

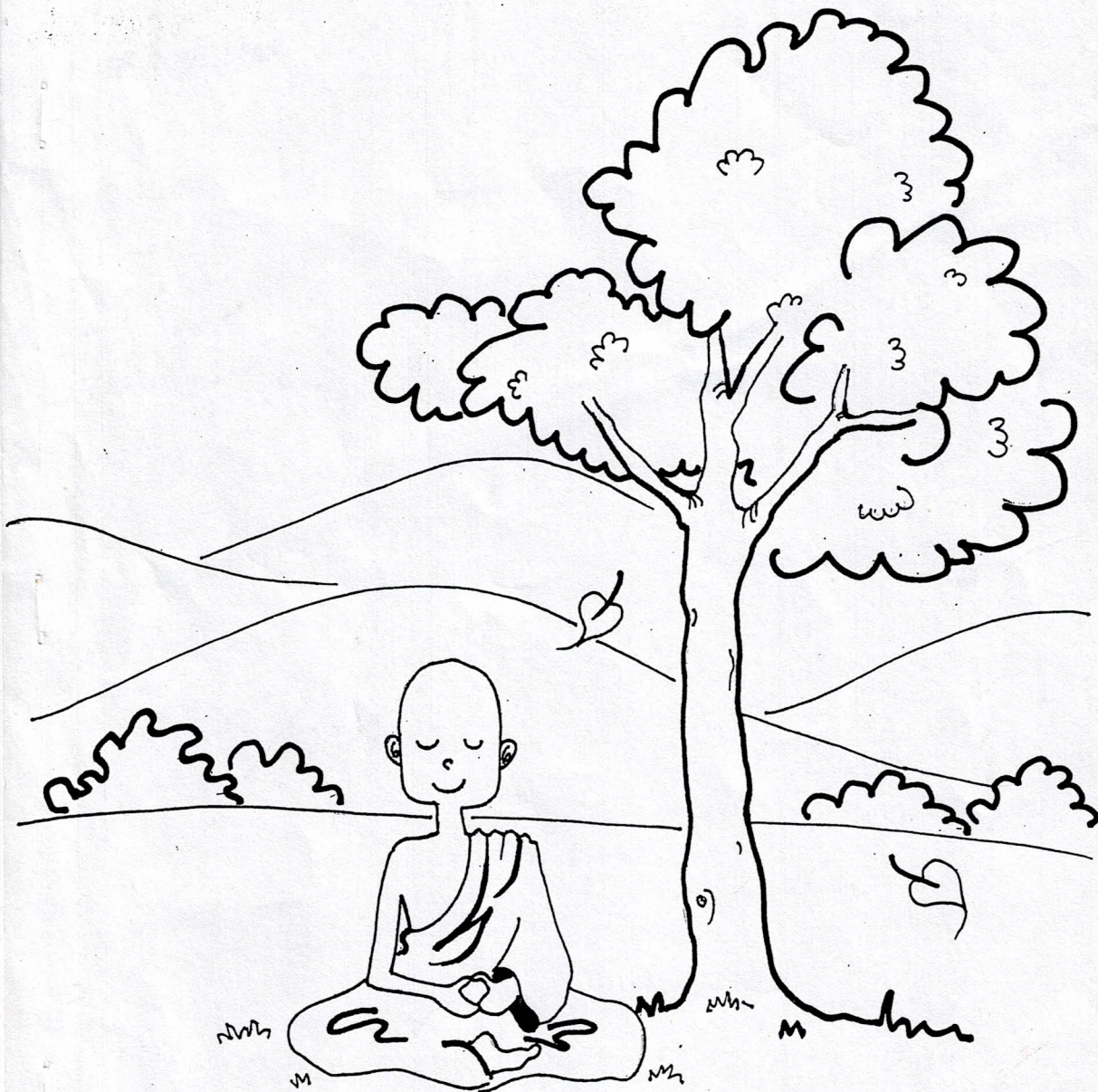


正信佛友會刊物

VOICE OF ZHENGXIN

The official newsletter of Zhengxin Buddhist Association

正訊



Hello! How is life?

