

**Amitabha Buddhist Retreat Centre  
Newsletter  
Australia**



Autumn Edition 2015 - 1

ABRC's Motto: "Do not be Far-sighted; Do not be Short-sighted"

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## Editor's Page

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Greetings to all. Firstly Happy New Year, I hope that this year will be a happy, healthy and fulfilling year for all.

My husband, Lloyd and I have just returned from a cruise. We started at Singapore then to Bali, Komodo Island, Phuket, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, then back to Singapore, 14 nights all in all. We had never been on a cruise, so were pretty wide eyed. The Ship was huge (although I'm told it was pretty small compared to some), but to us it was big. It was like a floating City, with Shops, Casinos, Theatres, Libraries, pools and spas, gyms, restaurants, bars and so on. There were 2500 passengers and about 1000 crew, so we were pretty spoilt. We met many interesting people from all over the world, people we never would have met had we not embarked on this journey, so lots of exchanged addresses and phone numbers and email addresses.....wonderful expectation!

One thing that was obvious by its absence while on board, was that mobile phones did not work, therefore everyone communicated with each other "the old fashioned way", verbally not digitally. As I am a bit technically challenged and I only rely on my mobile in the rare occasions, such as if the car won't go and I call my husband or the RAC, this did not pose a problem. So for me it was lovely to sit down to a meal and actually talk to the person opposite not stopping so phone calls, emails and the like could be attended to!

All you modern people will be saying what a miserable old Dinosaur I am, perhaps, but I enjoyed my "moment in the sun". Computer access also was not available; actually it was, for people who rely on this form of communication, mostly business people I guess, but at a price about \$300 per week!

Whilst I am rattling on about communication and interaction: We were on a tour of the River and Bay in Singapore and a group of school children were walking along the river bank as we passed, I could see one girl looking at us and she gave a little wave, I responded with a big wave and she returned with a big wave and in a few seconds all her classmates and teachers were waving madly and yelling "hello" and "your special", all the people on board by this stage were waving too! I must say it made my day. It is wonderful how human contact, in all its forms is so very important to us all.

I will not bore you further with how badly I did in the table tennis or shuttle board, but the thing I want to tell you is that every day at sea we had the opportunity to listen to a man called Marshall Stern, who was lecturing on Buddhism. The lectures ran for an hour every morning followed by question time, probably about 1000 people attended each day.

Day 1 Life of the Buddha.

Day 2 What the Buddha taught

Day 3 Important Buddhist Concepts

Day 4 Suffering is Optional

Day 5 Meditation

Day 6 Life, Death no Fear.

Lloyd and I totally enjoyed his lectures, it was wonderful to have our belief reinforced and we reflected on our days at the Buddhist Centre in Nanango and fond memories of Venerable WuLing and Celine and Charles. We felt that there was something "Karmic" for us, going on this cruise, being reintroduced to Buddhism.

One of the lessons that resonated with me was on meditation. I have always struggled with my 'monkey mind' and have tried to make my mind blank, with no success. He explained that Meditation was the act of Radical Acceptance. We sit with whatever we find in our present situation and by accepting everything as a gift; we begin to see deeply into what is around us. We see clearly where we are clinging and where we are avoiding and relax the unconscious habitual impulses to do either.

In meditation we do not seek to change anything, but instead use this time to become still and silent enough so that we can become truly present with the present moment. We will discover sensations in our bodies and the complimentary reflexes we have developed and allowed to become unconscious through years of habit and repetition.

If there is anyone reading this who struggled like me, understanding what meditation is, I hope this helps you too. If Venerable WuLing is reading this, I can hear her saying, "that's what I taught you", I am a slow learner obviously.

As I said before, I hope that each and everyone have a happy and healthy 2015. I read the papers and cannot help but be concerned over the wars and awful things that we humans are capable of doing to each other, not to mention animal kind. I guess if we had a report card, it would read, not paying attention and could do a lot better!

I am hoping to be more mindful this year of my actions, being mindful that we plant a seed and Karma is the fruit of that plant, trying not to contribute to the general confusion the world seems to be in. But then I read of a lovely act of kindness by someone and my heart soars, perhaps we are beginning to pay attention to our Buddha Heart (someone is at least). Hold that thought!

Namo Amitabha.

Lyn Davies (Assistant Editor)

“When we allow an angry thought to arise,  
we open the door to millions of obstructions.”

