



TI-SARANA BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

Ti-Sarana

NEWS

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Qing Ming: The Day of Showing Gratitude to Departed Relatives and Friends

One morning the Buddha addressed the monks and asked them whether they heard a jackal howling in the night towards the dawn. When the monks replied they heard the howling, the Buddha explained that it would have been an old jackal afflicted by mange, the disease caused by mites resulting in severe itching and hair loss. There would be more thankfulness, more gratefulness in that jackal for any help given to it for the alleviation of its pain than a certain man among us who had pledged to be a monk in the dispensation. Continuing the Buddha said to the monks further:

“There are these two persons in the world: One who is first to do a favour and the other is grateful for what is done. These two persons are hard to find. The former wishes to do a good deed as a duty and the latter thinks he ought to repay the good done to him. Therefore monks, thus must you train yourselves. We will be thankful and grateful for what is done; not even the least thing that is done for us shall be lost.”

According to the commentary the person referred to as the person “who had pledged to be a monk in the dispensation” is none other than Devadatta, who attempted to take the life of the Buddha several times. In illustration of the gratefulness of a certain jackal, the commentary also relates a story about a jackal, who was released from the entwined coil of a python by a farmer. The python then releasing the jackal entwined the farmer. The jackal helped the farmer in turn to get released from the grip of the python who was about to devour him. The Buddha draws our attention to the fact of performing our duty at the due time and the importance of the appreciation of the good done to us by performing the acts of gratitude in return. In the Sigālovāda Sutta it is stated that a child has to look after his aged parents with the thought that “once supported by them I will now be their support.” And when they are dead and gone, he shows his gratitude dutifully from time to time with the conviction “I will transfer merits to them in due time.” The Tirokuḍḍa Sutta states how the departed ones appreciate the good done to them by showering blessing in return on the living:

*“He gave me, he worked for me, he was my kin, friend and intimate. Thinking thus, one makes offerings on behalf of the departed ones.”
“In return, the departed ones thus remembered and satisfied will wish eagerly for the well-being of their living relatives out of gratitude.”*

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Ancestor worship and Qing Ming

The traditional day of showing our gratitude to departed relatives and friends is customarily called Qing Ming or Qing Ming Jie. The day is popularly known in different ways as “Clear Brightness Festival” or “Chinese Memorial Day” or “Festival of Tending Graves” or “Tomb Sweeping Day” or “All Souls Day” (not to be confused with the All Souls Day of the Roman Catholics). Now the day has come to our doorstep. This particular Memorial Day having originated in China in the remote past is marked with a fascinating history. The emperor Xuangsong of Tang dynasty has given a facelift to Qing Ming in 732 in order to stop the elaborate ancestor worshipping ceremonies performed on numerous days of the year. In order to minimize the expenses incurred in the name of ancestor worship, the emperor is said to have fixed a particular day for the festivities. He declared that respect to ancestors could be paid at ancestors’ graves only on Qing Ming. The day of Qing Ming has been integrated into Chinese culture by way of the “Qing Ming Tea Culture”, “Qing Ming Painting”, “Qing Literature” etc. On that day, young and old pray before the ancestral graves, sweep the tombs, offer food to them together with tea, wine, chopsticks and paper accessories.

Showing Gratitude to the Departed is a Buddhist Virtue

Showing gratitude when the person is living as well as when he/she is dead is a virtue praised by the Buddha. After Enlightenment, the Buddha exemplified gratefulness by focusing his attention for seven days with unblinking eyes at the Bodhi-tree under the shade of which he attained Enlightenment. Buddhists can celebrate Qing Ming by performing meritorious deeds in memory of the departed ones and dedicating merits to them for their well being. It is mentioned in the above quoted Tirokudda Sutta that the departed ones who have been born in pathetic and woeful states always look to the living relatives and friends for their sympathy. The Buddhist scriptures record that King Bimbisara performed acts of merits on the Buddha’s advice and transferred merits to his ancestors, thus enabling them to get released from woeful states where they had been suffering. In the present context, since transferring of merits to the departed is done out of gratefulness, it is a virtue praised by the Buddha. The Buddhists can make their departed ones happy by dedicating merits to them on the day of Qing Ming.