This is the first, also the last, issue of 2009-2011 newsletter. As the editor, I accept the full responsibility for failing to churn out issue after issue every three months. You see when a man is old, he becomes devoid of drive, enthusiasm, and foremost new ideas. He prefers to have an easy life – a life that does not require him to burn his brain juice. Worst of all, he does not have the tenacity to solicit articles from the chief or members. Thus, there you have it – only ONE issue in TWO years. (Reminder: Please get young member to be the next newsletter editor).

So, you may ask, “Why this issue?”

Oh! It is a matter face-saving. I would be too embarrassed to face anyone of you in the upcoming AGM, especially when one of you asks this question, “What happen?” With at least ONE issue sent to you informing you to attend the AGM, I guess newsletter would not become an issue. At the very least, I can say loudly that I did produce ONE.

So much for the apology (“excuse” would be much more appropriate”). (Actually, by changing the title to “ZX Biannual Newsletter” will make this excuse unnecessary. This is how funny conventional thing is.) Now, let’s talk about

It’s time for the current EXCO to step down. The Curse of Golf has come to an end. To my knowledge, there wasn’t a second round of golf challenge to determine the next president. So we have to make do with our persuasive talks to entice a member to be the next chief. Here is a suggestion so that we can focus on a particular group of members; rather than diluting our effort without concrete success. What about people with bald pate? Or people with long hair? What about sending a female member to the ZX house? That would be better than the 30% quota enacted by the government. Before we talk about another topic, I urge each and every one of you to attend this AGM. Why? ZXers are famous for their low attendance so much so I was once forced to shorten my appointment with Zhou Gong, rushed all the way just to fill up the quorum. So this is my very personal pledge – I do not want to be disrespectful again to Zhou Gong.

ZX AGM

Date : 21.8.11

Time : 0930

(Lunch F.O.C)

Allow me, before I step down, to leak some upcoming activities. These are some of the plans:-

- a. Moon Cake Festival
- b. Youth Camp
- c. Trip to Fuzhou, China **
- d. Transcription of Ven. Tsang Hui's talks (volunteers needed)

Ha! "Time flies. I'm old already". Please remember this adage of mine. It has done me a lot of good, especially taking advantage of others. "Old man first". "You can't expect an old chap to do this!" ... Sadly, there is another story on the flip side. You see having dragged my feet along in life for almost 50 years, it suddenly dawns on me that after all these years of association, listening to Buddha Dharma discourses, attending meditation classes and studying (reading?) Buddha Dharma books, I have not even tasted a drop of Buddha Dharma flavor. I'm still the old me; quick temper, enjoy polluting my lung and the air, office gossip is my favorite tea-break pastime... How many more years do I have? How many tomorrows? Can my old bone withstand a long period of prostration or sitting meditation? Can my mind, so indulging in my old bad habit, be "reprogrammed"? (This is a term aptly coined by Eric Keng or "deprogrammed" by Ajahn Sumeho). Being old is not a curse. It's a natural process. It became a curse when we know we have not done/achieved what we know is important to us. I sincerely hope that when you are my age, you do not have the same regret.

Talking about old, we have a Chinese article in this issue that talks about the author's feeling in dealing with his parents. Are you in the same boat? If you disagree, please write a reply and share with us in the next issue of newsletter. (Hello! New newsletter editor, you owe me one *meal at Dushi King*)

In order to publish this issue of newsletter, I have sought the help from two well-known bodhisattvas, at least in ZX circle, to contribute article. One of them wrote about seeking the truth, where he posted these questions, "When is the time to practice?" "When we are free?" Coincidentally, it is related to my regret I mentioned above. To me, the question is not "when?" but rather "Why don't?" As long as we have had a taste of the Dharma, the question of

when?" is not longer relevant. As for the other one, read about his admiration of the Buddha. Oh ya! Not forgetting our outgoing president's article, where he reflects on ZX 2009-2011.

