

# BLIAQ Newsletter

Buddha's Light International Association of Queensland, Australia

## Upcoming Events

**21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> July** – NTI Mindfulness Workshop for Teachers and Others (registration closes 14<sup>th</sup> July), 9:00am-5:00pm

**21<sup>st</sup> July** – Great Compassion Repentance Service, 9:00am

**5<sup>th</sup> Aug** – Buddhist Talk (Most Ven. Hsin Bao), 10:30am – 12:00noon

**31<sup>st</sup> July** – Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Dharma Service, 11am

**11-16 August** – Ullambana Festival Chanting Service, 9:00am

**17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> August** - Ksitigarbha Service and Sangha offering ceremony, 9:00am

**19<sup>th</sup> August** – Grand Offering starting 10:00am and Thrice Amitabha Commemorating Dharma Function, 1:00pm

**26<sup>th</sup> August** – Baby shower and blessing ceremony, 2:00pm



I expressed to Gary Zicking about my desire to have more Dharma teachings in the newsletter and not just stories. Synchronistically that very day I received an email offering to write a series of pieces about the Eight Great Realisation's of a Bodhisattva. Around the same date I was informed of the translation's of teachings on the Chung Tian Temple facebook page. How fortunate we are and without having to do much work! The piece about the Great Realisations is one of several that will be included over the coming months.

I have also include a piece on the Australia New Zealand Buddhist Youth Conference which I attended in Perth around the end of June and start of July. It is this as well as a virus that has kept me from publishing last month's email sooner. Due to the delay the Venerable Chueh Shan has recommended that I publish the June and July newsletters at the same time, so here they are 😊!

I trust you will all enjoy this newsletter and that it may be more relevant to your own life in this and the issues to come

Alex Seton- Editor



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## Noble Character – Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Noble Character

Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Translated by Elaine Pun

‘When people have no desire, they will have high standards of morality.’ The reason why a person is valued by others is not because of one’s level of knowledge, ability, wealth or status, but of one’s character. Therefore, for a person, character is more important than being knowledgeable, and personality is more important than wealth. A noble character is a person’s invisible asset. As to how to cultivate a ‘noble character’, there are four points:

First, not to betray one’s principle because of poverty: a person cannot desert one’s own cause or principle due to temporary poverty or misery. For example, monks and nuns must not lose their aspirations of seeking the Way and return to secular life because of momentary poverty and hardship. A woman cannot sell herself because of temporary poverty since this is self-degradation without moral integrity. It was said, “Even starving to death, scholars do not sell books

and warriors do not sell swords.” Therefore, a person should not betray one’s cause and principle due to a moment’s hardship, and must uphold one’s identity and integrity.

Second, not to change one’s aspiration because of being poor and low: a person cannot lose one’s own ambition because of temporary bad luck and destitution. For example, I was originally an upright person, but due to poverty, I associate with bad people to commit crimes. I was originally a benevolent and charitable person, but because I am poor now, I stop donating. In fact, though a person has no money or power, at least one has a heart, and though I have nothing, at least I have a mouth. I can be kind-hearted and practice giving by saying good words. Never change your aspiration due to poverty. Be able to be unaffected by poverty enables one to live a simple life and keep one’s goal in life. On the contrary, if one does not know shame, one will certainly be poor and low. Therefore, a person with moral integrity rather dies in poverty than to live a rich life, losing the right track. People who are able to face poverty but still stick to their aspirations are more respected by others.

Third, not to give up because of hardships: when life is difficult, we have to face it. Never give up your own responsibilities and ideals due to temporary hardship. Nowadays, some young people in society make effort to study hard at schools and are full of hope and vision for their future. Unfortunately, as soon as they step into the society and face a bit of difficulty, they will withdraw and give up their ideals. This is because their determination is not strong enough. Only a person with strong will can withstand hard tests.

