



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

Apr - Jun 2022



In this issue, we are privileged to bring you more information on the Certificate of Buddhist Counselling course, which was conducted from 19 November to 12 December 2021, and the reflections from two participants. Read on to learn how the knowledge gained from the course could be applied in daily life.

We are also pleased to bring you a lively account of the first physical BPCA activity since the COVID-19 pandemic – Temple Visit for the 2022 Diploma Course students. Join them as they share the day's visit to three temples, and what they learnt and experienced.

Since 19 April 2022, we have resumed physical classes for students of diploma, degree and master's courses. With this, we are very much back to the routine before the pandemic started. Plans are currently underway to organise the graduation ceremony, for graduates of diploma, degree and master's classes of 2019 – 2021, cum appreciation for our respected teachers on 28 August 2022.

If you find our quarterly e-bulletin a useful means of sharing the Dhamma, you are cordially invited to share on any topic relating to the Dhamma, or your experiences and reflections along the Path e.g. Kalyāṇa-mittatā (spiritual friendship, be it with your Dhamma teachers, friends or classmates), pilgrimage tours and changes in your daily life / interactions with others. The sharing may be in the form of short articles, comics or drawings etc. For more information, please contact Sister Tyy Yn at tyyynquek@gmail.com.

Thank you for staying in tune with us. May all be well, happy and peaceful!

The Editorial Team

Certificate Course in Buddhist Counselling

Foreword by: Brother Lau Kim Koon

The course was organised by the Buddhist and Pāli College Alumni, Singapore (BPCA) from 19 November to 12 December 2021 through ZOOM. Professor Wasantha Priyadharsana of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka was the course trainer. He teaches Buddhist Psychotherapy at the University and has conducted various programmes in Buddhist Psychotherapy. He specialises in the field of Career and Educational Counselling.

The course coverage was wide but focused. Some of the topics covered were:

1. Nature and Theories of Buddhist Counselling Psychology
2. Buddhist Analysis of Psychopathology, Mental Disorders and Abnormal Behaviours
3. Counselling Skills, Approaches and Techniques
4. Relevance of Buddhist Counselling for Resolving Psychological Problems

The course provided basic knowledge of counselling principles in Buddhist Psychology. It showed the applicability and practicability of Buddhist Psychology in resolving psychological problems in day-to-day life.

In achieving these course objectives, Professor Wasantha used about 35 suttas and Buddhist scriptures to illustrate the usefulness of the Dhamma in analysing the problems of daily life. From the analysis and understanding of the wider scope of the Buddha's teachings, one could have a better comprehension of the relevance of the Dhamma in managing one's life, be it physical or mental.

