

The Vine

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This month we celebrated National Day in Singapore on August 9th. The Christian AD2001 movement also planned and organised 40 days of fasting and prayer for the city of Singapore. The Annual Festival of praise was held at the Indoor Stadium on 8th August at night. It was a great evening of celebration, singing and praise, claiming the city for the Kingdom. The Christians in Singapore under the leadership of the SWN (Spiritual Warfare Network) planned to reach the entire city for Christ. Through oneness in unity and body of Christ we can see God

move in the city. We can establish God's perimeter in the city. Securing the perimeter according to Ed Silvoso means, "being aware of the schemes of the devil, who will do all in his power to war against the saints and neutralise the work of God's church. Three of his main weapons aimed at us are sin, accusation and spiritual strongholds. We counter sin by appropriating the grace of God in our lives, freely available to repentant sinner. The counter to Satan's accusation is to seek protection humbly in the mighty hand of God where we can cast all our anxieties onto God. We know that as we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Finally, to counter spiritual strongholds in our minds is to have our minds renewed. As believers we are no longer deceived by the enemy. But we die to our self and come to life in Christ.

We need to intercede for our land, the nation of Singapore as we go through a period of economic uncertainties and various tests of her sovereignty. Let us support our government as loyal citizens, strive for excellence and pray for our Prime Minister and other government ministers committing them into God's almighty hand. We give thanks to God that we can live in this beautiful, peaceful and clean country with a high standard of living. Amen.

Pastor Martin Yee



Chinese cosmology

There are several Chinese creation myths. The well known ones concern the legendary creation characters of Pan Ku and Nu Kua.³ This writer remembered watching a high-tech laser enhanced video show in Singapore's Haw Par Villa on the Chinese creation legend of Pan Ku. In the beginning there was only dark chaos. Into this chaos which is in the form of a huge egg, the first living creature Pan Ku was born. After a period of time, having been nurtured and grown inside the egg, Pan Ku, by now a giant, awoke and stretched his body. Inevitably the egg broke and Pan Ku emerged. The lighter part of the egg became the sky and the heavier part sank down to become the earth. Pan Ku stretched himself between the sky and earth fearing that they will merge again. His head supported the sky and his legs held down the earth. Incredibly for 18,000 years Pan Ku grew at about 10 feet a day, thus increasing the distance between the sky and earth. After having stretched the gap to almost 30,000 miles he fell into a slumber

which he never awoke. When Pan Ku died, his skull became the top of the sky, his breath wind, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his veins roads, his sweat dew, his flesh trees and soil, the hair on his head stars, the hair on his body grass and flowers, his teeth and bones metals and stones, his blood rivers, and the fleas in his hair human beings.

The second legendary character, a former goddess, Nu Kua, was portrayed as half human and half snake. Wandering through this world she felt lonely. She came to a river and sat on its bank. Gazing into the water she saw her own reflection. She then scooped some mud from the riverbed and molded the clay into a little figure like herself. However she made two legs for the figure so that it could stand. When she placed the clay figure on the ground it became alive. Nu Kua was very delighted and worked feverishly day and night to craft more such figures with her hands. Fearing exhaustion she decided to dip a vine into the mud which she then swirled round in the air. The drops of mud changed into little people as they hit the ground. Later Nu Kua divided the humans into male and female so that they can reproduce without her further effort. It is believed that those people that Nu Kua molded by her hand

became the rich and fortunate people of the earth and those from the drops of mud became the ordinary folks. The Nu Kua story above seem to has a anthropological and sociological dimension to it. It also has a point of contact with the Genesis account of man being created from the dust of the earth though it is probably incidental at most.

Another major achievement of Nu Kua in Chinese tradition is her re-creating the collapsed world. It is told that a long time ago the gods Gonggong and Chuan-hsu fought over the throne. Gonggong was defeated. In his suicidal rage, he butted the Buzhou mountain which holds up the sky with his head, thus causing it to collapse. A great hole was torn in the sky and it tilted northwest; so the sun, moon and stars moved in that direction. Great fissures appeared on earth, fire and water spewed out causing a catastrophic flood. The earth sank in the southeast, all the waters and mud of the river flowed southeastward. Nu Kua seeing the plight of humans came to their rescue. Melting some colorful pebbles from the riverbed she repaired the sky. She slaughtered a giant tortoise and used its four legs to support the sky. Nu Kua thus restored order to the world. However the mountains remained

tilted northwest leaving a void in the southeast. So all the great rivers of China flowed eastwards. This story thus gives an interesting mystical explanation for the geographical and meteorological features of China.