I would like to extend my heart-felt appreciation to Ms Wonderful Ice (not Vanilla Ice) for designing the cover, procuring the Chinese calligraphy - two major skills this editor is not ashamed to admit having none, and doing Chinese typewriting.

Last but not least, to my buddy, Mr. KE Tham (Ketam?), may you carry with you the happy memory of ZX, plant it in Aussie land and nurture it to grow ever stronger. Please do not forget that "initial-will". Oh, ya! All the best! (Although we are unwilling to lose our Coffee Lady, especially one that is F.O.C.).

So long! May you be well and happy! See you at the AGM! Datang! Jangan Tak Datang!

** The outgoing chief has actually promised to bring all of us there. A lot of us can be witnesses. But, you know, he is a quick learner, he would categorically deny he has said that, and that we have misquoted him. So, if you are interested to visit Ven. Tsang Hui in Fuzhou, my advice is "Start saving \$\$\$!"

Editor 2009 – 2011

We get attached to the idea that Buddhist teachings are right and then the result of that, if we don't have enough sati-sampajanna along with it, is that we become Buddhists who feel we are right because we're following the right teaching. Thus as a consequence of attachment and the way we perceive the Buddha's teaching, we can become self-righteous Buddhists. We can feel that any other form of Buddhism that doesn't fit into what we consider right is then wrong, or that other religions are wrong. (Excerpt from Intuitive Awareness by Ajahn Sumedho)

回顾 " 正信 " 2009 - 2011

主席

时间过得好快好快！记得四年前刚担任正信佛友会主席时，一时兴起写了大约六、七面的文章予 " 正讯 "，可惜由於种种原因而未能刊出！" 正讯 " 也停刊了一段时期！巧遇崇益向我追稿，不得已拿起 Ipad 开始了这份稿。。。。这次是四年以後，也是当了两届正信佛友会主席后，要下台的时候了。

谈谈「正信」这四年来所做的 " 活动 " 吧！第一，正信成功的筹办了 " 第二届菩提之夜一点亮心靈之灯 " 千人晚宴。所筹得的几万元款项足够维持「正信」两、三年的开销了！主要开销为会所租金及水电费，其他活动多为会员及信徒所捐助！

第二大活动为 2010 年马来西亚国际佛教论坛 " 印顺导师的思想与当代世界 "；以发扬印顺导师的思想！由「正信」发起，与多个佛教团体联办且邀请到世界各地的主讲者来发表演说！场地爆满且圆满完成！

「正信」儿童班也从早期的一班扩展到如今的四班，从小学至中学，为儿童与少年提供佛学基础和与佛教结下一个善缘的机会。这多亏这些老师会友家长们，Yen Lee, Ai Rin, 素萍, Ms. Neo, Phek Yew, Wong Sow Ling, 妙冰, Frankie, Siew Wei, Kuan Tai, 如英, Yvonne, 多年来各方面的付出！儿童，少年们不但学了佛法与手工等，还享受各类的美食！

「成人佛学班」由韦彰，伟干师兄多年的带领下，呈现出有素质有系统的，依据印顺导师著作的佛学课程！

由喜宝带领「正信」会员外出旅游的活动，无论是上山或下海，或在时冷时热的环境，都自然配搭历史的介绍，充满了无限乐趣且富有教育性！

当然也不忘记每星期为「正信」整理打扫和维修的林师兄，秀利和 Anne！他们给大家提供了清洁舒适的环境！还有每次为「正信」插花供佛的 Mei Lien & Mei Kwan 两姐妹，让「正信」显得更庄严和雅静安谧。

「正信」走到今天，是“大家”照应“大家”，也发扬了大乘的理念！

(注：主席所写的六页长气大论，因不再宜时，故把它投进篮去了。)

