

METTAMORPHOSIS
UNIBUDS ANNUAL MAGAZINE 2004

mettamorph

Going through life, most people cling on tight to what they call theirs. Money, material possessions, relationships, love... the more attached one is to the object, the tighter one's grip becomes. And in holding on so selfishly and stubbornly, the more the misery grows and the unhappiness intensifies.

Metta, or loving kindness, is a universal love that is without selection or exclusion. Although this concept of metta has been much talked about and expounded, the Buddha does not ask us to learn any of his teachings for mere recitation. He exhorted us to follow and practise it so that we might realise metta as the best state of heart in the world, encompassing every virtue such as compassion, generosity and kind-heartedness.

*The cover illustrates the process of *mettamorphosis* – a progression of change that takes place over an undefined period of time. This embodies a process of transformation from our basic tendencies of selfishness to selflessness by unearthing the deep seed of metta we have inherently that has been obscured by the strong veils of our own ignorance. *Mettamorphosis* involves continuous silent reflection into the truth of all things that leads to the removal of our negativities within. This ultimately gives way to the expansion of a higher state of being suffused with loving kindness towards all around us.*

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Pali terms have been adopted throughout this magazine for standardisation purposes but wherever possible, Sanskrit terms have also been included in the Glossary for readers who are more familiar with the latter.

As all dhamma articles are the original work of the respective speakers and individual contributors, whilst much care and effort have been made to ensure the accuracy and propriety of all materials, we apologise in advance for any inaccuracy and/or misrepresentation in this magazine. All photos and images used have come from UNIBUDS members.

In turning each page, we hope that you would be able to gain a bit more insight towards the workings of dhamma and find the inspiration to live each day with more peace, wisdom and clarity.

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Venerable Tsang Hui / 上藏下慧法師

UNIBUDS Patron's Message / 導師的話

The UNIBUDS Magazine Editor has chosen "Metamorphosis" as the theme for this year, hoping that everyone will learn to broaden one's love into loving kindness to all. All sentient beings are born with a certain sense of love and sympathy. However, very often, this love only targets some people. Why is this so? Why can't our love be extended to others and care for all sentient beings equally?

This is due to our ignorance. We are ignorant of the teaching of "non-self". We have strong self-love and self-pride. We always view things from our own perspective and are egocentric. Under circumstances as such, how can we treat all sentient beings equally? We only love those who are related to us or beneficial to us.

How can we break through this love that is selfish, narrow-minded and deluded, and expand our love to others? Fundamentally, we need to penetrate the truth of selflessness. We need to eliminate the attachment to self and realise the truth of emptiness and dependent origination.

By observing the interrelationships among dependent originated phenomena in the world, we can see that nothing in the world exists independently. Everything arises due to causes and conditions. We are also as such. We cannot be separated from society. Without the cooperation of everyone in the world, we cannot live peacefully, even just for a short moment. From this reality of dependent origination, we must let go of our self-pride. We should develop an outlook of life based on helping each other and repaying the kindness of others.

In addition, we should contemplate our existence in the cycle of life and death. From the beginningless of lives, all sentient beings are closely related to us. We owe gratitude to all sentient beings for their kindness. We should try to repay others for their kindness by bringing happiness and providing assistance to all sentient beings equally. This mind and action of loving kindness and compassion is developed through profound understanding of the Law of Dependent Origination.

We should also contemplate on the equanimity of the Law of Dependent Origination. All phenomena are not only interrelated, they are also equal and non-dual. However, sentient beings are ignorant and do not understand the truth. Thus, the Buddhas and Bodhisattas, with great compassion, try to guide and help sentient beings disentangle themselves from delusion. Thus, we should learn from the Buddhas and Bodhisattas and develop the mind of great compassion. In the state of mind of equanimity, we share the wish of all sentient beings in seeking for liberation and treat everyone as one.

In short, we should not only develop loving kindness through observing dependent originated phenomena, we should also try to break through self-attachment through the contemplation of the truth of dependent origination. In this way, we can gradually progress towards realising a true, pure and perfect mind of loving kindness and compassion.

In Buddhism, there is the teaching of the Four Immeasurable Minds. This practice helps us to systematically broaden our mind of loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity to all sentient beings. Training as such, supplemented by our understanding of the truth of dependent origination, will help us to break through our selfish love and extend our love systematically to a wider scope of sentient beings. When we can extend our loving kindness and compassion equally to all sentient beings, this is the loving kindness and compassion, as taught in Buddhism.

Love is common among all sentient beings. The practice of loving kindness and compassion in Buddhism aims to extend and purify this sentimental love. How can we transform this sentimental love into loving kindness and compassion in Buddhism?

“Love is common among all sentient be- ings”

We need to associate with wise advisors and listen to the dhamma. We need to think and contemplate on the dhamma in our daily life, so that we can understand the truth of dependent origination. We should understand that we owe gratitude to all sentient beings. We should also realise that “I”, the world and all sentient beings are impermanent and selfless in nature. We should let go of our attachment to self and realise the great love of equanimity.

In our world today, fights and wars happen everywhere. Thus, promotion of peacefulness, equanimity, loving kindness and compassion is essential. It is hoped that everyone will listen to the dhamma, contemplate on the dhamma and realise the truth of dependent origination. We should also cultivate the Four Immeasurable Minds and spread the mind of loving kindness and compassion to more people around us. May more people learn the true essence of loving kindness and compassion and hence, help the world to become more peaceful and tranquil.

慧命社年刊主編拈了“愛心的蛻變”為今年的主題，希望大家把愛心擴大到對所有眾生的慈愛。有情眾生與生俱來都帶有多少的愛心，但我們的愛心似乎有所拘限，只針對某些對象。為什麼我們不能將的愛心擴大而平等的愛護所有的眾生呢？

這是因為我們的無明，我們不了解無我的道理，處處產生我愛與我慢。我們以自我為中心，所愛的只限與與自己有關係的眾生，更重要的是關係到自己利益的人。要如何突破這自私，狹隘的情愛，而把我們的愛心擴大呢？最根本的就是要了達緣起性空的道理，透視無我，破除我執。

從緣起相的相關性來說，世間的一切都不是獨立的，是依種種因緣條件和合而成的。一切都是關係性存在的。我們亦是如此，我們不能離社會而生存。沒有世界眾生的努力，我們一刻也難以安樂。從這樣的緣起事實，我們要學習降伏我慢，養成互助互愛、知恩報恩的人生觀。進一步的，從三世的生死流轉來看。一切眾生，從無始以來，都與我們有非常密切的關係，他們都有恩於我們。有了這樣的認知，我們才不會把愛心拘限在現生狹隘的關係上，而等視一切眾生，將情愛擴展成利樂一切眾生的慈悲心行。

進一步的，我們要觀察緣起的平等性。我們要領悟到一切不只是相依相存的關係，而是無二無別的平等。然而，眾生不能了解這些真相。所以，佛菩薩發起大悲心，希望引導愚癡的眾生從迷惑中醒悟過來。因此，我們要向佛菩薩學習。在平等一如的心境中，體恤眾生也有與我們一樣希望離苦得樂的渴望，而發起同體大悲之心。簡言之，我們不但要從緣起的相關性中引發共同的慈愛，更要從緣起的平等性中突破自我的執著，這樣才能漸漸的趨向真正清淨圓滿的慈悲。

在佛法中，有慈悲喜捨四無量心的修習，幫助我們將愛心擴大。四無量心的修習使我們有層次地將慈心、悲心、喜心、捨心擴展到一切眾生。這樣的訓練，配合對緣起法的正確了解，使我們慢慢的突破自私、狹隘的情愛，次第的把愛心擴展到更廣泛的眾生。當我們能達到怨親平等，慈悲心普遍到一切，這才是佛法中的慈悲。

愛心乃有情所共有。慈悲的修習，主要就在於擴充、淨化這狹隘的情愛。如何將愛心蛻變成慈悲心？我們必須多親近善知識，聽聞佛法，並將所聽聞的佛法在日常生活中加以思維觀照，體會緣起的道理。我們要了解世間中每個眾生都有恩於我們，同時，體會自我、世間以及一切眾生的無常性，無我性，放下自我的愛染，實現平等一如的大愛。

我們這個世界充滿著鬥爭與戰亂，因此，鼓勵祥和平等的慈悲心實為重要。希望大家多聽聞佛法，思惟佛法，體會緣起的道理，修習四無量心，將慈悲心散佈於更多的人，使更多的人感染到慈悲的訊息，促進世界的和平與安寧。



Venerable Chao Khun Samai

UNIBUDS Patron's Message

One of the ten perfections the Buddha had to develop before he attained enlightenment is metta – loving kindness. If we wish to grow this virtue as the Buddha taught, gradually and properly, we must have a good understanding that all living beings without exception wants to be well and happy. Such being our mutual purpose, generosity is the first and foremost virtue. Secondly, he must live a moral life with a high standard of good conduct and good speech all the time. He keeps the noble silence when a word of truth is too hard to hear and serves no purpose.

In the level of generosity, there are so many things to be given. It might be food for the body, clothes to wear, shelter to live in, or medicine to take. As for a shelter or accommodation, anything given for a more comfortable life is also included; it might be a pillow, a blanket or even a bed. Through many different kinds of giving, some good people on earth work their way to many different levels of heaven. If they are still contented with the world of human beings, they will be back again with much more happiness and prosperity. At the level of metta-bhavana, meditation on loving kindness, generosity has transformed itself into a pure form of loving kindness that flows from the heart to pervade the whole world in all directions.

In practice, we start with the good meditation of the breath first. Be aware of the incoming and outgoing of breath for some time, until our mind is so calm and peaceful. Now silently, we say to ourselves, 'May I be happy', pervading the whole body with thoughts of loving kindness for some time, and then say again silently to others, 'May all living beings be well and happy'. This time our thoughts of loving kindness should spread far and wide, round and round from one group of people to others. First to those who are nearer and dearer to us, such as our parents, our teachers, our relatives and our friends and move on to the neutral ones and then eventually to the unfriendly people. We should repeat silently again and again, 'May all living beings be well and happy'.

When all foes and friends have been pacified, as our metta meditation is regularly practised, the heat of anger would slowly disappear, transforming itself into a very cool and calming condition. Now this condition is like a sea breeze traveling from the nearby coastline to a far greater distance. It selects no particular place and finds no distinction between the rich and the poor. Everyone would feel the same cooling condition.

Metta – loving kindness has a great role to play. It helps us to perfect dana, generosity. It helps us to perfect sila, morality. Without metta, a good person cannot be enlightened, without metta, one cannot be a Buddha.



Stephanie Pan

UNIBUDS President's Message

Dear readers in the Dhamma,

A year has passed. Time really flies, and waits for no man. Before you can even catch hold of it, it has quietly slipped away. It has been 24 years since UNIBUDS was first established. Being the first Buddhist society on campus, the society has definitely come a long way. As the Chinese saying goes, "To start a business is difficult, to ensure its continuity is even more difficult". This principle also stands for the society. Without the advise and support of UNIBUDS patrons, without the dhamma teachers to propagate the dhamma, without the planning and organisation of the UNIBUDS Executive Committee, and of course, without the endless support, encouragement and assistance from our dear members, UNIBUDS would not have been able to hold events like the Buddhist Exhibition 2004, annual Bodhi Nite, weekly Chinese and English dhamma talks as well as meditation sessions.

Throughout the year, UNIBUDS organised various activities spanning from cultivating a peaceful mind by organising the meditation workshops, and enabling more knowledge of the dhamma and Buddhist practices through organising dhamma talks and monastery visits. As you enter into UNIBUDS, you will always be assured that friendly smiling faces will greet you, and one will experience warmth, comfort and a conducive environment to learn the dhamma. There are different reasons or purposes for joining UNIBUDS. Regardless of the reason or purpose, be assured that you will bring away something each time: the knowledge of the dhamma. The learning of the dhamma is not only beneficial, but it will stay with us for life. It guides us through our daily life, as we enter the different phases in our lives. Since the transition from studying to working life, I have realised something that is essential in society, and that is metta or loving kindness. With loving kindness, even the most difficult student will melt. With loving kindness, conflicts will decrease, and office politics will be at a minimum. Of course, the Five Precepts have also helped to keep myself on the right path, and the right attitude.

I am very thankful for having been given the chance to be part of the UNIBUDS Executive Committee for two years. There have been challenges along the way, happiness, excitement and disappointment. However, I was able to overcome them not only by myself but also with the support of the UNIBUDS Executive Committee, my mentor Agus Santoso, as well as Chien Hoong Gooi, and a new friend I made this year, Wai Loon Teng. I hope that this support and encouragement will continue to benefit and inspire all for many generations to come.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the UNIBUDS honourable patrons, Venerable Tsang Hui and Venerable Chao Khun Samai for the guidance and encouragement towards the society; all senior members and members of UNIBUDS, wherever you are, thank you for always being there; all members of the sangha and teachers at the dhamma talks and events for the sincere teachings, guidance, and support; fellow Buddhist societies and friends; the readers and sponsors of this Annual Magazine; and the Annual Magazine Editor and her team for their fine sincere effort and dedication towards the completion of this project.

May all be well and happy and may all benefit from the teachings of the Enlightened One. May UNIBUDS continue its efforts to provide avenues within the University and the Australian community in propagating the dhamma.

With Utmost Gratitude and Loving Kindness,

Stephanie Pan

UNIBUDS 24th Executive Committee

Committee Members' Messages

JEEWANTHA KARUNARATHNA / External Vice President

In university, notes are swapped, tests are taken together and this caring develops into a selfless love. Through initial self-interested steps, true friendship can develop and the seemingly rare concept of metta can touch each of our lives. So cherish those friendships you have developed or are developing, whether on campus or within UNIBUDS. Delight in the fact that one of Buddha's precious gems can be found within all of us.

DESY JULIATY / Internal Vice President

At the right timing, a small and insignificant caterpillar will turn into a splendid and beautiful butterfly. The same concept applies to the practice of understanding and spreading loving kindness. and could start anytime and anywhere. The journey could be harsh and difficult but I believe that the Buddha's teachings would guide me through it. For this, I am grateful to have been a part of UNIBUDS, a part of this big family.

WEE HAN LIM / Honorary Secretary

The Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path are basics of Buddhism and we should actually always go to the basics and practise them in real life. Impermanence. Who are always the winners, losers? Loving kindness. A selfless love that is needed by every one to create a better world. Compassion, wisdom. By growing the seeds of dhamma in our hearts, we can lead a more peaceful life and find the ultimate happiness.

VICKEY CHEN / Honorary Treasurer

This EXCO term taught me a lot, and one of it is not to take things for granted and that everything in life is impermanent, which makes life precious. Therefore, it is important to cherish every moment in life and to love everyone/everything alike. One can learn to love and to share the love – I discovered this from UNIBUDS :) Together, let us learn the dhamma and find the happiness and the purpose of life :) ..

ARIFIANA KOESHENDRO / General Secretary

We often have love that is distributed selfishly and sparingly and hoping to gain something in return. This type of love is not metta because metta does not know boundary and seeks no reward. The joy of loving selflessly and unconditionally is itself its own reward. Thank you to our patrons, my dearest 24th EXCOs and members...for me in UNIBUDS learning more to develop not only the intellectual but also the heart. Let the metta flow towards all and may the world live in peace and harmony...

