

MCI (P) 091/10/2016

January – March 2017

# TENDREL

Make Life Good

## THE HEART OF BUDDHA DHARMA

There is no other road to approaching real understanding and practice of the Buddha's teachings than to devote to diligent study and reflection. With this as the central theme, we bring you special features, news and messages to encourage the pursuit of the Dharma essence.

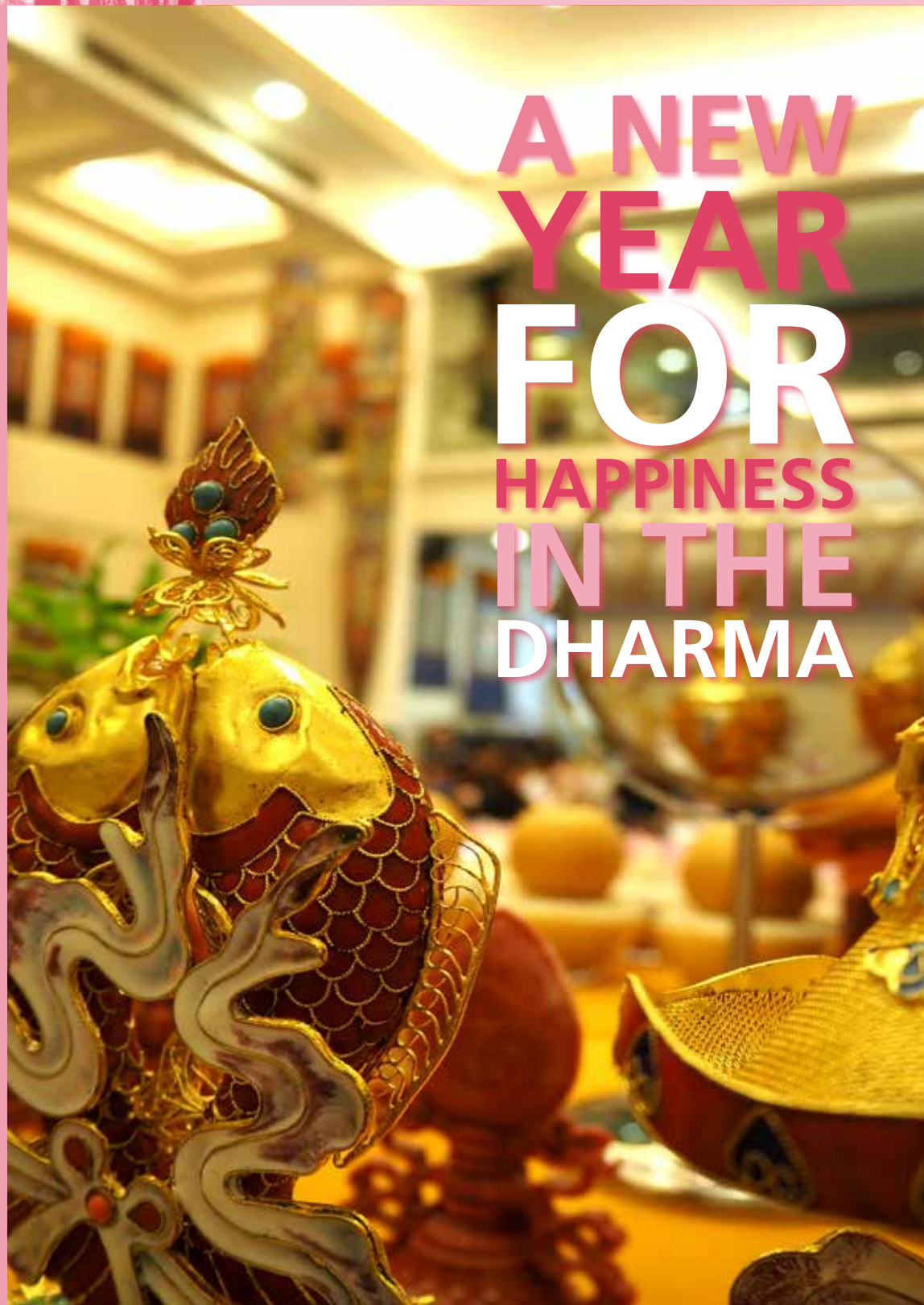
Quarterly News from  
Amitabha Buddhist Centre



Amitabha  
Buddhist Centre

阿彌陀佛佛教中心

# A NEW YEAR FOR HAPPINESS IN THE DHARMA



# NEW IN OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRAMME

## JANUARY – MARCH 2017

*New classes and new schedules: Here is an overview of what our members, students and friends can look forward to at Amitabha Buddhist Centre in the first quarter of 2017.*

### DHARMA OUTREACH

New to Buddhism and keen to explore further? The newly launched Dharma Outreach programme provides an opportunity to find out more in an informal workshop setting.