Reflection 1

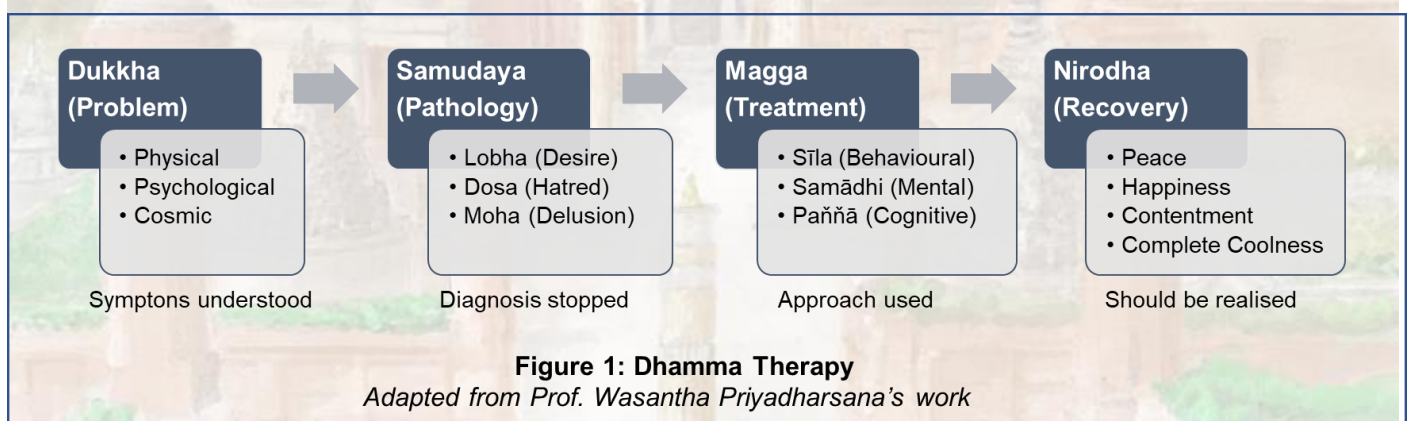
By Brother Lau Kim Koon

I have been lecturing on the “History of the Buddhist Canon” and the “Pāli Commentarial Literature” for about 12 years at the Buddhist and Pāli College, Singapore. The aim of these two subjects was to introduce the development and scope of the Dhamma. However, this Counselling Course has opened a new frontier for a Buddhist follower to apply the Dhamma in managing one’s life which is often entangled in a web of problems in one’s daily living.

Professor Wasantha used a holistic approach to introduce counselling principles inherent in the Dhamma. He provided a clear and systematic understanding of the manner in which Buddhist techniques could be effectively used in counselling a patient to resolve his problems. The Buddhist approach gives an alternative to the approaches commonly used by psychologists in treating their patients.

Dhamma Therapy

The approach to Buddhist counselling was well explained using “Dhamma Therapy” (see [Figure 1](#)), comprising three segments.



Segment 1: The problems or Dukkha. The problems may be physical, psychological or cosmic in nature. The aim of this phase is to understand fully the symptoms faced by the patient.

Segment 2: The pathology or Samudaya. This phase analyses the abnormal behaviour (i.e. illness) of the patient, relating to the unwholesome roots inherent in him. The three unwholesome roots are Desire (Lobha), Hatred (Dosa) and Delusion (Moha).

Segment 3: The treatment or Magga. The treatment is based on the Noble Eightfold Path, where the patient is being trained to comprehend the values of morality (Sīla), mental concentration (Samādhi) and cognitive wisdom (Paññā).

The end result is to assist the patient to recover from his illness and continue to live a life of normal peace, happiness, contentment and coolness.

Various suttas were used to illustrate the relevance of the Buddha's teachings in the "Dhamma Therapy" approach to treat a patient to recover from his abnormal behaviour.

Case Study

The case study was an interesting part of the course. Instead of the traditional method where participants analyse and discuss the case study, a role-play approach was used. Before starting the role play, Professor

Wasantha explained his therapeutic model (see Figure 2) to manage the counselling process systematically.

He also introduced a comprehensive framework of information which a counsellor should collect from the patient. Armed with this basic methodology,