May all beings be well and happy!

Ven. Dr. P. Gnanarama Mahā Thero

Qing Ming Memorial Service - 29th March to 4th April 2009

The Qing Ming Memorial Service will be held after the 7.30pm Buddha Pūjā on weekdays and after the 6.30pm Buddha Pūjā on weekends. Gifts of essential requisites will be offered to the Venerables before the recitation of the Tirokudda Sutta followed by dedication of merits to the departed ones.

Members and devotees can participate in the dedication of merits to the departed loved ones by making a donation to Ti-Sarana Buddhist Association in their memory. Donations collected are used for Dhamma propagation and welfare of the Venerables.

Names of the donors and their departed loved ones will be read out before the commencement of the memorial service. Enclosed with this newsletter is the registration form for Qing Ming Memorial Service. Please complete the form and send it to the Honorary Treasurer by 22nd March 2009.

Lunar New Year Blessing Service



Bro Māhinda inviting Bhantes to commence the Lunar New Year Blessing Service on 25 Jan 2009



Blessing by Bhante Ratanasiri



Bhantes tying blessed thread for devotees

Activities of the Sunday Dhamma Classes



Manjula, Hui Ting and Charita listening attentively as Bhante Gnanarama delivers his congratulatory messages to them



Bhante blesses the 3 students

On 18th January 2009, Bhante Gnanarama, in the presence of Bhante Ānanda, teachers and students of the Sunday Dhamma Classes, commended three students; Manjula Song, Ke Hui Ting and Charita Goh for doing well in their 2008 'O' Level Examinations. Our heartiest congratulations to them! Well Done!

Birthday Celebrations

Students of the Sunday Dhamma Classes whose birthdays fall in January and February 2009 got to celebrate their birthdays after the Morning Pūjā. Their happy faces and squeaks of delight at the sight of the lovely birthday cake further brightened up the Shrine Hall.



Cake cutting by students whose birthdays fall in January 2009



Students whose birthdays fall in February 2009



Queuing up for Bhante Ānanda to tie blessed threads around their wrists

Whenever the Buddha and his monks came to Anathapindika's house, his son Kala always kept away. The

Pagoda Lamps of Blessings

Coming Events to Celebrate the 32nd Anniversary of TBA

Free General Eye Screening – 22nd Mar 2009 (Sun)

To mark the 32nd Anniversary of our Association, we have arranged with the Singapore Women's Association, a non-governmental and non-profit organization to provide free general eye screening for members, devotees and the residents living in the vicinity of TBA.

This eye screening is only for those people aged 40 years and above and who are presently not under the care of any eye doctor. Each participant will go through 10 to 15 minutes of eye screening to check their Visual Acuity, Auto-Refract, Non-touch Tonometer and Slip-lamp machine for cataract or other related eye problems. If necessary, referrals will be given for further assessment or treatment.

The eye screening will be conducted between 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

Attached is the registration form. Please register by 15th March 2009 to facilitate preparations for the eye screening.

Sanghika Dāna – 26th Mar 2009 (Thurs)

On 26th March 2009 (Thurs) the actual anniversary date, a Sanghika Dāna will be held at 11.30 am, after the Morning Buddha Pūjā Service to commemorate the 32nd Anniversary of TBA. Venerables from other Buddhist temples and organizations who have assisted and guided us will be invited to the Sanghika Dāna. Members and devotees are encouraged to be present to thank the Venerables for their unwavering support and guidance throughout the years.

The Programme on **26th March 2009 (Thurs)** is as follows:

Morning

- 10.00 am Preparation for Sanghika Dāna
- 10.50 am Arrival of invited Venerables
- 11.00 am Buddha Pūjā and recitation of Suttas by Venerables
- 11.35 am Blessings for members and devotees
- 11.40 am Sanghika Dāna for the Venerables
- 11.55 am Vegetarian lunch for members and devotees

Evening

- 7.30 pm Buddha Pūjā
- 8.15 pm Re-affirmation of Dhamma Work
- 8.30 pm Cake Cutting by Venerables
- 8.35 pm Gilanapaccaya for the Venerables
- 8.40 pm Light refreshment for members and devotees