



Sydney & Melbourne Dharma Drum Newsletter 2005/01/15 Vol. 3

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DDMBA SYDNEY 2004

2004 has been a challenging, exciting, interesting, at times exhausting, but above all, a meaningful, fruitful, unforgettable and significant year for us as we were much blessed by Master Sheng Yen's visit.

Shifu's visit and the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Sydney and the Chung Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (CHIBS) has led to a number of significant exchanges and developments. Presently two other Australian universities are interested in similar co-operative arrangements with CHIBS. Dr Crangle of the University of Sydney will be presenting a paper at the 5th International Buddhist Conference at CHIBS in 2006. Dr Pecenko of the University of Queensland visited CHIBS in September and Dr Powers of the Australian National University presented a paper at CHIBS in November this year.



Shifu (Master Sheng Yen) at Sydney Airport, 2004



Above Photo: (left to right): Professor Philip Almond, Head of the School of History, Philosophy, Religion & Classics; Agnes Chow of Dharma Drum; Dr Primoz Pecenko, Director of the Centre for Buddhist Studies and Ms Vivian Fung, Honorary Adviser of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies receiving the books on behalf of the University

Presentation of Master Sheng Yen's Books

As an ongoing initiative, we continue to present Master Sheng Yen's books to educational institutions as reference material for students and researchers. We recently presented a full set of the Master's Chinese books to the Australian National University and a full set of the Master's English books to the University of Queensland and the Royal Brisbane International College.

(SEE PHOTO ABOVE RIGHT)

Chan Sharing Sessions

2004 saw our first full year of regular Chan Sharing Sessions. Conducted once a month on Saturday mornings, we took as guidance and topic for discussion sections from Master Sheng Yen's book, "Zen Wisdom". These have been active and lively sessions starting with selected readings and then open discussion. We have found that in most sessions we can link doctrines to real issues and challenges of daily life. We were fortunate to have Reverend Guo Jun join us to lead a number of sessions and perhaps the highlight of the year erudite, and entertaining, explanations on the Small self, Large self, and No self.

With our bright new base at the Buddhist Library next year we will introduce a program that focuses first and foremost on issues at the forefront of people's daily lives and then look at the teachings and techniques Chan Buddhism can bring to bear on them: Stress, Anger and Greed, Working Meditation, Tranquillity, Wisdom, Loneliness, Love and Kindness.

We hope you can join us for the first of these sessions on Sunday, 30th of January 2005, and thereafter on the last Sunday of every month. These sessions run from 11am-1pm at the Buddhist Library, 90 Church Street, Camperdown, NSW. Email us at ddmsydney@yahoo.com.au for more information.

Eight-Form Moving Meditation Team

In July 2004, our Eight-Form Moving Meditation team gave a demonstration at the Inaugural Australian Buddhist Youth Conference organised by MITRA Interservice Buddhist Network. Group practice sessions, which also provide team members the opportunity to lead the sessions, have been held since October, in conjunction with the sitting meditation sessions.

The team was fortunate to learn more about the Eight-Form Moving Meditation and its underpinning Silent Illumination from Reverend Guo Jun during his visit to Australia in July. The students from the University of Technology and University of Sydney also learned the Eight Form Moving Meditation from the Reverend.

Information in English about the Eight-Form Moving Meditation and how to do it is available through a direct link to the DDM Taiwan website from the DDM Australia website www.ddm.org.au



Photo:
Team members demonstrating Eight-Form Moving Meditation at the Inaugural Australian Buddhist Youth Conference

DDM Youth

It has been a wonderful journey of experience for the past few months. Reverend Guo Jun's visit to Australia has given DDM Youth the opportunity to regain our past working relationship with the university network to spread the teachings of Dharma through Dharma talks and meditation practices.

A most unforgettable experience was attending the Maitri Night in August, with Reverend Guo Jun as one of the guest speakers. The dedication and effort by event organisers ensured the night was a

wonderful success. All performances and entertainment had the underlying theme of 'Living in the present moment.' Reverend Guo Jun was invited to give a talk on 'mindfulness.' In one instance he asked the audience to block their noses with their hands to experience the concept of mindfulness - the mindfulness of living in this very moment... The individualistic, distinct method of presentation in Reverend Guo Jun's speech generated a captive effect on the audience.

