



MDDI(P) 005/09/2025



Seeking Liberation in Impermanence...

Impermanence is in Everything.

Impermanence (*anicca*) – the fundamental reality of constant change – is observable at every scale of existence, from quantum fluctuations to cosmic evolution. Human life is itself a dynamic interplay of physical, psychological, and environmental transformations. While the unstable nature of existence can evoke distress, the impermanence, when it is rightly seen, leads to liberation from suffering.

“There is no form that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and that will remain the same just like eternity itself. There is no feeling ... no perception ... no volitional formations ... no consciousness that is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and that will remain the same just like eternity itself.” (Gomayapiṇḍa Sutta, SN 22.96)

Impermanence Holds the Liberation.

The Buddhist doctrine of impermanence is not merely a philosophical observation but a transformative insight that lies at the heart of liberation. By cultivating perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*), through mindful observation and cognitive reflection, practitioners dismantle the illusions of permanence. This insight deconstructs ego, develops clear comprehension and nurtures equanimity, guiding practitioners towards the ultimate goal: the cessation of suffering.

“All conditioned phenomena are impermanent –
when one sees this with wisdom,
one turns away from suffering;
This is the path to purification.”
(Dhammapada, 277)

The perception of impermanence leads to liberation through several key mechanisms:

1.Desolation of the conceit “I am”

It facilitates the desolation of the conceit “I am” (*asmimāna*). The conceit “I am” is the clinging view towards oneself that may appear thus: “I am superior”, “I am equal” and “I am inferior”. Practitioners develop insight into the transient nature of the five aggregates that constitute the conventional “self”, thereby deconstructing those egoistic formations. (Mahārāhulovāda Sutta, MN 62; Seyyohamasmi Sutta, SN 35.108)



Bhante M. Suneetha
Resident Monk
Mangala Vihara
(Buddhist Temple)

“The perception of impermanence should be developed to eradicate the conceit ‘I am.’ When one perceives impermanence, the perception of non-self is stabilised. One who perceives non-self eradicates the conceit ‘I am,’ [which is] *nibbāna* in this very life.” (Sambodhi Sutta, AN 9.1)

2.Undermining the view of gratification

It undermines the view of gratification (*assādaditṭhi*), the cognitive distortion characterised by selected attention on pleasurable aspects of sensory experience, while neglecting inherent unpleasant aspects. This attention bias creates psychological fragility when confronting inevitable suffering. Practitioners develop clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), which discerns both pleasantness and unpleasantness in the transient casual

mechanism, thereby avoiding the shock of unexpected suffering through experiential familiarity. (Assādasutta, AN 6.112)

“When a bhikkhu attends carefully to form and recognises the impermanence of form as it really is, he experiences revulsion towards form. With the destruction of delight comes the destruction of lust; with the destruction of lust comes the destruction of delight. With the destruction of delight and lust, the mind is liberated and is said to be well liberated.” (Dutiyanandikkhaya Sutta, SN 22.52)

3. Maturing equanimity

It serves as a foundation for maturing equanimity (*upekkhā*), an undisturbed mental state that is not swayed by the fluctuations in sensory experiences, particularly with regard to the eight worldly conditions: gain - loss, disrepute - fame, blame - praise, and pleasure - pain. Practitioners discern the impermanence of both pleasantness and unpleasantness, thereby attenuating excessive reactivity and fostering emotional equilibrium. (Dutiyasaññā Sutta, AN 7.49; Ānāpānasati Sutta, MN 118)

“When a bhikkhu often dwells with a mind accustomed to the perception of impermanence, his mind shrinks away from gain, honour, and praise, turns back from them, rolls away from them, and is not drawn towards them, and either equanimity or revulsion becomes settled in him.” (Dutiyasaññā Sutta, AN 7.49)

4. Generating a sense of urgency

It creates the conditions for generating a sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) directed towards the liberation from suffering. Practitioners discern the potentiality of transforming unpleasant states through cultivating wholesome conditions, thereby being inspired to work for the liberation of oneself and others. (Aniccasutta, SN 46.71)

“Impermanent are formations, bhikkhu, so unstable, so unreliable. It is enough, bhikkhu, to feel revulsion towards all formations, enough to become dispassionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.” (Gomayapiṇḍa Sutta, SN 22.96)

In Buddhism, acceptance of impermanence is not a passive resignation but an active engagement with reality. It generates wisdom, which discerns the true nature of phenomena, and compassion, which inspires the alleviation of suffering—both for oneself and others.

