

## Message from the Administrator of the Hwa Tsang Monastery

### Venerable Chun Wu

When I came to Australia several years ago from China, I was lucky enough to come by aeroplane. The flying time was only about 12 hours. But most people came to Australia by boat, including some of your parents, in journeys that took weeks or months. Is this right? Can you tell me?

Why did I fly here by aeroplane? Was I especially rich? Did I have a special Chinese compass that showed the direction of Sydney from China? Or did I simply ask the pilot to follow the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidrus acuminata*) bird, which regularly migrates from Siberia and China to Mason Park Wetlands for the Australian spring, and is on is the China Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA) list? Do you know? Can you tell me?

Of course I was able to fly because air travel is now the economical, fast, and safe way of travel for modern people, despite its negative impacts to global warming, and which leaves more persistent and damaging affects than ground-level emissions. But have you ever thought about all those people that have contributed to our civilization, that allow us to make what is considered nowadays, a very mundane journey? Perhaps you have flown on an aeroplane to Asia yourself. Can you tell me?

We are able to fly because mathematicians, scientists, engineers, pilots, metallurgists, inventors, entrepreneurs, and salespeople have all worked together to resolve the difficulty we humans face in not having wings!



For example, in Paris, in 1783 two pilots flew a hot-air balloon 8 kilometres. This was followed by many years of vigorous experimentation by inventors all around the world, before the first sustained flight with a powered, controlled aircraft was made. Building on the concepts of earlier inventors, the Wright Brothers in 1902 created their own wind tunnel to measure lift and drag on more than 200 wing designs. They were the first design team to make serious studied attempts to simultaneously solve the power and control problems of flight. They finally flew successfully in 1903 in North Carolina, USA.



While many aviation pioneers appeared to have left safety largely to chance, the Wrights' design approach was greatly influenced by the need to teach themselves to fly, without taking unreasonable risks to life and limb. They knew from the many previous failures of inventors, that they needed to be able to survive crashes!

Could you and I have flown on the same aircraft that the Wright Brothers made in 1903? The first flight flew only 37 metres! So much more thought, consideration, design, testing and development was needed for aircraft. But then, what happened when aircraft were bigger and more powerful? Do you know? Can you tell me?

The pilots who flew, soon realized that navigation was difficult, because visual perception and references change with height. A pilot's sense of balance can be completely lost when flying in a cloud, there are changes in atmospheric pressure with altitude, and air crew blackout, if the aircraft rises above certain altitudes in thinner air! Were these their only problems do you think? What else did they have to consider?

Other problems aeroplanes encounter are lightning strikes, operating in ice and snow, metal fatigue affects due to motor vibrations, and delamination of modern composite layer materials. Sometimes birds may be sucked into the jet engines, causing immediate death to themselves, and also damaging the engines.

On an aeroplane, hundreds of people sit in a confined space for extended periods of time, which increases the risk of transmission of airborne infections. For this reason, airlines place restrictions on the travel of passengers with known airborne contagious diseases such as tuberculosis or severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). In 2003, on

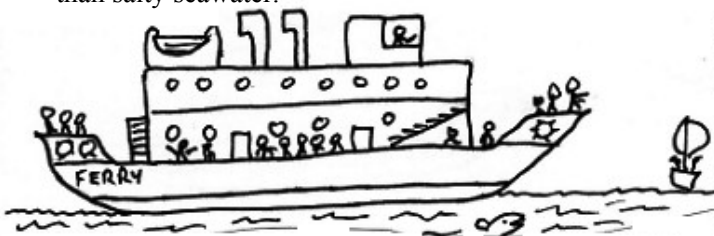
one flight from Hong Kong to Beijing, 16 of 120 people on the flight developed SARS from one passenger ! There are so many problems and complications, perhaps it would have been better if I had come by ship ...

Before the development of radar, satellites, and GPS Global Positioning Systems, aircraft navigation used many of the methods developed for marine craft. Undoubtedly many of the safety strategies applying to boats, were also applied to aircraft design.

For example, the weight and number of passengers that can be taken on an aircraft depend not only on the aircraft's lifting power, but also on its aerofoil design and control. How many people and goods are allowed on your boat, when you take a trip to Manly on a Sydney Ferry ? Is there an easy way to observe how heavily a boat is laden ? Do you know ? Can you tell me ?

If you have stood at Sydney's Circular Quay, or sailed around Sydney Harbour, you may have noticed that boats have a waterline. It is also called an international loadline or Plimsoll line. It indicates the maximum safe draft and reserve buoyancy for the vessel. All commercial ships have a load line symbol painted amidships on each side of the ship. This symbol must also be permanently marked, so that if the paint wears off, it remains visible. The load line makes it easy for anyone, (including you) to determine if a ship has been overloaded ! The exact location of the waterline on any boat is calculated and/or verified by the NSW Maritime Board, which authorizes seaworthy certificates for boat owners in NSW.

Temperature affects a boat's waterline level because warm water provides less buoyancy, being less dense than cold water. Likewise the salinity of the water affects the level, fresh water being less dense than salty seawater.



But the Plimsoll waterline just didn't appear overnight. Cretians in 2,500 BC, had official boat loading regulations. In the Middle Ages, the Venetians required ships to load to a load line. Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping introduced "Lloyd's Rules" in 1835.