Dharma Outreach is facilitated by senior lay students of ABC who take a special interest in the Dharma and are keen to share their knowledge and experience. The first Dharma Outreach course on “Mind and Its Potential” was held from 18 November – 16 December 2016, with Basic Program student Kelvin Ong as facilitator.

#### UPCOMING DHARMA OUTREACH WORKSHOPS:

##### “How to Meditate”

Three sessions  
6 – 20 January 2017

Learn basic meditation techniques, such as breathing meditation, which can be put into use right away. Find out the purpose of meditation, how to sit properly, how to set up a regular practice, different meditation techniques and how to recognise and deal with obstacles while meditating.

**Facilitator:** Wee Geok Hua has taught the on-going “Meditation for Beginners” course at ABC since 2008. She learnt meditation from both Mahayana and Theravada teachers and has done retreats in Singapore and abroad. She juggles many roles as a homemaker, a volunteer at Dover Park Hospice and a member of ABC’s Executive Committee. Yet her meditation practice is an integral part of her daily routine. She has assisted Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi in leading meditation retreats and also taught meditation at Kopan Monastery, Nepal.

##### “Presenting the Path to Happiness”

Four sessions  
3 – 24 February 2017

These experiential sessions will present an overview of the entire path, showing how to get from where we are now to our final destination, buddhahood. There will be an overview of the Four Noble Truths, the subject of “buddha nature”, and an introduction to the Buddhist path according to different Buddhist traditions. This is an opportunity to discover one’s true potential through understanding what genuine happiness

is and where the ultimate source of that happiness lies, based on an explanation of the nature, the causes and the paths to realise the state of true happiness as taught by the Buddha.

**Facilitator:** Ang Joo Kim has completed both of the FPMT advanced study programs—the First Basic Program at ABC in 2009, and the Master’s Program where she graduated with high honours in 2014. She also embraces mindfulness practices as taught in the Plum Village tradition, founded by the Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

**Schedule:** Fridays, 7.30 – 9 pm  
Registration is required to attend the Dharma Outreach classes. Registration for “How to Meditate” opened on 9th December 2016.

### DISCOVERING BUDDHISM

Eight sessions  
11 March – 29 April 2017  
Taught by Ven. Tenzin Gyurme

The only goal of the Buddha’s teachings is to help us achieve our deepest aspiration for happiness and to overcome all suffering. The teachings tell us we are in the cycle of death and rebirth (Sanskrit: ‘samsara’). As long as we are in it, true and lasting peace and happiness cannot be found.

Achieving the temporary happiness of this life and future lives, especially the permanent everlasting happiness of liberation from samsara, depends on a sustained and systematic way of disciplining our minds and changing our behaviour. This requires belief and faith that our thoughts and actions do matter and will bring about effects in this and all future lives.

How to transform one’s own mind and behaviour? The Buddha said this should be done based on faith engendered by knowledge and conviction. Hence, he prescribed the use of logic and

reasoning in examining his teachings. If the teachings withstand analysis, we can generate the faith to adopt it in our daily lives.

Through this foundational course, gain reasoned understanding of core Buddhist principles including reincarnation, karma and its effects, the cycle of death and rebirth, selflessness, and what Buddha is. These topics lay the groundwork for advancing in Buddhist studies such as the Stages of the Path (Tibetan: *lam-rim*), and to develop the interest and resolve for long-term practice.

**Schedule:** Saturdays, 10.45 am – 12.30 pm  
Registration is required.

### BASIC PROGRAM MODULE 9: “TANTRIC PATHS AND GROUNDS”

From third week of March 2017  
Taught by Khen Rinpoche  
Geshe Chonyi

This module presents an overview of the four classes of tantra—action, performance, yoga and highest yoga tantras—according to Buddhist teachings. In particular, the paths and grounds according to highest yoga tantra will be dealt with, and the profound details of the generation and completion stages of highest yoga tantra will be explained.

