

KMP at the World Book Fair Day 12 – 3 June 2007

The final flourish!

It was our last day at the World Book Fair today which has left us feeling both jubilant for the success of the last 10 days, as well as sad that it's all over. In true KMP spirit, *everyone* turned up to help out in the afternoon (which was necessary for packing up the booth at the end of the day). Such a hippie, happy, happening little booth of people! Look, see!!!



As a final flourish, it was encouraging to see that our presence at the book fair had a definite, positive impact on our visitors. Today saw many visitors come back to visit us again, mostly because they were so impressed by what they had seen and/or bought home the first time round.



There was a girl who had come on the first day but didn't have enough money on her at the time to buy any books. She came back today and bought HEAPS of stuff, including 15 copies of *Compassion Conquers All* and several other titles to give to her friends.

She talked for a while to Susan, sharing that she is an IT student and had initially come across Rinpoche's website when she was doing a website and was doing research online. She really loved the design of Rinpoche's website, and from there started downloading and watching the teachings. Since then, she and a friend have been watching Rinpoche's Youtube teachings regularly, on a weekly basis.

As we had run out of change the time she came, we were scrambling about trying to find the correct amount of money to return to her. She then kindly donated her change of SGD10 to us. When we then offered her some free copies of the White Tara book she seemed quite embarrassed and taken aback, and asked if that would actually incur more cost on our part. When we also offered her some free Buddha cards to take home or give to her friends, she politely declined, saying that she would rather her friends read the books first and appreciate the teachings before taking these items for free. Such a warm and sincere heart!

In the evening, a lady came by with her husband to enquire further about DVDs. They had both come by a few days ago and watched part of the *Chocolates and Oracles* DVD that was playing. The lady shared with Chia that her husband really likes Dharma and actually wants to be a monk in the future, but that he prefers reading Chinese. Unfortunately, we only have one Chinese book at the moment, but as all our DVDs have Chinese subtitles, the man was very interested to find out more.



They had initially bought two DVDs and as they had enjoyed it so much, had come to chat more to Chia today and try out the other teachings. They were so interested, they even pulled up chairs to sit in front of the screen and spent ages going through the DVDs. Eventually, they bought all of them, making it a complete set!

At the end of the day, just as we were packing things into boxes and taking down posters, another couple dropped by to buy more DVDs. They had been to our booth about three times over the past ten days and had initially bought *Snakes, Roosters and Pigs*. Having recognised the lady, Jamie started talking to her. She said that they had enjoyed watching the DVD and then asked Jamie if any of the people being mentioned in the DVD – like Kandaroo, Paris and JT etc – were actually at the booth. KH members are getting famous just from the DVDs!

We also had a few new people come by the stall. A guy from the Theophosist society (which contains a combination of different faiths) came by to look around the booth. He was a Christian but as one of his friends in the society is from Tibetan Buddhism, he has now also developed an interest in it, especially in the Gelug lineage.

Interestingly, as Susan shared pictures of Buddhas from our *Faces of Enlightenment* book with him, he recognised Lama Tsongkhapa. It turns out that he has a copy of *Lamrim* and when Susan asked him why he had it, he answered, "Well, sometimes we don't really know why we buy certain things!" He said that though it was quite an expensive book he had bought it; he doesn't know much about the *Lamrim* but was very excited just to be able to talk to Susan more. He was also keen to see photos of our centre from our photo album.

There were also a few passerbys who were initially attracted by the videos and the fact that Rinpoche speaks English. The morning shift's volunteers, like Susan and Sharon, found this a particularly easy angle from which to talk more about Rinpoche and his teachings, and soon, many of these visitors were taking home a DVD or book of teachings with them. One of them even said that he will be visiting KL soon and would be interested in visiting the centre.

One of the best things about being at the fair is in creating these pretty strong connections with visitors – the interest in coming to KL to visit our centre, members and of course, Rinpoche, has been really big and KMP members will continue to keep in touch with them when they're back in Malaysia. We even have a hefty collection of contact cards from visitors now, many of which are especially interested in receiving KMP updates on new publications.

