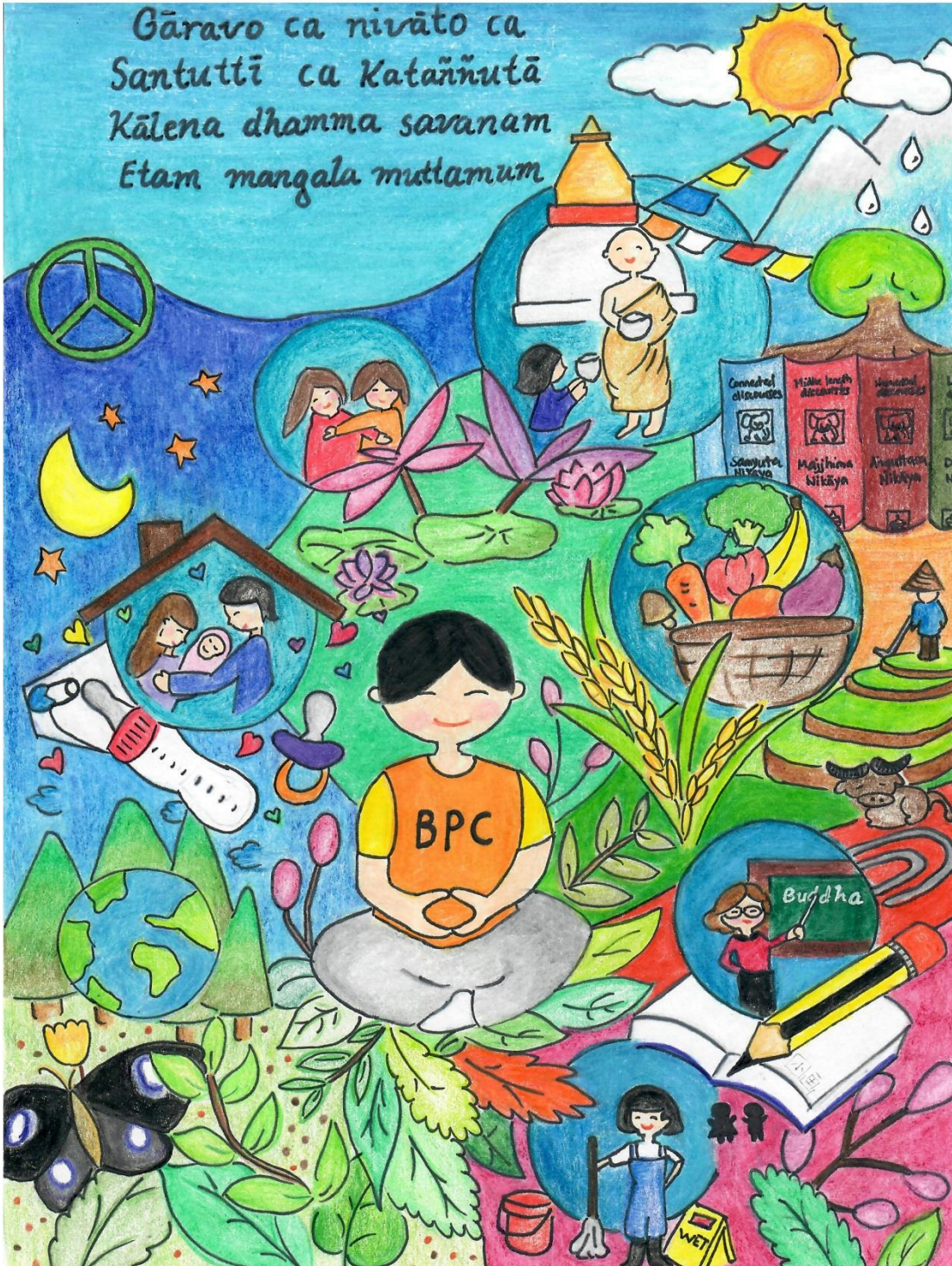




Buddhist & Pali College of Singapore Alumni (BPCA) - Quaterly E-Bulletin



Apr - Jun 2021

Picture by
Sis Lim Xiao Fang

In early May 2021, all classes were moved to the online Zoom platform as Singapore entered Phase 2 (heightened alert) due to an emergence of new virus variants, increase in the number of locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and unlinked community cases. Despite the short notice, we were more prepared for the disruption to “normal life” this time and transitioned seamlessly to online classrooms fully.