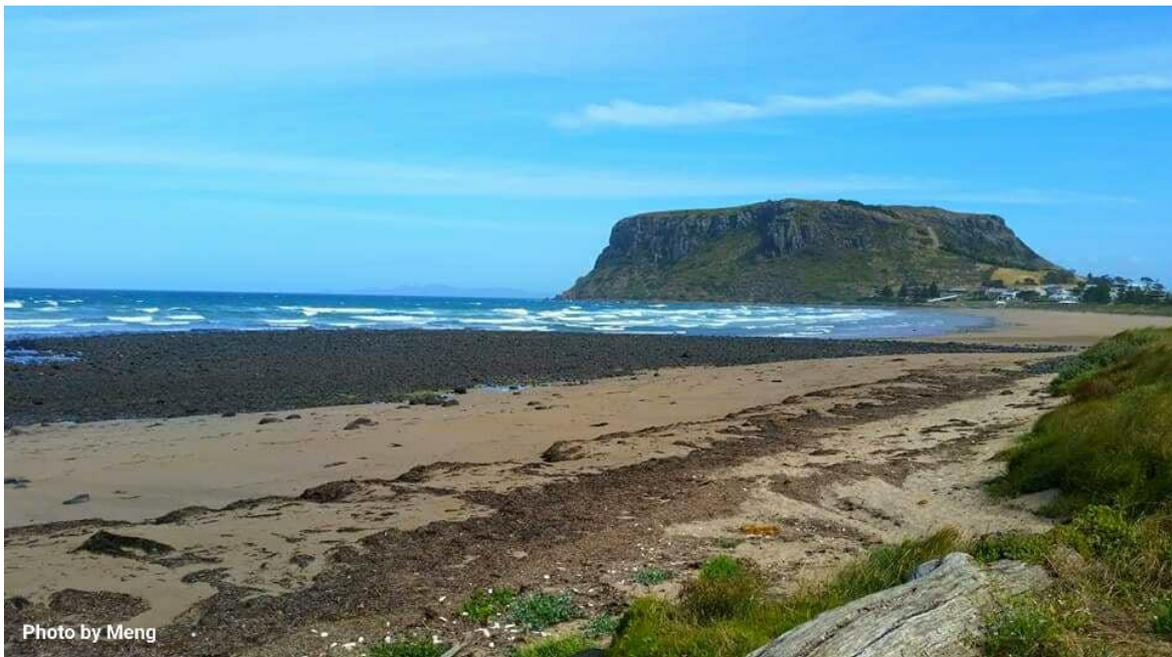


Photo by Meng

Fourth, not to retreat because of difficulties: in life, everyone has difficulties. In difficult times, we must be able to calmly analyze and break through attachments. With the determination to break through difficulties, we can obtain good opportunities. In ancient times, so many heroes and emperors achieved their success and distinguished themselves by going through a lot of hardships with firm beliefs and persistent struggles. Therefore, to be able to overcome difficulties can obtain good opportunities; to be able to solve problems can resolve crises; to be able to face difficulties can seek opportunities to change; without fear of difficulties enables one to seize opportunities. If we easily retreat because of hardships, it will be difficult to achieve success.

It was said, “Changan was not established in one day, nor was Rome.” People, who are able to make constant efforts and struggles with continuous sacrifices and dedication, can strive to succeed from difficulties and frustration of failure. They will be respected more by others. Therefore, to cultivate a ‘noble character’, there are four points:

1. Not to betray one’s principle because of poverty.

2. Not to change one's aspiration because of being poor and low.
3. Not to give up because of hardships.
4. Not to retreat because of difficulties.

### A teaching on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Realisation of a Bodhisattva by Xi Zhong

A 21st Century Reflection on The 2nd Great Realisation.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun's book "Eight Realisations of The Great Beings" is well worth the read if you have not already done so. I recently revisited this and found myself contemplating its' relevance for Western Society in 2018. The book (and of course the original Sutra) focus on how a Bodhisattva's view and understanding of the world compares with our own. Realisations 2-7 deal with the Buddha's view on Human life, while the last is probably the most important one in the sutra, as it is where the Buddha provides the highest level of instruction. Realisations 1-7 may be thought of the Buddha's Philosophy of life, whilst the 8th may be thought of as his answer to that philosophy. To cover all 8 realisations is beyond the scope of this short piece, and hopefully those of you who are wanting to learn more will enrol in the classes at Chung Tian with its wonderful Teachers who are far more knowledgeable than I. For now though, I offer my take on the second realisation - Greed is the cause of suffering. In this realisation, I think the Buddha was referring to excessive desire, or another modern word for it - craving. Humanistic Buddhism is I believe, about being mindful of the difference between what we really need to live a meaningful and spiritual life, as opposed to what we want in life. Intense or excessive desire for power, food, wealth or many other pitfalls of Mara are surely the realms of the 2nd realisation. In modern times there are literally thousands of ways we can indulge our desires. In fact, from my observations we are often encouraged to do just that! – take the TV stations that encourage us to “binge on your favourite TV show – watch all episodes NOW!”. Advertisements in print and on the flat screen bombard us with reasons why we must have the latest car, designer clothes or gadgets, suggesting that we are somehow entitled to have these things and that we should not wait! Have you ever noticed how many of those discount shops sell enormous mountains of empty plastic boxes in which we can store all the “stuff” we are not using? When was it that we suddenly had so many things we don't use that we have to buy boxes to keep it all in? Sadly, many people today have a strong sense of entitlement that clouds their judgement so much, they begin to expect (even demand) that things will be given to them or done for them. Humanistic Buddhism does not say we cannot have nice things, but it does ask that we be mindful of our intent behind wanting them. Buddhism also reminds us that everything is impermanent and whilst greed is a cause of suffering, there is a path from suffering if we choose to follow it.

