anaheim. The former Temple site on Normandie Ave. will become a residential facility and will serve as support for the newly purchased building in Anaheim.



Programs there will include Sunday Dharma School, Saturday and Sunday Evening Chanting and Meditation, and the 28 Buddhas Puja. The official opening ceremony is scheduled for late June or early July. For information and details of events and Meditation times, Please Call 714.821.8576.

Building Fund Update

The renovations to the IBMC buildings are almost completed. Some of the structural issues were resolved by constructing new back porches on two of our houses, while the shared areas of our residential buildings wear new coats of paint and new tile floors. The building exteriors will be cleaned and painted this month. Repairs and the upgrading of our Temple will continue in the coming months. We remain grateful for your support through the years, and plan to be a beacon in the community for another 40 years.

Feed your inner spirit:

By The Motorcycle Monk: Ven. Kusala Bhikshu

Yatra is the Sanskrit word for sacred journey. It is one of the most ancient spiritual practices that a person may choose to do so they may experience a revelation or vision.

Ven. Kusala Bhikshu, a Buddhist monk, traveled 5,000 miles cross-country on his 2001 Suzuki Volusia to see if the Dharma was any different on a motorcycle.

Here are some of his enlightening insights:

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"I was 52 and felt I needed to do something special. Being a Buddhist monk is one kind of challenge, a 5000 mile motorcycle road trip is another. It was a mid-life thing, I suppose. What is life really all about? Is it more important to be something, or to do something? The teachings of the Buddha gave me one answer, and I thought a motorcycle road trip would give me another. As it turns out, the truth found in the Dharma (Buddhism) and the truth you find on the road is pretty much the same thing."

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"Moments of perfection were in sharp contrast to the heat, cold, and rain. Because of the contrast; when perfection did happen 'WOW!' I said to myself on more than one occasion, 'it just can't get any better than this.' And yet, it always did: the colors, smells, and sounds moved me, not to think, but to that place deep inside where words have no meaning. Where time comes to a complete stop and space is forever. The place where all things are connected and fear can't exist, because you are no longer separate."

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"It's a challenge to find comfort on a motorcycle if you're looking outside yourself... The comfort a motorcycle rider finds is on the inside...with acceptance of the way things are, and faith in his/her riding skills and motorcycle."

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"A lot, for instance is... wherever you go, there you are. Your baggage travels with you. A change of place doesn't necessarily change the space inside your head. You suffer a lot more when you want things to be different than they are. My road trip began and ended in the very same place...inside myself. I really didn't go anywhere, but what a journey!"

IBMC Celebrates Vesek

IBMC held it's annual Vesek celebration on May 2 & 3. Many special guest speakers were present, along with Monks and Nuns visiting from around the city. The celebration also included a demonstration by a local martial arts school and a beautiful Dana lunch given to the Sangha, by the Vietnamese community. Below are some images from the event.



Ven. Shanti & Ven. Karuna



Ven. An Giáo giving teachings



*Ven. Karuna,
Ven. An Giáo,
Nam, Michelle,
And some visiting Nuns*



Ven. Karuna & Ven An Giáo share a laugh



Meditation before teachings

*Proces-
sion to the
Dinging
Hall for
Dana*



The Significance of Vesak by Venerable Mahinda Thero

The significance of Vesak lies with the Buddha and his universal peace message to mankind.

As we recall the Buddha and his Enlightenment, we are immediately reminded of the unique and most profound knowledge and insight, which arose in him on the night of his Enlightenment. This coincided with three important events, which took place, corresponding to the three watches or periods of the night.

During the first watch of the night, when his mind was calm, clear and purified, light arose in him, knowledge and insight arose. He saw his previous lives, at first one, then two, three up to five, then multiples of them. Ten, twenty, thirty, fifty Then 100, 1000 and so on.... As he went on with his practice, during the second watch of the night, he saw how beings die and are reborn, depending on their Karma, how they disappear and reappear from one form to another, from one plane of existence to another. Then during the final watch of the night, he saw the arising and cessation of all phenomena, mental and physical. He saw how things arose dependent on causes and conditions. This led him to perceive the arising and cessation of suffering and all forms of Unsatisfactoriness paving the way for the eradication of all taints of cravings. With the complete cessation of craving, his mind was completely liberated. He attained to Full Enlightenment. The realization dawned in him together with all psychic powers.