Nu Kua is depicted in the Chinese legend as a divine being who took up human form and became an emperor in prehistoric



time. Her sex was changed to female in Chinese writings since the Han dynasty period (ca. 206 BC - AD 25). It is common in Chinese folklore to depict divine beings who were sent out by the heavenly court on missions to incarnate as human to take up roles to intervene in their historical problems. On the other hand, the Christian faith accepts only one Incarnation of God, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.. " John 1:14. To believe in more than one incarnation amounts to heresy.⁴

A Great Flood legend exist in Chinese folklore. During the reign of King Yao, the supreme god Tiandi sent a terrible flood down to earth to punish wicked people. Only one of the gods called Kun felt sorry

for mankind. On the advice of an owl and a tortoise, he obtained a lump of magical soil which he dropped into the flood waters. The magical soil grew and formed mountains and the flood receded. Tiandi was very angry and sent Zhurong the fire god to kill Kun and recover the magical soil. Zhurong succeeded in killing Kun and the world was flooded again. Although Kun was killed, his spirit survived. New life was formed in his body. Tiandi then sent another god to destroy Kun's body. When his body was slashed by the sword, a fearsome dragon was released which is Kun's son, the Great Yu. Kun's son later completed his father's mission and stopped the flood. He then turned into a yellow dragon and lived at the bottom of the sea.

Indian cosmology

Several creation strands exist in Indian cosmology.⁵ The Rig Veda which is an ancient Hindu sacred hymn contained a few theories regarding creation of the universe.

The first portrayed the creator like a sculptor, carpenter, arranger and weaver. This creator worked with some primordial

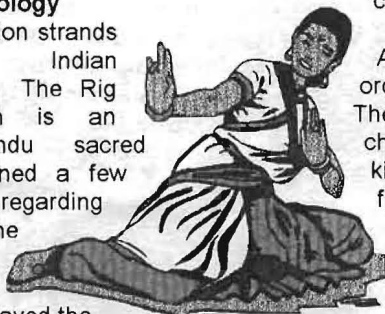
material crafting it into its present form.

Next is the story of the Golden Embryo who arose from the original waters. Once he was born he became the Lord of creation. When he rose from the primordial waters he felt lonely and did not know the reason he was born. He cried and those tears he wiped away became the sky and the air. Later he created people and spirits, night and day, the seasons and lastly death itself. This being is Prajapati in the Rig Veda.

Then there is the myth of the Golden Egg. This egg grew from a seed floating on the cosmic ocean. Brahma later emerged from this egg and split himself into two persons, a male and a female. The sexual union of this two became the creative force.

Another story concerns the ordering out of disorder or chaos. The superbeing Vytra symbolised chaos. Indra another superbeing killed him thus separating land from water, also the upper regions from the lower causing the sun to rise in daily succession.

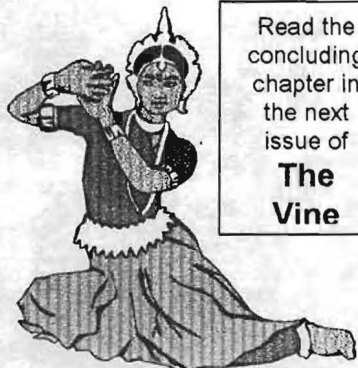
Lastly, another creation account concerns the sacrifice of Purusa, the cosmic man. Purusa was



dismembered by the gods to create the cosmos. The way of dismemberment of his body provided the explanation of the caste system in India. "His mouth became Brahmin, his arms were made into warriors..."

The legend of the four Yugas (Ages) provides a vital key towards understanding Indian cosmology, the cyclical theory of time, and the concept of soul transmigration. According to this legend, the four Ages were actually named after the four throws of a dice. Firstly, the Krita Age was the perfect age of no sickness, gods, demons or evil. Secondly, the Treta Age was when sacrifice began when evil increased. Thirdly, the Dwapara Age was when evil desires, sickness and disasters were rampant. Lastly, the Kali Age is that which we now live in, where people are depraved and wicked.

The above Indian creation accounts may have a sociological dimension and perhaps attempt to explain the causes of evil and sufferings in this world.



Read the
concluding
chapter in
the next
issue of
**The
Vine**

Little Tommy was doing very badly in math. His parents had tried everything: tutors, flash cards, 'Hooked on Math', special learning centers -- in short, everything that they could think of. Finally in a last ditch effort, they took Tommy down and enrolled him in the local Catholic school.

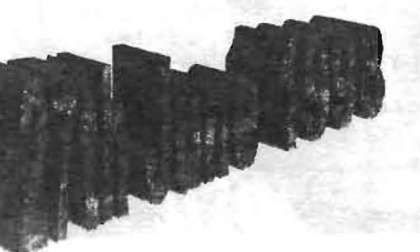
After the first day, little Tommy comes home with a very serious look on his face. He doesn't kiss his mother hello. Instead, he goes straight to his room and starts studying. Books and paper are spread out all over the room and little Tommy is hard at work. His mother is amazed. She calls him down to dinner and to her shock, the minute he is done he marches back to his room without a word and in no time he is back hitting the books as hard as before. This goes on for some time, day after day, while the mother tries to understand what made the difference. Finally, little Tommy brings home his report card. He quietly lays it on the table and goes up to his room and hits the books. With great trepidation his mom looks at it and to her surprise, little Tommy got an A in Math! She can no longer hold her curiosity. She goes to his room and asks, "Son, what was it? Was it the nuns?" Little Tommy looks at her and shakes his head. "Well then," she replies, "was it the books, the discipline, the structure, the uniforms.

