

Kechara participates at the World Book Fair in Singapore Day 5 - Monday 29 May

As it's a Monday, the World Book Fair saw a much quieter day today, with far less people visiting the booths throughout the fair. And yet....

....KMP managed to break its sales record with fabulous high of S\$1213, met some great people and are on the way to getting Rinpoche and Kechara's names out to over 130,000 people in Singapore!!!! Quite a large and happy feat for such a quiet day.

The start of the working week brought with many wonderful people to KMP's little quiet booth. First of all, Tsongkhapa dropped by for a visit and decided to stay so we had the extra blessings of all the Buddhas. This beautiful Tsongkhapa is actually Teo Lai Seng's personal statue, which he so kindly bought over to join us at the book fair.



Then, KMP received a lovely surprise from Datuk Eric Tan's family. (Datuk Eric is one of Rinpoche's long-time friends from Singapore). Datin Janet Tan and son Colin dropped by, bringing plenty of cheer and smiles with them. They also supported sales of our booth by buying lots of our books and DVDs.

Sometime during the morning, a visitor called Steven dropped by the booth for a chat with Susan. He had actually heard several things from his friends about Rinpoche practising forbidden practices and was there to clear up misconceptions and doubts. He was actually very polite about his enquiry and was even slightly hesitant to bring it up.

Susan informed Steven that actually Rinpoche has had many accusations made against him but gave him the reassurance that actually Rinpoche's work and teachings has been very highly endorsed and acknowledged by eminent Lamas in our tradition. She showed Steven the *Journey to Gaden* DVD as well as the signed forewords from H.H. Gaden Tri Rinpoche and H.E. Ken Rinpoche, Gaden Shartse Monastery's abbot.

Steven was very happy to learn of all this and bought the Gaden DVD, which he is keen to show and share with his friends. Susan noted that it was very encouraging to be able to share this information with Steven. Many people believe only what they want to believe and are not open to listening to any explanations, so it was refreshing to meet someone like Steven who made such an effort to find out more so as to clear others' doubts in future.

At about 11.30am Jenny's cousin, Fun, so kindly brought bagfuls of food to KMP's booth – rice, salad, curry chicken and dessert – and then also bought a copy of *Gurus for Hire, Enlightenment for Sale*. Considering this was the first time she would meet half of us that were there (and didn't get to meet any of us in the afternoon shift), this was incredibly kind and generous of her!



Fun lives up to her namesake with a big, happy, cheery fun smile and bagfuls of food.

At 3pm, KMP's big boss Joseph Chan gave a very professional, insightful and detailed presentation about Tsem Tulku Rinpoche's background, history and teachings, and about KMP's first Chinese *Be Greedy*.



Quite the charmer, he is!

Sure looks like he did a good job because a number of guests at the talk turned up at our booth afterwards to find out more about our publications.

Among them, was a particularly special member of the audience. Teo Lai Seng had invited one of his reporter friends, Lim Boon Chuan, to visit KMP's

booth at the book fair and to attend the presentation. The senior reporter for Singapore's largest evening newspaper, *Lianhe Wanbao*, is the only person covering spiritual issues for the paper and was very impressed by what he saw of KMP.

He will be writing an article for his newspaper to be published on Wednesday evening, just in time for the Vesak Day public holiday on Thursday. The newspaper has a readership of 130,000 – which can only mean that KMP's name will hit 130,000 pairs of eyes, hearts and minds within the next few days, and hopefully encourage them to visit us during the week.

In a long conversation with Joseph, Yek Yee and Teo, he shared that he was a little dubious at first and didn't think there would be anything to report but Teo managed to convince him to visit. He was first impressed by our bunting, posters and display which he found to be very attractive and strong in its marketing approach without being overwhelming or exaggerated.

When Joseph presented his name card and he learned that Joe was actually an MPhil graduate from Cambridge University he realised that if such a highly qualified and educated student from Cambridge was following this Lama's teachings and working for his organisation, then he must be quite good.

Mr Lim shared that unfortunately he has often come across religious organisations who are not very sincere, or which he even found to be quite fraudulent. However, he soon realised from his talks with some KMP



Lim (far left) deep in conversation with the KMP crew

members and from Joe's presentation that KMP was not just about good packaging but also carried good content; he identified very quickly that Tsem Rinpoche's teachings follow a correct and very valid lineage and are conveyed in an elegant, contemporary way that manages to uphold the value of the Dharma.