~ An Ancient Saying ~



## **Dharma Talk: Everything We Do Matters.**

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Taken from the book: Everything We do Matters (Part 5 )

### **GOODWILL, COMPASSION, AND EQUANIMITY**

One time, when the Buddha was in Kalama, he spoke to the people there about the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. One who is a student of the Buddhas and who is free of the three poisons will pervade all directions “with an awareness imbued with good will: abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.”

This student will also keep pervading the six directions of north, south, east, west, above, and below—everywhere and in every respect throughout the cosmos—with an awareness imbued with compassion and equanimity, both of which are “abundant, expansive, immeasurable, free from hostility, free from ill will.”

First, the Buddha spoke of goodwill, or loving kindness, which is feeling and showing concern. It is the wish that all beings be well and secure—that they be happy. With goodwill, we will act purely and without any personal agenda or selfish motives. We will happily forego our personal desires and, instead, focus on the needs of others. Listening carefully to them will enable us to understand what they are feeling and thinking: their wants, their needs, and their aspirations. If we are wrapped up in thoughts of what we, ourselves, have done or wish to do, our thoughts will be of what was or what might be—not of what is. If we are wrapped up in thoughts of self-benefit and ego, our thoughts will be of ourselves, not of other people. So we need to let go of thoughts of self. We need to broaden our minds to focus on others. And to do this, we need a mind and heart of compassion.

Compassion is the intention and capability to lessen suffering and, ultimately, to transform this suffering. When we adopt an awareness imbued with compassion, we seek to ease others’ pain. But in our wish to help, more often than not, we react emotionally and end up getting carried away by our feelings. At times we empathize so completely with what someone is going through that we subject ourselves to the same distress. So instead of one person suffering, there are now two miserable people!

Instead of reacting emotionally, we need to learn to temper our compassion with wisdom. Then we will know how to better help one another. We will also realize that an individual’s circumstances are the result of past karmas. Therefore, it may well be next to impossible for us to improve another’s situation. This realization does not mean that we should stop caring about others or dismiss their difficulties as being their own fault. It means we understand that our wanting to alleviate their suffering may instead be of benefit to them in the future, in ways we cannot foresee.

So be compassionate, but do not focus on getting immediate positive results. Do not get wrapped up in egoistic thoughts, thinking that “I” can fix the problem. Without such expectations, we will not be disappointed or saddened when our attempts to help end in failure or, worse, aggravate the situation. We will not know how best to help if we fail to temper our compassion with wisdom. In other words, the person we want to help may not have the requisite conditions for us to do so. When we stop focusing on immediate results and instead focus on just helping others, our compassion will ultimately benefit all beings. By planting the seeds of compassion—the wish for all beings to be happy and free of suffering—we can be confident that we have indeed helped others.

If we feel compassion for only certain people, then our compassion is limited, and thus our ability to lessen suffering in the future will likewise be limited. But when our compassion for all beings is equal and unconditional, then our compassion will be immeasurable and impartial. When we accomplish this, we will pervade all directions with awareness imbued with equanimity.

In the Western Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha, there are uncountable bodhisattvas, beings who are dedicated to helping all others end suffering. Widely known in this world and often depicted standing to Amitabha's left is Avalokitesvara, or Guanyin Bodhisattva. Avalokitesvara is often translated as "Great Compassion Bodhisattva" or "She who hears the cries of the world."

A very long time ago, Avalokitesvara vowed that if she ever became disheartened in saving sentient beings, may her body shatter into a thousand pieces. Once, after liberating countless beings from the hell realms by teaching them the Dharma, she looked back down into the hell realms. To her horror, she saw that the hell realms were quickly filling up again! In a fleeting moment of despair, she felt profound grief. And in that moment, in accordance with her vow, her body shattered into a thousand pieces. She beseeched the Buddhas to help and many did. Like a fall of snowflakes they came. One of those Buddhas was Amitabha. He and the other Buddhas helped to re-form her body into one that had a thousand arms and hands, with an eye of wisdom in each hand. In this way, she could better help all sentient beings.

Whether you view this as a true account or a legend, there is a very important lesson here that can help us in our practice of compassion. When we first develop the bodhi mind—the mind set on helping all beings attain enlightenment, ourselves

included—we will experience times when we are disheartened. At this point, we have two choices: go forward or give up. To go forward, we need to re-establish our confidence. We may do this under the guidance of a good teacher, through the support of a good spiritual friend, or through other means. If we do not go forward, we will fall back into ignorance and delusion.