ROY NG / Activities Director

Serving as an EXCO in UNIBUDS has been a great privilege and an unforgettable experience, one that can never be taught at university. It was a chance to learn the dhamma, meet many wonderful friends and overall to have a complete and fulfilling university life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our patrons for their unwavering guidance, our members for their continual support, and my fellow EXCOs for their undying commitment and friendship.

WIJOYO / English Dhamma Talk Officer

Life is short. It is fate and dhamma that bring us all together in this life. Learn from the past, live to the fullest for today, and prepare for the the upcoming journey with mindfulness. May all of us unite in the dhamma.

SIANG YEE CHUAH / Chinese Dhamma Talk Officer

Through my involvement in UNIBUDS, I have learned to look at life through a different perspective and knowing all of you is like having a bright shining star in this life. May the knowledge of dhamma bring happiness to all :)

JUNI JOE / SACCA Editor

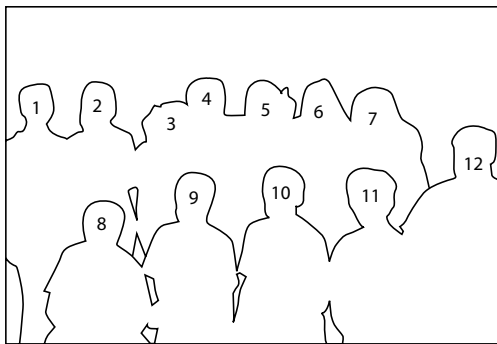
I would like to thanks the UNIBUDS EXCOs and friends for their help, support and friendship. Without UNIBUDS I would not be the today ME ^_^ . I have learnt a lot from the people around me, getting to know and understand more of the dhamma. The most important thing that I learnt from UNIBUDS is FRIENDSHIP. I hope that UNIBUDS will continue to flourish under the teachings of the Buddha and good luck for the new EXCOs too.

MILANI HO / Annual Magazine Editor

It is often easier to practise metta towards strangers whom we have just met than to those who are dear to us as we often take them for granted. May the knowledge of dhamma lead us to a brighter path and help us cherish every moment in life.


NICK LAVERY / Meditation Session Co-ordinator

We have a great opportunity to learn from the Buddha on how to improve our minds and make good choices to help ourselves and others and realise what is really important to us. May we all continue to learn and grow together.



1. *Juni Joe*
2. *Vickey Chen*
3. *Arifiana Koeshendro*
4. *Milani Ho*
5. *Stephanie Pan*
6. *Siang Yee Chuah*
7. *Desy Juliaty*
8. *Wee Han Lim*
9. *Roy Ng*
10. *Wijoyo*
11. *Jeewantha Karunarathna*
12. *Nick Lavery*





*Stemming from within
We all have a gift to share
A gentle smile
A comforting touch
Every moment,*

*Cultivating a boundless heart
Towards all beings*

With Loving Kindness...

Always on the go ...greater understanding in life

Shen Han Tan

There are ample opportunities everyday for us to practice our greater understanding and generosity towards others.

By integrating these practices in our daily lives, we can never fall into the excuses: “I don’t really have time for it” or “I have more important things to do” – one of the more common excuses to dismiss ideas which we know as reality but yet unable to do it. We simply have the time for it as long as we integrate our practices into our lifestyle. Considering that Buddhism is a science of living, we can see that living in itself is a complex process. There are many variables interacting; the environment, objects in contact and most complex of all, the interaction between minds. Interactions and relationships between people is an important element in our judgment towards other people. The following reflect on these complex variables within the environment of the living.

More often than not, we understand our process of judgment at a rather superficial level. This is because we often pass on our judgment on people too quickly; never giving the opportunity and benefit of the doubt to others. Many times during the day we encounter such situations especially to those who are driving out there. What is commonly observed, for example, when a father steers the wheel of the family car when the family decides to dine out for the night. Happily on the road, the father may come across another motorist, whom in his opinion, was not courteous in providing relevant signals when making turns. This is further reinforced by the mother, adding her views and negatively commenting on the behaviour that she had just witnessed. Note that this may be one of the rare moments when both parents agree on something, but such vibes and comments are not only unhealthy to the mind, but are also futile when one observes on a neutral note. Will the motorist at ‘fault’ have caught what the father has said and heed to it? Observe the following questions and consider them truthfully.

How many times have we shouted and complain on the roads, when other motorists did not drive the way we think they should? And how many times have we reflected upon the reasons why some have been slightly more reckless on the road, of which many of us are guilty of? What if there are valid reasons for these drivers to be ‘reckless’? How many times have you committed those common mistakes? Could you observe the multitude of variables that are interacting when you are on the road? Others’ ways of driving may be disapproving to you, but may have been factored by various reasons (again consider the interacting variables in the environment). Furthermore, we may have been guilty many times, in reinforcing other people’s judgment (as in the case above, the role of the mother) despite not knowing the whole situation?

What about the times when we pass our judgment on strangers who were either too noisy or quiet? Did we reflect on the times when we ourselves too may be labelled as a loudmouth when we got too excited or when we were labelled as shy due to our reluctance to speak? Our ego seems to provide all reasons for every one of our actions yet not for others. We justify our actions, having our own reasons to speak louder than usual. But have we also considered that others may have done so within similar conditions? Have we also considered that we may have detested people’s behaviours and may have been oblivious to the reasons or conditions others are in? Perhaps someone was speeding due to an emergency at home. There could be a thousand other valid reasons behind someone’s actions which we might never know about. Did we know all the conditions that may have driven others’ actions? Nevertheless, what we do know is that our reaction and actions are habitual though within our control. Whether we choose to be angry or understanding, it is still our choice.

The ability to empathise, in other words put ourselves into other people’s shoes, may affect our initial judgment – for instance, if we had known that the other person had driven faster due to an emergency to the hospital, we may have had a bigger heart to forgive. Or perhaps the next time when someone made a mistake, we should also reflect whether we would have made such mistakes as well. We should attempt to observe and reflect whenever opportunities arise. Not only does this open our eyes to the endless possibilities of things, but also to live happier. By looking at things at a different perspective, we become less frustrated whenever things do not go our way. We place less blame on other people’s mistakes where many times they had been greatly exaggerated to think that we have put the message across – and were any of these messages effectively communicated? More often than not, we let our anger and frustration take over our rationality and many times this had led to greater retaliation of anger. Not only does this not help the problem at hand, but our anger and pride may cause

more problems than solve the issue at hand.

Also, we have never been generous enough in giving. Generosity in this context does not just mean giving forms of physical items. We have never been generous enough to look at the positive side of things that many people may have done. Our selfish and deluded self only concerns our own well being. For instance, next time when your friend is late for an appointment with you, try considering that maybe your friend was late helping an old lady getting on the right bus before meeting you. Your friend's presence elsewhere may have provided positive outcomes at the cost of being late. Just because *you* have to wait, *you* have become upset. Notice how *you* is highlighted to reflect the idea of self and ego.

This is just one example so try and reflect many more incidents when others have made you upset. A common example is when parents get upset and angry at us. We may always see that they may not understand us. Even if this was true, the intentions and actions are just forms of parental love and care. If we switch our perceptions, be more generous for others, there will be less room for dissatisfactions in life.

In finality, there are ample avenues in reflecting oneself in improving our practices with greater understanding. Many are subtle and revolve around simple ideas such as generosity. Nevertheless, the human mind often neglect that it is these small little ideas that build strong minds - minds of great wisdom and understanding. As mentioned above, we could integrate these values into our lifestyles by changing our mindsets. Our perception and thoughts may develop a better understanding of our surroundings and its variables. May all beings, here and now, seen or unseen; develop great wisdom, be well and happy.



Photo: Chien Hong Gooi

Precepts in Buddhism

Venerable Phra Mana Viriyarampo

One of the practices in Buddhism is the precepts. The precepts are like a type of self-discipline, promises you make to yourself to act in a certain way in order to achieve something.

They are different from the Ten Commandments of Christianity in that there is no one to command us. For example, you may discipline yourself in your studies because you aim to graduate. You are responsible for yourself, and no one will punish you if you do not follow your own set schedule and fail in your examinations through lack of understanding of the subject being studied. So by looking at the benefits of studying we will try to follow our own set schedules. Therefore, we discipline ourselves in order to move towards our goals.

Similarly, the Buddha said if you would like to achieve enlightenment, the most basic guideline is to first practise the precepts. The Buddha said, "If you undertake the precepts well, then happiness will come to you; if you undertake the precepts well, then prosperity and wealth will come to you; if you undertake the precepts well, then you will gain the wisdom to enter *nibbana*." If we can discipline ourselves, then these are the benefits to be gained.

Of course in the beginning, if we have not yet seen the benefits of our practice, we may still have some doubts. The Buddha asked us to have faith, which we call *saddha*. We may be unsure whether following the precepts can give us all these benefits but the Buddha asked us to just try following the precepts as an experiment to see what will happen. Bear in mind that if you do not follow the precepts the Buddha cannot punish you but if you do follow them, he cannot reward you either. Whether we follow them or not, he leaves us alone, it is up to our own sense of right and wrong.

For lay people, the discipline involves following the basic Five Precepts: to refrain from killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying, and drug taking. These Five Precepts are for our own benefits, in order for us to achieve enlightenment. Taking care of our precepts well means controlling our physical and verbal actions, being constantly aware and conscious in whatever we do and say. A mindful, calm and resolute mind is called *samadhi*. So if we can follow the precepts, we will gain the benefits, but if we cannot then what will happen to us?

In Buddhism there is no one to punish us if we cannot follow the precepts. However, breaking the precepts means we are merely following and being controlled by our own emotions such as hatred and fear, like and dislike. If we are in a situation and we are too afraid to tell the truth, we tend to cover ourselves with a lie. In getting drunk through consuming alcoholic drinks, we will most likely lose our mindfulness. Similarly if we are married but we still have desire for other people, these are our emotions ruling us. All of these things reflect on how well we can control the mind. If you can see the benefit of self-discipline then you can remind yourself to do the right thing.

Since no one is perfect, we all inevitably break the precepts sometimes during our lives. We should be regretful about this and then try to correct and improve ourselves. We should not be careless in keeping the precepts because we may form bad habits and it is very difficult to change when something becomes a habit. Moreover, if you often tell lies for example, the result will be that people will stop trusting you. If you cannot stop lying, then it is better not to speak at all. We should slowly correct ourselves in this way through mindfulness.

Monks enter monastic life in order to train themselves and the precepts form the rules for this training. The Buddha said one of the benefits of the precepts is that when many people from different families come to live together, there must be some rules or agreements so that they may live in harmony. If everyone were to follow their own thoughts or ideas, then there would be no harmony or unity, but a lot of confusion. The monks' precepts act to harmonise a group with wisdom and understanding.

Even though the precepts are laid out like a discipline, sometimes we are not able to follow it because we are not enlightened yet. Our awareness or our consciousness is not one hundred percent perfect, which is why the disciplines of the monks are set out as a form of training. If you make a mistake, then you go through the process of renewing yourself to build up your mindfulness and awareness again.

In Padugali, there are many rumours about spirits in the mountains. I had stayed in a cave behind some mountains for the past week without knowing that it was in the vicinity of a cemetery. Everyone else knew, but no one had told me. I walked by myself at night far from the main temple about half a kilometre into the bush back to my cave after evening chanting. I felt so comfortable until one afternoon when one of the monks said, "Oh you are very brave, no one ever dares to walk to that cave. No one wants to stay there because it is next to the graveyard." The hairs on my body stood up. I did not want to go back to my cave anymore, I felt funny, but all the other monks and novices were watching and I would have felt so embarrassed if I did not go back to my cave. So I forced myself to go back even though I felt so scared. The only thing I had to protect myself with was my bowl. It was my only friend! What protection did I have? I thought of the reason I had come in the first place, which is to train myself. I had no intention of harming anyone, even mosquitoes or ants. By thinking this I felt better, I felt safer and happier. By looking at our precepts we can see some of the good things that we have done in our lives, which gives us some positive thoughts already. If you feel good about yourself then you are able to share your happiness and friendliness with others. Your loving kindness can spread to others too. This is another benefit of taking care of your precepts.

When we take care of our precepts, mindfulness and awareness come more naturally because when you close your eyes you do not see any mistakes. And if you have done something regrettable in your past then you can correct yourself immediately. The Buddha said, "Look at the sky at night, sometimes you can see the full moon emerging from the clouds." This is like people who might have been careless and made mistakes in the past but now in the present moment have corrected themselves and set themselves on the right path. We can start a new life every time we correct our physical and verbal actions. Accept what has happened in the past because no one is perfect. I myself have broken so many precepts since I became a monk, but I keep on trying because I accept these mistakes and I know I am not yet enlightened.

In Pali, the term for precepts is sila meaning normal conduct. Whenever we have calmness of the mind, consciousness and awareness, we will naturally be in accordance with sila. But sometimes when we are too busy and neglect the development of the mind we lose our mindfulness or awareness, and in this weak state we are more susceptible to the ebb and flow of emotions, the likes and dislikes that flood our minds twenty-four hours a day. Because we have eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin we are exposed to external stimuli that impact on us whether pleasant or unpleasant. These sensations create thoughts of like, dislike or neutrality. But if we have strong mindfulness and awareness we are able to control our mind instead of simply following our senses and the wandering thoughts that arise from them.

In 1999 when I went to North Carolina, I stayed with a kind Vietnamese family for six months as there was no monastery there at that time. Their son gave me his room and I felt like one of the family. At that time I did not have a teaching program so I had plenty of time to take care of my precepts, do chanting, radiate loving kindness and practise meditation. I

mindfulness

looked at the book of disciplines to remind myself of the precepts. I wanted to follow them the best I could. Of course along the way thoughts appeared which made me feel like breaking the precepts. It just so happened that one night there were some very delicious noodles in the fridge, and all the family members had gone to bed already when tempting thoughts occurred to me. Of course the family had said, "You can eat anything in the fridge". However, it was past midday and I was to wait until the next day to eat. I felt so hungry, but I kept drinking water and waited for the sun to rise. It seems that whenever we set our minds to do something, situations will always arise to test us. This was my challenge, and I had promised myself that I would keep my precepts, so I meditated until the morning and overcame my temptation.

On the contrary, intentionally breaking the precepts can also have consequences. People are born as human beings because in their past lives they have taken care of the Five Precepts well. On the other hand, if you fail to follow the precepts, you may be born with a disability in future lives. The scriptures mention that in one of his previous lives, the Buddha himself was a doctor who treated a man with eye problems. The patient's eyes were recovering but he did not have enough money to pay the doctor, so when the patient returned again, the doctor put some chemicals in his eyes that made the patient blind. This bad *kamma* returned to the Buddha in another lifetime and he became blind because of his past actions. How we have taken care of our precepts in the past impacts on how we are now. Killing shortens the lives of others, therefore if you kill, the *kamma* created will cause you to have a shorter life span.

People who tell lies in previous lives will in the same manner, be cheated and lied to by others. This is why we say, if we love ourselves we will not harm others. By following the precepts, happiness and peace of mind will naturally come to us. There would be no need for so many laws or penalties if more people followed the Five Precepts. If more people thought, "I do not want to kill, I do not want to steal, I do not want to commit adultery, I do not want to tell lies", our society would be a more peaceful and less dangerous place to live in. The same applies to our own families and people around us. If you make a commitment to follow the precepts, I believe people around you will feel happier and safer to be near you. This is why they say, the precepts can produce happiness, and this is why we should try as much as possible to follow the Five Precepts.

