



From Seed to Seed

UNIBUDS Annual Magazine 2005

25th Anniversary Edition

From Seed to Seed

From a seed, life begins

From a tiny seed,

grows a big tall tree

The tree starts to bloom with flowers

The wind blows

leaves scatter,

flowers are carried by the breeze

More little seeds are spread all over

A new tree is sprung

Every seed is a potential new beginning

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Unibuds Library

Illustration: Siang Yee Chuah



Dear reader,

Every year, the UNIBUDS Annual Magazine is based on a theme. With this year being our 25th anniversary, we thought it appropriate to deepen our understanding of the Buddhist concept of interdependency: how all things are related through causes and conditions. Take for example an apple seed. For the apple tree to grow, first there must be the right conditions of fertile soil, enough water, sunlight, carbon dioxide, proper care, etc. It would take years for the tree to mature but throughout its life, there is a constant interdependency between the tree and all these other elements in order for the tree to continue growing. When it eventually bears fruit, it produces more seeds which creates more apple trees. And so it goes on.

This is how we came up with the theme, "From Seed to Seed". From the time our patron, Venerable Tsang Hui and founding president, Dr. LIM Ching Liang first established UNIBUDS in 1981, to where we stand today in year 2005, the society has grown from a seed to be a mature tree, continually creating more new seeds every year. In fact, this society is now in its prime and still has a ways to go before it becomes an old tree. So it is very important that we carry on the good work of sharing Dhamma on campus and continue to grow from strength to strength.

Over the past 25 years, UNIBUDS has been blessed with good people who were willing to give generously of their time, effort and financial support in order to sustain the society and propagate the Dhamma to help as many beings as possible. In this edition, we have been very fortunate to collate the messages from each previous president of UNIBUDS. We were also very privileged to receive some article contributions from senior members (some of whom have left Sydney for many years). Their voices tell of many old stories and experiences that they went through during the earlier years, which the current generation of members

Editor's Note

may not know about. The people that have come and gone, the challenges that have arisen and been surpassed, the good times and the not so good times... Their stories are not only a good read but they also serve as valuable advice so we do not make the same mistakes. The faith and strength that radiate from their words are also an inspiration and encouragement for those of us who are young and new.

The editorial team has also transcribed some of the weekly Dhamma talks that were given this year by Venerables and lay Buddhists alike, organised by UNIBUDS on campus during the university term. Where the talk was given in Chinese, we have provided the English translation. All transcriptions and translations have been approved by the respective speaker. Throughout this magazine, we have adopted Pali terms for standardisation purposes but wherever possible, Sanskrit terms have also been included in the Glossary for readers who are more familiar with the latter.

In the photos section of this edition, the team waded through old photo albums in order to include photos from previous years together with the current for each event. It was very interesting to see the progression of the society from the 1980's to the new millennium in frozen moments captured through the camera lens. While the faces, facilities and fashion may have changed, it was also clear that the friendship in UNIBUDS and the spirit of Dhamma remained everlasting till today.

Credit must also be given to the sponsorship team who weathered the rain and sun to seek sponsors for this annual magazine. We were fortunate to receive some donations as well, all in the faith of sharing Dhamma and promoting peace and harmony. Last but not least, humble thanks to the design and graphics team who has put in numerous long nights and many hours of hard work to create the final product that is this magazine.

And with that, as the pieces that make up this magazine started to fall together, it became so very clear that just as with all phenomena in this world, the interdependency of every person and element involved in publishing this magazine with each other was unmistakable. 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 the material, we apologise in advance for any inaccuracy and/or misrepresentation in this magazine. In turning each page, we hope that you would be able to gain more insight into the Dhamma and continue to seek to learn more and progress on this wonderful path that the Buddha has given us.