It will help us at these difficult times to remember that we do not grow spiritually in good times, when everything is going our way. We grow spiritually and progress on the path of awakening in times of adversity. Just as steel is tempered by fire, our resolve is strengthened by hardship.

Avalokitesvara was shattered in a fleeting moment of despair. But through the strength of her aspiration to help all beings, she touched the hearts of those who had gone before her on the path. Due to her great vow and profound sincerity, she had created the causes for many Buddhas to help her when she was momentarily overwhelmed by the enormity of her chosen task.

We too will encounter obstacles. When we do, our aspiration to help all beings will enable us to receive the help we need to move back onto the path.

Due to the depth of her vow to help, Avalokitesvara regarded all beings with equanimity. In the above story, in addition to the hell realms, she also went to the ghost, animal, human, demi-god, and heavenly realms teaching all those who had the affinity to learn from her. Each being was equally important, and so she taught each one as best she could. She did not discriminate and was not judgmental. She tirelessly and vigilantly listened for cries for help and found the beings who were suffering. She then taught them so they were able to advance on the path to awakening.

With similar equanimity, we too will view everything equally and in a balanced way. Often when we try to help others, we act impulsively and erratically, not wisely. We rush in to help one day and then feel like giving up the next. Without a pure, calm mind, we can lose our balance and fall from great enthusiasm to mind-numbing discouragement. Only when our minds are calm will we know how to truly benefit others.

The Buddha told an account of how a father saved his children from a burning house. Some children were playing inside a very large, old house. They were so engrossed in their play that they did not realize the house was on fire. Their father called out frantically for them to leave the house, but unable to hear him, they continued playing. Luckily, he had the presence of mind to call out to the children that there were newly-arrived carts outside the house, something the children had been looking forward to. On hearing that the carts had arrived, they rushed out of the house to see them and, in so doing, were saved from the fire.

On a very basic level, this account shows how by using our calm, clear mind, we can more effectively determine the best way to help others. By running into the house, the father would have perished in the fire with his children. By remaining calm, he acted from his innate wisdom and saved them. In our practice of compassion and equanimity, we also need patience. Patience is one of the virtues that bodhisattvas practice to perfection.

Avalokitesvara needed great patience to teach all the beings and then even greater patience to continue helping them after that moment of despair. The father needed patience to hold himself back from a foolish act. Thinking calmly, he found a way to save his children. We too need patience to be compassionate and to regard all with equality.

We need patience to help us get through emotional and physical obstacles when we try to help others. There will always be obstacles. Just because we are trying to help does not guarantee that all obstacles will fall away and everything will be resolved to our satisfaction. Remember, we cannot overcome the karma of others and the ensuing retributions.

Without patience, we will be mired in the quagmire of our own disappointment. Also, without patience, we will give up when criticized and obstructed by those who do not understand what we are trying to do. Just as we sincerely believe that we have wisely found the way to help, others will likewise be certain that they, too, have the right solution. If we are prepared for this and do not allow it to disturb our serenity, we will not be shaken from our pure, calm mind.

As we encounter criticism and obstacles that seem overwhelming, we will need patience. Everything changes—good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. Remember that just as good times do not last forever, bad times will also change and improve. Although our current conditions may seem overwhelmingly distressing, even these difficulties will someday end. If we can manage to hold on to this thought, we will find the patience within us to persevere, to hold on until our unfavorable conditions begin to ease.

This turnaround will take place more quickly if we can manage to let go of thoughts of our own discomfort and disappointment. Think, instead, of how to end the distress of others. The sooner their distress ends, the sooner ours will end, for the pain of others is our pain as well. We are all one, all interconnected with one another.

Do not get side-tracked by thinking that the concerns of another are trivial, for to that person those concerns are all consuming and very important. How we feel about the validity of their concerns is unimportant. We should put personal judgments aside and instead focus on trying to alleviate their distress and unhappiness, which to them is very real.

How can others be happy? In the same way that we become happy: by leaving negative emotions behind. If we can show others how to be less engrossed in their emotional reactions, we will help them begin to react more from reasoning. If we can help them see that the underlying causes of unhappiness are attachment and aversion, we will have helped end someone's pain. By letting go of craving and aversion, one will realize that the cause of happiness is goodwill, compassion, and equanimity.