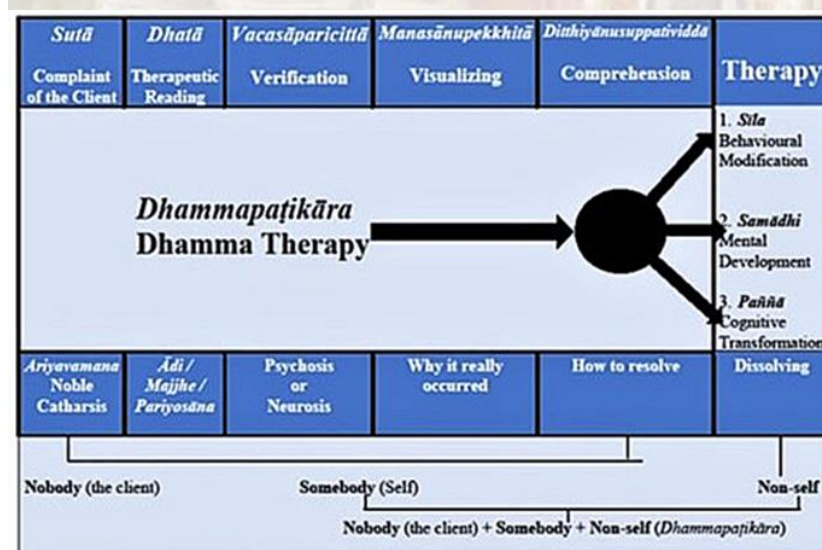
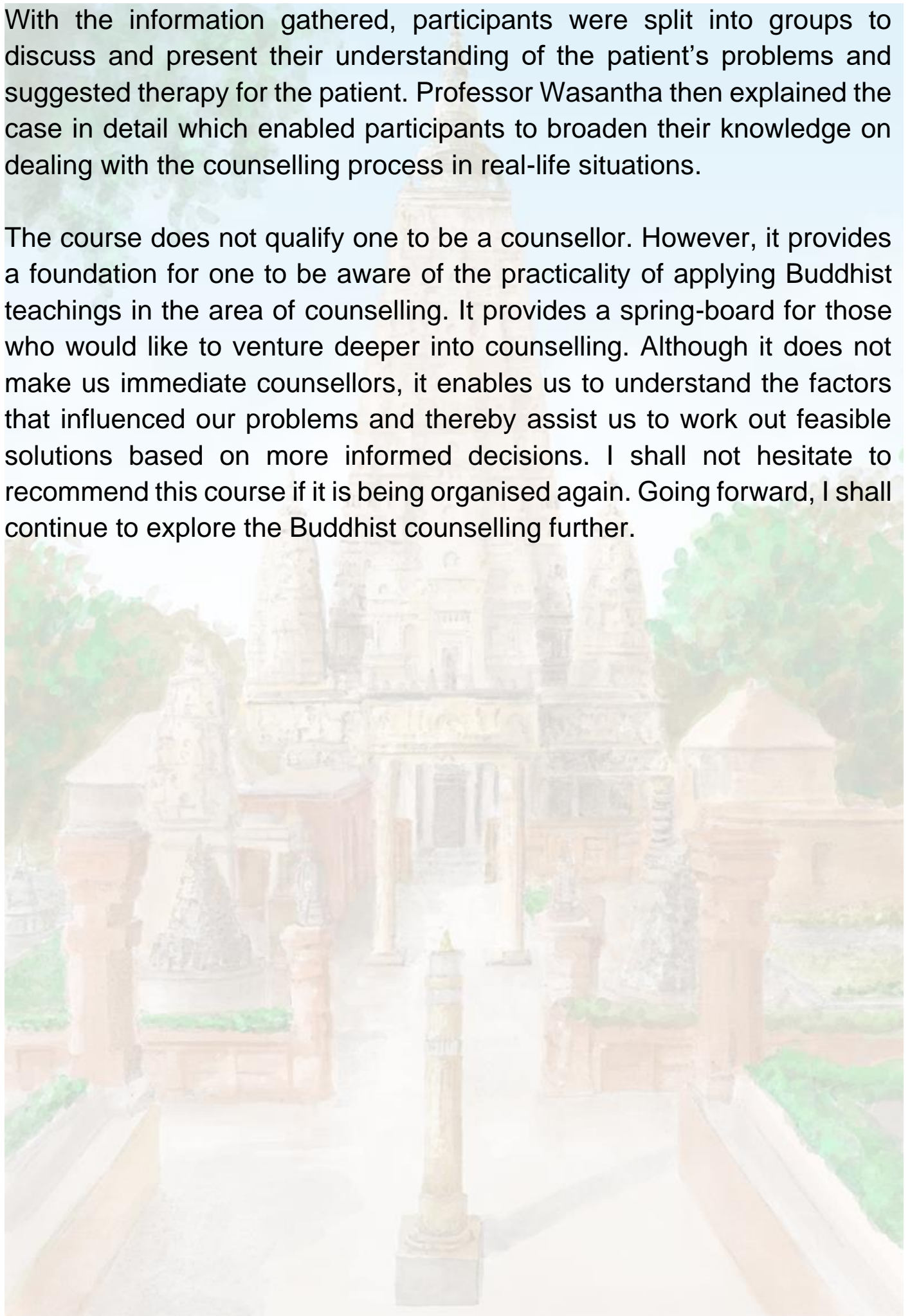


Figure 2: Therapeutic Chart
from Prof. Wasantha Priyadarsana

participants were then engaged in questioning the patient, who was acted by someone from the faculty.