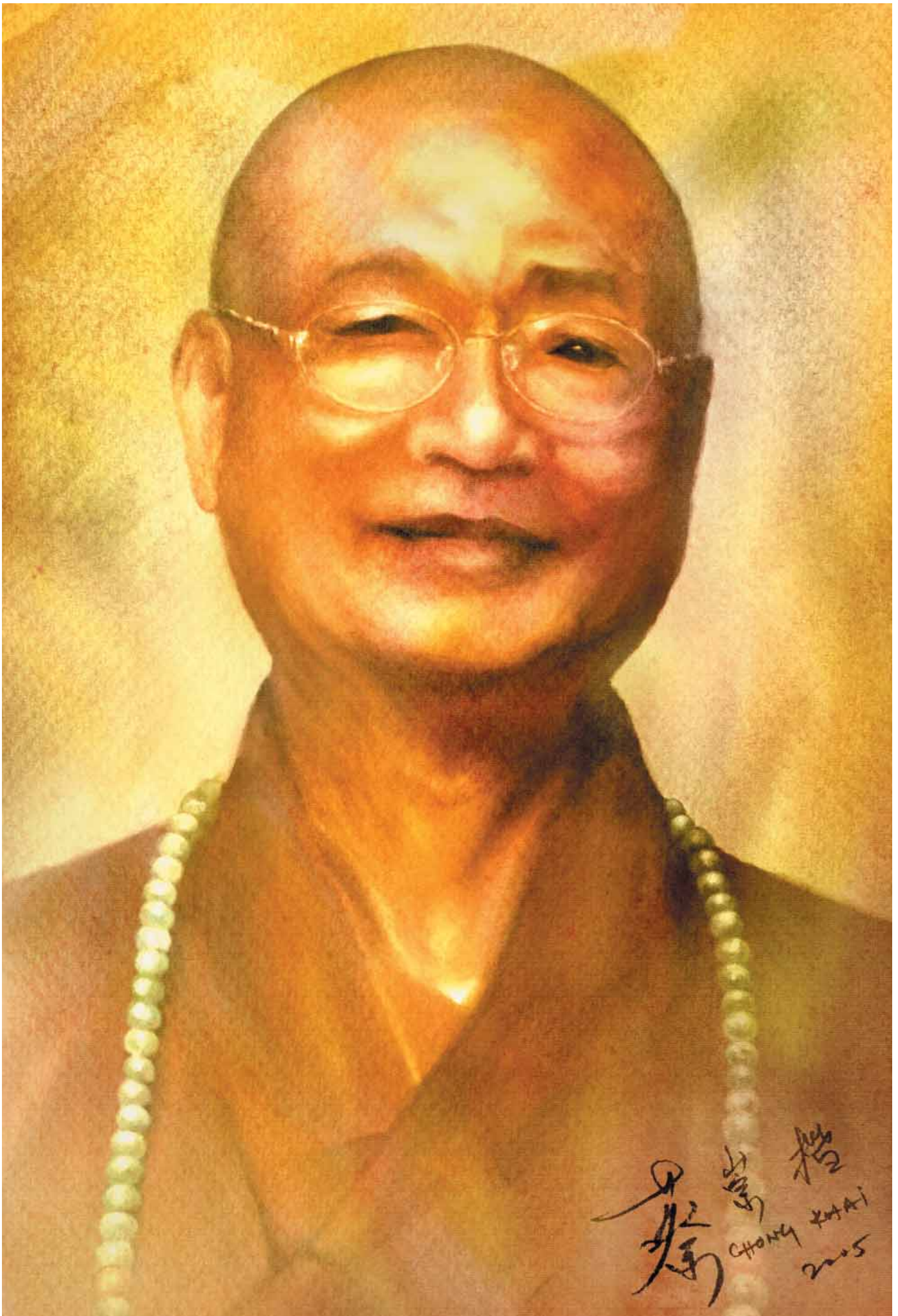


Illustration: Chong Khai Chuah

Patron's Message

Venerable Tsang Hui

Continuing the shining light,
continuing the growing seeds

This year marks the 25th anniversary of UNIBUDS; it was a great success for our biggest event of the year, Bodhi Nite. The entire Clancy Auditorium was filled with new and old members and even other supporters from near and far, which contributed to the joyous occasion. Looking back to 25 years ago, when UNIBUDS was initially established, there were not many members in the society. The newly formed executive committee then planted the "Bodhi seeds" in the campus of UNSW with courage and passion, spreading the Buddha's teaching to all. With the right effort of these pioneers, the seeds have now spread far and wide. This is much to be thankful for.