There are some things in life that we can change. It is our responsibility to try to alter them for the better. But sometimes, we will not be able to effect any change. If we can move from our personal sense of sorrow or regret over not being able to help directly, the gentle happiness that arises from our wish to help will still bring relief to others. Be happy helping. And be content knowing that sometimes all we can do is to wish for others to be happy as well.

Taken from the book: Everything we do matters,

~ Venerable Wuling ~



## Sayings of Venerable Wuling

'The secret of happiness?  
Want more less.  
Think less more.'

"Who we are is not determined by what we have.  
It is determined by what we think and do."

'When a thought of liking or attachment arises,  
remember that "All phenomena are illusory."  
When encountering a foe or unpleasant circumstances,  
remember that "All phenomena are illusory."

"When trying to help another,  
Focus on doing your best  
not on the result of your helping."

'If others ask for your opinion,  
respectfully give it.  
If they do not ask,  
respectfully keep your opinions to yourself.'

"Speak what is true and helpful  
when the time is right.  
Avoid what is gossip  
for it's invariably neither true nor helpful  
and the time is never right."

'Before teaching others, first cultivate yourself.  
Achieving some level of success in cultivation,  
you will reach the point where your behavior  
speaks more loudly than mere words.'

"It is not what happens around us that we need to fix.  
We need to fix what is inside us.  
Every one of us."

'By being content with what you have and  
knowing that nothing is lacking,  
you will realize you have everything you need.'

"Do not envy others for what they have.  
Plant, instead, the seeds for what you aspire to realize."

'The sincere mind  
is the true mind  
without wandering thoughts.  
Not even the thought  
"I am sincere."'

"The fewer the things,  
the fewer the attachments,  
the fewer the worries,  
the greater the peace."

~ [Venerable Wuling](#) ~



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## Personal Anecdotes

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As we journey through life we are faced with the many forks in our road, and we have to make decisions based on what we've been taught: how we've been raised, our ethical teachings & the spiritual guidelines we have been shown...

As we grow and mature we base so much on early childhood memories & teachings; I personally had no idea how to handle situations so often placed before me. Not knowing which way to turn ~ left or right or straight ahead ~ I began having this deep sense of not doing what was expected. I wanted to pave my own path, I just didn't know how.

I have been told that I am strong, however I feel it was more a survival of my soul to get through each day with love in my heart and to not grow bitter from harsh experiences ~ I didn't want to be defined by my pain because I'm not my pain; it is just part of the experience.

I didn't want to be defined by my very painful childhood & very tough young adult life of painful losses & bad choices. I turned my grief into gratitude... Hate into forgiveness and bad choices into learning experiences... I became aware of my actions and want to be responsible for my words.... I really started to accept what I had no control over and to live more in the moment, in the right here & right now..~ Not an easy feat by any means ~

Offering an ear is a simple task however, are you really listening?? Being in the present, I feel is an important part of my journey; how can we have empathy without truly listening???

We are all of equal value on this planet and we all deserve love and peace but that is often forgotten in the harsh environment

some people have to live in. Should this define us as human beings ??

The more we can share love and forgiveness; to show compassion to those whom some people might say 'they don't deserve it', we are then truly expanding our own soul....When we are filled with deep love for all living things on this planet and extend that love to the universe around we are certainly raising that awareness and vibration not only for ourselves and also all those around us as well; thus, living in harmony and unity and not defining ourselves by our past..

Unlearning what we have been programmed to believe is a decision to open your heart, mind & soul to the unknown. Reprogramming takes time and patience ~ another lesson I continue to learn ~ some of the old self will keep popping in as she is etched in every living cell in the body, Honouring each memory with gratitude & acceptance propels us closer to divine light & love. When we open our hearts with love we are surrendering expectations, fears and anxieties, we can then receive the love we truly desire.

I no longer wish to fit into a box, my ego is softened & my expectations are lessened; I no longer fear the unknown; my anxiety is dwindling. I truly believe this is a result of opening my heart and finding solace in meditation, spending time in nature and searching within myself the answers to my own questions...