Reverend Guo Jun also led a youth camp with the theme of self discovery for MITRA from 10-13 December. Participants' reports on their experience at the camp can also be viewed from our web site www.ddm.org.au

DDMBA MELBOURNE 2004

In addition to the regular activities held throughout the year, we celebrated the "Bathing of the Buddha" in May. Through bathing the Buddha, we remind ourselves of the Buddha within everyone of us, we cleanse our mind, restoring it to its original, authentic luminous nature.

Heart Sutra and Modern Day Management

We also invited Professor Chung-Kwong Poon, President of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, to present a talk on "Heart Sutra and Modern Day Management" on 30 October 2004.

Professor Poon highlighted the main teachings of the Heart Sutra, in particular the application of the Four Noble Truths in management by; identifying the problem, finding out the cause of the problem, and working out a way to resolve the problem, through techniques such as SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) Analysis. He also explained how we could apply The Twelve Links to deal with emotional issues and make better judgments and decisions.

The Heart Sutra talks about the Five Skandhas that cover both our physical form and mental aspects - by the same token, in modern day management we must also consider both the economic efficiency of the organisation (physical form) and the well-being and needs of the employees (mental aspect).

In his talk, Professor Poon pointed out that "form is not other than emptiness" refers to the wisdom of one's ability and limitations, analysing the situation in an objective manner and creating the conditions and opportunities to achieve success. "Emptiness is not other than form" refers to compassion as expressed in understanding the needs of the employees, caring for them, respecting them, and utilising their strengths to enhance team spirit and workmanship. "Form is precisely emptiness and emptiness is precisely form" refers to the interdependence and inter-connectedness of all things, and that nothing can exist by itself, so we must be willing to listen to others and accept their criticism.

By understanding that "the five skandhas are empty", we can let go of our attachments to our previous experience. By understanding that "all Dharmas are marked with emptiness", we will be able to consider all factors and conditions and act with flexibility according to the situation and set up new strategies.

The Heart Sutra shows us that management personnel are able to uplift their wisdom and compassion to raise the performance level of the organization and help employees change the working environment and their mindset for the better.



Photo:

Professor Poon presenting a talk on "Heart Sutra and Modern Day Management"

THOUGHTS FROM THE YOUTH CAMP 2004

Dear Everyone:

I feel this retreat has reminded me of how precious life is. I feel a lot more grateful for what I have and I definitely won't waste my time as much when I go home. I feel like I have started to calm down in my meditation. I can sit longer now without getting restless. These few days have also inspired me to wake up earlier and try to do more things in one day. I hope I'll be able to continue with the meditation when I go home.

I am really glad I got to talk to Chin Liang about 'Who Am I'. I think it's nice to have someone listen to you without responding and I also appreciated the noble silence because I didn't have to talk just for the sake of talking.

Normally I wouldn't go walking in the rain. But even the bad weather can be beautiful if you try hard enough to make yourself believe it. I really enjoyed working in the kitchen with everyone. I think it is fun but it also teaches you to respect other people's way of doing things.

When I go home I want to stop worrying about little things and really appreciate my life. I want to be happy with who I am and with just being alive rather keep on being greedy. I want to be a nicer person to live with. I think I have selfish love, so I want to learn true love. Hopefully this will make it easier for others to live with me.

I've also come out with the perspective that the life I am leading is one of the relative self. So instead of letting all of life's problems get me down I should realise these are only relative problems. I think knowing about relative self lifts a great weight off my shoulders.



Photo:

Participants of the youth camp practising sitting meditation in the Blue Mountains

Even though I feel as though I've learnt a lot from these few days there are also other things that have become a lot clearer. Like I know I can still be an angry, selfish person. I can see it in my thoughts. I really hope I can gradually lessen these feelings. I also know that I am a very judgmental person and I need to become more like a mirror.

I want to live in the present but this is really hard because my thoughts always wander off everywhere. I want to make good habits part of my life. Like being mindful when I eat, drink, walk. Basically I think the worries I had before this retreat were because I was too concerned with the past and the future. I kept on having regrets about the past and I would worry about what my life would be like. Instead of worrying so much I need to actually do something. And I think taking time out to enjoy the simple things in life will help me worry less as well.

Overall this retreat has made me more appreciative. I am grateful that all the right causes and conditions have brought all of us together and enabled us to get so much benefit. I think Reverend is right about group practice. You've all helped me to meditate better. I have truly enjoyed myself which surprises me because in the beginning I didn't know if I'd be still awake by the last day. Even though we haven't really been talking to each other, I've really enjoyed all your company. I can feel the warmth being around you guys. I hope we can all build on the good habits we've learned in this retreat. Thank you everyone.

With metta, Adelene