This year, UNIBUDS had chosen the theme "Rain Falls, Wind Blows, Plants Bloom" for Bodhi Nite, indicating that the success of this society did not happen out of the blue. It had been well established with the hard work and diligence of generations upon generations of members. All of these came together under the right conditions. Therefore, we must be grateful to all the causes and conditions that facilitated the development of UNIBUDS. We also hope that everyone can continue to support it, so that the light of wisdom can be passed down to brighten the hearts of many more.

UNIBUDS has also used "From Seed to Seed" as the theme for the annual magazine this year. I hope that students could try to cultivate and spread the seeds of Dhamma in the university environment. For those who have graduated, it is hoped that they could continue to spread the seeds of Dhamma wherever they go. Some of the earlier alumni members have further strengthened the essence of the Dhamma cultivation by starting the Zheng Xin Buddhist Association in Malaysia. They encourage their families and friends to learn about Dhamma and establish right understanding of Buddhism. Zheng Xin provides a place for Dhamma discussions among members to continuously cultivate their Bodhi mind and plant more seeds of the Dhamma in everyone's heart. This is the real example of spreading the Bodhi seed "from seed to seed".

Many people wonder, "How is it possible to benefit/help others without first liberating oneself?" In actual fact, as Venerable Yin Shun said, benefiting others can be categorised into two types: The first is benefiting others with material things and the second is benefiting others spiritually, which is the spreading of Dhamma. This includes giving the teaching of both worldly Dhamma and spiritual Dhamma that leads towards liberation.

We can provide help based on our own ability and the needs of others. Even if it is only giving worldly Dhamma, as long as it leads others towards brightness, towards the middle path and goodness, then that is also a form of helping others. From the perspective of providing teachings for liberation, it is not necessary that we must be liberated first before we can help others. We must never forget that in order to become fully liberated, we have to continually practise the way of the Dhamma. All practices have to go through the process of 'sowing', 'maturing' and then 'liberation'. Even if one has not achieved the liberation stage, he or she can still help others to 'sow' the Bodhi seed, gradually allowing it 'to grow and mature'. It is not that we need to help others to liberate themselves right this moment in order to benefit them. Thus, we must understand that everyone has the ability to benefit others. We can encourage them to practise the Dhamma and share the teachings of the Buddha. This also enables the Bodhi seeds to be continuously passed down. In this way, we do not only help others, but also help ourselves. Isn't this a deed in which we should rejoice?

The Dhamma learning environment on campus is very pure. I hope that everyone will treasure this rare opportunity for learning Dhamma. Acquaint yourself more with wise teachers, listen to the Dhamma, and cultivate the right faith and right views. Strengthen your faith, compassion and wisdom, and at the same time, share the Dhamma with others, so that you may benefit yourself and others. I hope that the Bodhi seeds can be spread all around the world and continue to multiply in numbers.

I hope that the members of UNIBUDS will continue the mission of "From Seed to Seed", allowing the light of Dhamma to shine continuously. May UNIBUDS continue to grow in the journey of the new milestone.