Reflecting on my life without judgement, taking down the walls that were built on fear, rejection, grief & sadness and then un-defying myself I have learnt empathy, compassion, trust & most importantly love. Continuing to rebuild my cells with love and compassion day by day is extremely healing and rewarding, as I now see, feel, hear, smell & taste more beautifully than ever before.

I don't wish to be defined as anyone or anything, only to be a beacon of love & light and for those whom I come in contact with can walk away with a smile and know they are loved and supported by the entire universe and that they are a beautiful creation are important.

A Journey of Self Discovery and Healing xxx Tammy xxx



A spiritual Experience:

I was asked to write a article and so would like to share a spiritual experience which happen over twenty years ago.

I am Polish and grew up in very small village in south Poland. Hilly landscape with many different types of trees of many changing colours and shapes as with the four seasons of the year where the Winter snow with temperatures below zero; Spring with flowers and berries and the smells, rains and sometimes floods; Summer of long days to enjoy; and Autumn with colours and harvesting crops, river and lake created by electric dam; and these were my childhood physical reality.

I did not think about many things when growing up in that tiny corner of the world where the air is fresh, good quality water and in abundance, no chemicals, safe and simple living with all needs being met.

I grew up in an ignorant world too, a world of limited and incorrect ideas, views and opinions and where my mainstream

schooling in understanding life was limited too. I started thinking about life as an adult.

I do not know how this happen, and when I started focusing on my diet. I changed not only what I was eating, but how much and when, putting emphasis on drinking more water, no sugars, alcohol, nor carbohydrates except occasional rice, I had very little fruit and ate more green leafy vegetables, usually in a liquid form. I fasted as well. Generally, as I understood this later, I purified the body-mind to a great degree.

One day I felt very tangible:

*one and half time uncoiling at the base of the spine, energy shoot up all the way along the spine to the top of my head and I experienced "opening".*

I found myself in another state of being, perceiving life as awareness of Blissful Love-Oneness, past, present and future being one. The experience on Oneness lasted about six months and I experienced number of experiences at that time. There was a force within me which made me to sit and meditate from time to time (though previously I've never meditate before); sometimes I was moved to sit on the lawn in my garden even at night when it was cold and naked. But I never felt cold. I was surprised of feeling pleasantly warm, and being aware of blood moving in veins like the mountain river flowing downstream. I experienced vitality like never before, more than when I used to be very active person and played volleyball professionally as well.

The main experience, however, was perceiving Love, bliss being in the very nature of it. That Love is all pervading, all embracing, is without and within, everyone and everything is made of it. Nothing exists without it.

There is no god and yet the very experience I experienced was god, the two opposite at the same time. And in that state of being there was total acceptance of these two opposing messages. Yes, the very nature of the experience was acceptance.

I was in a state of being absolutely fulfilled and absolutely free. That was not an emotional ecstatic state but a state of being in the moment: of peace, equanimity, awareness, and of the feeling that "*I was never born and I was not going to die*" state of awareness, and knowing at the same time that something was happening to the body however.

I was functioning very well in everyday reality as well. Later when I thought about it, about how the mind could 'live' in these two different realities at the same time, I came to the conclusion that the mind has the ability to function on different frequencies and oscillate between these frequencies.

I saw, at that time, that treating nature egoistically; especially killing animals for our consumption is dreadful things to do. In fact we are doing these things to ourselves and we are destroying ourselves not realising it.

That spiritual experience changed my life forever and made me to see life very differently to the way I used to see it. Even later when the state of my being changed and the experience was no more, I still see life differently to the way that most people see them.

Amitufo, Ziggy Zarebski



## Winds of Change

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### Parable 0143: THE MIDDLE WAY

‘One evening a novice was reciting the Sutra of ‘Bequeathing The Teaching’ by Kashyapa Buddha. His mind was mournful as he reflected repentantly on his desire to retreat.

The Buddha asked him: “When you were a householder in the past, what did you do?” he replied: ‘I was fond of playing the lute.’

The Buddha said: “What happened when the strings were slack?” He replied: ‘They didn’t sound.’ “What happened when the strings were taut?” He replied: ‘The sounds were brief.’ “What happened when they were tuned between slack and taut?” He replied: ‘The sounds carried.’

The Buddha said: “It is the same with a novice who studies the way. If his mind is harmonious, he can obtain the way. If he is impetuous about the way, this impetuosity will tire out his body and if his body is tired, his mind will give rise to afflictions. If his mind produces afflictions then he will retreat from his practice. If he retreats from his practice it will certainly increase his offenses. You need only be pure, peaceful, and happy and you will not lose the way.”