Impermanence is to be Rightly Seen.

The perception of impermanence is cultivated through the sustained contemplation of impermanence (*aniccānupassanā*). Contemplation practice includes being aware as it happens and repeated cognitive reflection. To undertake contemplation rightly, one should be ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world (Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, MN 10). To contemplate on impermanence, one should observe phenomena – whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near – with their (1) arising (*uppāda*), (2) passing away (*vaya*) and (3) alteration while they persist (*thitassa aññathatta*).

Impermanence of the Human Existence

1. Youth is impermanent: “I am subject to old age and am not exempt from old age.”
2. Health is impermanent: “I am subject to illness and am not exempt from illness.”
3. Life is impermanent: “I am subject to death and am not exempt from death.”

(Sukhumāla Sutta AN 3.39)

Impermanence of Eight Worldly Conditions

1. Gain is impermanent: “This gain that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
2. Loss is impermanent: “This loss that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
3. Disrepute is impermanent: “This disrepute that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
4. Fame is impermanent: “This fame that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
5. Blame is impermanent: “This blame that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
6. Praise is impermanent: “This praise that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
7. Pleasure is impermanent: “This pleasure that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”
8. Pain is impermanent: “This pain that I have met is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change.”

(Dutiyalokadhamma Sutta, AN 8.6)

Impermanence of Five Aggregates

1. Form is impermanent: “such is form, such its origin, such its passing away.”
2. Feeling is impermanent: “such is feeling, such its origin, such its passing away.”
3. Perception is impermanent: “such is perception, such its origin, such its passing away.”





4. Volition is impermanent: "such is volition, such its origin, such its passing away."
5. Consciousness is impermanent: "such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away."

(Aniccasaññā Sutta, SN 22.102)

Impermanence of Suffering

- Suffering is impermanent: "such is suffering, such is the cause of suffering, such is the cessation of suffering, such is the path leading to the cessation of suffering."

(Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta, MN 10)

Impermanence of Enlightenment Factors

1. Mindfulness is impermanent: "There is mindfulness in me, there is no mindfulness in me."
2. Investigation is impermanent: "There is investigation in me, there is no investigation in me."
3. Energy is impermanent: "There is energy in me, there is no energy in me."

4. Rapture is impermanent: "There is rapture in me, there is no rapture in me."
5. Tranquillity is impermanent: "There is tranquillity in me, there is no tranquillity in me."
6. Concentration is impermanent: "There is concentration in me, there is no concentration in me."
7. Equanimity is impermanent: "There is equanimity in me, there is no equanimity in me."

(Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta, MN 10)