For higher development, there are the Eight Precepts. Some people choose to take the Eight Precepts when they are on retreat at our monastery in Bundanoon. The sixth precept is to not take food after midday, the seventh is to not indulge in worldly entertainment that will diminish our consciousness or mindfulness and to refrain from beautification of the body, the eighth is to not sleep on a high or luxurious bed. The purpose of the Eight Precepts is to strengthen the mind. We do not take food after midday because the food we eat in the morning is used for fuel throughout the day but the food we eat later is not needed because we will be sleeping. Even though we may be hungry at night, we must use our determination and strength of the mind to overcome physical feelings. The mind will become stronger. Feelings of the body, pleasant or unpleasant, are just feelings. The mind can withstand them. There may be feelings of pain in the body, but the mind does not have to suffer. When we understand the comings and goings of our feelings, the mind can then be free.

The next level is the Ten Precepts, for nuns or young novices. It includes shaving the head and wearing robes. Dressing differently makes you more aware that other people expect a certain level of conduct from you. Wearing this uniform, you cannot go to discotheques; people will wonder, "What are you doing here?" Robes are a kind of barrier or protection.

We know the benefits of the precepts when they are used as guidelines for leading a good life. However they can also be misused when people use them to find faults in others. Even in the monastery, some monks may compare themselves and think, "I am better than you at keeping precepts". This sort of pride and ego is a misguided use of the precepts. It is what we call attachment to the precepts. We should not become attached to the precepts;



Photo: Chien Hoang Gool

they are merely a form of training or discipline.

There was once a very strict master in Thailand who was the head of a group of one hundred monks. He trained them like soldiers but there was one monk who was always the last to wake up, and when the other monks ate quietly and sat up straight to meditate, he would chew noisily and slouch. All the other monks were very embarrassed by him and complained to the master. But the master replied, "All rules have exceptions". By taking the precepts as guidelines we apply them to people only when they are ready to accept them. If we understand the nature of people we will be able to use the precepts appropriately. The precepts should be used as encouragement and not forced upon others. I myself feel responsible for myself; I do not want anyone else to force me. Consequently, this is how I treat other people and other monks, even in the monastery. Some monks can do very well on their own while others need reminding, but we have to remember, different people have different characters.

The precepts are a set of guidelines that if used correctly will train us to become more mindful and aware.

By following the precepts properly we will gain as a side effect, the benefit of peacefulness and calmness of the mind. The precepts are not to be used to show off to others. For example, eating vegetarian food is not a precept in our school, but some monks in Thailand use this to look down on other monks. This will only cause disharmony in a group. Whether we eat vegetables or we eat meat, we eat just to maintain the physical body. If we know the purpose of the discipline we need not gloat over being able to keep some minor rules. When we understand their purpose then we can transcend these minor details and embody the precepts so that they become a part of us.

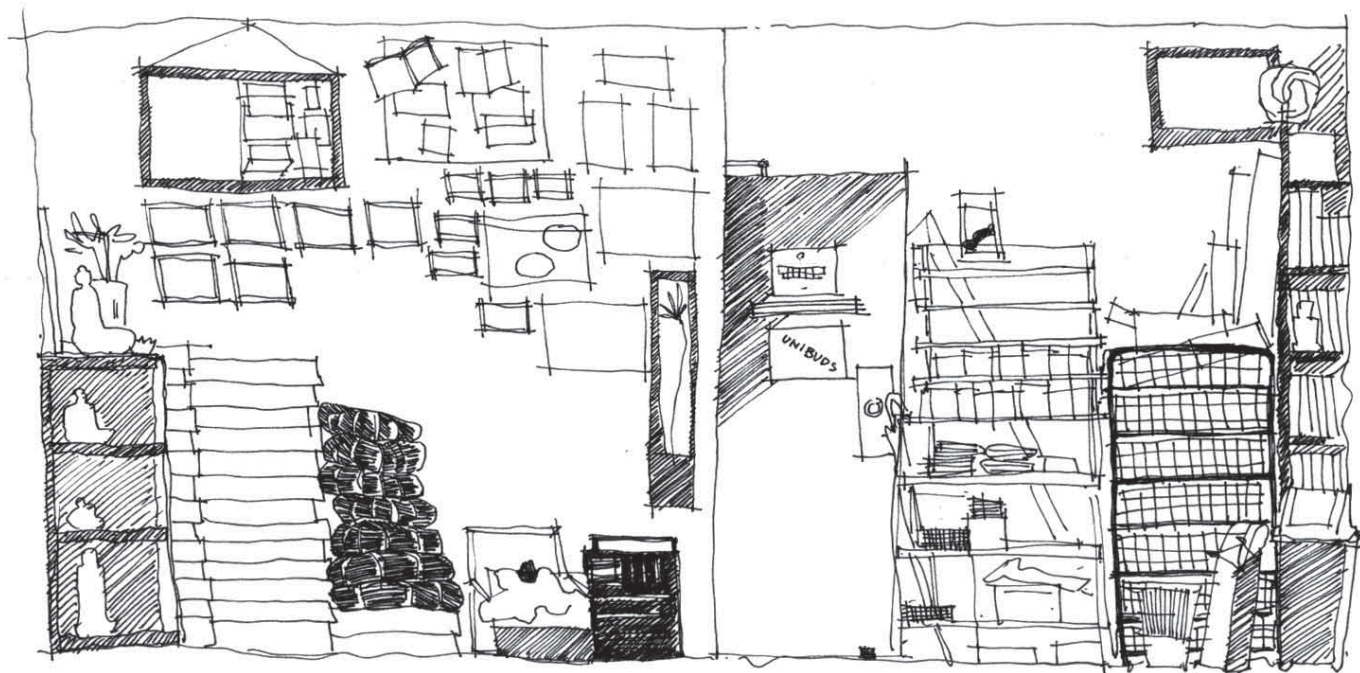
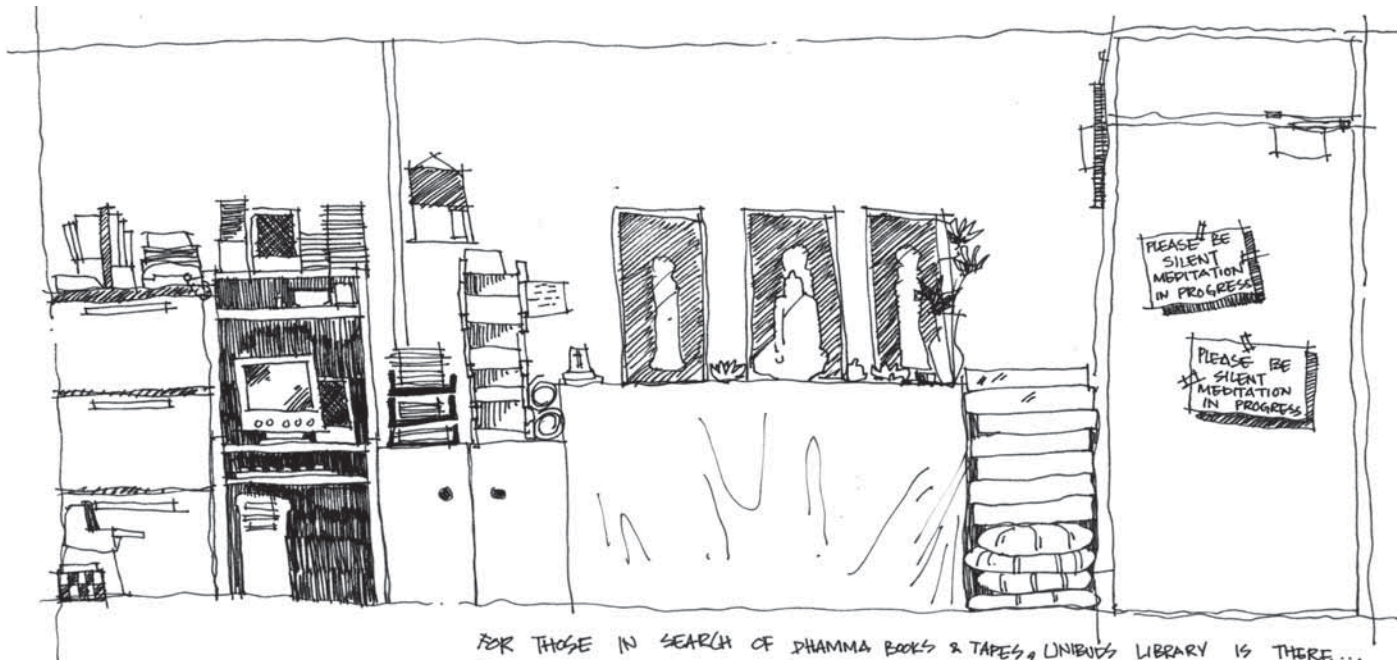
*In the face of aversion
Confronted with old hurts
That is when
kindness eludes us most*

*As we put up barriers
we forsake others
We abandon love*

And eventually, we forget...



Photo: Chien Hong Gaoi



Mirrors

Tina Ng

“As usual, you’re looking perfect tonight.” The mirror smiled in acknowledgement. Jessie checked herself out one last time before she headed off: perfect dress, perfect hair, perfect shoes, perfect smile. Just perfect.

Well, except for one thing. She had no boyfriend.

But of course that didn’t worry her one bit. After all, she hadn’t thought about it when she dressed and redressed for three hours. Nor did she think about it as she drove to Trevor’s 21st in the rain. And it certainly wasn’t on her mind as she made her way through the crowded party, dropping her name and smiles into strangers’ hearts. No, she wasn’t worried at all.

There were plenty of people Jessie didn’t know there. Trevor was the sort of guy who was everyone’s friend, but no one’s boyfriend; an amusing fact Jessie believes she was beginning to change. After all, she does keep catching him looking at her and he does comment on how great she looks almost every time they meet.

Commentary by author:

Many people say that love and hate are only separated by a very fine line. When someone stops loving you, you may begin to hate that person. When you see that person happy with someone else, you might get jealous. But is that love? Who do you love? Them or yourself? Why was Jessie so annoyed at knowing Trevor has a girlfriend? She wasn’t even in love with him.

What is operating here is one’s ego. In her own mirror image, and in Trevor’s, Jessie thought she could understand herself very well. But like the moon’s shadow on a lake, reflections are not substantial, but illusionary. Our humanity is discovered and fostered within, not without. Loving-kindness allows us to think of others before ourselves and this slowly dissolves our attachment to our discriminations of self and others. The unconditional and universal nature of metta frees us from the entanglements of selfish love, to one that is selfless and boundless.

But she must turn him down. As much as she doesn’t care about having a boyfriend, she couldn’t possibly have him for her boyfriend. Put simply, she felt he just wasn’t good enough for her.

Just as she decided this, and was happily wallowing in the idea of someone devotedly in love with her for her to reject, she was introduced to no other than Trevor’s new girlfriend.

“Jessie, there you are! I’ve been looking all over for you!” Before Jessie could prepare her rejecting speech, Trevor – like a magician – drew out a pretty girl from the crowd. “Jessie, I want you to meet Sophia. Sophia, Jessie. Jessie and I go way back, we used to go to high school together.”

Jessie was in such shock she completely forgot about her perfect composure. Although Jessie could see Trevor holding onto his dear Sophia, she still shrieked, with a pitch too high, “Is she your girlfriend?”

“Yes she is,” Trevor smiled, pulling Sophia closer. “After about three months of finding the courage to ask her out.”

The rest of the conversation was a blur, and she stumbled out a few unintelligent words and left to take shelter elsewhere. Away. Away from the happy couple, dancing their romantic song. Away from the social critics, who were her friends. Away from the sniggering walls and mocking air.

She ran outside, into the rain. This time, she didn’t see her perfect shoes sinking into the muddy puddles. She didn’t care about her perfect hair being a mess. She just felt cold, and alone.

She kept repeating to herself, “but I don’t even like him.”

And she didn’t. She wasn’t in love with him, or her mirror. She was in love with the reflection, with herself.

When Love Becomes Hate

John Barclay

The first thing that came to mind about falling in love, was the strong feeling when you first fall in love with someone. It would be useful to compare the idea of romantic love to the definition of love that Buddha taught. It is quite easy to confuse the two as the term "love" is so often mentioned and used nowadays in society that the real meaning of love can be easily confused.

What does love mean? What does that conjure up in our mind? People often say that they "love" a hamburger or something similar, but I am sure that was not what the Buddha had in mind when he thought about love. The Buddhist teaching describes four aspects of love and without these elements present in the type of love you have, then it is not considered as true love.

First let us look at romantic love. In some cultures, falling in love can be described as an accident. My wife describes it as an accident when anyone asks how we met. To describe the characteristics of romantic love, I have used this book by Cathy Troupp called "Why Do We Fall In Love? - The Psychology of Choosing Partners". She describes four particular characteristics of falling in love. Initially, there is a surge of hope, and that hope is composed of several things. One of them is the hope that one will be loved exclusively by another person; there is also the hope to becoming the most important person in the world, in someone else's world; and the hope of giving our love to that other person without reserve. Certainly we become very creative and infused with energy. We are able to write love poems, whereas before we might not have thought of becoming a poet. All those things are characteristics of that initial hope that comes out of falling love.

It is also a common theme in psychology, that perhaps unconsciously most of the time we are striving, through falling in love with another person, to become whole. There is a part of us, those characteristics and traits, which left undeveloped, are waiting to be enriched and to be brought out by that other person. Some of the words you hear when people first fall in love includes, "she brings out the best in me", but as the relationship progress a little more, the sentence becomes "he

really knows how to bring out the worst in me" may come up. Or whatever the case, this hope of psychological expansion and development is a very powerful ingredient earlier on in the relationship.

There is also the aspect of projection. Projection is when we attribute our own feelings and traits to others which are either unconscious or under-developed, suppressed or repressed in our personality. These projections happen from a very early age, for example, when a small child doesn't want the light to be turned off at night. However, instead of saying he is afraid of the dark, he projects his feeling onto his teddy bear, "Can you please turn the light on, because teddy is afraid of the dark". Even as we grow into adulthood, it is very rare for anyone to have heightened awareness of his or her own trait, mind, and feeling, all going on at the same time. So it is quite common that projection, perhaps in subtle ways, continue into our adulthood. The idea of projection in romantic love when you just fall in love with someone is like having rose-coloured glasses on; we see that person as incapable of doing wrong, we see all the good points, and we project those qualities on to them.

The projection can happen in all sorts of ways and falling in love is just one form of projection. Since I am aware of the idea that we do project things onto others, I will always ask myself the question whenever I feel angry whether I might project onto them the fears and anxiety that I have suppressed or not developed onto that person. I will then go further and say to myself, what would have happened if I was in that other person's shoes. This is one way of weakening projection because sometimes we have the attitude that "oh I could never behave like that" or "how can anyone behave like that." However, if you look deeply into the situation to consider the issues involved, you might have behaved in the same way under the same circumstances..