In the last quarter, we completed one class of *Introduction to Buddhism Course* (in English) and started the second class on 7 July 2021. The *Introduction to Buddhism Course* (in Mandarin) has been postponed to a later date so that it may be conducted in a classroom setting when the pandemic situation is expected to be more stable.

Despite the changing norms brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and varying adversaries faced, being *Grateful*, through mindfulness, helps us to appreciate the blessings in our life. This in turn spurs us to be kind and compassionate to others, helping us cultivate our virtues and keeping us on the right track in the Middle Path. Check out the various ways to be Grateful in this Apr- Jun 2021 issue of the BPCA quarterly e-bulletin.

Please reach out to the editorial team if you would also like to share your inspiring stories, insights on putting Dhamma into daily practice or give any feedback or suggestions via email to Brother Bryan Law at bryan_law2002@yahoo.com.

In the meantime, let's stay safe and healthy.

The Editorial Team

On Gratitude

by Brother Lau Kim Koon

Jack woke up as usual but with severe pain in his left toe. The area was swollen red. He did not know what was the cause as he had not experienced it before. As he was walking to the toilet, he fainted in the kitchen. He consulted a GP doctor and found out that he had a gout attack. He was given some medicines and went to work. For the next three weeks, he had intermittent high fever each day, usually in the evening. He had gone back to the GP doctor for further reviews twice, but there was no improvement. On the morning of the third week, there were red rashes over his chest and back of the body. He was worried and went to consult a specialist. It was diagnosed that the rashes were caused by an allergy to the gout medicine. Jack was hospitalized immediately.

During hospitalization, the rashes spread throughout the body, and his skin cracked. He was in pain from the blisters and could not sleep at night. His lips were swollen and covered with crusty sores. There were ulcers in the mouth, and cracks appeared on the tongue. Jack had difficulty eating. His weight dropped to 38 kg although he was 30 years old! He was on a 24-hour drip until all the medicine were washed out from his body. There was no medication to arrest the allergic symptoms. He had to rebuild his body with food rich in carbohydrates and protein. Having difficulty eating and sleeping and the pain from his body and mouth, he lost confidence in life. He lived day by day, putting his faith in the medical staff. Fortunately, he was treated by a team of very dedicated staff. Every morning the doctor would come around the ward to examine him. The nurses would delicately put eye drops to protect his eyesight and rubbed 'Nivea' cream over his body. The assistant doctor had to go around searching for him to have his blood tested. He had developed a great fear of taking blood twice a day, and he went into hiding. The nurses also ensured that his meals were not taken away until he had finished all the food. If he had any leftovers, the nurses would encourage him to finish up all the food, notwithstanding he had to take the whole afternoon or evening to do so.

One day, the cracked skins on Jack's limbs were peeling off by themselves. They were dead skins. New skins had grown. As days went by, the crusty sores on the lips dried up. The ulcers in the mouth were gone. These were signs that Jack was recovering from his allergic conditions. After a few weeks, he had recovered from all the wounds. He learnt that he was suffering from Stevens-Johnson syndrome and survived! Jack was grateful to the medical staff who had patiently nursed him to life. He was also appreciative of those who had wished him well and gave their moral support. He is still mindful of their kind deeds until today, although he could not remember their names or whereabouts to express his gratitude, especially to the medical staff.