真理的追寻

小虫

假如有人说，「生命的意义在于对真理的追求。」我想一个真正的学佛者大概不会反对这句话吧！如果佛法对人类的意义，或者说应该说我们只运用佛法来增进人生修养或成为得空时才来调剂一下生活的节目，那实在是太糟蹋佛法了。坊间流传的一些哲学思想，或类似身心灵的方法，对处理这些问题已经绰绰有余了。佛法是超越这一切，甚至超越这一期的生命的。

「我近来才组织了一个家庭，又刚刚换了一份工作，事业刚起步，忙得不得了，实在是腾不出时间来学佛，等我安定下来了再说吧！」这种论调大概大家都耳熟能详吧，搞不好自己就是其中一位。佛法真的是与生活分割的吗？这两者难道没有共存的空间吗？忙碌时就不能学佛，不需要佛法了吗？

最近永觉法师来到正信佛友会与大家分享了两场演讲“四千里路风和雨”——十四年在泰国的行脚生活。在十四年中过着清苦的修行生活，甚至一个人在离人烟八十公里的森林中与虎熊为伴，独住了两个月余，实在是令人钦佩不已。我不是说能一人独住森林或者能够行脚十四年值得我们效仿，而是感念于他对真理的追求的热诚，把全副生命都投进去的那种精神，真的值得我们借镜。听了他的分享，实在是惭愧异常，自己真的做得太少了！一个人喜欢住山里，或者过着清苦淡泊的生活而甘之如饴，有时候是性格使然，也不是说这样的修行“相”才是真正的修行。但是如果一个人能抛离世俗的一切一切，一心一意的去追寻生命的真理，那是会感动人心的。

这种把全副生命都用在修行与上述等忙完了才学佛的例子真的是太两极化了，这是值得我们去深思的。一个人假如忙的时候没有佛法的引

导，很多时候都变成很“盲”，看不清楚而做了令自己及他人烦恼的决定。我们在忙的时候更需要佛法！法的学习就是在我们忙的时候作为生命的引导，所学习的正可以派上用场，以对治自己的习气与烦恼而立即得到轻安。“定”的修习更是不可或缺的一环；除了减低热恼之外，定心能使我们更有效力的，更正确的处理问题。再者，定力也能促使我们看得更清楚，开拓我们的生命力，它更是修慧的基石。

光阴似箭，这句小孩写作文已会用的字眼，在步入中年时更是体会莫深也。生活必须与佛法结合，人生才会变得更美的，更有意义。等我们忙完才学，一晃眼间可能就是二十年或是下一世了。或许我们无法像永觉法师一般用全部的生命来修行，但是我们或者应问一问自己，我们用了多少巴仙的时间投资在慧命的成长？假如答案是少过三份之一，那我们也许应该多对自己做些反思了，这一生我们要得到什么？我们在追求什么？又得到了什么？或许这些问题能成为行动的开始。

阿含经中的一个事故

伟干

七月初与正信佛友一行几个人到新加坡拜访师父。与此同时，上了昭慧法师和性广法师的各两堂课，受益良多。在此摘了昭慧法师所讲的阿含经中的一则事故，作一个简报。经说：耆那教尼犍子门徒之萨遮迦，饱学各种理论，口出豪言：「我不预期有任何能与我辩论的沙门，婆罗门，他们的领导者，老师，甚至於自称已证全然正觉的人，因为他们都被我论到震撼动摇颤抖汗下而落败。。。。」他就找到佛陀要挑战世尊对於色受想行识之无常，无我的教法，佛陀把“常我”的说法一层的辩驳，最後被论到震撼动摇颤抖汗下的当然是萨遮迦。

这则事故让听课者对於阿含经生起更高的兴趣。同时是对释尊的辩才无碍的能力而觉得所有佛弟子何其幸运，我们拥有一位无人能超越其智慧的人天导师！

(注：人与人之间的互动，存着无奈。答应了就要去做，好有个交待—这篇文稿。我知道伟干可以交出一篇更好的。)