When we fall in love with someone, we tend to project virtuous qualities onto that person. After some time, it can be a burden for that person to carry because most of us are not full of virtuous qualities. In fact, Buddhist teaching taught us that we all have the same seeds in our consciousness, all with the same potential manifested in all those seeds

which could become either wholesome or unwholesome. For example, something like seed of loyalty which we may see as something very important, is manifested in us because we have learnt those things unconsciously through our parents or through other role models. Since the supporting condition is there, we are able to manifest this quality and all the qualities that are associated with being loyal. When we see someone who shows quality that is the opposite, we may feel aversion towards that person. This is just an example of how with the correct supporting condition, a seed may grow to be wholesome but is also possible for the opposite, for unwholesome seed to manifest.

Moving along to disillusion, once projection starts to become too much of a burden, it is not long before we also start to see that the person we fell in love with is not just all light and virtue. Inevitably, disappointment and disillusionment will set in. We come to the realisation that this person is not some god/goddess and changes are inevitable. At this stage, both parties involved in the relationship need to reassess their original vision of the other person, to see who they really are as a whole person and not just the shiny virtue we choose to see exclusively before. To deny this phase of reassessment can be fatal to the relationship and this is where love can turn into hate quite quickly. The initial projection can start turning into one of projecting negative traits which one begins to see in the other person. All of a sudden, things that have been rosy can turn black very quickly.

For example, a couple at the romantic stage of their relationship is driving home after a romantic picnic and the car breaks down. The man that this girl is in love with stood there with the car bonnet up, not knowing what to do with the broken down car. Immediately, the girl experience a feeling of disgust she has for this man, whom she sees as a white knight who can fix any car and anything that is broken. The girl stomped off and got a lift home in a taxi instead. She didn't speak to him or return his calls for days until fortunately in her case, she began to see that maybe what she was doing was to project her own inability to fix cars as well on to him. It is also through the realisation of her false expectation of this person whom she fell in love with. There is a big shock and big drop that comes from that kind of expectation.

Let us look at the different aspects of Buddhist teaching of love. As I have mentioned before, this word does get used a lot, and I find myself use the word "compassion" when I describe love in the way Buddha intends it. To look with eyes of compassion or love is a way to gain deep understanding that leads to wisdom and insight, so when we come across a

difficult situation, we can always use those eyes of compassion to look at it. We need to ask ourselves, "What is the best way for me to act to relieve the suffering of everyone concerned in this situation". With understanding, you can always look with eyes of compassion and to look deeply towards a resolution which does not bring suffering to either that other person, or to ourselves. I was recently on a retreat and one lady brought along a friend who is new to this country and was suffering from a lot of difficulties. Out of compassion, this lady had asked her friend to come along to this Buddhist retreat. Being not particularly well off either, this lady had paid her way to the retreat for herself as well as for her friend. For the first morning of the retreat, the lady's friend stayed there for 2 hours and decided that it wasn't for her and decided to go. The lady who had invited her friend, got extremely upset. She felt that she had done the wrong thing and felt that her friend had let her down. In the end, the lady who did the generous act with all the good intentions came to see that sometimes our good intention is not enough for compassion.

How then can Buddhist practice help us deal with the issues that come up when love becomes hate? Often the other person who has misunderstood us will soften when we show our compassion, when we show that we have understood the situation from their point of view, so we have to make an effort to look deeply into the teaching on aspects of love, and then we have to use it.

Equanimity is a characteristic that is like a basket that contains several things. It contains non-attachment, non-discrimination, and even mindfulness. But as we read in the last line of the loving kindness meditation, equanimity is not indifference. If you think of the extremes that sometimes happen in our society, attachment and aversion, is there a way through the middle to deal with them? With the Buddhist teaching there is always a way through the middle path. That is, to look at things with compassion and insight, in a way that can offer resolution which can bring relief to suffering in any particular situations.

In the Zen tradition, the function of meditation is to heal and help us to be able to look deeply into ourself and around us in order to realise what is really there. The tool we use here is that of mindfulness. I like to refer to a teaching called "seven miracles of mindfulness" and the first miracle of mindfulness is to dwell in the present moment and not off with our thoughts somewhere else. As we sit here in meditation, hopefully we are focused on our body, and not worrying about what we have to do later this week, or think about what might have gone on earlier. When it involves another person, then it

Projection is when we attribute to others, feelings and traits which really belong to us that are either unconscious or under-developed, suppressed or repressed in our personality.

is to be present for that person and to listen to them if we are really there to listen. When we do that, we come to the second stage of mindfulness, which is to make the object of our mindfulness present. It is like the story of two people watching a sunset. If you are sitting there watching the sunset and you are present for the sunset, then the sunset is real because you are experiencing it. But if your mind is somewhere else, then the sunset is not real for you at that moment.

Think of the third part of mindfulness as nourishing the object of your attention. A person will feel the nourishment just by having us being really there for them. The fourth miracle of mindfulness, and this is where mindfulness and true love intercept, is to relieve others of their suffering. Without mindfulness, looking with eyes of compassion and deeply into a situation, we risk taking an action to resolve a situation without really relieving the suffering. The fifth miracle is to look deeply. The sixth is understanding, and the seventh is transformation; to transform a situation in terms of what we talked about in romantic love, by changing our own projection of others.

The last one is where we might find it most difficult to transcribe our suffering verbally to something like, "Darling, I am angry". Sometimes it is all too easy for us to deny that we have been made angry by our loved ones. They may even ask us, "You are not angry, are you?" to which we will respond with, "Oh no no no, I am not angry" as we grind our teeth. To be able to put our pride aside and to acknowledge our feeling to our partner or loved one is a very open way to deal with the situation. It is often our pride that gives way to misunderstandings in these situations.

In the meditation that we practised tonight, we practised with "may I" and we started with "I" because normally it is easier to start practise focusing with one's self. We generally practise that way because if we cannot have good feeling towards ourselves, then it is very difficult for us to do it towards others. It is also sometimes better to start off with something that is very lovable, something like a fluffy puppy dog or something you could not possibly feel ill towards. We start practising good thoughts with the easy ones first, and then towards someone we love, and then someone else. So by bringing these things to mind, the way this meditation works is not just by thinking kind thoughts and generating

them in that person's direction. By visualising the person we are thinking of, it is only natural that we start to think of how we can help him/her. This is a type of meditation you can practise quite regularly which can be called loving kindness or compassion meditation because you are developing your capacity for love.

I have used examples that have come to my mind illustrating how love can turn to hate, very quickly. I could have used other examples of our friends, particular young girls growing up and are the apple of their fathers' eyes. When they get to teenage years, all of sudden the teenagers want to look elsewhere for role models and peers, hardly listening to their parents for advice anymore. The daughter is suddenly seen as someone who is very spoiled. I have used falling in love as one example, but what we really need to do is to look at the Buddhist teaching on love, and also on mindfulness to help us see clearly in those types of situations and to be able to use compassion to help us walk through those difficult times.

*Deep down inside
There are parts of us
We try to hide
Even from ourselves
The things we are not
proud of...*

*Our mistakes, our fears
Our own vulnerabilities
Just as we shut them away
So too, do we close our-
selves off
From those who remind us
of our imperfection
We lose sight of our aspira-
tion.*

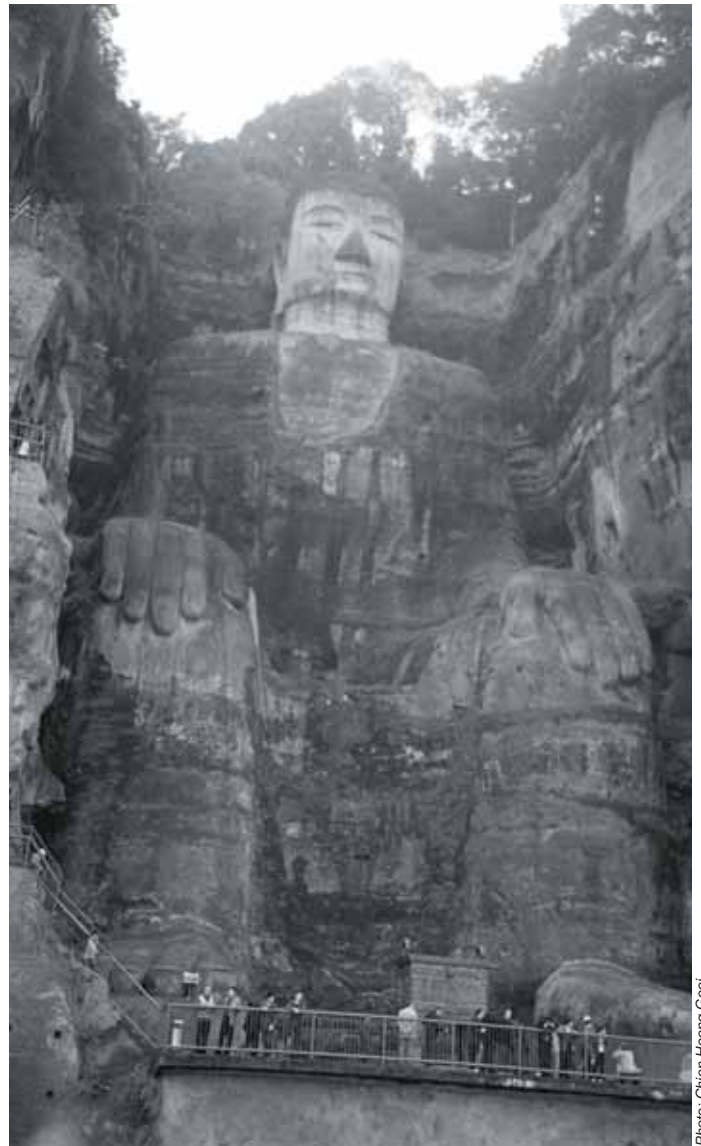


Photo: Chien Hoong Gool

Attachment vs. Letting Go

Rod Lee

The three poisons are ignorance, aversion and attachment. It is from ignorance that we actually mistake the way things occur. We mistake impermanent things as being permanent.

We think that our states of happiness should be permanent whereas states of unhappiness should be impermanent; so we get very mixed up. Interestingly enough, when you look at attachment and aversion, we have an attachment to not wanting things to happen to us. We never want suffering. We never even want the slightest discomfort. If you have an itch, you scratch it. You want it to go away. If you have a headache, you take a headache tablet. So, we are attached to feeling good all the time. This attachment is a cause of suffering. What we spend all our energy on wanting becomes a source of unhappiness, and that is the ignorance.

It is natural for us to have a certain amount of attachment. When the Dalai Lama's mother died, he cried. It is not about becoming completely detached from everything but it is the degree to which that attachment starts to affect our lives that is important. We are caught between wanting and not wanting, and we are constantly in this kind of battle. There is a way around this, and that is to realise that strong attachments do not work.

Let me give you an example. When we look at a sunset, we know two things. Firstly, that it is very beautiful and secondly, that it is impermanent. Does that worry us? Do we sit around saying, "Oh it's so beautiful" and then wail, "Oh no, it's gone"? No, because we know clearly that all things in nature are impermanent. So it only becomes a problem if you want to capture it on film and you cannot find your camera. Again, agitation arises when we fall under the ignorance of trying to make permanent things that cannot be made permanent. Did anyone see that wonderful Leunig cartoon, where this father and son are looking at a television set, watching a sunset over some mountains and they are going "wow", and outside the window is exactly the same sunset! It is kind of funny the way we set ourselves up. When we know that something is definitely impermanent, we should enjoy it fully. It is not about trying to capture it, holding on to it or being attached to having it forever. It is about rejoicing in the fact that we could see a sunset, and even when it is gone, that we had been very lucky to be in the right place to see it. *Dhamma* is about intelligence, and organising our mind to see things the way they are, not the way we want them to be.

When we pin our attachment on our success, then it can also be a problem. It is like having a carrot tied to a pole on top of your head and no matter how fast you run the carrot would always stay dangling in front of you. If you pin your hopes or your happiness on the next carrot, what happens if you die between carrots? What if you die before making it to the next carrot, have you had a terrible life? What about the ones you got before? It is not about the future, it is about the present. It is about becoming happy in the present, because if we decide that we are only going to be happy in the future, we are never going to get there. Do you know why? Because we never get to the future! We have a movable present, which lies at the interface between the ending of the past and the beginning of the future. We only have an ever-present present.

Now this does not mean that you do not have objectives. It does not mean that you do not plan for your exams or study hard to reach your goals. It is not about that – it is about where you place your happiness.

"I'm not happy now, but if I only get ... then I'll be happy!"

"If I've just had ... then I'll be happy!"

"Once I finish my exams, then I'll be happy!"

"Once I get a job, then I'll be happy!"

"Once I get a promotion, then I'll be happy!"

What we are saying here is, "I'm not happy now, but if I get all these things, then I'll be happy." It is a very sad way to live, because the future is like the carrot. We have the pole sitting over our head. There is the carrot, and

*What do you do if you get attached to letting go?
Can you get attached to letting go? Not really.*

there is the future, and we keep running towards it.

There was a very famous Tibetan lama who said, "The spiritual path is very difficult. Better not begin." He said, "However, once you have begun, you can never get off." Another Tibetan lama said, "You have two choices in life: to be completely ignorant, or become enlightened." Because once you start to understand a little of these spiritual truths, it does not stop. It will keep getting thrown up in front of you.

It is about understanding that attachment and learning to let go – to realise that there are some things we cannot stop. We sometimes do not have the power to stop external situations happening, and so we actually have to learn to accept patiently. If we have the opportunity of changing an external situation for the better, then we do it. It is not about abdicating responsibility, but we have to know when we can act, and what we can do, and then when things do not work out or we do not have control, then we have to accept patiently. That is the letting go – patiently accepting the way things are – because any other attitude will only cause us misery.

What do you do if you get attached to letting go? Can you get attached to letting go? Not really. Letting go is a process of the mind that frees the mind. Attachment is a closing in, or a contraction of the mind. Letting go is opening the mind. Now, there can be a problem if you just decide to let go of everything. That becomes irresponsibility. Letting go is called renunciation. The Buddha sits on a lotus, which represents the renunciation of our negative states of mind. These are all the states of mind which cause dissatisfaction in yourself and others.

Has anyone heard about Mila Repa, the famous yogi of Tibet? He was a very unusual character and there was one time, he went into this cave with his sole possession: a clay pot. That was all he had, and one day as he walked out of his cave, he tripped over it and it smashed. Apparently, he danced round and round this broken pot saying, "Isn't impermanence wonderful!" He thought it was fantastic. He had just seen impermanence right before his eyes, and it was wonderful. He even made the statement, "Every time I find a negative state of mind, I rejoice because I have got something else to work with." So this is also a little *dharmma* secret. When you see yourself being less than perfect, it is not a time to become more frustrated and angry with yourself. This is not *dharmma* practice. It is a time to work on that state of mind, so it does not keep re-occurring. It is about intelligent regret. You know that a negative state of mind is not beneficial and not only do you try not to intensify it, you try to lessen it or let it go. You try to renounce it. That is the way to work with negative states of mind, to let them go.

Your enemies are not out there, they are in here. It is the way you perceive things. It is the way you see things that create the difficulty and frustration. That is why Mila Repa said, "When I discover a fault in myself, I rejoice, because I have got something to work on." That is everyday *dharmma* practice. It is important to sit on your cushion, it is important to read the *dharmma* texts, but it is even more important to watch your mind. What is my mind doing now? Am I angry or frustrated? Do I need to do something now but I am too lazy to do it? These are negative things that you can work with right now. You can work with them directly and that, to me, is the message of the *dharmma*.

