**THE LIVING WORD OF THE BUDDHA**
The Buddha’s Teachings in the Oldest Texts
Translations, essays and notes by Piya Tan ©2008, 3rd rev 2009

Sutta Discovery Volume 40b
Piya’s 5th Cycle Special Edition

**How Buddhism Became Chinese**
A reflection on the (Ahitāya) Thera Sutta (A 5.88/3:114-116)

THE MERE BUDDHIST VISION
We aspire to learn, teach and practise mere Dharma, or “non-religious Buddhism,” that is, Buddhism as simply as possible, so that it is open to all who seek true stillness and liberating wisdom. We aspire to joyfully proclaim the possibility and necessity of gaining spiritual liberation in this life itself (at least as a streamwinner, with or without dhyana), in keeping with the teachings of the Okkanti Samyutta (S 25).

*Mere Buddhism is easy: live it and be free.*

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*We should not change Buddhism; we should change ourselves.*

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The Minding Centre, based in Singapore, is part of Piya Tan’s Dharma ministry. It was founded in 2006 to provide Dharma-based non-religious service to those in need of counsel and solace. It also serves as a haven and hub for those seeking Dharma by way of meditation and education, Sutta study and translation, and spiritual experience. The Centre also supports and promotes Piya Tan in his full-time Buddhist and related work.

The Sutta Discovery Series is part of the Living Word of the Buddha project which aspires to encourage and facilitate Buddhist Studies, both in a Dharma-inspired and academic manner for personal development as well as outreach work on a local and global scale. The Minding Centre and the Living Word of the Buddha project are motivated and guided by the vision of mere Buddhism.

The mere Buddhist vision. We aspire to learn, teach and practise mere Dharma, or “non-religious Buddhism,” that is, Buddhism as simple as possible, as the Buddha Dharma, so that it is open to all who seek true stillness and liberating wisdom. We aspire to compassionately and joyfully proclaim the possibility, necessity and urgency of gaining spiritual liberation in this life itself—at least as a streamwinner, with or without dhyana—in keeping with the Okkanti Sāriyutta (S 25). Mere Buddhism is easy: live it and be free.

Piya Tan (TAN Beng Sin), 1949-
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The Sutta Discovery (SD) series started with the NUS Buddhist Society weekly Sutta Study Group (SSG) classes (with its own website) in February 2002, and the Buddhist Fellowship SD series started in February 2003. This is the longest running Buddhist class in Singapore. The SD volumes are also archived in the National Library.

Piya Tan, who works on these Suttas and notes, and teaches them, was a former Theravada monk of 20 years. Today he is a full time lay Dharma teacher specializing in early Buddhism. He was consultant and regular lecturer to the Buddhist Studies Team (BUDS) that successfully introduced Buddhist Studies in Singapore Secondary Schools in the 1980s.

After that, Piya was invited as a visiting scholar to the University of California at Berkeley, USA. He has written many ground-breaking and educational books on Buddhism (such as Total Buddhist Work) and social surveys (such as Buddhist Currents and Charisma in Buddhism).

Piya is a full-time Dharma teacher who runs regular Buddhist, Sutta and Pali classes like the basic Pali course series, the Sutta Study Group (NUSBS), Dharma courses (the Singapore Buddhist Federation), Sutta Discovery classes (Buddhist Fellowship and elsewhere), and Sutta-based (including meditation) courses (Brahm Education Centre), besides running his own full-time Pali translation and research project, the Pali Centre, and doing a comparative study of the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Āgamas.

As a Theravāda monk, he learned the insight method from Mahasi Sayadaw himself in the 1980s. As a lay teacher, he learned the forest method from the Ajahn Brahmavamso himself. Since 1980s, he has been running meditation courses
and retreats for students and adults (incl non-Buddhists). In 1992, he taught meditation at the University of California at Berkeley, USA. He has taught at BP, JP Morgan, the Defence Science Organization, GMO, HP, SIA and schools. He is doing all this for the love of Dharma and of his wife Ratna and their 2 children.

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As people today become more aware of Buddhism, many seek the simple original teachings of the Buddha. For over two decades now, Piya Tan has been inspired by this ideal. In this connection, he has set up the Minding Centre (Bukit Batok) and Pali House (Jurong East).

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