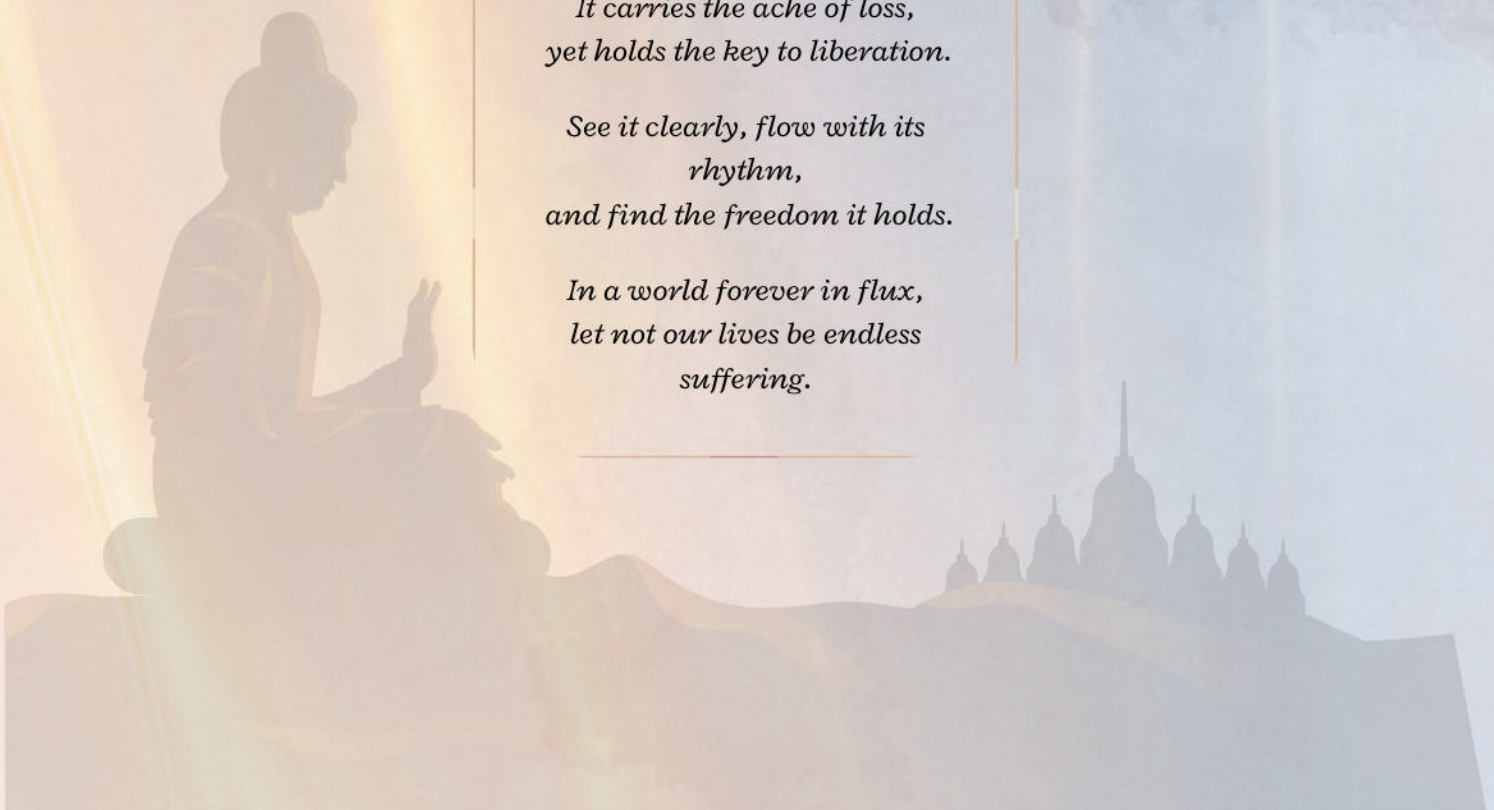
Beyond its foundational role in Buddhist practice, the contemplation of impermanence has also found a valued place in modern psychotherapy. Mindfulness-based interventions – Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) – leverage awareness of impermanent sensations and thoughts to foster acceptance, enhance psychological flexibility, and alleviate suffering.

*Impermanence -
the thread woven through all things,
the truth none can escape.*

*It carries the ache of loss,
yet holds the key to liberation.*

*See it clearly, flow with its
rhythm,
and find the freedom it holds.*

*In a world forever in flux,
let not our lives be endless
suffering.*



Remembering Chew Quee Neo, Our Benefactress

Mangala Vihara has a Chew Quee Neo Hall at the second level of the main building. You may wonder who is Madam Chew Quee Neo whose photograph graced this Hall. A rotund Peranakan lady who always dressed elegantly in finely embroidered baju kebaya and hand-crafted batik, Madam Chew was a devout Buddhist and a vegetarian. She was instrumental to the construction of Mangala Vihara and was often referred to as the Benefactress of the temple. She was also nicknamed 'the Grand old lady of Joo Chiat' by the Press.

Madam Chew was the youngest daughter of Chew Joo Chiat who was a notable landowner and merchant in the 19th Century. Joo Chiat Road, Joo Chiat Terrace, Joo Chiat Place, Joo Chiat Lane and Joo Chiat Walk were all named after him. In fact, he has the most roads named after him in Singapore. [1] Chew Joo Chiat married Tan Quan Neo, a Peranakan after he came to Singapore from Amoy and Chew Quee Neo was his daughter from this second marriage.



Figure below: The first celebration on Vesak Day, 10th May 1960. Madam Chew Quee Neo (centre of photo, in baju kebaya), performed "Transferring of Merits" service in fulfillment of her vow to build the Temple, should she live through the Japanese Occupation. She survived and did it.