"Every suffering that I receive is through selfishly cherishing myself. Every happiness that I get is from cherishing others." So it is about letting go of the negative states of mind, but if you become attached to making sure people are happy, then you have what is known as "idiot compassion". You have to couple your generosity with wisdom. You need a balance. You do not give a baby razor blades to play with because the baby wants them. That is not generosity. You do not give away everything that you have and become completely destitute. That is not the

middle way, because then someone else is going to have to pick up the pieces for you and it becomes a burden for them. So, it is about balancing on the Buddha's path, which is the middle way. It is not about extremes, neither the extremes of poverty nor the extremes of ultra-wealth. It is about being happy with what you have.

As I said in the beginning, we all want happiness, and that is fine. There is nothing wrong with wanting happiness. But it is the way we see happiness that causes the problem, when we put our happiness on other people and other things. If you have a friend, and you think that person is the best person on the entire planet and you trust them 100%, and they let you down, all of a sudden your life becomes a disaster. But the Buddha said, "Friends become enemies, enemies become friends, and then change again!" So, if we put our happiness in a something or somebody, we must understand it will change, otherwise we are going to suffer if we cannot see that. We have to work on the happiness of our own mind, not on securing external phenomena to make sure that they keep us happy.

If you focus on being frustrated about everything that you cannot get when life does not go well, if you attach yourself to wanting things one way and then get frustrated when they do not go the way you want, you become an expert in frustration and anger. It is about changing our own minds and not external things. It is about changing the way we look at things that start to give us happiness. Interestingly enough, out of the Four Noble Truths, the path out of suffering through the *dhamma* allows us to let go of the small stuff, to let go of the things that make us irritated or jealous, and to let go of the things that are keeping us in a state of unhappiness. In the ninth century, a very famous teacher called Shanta Dava in India said, "If it can be remedied, why worry? If it can't be remedied, why worry?"

Ultimately, whatever happens to you is a result of your previous *kamma*. That does not mean that you do not do the best you can with the situation. You do not say, "Oh well, that's *kamma* so I'm not going to care or work hard" because every action that you take is creating more *kamma*. So every experience of old *kamma* gives you an opportunity of creating new *kamma*. Good causes only create good effects; bad causes only create bad effects. If you want a nasty person to go away in your life, be nice to them. Because you have just created a *kamma* by being nice to them, the effects of this action will only turn up as a good *kamma* in the future. If you want a negative person to continue to be in your life, be negative back to them. You are just creating the negative cycle.

When we talk about the cycle of rebirth, we can also talk about the cycle of returning *kamma*. There is a Tibetan text called "The Wheel of Sharp Weapons". It is written in verses, and it says, "This is only the wheel of sharp weapons of the *kamma* returning from the wrongs that I have done." In other words, whatever we are experiencing now is the result of previous *kamma*. The Buddha said, "If you want to know what you have been, have a look at your life now. If you want to know what you are going to become, have a look at your mind now." If you realise that the more compassion, love and understanding you bring to your present, the more you secure a future of experiencing life in that way. That is exactly how the Buddha talks about *kamma*. You have to know that whatever you create, you will experience.



Photo: Milani Ho

Mettamorphosis

~ Transformation of Sentimental Love into Loving Kindness

愛心的蛻變

Venerable Tsang Hui / 上藏下慧法師

Sentient beings are beings with feelings/emotions. All sentient beings are born with a certain sense of love and sympathy. If we look at the sentient beings around us, they all love their children, relatives and friends.

This is especially so with a mother's love. Mothers love their children deeply and thoroughly. However, very often, this love has its limitation. It only targets some people. Sometimes, in order to protect those we love, we may even hate others and fight with others? Why is this so? Why can't our love be extended to others? Why can't we care for all sentient beings equally?

Attachment to Self

This is due to our ignorance. We do not understand that our body and mind are in fact a combination of the Five Aggregates. It is unreal. We ignorantly attach to our body and mind as real. We think that there is a real, solid "I". Hence, the deluded concept of "I" and "mine" arises. We are ignorant of the appearance of "I" and the teaching of "non-self". This is self-ignorance. Extending from this, we attach to this unreal phenomenon as "I" and develop the view of self – self-view.

Due to our self-ignorance and self-view, self-love and self-pride also follow. Self-love means strong love to ourselves. We love ourselves deeply. Consequently, we also cling on to the things that are related to us. We want to protect them, expand them. This is the self-love and love for our belongings. In order to protect ourselves so that our lives become more secure, we fight for and grab hold of everything that is beneficial to us. We resist and reject those that will affect our benefits. We protect our belongings and always hope that we can have more.

As we tend to perceive everything from the perspective of "I", our self-pride arises. We always think that we are the best and better than others. We look down on others and cannot bear to see others succeed. Hence, jealousy, hatred etc follow. Under such circumstances, we always view things from our own perspective and are egocentric, how can we treat all sentient beings equally? We only love those who are related to us or beneficial to us. Frankly speaking, we love others in order to protect ourselves, so that our lives become more secure. We love ourselves the most!

Transformation of Sentimental Love into Loving Kindness

How can we break through this love that is selfish, narrow-minded and deluded, and expand our love to others? Fundamentally, we need to penetrate the truth of selflessness. We need to eliminate the attachment to self and realise the truth of emptiness and dependent origination.

Before we can attain this wisdom, we can practise through contemplating the Law of Dependent Origination and cultivating the Four Immeasurable Minds. These practices can help to reduce our self-love, self-pride, self-view and self-ignorance. We will learn to reduce our ego and appreciate the existence of others. We will learn to expand and purify our love, so that it is not strongly trapped in "I".

Contemplation on the Interrelationship among Dependent Originated Phenomena

By observing the interrelationships among dependent originated phenomena in the world, we can see that nothing in the world exists independently. Everything arises due to causes and conditions. All materials, mental activities and lives may seem independent, but they are like the knots in a net. They really exist with the existence of others. Without the interrelationship with others, nothing can exist.

We are also as such. We cannot be separated from society. Besides our family members, we rely on the farmers and merchants for our daily needs. We need the assistance of teachers and friends in learning knowledge and skills and to be successful in our career. We need the government to maintain the order and public work of the society. Without the cooperation of these causes and conditions, we cannot live peacefully, even just for a short moment. From this reality of dependent origination, we must understand that we are not individuals that are great and independent. We must let go of our self-pride. Without others, we cannot survive. We owe gratitude to all sentient beings. We should thank everyone for



*Compassion means
the mind to free others
from suffering.*

making our lives possible. We should develop an outlook of life based on helping each other and repaying the kindness of others, hence develop loving kindness and compassion to others.

In addition, we should contemplate our existence in the Three Births - the past, present and future lives - the cycle of life and death. From the beginningless of lives, all sentient beings are closely related to us. They could be our parents, brothers or sisters, husbands or wives, sons or daughters. We owe gratitude to all sentient beings for their kindness. With this understanding, we should try to expand our love and not to confine our love in the scope of our present family, race or nation; or to people in the same career, same area, same school or same religion only. From our interrelationship with others in the Three Births, we should understand that all sentient beings are closely related to us, we should learn to treat everyone equally. Based on this understanding, we will try to repay others for their kindness by bringing happiness and providing assistance to all sentient beings. This mind and action of loving kindness and compassion is developed through profound understanding of the Law of Dependent Origination.

Contemplation on the Equanimity of the Law of Dependent Origination

The previous contemplation is still a form of care that arises from worldly relationships. Thus, besides understanding the interrelationship of dependent originated phenomena and having loving kindness to others, we should contemplate on the equanimity of the Law of Dependent Origination. All conditional phenomena arise due to interrelationships. Their appearances are different. However, these different appearances are not existences that are independent and real. This includes ourselves. We exist due to the combination of many causes and conditions, we are impermanent and have no fix and real identity. We need to penetrate deeply into the truth of dependent origination and realise that all phenomena are without self-nature. Everything is selfless. When we realise that the inherent nature of dependent origination is emptiness and equality, we will realise that all phenomena are not only interrelated, they are also equal and non-dual. All sentient beings are unreal existences that arise due to causes and conditions. Everything is as such. There is no contradiction and discrimination between I and you.

Although everything is in equanimity, sentient beings are ignorant and do not understand the truth. To them, "I" and suffering are real, thus, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, with great compassion, guide sentient beings. They do not only wish to attain enlightenment themselves, they also wish to help sentient beings disentangle themselves from delusion and realise the truth. Thus, we should learn from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and develop the mind of great compassion. We should help sentient beings to attain liberation and not only attain liberation for ourselves. In the state of mind of equanimity, we share the wish of all sentient beings in seeking for liberation and treat everyone as one. We see the suffering of others as our own suffering. When others are in delusion, it also implies that our virtues have not attained completion.

In addition, we should realise that all sentient beings are equal. No matter how good or bad they are now, it is all due to our ignorance. This includes ourselves. As long as we try hard, cultivate the right causes

and conditions, everything can be changed. All sentient beings have the potential to attain Buddhahood. In short, we should not only develop loving kindness through observing dependent originated phenomena, we should also try to break through self-attachment through the contemplation of the truth of dependent origination. Hence, constantly develop the sense of equanimity to oneself and others. In this way, we can gradually progress towards realising a true, pure and perfect mind of loving kindness and compassion.

The Practice of the Four Immeasurable Minds

In Buddhism, there is the teaching of the Four Immeasurable Minds. That is, the cultivation of the mind of loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. This practice helps to broaden our love to more people.

Loving kindness means that the mind wishes others to be happy. Compassion involves the mind wishing others to be free from suffering. Appreciative joy is the mind of rejoicing in the wholesome deeds and success of others. Equanimity means to treat everyone equally, regardless of their relationship to us.

The practice of the Four Immeasurable Minds helps us to systematically broaden our mind of loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity to all sentient beings. When we practice the Four Immeasurable Minds, we have to begin with sentient beings that are easiest for us to develop these minds.

For example, in developing the mind of loving kindness and compassion, we normally start with those who are closest to us and systematically expand the scope to those who are not so close to us, and then to those who are unfriendly to us. We usually start with ourselves, wishing ourselves to be happy and free from suffering. Then, we extend the loving kindness to our parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, may everyone be happy and free from suffering. Then, we extend our loving kindness to those who are not so close to us, those that we do not know and even to those who are unfriendly to us. Finally, we extend our loving kindness to everyone in society and the country, and to all sentient beings in the six realms.

Training as such, supplemented by our understanding of the truth of dependent origination, will help us to break through our selfish love that is narrow in scope. We will learn to extend our love systematically to a wider scope of sentient beings and not be deluded by personal sentiments and views. When we can extend our loving kindness and compassion equally to all sentient beings, regardless whether they are friends or enemies, this is loving kindness and compassion, as taught in Buddhism.

Conclusion

Love is common among all sentient beings. The problem lies on its limitation to a selfish and narrow field of scope. The practice of loving kindness and compassion in Buddhism aims to extend and purify this sentimental love. How can we transform this sentimental love into loving kindness and compassion in Buddhism?

We need to associate with wise advisors and listen to the *dharmma*. We need to think and contemplate on the *dharmma* in our daily life, so that we can understand the truth of dependent origination. We should understand that we owe gratitude to all sentient beings. We should also realise that "I", the world and all sentient beings are impermanent and selfless in nature. We should let go of our attachment to self and realise the great love of equanimity.

Everything in the world is impermanent and ever changing. They exist conditionally. This includes ourselves. Thus, we should not attach to ourselves too much. Strong self-love obstructs us from seeing the truth and traps us in sufferings. It can lead us to confrontation with others and true loving kindness and compassion cannot be fully expressed. We need to contemplate on the truth of ourselves. Although everything is impermanent, it is in this world that is impermanent and dependent originated that we can improve ourselves, and lead ourselves to liberation and freedom. We should thank all sentient beings for giving us the opportunity to learn. We should also understand that all sentient beings have the same suffering as ourselves. They do not understand the truth of self and all phenomena. They are always disturbed by defilements. Thus, we should share what we have learnt with all sentient beings. Hopefully everyone will realise the truth, break through the attachment of "I" in this dependent originated world and not to entangle themselves in suffering.

In our world today, due to attachment to oneself, one's own race or country, a lot of ignorant sentient beings fight for power and wealth. This leads to unrest and suffering in the world. Thus, promotion of peacefulness, equanimity, loving kindness and compassion is essential. It is hoped that everyone will listen to the *dharmma*, contemplate on the *dharmma* and realise the truth of dependent origination. We should also cultivate the Four Immeasurable Minds and spread the mind of loving kindness and compassion to more people around us. May more people learn the true essence of loving kindness and compassion and hence, help the world to become more peaceful and tranquil.

眾生與生俱來都帶有多少的愛心與同情心，所以又稱有情眾生。廣觀世間的一切眾生都有愛護自己子女、親友之心，尤其是母親對子女們的愛，更是徹骨徹髓，表現得淋漓盡致。但是，這愛心似乎有所拘限，只針對某些對象，有時還會因為保護自己的所愛，而瞋恨他人，與他人鬥爭？這是為什麼呢？為什麼這個愛心不能擴展到其他人，為什麼我們不能平等的愛護所有的眾生呢？

[自我的愛染]

這是因為我們的無明。我們不了解我們的身心乃五蘊和合之假體。我們愚癡的執自己的身心為實有，妄執有一個實在的、具有主宰作用的實體存在，因而產生「我」與「我所」之妄想分別。我們愚於我相、迷於無我之道理，這是我癡。並進一步的於非我之法，妄執為我，執著有實我，產生我見。

由於我癡我見，我愛與我慢也隨之而生。我愛，即我貪，也就是對所執著的我深生耽著，對自我深刻的愛戀。進而，對與自己相關的事物也產生執著、要保護它們，擴充它們。這就是我愛與我所愛。我們為了保護自己，使自己的生命更有保障，對自己有利的事就盡量爭取，對影響自己利益的事就加以抗拒，對自己所擁有的東西更盡量保護，希望越多越好。

由於處處視「我」為一己之中心，我們也因所執之「我」而形成憍慢心，總覺得自己最好，自己比別人好，看不起他人，不耐他榮。妒嫉、瞋恚隨之而起。請問，在這樣事事以自我為中心，以自我為出發點的情況下，我們如何能公平對待一切眾生呢？我們所愛的只限與自己有關係的人或眾生，更重要的是關係到自己利益的人。說得透徹些，我們愛別人，實際上最愛的是自己！我們愛別人是為了保護自己，使自己的生命更有保障！

[將愛心蛻變成慈悲心]

那麼，要如何突破這自私，狹隘，雜染的情愛，而把我們的愛心擴大呢？最根本的就是要透視無我的道理，破除我執，了達緣起性空的真理。在還未完全達成這智慧之前，我們可透過緣起法的觀察以及四無量心的修持，減輕我們的我愛、我慢、我見、我癡，降低自我，感恩他人，擴充及淨化我們的愛心，不要讓它太因陷於自我當中。

[觀緣起相的相關性]