Gratitude and mindfulness are related. If a person is not mindful of others' kindness towards him, he would never have any gratitude towards them. On the contrary, he might have negative thoughts which is an unwholesome deed. He might think that after all, the medical staff were paid and that the well wishes from friends were to be expected. However, with mindfulness he would be able to see things as they really are. The salary a staff received is a matter between an employee and his employer; the staff's conscientiousness in carrying out his duties is a different issue. It is the services performed by the staff, and not the salary, that make our life more comfortable and filled with hopes.

“The good person is grateful and thankful, for the virtuous only know how to be grateful and thankful. It is totally the level of a good person to be grateful and thankful.”

AN2.32

One may not be able to repay his gratitude directly to the person whom he had received the benefits from. In such cases, he can show his gratitude through others who are sick or facing difficulties. He can provide moral support within his means. For example, when a person is sick, he can give words of encouragement for a speedy recovery, participate in special blessings session at a temple chanting the Bojjhanga Sutta, or visit him to cheer him up etc.

Buddha said, “He who attends on the sick attends on me”.

Not every occasion is so complex for one to show his gratitude. The Buddha is a great teacher whom every Buddhist is grateful for his teachings. Buddhists will show their appreciation by venerating him. They also study and practise his teachings which are wholesome activities. Some will teach and explain the Buddha's teachings to those who are keen to know more about Buddhism so that the teachings can last a long time. Out of respect, Buddhists all over the world commemorate Buddha's birth, enlightenment and demise on Vesak day each year.

The principal of Buddhist and Pali College, Singapore (BPC), Venerable Dr. Pategama Gnanarama Anu-Nāyaka Mahāthera, (Bhante) passed away on 4th June 2019. The College is affiliated with the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka. He was the first principal of BPC who had tirelessly spent 25 years ensuring the students were adequately trained in Buddhism under the English stream of instruction. He was also the Chief Religious Advisor of Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association (TBA). The graduates of BPC and Buddhist followers of TBA were very grateful to him and they showed their gratitude by holding his annual memorial service. The lecturers had faithfully volunteered to teach at BPC and continued their services to uphold the passion of Bhante in BPC and ensure the College's continuation.

Buddha said that there are two persons who are not easy to repay.

They are one's mother and father. (AN 2.33).

They introduced him to this world, care for him and nourish him. When their child is sick, the parents will be very concerned and seek means for their child to recover from his illness. They will ensure that he has the necessary education to earn a decent living when he has grown up. They will provide him with a comfortable place to live in and that he will be fed well. Despite the care of the parents, some children despise them when they grow up. This arises because of differences in opinions due mainly to the generation gap between them. The child may be independent when he has grown up, but he must appreciate the efforts of the parents in bringing him up. He should show his gratitude by not ignoring them and taking care of them.

Buddha had taught how a person could show gratitude to his parents:



*"But, Bhikkhus,
if, when one's parents lack faith, one encourages,
settles, and establishes them in faith;
if, when one's parents are immoral, one encourages,
settles, and establishes them in virtuous behaviour;
if, when one's parents are miserly, one encourages,
settles, and establishes them in generosity;
if, when one's parents are unwise, one encourages,
settles, and establishes them in wisdom

In such a way, one has done enough for one's parents,
repaid them, and done more than enough for them."*

There are many other occasions where one can show gratitude for. For example, to one's friends for benefits received during their companionship; one's boss for being employed, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic where many have lost their jobs. The occasions where one can show gratitude in life are numerous if one is mindful in daily life.

One can also take the cue from the Sigālovāda Sutta (DN 31)
on the ways to show gratitude in a relationship.



"These two people are hard to find in the world. Which two?
The one who is first to do a kindness,
and the one who is grateful and thankful for a kindness done."

(AN 2:118).

Gratitude and Appreciation

By bro Bryan and his cat Siha

Siha! I hate my friends, my boss, my work, my parents, teachers, this society, this whole planet! I hate everything!



