

Remembering First British Member Eve Hardman a Buddhist relative

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Eve Hardman

Last Saturday I attended a memorial service for the sister of my mother-in-law, Eve Hardman. Some of the senior members of the British family may remember her, as she was the first person to join the Unification Movement in the late 1960s. She introduced her sister, Patricia, to the movement, and were it not for that gesture I would not have a wife, so I should be very grateful for Eve's contribution. Later in Eve's journey through life she became a Buddhist, and a few years ago she was ordained as a Buddhist nun. Although she had a few serious health problems during her last few years of earthly life, she was diagnosed with cancer last year and ascended (with Patricia by her side) a few months ago.

Eve's memorial service was held at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre near Elephant & Castle. I was surprised to see two familiar faces at the Jamyang almost as soon as I had arrived; Patricia and Esther were two young women who were involved in an interfaith council I had developed a few years ago, and I was very happy to meet them again. The Jamyang centre is housed in what used to be a courthouse. There are living quarters (perhaps suitably in the old prison cells) and the architecture of the building retained reminders of its former usage.



The memorial service was a very pleasant experience, including spoken obituaries, musical performance and a dedication prayer (which you can read at the end of this blog). There were some gorgeous refreshments after the service, hand made by the centre volunteers, and I had the chance to speak with Harry, a friendly gentleman serving drinks who also lived in the centre.

My children were fascinated by the centre, especially the main meditation hall which included a majestic statue of the Buddha sitting at the front of the hall straddled by holy texts. My 5-year-old daughter

confidently walked around during the service, surveying the architecture and investigating the candles burning at the front. My 8-year-old son engaged in conversation with some of the members of the centre, who took it to task to teach him about the history of the Buddha. My son was excited to recall that he had already studied about the Buddha during his classes at home, and responded by asking if his new teachers knew about God. He was answered with another question, "Are you talking about the Christian God?" and I was amused by my son's hesitation in answering, "I suppose so." It was awfully cute.

I was happy to discover this sanctuary of devotion to peace in the heart of the city. I hope to rekindle the relationships that I had allowed to wane. And I also wish Eve a liberated experience in the spirit world.

Shantideva's prayer

This is one of H.H. the Dalai Lama's favourite prayers, extracted from "A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life" by Shantideva, a Buddhist master from the monastic university of Nalanda, India and composed in the eighth century AD.

May all beings everywhere
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.

May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil, or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds,
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food;
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy;
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness, and prosperity.

May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests;
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,
For as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the miseries of the world.