從緣起相的相關性來說，世間的一切都不是獨立的，是依種種因緣和合而成的。一切的物質、心識、生命，看來似乎是獨立，但他們實如網結一樣，都是關係性的存在，離了關係一切是不可能存在的。我們也是如此。我們不能離社會而生存。除了家庭的成員，我們日常生活的衣食住行，有賴農工商賈的辛勞；知識的學習，事業的成功，要靠師友的幫助；社會秩序的維持，公共事業的推動，需要政府的政治與軍事。沒有這些因緣的和合，我們一刻也難以安樂的活下去。從這樣的緣起事實，我們要了解自己不是最偉大的個人。我們要學習降伏我慢。沒有他人，也沒有我們。我們要感念生活中的每一個眾生，感謝大家成就了我們，養成互助互愛、知恩報恩的人生觀。

進一步的，我們要從三世的生死流轉來觀照。一切眾生，從無始以來，都與我們有著非常密切的關係。他們都可能是我們的父母，兄弟姊妹，夫妻兒女。一切眾生，都對我有恩德。有了這樣的認知，我們才不會把愛心拘限在現生狹隘的家庭，國族，人類；或只限於同一職業，同一區域，同一學校，或同一宗教的關係上，而是從三世因果的自他展轉關係中，了解我們與一切眾生的密切關係，而等視一切眾生。進而將我們拘限性的情愛擴展成利樂一切眾生，救濟一切眾生的報恩心行，慈悲心行。這是因對緣起法則的透視而流露出的關切與同情。

[觀緣起的平等性]

以上的觀察，還是屬於世間自他關係而產生的關懷。因此，在了解緣起相的相關性，慈悲眾生之餘，進一步的，我們要觀察緣起的平等性。緣起法是重重關係，無限的差別。但是，這些差別的現象，都不是獨立的、實體的存在。包括我們自己在內，亦是因緣和合假有的，是變動不實的。我們要深入觀察緣起法，通達一切法的無自性，體解無我。在了達緣起法平等一如的本性時，我們將領悟到一切不只是相依相成的關切，而是無二無別的平等。眾生與我們都是因緣和合的假體，沒有實在性的。一切是如是，沒有自他的對立與分別。

雖然如此，無明的眾生卻不能了解。自我與苦對眾生還是迫真的。所以，佛菩薩發起大悲心，不但自己覺悟自在，也希望引導愚癡的眾生體解真理，從迷惑中醒悟過來。因此，我們要向佛菩薩學習，發大悲心。不但

自己要解脫，也要幫助眾生得到解脫。在平等一如的心境中，體恤眾生也有與我們一樣希望離苦得樂的渴望，而發起同體大悲之心，與眾生融成一體。眾生有苦迫，不得解脫，就等於我們自己的苦迫，自身功德的不圓滿。同時，從這法性平等中體悟到眾生的平等性。無論眾生現在是怎麼樣，包括我們自己，都是因為無明煩惱的覆蓋，只要肯努力，培養正確的因緣，一切是可以改變的。一切眾生都有成佛的可能性。簡言之，我們不但要從緣起相的相依共存引發共同意識的慈愛，更要從緣起的平等性中突破自我的執著。無論對自，對他，都時時傾向平等，和同的直感，這樣我們才能漸漸的趨向真正清淨圓滿的慈悲。

[四無量心的修持]

在佛法中，有慈悲喜捨四無量心的修習，幫助我們將愛心擴大。慈是希望他人得到快樂的心懷。悲是希望解除他人痛苦的心懷。喜是讚賞他人的快樂與善行的心懷。捨是不考慮與他人的關係，平等的對待一切眾生的心懷。

四無量心的修習使我們有層次地將慈心、悲心、喜心、捨心擴展到一切眾生。修習四無量心，要從最容易著手的對象開始。在培養慈悲心的時候，我們一般從親而疏而怨，次第的擴充。從希望自己離苦得樂，擴展到希望父母兄弟姐妹，親戚，朋友遠離痛苦，得到快樂。並進一步的擴展到陌生人，甚至仇人身上。然後，更把慈悲心擴展到社會和國家的每一個人，最後擴展到六道中所有的眾生。

這樣的訓練，配合對緣起法的正確了解，使我們慢慢的突破自私、狹隘的情愛，次第的把愛心擴展到更廣泛的眾生，不被自我情見所歪曲。當我們能達到怨親平等，慈悲心普遍到一切，這才是佛法中的慈悲。

[總結]

愛心乃有情所共有，只是不能擴充，不能離開自私與狹隘的立場而已，所以它又被稱為情愛。慈悲的修習，主要就在於擴充、淨化這情愛。如何將愛心蛻變成慈悲心？我們必須多親近善知識，聽聞佛法，並將所聽聞的佛法在日常生活中加以思維觀照，體會緣起的道理。我們要了解世間中每個眾生都有恩於我們，同時，體會自我、世間以及一切眾生的無常性，無我性，放下

自我的愛染，實現平等一如的大愛。

世間的一切都是無常變化，有條件性存在的，包括我們在內。因此，我們不應太執著於自己，強烈的我愛使我們看不到真理，使我們束縛在煩惱中，不得自在；也使我們與人產生對立，不能發揮真正的慈悲。我們要觀照自我的真相。雖然一切是無常的，但也唯有在這緣起變動的世間中我們才能提昇自己，使我們趨向解脫自在。我們要感恩所有的眾生給我們學習的機會，同時，體諒一切眾生都與我們一樣的苦惱，不明自我與世間的真相，煩惱躁動。我們要把自己所學的與眾生分享，希望大家都能體悟真理，在緣起的世間中，突破自我，不再困惑於煩惱當中。

在我們這個世界，無明的眾生常常為了個人、民族、國家的權利而鬥爭，使大家陷溺於痛苦不安當中。因此，鼓勵祥和平等的慈悲心實為重要。希望大家多聽聞佛法，思惟佛法，體會緣起的道理，修習四無量心，將慈悲心散佈於更多的人，使更多的人感染到慈悲的訊息，促進世界的和平與安寧。



Photo: Chien Hoang Gaoi

Love Like a Mother Loves

Performed in Bodhi Nite 2004 'With Loving Kindness ...'

Vocals: Desy Juliaty / Agus Santoso / UNIBUDS Choir

On piano: Adelene Ong

Saxophone: Julian Craig

When a mother loves her child
It's like the sunshine upon this life
It's a true love with a selfless heart
Sparkling up the dark like a million stars

It's like a mother loves her child
We share our love with a boundless heart
With those in need and for everyone
This world would live in peace and harmony

Hear my child,
These words rhyme so clearly in my heart
Hold my child,
My hands are open to be your guide
Walk forward to the far boundless horizon
Where dreams buried under the bright light of the sun

There are things to realise
There's happiness deep inside
You will understand how it's like
To fly high above the sky
Free from misery of life
And share our love with everyone
Just like my love to you, oh so true

r *Her Child*

by Agus Santoso



Photo: Milani Ho

The song was inspired by the love of all mothers in this world to their children for many generations to come, from one lifetime to the next. We are born and nurtured by the love of our mothers, by their noble effort, despite their imperfections. But it surely is a true love when we love all beings the way a mother loves her child. That is to nurture, to lend a helping hand, offer some space in our hearts to those in need and to everyone, unconditionally. The love of a mother is a fine symbol of loving kindness, a pure form of love with understanding, compassion, and equanimity for all, as shown by the Buddha.

May all beings be well and happy.

Agus

As Calm as Water

~ Training of Mindfulness

Venerable Tenzin Chonyi

*Mindfulness means 'not forgetting the object'.
And the object is, of course, the object of meditation.*

The other word we need to bring in is 'introspection', which analyses why we have forgotten the object of meditation. These are the two main things we need to have in order to develop our meditation practices. Within these two definitions, it also helps us to understand what meditation is about. Through understanding, we can see that mindfulness in itself is not meditation, for meditation is a whole process.

To develop mindfulness, we need to know the object we are trying to meditate on. In a guided meditation, the object is whatever instructions are given. However, when you meditate at home you need to know what the object of your meditation is. As Buddhists, very often the visualisation of Sakyamuni Buddha is used as the object. The other objects of meditation are, for example, our sense perceptions, our thoughts that run in the mind or imagining what a completely purified mind is like. You might also be changing the object of meditation within one sitting of meditation.

While we are talking about this, we need to also have a look at our aim. One of the reasons of developing meditation is achieving what is called 'calm-abiding'. This is the level of meditation practice which we need to develop in order to have the direct perception of emptiness. So in addition to mindfulness of the body, sense perception or the mind, one of the key objects of meditation is emptiness itself and what this means.

In order for us to have an object of meditation, we need to understand what it is all about. So behind the mindfulness we also have thoughts, theories and contemplations. These are the other factors that help us develop mindfulness. We need to know the reasons why we apply mindfulness, for example towards our sense perceptions. If we just sit down and try to meditate without any understanding of why we are doing this then it makes it very difficult. That is why we need to understand the teachings behind the reasons for being mindful towards our sense perceptions, why we need to be non-judgemental and what it means to be simply aware. So the theory and contemplation helps us to develop that quality of mindfulness and with that we also build up a sense of familiarity towards the object.

Through mindfulness we are trying to train our mind to come to the state of 'calm-abiding'. The definition of this state is the ability to keep our mind on the object of meditation for as long as we want. This may be hours, days or even weeks without any effort. In calm-abiding, the mind is very stable, like a mountain. The mind is like being locked down on the object of meditation with incredible power. When we are able to lock down on the object of meditation with that sort of power, then we can keep our minds very stable on a very subtle object. When we are trying to understand what emptiness is about, we are dealing with something that is very subtle. So we need to have a very powerful mind to do so. We need calm-abiding together with what we call special insight, which is the wisdom of realising emptiness. When we bring these two together we have a direct perception of emptiness or the 'yogic' perception.

Meditation itself is not something specifically for Buddhists. It is a method of training the mind. As Buddhists, what we do is oriented towards achieving the state of enlightenment or liberation. So when we meditate, that is also what our aim is. That is a long-term aim and

we may not be able to achieve it in the short-term, although this state of calm-abiding is a necessary prerequisite to achieve the final goal. The other important prerequisites are, for example, living a moral life to reduce our obstacles and reducing mental distractions, having enough material support for our practice and having a quiet space. All these need to come together and in addition, it is important to have a good teacher to guide us through the different meditation states. One of the things that we need to know by studying the whole process of meditation is to understand what the different states are. This is important because to reach our aim there are some states we will come across that may seem like we have reached enlightenment but in fact we have not.

When we try to meditate there will also be problems that arise. One of them is laziness in the practice. In order to counteract these problems we need to bring in the antidotes. And the first antidote to laziness is 'faith'. Faith means understanding the mind, the teachings, the relevance of training the mind so that you are sufficiently convinced that this is what you really want to do. Together with faith we develop 'aspiration' which is the second antidote. Having aspiration means that now we have the faith to do it, we want to have the aspiration to continue on with it. The next part is putting 'effort' into it which is the third antidote. The fourth antidote is a sense of 'joy' as a result of walking the path. When you start to feel good about it you become more enthusiastic and want to continue on further. These are the preliminaries for meditation.

The next biggest problem is forgetting what it is that we are trying to meditate on and this is where mindfulness comes in. When we meditate we need to know what we are meditating on and stick to that. With some meditation techniques, we might be intentionally moving around from one object to the other. This is alright because you are being clear that in this particular session you are moving your attention. But if you are trying to train your mind in mindfulness, what you need to do is to keep your mind on the object of meditation. Mindfulness is about not forgetting the object of meditation.

When we want to train our mind in mindfulness we need to start off with short periods of time because our mind is not used to staying with one object for a long period of time. If we try to force ourselves to meditate we may end up damaging our mind. It is possible that people may end up with a psychotic episode or enter into depression as a result of pushing themselves too much in meditation. Meditation is very helpful if done correctly but can also be damaging when done incorrectly.

When we start initially, we work in short periods of time. One of the things I teach people is to do it with counting the breath. You take three cycles of breathing while you keep your mind on the object of meditation and on the fourth breath you relax. After that you again come back to the object of your meditation. This is a short period of time to work with and in that short period of time it is less likely that we are going to lose the object of our meditation. This way we are more likely to feel a sense of success. When you are comfortable with it then you can extend the period to four breaths and more. We push ourselves forward but when it is too much we step back to stabilise ourselves before going forward a little bit more.

Associated with the training of mindfulness is the other quality of 'introspection'. When we try to hold on to our object of meditation two things happen. Either our mind becomes overly active, which is called excitement, or the mind becomes dull. We lose the object of meditation either when the mind becomes overly active or if we fall asleep. Having introspection comes after mindfulness has checked to

We need to know the reasons why we apply mindfulness, for example towards our sense perceptions.

see whether we have lost our object of meditation and then introspection checks whether it has been lost through excitement or dullness. With introspection we begin to learn more and more on how our mind works. As we come to a stage where we become more skilled in knowing when we are about to lose our object of meditation, we will be able to bring the mind back. In this way we become so familiar with the whole process of meditation that we do not even need to deliberately check whether our mind has lost its object of meditation. When we reach this stage then we are closer to the calm-abiding stage.

So in the early stage of learning meditation we need to build up our mindfulness and introspection but later on this is what we need to let go. If we know a little bit about the stage of calm-abiding then we are more skilled at knowing when to check up and when to let it go. When we are looking at the bulk of meditation, once we get past the inability to identify whether we are in excitement or in mental dullness, from then on the problems are to do with not over applying this introspection or using it when it is inappropriate. These are the qualities that we need to build up.

It is important for us to understand the different stages from the beginning of meditation up until the stage of calm-abiding. The first of these stages is called 'setting the mind'. In this stage we are turning our mind inwards. As this is the beginning, we need to put in a lot of effort into our mindfulness and introspection. The object of meditation should be something gross rather than subtle so that it is easier for us to stay with the object.

The second stage is called 'continuous setting'. For example, at first we extend the breaths from three to five breaths. Later, instead of counting the breath we can now sit continuously for 15 minutes. This is extending the period of our meditation on the object. This still requires a lot of effort on mindfulness and introspection but is now less than before.

The third part is called 'resetting'. In this stage we bring our minds back. This becomes easier now because the power of mindfulness has become stronger. As we become used to mindfulness, we return the mind to the object of meditation without losing mindfulness very badly. The previous stages are not so much of doing meditation but rather just doing the preliminary exercises. Once we reach this third stage we can start to call it meditation.

The fourth stage is called 'close setting'. The mind has become much more stable and by applying mindfulness we become more closely tied to the object of observation. Although the object is not lost, there is still a quality of excitement or laxity that occurs. In these initial stages, we experience coarse excitement or coarse laxity. In the next stages it becomes more subtle. The mind is able to hold on to the object of meditation yet one part of the mind is still doing something else. The analogy used is that the mind is steady like ice or very still water but there is still activity happening down below like fishes swimming underneath. In this stage, if we do not bring in introspection we may be thinking that we have a stable mind. We can maintain awareness of the object but our mind is still having awareness of a lot of other things that are happening. In these two stages introspection needs to be very powerful in order to

*With introspection we begin to
learn more and more on how our
mind works.*

In order to cut the roots of samsara you only need to get to this stage of calm-abiding.

distinguish between the coarse and subtle laxity and excitement. This is the fifth stage of 'disciplining'.