With the information gathered, participants were split into groups to discuss and present their understanding of the patient's problems and suggested therapy for the patient. Professor Wasantha then explained the case in detail which enabled participants to broaden their knowledge on dealing with the counselling process in real-life situations.

The course does not qualify one to be a counsellor. However, it provides a foundation for one to be aware of the practicality of applying Buddhist teachings in the area of counselling. It provides a spring-board for those who would like to venture deeper into counselling. Although it does not make us immediate counsellors, it enables us to understand the factors that influenced our problems and thereby assist us to work out feasible solutions based on more informed decisions. I shall not hesitate to recommend this course if it is being organised again. Going forward, I shall continue to explore the Buddhist counselling further.



Reflection 2

By Sister Heng Qwee Siang

This 9-session programme has been an eye opener for me. Firstly, I saw all the Buddhist Teachings coming alive in the approaches, interpretations and interventions such as therapies and counselling. Secondly, the amazing collection of suttas connected to this subject made me marvel at how insightful the Buddha was 2,500 years ago and how relevant his teachings remained. Professor Wasantha is a walking encyclopaedia on the sutta and demonstrated passionately the connection of the teachings to the learning and application.

Unlike the conventional counselling approach which focuses mainly on conflict resolutions, Buddhist Counselling gets to the root of the issue to understand the cause and effects (Sutta and Dhata) before finding ways to prevent the issue from arising. In the words of Professor Wasantha, “focusing on the cetana to drive change”; “understanding the client’s internal cosmo before dispensing the therapies”.

I particularly liked the practicum where we applied our learning to the process of Buddhist Counselling. Short as the session might be, learning came alive for me. All the Buddhist concepts e.g. Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā, Ti-lakkhana, Cattāri Ariya Sacca and Paṭicca-samuppāda became the practical tools for dealing with the emotions, thoughts and somatic symptoms in the counselling case presented.

My immense gratitude to Professor Wasantha and the organiser for putting together this wonderful learning opportunity.

Temple Visit

Illustrated by Brother Bryan Law



Temple Visit

By Sister Lynette Wong and Diploma Class of 2022



Our Temple Visit itinerary:



Wat Ananda Metyarama Temple (Thai Theravada Tradition)



Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery (Chinese Mahayana Tradition)



Amitabha Buddhist Centre (Tibetan Tradition)

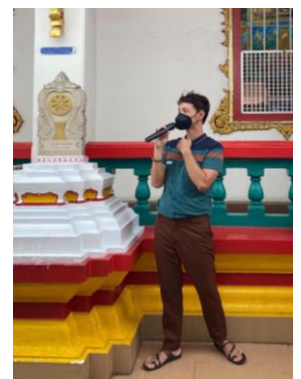
The struggle was real when my alarm buzzed at 6:20 am on the morning of the temple visit, arranged by the Buddhist and Pali College Alumni Committee, for the 29th cohort of students from the Diploma in Buddhism course. As my hand reached for the snooze button on autopilot, my mind (also on autopilot) was already guilt-tripping me for too early a start on a Saturday. *“Am I really going to learn something today? I am so tired, and I don’t want to go.”* But, rolled out of bed I finally did.

About 40 of us gathered at Mangala Vihara, where we were generously provided with snacks and drinks for our journey. We were split into various coloured groups of five before we boarded the chartered bus. From that moment, it was a learning experience we could not have expected – an engaging experience led by Brother Kyle and aided by a quiz we had to answer in our groups.

“Kyle took the time to explain the three different branches of Buddhism – Theravada, Mahayana & Vajrayana to us.”

Sister Mary Anne

Not only was he our guide for the day, sharing with us his extensive knowledge of Buddhism, but he was also once a student in the Dhamma like us. This was very inspiring to us. Perhaps one day, we will get there?



