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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhassa

Summary

This opening speech of the Ch'an Academy Long Life Day (1990) by John D. Hughes (Director, Buddhist Discussion Centre [Upwey] Ltd.) begins with acknowledging the Teaching visit of the Great Korean Patriarch Ch'an (Seon) Master Venerable Seung Sahn, and that he admired the (Heavenly Buddha Dhamma) garden and especially the western wall.

The writer directs our attention to see that 'Individual striving must be directed against ignorance by applying the Buddha Teaching, the Buddha Dhamma. And, that a skilful teaching aid for this, is found 'Within the boundaries of this Buddha Dhamma Garden, where human beings learn the first fundamental of life, that all things change. (unsatisfactoriness, in Pali - dukkha). While the reality is 'Most beings wish to slow down this natural deterioration caused by change.'

To assist persons who wish to conquer their ignorance, the Ch'an Academy creates causes for Ch'an Teachings (The Way of The Brush).

Putting the question, What really are we doing? brings us to see the garden is a place of many beings, and that we wish they all have long life. No being likes to be killed. When watering the garden, it is offered to save the lives of many beings, and 'by repeated mindful cultivation of such kindly motivated actions, humans are taught to become friendly to others'.

With correct cultivation of loving kindness and compassion those human beings with wholesome minds can work to remove the scripts of those beings with 'lack of trust minds' – associated with the culture of poverty.

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The Way of the Garden is difficult to understand and may be compared to bringing one hundred brooks under one bridge', the bridge being the wisdom minds. The garden recreation process is used as an active training ground to develop the needed human qualities of loving kindness, compassion, patience and trust minds.

THE WAY OF THE BRUSH AND THE WAY OF THE GARDEN

Chan Academy Long Life Day speech by Buddhist Discussion
Centre (Upwey) Ltd Director John Hughes Dip. App. Chem.
T.T.T.C.

Venerable Sirs, Honourable Sirs, Respected Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Welcome to the Ch'an Academy Long Life Day.

Four years have passed since the official inauguration of the Ch'an Academy. Last year, the Ch'an Academy was blessed with the Teaching visit of the Great Korean Patriarch Ch'an Master Venerable Seung Sahn Sunim. He admired this garden and especially, the Western Gate.

Beneficial past causes of the working of kamma between us made this visit possible, and I will be visiting the conference he has arranged in South Korea in August.

As the Late Venerable Narada Maha Thera pointed out; we are neither absolutely the servants nor the masters of our kamma, however, it is evident that the fruition of kamma is influenced to some extent by external circumstances, surroundings, personality, individual striving, and so forth. Individual striving must be directed against ignorance by applying the Buddha Teaching, the Buddha Dhamma.

To assist persons who wish to conquer their ignorance, the Ch'an Academy creates causes for Ch'an Teachings (The Way of The Brush). As part of this Practice, our Members take care of the Buddhist artefacts, library and surroundings of this place.

Our surroundings include this garden, the repository of the four seasons, the natural factors of change. This Ch'an Garden is used as a rather grand Teaching aide and because of this function, the Calligraphy on the Four Gates refer to it as a Heavenly Buddha Dhamma Garden.

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Within the boundaries of this Buddha Dhamma Garden, human beings learn the first fundamental of life, that all things change. Change means unsatisfactoriness (in Pali - dukkha). Most beings wish to slow down this natural deterioration caused by change. The modern world of physics shows disorder increases with time because we measure time in the direction in which disorder increases.

Buddhists distinguish four times; past, present, future and timeless times.

Where possible, the good things handed down to us by our forebears, such as, for example, this garden ought to be preserved. We are blinded by the name and form "garden". What really are we doing? We are recreating some replica name and form of the former garden.

This garden attracts many possums, birds and insects. Last week, a colony of seven rainbow butterflies appeared here. For those of you who like numbers, one student reported an annual count of over 80 different species of local birds which visited this garden. The water ponds built here have saved the lives of several birds during drought and bushfires and the fruit trees and berry bushes provide food for many. We wish beings to have long life.

The Buddhist Precept of no killing is a fundamental morality. No being likes to be killed. Accordingly, even mosquitoes or other small creatures are not destroyed volitionally by students in this place. In fact, we attempt to preserve their lives and cultivate causes for their present and future well-being.

The excellent infrastructure built and maintained by a series of governments in this State of Victoria gives an adequate water supply to supplement the natural excellent rainfall of this area.

When watering the garden, this water is offered to save the lives of many, many small beings. By repeated mindful cultivation of such kindly motivated actions, humans are taught to become friendly to others. Animals appear in this sanctuary without fear of death from humans. Their death appears from other animals' actions. Animals kill, so do not praise this aspect of animal nature. At some future time, these animals shall take rebirth as humans who trust humans. If an animal is killed by a human, it should not surprise you that, upon human birth that being is antisocial.

In this place you are unlikely to see an animal die of old age. It is the way things are. Compassion, without wisdom, is blind to the real needs of

sentient beings. It is hard to practice charity if you are poor. Poor killing animals manage to practise some charity to their kith and kin. Humans can be trained to practice charity but, first, they must be trained to work for themselves and others. Harmless non-killing human work must be undertaken patiently to maintain our human material wealth and health. Some goods and services must be given by those who have wealth to help other beings develop their own suitable habitats for themselves. It is difficult to do this in war time, so we should try for peaceful solutions to problems. It is not wise action to rob the rich to feed the poor. The poor must wish to get rich by their own efforts. Such truths may have been overlooked in recent times. The only valid war to fight is a war on the culture of poverty. Poverty culture arises because humans cannot trust each other.