Xi Zhong 惜中 (Member of the Chung Tian BLIAQ)

## Report on the Australia New Zealand Buddhist Youth Conference by Alex Seton

This is the first Buddhist Youth Conference I have attended and it was truly a blissful and encouraging experience. Held in Perth over 4 days we engaged with morning chanting, meditations guided by Venerable Miao Xin, Dharma talks by Venerables, dancing, Wing Chun, lectures on personal development and a lot of contribution by the young adult participants. I believe there were 16 participants from Brisbane, and over 120 from all over Australia and New Zealand. This is the first event I have engaged with where I felt that the environment was one of harmony as disciples of the Buddha. Everyone there was pleased to be engaged with Buddhist practice and the practice was to engage as a group with the activities planned. I met many people who I feel I have a lasting affinity with that may be expressed in future conferences. I must express my gratitude to Venerable Miao Xin for inviting me and encouraging me to attend, I feel I would have overlooked it if it were not for her enthusiasm. I recall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> day during a meditation class having the insight that this was one of the best experiences of my life. I cherished the ethos of engaging with Buddhism in a community and the opportunity to express myself to my Dharma brothers and sisters.

I would definitely like to engage with events like this in the future and plan to attend the Oceania conference at Nan Tien temple later this month. I have two favourite experiences from the Buddhist Youth Conference. The first is where we donned blindfolds and with our hands on the shoulders of the person in front of us we were guided from the Assembly Hall to the cafeteria where (still with blindfolds on) we ate our dinner. I don't think I've ever experienced this sort of activity before in this life and it was a test of trust and faith (albeit on a small scale) that made me feel very engaged.

My other favourite experience was an activity the Western Australia Young Adult Division prepared where in groups of about 12 we went to different stations that represented one of the 6 realms of rebirth. In the hell realm we had to cross a sea of lava on small moveable platforms to deliver a ball held on top of a spoon to a basin. It took a few attempts and my group managed to deliver one ball, but the sense of danger and difficulty made the task seem very daunting. In the animal realm we were given numbers (much like branding) and penned in a closed area we did exercises and were given food much like farm animals. At the end we were allowed out one by one where around the corner we were hit on the back and told "you're dead" as if we had been slaughtered. This activity really brought awareness of the suffering that animals have to go through to our attention. In the Hungry Ghost realm we were blindfolded and much like 'marco-polo' we had to gather food from the organisers who would simply say "food" and give a ball to those who responded fast enough. In the heavenly being realm we formed a human knot by joining hands with people in different parts of a circle, my group was unable to untangle the knot. This represented the distraction of the pleasures that heavenly beings encounter. In the Asura realm there were two groups and we had to perform exercise. My group did far more than the other group, and my group received no rewards while the other group did. This was meant to represent jealousy. The main theme of these five realms was



← Venerable Miao Xin and some of the Brisbane Young Adults.

that there was so distraction or engagement that we could not perform our goal of spiritual cultivation very easily. We were often asked at the start of a realm's activity what our reason for coming to this realm was and my group responded "cultivation!". We were made aware however that this is very difficult to accomplish in these realms. The final realm we entered was the human

realm. Before the start of the whole activity we were given 'charms', small pieces of paper we were told not to open yet. In the human realm we opened the charms and found out that together they all explained the Heart Sutra. This was meant to emphasise that the human realm is indeed a very good place to practice spiritual cultivation.