Registration for this module is compulsory based on the following pre-requisites:

- All students, including those presently enrolled in the Basic Program, MUST have received a great initiation of highest yoga tantra and the tantric vow in order to receive these teachings
- Students should preferably already have an understanding of the ‘*lam-rim*’ (stages of the path to enlightenment) and the paths and

grounds as taught in the Perfection Vehicle

“Tantric Paths and Grounds” forms one of the culminating subjects of the Second Basic Program, which is approaching completion in 2017. See “**In Perspective: The Second Basic Program**” on page 7.

**Schedule:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7.30 – 9.30 pm

On-line registration is required for all the above classes. To be notified of updates in our programme, subscribe to our e-mail list. Turn to page 10 for details on how to **Connect with ABC**.

### MORNING START FOR SUNDAY PUJAS

Starting with the new year, the weekly Sunday pujas will move to a fresh morning slot. The Medicine Buddha puja, Tara puja, and Confession and Purification Practice session will be held at 10.30 am instead of 4 pm. All are welcome to join in these on-going prayer sessions that are held all-year long. For the puja schedule for January to March 2017, turn to **What’s Next** on page 10. No registration is required to attend the pujas, which are dedicated for the lives of our gurus, the success of the organisation, and the benefit of our members and sponsors.  
**Puja leader:** Ven. Tenzin Tsultrim



# HOW TO GET TO THE HEART OF BUDDHADHARMA

*The importance of using reflection and analysis is paramount to really understanding the Buddha's teachings, as Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi, our resident teacher, spells out clearly in his message to Basic Program students last June.*

Whenever you listen to an explanation of the Dharma, as you are doing now, it is very important that you reflect and analyse as you listen to what is being said. This is extremely important. If you only listen to what is being said without thinking at all, without reflecting or analysing, then there is no way you are going to learn anything.

In the process of educating yourself, when you are learning the Dharma and hearing an explanation, you have to simultaneously analyse as you listen. Without such analysis, you will not be able to check whether you understand what is being taught or not. If you don't think about it, you will not be able to see whether you agree with what is being said or not.

While thinking as you listen to the teachings, if you find points that are objectionable to you or that you cannot agree with, then you need to bring them up and ask me. You pose a question: "Why did you say that? Is that correct? Is that wrong?"

When you are dealing with Buddhist philosophy and looking at the great treatises, in order to understand what is in the text, you have to reflect and analyse in order to understand its meaning. Otherwise, there is no way to understand these topics at all. When you engage in studying these topics, you have to try your best. Your mind has to be very alert in seeking out the answer through analysis and reflection.

able to complete the accumulation of the two collections. With that, we will achieve enlightenment. These are the benefits of having a good grasp of the two truths.

This is how it is presented in the teachings in terms of the basis, the path, and the result. The basis is the two truths. The path is the method and wisdom. The result is the two bodies: the truth body and the form body.

It is so important to have some idea of the two truths. This is why I am



## Importance of the Two Truths

The first line in the "Vajra Cutter Sutra": "A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp," is an introduction to what constitutes reality. The whole of reality, anything and everything that exist, can be included in the two truths. So this is the introduction to the basis.

It is stated in the teachings that if we do not understand the basis, what constitutes reality, especially in terms of the presentation of the two truths, we will not discover and understand well the intent of the Buddha and his teachings. In order to understand well the intent of the Buddha and the intent of his teachings, we need a good grasp of the two truths. When we have a good grasp of the two truths, we will be

repeating this over and over again, saying the same thing in different ways. The two truths are the bedrock or foundation for everything else. The purpose of repeating myself over and over again is to emphasise their importance. You should also think about them over and over again.

If somebody were to ask you what the two truths are, at least you should be able to say decisively, "The two truths mean this; these are their names and this is what they are." At the very minimum, you must be able to say this. It doesn't matter who is asking this question about reality or the two truths or how they phrase their question. You should be able to deliver a definitive answer. That means you don't have one answer for one person and another

answer for another person. Your answer should be a standard answer, which is reflective of reality.

There are many people who are easily swayed. This means that if somebody says, "It is like that," these people would agree readily, "Yes! Yes! It is like that." When another person says something completely different, they will also say, "Yes! Yes! You are right. It is like that." Their understanding is not stable at all!