该换位了？

CALim

当一个人老了，以前举手之劳的事也逐渐办不到了，而要别人代劳。对他来说，这是很悲哀的事。天下的父母，有谁愿意麻烦子女；有谁愿意让子女担忧，于是乎把自己的无奈与悲哀隐藏在心中，独自一个人承受去渡过余生。

当一个人年幼时，不曾隐瞒自己的感受和不舒适——有病就呻吟，不满就投诉，想要什么就去要，从来不曾为父母着想。

年少时，虽然多数还会服从父母的意见，但自我心中已经开始结构出自己的看法与想法。随着知识见闻，朋友的影响的增加，代沟的扩大，青年的心中已经有了一套自我的思想——如何生活，如何教育儿女等等。它加上经济上的独立，服从父母的意见的机会也渐渐少了。

父亲刚走了。临走前他所表现的那种倔强，使我反感和心痛，一直要求他不要那样。事后回想，父亲只是在做他一直以来在做的事——不愿我们为他操心。只可惜他不曾明白他这么做会让我们更心痛，更操心。一边是希望他的痛苦减少，尽力的去服侍他，一边是不希望别人因他的痛苦而痛苦。

我想天下的父母都是这样的吧！他们只知道付出，一味的付出，即使自己已经没有这个本钱了。我不怪父亲那么做，只希望他会和我来个换位。

当一个人老了，以前的一直付出也该终止了吧！是时候重做一个小孩了吧！让儿女来照顾你，服侍你，供你一切生活所需。想要什么，想吃什么，有什么不满，就让他们知道吧！莫问他们所买给你的东西值多少，因为他们买得起。病了就让他们服侍你，让他们觉得你需要他们。莫怕拖累他们，因为这是他们的天职，就像小孩眼中的父母亲一样。

换下位，我想大家的日子会好过点。天下的儿女，像天下的父母一样，都是疼爱自己的父母的。

爸爸，您好走！

Excerpt from "In Simple Terms", a collection of similes by Ajahn Chah.

1. A THORN

Things are simply the way they are. They don't give us suffering. Like a thorn: Does a sharp thorn give us suffering? No. It's simply a thorn. It doesn't give suffering to anybody. If we step on it, we suffer immediately.

Why do we suffer? Because we stepped on it.

So the suffering comes from us.

2. NO MATCH FOR AN OX

An ox that's been pulling a loaded wagon a long way – the closer the sun lowers to the horizon and evening comes on, the faster it walks, because it wants to reach its destination quickly. It misses its home.

We human beings, the older we get, the sicker we get, the closer we are to dying. That's the time when you have to practice. You can't make old age and illness an excuse not to practice, or else you'll just be worse than an ox.

(Editor: This seems to target at me!).

3. HEAVY LIFTING

Mindfulness and alertness are like two people lifting a heavy log. A third person is watching and when he sees that the log is heavy, he comes to help. When it's heavy like that, he can't not help. He has to help. The person helping here is discernment. It can't stay still. When there's mindfulness and alertness, discernment has to run in and join them.

4. PICKING MONGOES

If a mango is five meters off the ground and we want it, we can't use a ten-meter picking pole to pick it, because it's too long. We can't use a two-meter picking pole either, because it's too short.

Don't go thinking that a person with a PhD. has an easy time practicing the Dhamma because he knows so much. Don't go thinking that way. Sometimes people with PhD. are too long.

5. THE DOG ON A PILE OF UNHUSKED RICE

..... This is like a dog lying on a pile of unhusked rice. Its stomach is gurgling – jawk, jawk – and it lies there thinking, “Where can I get something to eat?” Its stomach is hungry, so it jumps off the pile of unhusked rice and goes looking for some garbage.

There's food right there in the pile, but it doesn't realize it. It doesn't see the rice. It can't eat unhusked rice.