Wat Ananda Metyarama Thai Buddhist Temple



As we reached our first stop, it had started to pour, so our tour began with us sheltering each other through the grand temple entrance framed by serpent-like Nagas, part-bird / part-human Garudas, four-faced Lord Brahma and Chinese-influenced lion sculptures. Completed in 1925, we learnt that an ordination hall in a Thai Theravada temple like this was demarcated with nine chedis. Doors were painted with auspicious figures and designs

to ward off evil spirits. The interior of the ordination hall was ornate with dramatic, bright-coloured murals illustrating the Buddha's life and teachings. It was simply a feast for the eyes. We were also ushered up to a prayer room on the third floor where Ajahn led us in a brief prayer and held space for our questions. On the way out, Brother Kyle stopped us by a huge chart on the stages to Nibbāna and shared insightful explanations about the path. He stressed on "intention", which underscored a concept we had been learning in Bhante Sumano's classes on kamma. Intrigued by this 'framework', I started taking pictures of it – one blurry picture after another until Sister Hsuwon softly mentioned over my shoulder that the same chart was in our classroom. *Note to myself – look out for it in class.*

Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery

At our next stop, the pouring rain sent us again scurrying through the entrance of this sprawling temple, modelled after Xi Chan Si temple in Fujian and as a 'cong lin' (Mandarin for 'layers of forest') styled temple architecturally. We stopped by the Maitreya Bodhisattva statue, surrounded by the four heavenly kings in the hall, holding a pipa, umbrella, sword, and serpent respectively, as well as at the rear, the Skanda Bodhisattva statue. How does one know if one could stay for a longer or shorter duration in this temple? It is indicated by whether Skanda Bodhisattva has the sword pointed downwards (short stay) or over the shoulder (stay as long you like).



We then walked past the drum tower on the east side of the temple to Mahavira Hall. This hall houses three large Buddha statues (Amitabha Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha and Medicine Buddha) and two of the Buddha's chief disciples (Ven. Ananda and Ven. Mahakasyapa). On the way out, we also learnt how to identify the Guan Yin Pu Sa statue, which is depicted with an Amitabha Buddha image in the headdress.



Amitabha Buddhist Centre (ABC)



The skies finally cleared at our last stop, where we were met by the President of ABC, Brother Tan Hup Cheng, with as sunny a welcome for us as the brilliant clear skies. After a brief introduction at a foyer that features a giant golden prayer wheel inscribed with the mantra of Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva) and the Eight Auspicious Symbols, and circumambulating a glass encased Kadampa stupa, we were ushered to the main prayer hall on the second floor. There, against the backdrop of an intense blue wall, one could not miss the awe-inspiring, life-sized statue of the Thousand-Arm Chenrezig adorned with rainbow-hued garments and shining ornaments and surrounded by the 21 Tara statues.

"Having lived in Singapore for so many years, I was not aware of the existence of these three temples and that so much information about Buddhism is presented in the architecture and figurines found in the temples."

Brother Adrian

"The temple visit reminded us that Buddhism is very broad-minded: The hosts were very welcoming of students from different divisions of Buddhism. BPCA was broad-minded to organise such visits to expose their students to other divisions of Buddhism; and our classmates are also very open-minded and receptive to learn about the other divisions of Buddhism. Our reflection: Our lives will be happier if we can focus more on similarities rather than differences."

Brother Kheng Leng & Sister Michelle

Blessing



After returning to Mangala Vihara, we were given a blessing by Bhante Cakkapala. As I knelt in the beautiful prayer hall with my fellow brothers and sisters, I was thankful that autopilot had not stolen me away from this gem of an experience, regardless of whether one was of

Buddhist faith. I wondered, what else would we sometimes miss or overdo, if we live in constant autopilot mode?

As cold droplets of blessing fell on my body, I felt once again enveloped by the rain from the day and realised that we could not compare the raindrops to our growth in Buddhist knowledge that day. The trip was made possible by the thoughtfulness of the organising committee, the humble intention of Brother Kyle in his wider sharing of Buddhist knowledge, the perseverance and hospitality of President Tan of ABC, and our class monitors in shepherding us through the registration process. And naturally, the Buddha's praise of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva's benevolence came to mind:

"O bhikkus, even if the rain stays day after day, month after month, year after year, even kalpa after kalpa, still I can count the number of raindrops! But I could not count the merits of saving sentient beings and the spirit of Bodhicitta of Avalokiteshvara."