After Joo Chiat's death in Feb 1926, Chew Quee Neo inherited a parcel of land in Kampong Eunus. Her mother, Quan Neo passed away the following year at the age of 59 in Apr 1927. Madam Chew had three sons, two daughters and ten grandchildren and resided at Tembeling Road. During World War II (1942-45), Madam Chew had made a vow to build a temple should she and her family survive the days of fear and hardship during the occupation. Madam Chew's husband Lee Tian Seck



Figure above: The late Madam Chew Quee Neo

was the Managing Director of Batu Pahat Bank. In Dec 1957, when Tian Seck passed away, Madam Chew requested the service of the Sinhalese monk whom she has heard about. This was her early encounter with Venerable Mahaweera and she was immensely impressed by how pure, simple and meaningful the Theravada Buddhist funeral rites were. In 1958,

through Wee Tin Guan, another Peranakan and a close disciple of Venerable Mahaweera, Madam Chew came to know that the late Venerable was looking to build a temple for his growing congregation. Delighted with the opportunity to fulfil her vow and driven by her earnestness to support the Buddhist cause and honour her ancestors, she graciously donated a large plot of freehold land located at Kg Eunus to build this new temple.

Together with her cash donation, the construction of the temple became a reality. Funded also by Venerable Mahaweera's supporters and devotees, the construction began in 1959 and was completed in March 1960.

On 16 May 1960 [2], more than 1000 relatives, friends and devotees witnessed Madam Chew's vow fulfilled on Vesak Day at the new Mangala Vihara Shrine Hall when she led in the Transference of Merits. Five months' later on 11 October 1960 [3], Madam Chew gifted a gold coloured Buddha image to Mangala Vihara. This image installed at the centrestage of the main shrine hall came from Mandalay, Burma (now referred as Myanmar) and cost a princely sum of \$5000. [4] The enshrinement ceremony was witnessed by more than 700 devotees.

Mangala Vihara was officially opened on 31 Mar 1961. It is noteworthy that the initial address 38 Jalan Eunus gave the temple its name of Mangala Vihara which mirrors the 38 Blessings in the Mangala Sutta, aptly means 'Shrine of Blessings' After redevelopment of Jalan Eunus, the address was changed to the present day 30 Jalan Eunus.



Figure above: On 11 Dec 2025, MV held a Sanghika Dana in memory of the late Mdm Chew Quee Neo. (Photo credit: Linus Tan)

Madam Chew continued to support Mangala Vihara and was always at the forefront of all temple's events and celebrations including observing Eight Precepts. She passed away on 12 Dec 1962 at the age of 71 [5] after a short illness. She has left a lasting legacy in Mangala Vihara. The simple two-storey temple has come a long way from its humble beginning through two subsequent redevelopments in 1984 and 1993. Today, we have a full facilities temple complete with Shrine Hall, Sima House, multi-purpose Hall, admin office, classrooms, kitchen cum dining, living quarters for monks and library.

The Chinese saying 飲水思源 or 'remembering those who have benefited us' aptly describes our thoughts of Madam Chew. Indeed, it is her generosity and selfless gift and the dedication and foresight of the late Venerable Mahaweera that gave us the legacy of Mangala Vihara.

[1] Chew Joo Chiat arrived Singapore from Amoy as a penniless youth but subsequently built a massive fortune for himself. He was a housing developer in the East Coast District, owner of vast tracts of land and plantations for spices, rubber and coconut mostly in the areas of present day Joo Chiat which was worth millions in 1926. He was also a ship chandler, timber trader and founder of two banks, the Pacific Bank in 1919 and a major shareholder of Batu Pahat Bank.

[2] Singapore Free Press 16 May 1960 pg 7

[3] Singapore Free Press 11 Oct 1960 pg 7

[4] Mr Lee Kiong Loh, grandson of Madam Chew Quee Neo verified that the Buddha image in our main shrine Hall was donated by Madam Chew.

[5] Singapore Free Press, 12 Dec 1962 pg13

Upcoming Events!

January 2026



- 01 Jan - New Year General Dana

February 2026



- 16 Feb - Eve of Chinese New Year (Midnight Service)
- 17 Feb - Chinese New Year Day & New Moon Celebration

March 2026



- 31 Mar - Mangala Vihara 66th Anniversary



Peranakan Event @ Dhamma Kaki

Back in the 60's, a young Maureen and Caroline remember Mangala Vihara members and devotees, many of whom were babas and nyonyas. They lived in the MV neighbourhood and the chatter was often in Baba Malay, the patois of Peranakan Chinese.