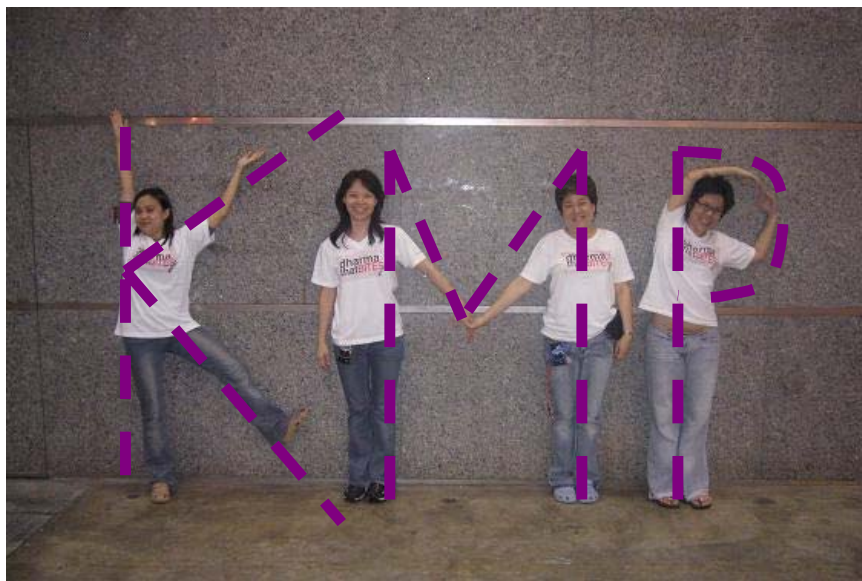
Before we knew it, it was almost 10pm and time to start moving out. Everyone pitched in to help repack the remaining stock and clear away our space. Wonderful Teo Lai Seng stopped by once again to help us with the packing, and has even agreed to store all our remaining books in his factory in Singapore, as they will eventually be passed on to Singaporean distributors. The rest of the DVDs and promotional materials will be coming home with us in Irene and Sharon's car, to be used again for the forthcoming Buddhist Culture and Arts Festival in KL.



The last poster comes down...

... and everything goes into boxes

And just because we were in such high and silly spirits, Susan, Sharon, Shin and Jamie decided to demonstrate what it *really* means to BE KMP.



We are so very pleased-as-punch proud to be KMP dakinis!!!!!!

We'll all be setting off back home tomorrow, back in time for the next round of "exhibitionist" antics at the Buddhist festival! It has been quite a long 10 days and many of the volunteers fell sick during the fair, but it has been excellent experience and a great training ground for us to really get out there and talk to people.

Rinpoche speaks often about how pivotal a role a publishing house can play in a Dharma organisation and though it might perhaps sound a bit arrogant for us to say this, being at the book fair has actually made us see how true this can be. Rinpoche's teachings are incredibly precious to every one of us but it doesn't and shouldn't ever just stop there. A Dharma publishing house is about striving to immortalise the teachings so that others can benefit from them way into the future.

But the laptops full of transcripts and knowledge, and the printed page itself isn't enough. The next step is about how to bring the physical ink-and-paper into the hearts of others. It's about really understanding the teachings we've really edited and worked with, and then talking about it in a way that can truly benefit someone. This is not about us presuming the role of teacher or *Lama*, of course, but about sharing what we've learnt and in that way, to inspire others onto their own Dharma paths.

The KMP team would especially like to thank:

- our big boss, Joseph Chan for having the foresight to bring KMP to the book fair and for always keeping us on track. You inspire us all greatly, all the time.
- the full-time KMP dakas and dakinies, Susan, JJ, Shin and David for all the immense preparation and organisation that went into this project.
- Mr. Teo Lai Seng for all his continuous support, company, help and home-cooked food.
- all the part-time volunteers who came down for the weekend just to help us out
- Rosalind Hong and Roland Tan for letting us stay with them throughout these two weeks...
- ...and of course to the many, many KH friends and members, and new visitors who came by to support us.

Watch this space – KMP is here to stay, and we're all so proud to be a part of this most dynamic team.

May the merit accumulated from our participation in the book fair bring vast and infinite amounts of happy moments to everyone and bring to their hearts as much joy as there is on our faces!