What I am trying to say is, that whatever understanding we gain from our studies, the conclusion we arrive at must be firm and unshakeable. We must be convinced of the conclusion we arrive at. This is one point I want to drive home. I am not saying that we should aim to be foolishly stubborn. Being decisive and holding on firmly to a position is not being foolishly stubborn: "This is so because my guru said so! Therefore, it has to be so." It should never be like that. Your decisiveness comes from having thought thoroughly about the subject matter. You understand what you are saying because you have thought about it and you know that your position is backed up by reason.

The result of learning and reflection should be this kind of decisive, unshakeable conclusion. This is especially important when we are dealing with Buddhist philosophy. The end result we are aiming for must be like that. We cannot be wishy-washy with our command of the topic.

What I am presenting here is not something new. You have already studied the tenets that cover the Great Exposition School, the Sutra School, the Mind Only School and the Middle Way School. Each of them has their own assertions of what the two truths are. If you remember what you have studied, this should not be anything new to you.

You have to know the presentation of the two truths from the perspectives of these four Buddhist tenets. With an

understanding of the presentation of the two truths by the lower schools, only then will you see how the presentation of the two truths according to the higher schools is special, unique and extraordinary.

## The Art of Listening to Teachings

Although we don't like suffering, we experience suffering in many ways. There has to be an answer to that. We don't like it, yet it keeps on coming our way. We get angry and we have attachment for all kinds of things. We don't like to be upset and we don't like to be angry, yet anger still arises. Why? There has to be an answer. We can talk about reality, "Reality is these two truths. It is this and that." But we still have to answer the question, "Why do we get upset? Why does attachment arise?"

When you hear an explanation like this, this is the way to listen to a teaching. For example, I had just asked the question: "Why do we get upset? Why does attachment arise?" At the same time, you should be analysing my question. You should not just sit there, thinking, "He is asking why we are angry." You have to ask yourself the question, think about it and look for the answer. This is why there is an art to learning and studying the Dharma and an art to listening to the teachings. It is not just sitting there and registering the words you hear.

If you don't think about what you have read or heard, it is impossible to develop any insights or understanding. Often people think, "You are saying this again. I have already heard this before many times. I already know this as you have said it numberless times already." With this kind of attitude, not putting effort into analysing what you have studied or heard, you will not taste the Dharma. The Dharma will not go into you. And this is why you don't change. This is the problem.

We should ask ourselves this. Many

of us, if not all of us here, have heard numberless teachings over many years but nothing much has happened, isn't that right? It is important then to ask our selves, "Where does the problem lie? What happened?" This absence of change despite having heard so many teachings over so many years is not due to a shortage of teachings. It is not due to experiencing the poverty of Dharma teachings. It is also not the fault of the teachings themselves. If we analyse and think carefully, it is evident that we have never ever seriously analysed what we have heard and what we have read. The problem comes from that lack of reflection, just listening to teachings and reading but no reflection at all.

## Investigating Beyond Appearances

It is said in the teachings that when we look at our own or someone else's body, the body appears to be something solid right there, whether we call it an inherently existent or truly existent pleasant body. Furthermore, we assent to that appearance.

When we see somebody that we dislike, what is the basis for our unhappiness with that person? It is just the mere appearance of the body of that person that makes us feel uneasy. It is said in the teachings that our feeling of unhappiness is based on our belief that there is a bad and terrible person existing right there from its own side. Whether this is true remains to be seen from our own experience. We have to think about this.

The big question pertains to our object of attachment, say the body of another person. In the view of that attachment, that attractive body appears to that mind of attachment in a certain way. The big question is this: "Yes, this is how this body is appearing to me, but is that representative of how that body actually exists?" We have to think about this deeply.

Likewise, with regard to the enemy or the person we dislike so much, in the



Actually, there is nothing there.

Likewise, we are like those children in that we imbue so many hopes and expectations onto the object we are clinging to, be it the enemy or friend. This can only lead to either very strong

aversion or very strong clinging. At the end of the day, however, we are clinging on to nothing. We are getting upset with nothing. We are just like the child who is so excited over that empty fist. When the fist opens up, there is nothing there.

view of that mind of aversion or anger, that enemy or bad person appears in a certain way. Is that appearance indicative of how that person actually exists? This is what we must investigate.

