

13.6 Has the Dharma Come to Singapore?

If a foreign visitor were to come to Singapore and ask you which good Buddhist temple or centre would you recommend? And he is unable to speak Chinese.

You can say there is this Thai temple, or this Burmese Temple, or this Sinhalese temple, or this Tibetan temple, or this Japanese temple...

But there is no *Singaporean* temple that he could go to!

Indeed even a Singaporean, if he is not Chinese speaking, he will have to learn chanting the Thai style, the Burmese style, the Sinhalese style, the Tibetan style, or the Japanese style. Again no Singapore style!

In the history of all the “Buddhist” countries and even in many western countries, we have natives becoming monks or nuns, or lay people well-versed in the Dharma and running their own Buddhist centres serving local needs.

In the ancient historical records (Mahāvamsa) of Sri Lanka, the arhat Mahinda declared that the Dharma would only have arrived in Sri Lanka when a local person becomes a monk and who is awakened.

We have to consider sinking to Dharma roots in our own homes. Meantime, let us remind ourselves how we can do this by understanding the “middle way” as taught by the Buddha to Soṇa Koliṅga in the Sona Koliṅga Sutta (A 6.55 = [SD 20.12](#)).

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