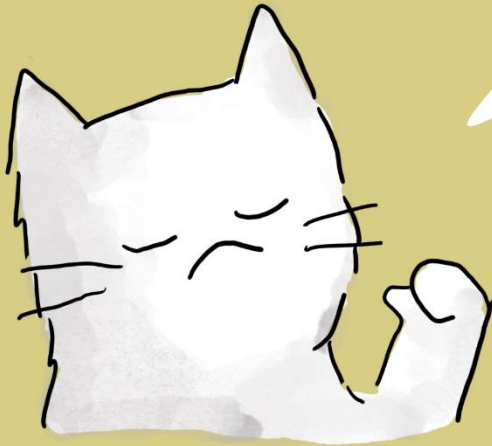
Please do calm down.



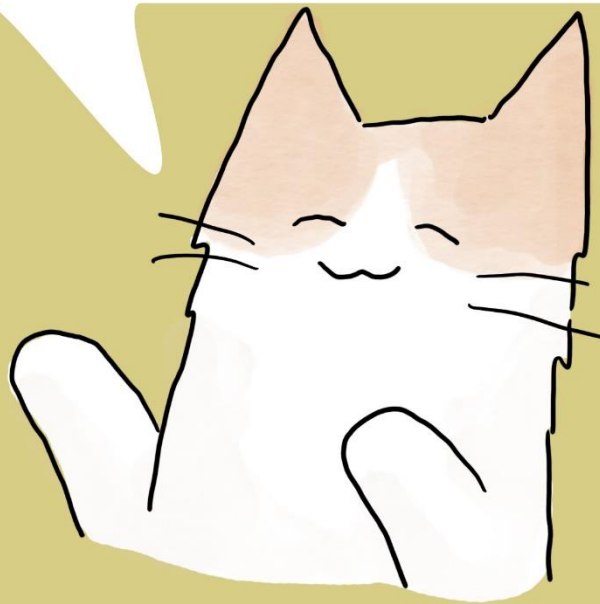
Yes, they are not perfect, but most of them do help us in some ways before. We have to have kindness and gratitude for them.



But my parents should have worked harder to make my life comfortable! I deserved more than what they gave me! They owed me a good life! I truly hate them!



Bb, even if one's parents did not earn enough to provide a comfortable life, they still do their best to care. They even provide a life, a chance for one to do good. One does have to be grateful for them. They may be imperfect, thus one has to try their best to help their parents be a better being and care for them.



But society should do more for me! I deserve a better world! This world is unfair and collapsing! Everyone owed me a good life and a good future! Others have a good life but not me! I hate this society and this world. I hate everyone!



Bb, indeed there are flaws in society and the world, but one should still be grateful. There are still a lot of good people and acts of kindness in this society.

Often one takes so much for granted and complains that life is not as good, as abundant, as privileged as one would like it to be. Instead of anger and hate, we should act with kindness and gratitude.



There must be appreciation and gratitude for the good. There are still kindness and compassion in the world, and one should not take things for granted.

One does not always think that this society and everyone owes him or her everything. Their very lives actually depend on the kindness and hardships of many others.

Indeed, there are plenty of flaws and problems, but instead of hating others, one helps others and the world with kindness and compassion. **With gratitude, there is joy in every moment.**

“These two people are hard to find in the world. Which two? The one who is first to perform a kindness act, and the one who is grateful and thankful for a kindness done.”



Thank you so much, Siha. I am grateful and will not take things for granted now. Even if this is a troubled world, I will still help myself and others and make this world a better place with kindness and compassion.