WHAT was it?" Little Tommy looks at her and says, "Well, on the first day of school, when I saw that guy nailed to the plus sign, I knew they weren't fooling around."

Walt's Church Graduation



The kids gave many presentations in songs, skits and costumes. After a round of very difficult questions on the Ten Commandments, prizes were given out and finally, the Certificate was given out to all the kids who have completed the Ten Commandments session.





The Great Commission

Pastor Anthony Loh was officially commissioned as a missionary of the Jurong Christian Church on 19th July 1998.

He will be sent out as JCC's missionary under the umbrella of the Campus Crusade. Initially he will undergo training in Singapore but after his training, he will be posted to the mission fields, probably in South-east Asia.

Pastor Peter Cheong performed the ceremony. The church council lay hands on him and prayed for his success in God's work.

JCC continues to support Anthony by contributing to 60% of his financial needs. Anthony will need to trust God to provide the remaining 40% (about \$800) to cover the fees of Campus Crusade.

"I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty," declares the Lord.
Jer 31:14



A couple, just married, got among their wedding presents two tickets to a very fine show, with the notation "Guess who" on the tickets. They went to the play. When they returned, all of their wedding presents were gone, and a note was left also, "Now you know!"

A lady with a bad rash visited a dermatologist. It was the type of condition that had been present for some time. "Have you been treated for this rash before?" inquired the doctor. "Yes, by my druggist." "And what sort of foolish advice did he give you?" asked the doctor. "Oh, he told me to come to see you."



Photos by
Lee Chee
Meng



NORTHERN THAILAND MISSION TRIP

" Sawat Dee Ka! "

THAT WAS THE only Thai phrase that the mission team was most familiar with, in Thailand.

The team, led by Bro. Chee Meng, included Beng Lay, Grace, Sook Hwee and me.

We reached Chiang Rai (via Bangkok) safely on the evening of 18th June. It was a smooth check-in



It was a smooth check-in and check-out, unlike last year when one of the team members was delayed because of the Bibles...

and check-out at both Bangkok and Chiang Rai airports, unlike last year when one of the team members was delayed because of the Bibles brought in for CNEC. Li Jian Ping, together with Sis. Zhang Zhen Ping from CNEC, was already waiting for us at the airport. Sis. Xiao Dao from CNEC who was with last year's mission team had married a Singaporean this January. Zhen Ping, who had left CNEC for a while, returned there when Xiao Dao came to Singapore.

As both Li Jian Ping and Zhen Ping only knew how to ride a

motorbike, they chartered a van to fetch us to Chiang Rai Condotel (a combination of condominium and hotel, I guess) where we stayed for the night. First, however, we went for our dinner at a food court in a big supermarket. Since we could not have the use of CNEC's van to travel up to Meng Guo Village (MGV) and to the nearby places, we had to cook most of our meals at Li Jian Ping's house. So, we ended up having to buy our groceries and toiletries at the supermarket for the MGV Christian families.

After shopping, we met up with Song Pong and Pong Sah at CNEC. These boys were sponsored by the DTP students to study in a mission school in the city. Both in Secondary One, Song Pong is 18 years old whereas Pong Sah is 16. We had a long chat with them to find out how they were adjusting to city life and coping with their studies. They said that they were homesick initially. Pong Sah has even cried a few times. Both had difficulties with their studies as their foundation was weak, particularly in Maths and English. We encouraged them to study harder especially in the English language so that we could communicate with them directly in English. For the time being, Li Jian

Ping was our translator. We also found out more about the boys' school life and their prayer needs. The mission team hopes that the DTP students will be able to write to the boys more often as they really need a lot of encouragement. Perhaps one or two DTP students could join the mission trip to Thailand in future?

Next day, we travelled to MGV in a rented van. The Village is about 1½ - 2 hours drive from the city. We reached MGV before noon and had to prepare for lunch after unpacking our things. Lunch was porridge with *chye sim*, salted egg and preserved vegetable with egg, laboriously and lovingly cooked over a charcoal fire



by Grace. It was a simple lunch but it tasted so *aroi* (delicious in Thai) to all of us. Grace and Chee Meng were to be the main chefs while Beng Lay took care of our breakfast during our 3 days' and two nights' stay at MGV.

programmes were meant for the adults but the youth and the children would also be present. On the first night, Beng Lay taught about evangelism, using the bridge illustration. Chee Meng went on to share his

Lunch was porridge with *chye sim*, salted egg and preserved vegetable with egg, laboriously and lovingly cooked over a charcoal fire ... it tasted so *aroi* .