The correct conclusion from thinking about what I have just said should be the same as what the line, “Form is empty” [from the “Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra”] is trying to convey. We say that things do not exist in and of themselves, although they may appear in that way, be it our object of aversion or object of attachment. Applying the line, “Form is empty”, to our enemy or object of attachment, that person does not exist in the way that our anger or attachment believes it to exist. Just by understanding well that our enemy or friend does not exist in the way they appear and the way our mind believes them to exist, our emotion, be it anger or attachment, will be reduced substantially. There is no force behind that anger or attachment anymore. When we develop this understanding, it is said that not only are those emotions subdued but we can eradicate those emotions completely because there is no longer any basis for them to arise.

Sometimes, when adults play games with children, they clench their fists and pretend to be holding something in them. Then they tell the children, “I am holding something special in my hand. If you can guess what it is, then it is yours.” The children become excited and fantasise about what the special object may be. They look forward to getting that object inside the fist.

aversion or very strong clinging. At the end of the day, however, we are clinging on to nothing. We are getting upset with nothing. We are just like the child who is so excited over that empty fist. When the fist opens up, there is nothing there.

This is very clear evidence that we have been suffering and we will continue to suffer over nothing. Due to our hallucinated view, while there is nothing there, we think that it is everything although reality is not like that. Reality exists in terms of the two truths. Not knowing that all phenomena are empty and exist only in mere name, we lead life based on our made-up reality. Our hallucinated mind is the bedrock of all our views. Based on that, we lead our lives believing whatever our hallucinations tell us to be true. While they are not true, we think they are true and correct. We accept whatever appears to our mind. “The person appears like this. The object appears like that then it has to be like that. What I think is correct. How it appears to me is correct. There is nothing more than that. There is no other possibility for reality.” This is how we lead our lives. Based on this hallucination, we create our suffering life.

### How to Taste the Essence

This is why it is so important to gain an understanding of reality and what actually exists. Because we don't know this at all, this is why we suffer so much and we continue to be in samsara. If we don't understand the two truths, we

will never see the icing on top of the cake, the most delicious part of the entire Buddhadharma.

What is the essence, the very heart, of the entire Buddhadharma? If we don't understand the two truths, there is no way to see the intent of the Buddha. Without understanding the two truths, there is no way to see how the Buddhadharma is truly in a class of its own. We will not be able to see how special, extraordinary and different it is from other beliefs and traditions. Appreciating the wonderful and special qualities of the Buddhadharma can only come from understanding well the presentation of the two truths, the Buddha's explanation of what reality is. This is a hallmark of Buddhism that truly sets Buddhism apart from all other traditions.

Arya Nagarjuna said in his “Essay on the Spirit of Enlightenment”, that when one comes to understand the emptiness of all phenomena—how things do not exist inherently—and at the same time, is able to explain how actions can give rise to their effects, when you have the realisation that emptiness is complementary with the working of karma and its effects, that realisation is beyond marvellous and exceedingly amazing.

Many people think that they have some understanding of emptiness. Yet, they are the very people who assert that since everything is empty, there is no karma because that is empty too. That is why there is no karma and no effects. This is no way to understand the heart of the Buddhadharma.

*Excerpts from Lesson 2 of Basic Program Module 8: “The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics” taught by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi at Amitabha Buddhist Centre, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016. English translation by Ven. Tenzin Gyurme; transcribed by the Basic Program transcribing team; edited by Cecilia Tsong; additional editing for TENDREL by Ven. Tenzin Tsaltrim.*

# IN PERSPECTIVE: THE SECOND BASIC PROGRAM

Every Tuesday and Thursday evening for eight months every year since 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011, a group of people have pulled themselves away from their jobs or their homes, put up with rush hour commutes and traffic, ploughed through hurried dinners, and tried as much as they could, to be present for the 7.30 pm classes with Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi.

The Second Basic Program got off to a remarkable start in June 2011, when 208 people signed up for Module 1 on the “Stages of the Path”. As with any long-term programme, where early enthusiasm competes with realistic resolve, a gradual attrition pared the number down to less than half of the original cohort. Fast-forward 5.5 years to October 2016: Module 8 on “The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics” of Maitreya's “Ornament of Clear Realisations” has been concluded. This Basic Program is expected to complete in 2017 and ABC can look forward to rejoicing for our second batch of BP graduates since 2010.