導師的話

上藏下慧導師

燈燈相續， 種種相傳

今年慧命社慶祝其廿五週年紀念，菩提之夜達到空前的高朋滿座，千人之禮堂，坐無虛席。新舊社友，共聚一堂，其樂融融。回想廿五年前，慧命社草創時期，人丁稀薄，委員們憑著一股對佛法的熱忱，希望在這西方的校園裡播下菩提的種子。幾個人辛勞的支撐，默默的耕耘。當年的艱苦與今天的盛況，實不可同日而言。菩提的種子，已傳播開來。這是令人感到欣慰的。

慧命社選擇了『雨水的滋潤，微風的吹拂，樹木的成長』為今年菩提之夜的主題。說明慧命社的成長不是一蹴而就的。它是經過多年來許多人的苦心耕耘，灌溉，照顧，才得以成長的。其開始及成長皆離不開眾緣的和合。我們必須感恩每個促成這個成果的因緣，更希望大家繼續給予支持，使這盞慧命之燈能不斷的在校園裡燃燒下去，讓智慧之光照亮更多人的心田。

慧命社也拈了『種種相傳』作為今年年刊的中心論題。希望同學們在校園裡努力培養及散播菩提的種子，畢業後亦能繼續把菩提種子傳播到所經過的每個角落。早年畢業之學長，在慧命社這菩提苗床中醞釀出堅固的菩提道心。畢業回國後，帶動家人親友學佛，正確的認識佛教，在馬來西亞成立了正信佛友會，定期相聚研討佛法，增強自己的菩提心，也把菩提的種子植入他人的心田。這就是『種種相傳』的實例。

許多人認為，「未能自利，焉能利他」？事實上，誠如印順導師所說，利他有二類：一是物質的利他，即財施。二是精神的利他，即法施。這包括出世法的化導，以及世間正法的化導。

我們可依自己的能力，根據眾生當前的需要，給於適當的救濟與幫助，即使是世間法的財施或

法施，只要能使人心向上，向光明，向中道，向正常，向安隱，即是利他。從出世的法施來說，也決非要自己先大徹大悟才可利他。我們必須記得，無論是達成解脫聖果或成佛，都必須從熏修行持得來。所有修行都要經歷「種」「熟」「脫」的過程。自己雖未得解脫，但能使人種下種子，漸漸成熟，得「種」利，得「熟」利，這些都是利他。並不只是使人當下解脫自在，才叫利他。了解這一點，人人都能利他，鼓勵他人學佛，與他人分享佛法，使菩提種子不斷的相傳，不但利他，亦能利己，何樂而不為？