Knowledge exists, but if we don't practice it, we don't understand it. We're as stupid as the dog on the pile of unhusked rice. It's really a pity. Edible rice is there, but it's hidden by the husks – in the same way that release is here, but it's hidden by our suppositions.

6. A SENSE THAT YOUR ARM IS SHORT

The Buddha's teachings are direct, straightforward, and simple, but hard for someone who's starting to practice them because his knowledge can't reach them. It's like a hole. People by the hundreds and thousands complain that the hole is deep because they can't reach to its bottom. There's hardly anybody who will say that the problem is that his arm is short.

The Buddha taught us to abandon evil of every kind. We skip over this part and go straight to making merit without abandoning evil. It's the same as saying the hole is deep. Those who say their arms are short are rare.

(Editor: Doesn't he talk about us?)

7 PEELS & HUSKS

I'll give you a simple comparison. Suppose you've bought a banana or a coconut in the market and you walk along carrying it. Someone asks you, “Why did you buy the banana?”

“I bought it to eat it.”

"But do you have to eat the peel, too?"

"No."

"I don't believe you. If you're not going to eat the peel, why are you carrying it too?"

Or suppose you're carrying a coconut:

"Why are you carrying the coconut?"

"I'm carrying it home to make a curry."

"And you're going to curry the husk too?"

"No."

"Then why are you carrying it?"

So, how are you going to answer his question?

Through desire. If there's no desire, you can't give rise to ingenuity, to discernment.

That's the way it is as we make an effort in our meditation. Even though we do this through letting go, it's like the banana or the coconut: Why are you carrying the peel or the husk? Because the time hasn't come yet to throw it away. It's still protecting the inner flesh. The time hasn't come yet to throw it away, so you hold onto it for the time being.

The same with our practice: supposition and release have to be mixed together, just as the coconut has a husk mixed together with a shell and the flesh, so you carry them all together. If they accuse us of eating the coconut husk, so what! We know what we're doing.

(Editor: It's fun and thought provoking to read this book. The teachings of the Buddha are too profound for most of us to understand, and hence similes are used most of the time to help convey his teachings, ability limited to those with wisdom. This book is available in ZX library. If you can't find it, it can only mean one thing – it's still with me.)

Just Thought

I don't know about you. On the way home after Bodhi Night, getting a lift from one sleepy and tired soul, while worrying that he might bang into others, events leading up to that night flashed in my mind. The many hours of practices those kids, teenagers and adults had to go through; the tireless effort the organizing committee spent to ensure a smooth running of that night; the many brainstorming on and editions of the slide show; those thickened faces as a result of selling tickets; the precious family time members had to forgo in order to help out.... They all evaporated in the thin air once that night had come to an end. All the times, efforts and sacrifices, were they worthwhile?

In life, I believe, these are common occurrences. We work hard for long period of time to ensure a successful something. When it is all over, deep inside us there is a feeling of emptiness. All those zeal, determinations suddenly dissolved and disappeared, leaving behind nothing but memory, until a new something comes along. We may have to go through many of these cyclic occurrences in our life.

I always look forward to a holiday. I always have the feeling I just have to work for another few days and there would be no more working days once the holiday comes. While I know that this is the stupidest thought of all the stupidity any rational human may have, it keeps on occurring again and again. Once the holiday is over, the reality dawns on me – I have to work tomorrow. Then again, I don't know, when that day really comes, would I miss my working days?

What do I really want? Something that is permanent? Something which would last forever? Why do I keep on doing those things that I know for sure would end in disappointment or with the feeling of emptiness? Is it because I do not have a choice? Can I do them differently? Should I put on another pair of glasses to see them from a different perspective that would give a meaning to them?

In this secular world, everything is meaningless in final analysis. Its meaning is what we encode on it. Some think the meaning of life is to have fun; some rest it onto being with family members – the joy of seeing kids grow up, utter the first word, see them achieve greatness; securing financial security; reaching out to the needy and disadvantage; What's yours?