So who was Plimsoll, or is that just a brand of shoes? Samuel Plimsoll (born 1824) was involved in shipping coal to London in the 1850s. While writing two books on the subject, he became aware of the great dangers faced by sailors due to the negligence of some ship-owners, and the indifference of the government. He decided to try and become a member of the English House of Commons, and was elected in 1868. He immediately campaigned for government legislation to protect seamen. To support his case he published the book "Our Seamen" in 1873. This included information that nearly 1,000 sailors a year were being drowned on ships around British shores.



Overloading and poor repair made some ships so dangerous that they became known as "coffin ships". "Coffin ships" was the name given to any boat that was overinsured and was therefore worth more to its owners sunk than afloat !

Plimsoll was particularly critical of the 1871 Merchant Shipping Act in which seamen were obliged, to go to sea and complete a voyage once they had signed a contract. If they broke their contract, they would face imprisonment and fines. This made it difficult for sailors to leave a ship once they realised it was unseaworthy. (Possibly this Merchant Shipping Act was enacted partly in response to English seamen deserting their ships on arrival to Australia, with gold fever, after the discovery of gold here in 1851 !)

In March 1873, The London Times newspaper joined Plimsoll's campaign by printing a story about fifteen seamen who had been imprisoned for three months after they refused to go on board the ship Peru. When the ship finally left Cardiff with a new crew, it sunk in the Bay of Biscay (near France), and three men were drowned.

Ship-owners had powerful supporters in the House of Commons and it was argued by them that the government should not pass legislation that restricted the freedom of employers to run their companies. But finally, in 1875 the Unseaworthy Vessels Bill was passed, which provided for the

marking of a line on a ship's sides which would disappear below the water line if the ship was overloaded.



In 1873, Vanity Fair (UK Society Magazine) described Samuel Plimsoll as, "Not a clever man, a poor speaker and a feeble writer... He has taken up a cause, not a popular cause nor a powerful one - only the cause of the British sailor who is sent to sea in rotten vessels so that ship-owners may thrive. His book was jumbled together in the fashion of an insane farrago, written without method and without art. But it is powerful and eloquent beyond any work that has appeared for years, because it is the simple honest cry, of a simple honest man. It is also a man who is bold enough to tell what he believes to be the truth, and it is still pleasing to many people in these British Islands, to find that in any accessible form."

In 1906, laws were passed requiring foreign ships visiting British ports to be marked with a load line. It was not until 1930 (The 1930 Load Line Convention) that there was international agreement for universal application of load line regulations.

Philosophy and religion have also contributed to the design of aircraft and boats, in mundane ways, that modern people barely acknowledge. Some people suggest that religion inspired our dreams of travel, to places richer, more abundant, more fertile, more luxuriant, more sociable, more hospitable, and more perfect than our own. Could this new destination be our heaven or nirvana in this world ?

Living the dream of travel, has allowed us to conquer many of the sufferings that my master, the Buddha, taught that we all face in life, and cannot avoid:-

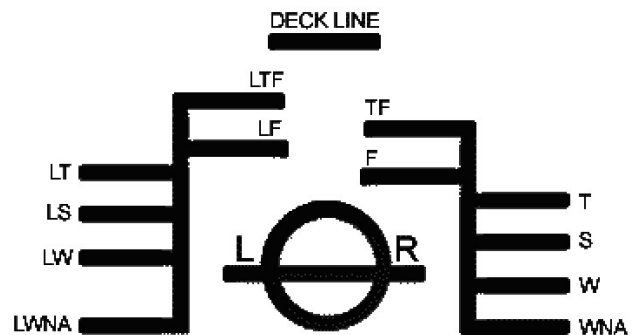
For example, how do you feel, when you can't get what you want, and yet you know that it is not far from your reach ? How do you feel, when you are separated from your family or loved ones, and cannot travel or communicate with them ? How do you feel, when you have to associate with unpleasant people and conditions, and cannot travel

to some far away place ?! We cannot avoid old age, when our body deteriorates, and our social situation changes. But isn't it nice to be able to travel somewhere else, where our age and social status may be welcomed, even if only as a fee-paying tourist ! Although no one is able to avoid sickness at some time in their life, travel to a doctor, can sometimes be the solution to our sufferings !

Some say that modern ways of travel have not sated our desires, and that travel itself has become a new suffering just to be tolerated, rather than an activity to be enjoyed, and a patience to be cultivated. Are we there yet ? Do you know ? Can you tell me ?

While we may fly on aeroplanes, drive cars, or ride on trains, we generally prefer not to acquaint ourselves with our fellow travellers, and sometimes have little patience for delays.

Are we there yet ? What is the point of patience ? What is patience ? Patience is the ability to wait, or to continue doing something despite difficulties, or to suffer without complaining or becoming annoyed. Some scholarly monks class patience into four categories; Patience for natural movement. Patience for mental suffering. Patience for physical suffering. Patience for human action. Are we there yet ? Do you know ? Can you tell me ?



How does knowing about patience help us in our lives ? Can we live in the past ? Can we live in the future ? When we are travelling, where is our mind? Are we there yet ? Do you know ? Can you tell me?



My congratulations to all graduating students. I would like to thank our Tuition Classes teachers for all their great efforts. The results of the students, continue to highlight the valuable contribution you make. Many thanks also to Venerable Neng Rong - Tuition Class Co-ordinator, Mr Chong Jin Chew - BOE Chairman, the Homebush Boys' High School for their support and the kind use of their facilities, and to Strathfield Council for their support for bush-regeneration activities.