(Sutra in 42 Sections)

### Parables 0130: SPIRITUAL POWERS

“Miracles are possible in Buddhism, even though the Buddha discourage all display of miraculous or Para-psychological powers as offering proof of spiritual attainment .....

A story that was told of his response to a noted ascetic whose path he crossed on one of his journeys nicely illustrates his down-to-earth reaction to any extremes of yogic behaviour.

Encountering an ascetic... at a river crossing, he entered into conversation as he often did when traveling, and was told that the ascetic had achieved such mastery over his physical body that he could now cross the river walking on the water.

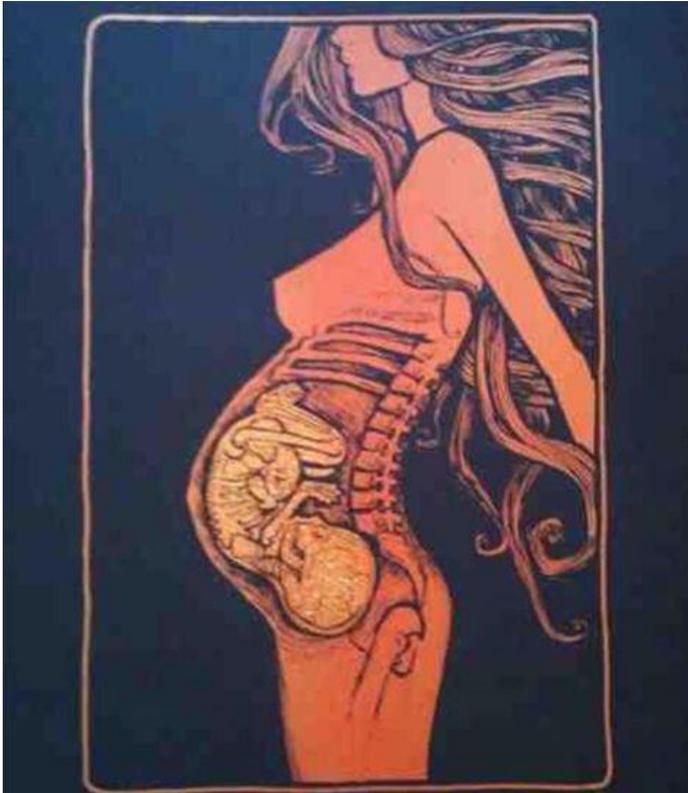
The Buddha’s comment was to the effect that such a feat, though remarkable, seem a *rather useless expenditure of physical and psychological energy, since there was a good ferry crossing the river at regular intervals charging less than a penny for the ride.*”

~ **THUS HAVE I HEARD** ~ Buddhist Parables & Stories



*If we are patient and more ethical  
We would be less prone to Anger  
And if we are kind & less cynical  
We will become a Peace Maker*

Taken from Lyn Edmiston's F/B Timeline.



By [Davaun T Kurcz](#)

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us."

The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist."

Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist."

To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above."  
- Útmutató a Léleknek

## Readers' Enquiries or Comments

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Below is a letter of thanks from ABRC to the sender for her kind donation to the Center, and included below is her response.

*Paypal has informed me that you have made a donation to your centre and on behalf of Amitabha Buddhist Retreat Centre I wish to thank you for your kind gesture.*

*I wish you Amitabha (which is a Sanskrit word for "Infinite Light, Infinite Life" and encompasses All that is Infinite and Perfect. It is the name of Buddha Amitabha and also our innate buddha nature of Perfection)*

*Celine Richardson,  
centre manager  
Amitabha Buddhist Retreat Centre*

Dear Mrs. Richardson,

It is my pleasure! I recently started practicing Pure Land Buddhism and my practice is in Mandarin Chinese (I am a native of China and came to the USA in 1996.) I have been learning about Pure Land Buddhism in English through the retreat center web site and I am grateful for what the center does.

Amitufo!

Minhui Haddad

P.S. Catherine is my English name.

Hi,

I was wondering when your next weekend retreat was on?  
What type of accommodation do you have?  
Where about are you located? I live in Brisbane.  
Are there any costs involved?  
How many people usually attend this event?