He further noted that, from his observations, he finds us to be a very unique group with a *huge potential*, that we have what it takes to become big! He felt that it would be up to the students to really determine how big Tsem Rinpoche becomes – an apt reminder of what Rinpoche is always advising us back home.

He is now very interested in writing a series for the newspaper that would profile Rinpoche (something similar to the series written by Yek Yee for our Chinese newspaper in KL). Joe mentioned that it might be difficult to interview

Rinpoche directly as he might not come down to Singapore but in fact, Mr Lim felt that this sense of mystery might add to the value of the article.

Joe also shared with him very honestly that we did not have any contacts in Singaporean media and therefore, greatly appreciate his coverage of us. Mr Lim pointed out that it can sometimes be harder to get coverage in English media as hardly any of the people there are Buddhists, or are interested in such issues. However, he noted that there are more ways to work around the Chinese press by combining the philosophy with a slightly commercial angle to attract readers.

Because he is so interested in Rinpoche and Kechara's work, and in preparation for the article he will be writing for *Lianhe Wanbao*, Mr Lim will be coming back to our booth on Tuesday to talk further with Joe.

Late in the afternoon, another long-lost friend turned up for lots of chats and a long browse through our books and publications. Teo Lai Seng had informed Derek Lim about our participation at the fair, so he dropped by. Derek's father is Reverend Lim, another of Rinpoche's old friends, who he first met 10 years ago in Thailand. Rev. Lim was ordained as a monk in Thailand and studied under the same teacher as Fat Monk, and currently heads the Lama Tsongkhapa centre in Kaki Bukit, Perlis, as the resident teacher there.



Derek (right) takes a break from looking through our KH photo album to say a big hello!

Derek recalled that he first met Rinpoche in Lucky Plaza in Singapore and that Rinpoche later visited his home in Pasir Ris. He told Rinpoche then that he really liked Tara, and Rinpoche gave him a Tara statue. He has been doing Tara practice since, and continues to do so today.

He was very happy to see us, and Chia shared all our new news with him – what we're doing in KL, our Dharma stores, organisation, members and our new expansion in Sunwaymas. Chia also extended an invitation to him to visit us in Malaysia. Derek took an especially keen interest in the books and DVDs on offer at our booth and ended up purchasing EVERYTHING, the first of our visitors to do so. How auspicious!

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Derek is a very happy shopper!

Among our other visitors, we also had several “walk-in” customers who were very interested in Rinpoche’s teachings.

A first-time visitor, Miss Valerie, talked for a while to Yek Yee, and ended up buying the while set of books. Hari Dawadi, a thangka exhibitor from the Lifestyle Exhibition being held downstairs, came late in the evening and spent quite a long time talking to a few of us at the booth. He owns two thangka shops in Thamel and Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal and is a Buddhist himself, so was keen to share and talk to us about different aspects of Buddhism. He even kindly supported our stall by purchasing two of our books, including *Faces of Enlightenment*.



Sasha and Chia

One of Chia’s friends, Sasha, drove down from JB to visit us at the fair. She “confessed” to Jamie that she doesn’t actually like reading at all, but she’s an ardent fan of Rinpoche’s books, having previously bought 20 copies of *Be Greedy* to give away to friends. This time, she bought 3 copies of *Nothing Changes*, *Everything Changes* and 3 copies of our newest English book, *Compassion Conquers All*.

JJ also invited two of his old friends from high school to visit our booth. They came to hang out with us, watch some of our videos browse through our display and even bought some DVDs!

A common question that several of us encountered throughout the day was whether we had a centre or a branch in Singapore, and we’d never even met these people – looks like there is a strong interest here for Kechara to move over the causeway and into the Singaporean’s hearts!

Thanks again to everyone for your support. We’re missing you all heaps
xoxox

PS: Although it sounds quite evil to say this, it must be noted that KMP is causing quite a stir in our little corner by drawing the most dynamic and largest number of crowds, visitors and attention among the religious publisher's section! With crazies like these (below), what's not to love, eh?



Note the two new pretty posters on the right (designed by Joy and Justin) that we've recently put on display



Shin rings the magic chakra-filled singing bowl to create inviting, auspicious vibes!



Joe and Hari, a Nepalese thangka shop owner



.... the people you find only in Kechara House....