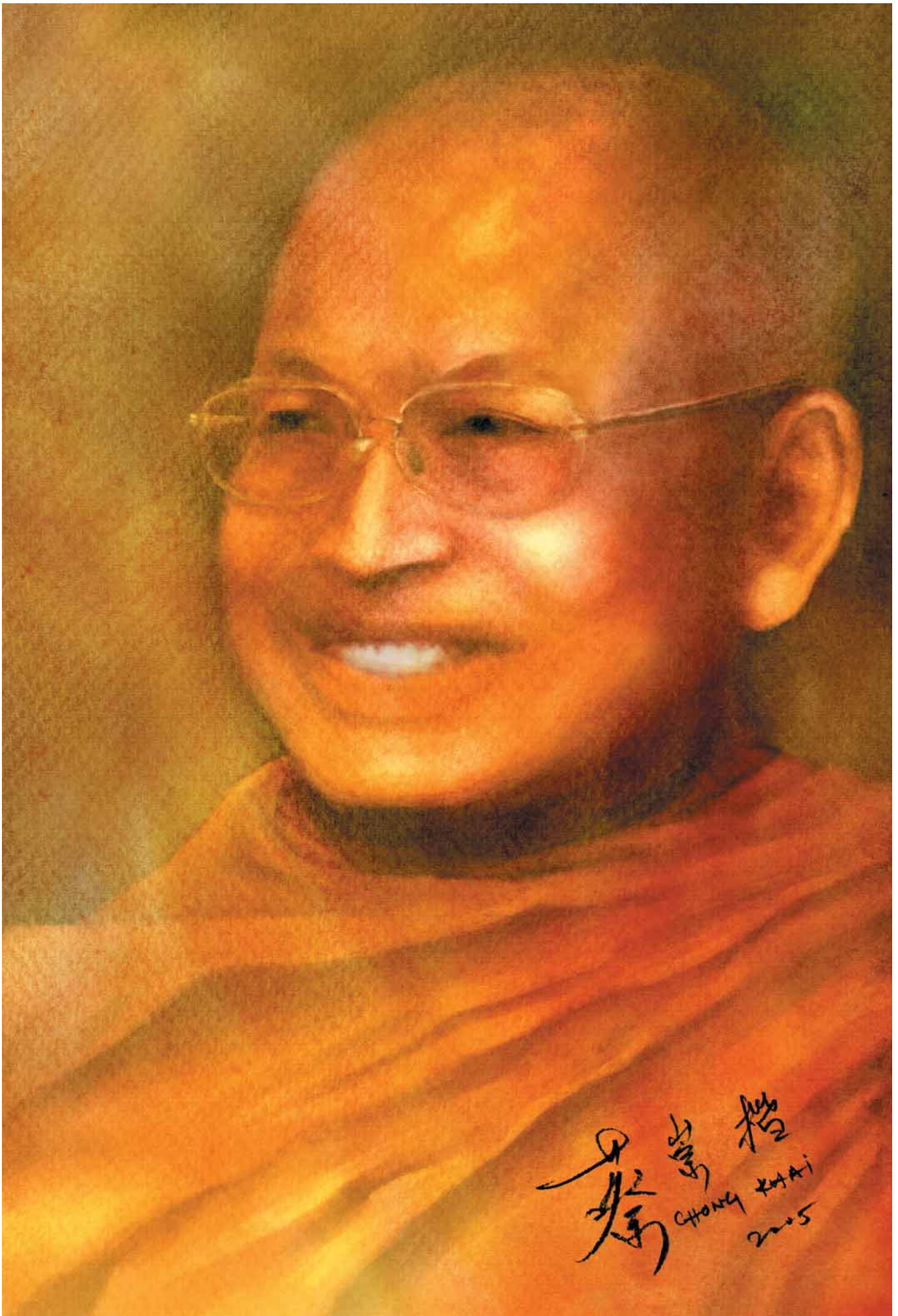
校園的學佛環境是純淨，樸素的。希望大家珍惜這難得的學佛因緣，多親近善知識，聽聞佛法，培養正信與正見，堅固自己的信願，慈悲與智慧，與更多的人分享佛法的利益，自利利他。更希望菩提的種子能隨著微風的吹拂，飄落到世界各地，並傳播出更多的種子。

願慧命社的社友都能稟承這『種種相傳』的任務，使佛法之光相續不已。祝願慧命社在這新的里程碑中更茁壯的成長。

佛



Illustration: Siang Yee Chuah



The Seeds of Enlightenment

When we study Buddhism, we always come across the word “suffering”. We might be wondering why this negative word is mentioned all the time. It might be that suffering, whether physical or spiritual, is the plain truth experienced by all living beings, be they young or old, at any time in their daily life.

In the west as well as in the east now, people always celebrate their birthday with a party, not really realising that birth is the cause of old age, sickness and death. When we reflect upon these painful sufferings, we would come to acknowledge that birth is the prime deceiver, leading us to a great danger of life. Old age and sickness would continually disrupt and destroy our happiness and peace and eventually death would terminate our well

beloved life.

If we would like to free ourselves from these kinds of sufferings what should we do? There is no better way than planting the seeds of Enlightenment.

Generally speaking, generosity is the first and foremost virtue that should be planted in our heart. We should be willing to share, if we have anything at all, for the happiness and peace of other beings. From what the Lord Buddha said, a truly kind person would not eat or drink anything without sharing with others. During his meal, even after half his food had been given away, he would give again the remaining share if he could find another hungry receiver. Such is the mentality of those who really believe in the power of generosity.