Do you have any testimonials of your retreat? I was unable to find them on your website.

Is there any other information that might be of assistance?

Thanks, Kellie

*Due to our concise newsletter and lacking space, we don't normally insert our replies to senders in our newsletters, but as some of the questions have been commonly asked, it may seem fitting that we paste our reply to this pertinent email here so that, (especially the newcomers to our centre) may be able to peruse the answers to any of the same questions they may have.*

*Amitufo and Thank you. Editorial.*

Dear Kellie,

The next two bi-monthly retreats are scheduled for: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> May.

There is our Jacaranda retreat house that has three bedrooms (one bedroom with 4 single bedding; another with 3 single bedding; and the smallest room with 2 bedding) and so it can

house up to 9 people. There is also small room with single bedding next door to the cultivation hall at the centre.

Male and female have separation quarters when they attend the retreat. In the past the retreat house was mainly used for the ladies except our last retreat where it was reversed, as it was attended by more males than females, and there was only one female who required accommodation (the few were locals and do not require accommodation) and so the young lady was given the small room next door to the cultivation house. Our accommodation is offered on the principle of "First in, best dress" scenario.

Everything that is run by Amitabha Buddhist Retreat Centre is run by donations only, including retreats. We are a small centre and only cater for 10 people every Sunday for our weekly meditation sessions. As for the retreats they varied between 3 to 10 participants, pending on who applied early and turned up for the retreats. The address is: 160 Greenwood Creek Road, Nanango, Qld 4615

If it is testimonials that you are after, the closest info you can find would be in our quarterly newsletters where past participants have written about their experiences at the centre, which can be found at this link: <http://www.abrc-newspress.org>

To attend the retreat, please download the application form to fill in the details and please send it back as soon as you can, and when it is approved more information including the centre etiquette will be forward at a later date.

Thank you for your enquiries. Amitufofo, jusme celine

07 -4171 0421 (0439 070 782)

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## Messages and Announcements

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We are celebrating Chinese New Year, the year of the Goat or the Sheep. Below is a bit of excerpt on the year 2015 for those interested in this year Chinese Astrological chart; taken from: <http://astrologyclub.org/chinese-horoscope/2015-year-sheep/>

### *THE YEAR OF THE GOAT (SHEEP) 2015*

**The Sheep (Goat)** is a Yin energy, a symbol of Peace, Harmonious co-existence and Tranquility. That is the primary and fundamental mood for this year. Though there are cries for War and a countdown is soon to begin, if any almanac serves me well – War will be averted and a period of mending and compromise will be undertaken to ensure Peace is maintained.

The Sheep is the symbol of the Arts. It relates to passive and nurturing times. It will help the healing process with regard to past events caused by individuals who have little respect for the human race or life itself. It will be a year of banding together in faith and in belief that good will prevail and win out over the forces that refuse to comply to a peaceful way of life. For those who trust in goodness, happiness and success will follow.

So you have it. Think positive and peaceful thoughts and harmony & inward calm will soon follow as it is in this metaphor: - "As above and so is it below"; though literally speaking, that universal law of attraction should be understood and applied each and every year and everyday and not just 2015.

And so, if we wish to have a peaceful and gentle life of inner calm and harmony, we'd need to align ourselves, our thoughts, words and deeds to correlate to a mind of gentleness and to living a positive lifestyle to accord with goodness, peace and harmony.

For whatever we wish for in life and if we work mindfully and patiently to achieving our goals, they have a good chance to pass in reality with the right timing if it is meant for us in this lifetime. Hopefully that as seekers of truth, our aspirations and goals may be more geared to spiritual goals than naught. In essence we are spirit moving about with the body as our vehicle, and not the other way round. So it would be good to bear in mind that whatever we do in life, everything we do does matters.

And Gratitude is such a wonderful virtue to have; and we are grateful to be able to feel its energies as it does help. Optimism seems to have a positive health impact and strengthening better affinity with others which will bring inner happiness when we accord well. So why not give boost us a good dose of Gratitude and Equanimity, which complement each other, just as Wisdom go hand in hand with Compassion.

If we wish to live a life that is peaceful  
We ascertain what makes us graceful  
Discern the truth of life and be heedful  
And take proactive steps to be grateful

Our next two bi-monthly retreats are scheduled for:

20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> May.

Amitufo, jusme



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