The FPMT Basic Program is anything but basic with a curriculum that gathers the main threads of the Buddhist path into a sturdy rope to guide earnest students on their quest for sound understanding and practice of the Dharma. Although the part-time modular course is designed for

a five-year duration, the immense consideration and patience that Khen Rinpoche has invested on behalf of the students inevitably stretched the schedule beyond its prescribed timeline.

Besides the obvious dynamic of Khen Rinpoche, the excellent teacher, imparting the Dharma to a varied assembly (all lay with the exception of yours truly, the nun!), there is a less apparent network that sustains the course, ensuring that the students receive the transmission of the Dharma as smoothly as possible.

Meet some of the people who have made tremendous contributions of time, talent and toil to ABC's Basic Program.

### The translator, Ven. Tenzin Gyurme:

The launch of the Basic Program at ABC in 2003 was made possible because our resident teacher Geshe Chonyi agreed to teach, and because there was a Tibetan interpreter for the teachings, Ven. Gyurme. Throughout 13 years and two runs of the Basic Program, Ven. Gyurme has served as the conduit for Khen Rinpoche's teachings in Tibetan to channel forth in a recognisable stream of English. Although the exact terms of

Dharma vocabulary often requires it to be translated into correspondingly technical jargon, many students have warmed up to Ven. Gyurme's attempts to pepper the commentary with his own dashes of Hokkien cum Singlish humour. Although he has not said so at large, it is a huge responsibility to convey the Dharma with accuracy and this is what Ven. Gyurme has strived to do.

A point of interest about the current Basic Program is that it draws ardent and loyal participation from several students who had graduated from the first Basic Program. From the start,



Khen Rinpoche had singled out some of these senior students to take on a mentoring role as group leaders. Benny Law, Phuah Soon Ek and Cecilia Tsong are among the diligent “seniors” who continue to attend classes while providing invaluable support to Khen Rinpoche and all their classmates.

### Benny Law, group discussion facilitator and exam-grading assistant:

“I have had the unbelievable fortune to experience and learn through two Basic Programs. Since the Basic Program started in 2003, over the course of these 13 years, it has opened up my



is unbelievably and indispensably precious.”

### Phuah Soon Ek and the transcribing team:

Phuah helms a team of six volunteer students who take turns to transcribe each lesson by playing back the voice recordings. It is a laborious time-consuming task. Phuah revealed that it takes an average of eight to ten hours just to transcribe one lesson. He then devotes another six hours to playing back each recording to check for errors in the transcripts!

“The transcribing process started during the first Basic Program. I myself



Lee for help. Patricia then roped in Julia Koh and Aki Yeo. Rachel Tan and Alison recently joined the team to help out whenever any of the team members need help.

Most of us feel that transcribing makes us commit to listening to the teachings again carefully and with concentration, to understand the lessons. We feel it is very beneficial. We feel that BP teachings from the most qualified teacher are precious and can only be preserved through transcribing and keeping them.”

### Transcript editor Cecilia Tsong:

“I am forever indebted to Fiona O’Shaughnessy, who kick-started the idea of uploading edited transcripts onto our ABC website [for the first BP] and roped me in to help. The transcription team keeps me on my toes. Without their hard work, I will have nothing to edit! I have also had the help of Yap Siew Kee and Shirley Soh over the years to proofread my edits, correct my grammar and punctuation, and give the transcripts a final polish. The job can be challenging but is always fulfilling and I feel very privileged to be able to help in this small way. Hopefully, the students have found the transcripts helpful in their studies and revision.

I am very lazy and coming to classes



perspective of what the Buddhadharmā is all about. It has helped me to at least intellectually understand, although not completely, the overall structure of traversing the path, how vast and profound it is, and where anyone who is really serious about doing so, should even begin. More importantly, having to revisit the modules the second time round has enabled me to get a better insight into understanding what Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are all about, whether they really exist, and how they are able to help me and others, albeit painfully slowly, but realistically and practically on a daily basis, towards my own and others’ salvation! The Basic Program has helped me open my eyes to see that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are right here with me all along, guiding me—unbelievable!