This wisdom and light that flashed and radiated under the historic Bodhi Tree at Buddha Gaya in the district of Bihar in Northern India, more than 2500 years ago, is of great significance to human destiny. It

illuminated the way by which mankind could cross, from a world of superstition, or hatred and fear, to a new world of light, of true love and happiness.

The heart of the Teachings of the Buddha is contained in the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, namely,

The Noble Truth of Dukkha or suffering

The Origin or Cause of suffering

The End or Cessation of suffering

the Path which leads to the cessation of all sufferings

The First Noble Truth is the Truth of Dukkha, which has been generally translated as 'suffering'. But the term Dukkha, which represents the Buddha's view of life and the world, has a deeper philosophical meaning. Birth, old age, sickness and death are universal. All beings are subject to this Unsatisfactoriness. Separation from beloved ones and pleasant conditions, association with unpleasant persons and conditions, and not getting what one desires - these are also sources of suffering and Unsatisfactoriness. The Buddha summarizes Dukkha in what is known as the Five Grasping Aggregates.

Herein, lies the deeper philosophical meaning of Dukkha for it encompasses the whole state of being or existence.

Our life or the whole process of living is seen as a flux of energy comprising of the Five aggregates, namely the Aggregate of Form or the Physical process, Feeling, Perception, Mental Formation, and Consciousness. These are usually classified as mental and physical processes, which are constantly in a state of flux or change.

When we train our minds to observe the functioning of mental and physical processes we will realize the true nature of our lives. We will see how it is subject to change and Unsatisfactoriness. And as such, there is no real substance or entity or Self which we can cling to as 'I', 'my' or 'mine'.

When we become aware of the unsatisfactory nature of life, we would naturally want to get out from such a state. It is at this point that we begin to seriously question ourselves about the meaning and purpose of life. This will lead us to seek the Truth with regards to the true nature of existence and the knowledge to overcome Unsatisfactoriness.

From the Buddhist point of view, therefore, the purpose of life is to put an end to suffering and all other forms of Unsatisfactoriness - to realize peace and real happiness. Such is the significance of the understanding and the realization of the First Noble Truth.

The Second Noble Truth explains the Origin or Cause of suffering. Tanha or craving is the universal cause of suffering. It includes not only desire for sensual pleasures, wealth and power, but also attachment to ideas, views, opinions, concepts, and beliefs. It is the lust for flesh, the lust for continued existence (or externalism) in the sensual realms of existence, as well as the realms of form and the formless realms. And there is also the lust and craving for non-existence (or nihilism). These are all different Forms of selfishness, desiring things for oneself, even at the expense of others.

Not realizing the true nature of one's Self, one clings to things that are impermanent, changeable and perishable. The failure to satisfy one's desires through these things; causes disappointment and suffering.

Craving is a powerful mental force present in all of us. It is the root cause of our sufferings. It is this craving which binds us in Samsara - the repeated cycle of birth and death.

The Third Noble Truth points to the cessation of suffering. Where there is no craving, there is no becoming, no rebirth. Where there is no rebirth, there is no decay, no, old age, no death, hence no suffering. That is how suffering is ended, once and for all.

The Fourth Noble Truth explains the Path or the Way, which leads

to the cessation of suffering. It is called the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold path avoids the extremes of self-indulgence on one hand and self-torture on the other. It consists of Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

These path factors may be summarized into 3 stages of training, involving morality, mental culture and wisdom.

Morality or good conduct is the avoidance of evil or unwholesome actions -- actions, which are tainted by greed, hatred and delusion; and the performance of the good or wholesome actions, - actions, which are free from greed, hatred and delusion, but motivated by liberality, loving-kindness and wisdom.

The function of good conduct or moral restraint is to free one's mind from remorse (or guilty conscience). The mind that is free from remorse (or guilt) is naturally calm and tranquil, and ready for concentration with awareness.

The concentrated and cultured mind is a contemplative and analytical mind. It is capable of seeing cause and effect, and the true nature of existence, thus paving the way for wisdom and insight.

Wisdom in the Buddhist context is the realization of the fundamental truths of life, basically the Four Noble Truths. The understanding of the Four Noble Truths provides us with a proper sense of purpose and direction in life. They form the basis of problem solving.

The message of the Buddha stands today as unaffected by time and the expansion of knowledge as when they were first enunciated.

No matter to what lengths increased scientific knowledge can extend man's mental horizon, there is room for the acceptance and assimilation for further discovery within -the framework of the teachings of the Buddha.