This inspired the 30 October 2025 session where Dhamma Kaki members gathered to learn a bit about the Peranakan heritage.

What made the day special was the supportive turnout, and especially the presence and participation of our special guests - Mdm Chew Quee Neo's great-grandnephew, 90-year-old Brother Philip Chew, and his wife Sister Mary Ee Chew who is 88.

Like Sister Mary, Sisters Nelly Tay and Evon Chew, with Maureen Teo and Amy Ang came dressed in kebaya too. Together with Sister Low Lye Wan, all these ladies delighted the audience with their spontaneous rendition of "Nyonya Pakai Bunga" while doing the joget (dance).

Did you know that Irene Cheok, a long time MV member is the great, great-grandniece of Mdm Chew Quee Neo, our benefactress who donated the piece of land on which MV is built?



NYONYAS WEARING KASUT MANEK IN
THEIR SARONG KEBAYA



In Camaraderie:
Bro Philip Chew and his wife, Sis Mary
Ee-Chew with DK's Bro Winston Seah



Bro Philip Chew and Sis Mary
Ee-Chew @CQN Hall with Dhamma
Kaki members in the background



MV Chairman, Lim Ah Swan
Presenting a "Kam Sia" gift to
thank Bro Philip Chew, great-grand
nephew of Mdm Chew Quee Neo
for attending the special session.



Brother Philip shared a synopsis of his book, "The Penniless Boy Chew Joo Chiat " published in 2017.

Much of the Peranakan heritage; language & culture, fashion and food has been assimilated into the more fluid Singaporean identity today.

The afternoon session briefly covered the idiosyncrasies and ethnicity that was more strongly prevalent the past century.

The pantun (poem) is a a four line verse reminiscent of how babas and nyonyas engaged in entertaining banter. The first two lines are usually gibberish, and last two lines deliver a meaning. We attempted our pantun for the day:

*Dua tiga kucing belari
Mana sama si kucing belang
Segala macam di dunia ini
Kumpulan Dhamma Kaki sebagai bintang terang*

Translated it means :
Two, three cats are running
Not like the striped cat
All kinds (of people) in this world
Dhamma Kaki group is like a "shining star"
(Implication : group of exemplary people)

Closing the Dhamma Kaki year with fellowship & food

What wonderful memories shared over food which marked the last Dhamma Kaki session of 2025. The group meets every Thursday from 1.30pm to 4.30pm with the final hour dedicated to fitness with Chair Zumba .

The refreshment spread was Peranakan favourites like Laksa (vegetarian), Bubur terigu, Nyonya pineapple tarts, Nyonya kueh makmur, goreng pisang and fruit juice.



Pāli Naming Ceremony



Figure: Participants holding their Certificates displaying their new Pāli names. With them are the Venerables who had blessed them during the Pāli Naming Ceremony, Temple Chairman Mr Lim Ah Swan and Asst Hon-Sec, Donna Tan.

The Significance of a Pāli Name

The Pāli Naming Ceremony was held on the auspicious day of Kathina evening, October 12, 2025. This was the 3rd year that the temple held this event. There were 30 participants that came forward to receive their Pāli name. Each name was meaningfully selected or given by our Chief Monk, Bhante Seelananda.

In Buddhism, a naming ceremony is a sacred occasion that welcomes the new life into the spiritual community and invokes blessings for a future guided by wisdom and compassion.

The ceremony began with taking **Refuge in the Triple Gem** — the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha — reaffirming one's faith and commitment in accordance with Buddhist values.

A significant moment of the ritual was the **bestowal of a Buddhist name**, often derived from Pāli or Sanskrit, reflecting noble qualities such as mindfulness (*Sati*), loving-kindness (*Mettā*), or wisdom (*Paññā*). This name serves as a life-long reminder of the virtues that one should cultivate on the path towards enlightenment.

The ceremony concluded with sharing of merits with all beings, symbolizing generosity and interconnectedness — core principles of Buddhist teaching.

Ultimately, the Buddhist naming ceremony is both a blessing and a beginning. It celebrates life, reinforces moral values, and plants the seed of spiritual awareness in one's journey through samsara.

By Lucia Sng
Event Co-ordinator



Short address by Bhante Cakkapala to the participants.



Bhante Seelananda and other Venerables who attended the Pāli Naming Ceremony.