What is then left is for a habitually hardened and stubborn person like myself to use my boat of the precious human rebirth to start crossing to the other shore. Learning the materials is one thing, being able to actually use it to benefit myself, and others, is another matter altogether. Without the Basic Program shining the light on what is and what is not to be done, I would ask myself where I would be for countless future lifetimes. The prospect would seem very bleak. Therefore, for anyone who wants to know how to get rid of suffering, the Basic Program

could not catch most of the teachings taught in class. After listening to the audio, again most of the facts were forgotten after a few weeks. So the only way to retain the facts was to transcribe the teachings. Thereafter, I realised many people had the same problem. Many people requested to have the transcripts shared. As I could not cope on my own, I approached Vivien Ng for help. Alison Wong and Angie Xiao then approached me to volunteer with transcribing. When the Second Basic Program started, I approached Patricia

twice a week keeps me on the straight and narrow. I am constantly amazed at how skilful Khen Rinpoche is in presenting the teachings. It is quite different from what we went through in the first cycle. He engages the new

students very well and at the same time, he is able to pose questions that make the older students think more deeply about the topics presented. In some distant future life, may I become like him! If there is a third cycle of Basic

Program, I will sign up for that too!”

Audio recordings and edited transcripts from the Second Basic Program can be downloaded at [http://www.fpmtabc.org/resources\\_dl.php](http://www.fpmtabc.org/resources_dl.php)

and form. What is a tree? And how do we encounter it?”

Shirley explained the Dharma inspiration in her art: “Visiting the Mahabodhi Temple in Bihar, India, in 2012 and sitting under the bodhi tree inspired my art installation for the Downtown Botanic Gardens MRT Station. In that same year, we were studying ‘lo-rig’ [“Mind and Mental Factors”] in the Basic Program. Deeply lost grappling with the concept of emptiness and functionality, I decided to pose the question: what is a tree? As you enter the station to descend to the platform, different representations of Singapore’s most famous tree are slowly revealed, along with quotes about trees on the floor.”

While the thousands of commuters pouring through the station might be largely unaware, a tiny seed about emptiness has been sown right there.

# THE MERELY LABELLED TREE

The Basic Program has never been intended for academic learning alone. Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s wish is for the subjects studied to serve as the foundation for Dharma practice.

Station. Shirley Soh is the artist behind three artworks that were commissioned for the Downtown Line. “What Is a Tree?” depicts the Botanic Gardens’ iconic Tembusu tree in various forms, coupled with thought-provoking messages. The large mural on the train platform (see photograph) carries the musing:

One BP student took a piece of the philosophical concepts she had learned into creating a series of art that now adorns the Botanic Gardens MRT

“It is merely labelled on its functions



Amitabha Buddhist Centre is a centre for the study and practice of Mahayana Buddhism in the tradition of the Tibetan master Lama Tsong Khapa, originating from the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), a non-profit international organisation founded by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/fpmtABC](http://www.facebook.com/fpmtABC)

#### Opening Hours

Tuesdays – Saturdays: 10:30 am – 6 pm

Sundays: 10 am – 6 pm

The office is open till 7.30 pm when evening events are scheduled

Closed on Mondays

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#### Connect with ABC

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For a postal subscription, call or e-mail our office at 6745 8547 / [centre@fpmtabc.org](mailto:centre@fpmtabc.org) (This service is available for ABC members only, to addresses within Singapore.)

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# WHAT'S NEXT

## CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION 2017

Join us to welcome the Year of the Red Rooster with these auspicious events!

#### Tara Puja

Chinese New Year's Eve, Friday, 27 January – 9.30 to 11.30 pm  
The centre will open at 9 pm.

#### Relic Blessing

Chinese New Year's Day, Saturday, 28 January – 10 am to 12 noon

To start the New Year, a special opportunity for everyone, including families, to receive the blessing of holy relics from our sangha and make meaningful prayers and light offerings to the Three Jewels. The centre will open at 9.30 am. Please note that Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi will not be present on this occasion as he will still be away on his annual visit to Kopan Monastery, Nepal.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

See page 2 and 3 for more about our upcoming programme.

### ICARE FOR WELLNESS WORKSHOP

Another round of this self-care workshop is planned for the weekends in February 2017. Details will be posted via our e-mail updates.