The teaching of the Buddha is open to all to see and judge for themselves. The universality of the teachings of the Buddha has led one of the world's greatest scientists, Albert Einstein to declare that 'if there is any religion that could cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism'

The teaching of the Buddha became a great civilizing force wherever it went. It appeals to reason and freedom of thought, recognizing the dignity and potentiality of the human mind. It calls for equality, fraternity and understanding, exhorting its followers to avoid evil, to do good, and purify their minds.

Realizing the transient nature of life and all worldly phenomena, the Buddha has advised us to work out our deliverance with heedfulness, as 'heedfulness is the path to the deathless'.

His clear and profound teachings on the cultivation of heedfulness otherwise known as Satipatthana or the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, is the path for the purification of beings - for the overcoming of sorrows and lamentation, for the destruction of all mental and physical sufferings, for the attainment of insight and

knowledge and for the realization of Nirvana. His disciples verified this. It is therefore a path, and a technique that can be verified by all regardless of class, color or creed.



Inside the shrine room of Sri Rathana Vihara International

June Events

Sunday Talks

- 6/7** -Tibetan Teachings - Ven. Lobsang Sandup
6/14 -Dharma Talk by - Ven. Kusala Bhikshu
6/21 - Fathers Day -The Buddha in your home
- Ven. Havanpola Shanti
6/28 - Dharma Talk by - Ven. Karuna Dharma

Meditation Times

- Friday** 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala
Sunday 10:30 AM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala
Sunday 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala

Special Events

- 6/7 2 PM** - History of Gomang Monastery
Slide Show
6/11 7:30 PM - Buddhist Art Work Shop
6/12 7 PM - Teachings on Medicine Buddha
Practice
6/13 10 AM - Medicine Buddha Empowerment/
Healing Ceremony ***5 PM** Cultural
Presentation

IBMC Classes

- Mon. 7 PM** Tibetan Buddhism - Palmo Ling
Nunnery - Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna
Tue. 7 PM The Ten Ox Herding Pictures - An-
anda Hall - Rev. Hanasi Karuna
Tue 7 PM Monks Training - Zendo
Wed. 7:30 PM Everyday Buddhism - Zendo
Ven. Kusala Bhikshu
Thur. 4 PM Vimalakirti Sutra, Ven. Karuna
Dharma
Thur. 7 PM Pali Chanting -Palmo Ling Nun-
nery- Ven. Havanpola Shanti
Fri. 7 PM Western Zen -Ananda Hall
Rev. Shunya Karuna
Fri. 7 PM English Conversation - Palmo Ling
Nunnery. Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna
Sat. 2 PM Math Tutoring - Palmo Ling Nun-
nery -Call IBMC for Details

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IBMC Web Pages:

- www.Ibmc.info
www.Karunadharma.info
Www.Urbandharma.org

Prison Dharma is a column devoted to writings of prisoners around the country.

Dear Rev. Karuna Dharma,

This letter is to thank you for your support, encouragement and guidance on my path. I'll be leaving prison on 4/15 and as I do not yet have an address I'll no longer need to receive the newsletter. I do intend to remain in touch via the internet.

Some thoughts I've had on the Heart Sutra and emptiness [Sunyata]: I feel that the essence of what Avalokitesvara is trying to convey is the sense of nirvana which he has experienced and then given up to lead others to it. The essential nature of nature of nirvana and for that matter, all of reality is Sunyata.

I understand Sunyata to mean that each individual particle is interdependent and therefore does not exist independently. When we transcend this world of form and phenomena all that is left is nirvana which is when and where the realization of Sunyata' truth happens. The change in our conscious brought on by this realization is what we are trying to achieve here and now, in this lifetime. Is not the emptiness of nothing but of all things 'canceling out' all things which is what results in no-things but at the same time is all things. The 'canceling out' arises from the realization of interdependence.

I continue to meditate on emptiness. I believe I have achieved the realization of the Koan does a dog have Buddha nature? Answer Mu. It is answering a conventional question with the absolute truth. At heart all things are empty including Buddha nature and the dog itself. Mu is the answer to every question in an absolute sense. That is the trick of this Koan. If you have any insights to add please write me back before April 3.

Namaste,
Ben Ferreira

Many thanks go out to all of Ven. Karuna Dharma's devoted correspondence students. The cards and letters sent during her surgery, and her recuperation and your love, concern and dedication to your teacher and your practice, was and is a testament to her hard work, and love of the Dharma. Her staff and students here at IBMC thank you for your continued Guru Devotion.

May the triple Gem Bless you!

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