The sixth stage is called 'pacifying'. In this stage introspection comes in very quickly and stops the mind from going into laxity or excitement even at subtle levels. We are able to recognise the subtle laxity but we are still not good at subtle excitement which happens in the next, seventh, stage of 'thorough pacifying'. Once we have gotten through these two stages then we get to a stage where the amount of effort required becomes minimal.

The eighth stage is called 'making one pointed' or 'making continuous'. We can place our mind continuously in meditative stabilisation uninterrupted for much longer periods. We have become much more skilful in using mindfulness and introspection that subsequently the mind becomes more stable. There is no longer a need to rely on the exertion of introspection in this stage as it now arises by itself without any effort. It is like driving a car and initially you need to think about what you need to do but after a while it just becomes natural for you. In a similar way, mindfulness and introspection are now happening without us having to do anything about it.

The ninth stage, called 'setting in equipoise', is a meditative stabilisation devoid of the activity of thought due to the fact that meditative stabilisation arises of its own accord from familiarity without depending on the striving and exertion of maintaining mindfulness of antidotes. There is no problem in getting our mind fixed. Once we get to this stage then we can move into calm-abiding, which is the stage we are trying to reach.

Calm-abiding is also the first of another set of nine levels of mental concentration. However, in order to cut the roots of *samsara* you only need to get to this stage of calm-abiding which allows you to have a direct understanding of emptiness. In this stage the mind is very fluid and is working well like a well-oiled machine. From here, the mind has the ability to gain a full understanding of what emptiness is about.

There are many paths of mindfulness training whereby you are mindful of different objects, for example, the Four Noble Truths, the Six Perfections, etc. All these objects can take us either into meditative concentration or to develop the wisdom of realising emptiness, which is important in cutting the roots of *samsara*. When we bring these two together and meditate using emptiness as our object of concentration, we then have sufficient meditative power to have the direct perception of what emptiness is. That is when we are able to achieve liberation from *samsara*. It could take six months to achieve the state of calm-abiding and it might take a little bit longer to achieve a full understanding of what emptiness is about but it makes us realise that it is not impossible to reach liberation. What stops us may be attributed to being lazy or not having the opportunity to practise but it is in fact our *kamma*. We need to generate enough positive *kamma* to create the necessary conditions for us to develop calm-abiding and to develop this wisdom. So the whole aim of our spiritual path is to bring us to this particular point where we could achieve liberation or the final stage of enlightenment.

The memory grey....the mood gold: Metamorphosis

Maggie Owen

I surface. Grey is my world. Grey surrounds me. Grey plastic TV flickers grey images. Grey is the lodestone in my heart. Grey the seat I sit upon. Grey the cupboard where I hide my life. Grey the pin-board where I expose it. Grey the lino on the stairs. Grey the mouse sitting in the corner licking his lips. Grey the fuse box that hangs over my head. Grey the wires that run in long grey shafts. Grey and glistening carrying messages. Grey life drained. Grey long starless night. Grey short foggy day. Grey spinning into swirling dust. Grey cloud - drab blanket covering the sky. Grey empty of colour. Grey messages empty of life. Running in tangled grey wires. Hidden in long grey sheaths.

Where do they go?

They metamorphose

White is my light glowing bright

Yellow my sunshine bittersweet joy

Orange my spirit meditation head bowed

Blue holds my hand heals my heart reminds me of you

Lilac colours the pallet of my life with gentleness

Silver graces my steps slipper-less feet in pirouette

Red my bowl of cherries warm summer breeze sways the trees

Gold is my life

You Are Responsible (For Your Own Actions)

Rod Lee

As we go through our lives, sometimes bad things happen to us, either physically, emotionally or financially. This is inevitable. However, the good news is it is our own fault that they happen. And this is the result of kamma.

Our world works on the basis of *kamma*, the law of cause and effect. Bad things happen to us because of the negative actions and motivations behind the actions we have done previously, either in previous lives or past moments in this lifetime. Thus, we are responsible for our own actions as well as their subsequent results.

However, how do we know that *kamma* indeed exists? The Buddha once said, "Do not believe what I have told you because of your love for me. Believe them only because you have gone through them in your consciousness and understood them." Thus we should always seek to understand concepts before accepting them. If we look at the smaller aspects of our lives, we can see that we rely very much on the law of cause and effect in our daily lives. For example, when we plant an apple seed and water it appropriately, we will get an apple tree; it will surely not turn into a Mercedes-Benz, for instance. We cannot function if things happen in total randomness as we will not be able to predict anything in our lives. However, sometimes we cannot see the connections and we think that there is some randomness at work as well. For example, we cannot accurately predict where the cup will fall when we throw it against the wall. However, this is because we do not know all the factors that are involved, such as the mass of the cup, the trajectory of the throw, the disturbances of the air and many more factors. Thus, according to Buddhism, we may not be able to see all connections but there is no external force besides the cause and effect governing this world. And this is why we may need to rely on certain authorities such as through Buddhist teachings, or government policies because only the Buddha can see all kammic relations.

One may wonder then how does *kamma* answer the question "why are we here". According to Buddhism, we are here because of a previous cause - a previous moment of consciousness. We experience the world through our consciousness and our consciousness determines our likes and dislikes. For example, other people might like the same object/person that we dislike. This consciousness has no beginning and no end, it continues moment by moment as one moment of consciousness gives rise to the next. As the consciousness goes from lifetime to lifetime, it carries with it the seed of *kamma*, which acts as the potential of our actions.

One aspect of *kamma* that we must understand is that there is a time gap between the cause and effect. Our financial savings do not decrease the moment we evade tax or our ribs do not get crushed the moment we step on an ant. However, we do experience a certain level of effects later. We are responsible for our actions as we have a choice in each moments of our life to purify our *kamma* - to create positive *kamma* instead of negative ones.

If we come across a person who we consider to be difficult to deal with (who could actually be someone else's best friend), we have created the *kamma* to experience this situation in this lifetime. We need to be nice to him so as to create the conditions for the same person to appear in a positive way in the future if we want to stop this negative experience. Being nasty to the person will only bind us more tightly to the kammic cycle. However, many of us tend to blame the other person for causing all of our pain and thus not being in control of our experiences. We need to realise that we are responsible for our experiences and thus we are able to change our future at each moment of our experience.

According to the Buddha's teachings, there are four ways of dealing with difficult people or situations. I will explain it by referring to the difficult person or situation as a poison bush. Firstly, we can choose to avoid the poison bush if we feel that we are not capable to deal with it. For example, we can choose to avoid a person if we feel that he or she is too negative and we do not have the abilities to help him or her. Note that we are not wishing the person harm but we are just removing ourselves from the situation and we can wish the person well at the same time. There is a friend of mine whose father is a strong pacifist and he volunteered as a stretcher carrier during World War II. In this way, he could help the wounded without killing anyone. However, he also said that he would have shot back if he had had a gun on many occasions. Sometimes circumstances bring our *kamma* to the surface, as we are only free from our *kamma* when we reach *nibbana* and surpass all sorrows. Sometimes our *kamma* is stronger than our own choices, just like the times when we have done negative things even when we did not intend to, but it does not mean we stop trying to do the right things.

The second way in dealing with the poison bush is to understand it, like understanding the root system so we can chop it out. We analyse the situation intelligently. For example, we may have discovered that some people are very negative because they are insecure or jealous, we can then begin to work skilfully with them so that they no longer feel jealous or insecure. This kind of method requires wisdom.

The third way to deal with the poison bush is to transform it. We can transform the poisonous leaves of the bush into medicine just like using the negative aspect of the person in situations to yield positive outcomes.

Finally, enlightened beings such as the Buddha are able to consume the poison bush directly without incurring any kammic effect as they have gone beyond the law of cause and effect.

As can be seen, we can employ various ways to deal with different situations of our lives to negate negative *kamma*. There are times when we need to deal with situations directly as we cannot avoid them. For example, I had a client who was a very grumpy and unhappy man. I dealt with him for many years partly because I needed a job and also because I had an instinct that he will be really upset if I rejected him. I figured it would also be an opportunity for me to put my practice to the test. I dealt with him as patiently as I could, putting my many years of practice to the test; of course I was on the edge of losing my temper many a times. Eventually, he became more and more generous towards me until our *kamma* finished. It was rewarding for me as I learnt to be more patient and hopefully a better person.

Buddhism is really simple; find out what yields positive effects and do them, and avoid doing things that will yield negative results at the same time. This requires morality. Generally, actions that bear positive motivations with the aim of bringing happiness for sentient beings will generate positive *kamma* while motivations that aim to harm will generate negative *kamma*. However, there are some grey areas that require wisdom. Sometimes what people think will bring them happiness may not be good for their well-being. For example, we do not buy drugs for drug addicts just because they want them.

We need renunciation, compassion and wisdom to achieve enlightenment. We renounce negative states of mind that will bring us grief, such as greed, hatred and jealousy. Renunciation is our morality to not harm others so as to prevent ourselves from suffering. We then need both compassion and wisdom in order to help others efficiently. Compassion is an action of helping others while wisdom is the understanding of the truth that will allow us to help efficiently. Compassion also creates positive states of mind, developing wisdom that allows us to see the truth and reality, giving rise to the right actions that will remove the *kamma* and thus allowing us to be more enlightened. These three virtues create causes for positive *kamma*.

Actions that bear positive motivations with the aim of bringing happiness for sentient beings will generate positive kamma while motivations that aim to harm will generate negative kamma. However, there are some grey areas that require wisdom.

In order for *kamma* to ripen, we need to have both causes and conditions. Causes are our past thoughts and actions while conditions are the necessary circumstances for the effect to take place. For example, driving a car and parachuting are the conditions for people to die from unnatural deaths but it will not manifest into reality if there is no cause in the first place.

There are people who exploit the law of cause and effect to remove all responsibilities for their actions, such as, "I can't help that I'm lazy and it's because of my *kamma*." However, these people forget to see that we have a choice in every moment of our life to free ourselves from the *samsara* cycle or to bind ourselves tighter to it. I can say that my laziness is a result of my *kamma*, however, I now have a choice to create the cause of my future experience. For every moment we make a positive choice, we are freeing ourselves from *samsara* and creating a better future. Being responsible for our actions and consequences is to accept the negative experiences as a result of our *kamma*, not blaming others for the cause. Try to analyse situations and think of what we can do to prevent its occurrence and generate positive experience instead. This means that we have to take control of our lives.

While we try to create the life that we want, we should not dwell too much in the future or the past. All we have is only NOW, the present. Our past and future exist in our minds and not in reality. Our actions and power lies in the now only. It is also where our responsibility lies. We are responsible for our states of mind as well as our actions in the present moment. We cannot control the past or the future but we can control the present state of mind. Our experiences depend on our state of mind and we can change it by changing our ways of thinking in the present moment.

The Zen tradition believes in "no remainder". It believes in focusing in the present 100% and the future will be taken care of. However, being relaxed about the future does not mean being oblivious about the future. We need to be aware of the future and plan for what we need. We then focus 100% of our attention in the present to carry out our plan while worrying about the results as little as possible. For example, we realise the need to save financially for the future, so we save in the present while worrying as little as possible about our future.

One may wonder what happens to the Buddha's consciousness after reaching *nibbana*. The Buddha's consciousness continues to exist even when He has gone beyond the law of *kamma*. One important concept to understand is that all beings have the potential of transforming to become like the Buddha's consciousness. The Buddha was a human before he attained enlightenment. The difference, however, is that He has realised the Buddha consciousness while we have not, and He realised this consciousness by removing all the negative states of mind. We too have the potential but our potentials have been clogged up by our negative states of mind. Thus, we can all achieve enlightenment by renouncing negative states of mind through understanding and letting go and therefore purifying our *kamma*.

In conclusion, we are responsible for our own actions as well as its results. What we experience now is entirely due to our past actions and motivations, and at each moment of our life (in the NOW), we have the opportunity to create the causes for positive *kamma* to result in the future. We create the causes for positive *kamma* by doing actions with the motivation to create happiness for sentient beings, and we can also do it most effectively by renunciation of negative states of mind, and by practising compassion and wisdom.

*Loving kindness
In its purest form
Comes from acceptance
And embracing ourselves
For who we are,
and in that,
Learn to love others wholeheartedly
Unjudgingly and unconditionally
Without justification and condemnation*



Photo: Chien Hong Gaoi



*This way the barriers melt away
Allowing love and kindness
To shine in its entirety...*

Metta.

Annual General Meeting

A transitional stage for the outgoing committee and ordinary members to elect new committee members to lead UNIBUDS in the coming new year.



Kathina

UNIBUDS members attended the *Kathina* ceremony at both Wat Pa Buddharingsee and Sunnataram Forest Monastery.

The *Kathina* ceremony offers members a chance to practise dana by offering robes and requisites to the *Sangha* members at the end of a three-month rains retreat.



Cook of the Year

A fun way for members to learn the *Dhamma*... through food of course! Members had the chance to present their cooking with *Dhamma* explanations and the best team won according to the *Dhamma* presented, taste and presentation of the food.



Summer Retreat

Our annual summer retreat was spent at Wat Pa Buddharangsee and led by our patron Venerable Chao Khun Samai. Members had the chance to listen to *Dhamma* talks, attend meditation sessions, and offering dana to the venerables of the monastery.



Walk Against Want

Raising money for the Oxfam charity organisation, UNIBUDS members walked along the 5km city route. We were presented with a Krispy Kreme doughnut each at the end of the walk...what more can we ask for!





Orientation Week & Orientation Picnic

A brand new start to the university year, meeting new friends, and renewing old friendships.

Plenty of food to eat and fun games to play during the Orientation Week picnic



Buddhist Exhibition

"Shining Gems of the East" showcased to the public Buddhist artifacts sourced from various cultures. It was a successful and an informative event for both the university community and the general public .



Vesak

Vesak Day is a ceremony celebrating the birth, enlightenment and entering the *parinibbana* of the Buddha. This year's Vesak Day was celebrated under the Theravada tradition and led by our patron Venerable Chao Khun Samai.



Winter e t r e a t

The annual winter retreat was held in Bundanoon up in the Southern Highlands of NSW. Various activities were organised to allow members to practise and deepen their understanding of the *Dhamma* under the guidance of Venerable Phra Mana.





Talented members and helpers combined energy and resources for UNIBUDS' biggest event of the year, celebration of the society's anniversary. The response from the public was overwhelming, with the Clancy Auditorium filled to near-full capacity. All performances for the night explored the theme "With Loving Kindness..."

