



■ ■ DHARMA TALKS

Life is Like a Ball



How can life be symbolized? Some say life is like a dream, others say life is a play, or life is like dew. Then there are those who say that life is suffering, a traveler, or floating clouds! If life can really be symbolized in these ways, this then life is truly sad! Realistically speaking, life is impermanent and has no self, because within the several decades of human life, we are born empty-handed and die in the same manner. If life in this world is spent without cultivating merit, establishing morals, or writing ideas, without leaving any kind of meaning behind, then life is genuinely "coming and going empty-handed!"

So what is life really like? Let us not

be too pessimistic about it and instead, follow the middle path; life is like a ball! From the young age of entering school to starting a career, until marriage and raising a family, parents are like a basketball in the eyes of their children. Just like in a basketball game, each player goes after the ball crying, "My ball!" But as parents get old, their children may then start to shun the responsibility of looking after their welfare. The eldest child may start by saying it is not his turn, the second one may then shove it to the third one, and so on. The poor parents may end up moving from household to household, much like a volleyball being bounced around from here to there during a game.

When parents are sick and old, their lot may become like a ball in a soccer game, because their children are so busy with their careers and making money. They may find their parents to be a burden on their schedules and want to kick them, as they

would the ball, to a distance. In reality, parents need not be like the ball in volleyball or soccer game. As long as they possess morals, knowledge, and savings, they can become the ball in a rugby game. They will find it difficult to move too far, for their children may hold onto them tightly, refusing to let go!

What is life like? If you live your life like the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, then everyone will respect and admire you. On the other hand, if you transform yourself into the devil, then everyone will surely desert you! Therefore, we can live our lives like "earth," to carry all things; like "heaven," to cover the populace; like "fields of merit" for others to cultivate on; and like a "wisdom bank" for others to draw on endlessly. We therefore need not speak of life as being pitiful. So what is life like? Shouldn't life also be like spring breezes or the winter sun?

By Venerable Master Hsing Yun

New York YAD Governor's Island Biking

On September 2, 2012, the New York Young Adult Division organized a bike trip to Governor's Island, which is on the southern tip of Manhattan. Approximately 15-18 people attended the event. We took the subway downtown and walked to the Battery Maritime Building to take the ferry over to the island. The ferry ride only took about 15 minutes, but it gave us a great opportunity to see the skyline of lower Manhattan. The weather was a bit cloudy and breezy, but it was still good to be outdoors. There were lots of people on the island enjoying a variety of activities such as participating in the free National Park Service walking tours, checking out the fairs, festivals, picnicking and concerts. We rented single rider bikes for two hours and rode around the island several times. Some

of us stopped to view the art exhibits and festivals during the ride.

We also had a quick tour of Castle Williams, one of the island's historical fortifications that were proclaimed to be a national monument back in January 2001. Based on the guide information provided, we learned that Castle William was built and completed in November 1811. Being inside the fortification we could all imagine how terrifying it must have been 200 years ago and we were all grateful to be living in a place where we are not surrounded by war.

There was an outdoor restaurant located right by the water where we had lunch. As we ate and chatted, we also enjoyed the beautiful view of the New York Bay area and lower Manhattan. It was a



fun and relaxing day and we hope to make it an annual trip out to Governor's Island during the late summer time!

Now that I look back at that carefree weekend I am glad we all seized the opportunity to enjoy ourselves and relax. I have no idea how Governor's Island might look after Hurricane Sandy, but it reminds us that life is impermanent so we have to treasure every single day.

By Emily Su

2012-2013 IBPS NY Scout Troops Opening Ceremony

Early morning on September 16, 2012, one youngster after another rushed into the IBPS temple in Flushing. Every one of them was in full or, using the scout terminology, Class A uniform. At 7:30 AM, one troop after another entered the 3rd floor and positioned themselves at the designated location. One boy and one girl scout served as the Master of the Ceremony (MC). The boy scout who served as the commander gave the command to have the color guard march in. Once the ceremony got started, it followed the procedure as planned.

We had the honor of having Abbess Chueh Chuan to host the ceremony and give us Dharma words, guiding scouts in their spirit and attitude towards scouting as well as in their personal growth

contributing to humanity.

Scoutmaster Cheng gave an opening remark to welcome the first year scouts to join the IBPS NY scout family and wishing all scouts to enjoy and be successful in this new scout year. Abbess officially issued the certificates to all registered adult leaders entrusting them the responsibilities to guide our scouts throughout this new scout year.

The ceremony would not be a complete one without a group picture. All scouts and adult leaders surrounded Abbess. Together we took an energetic group picture marking the beginning of this 2012-2013 scout year. Every year, in September, the 4 scout units, join the opening ceremony together. It is not only a time for "good to see you again getting together" but also an event in which the



sponsor, IBPS NY, shows its support to scouting and sincerity to support all youngsters to grow and mature in a healthy and positive environment. The scout oath/promise/law and the guidance from the temple lay down a solid foundation for our scouts to become contributing members to the society in which they grow up. Scouting is not an outdated activity. Instead it continues to play a vital role in preparing our youngsters to be the leaders of tomorrow. Please join our sponsor and give your support to our IBPS NY scouts.