As the Buddha has taught us in the Mangala Sutta:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Gāravo ca nivāto ca</i> | Reverence, humility, |
| <i>Santutthī ca kataññutā</i> | contentment, bearing gratitude and |
| <i>Kālena dhamma savanam</i> | opportune hearing of the Dhamma; |
| <i>Etam mangala muttamam</i> | this is the highest blessing. |

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Introduction to **Buddhism Course**

July 2021 (**22nd Intake**)

- * *How much do you know about Buddhism?*
- * *Are you a knowledgeable Buddhist?*
- * *What is the essence of Buddhism?*
- * *Do you know how to practise Buddhism?*

Course Details :

- Course Date** : 7th July to 8th September 2021 (10 weeks)
Frequency : Every Wednesday 7.30pm to 9.30pm
Venue : Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple
30 Jalan Eunos, S'pore 419495 (Opposite Eunos MRT)
Course Fees : By donation
Email : Intro2buddhismbpca@gmail.com
Tel : Sis. Lynn @ 8288 9888
Instructors : By experienced **Dhamma Teachers**

Topics are covered in plain and simple language and include:

The Freedom of Inquiry in Buddhism, the Life of the Buddha, the 3 Characteristics of Existence, the 4 Noble Truths and the Noble 8 Fold Path, Rebirth and Karma, the Buddhist Texts, How to Practise Buddhism, the Different Buddhist Traditions, the Meaning of Common Buddhist Rituals and Chanting, Buddhist Meditation.

Organized by the Buddhist & Pali College of Singapore



BUDDHIST AND PALI COLLEGE OF SINGAPORE

(Affiliated to Buddhist & Pali University of Sri Lanka)

Diploma in Buddhism 2021/22

(29th Intake)

Curriculum

- Early Buddhism - Basic Doctrines
- Buddhist Social Dimensions
- Geographical Expansion of Theravada Buddhism
- Early History of Buddhism up to 3rd Century BCE
- Pali Qualifying Paper

Term

From 3rd Oct 2021 to 31st Oct 2022
Exams: 3rd week of Oct 2022(Tentative)

Venues

Mangala Vihara (Buddhist Temple)
30 Jln Eunus, Singapore, 419495
Tuesdays (7.30pm - 9.30pm)
Sundays (2.00pm - 5.15pm)
Starts: 3rd Oct 2021, Sunday

Poh Ming Tse Temple
438 Dunearn Road, Singapore, 289613
Tuesdays (7.30pm - 9.30pm)
Fridays (7.00pm - 10.00pm)
Starts 5th Oct 2021, Tuesday

Enquiry

Maureen Hui
maw69xyz@gmail.com, **96282069**
Sandra Koh
chaturikoh@yahoo.com.sg, **91297763**

Registration Closing Date

- By 15th Sep 2021

How to Apply

- Application Form:
Download at <https://bpc.edu.sg> or <https://mv.org.sg/>, or
Collect from Mangala Vihara, or
From QR code below
- Registration Fee: US\$55 (pay in Sgd\$ equivalent) to be paid to the university
- Maintenance Fee: S\$260
- Other documents:
2 Passport Size Photos and a copy of IC

Course Preview

Register through Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple Facebook page, website, or through this QR code

Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple
Date: 7th August 2021, Saturday
Time: 2.00pm -4.00pm

Poh Ming Tse Temple
Date: 15th August 2021, Sunday
Time: 2.00pm -4.00pm



**Current
School
Activities**

- **Buddhist Pali College Courses**

All courses are ongoing

- **Introduction to Buddhism Course**

Course Date: 7th July 2021 – 8th September 2021

Every Wednesday, 7.30pm-9.30pm

**Upcoming
Activities**

- **Diploma in Buddhism 2021/ 22 (29th Intake)**

Course Date: 3rd Oct 2021 to 31st Oct 2022

Course Preview will be conducted at 2 locations:

1) Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple on 7th August 2021

2) Poh Ming Tse Temple on 15th August 2021

For more information, please contact:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Address | 30 Jalan Eunos Singapore 419495 |
| Tel | 8288-9888 |
| Email | bpca2017sg@gmail.com |
| BPC website | https://bpc.edu.sg |
| BPC Facebook | https://www.facebook.com/bpcsin |