BODHI





Working Bee

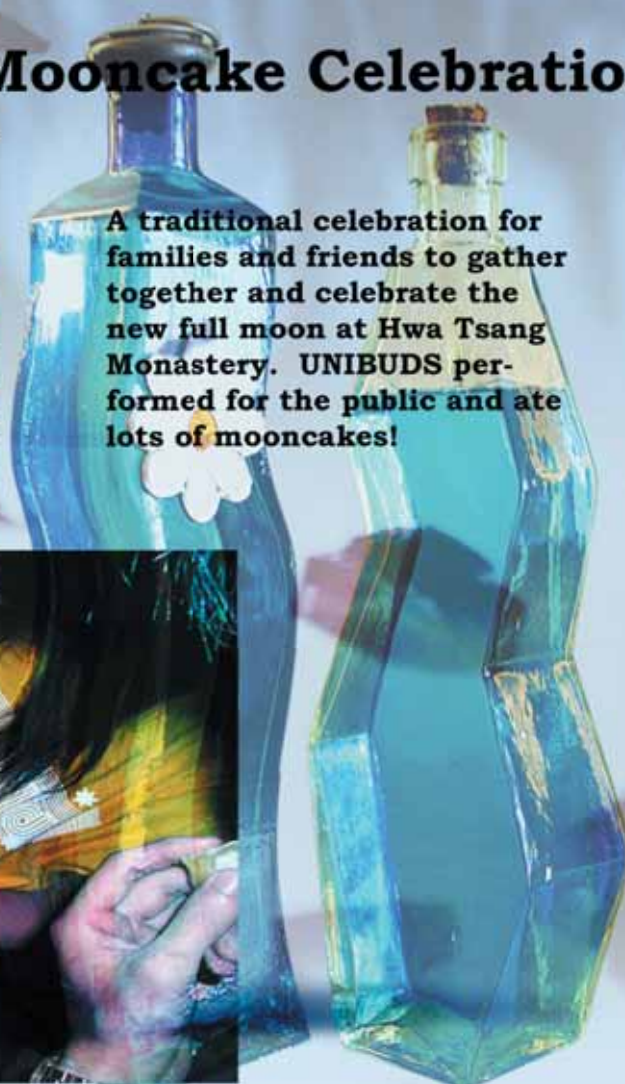


UNIBUDS members helping out at our patron's monastery, Hwa Tsang Monastery. It was a fun day spent working together doing gardening and getting our hands into.



Mooncake Celebration

A traditional celebration for families and friends to gather together and celebrate the new full moon at Hwa Tsang Monastery. UNIBUDS performed for the public and ate lots of mooncakes!



Dhamma Talks

English and Chinese *Dhamma* talks are held every week to learn more about the Buddha's teachings.



Potluck

A friendly atmosphere filled with laughter and great food to enjoy. Birthdays are also celebrated during this time.



Birthdays



Graduation



Congratulations to all members who graduated in 2004. All the best for the coming future.



Sport Sessions



Basketball, badminton, volleyball and occasional jogs around Centennial Park..What an exciting way to spend a day of the weekend!

MEMBERS LIST

HONORARY

KIDDLE	Michael
LEE	Kwai Yung
LIM	Ching Liang
NG	John Joon Hu
ONG	Kok Hui Desmond
ONG	Yen Lee
SAW	Quee Kin
SEE	Graeme
TENG	Wai Loon
WEERASINHA	Tracy Tilaka
WONG	Kah Loon

OVERSEAS

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MARONA	Andy
SUDILAN	Osmon
TANDIHARJO	Ferry

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DARWIN	Sylvia
HO	Meisy
HO	Milani
HO	Milia
JOE	Juni
JOENG	Shanty
KEE	Su Yen Kevin
LAI	April
LI	Arlene
MAK	Catarina
NG	Marie
PURNAMA	Sari
TAN	Rachel
TASLIM	Humardani
TEH	Min Fuh
TEH	Puay Yeong
TENG	Wai Koon
TENG	Wai Pan
WONG	Ching Khen
YEP	Kah Heng
ZHANG	Zhao

ORDINARY

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ANG	Eng Leong
ANG	Jessica
BAKER	Roslyn
BARWICK	Amy
BEK	Emily
BENJAMIN	Michael

BIRCHALL
CHAKMA
CHAN
CHAN
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CHEN
CHEN
CHEONG
CHIN
CHONG
CHOONRAWAT
CHOW
CHUA
CHUAH
CHUT
CRAIG
CRESP
CROOCH
ERITA
GAN
GAN
GARCIA
GOH
GOOI
HAN
HANITIO
HARTREE
HE
HENG
HERNANDA
HO
HONG
HUANG
JAMES
JOENG
JOKO
JULIANTY
KARP
KESUMA
KIM
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LAI
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LEE
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members

2004

LEE	Kok Siong	STREICEK	Madeline
LEE	Matthew	SUGIANTO	Adeline
LEE	Tai Fook David	SUGITO	Mia
LEGASPI	Harold	SULISTIO	Karl
LENG	Supeap (Tom)	SURIANTO	Emillia
LEONG	Weng Yart	SUSANTY	Devv
LIEW	Hock Chuan	SUWARNO	Adi
LIEW	Kong Yih	TA	Hung
LIM	Jacky	TAM	Eric
LIM	Rosiana	TAN	Ee Chain
LIM	Wee Han	TAN	Olivia
LIN	Dean	TAN	Shen Han
LIN	Eric	TAN	Shie Haur
LING	Daoyao	TAY	Kim Wei
LING	Phoebe	TAY	Wei Han
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LOH	Denissa	THEN	Raymond
LOO	Whee Hoo	THEN	Siaw Khiun
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MOOR	Zewlan	UI	Suhendry
NG	Chew Wey	VANI CHAYANG -	Dusida (Wan)
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NG	Siew Peng	WAHYUDI	Brian
NG	Roy Thuan Cheong	WHITE	Elisa
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NGUYEN	Ngoc Hong An	WIJAYAWEERA	
NGUYEN	Viet Cuong	WIJOYO	
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NYO	Yupar	WONG	Gabriel
ONG	Adelene	WONG	Shek Kung
ONG	Julia	WONG	Sivary
ONG	Terrence	WU	Hai Feng
PAN	Ji Hong (Gina)	XU	Hilda
PAN	Stephanie	XU	Yan
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ROCHTCHINA	Anastasia	YUE	Yue
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SENGCHANH	Monemala	ZHANG	Rebecca
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GLOSSARY

For the convenience of readers, a list of explanation for the terms used in the magazine has been included. These explanations are taken from three different sources namely Buddhist Dictionary (Nyanatiloka), Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism (Sutra Translation Committee of the US and Canada) and Discourse Summaries (S.N. Goenka). Care has been taken to select the simplest and best possible explanation of the terms and the editor apologises for any inaccuracy of term explanations rendered here. Wherever possible, the English, Pali and Sanskrit version of the terms are provided so that readers could cross-reference between the languages they are familiar with.

Note on Abbreviations:

eng – English

pl – Pali

skt – Sanskrit

tib - Tibetan

Attachment (eng) grasping, clinging. According to Buddhist thought, this is an intensified form of craving. In the Four Noble Truths, the Buddha taught that attachment to self is the root cause of suffering. Upadana (pl)

Bhavana (pl) mental development; meditation. The two divisions of bhavana are the development of tranquility (samatha), corresponding to concentration of the mind, and the development of insight (vipassana), corresponding to wisdom.

Bodhisatta (pl) literally, 'Enlightenment-being'. Those who aspire to Supreme Enlightenment and Buddhahood for themselves and all beings; also for anyone who has developed the Bodhi Mind – the aspiration to save oneself and others. In the Pali Canon, it is used specifically to designate Siddhattha Gotama in the time before he achieved full Enlightenment. Bodhisattva (skt)

Compassion (eng) one with compassion extends itself without distinction to all sentient beings. This must be accompanied by wisdom in order to have the right effect. The virtue of compassion is embodied in the Bodhisatta Avalokiteshvara (Kuan Yin). Karuna (pl)(skt)

Dana (pl) charity; generosity; donation. Often used to refer to an offering, especially of food, to a monastic community.

Dependent Origination (eng) the chain of conditioned arising; causal genesis. The process, beginning in ignorance, by which one keeps making life after life of suffering for oneself. Also a fundamental Buddhist doctrine of the interdependence of things. It teaches that all beings and phenomena exist or occur only because of their relationship with other beings or phenomena. Paticca samuppada (pl) Pratitya samutpada (skt)

Ego (eng) or self, refers to the notion of oneself as a fixed and discrete entity separate from other selves and from an 'outside world'. Through awakening, the illusory nature of ego is seen through. Atta (pl)

Eight Precepts (eng) incorporates the Five Precepts, with the addition of three which are to refrain from (1) singing, dancing and attending musical performances and adorning their bodies, (2) sleeping on high and wide beds, (3) eating after noontime.

Enlightenment (eng) being awakened from the slumber or stupor (inflicted upon the mind) by the defilements and comprehends the Four Noble Truths. Bodhi (pl)

Equanimity (eng) the state of mental equilibrium in which the mind has no bent or attachment. It is a detached state of mind, a sustained state of mental calm, a mental disposition or habit that allows the person to experience opposites without feeling partiality. Upekkha (pl) Upeka (skt)

Five Aggregates (eng) these are the five aspects in which the Buddha has summed up all the physical and mental phenomena of existence: matter, consciousness, perception, feeling and reaction. Aggregates: Khandha (pl) Skandhas (skt)

Five Precepts (eng) the five moral rules, which are binding on all Buddhist laymen, are: (1) Abstaining from killing any living being, (2) from stealing, (3) from unlawful sexual intercourse, (4) from lying, (5) from the use of intoxicants. Panca sila (pl)

Four Immeasurable Minds (eng) also called the Four Boundless States, are infinite loving-kindness, metta (pl); infinite compassion, karuna (pl); infinite altruistic joy, mudita (pl); and infinite equanimity, upekkha (pl). Also known as the Four Brahma Vihara (pl).

Four Noble Truths (eng) the briefest synthesis of the entire teachings of Buddhism, which explains the cause of suffering and the means of deliverance therefrom. This was the first doctrine taught by the Buddha after his Enlightenment. They are: the truth of Suffering, of the Origin of suffering, of the Extinction of suffering, and of the eightfold Path leading to the extinction of suffering. Ariya sacca (pl)

Ignorance (eng) delusion. A lack of awareness of the true nature of things, it is the fundamental error which brings about existence. Delusion (or ignorance) is the source of all afflictions. Greed and anger stem from delusion, as do pride, doubts and wrong views. Avijja (pl) Moha (pl)

Impermanence (eng) basic feature of all conditioned phenomena. It is the rising, passing and changing of things, or the disappearance of things that have become or arisen. The meaning is that these things never persist in the same way, but that they are vanishing and dissolving from moment to moment. Anicca (pl)

Kamma (pl) action performed by oneself that will have an effect on one's future. Correctly speaking denotes the wholesome or unwholesome volition and their concomitant mental factors, causing rebirth and shaping the destiny of beings. Karma (skt)

Kathina (pl) a festival that takes place during October/November, at the end of the Rains Retreat, Vassa. A ceremonial offer-

ing of cloth and requisites takes place during the festival.

Metta (pl) loving-kindness; selfless love and good will. One of the qualities of a pure mind. Maitri (skt)

Mindfulness (eng) one of the 7 factors of Enlightenment and the 7th link of the Noble Eightfold Path. Mindfulness is, in its widest sense, one of those mental factors inseparably associated with all karmically wholesome and karma-produced consciousness. Sati (pl)

Nibbana (pl) freedom from suffering; the highest and ultimate goal of all Buddhist aspirations, i.e. the absolute extinction of the life affirming will manifested as greed, hatred and delusion, and convulsively clinging to existence. Nirvana (skt)

Noble Eightfold Path (eng) the path leading to liberation from suffering. It is divided into three stages or trainings: (1) Sila, which includes right speech, right actions and right livelihood, (2) Samadhi, which includes right effort, right awareness and right concentration, (3) Panna, which includes right thought, right understanding. Ariya atthangika magga (pl)

Non-self (eng) egolessness. Neither within the bodily and mental phenomena of existence, nor outside of them, can be found anything that in the ultimate sense could be regarded as a self-existing real Ego-entity, soul or any other abiding substance. Anatta (pl)

Panna (pl) wisdom; insight. The third of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised. There are three kinds of wisdom: received (heard) wisdom, intellectual wisdom and experiential wisdom. Prajna (skt)

Rains Retreat (eng) The period of three months, in the monsoon season, during which monks and nuns are expected to reside in one place and devote themselves to their practice. Vassa (pl)

Rebirth (eng) literally, 'Reunion, Relinking'. Rebirth is one of the 14 functions of consciousness. It is a karma-resultant type of consciousness and arises at the moment of conception, i.e. with the forming of new life in the mother's womb. Patisandhi (pl)

Saddha (pl) faith; confidence. Belief in the Buddha's Enlightenment or in the Triple Gem by taking refuge in them. This faith however, should be reasoned and rooted in understanding. Through wisdom and understanding, faith becomes an inner certainty and firm conviction based on one's own experience.

Samadhi (pl) concentration; fixing of the mind on a single object; control over the mind. The second of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised. When cultivated as an end in itself, it leads to the attainment of the states of mental absorption, but not to total liberation of the mind.

Samatha (pl) calm; tranquility. Samatha-bhavana, the development of tranquility; synonymous with samadhi.

Samsara (pl/skt) cycle of rebirth; conditioned world; world of suffering. Also more precisely refers to the unbroken chain of the fivefold aggregate-combinations, which constantly change from moment to moment continuously, one upon the other through inconceivable periods of time.

Sila (pl) morality; abstaining from physical and vocal actions that cause harm to oneself and others. It is the foundation of the whole Buddhist practice and is the first of the three trainings by which the Noble Eightfold Path is practised. Buddhist morality does not consist in the mere not-committing of evil actions, but is in each instance the clearly conscious and intentional restraint from the bad actions in question and corresponds to the simultaneously arising volition. For a lay person, sila is practised in daily life by following the Five Precepts.

Six Realms (eng) six planes of existence or states of life into which it is possible to be born. They represent types of being rather than actual places. (1) realm of the gods, (2) realm of the jealous warring gods, (3) realm of animals, (4) realm of humans, (5) realm of hungry ghosts, (6) realm of hell.

Sutta (pl) discourse of the Buddha or one of his leading disciples. In the early stages of Buddhist history, suttas were memorised, and only in later times were they written down. Sutra (skt)

Ten Perfections (eng) ten qualities leading to Buddhahood. (1) Giving or charity, (2) Morality, (3) Renunciation, (4) Wisdom, (5) Energy, (6) Patience or forbearance, (7) Truthfulness, (8) Resolution, (9) Loving-kindness, (10) Equanimity. Parami (pl) Paramita (skt)

Ten Precepts (eng) incorporates the Eight Precepts, with the addition of two which are to refrain from (1) singing, dancing or performing on stage, (2) handling gold or silver. These constitute the ten precepts of novice monks and nuns.

Three Births (eng) three periods of time, which is the past, the present and the future. An expression used to abstractly mean "all time" or "for all time".

Triple Gem (eng) (1) The Buddha, the supremely enlightened being. (2) The Dhamma, the teaching imparted by the Buddha. (3) The Sangha, the congregation of monks and nuns, or of genuine Dhamma followers.

Vipassana (pl) introspection; insight which purifies the mind. Specifically insight into the impermanent, suffering and egoless nature of the mental-physical structure. Vipassana-bhavana, the systematic development of insight through meditation technique of observing one's own bodily and mental processes. Vipasyana (skt)

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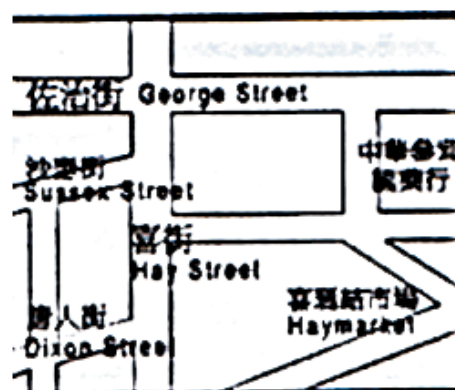
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