By Sheng Yean Chen

Making Strides



On Sunday, October 21, 2012, the Buddha's Light International Association New York Division, Boy Scouts Troop 745, and Girl Scouts Troops 4568, 4569, and 4570 supported Breast Cancer Awareness by attending the annual Making Strides event in Corona Park, Flushing Meadows.

The New York Young Adult Division also attended the event in Central Park, New York City.

At Corona Park, the BLIA Division and all the scouts met near the entrance of the park at around 10 and gathered for group pictures. It was a bright, sunny day with a cool breeze. After assembling and making sure everyone was present, we set out on the 2-mile walk in high spirits. As we walked, we saw many touching and moving t-shirts, banners, and posters that people made in remembrance of a loved one who had breast cancer or was fighting it. There were also many survivors walking with the crowd, giving a sense of encour-

agement and hope to all.

The event was an exciting opportunity to become closer to our old friends, or even meet new people from our own or other divisions. Although tiring, the walk could not have been better, and there was even a beautiful rainbow stretching over the famous Unisphere of Corona Park. After passing the finish line through an arch of white and pink balloons, everyone had an extremely accomplished and happy feeling in their hearts. We were grateful for coming out on a beautiful day and supporting a wonderful cause with all of our friends.

By Joana Wu

Visiting Fo Guang Shan For the 2012 Annual BLIA Meeting



Author : the second from the left

train through the country side. When we arrived in station, several buses were waiting us as well as a large crowd, all from F.G.S.!! We boarded the buses and headed to the main temple. Everyone was excited and happily talking. We arrived at the temple an hour later. Even though I had previously watched videos of F.G.S., I was not prepared to see the real thing. The temple's grounds were so vast that it was difficult to walk from one end to the other in the heat. Seeing the large standing Buddha and the Memorial Hall was inspiring! Just gazing at the statues makes you want to renew your vows to uphold the precepts and follow the Buddha's teachings.

During one of the many meetings we attended, Ven. Master Shin Yun spoke to the members. He explained why he created Humanistic Buddhism. Master told us that when he was a young monk, things were very strict which may have discouraged people from becoming Buddhists and their benefiting from the Dharma. Also, for many years women had not been as respected as men. He felt that this should change because of the hard work and contributions that women have made to the temple. He encouraged us all to work towards propagating Buddhism around the world. I was shocked and happy to hear Master's progressive thinking.

My trip has taught me a lot about Fo Guan Shan's mission. I have so many stories about seeing the Memorial Hall and the stupas. I also have great memories with my new friends from the Boston and New Jersey temples. We already have made plans to visit the new temple being built in mainland China if next year the conference is held there. It was a fantastic experience that I hope everyone in a Fo Guan Shan temple can have.

By Gen Dulan

This year I had the honor of going to Fo Guan Shan headquarters in Taiwan. On the day we arrived in Taipei, we went to a local branch temple to prepare for our trip to Kaohsiung. There I met another member from Chile.

On our way to Fo Guan Shan, we took the high speed

Upcoming Activities Nov. 2012-Jan. 2013

Sunday Services

Sunday Services are from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Humanistic College of Fo Guang Shan Temple
Events and Various Classes Are Available

11/2	Fri	6:00pm	BLIA Nov. Birthday Dinner Party
11/10-11/17	Sat	9:00am	Chinese School
11/4-11/18	Sun	10:00am	Sunday School
11/6-11/13	Tue	7:30pm	Tai Chi Class
12/1-12/22	Sat	9:00am	Chinese School
12/2-12/9	Sun	10:00am	Sunday School
12/7	Fri	6:00pm	BLIA Dec. Birthday Dinner Party
1/5-1/26	Sat	9:00am	Chinese School

Special Events

11/9-11	Fri-Sun	10:00am	Medicine Buddha Dharma Function
11/17	Sat	6:00pm	BLIA Family Thanksgiving Potluck Party
12/1	Sat	6:00pm	BLIA Family Thanksgiving Potluck Party
12/2	Sun	10:00am	Blood Drive
12/29-31	Sat-Mon	10:00am	Amitabha Chanting Retreat
1/1	Tue	10:00 am	Dharma Service for Dedicating Merits for Patrons and Sponsors
1/12	Sat	10:00am	Cleanup Day
1/13	Sun	10:00am	Buddha Enlighten Day Dharma Service
		2:00pm	BLIA, NY Annual Conference
1/19	Sat	1:00pm	Cleanup Day
1/27	Sun	10:00am	Completion of the Light Offering Service