

KMP at the World Book Fair Day 9, Friday 1 June 2007

Sure looks like KMP is a great big stir at the book fair – all in a good way of course! Today, although it was fairly quiet around the fair, KMP had HEAPS AND HEAPS of interesting visitors. We made over 25 sales throughout the day (the highest number of sales since coming to the fair) and got to chat to lots of other fun characters.

Unusually, the majority of the visitors today had some background in Buddhism or who were already practitioners. This may have been because of the newspaper article that came out on Wednesday – people's curiosity was piqued and perhaps they were coming to check things out.

Early in the day, a man stopped by to watch the "While I Still Can" DVD teaching that we were playing. After watching it for only about two minutes, he enquired about the two books that were on display at the front of the booth, *Compassion Conquers All* and *Be Greedy*. None of us even had to say anything – he just bought the books and went off a happy chappy!

A very nice man called Mr Tay also stopped by to chat to Jamie for awhile. Though he is from a predominantly Theravadan background, he was very interested in learning about all other Buddhist lineages and traditions. Having gone to Dharma classes at Bright Hill Temple for awhile, and attended various Dharma talks, he was very intrigued and curious to find out more about Tibetan Buddhism. He asked lots of questions and had a very interesting discussion with Jamie about the similarities between Buddhist traditions; he then bought two books (*Why I Make Myself Unhappy* and *Compassion Conquers All*) and three DVDs (*Snakes, Roosters and Pigs, Nothing Changes/Enemy Within* and *While I Still Can*). He was especially interested in learning about the death meditation that Rinpoche outlines in the *While I Still Can* DVD.

Jamie also had the chance to talk to an Indian man called Caleb about *Compassion Conquers All* and the Eight Verses of Thought Transformation. Though he seemed very sceptical at first and had a very doubtful, unconvinced look on his face when discussing Enlightenment, he was open to listening. He asked Jamie to explain what each of the eight verses were about; after she did, his face literally looked like it loosened up a whole lot more!

He shared, "From what I have experienced in life, it has really strengthened what you have just told me about these verses," and he really got into the discussion, talking about the finer details of how to balance skilful (sometimes, wrathful) methods with compassion and love. He had to leave to meet his friend but asked for our contact details and kept saying he would like to stay in touch and discuss more in future. Though it might seem like something small, it is so encouraging and uplifting to really see how those eight famous little verses can really make a difference to somebody's day!

Things got *even better* throughout the day though. In the afternoon, a lady walked straight into the booth and directly to the *Be Greedy* book, which she promptly bought. When Susan asked her if she had been to the booth before, she said that she had actually read about us in the papers and was interested in the book. Looks like the pen really is mightier than the sword – many thanks to Mr Lim, the *Lianhe Wanbao* newspaper, for writing about us!

Joe had two particularly special encounters with two people. Firstly, a young Malaysian guy, Jackie, who is currently working in Singapore dropped by the booth to visit. He already knows about us as he bought Rinpoche's Chinese book, *Be Greedy* back home in at Dzambala Mystical Treasures. Jackie attended Gaden Tripa's teachings in Singapore last month and was very impressed the endorsements from Gaden Tri Rinpoche for our books. He was also very taken with our KMP group and our outlets, noting that we are so young yet so dedicated to Dharma and that he truly rejoices.

And it gets even more exciting! The second guy Joe met, Petrus, spent almost one and a half hours at the booth talking. Joe found this young IT guy to be full of dakini energy and highly intelligent. He has received four or five initiations already from Gaden Tri Rinpoche and Penor Rinpoche, knows Tibetan and does translations for his Guru. He has also translated for Lati Rinpoche (also one of Tsem Rinpoche's Gurus) on a Yamantaka initiation.

Coincidentally (though there's no such thing as chance!), he clicked on a link from a friend's email and ended up on KMP's website which then led him to Rinpoche's website, tsemtulku.com. The first thing that caught his attention was the Setrap teachings, which is what his Guru has taught him also. He found Tsem Rinpoche's teachings very



clear and filled in a lot of gaps so he had come to the booth specifically to look for *Shartse's Jewel*, Setrap book. Unfortunately, we are not selling that book here, but Chia has offered to give him his copy so Petrus will come back to the fair tomorrow.

One of JT's friends, named Kevin Teoh, also stopped by the booth. He has met Rinpoche before and bought Buddha statues from our outlets, and this time round, very kindly donated SGD50 towards Kechara's monk fund, that goes towards supporting the basic necessity of monks in Gaden Monastery.

KMP also met a nice Indian guy from America who is currently living in China. He seemed quite interested in Rinpoche and the teachings and enquired if Rinpoche could go into China.

However, just as we have a big fan base, we also receive our fair share of brickbats. A few people visitors who came by the booth today seemed to be there deliberately to challenge, test or perhaps even rile us up. Chia found himself pitted against three particularly belligerent people, one of whom tried to corner him by continuously quoting from the sutras to negate everything Chia said.

He was trying to argue that “the mind does not exist”. Chia tried to debate with him by posing very-thought provoking questions like “If there is no mind, then how would you explain the existence of (re)incarnations?” but the man seemed very set in his views. Eventually, even the hardest Dharma-stalwart Chia had to wave his white flag and let the guy be.

Jamie also encountered a man who seemed to find it especially difficult to accept that Buddhism didn't really affirm the existence of a creator god. He was bought up as a Taoist and is now a Sai Baba devotee but said he has studied Christianity and Buddhism. He shared, “I have studied Buddhism, but then I realised that there was just something not quite right about it!” referring, presumably, to their lack of affirmation of this creator force. Again, like Chia's new friends, he didn't seem to want to engage in discussion much and left quite quickly before Jamie had the chance to talk further.



A few of KMP's volunteers – Andee and David – returned back to KL today but a new little helper was dropped off at Suntec to help out. Sharon's cute little 9-year-old monster, Sean, has come up for the weekend to participate in the booth with us.

After a quick sales briefing from Sharon, and a change of clothes into

KMP's eye-catching t-shirt, Sean was off to charm the bookfair visitors with his huge smile and adorable big eyes. He stood by the front of the booth for hours, handing out postcards and bookmarks, and speaking in Chinese. When people came into the booth, the “grown-ups” took over to talk to them more in detail. Small Fry (as he's affectionately known) did a fantastic job – everyone he managed to attract into the booth ended up taking home a DVD or book!

And just to round off the great success of the past week's efforts, Shin and Joe met with Horizon, the distributors who have helped to get KMP's books out onto the shelves of Singapore's bookstores, including megastores, Kinokuniya and Borders. Mr John and Mr William, both in charge of sales and marketing at Horizon came by for tea and cake at our booth and after a fruitful discussion with Shin and Joe, they have offered to help us get our books into more bookstores around Singapore and will try to get the Singaporean libraries to order our books. They will be in touch and inform us when this is all done. They also informed us that a small number of our books are currently being sold to Buddhist stores in Indonesia.



KMP's getting big in a BIG WAY – from inspiring conversations with curious visitors, to fervent, controversial reactions from excitable passerbys, to striking bigger deals with a prominent distributor, Kechara's thriving little publications house looks to be going places... and all this development in the span of only one week!

It's our last two days at the book fair and we're expecting a big crowd from weekend shoppers so KMP is gearing up for an extra big boost and a fantastic final flourish. Stay tuned!...