The unprompted scripts of the culture of poverty and ill health by some Australians can be remedied.

The "Me Now" generation have their origin in their immature 'trust - mind' structures. Many of these scripts generate from their birth with karmic callous dispositions induced by ill treatment by humans when they were in animal birth. For example, if you showered affection on a family pet for a decade and then kill it because it becomes old and sick, then the death proximate kamma thought would be 'don't trust humans'. Hence, with correct cultivation of loving kindness and compassion those human beings with wholesome minds can work to remove the scripts of those beings with 'lack of trust minds' - associated with the culture of poverty. Often, scripts associated with ill health are the result of the fact that many animals kill. The Practice of Compassion removes the kamma of ill health without necessarily replacing it with the culture excessive greed or hypochondria.

If you find these subtle script concepts do not sit well with your present minds, I invite you to reflect on these concepts and arouse notions of Wisdom-Compassion.

The Way of the Garden is difficult to understand and may be compared to bringing one hundred brooks under one bridge. The bridge is the wisdom minds, so it can be seen that this garden recreation process is not just a mere folly or ornament; but this process is used as an active training ground to develop the needed human qualities of loving kindness, compassion, patience, generosity and trust minds.

The wise remove antisocial attitudes involved in the culture of poverty and the culture of ill health. When this training is successful, you are aware that

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this can be called a true Ch'an Garden. Ch'an implies meditation and action.

The Ch'an Meditation Teachers here use many Buddhist ways to drive people sane, but only for those who request to be taught. We hope we earn your trust.

On this Long Life Day of the Ch'an Academy, we desire to make some more causes for the long-time preservation of this suitable Dhamma environment for Ch'an Practice and to build trust between people and to remove the scripts resulting in the culture of poverty and the culture of ill health from the mind frames of all Australians and others.

Unwholesome minds cannot recreate beautiful gardens. We overtly concentrate on the Ch'an Way of the Brush, but covertly, practise the Ch'an Way of the Garden. A few of our students of the Middle Way have developed the patience to undertake training in the Ch'an Way of the Garden over the four seasons. Please inspect our new Western Ch'an Wall. It is not easy to place one rock into a wall, unless your middle mind is correct.

By repeating such actions, the correct middle mind is produced over years of practice. Thousands of insights into the nature of world matters arise in the process, but these should be viewed as the chattering of a monkey mind.

The Buddhist Discussion Centre (Upwey) Ltd. has the will to introduce the concept of a New Meditation Hall to be built, behind the Western Gates, in harmony with this garden. A traditional Buddhist Foundation Stone was laid on the site on 29 October 1989. We have gratitude for the attendance of two Chief Monks from Thailand and many Monks who gave many Blessings on that day for the Stone Laying Ceremony of our Hall.

Naturally, it is intended that the actual construction method of our hall shall follow the methods of the Way of the Garden.

The Way of the Garden also helps us understand such matters as the two other fundamental properties of human existence, namely, unsatisfactoriness (Pali - dukkha) and the lack of a permanent self (Pali - anatta). The short time available today does not permit me to elaborate on the methods whereby these two fundamental aspects of human existence can be known, each for himself or herself.

Suffice to say, the Way of the Brush and the Way of the Garden extends to

encompass wisdom concerning all three fundamental properties of existence. Direct knowing of these three properties leads to Enlightenment (Pali - nibbana).

Thank you for your attendance and goodwill on this Ch'an Academy Long Life Day. We invite you to share our merit and blessings and help us to cultivate causes to assist us in preserving the Long Life of the Ch'an Academy and this Heavenly Buddha Dharma Garden. Please attend at least one of our classes in Ch'an this year. You must get close to Ch'an to see. You can't see an ant from the back of a horse.

Thank you for your intelligent attention. May your attention become a cause for your karmic ascent and bring you prosperity, health and long life. May you enjoy the results of the Ch'an Academy Students' labour.

Thank you for your past support of this Centre and I hope we meet with you again for our mutual benefit.

I wish to praise all Members for their great efforts this year in attending to the Way of the Garden. I wish to mention a few of our Organisers of this Ch'an Academy Long Life Day.

Firstly, Peter Marshall, our Treasurer of the Ch'an Academy Sub Committee who helped build the Western Ch'an Wall containing the extended Car park area.

Secondly, Lynette Lehmann, our Ch'an Academy Convenor, whose gardening skills are a most precious resource. Both these Members of the Ch'an Academy Sub Committee have shown outstanding enterprise, persistence, organising abilities and loyalty to the tenets of the Ch'an Academy.

Finally, that illustrious duo Masters Melva Fitzallen and June Young who last year obtained their first formal ratings in calligraphy from the Japanese Controlling Organisation. I know they wish me to thank their Teacher, Master Shigyoku, in this matter.

I now declare this Ch'an Academy Long Life Day open to preserve the vital life of this Training Centre and its surrounds.

Thank you very much.