I strongly encourage anyone with the opportunity to attend conferences or camps of this sort. The sense of community and brotherhood is inspiring and encouraging, affirming the universality of Buddhism as practical and meaningful. It has definitely made fresh my devotion to Buddhism and helped me to not feel so isolated in my practice.

Thank you Venerable Miao Xin for inviting me and to the Western Australia Young Adult Division for hosting such a successful conference!

#### A recollection of Tour Guiding by Catherine Mahoney

On Tuesday 12 June, Sharon and I (Catherine) helped Venerable Miao Lai host a group of 54 ten year-old students from St John's Anglican College, Forest Lake, who visited the temple for a school tour.

One of the great things that the Temple does to help schools prepare for the tours is ask them what they would like included. On this occasion St John's asked to visit the Museum, the Art Gallery and the Pagoda with activities to include Tai Chi, meditation and calligraphy. This is helpful for the Temple volunteers as well, as it allows us to plan the tour and think of two or three points of interest in each part of the Temple. There's a lot of taking off and putting on of shoes so time to untie and re-tie 54 sets of shoe laces must be factored in.

My tip is, with children, think about the years they were born as the topic of the Chinese Zodiac often comes up in the conversation.

Venerable Miao Lai talked with the children in the Conference Room first and, as usual, I was impressed at how much they already knew which is a tribute to their teachers, and some of the students are already learning Mandarin. This session is always fun as there are often delightful answers to some the questions Venerable Miao Lai asks the children.

Next Venerable Miao Lai led the children through a Tai Chi session in the beautiful sunshine that bathed the Temple courtyard, and the children found this quite absorbing. I don't think I've seen anyone single-handedly keep the attention of 54 ten year-olds so well!

After this, the children were led to the Main Hall and Sharon talked with them about the many points of interest including the various statues and other items on the altar, and the beautiful artwork on the ceiling and walls. It was lovely to see the children do their best to be so quiet and still. As per usual they asked some questions that we couldn't answer and it's a good reminder that we never stop learning and have homework to do!

The teachers had already organised the students into two groups, which Sharon and I led on separate tours. The students liked the Temple Art Gallery - mostly the space to burn energy and also the beauty of the many items on display for sale. They also enjoyed finding 'things with wings' in the displayed artwork and reporting back to the group at the end.

We then headed off to the Pagoda and spent most time in the Sutra calligraphy room, which is one of my favourite places at the Temple. The students enjoyed transcribing the Chinese characters for 'Do good deeds, say good words, think good thoughts'.

This was followed by a session in the Meditation Hall. Some of the students were quite practised at mediation and for some it was a new experience. Asking 27 ten year-olds to stay still and quite for ten minutes is a big ask and they did their very best. They offered lots of feedback about how they felt after the session. One said hungry!

On our way to the Museum we talked about the Chinese Zodiac and the children were keen to look out for items relating to the years that they were born. They also loved the scale model of the Temple and planning extensions.

I think the most enjoyable activity for children at the Temple is striking the Blessing Bell in the courtyard. This is a very orderly activity and each child is encouraged to extend a benefit to others as they strike the bell. Which reminds me, the inscription on the bell reads.....

*"Let the chime of the bell alleviate sufferings, cultivate wisdom and induce enlightenment.*

*Let those hearing it refrain from suffering in hell and the burning flame, but vow to attain Buddhahood and deliver all sentient beings."*

-Catherine Mahoney

## 2018 Term 3 - Meditation, Buddhist & Tai Chi Classes held at Chung Tian Temple

### English Buddhist & Meditation Class

#### Intensive Course

**Level:** Beginner's  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> July to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am - 11:00am (Meditation)  
11:10am -12:00am (Introduction to Buddhism in Wisdom Room)  
**Cost:** \$20 per person per term - Booking is required

### Basic Buddhist & Meditation Class

**Level:** Level 1  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Time:** 9:00am - 10:00am (Meditation)  
10:10am -11:00am (Buddhist talk)  
**Cost:** \$20 per term - Booking is required

### Advanced Buddhist Study & Meditation Class

**Level:** Level 4 (**Free for BLIAQ members**)  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am - 11:00am (Meditation)  
11:10am - 12:00pm (Buddhist talk)  
**Cost:** \$20 per term – booking is required