## PRAYER SESSIONS JAN-MAR 2017

#### Animal Liberation:

8 January – 10 am

#### Guru Puja:

7, 22 January – 2.30 pm / 10, 25 February / 7 March – 7.30 pm

**Tsog Offering:** 23 March – 9 pm

#### Medicine Buddha Puja:

15 January / 5 February / 5 March – 10.30 am

#### Tara Puja:

19 February / 19 March – 10.30 am

#### Confession and Purification Practice:

26 February / 26 March – 10.30 am

For our full calendar visit [www.fpmtabc.org](http://www.fpmtabc.org)

# IN OUR CIRCLE

## REJOICE FOR RETREATS DONE



One-day Vajrasattva purification retreat in progress on 16<sup>th</sup> October

The last quarter of 2016 was a season for retreat with three different kinds of retreat organised and completed. Rejoice for the merits accumulated by those who took part!

38 ABC students entered a two-week long approximation retreat of **Vajrayogini** on the mystical island of Bali on 15<sup>th</sup> October and successfully completed the retreat with a fire puja on 31<sup>st</sup> October. The retreat of this

highest yoga tantra deity was led by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi and was held at the Bhojjanga Bhavana Centre, situated in scenic Mount Batur. This was the first time that an ABC group had ventured to Bali.

A one-day **Vajrasattva** purification retreat was held on 16<sup>th</sup> October, drawing an overwhelming 190 participants who displayed great commitment in the practice of reciting the powerful hundred-syllable mantra. The Sunday event coincided with the full moon Tibetan 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Christmas holiday weekend from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> December was devoted to a **Nyung Nay** retreat attended by over 50 people. It was of significance as it was the first Nyung Nay to be held in the presence of our Thousand-Arm Chenresig statue, which was completed in February last year. As our Chenresig statue was created to be the centrepiece of a Nyung Nay merit field, being able to perform the Nyung Nay retreat with the completed statue at last made it especially meaningful.

In our July – September 2016 issue, we had reported that progress was being made in completing the crowns for our Thousand-Arm Chenresig statue. The process turned out to be much more extensive and complex as there was much fine-tuning to be done in the proportions, as well as the actual rendering of each element using three-dimensional printing. Artist Peter Griffin had returned to England in July and had taken up the painstaking process from there. With a 3D printer running non-stop for four months, he managed to finish the production of the 151 blue wax masters that, together with several main elements that had been completed earlier, will create the

## CHENRESIG'S CROWNS – ONE STEP CLOSER

crowns and ear ornaments for nine heads of the statue.

Peter paid a short visit to Singapore in November 2016, bearing this precious bundle of blue wax masters back to ABC. There is some way to go before

the galaxy of parts can coalesce into a crowning glory. However, as 2016 drew to an end, one important piece of the project had fallen into place. Turn to the back page for a view of the master elements.

# MY VIEW

## LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE ON THE BASIC PROGRAM AT ABC

“A very important thing that Amitabha Buddhist Centre is able to provide is the study of the Basic Program. There is usual study of the *lam-rim* but also the study of the Basic Program, and hopefully the Master’s Program soon. That fulfils His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s holy wishes. What pleases His Holiness the most is education in Dharma. The centre doesn’t just do pujas without explaining Dharma. Here, Amitabha Buddhist Centre is particularly for Buddhist education, which others are unable to provide. That Amitabha Buddhist Centre is able to provide a Buddhist education is so very important. The happiness of sentient beings comes from Dharma. The happiness of sentient beings, any happiness, temporary and ultimate, liberation from samsara and full enlightenment, all comes from Dharma—from good karma, from Dharma. Therefore, without Buddhadharma there is no happiness for sentient beings. Therefore, it is *SO* important, unbelievably important, to learn Buddhism.

That many people want to do the Basic Program is the great accomplishment of Amitabha Buddhist Centre. Because those students are awakening their minds, then they are qualified to achieve enlightenment and also enlighten all sentient beings. You are carrying the whole world. Thank you very much.”

*From Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s talk during the long life puja offered to him at ABC on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2014 – transcribed by Ven. Joan Nicell.*

# WORDS OF TRUTH

*“It is clearly mentioned in the lam-rim that there isn’t a Dharma to be learned and studied and another Dharma to be practised. To think of the Dharma in this way is wrong. It is a huge mistake... Whatever we have learned is meant for practice and whatever we practise is what we have learned.”*

*– Khen Rinpoche  
Geshe Chonyi*



## ONE SHOT

**Chenresig’s Crowns – One Step Closer** (continued from page 11): While the next steps of crown making gradually come into place, we offer a glimpse of the delicate components that will fit together to form eventually, the exquisite whole.

Photography: Ven. Tenzin Tsultrim