A quick prize presentation followed, with the "Orange" team winning the quiz via a tiebreaker question (since three teams had full scores!) by declaring that Mangala means "**BLESSINGS!!!**" loudly from the back of the chartered bus. Well, it certainly was the theme of the day!



Our itinerary came to a close at that point. Like the clearing of the skies, a wave of lightness washed over me as I walked out of the prayer hall. Despite my hunger pangs becoming ever more apparent in my consciousness, I left Mangala Vihara with a full heart from a day well spent. We had a truly insightful and enriching day – learning together, sheltering each other under the rains, and breaking the ice with conversations. A shared sense of gratefulness was certainly felt by everyone.

"The temple tour was very insightful and reinforced the fact that all temples/centres shared common Buddha's doctrine – generosity, compassion, kindness and mindfulness."

Sister April

"The temple visit was fun, informative and blessed. Each and every moment was precious."

Sister Lisa

"It seems like an easy trip when everything is well managed. I believe the downpour was an act from the heavens to rejoice everyone's meritorious deeds to strengthen Buddhism's foundation."

Sister Alicia

"I discovered I don't know many things about Buddhism yet. We are to discover our path to go home to that very source."

Sister Lynn



Upcoming Courses

Introduction to **Buddhism Course**

July 2022 (24th 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 : 13th July to 14th Sept 2022 (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 Kamma, 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

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Upcoming Courses



BUDDHIST AND PALI COLLEGE OF SINGAPORE (Affiliated to Buddhist & Pali University of Sri Lanka) **Diploma in Buddhism 2022/2023** (30th 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

9 October 2022 to 31 October 2023
Exams: 3rd week of October 2023 (tentative)

Venues

Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple
30 Jln Eunus, Singapore 419495
Tuesdays (7.30pm - 9.30pm)
Sundays (2.00pm - 5.15pm)
Starts: 9 October 2022, Sunday

Poh Ming Tse Temple
438 Dunearn Road, Singapore 289613
Tuesdays (7.30pm - 9.30pm)
Fridays (7.00pm - 10.00pm)
Starts: 11 October 2022, Tuesday

Enquiry

Maureen Hui
maw69xyz@gmail.com,
96282069

Sandra Koh
chaturikoh@yahoo.com.sg,
91297763

How to Apply

Application Form: Download at <http://bpc.edu.sg>, collect from Mangala Vihara, or scan the QR code below

Payments comprise:

- Registration Fee: USD \$55 (in SGD equivalent) and
- Examination Fee: USD \$100 (in SGD equivalent) to be paid to the University
- Maintenance Fee: SGD \$260

Other documents:

2 Passport Size photos and a copy of IC

Registration Period

- 14 August to 25 September 2022

Course Preview Briefings

Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple
Date: 10 September 2022, Saturday
Time: 2 – 4pm

Poh Ming Tse Temple
Date: : 17 September 2022, Saturday
Time: 2 – 4pm

Register for a course preview through Buddhist and Pali College of Singapore Facebook page, www.bpc.edu.sg website or this QR code



Current School Activities

- **Buddhist and Pali College Courses**

All courses are ongoing:

- Diploma in Buddhism
- Bachelor of Arts in Buddhist Studies
- Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies

Upcoming Activities

- **Introduction to Buddhism (in English)**

Course Date: 13 Jul 2022 to 14 Sep 2022

- **Introduction to Buddhism (in Chinese)**

Course Commencement: Sep 2022 (tentative)

- **Graduation Ceremony cum Appreciation for Teachers**

- 28 Aug 2022

- **Diploma in Buddhism**

	Course Preview	Course Commencement
Mangala Vihara Buddhist Temple	10 Sep 2022, 2 – 4pm	9 Oct 2022
Poh Ming Tse Temple	17 Sep 2022, 2 – 4pm	11 Oct 2022

For more information, please contact:

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