A typical programme for each day started in the late afternoon with Grace and I sharing Bible stories as well as art and craft works with the youth and children, followed by games led by Sook Hwee. The night

testimony on the second night. During Sunday worship service, the congregation turned up in their Sunday best, with the women in their traditional Akha costumes. The church was packed with the



congregation, our mission team and two groups of visitors from the churches in the city. Grace shared her testimony and Beng Lay shared a message of encouragement.

For the morning, we went to Ban Xing Dieh by public transport and visited a Discipleship Training Centre run by a couple, Pan Zhong Chang and his wife Zheng Qin. Pan is an Akha and was from the same Bible school as Li Jian Ping. He spoke very fluent Mandarin because the Centre was sponsored by Taiwanese churches. He shared with the team the many needs of his ministry, his love for the Akha people and his desire for unity among the churches. We were burdened by his sharing and felt compelled to pray for him and his ministry. Although all of us, except Beng Lay, could only pray in English, we believed Pan understood what we were praying. We sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit as we prayed. Besides visiting the Centre, we also managed to visit some Akha families before the start of the Sunday worship service.

We left MGV after the worship service. We visited the Golden Triangle on our way back to the city. We did not do much sight-seeing and shopping as we had planned to meet Song Pong and Pong Sah again in the evening. This time, we visited them in their school



hostel. The school had 6 hostels supervised by 4 superintendents. The hostel where the 2 boys were staying had 60 students, out of which 29 were Akhas. The age of the students ranged from 6 to 18 years old. The hostel, though small, accommodated 60 students. All of them slept on the floor except for a few lucky ones who were provided with beds by their parents. (We were told that

"Sawat Dee Ka!"
J U N E 1 9 9 8

Song Pong and Pong Sah made sure that the hostel was swept clean when they knew we were visiting.) The

hostel was very hot and stuffy but, thank God, someone had donated 4 fans and the wiring had just been installed. The boys' superintendent, Boon Nie, told us that Song Pong and Pong Sah were doing well in school. In fact, Boon Nie would ask Song Pong to take care of the students when he had to be away.

We left for Bangkok on the following morning where we met up with Pastor Kee and Sally. I think they had settled in very well in Thailand as they looked and spoke like the locals. They already had 2 groups of visitors when we reached Bangkok. Despite their tight schedule, Sally picked us up at the airport. We were joined by Pastor Kee during lunch and visited

the Lutheran Institute of Theological Education (LITE) where Pastor Kee is teaching. Sally spent the next day with us shopping. We appreciated Pastor Kee and Sally for spending time with us and sharing with us their ministry despite their extremely tight schedule. Their ministry in the North-eastern area sounded so exciting that some of us wished that we could join Pastor Kee in visiting the area.

Much as we would like to stay longer in Thailand, all of us had to return to work. This was my second visit to Meng Guo Village, but it was a different experience altogether. It was the rainy season when we visited but God is good. It stopped raining



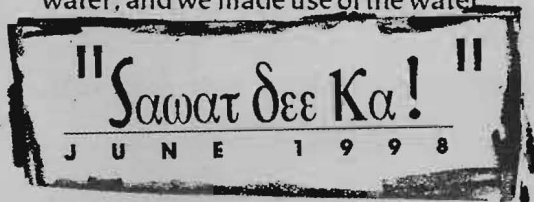


It is good to leave our comfort zone
once a while and see the needs of our fellow
brothers and sisters ... be thankful and
appreciate more what you have .

whenever we started our activities
and everything went on smoothly.
There were two occasions when the
water supply was disconnected. We
had to ensure that we did not waste
water, and we made use of the water

even though it was sometimes not
very clean.

It is good to leave our comfort
zone once a while and see the needs
of our fellow brothers and sisters in
other countries. You will be thankful
and appreciate more of what you
have here in Singapore.



BY CHRISTINA ANG

JURONG CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Areas of commitment:

- strengthening the youth fellowship & ministry
- to build up vibrant caring small care groups
- deepening devotional, Bible study and prayer life of members
- To be a mission-minded church
 - ⇒ Sengoi missions
 - ⇒ Thailand missions
 - ⇒ involvement in AD2000 movement
- strengthen involvement in community outreach
- growth in number of worshippers through evangelism
- improvement in worship space and facility

To:

Brian Lee, Zhang Yu, Wang Yiqing/Liqun,
Yao Bin, Angeline Ong Pei Pei
and Kong Ling Bing



We were glad to meet you when you visited us for the first time in July.

We continue to look forward to your visit and your fellowship with us as one community in Jurong Christian Church.