### Tai Chi Class

**Day:** Every Wednesday  
**Time:** 9.30am – 11.00am  
**Where:** Chung Tian Temple  
**Cost:** Free donation

### Tai Chi Class

**Day:** Every Saturday  
**Time:** 9.00am – 10.30am  
**Where:** Chung Tian Temple  
**Cost:** Free donation

### Tai Chi Class

**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Time:** 8.30am – 10.00am  
**Where:** Chung Tian Temple  
**Cost:** Free donation

### English Buddhist & Meditation Class

#### Intensive Course

**Level:** Intermediate - Advanced  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am - 11:00am (Buddhist Teaching in Conference Room)  
11:10am -12:00am (Meditation in Meditation Hall)  
**Cost:** \$20 per person per term - Booking is required

### Intermediate Buddhist & Meditation Class

**Level:** Level 2  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am - 11:00am (Buddhist talk)  
11:10am - 12:00pm (Meditation)  
**Cost:** \$20 per term - Booking is required

### Bodhi Class For Children

**Ages:** 4 - 12 years  
**Sunday:** 10.00am - 11.00am  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Cost:** \$20 per term  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> child from the same family will be free.  
☒ Children are taught Buddhist morals and ethics in a nurturing environment. Lessons are backed by fun activities which include: simple meditation, children's tai chi, Buddhist stories and virtues, craft activities and team-building games.

### Teenager's Buddhist Class

**Ages:** 13 - 19 years  
**Sunday:** 10.00am - 11.00am  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Cost:** \$20 per term  
Every 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> child from the same family will be free.

☒ The intermediate Dharma class builds on and expands the basic foundations of Buddhist learning, aiming for a practical approach and solutions to challenges issues faced by young people today.

### Buddhist Book Study & Meditation Class

**Level:** Level 3  
**Day:** Every Sunday  
**Date:** 26 August to 30 September 2018  
**Time:** 10:00am - 11:00am (Meditation)  
11:10am - 12:00pm (Buddhist talk)  
**Cost:** \$20 per term - Booking is required

☒ To book for the Buddhist classes, an application form must be completed and returned to the Chung Tian Temple's reception together with full payment at least a **week prior** to the course commence date.

☒ For all enquiry please contact **3841 3511** on Tuesday to Sunday, or email: [ibaq@chungtian.org.au](mailto:ibaq@chungtian.org.au) or see [www.chungtian.org.au](http://www.chungtian.org.au)

Thank you

**FGS Chung Tian Temple/BLIAQ 2018 Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activities</b>
1 July – 22 July 2018	Sun	10:00am-12:00n	Buddhism & Meditation Classes Intensive Course (4 Weeks)
21 July 2018	Sat	9:30am-12:00noon	Great Compassion Repentance Service (in Mandarin)
21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2018	Sat-Sun	9am-5pm	NTI Mindfulness Workshop for Teachers and Others
28 July 2018	Sat	10:30am	Buddhist Service (in Mandarin)
31 July 2018	Tues	11:00am	Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva Dharma Service
3 August 2018	Fri	5:30pm	Annual Charity Dinner (by BLIAQ Loving Care Group)
4 August 2018	Sat	10:30am	Buddhist Service (in Mandarin)
		1:30pm	Monthly Meeting of Branch Presidents
5 August 2018	Sun	10:30am-12:00noon	「Dharma in Human World」 (Abbot of Fo Guang Shan Temple) Most Ven. Hsin Bao)
11-16 August 2018	Sat - Thurs	9:00am	Ullambana Festival Filial Piety Buddhist Chanting Service / Liang Huang Repentance Sutra
17 August 2018	Fri	9:00 am	Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's Service
18 August 2018	Sat	9:00 am	Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's Service
		11:30am	Sangha Offering Ceremony
19 August 2018	Sun	10:00 am	Grand Offering-Disperse Calamity Acknowledgement
		1:00pm	Thrice Amitabha Commemorating Dharma Function
25 August 2018	Sat	10:30am	Buddhist Service (in Mandarin)
26 Aug – 30 Sept 2018	Sun	9:00 am-12noon	English Buddhism & Meditation Class Term 3 (6 weeks)
		10:00am-11am	Children & Youth Buddhism Classes (6 weeks)
26 August 2018	Sun	2:00pm	Baby Shower & Blessing