Why is generosity called a prime seed of Enlightenment? All of us as human beings must have parents as our main supporters in life. Without their kindness and generosity we would not be alive today. Without gratitude to the most beloved ones, there is no progress in the Buddhist practice. Greed or in other words selfishness clouds the mind, whereas generosity purifies the mind. Apart from being kind and generous to our relatives and friends, we should extend our loving kindness to all living beings, whether seen or unseen, whether big or small, whether living far or near. Looking back to the place where generosity first grows we would find that our knowing mind gets purer and purer, with much less greed, much less anger, much less delusion.

The second seed of Enlightenment is morality. Whereas generosity is the act of doing things for the happiness and peace of others, morality is the discipline of not doing things leading to the suffering of others, such as killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicating drinks. Once the bad actions and bad speech have been eliminated, generosity would flow naturally from that wholesome heart. At this stage we might say that the seeds of Enlightenment have been properly planted; they are about to take roots.

The third and the last seed of Enlightenment is bhavana, mental development. It includes both tranquility and insight meditation. Most of us would agree that if the mind is not calm enough it would not be able to see anything clearly. Peacefulness and clarity always come together. Once there is no peacefulness to sustain the mind, it would be difficult for the mind to see things as they are.

Once the seed of wisdom starts to grow we would come to the level that enables us to separate the visiting negative elements of greed, hatred and delusion from the knowing mind. Once upon a time there was an owner of a small inn in a far remote countryside. This owner is quite stupid, always inviting bad guests to stay with him. From time to time he finds pleasures with them but most of the time he has troubles. One day, wisdom dawns upon him; he stops the bad guests from coming and lets the good ones stay as long they like. Greed, hatred and delusion are wandering elements. They do not have places to stay except in the minds of living beings. If the knowing mind is not tempted and frees itself from these bad elements, it can be happy forever.

May all living beings be well and happy, may the seeds of Enlightenment grow in every heart.



On the Journey with Friends and Alone

From the train station, I walked straight on the Old Leumeah Road reaching a T-junction. I wondered for a while, is it a left or a right turn? From memory, it was not too difficult to find Wat Pa Buddharangsee. In the past, under the leadership of the 2004 President, Steph, it seemed that it only took a while to find the place. I thought that I would be able to recognise the way, therefore I did not bring a map. After ringing a friend and asking people along the way, I finally found the stupa that stood amidst the woods.

Apart from showing that I was not too observant about my surroundings, this journey also highlighted the importance of having friends on the path of learning Dhamma. (That's right! This is helping to advertise the wonderful environment that UNIBUDS has created for cultivation. Hehe...) Amidst the laughter, the journey once seemed so short. Now being alone, apart from the sun, there is only the 128 MB MP3 player accompanying me with continuous, repetitive music. However, there is also a good thing about being alone: next time I will not lose my way again.

On the road, there were many misleading junctions. There were discrepancies between my memory and the UBD street directory which made me stop and wander

uncertainly. However, how much can we trust our memories that are coloured with emotions? There is only one "path", which has already been recorded in the "suttas". Why not walk on this wide main road instead of travelling on the rough, curvy road that has never been used before?

Therefore, having realised and come back to senses, I took the path that I was supposed to travel, and finally arrived at the destination.

The relic stupa in the drawing stands peacefully surrounded by layers of dense forest. That was the scene I saw and touched my heart, after having walked for almost an hour. I sketched the scene, hoping to share it with all of you.

Siang Yee - 11/12/05 (8:57 pm)

結伴同行與孤獨上路

我從火車站的 Old Leumeah Road 往前直走，來到T字路口的時候，愣了好一陣子。轉左或轉右好呢？記憶中的Wat Pa Buddharangsee 並不難找。從前在04年度主席Steph的帶領下，好像一會兒就到了。自以為肯定認得了路，所以托大，並無帶地圖。打電話麻煩了一位朋友，途中再問了好一些途人，方尋到了那座坐落在林子裏的塔。

這除了證明我平時並無細心觀察周圍之外，亦證明了習佛路上有朋結伴同行的重要。(對啦！就是要在這裏宣傳 UNIBUDS 所提供的環境是多麼的適宜修行，嘿嘿)談笑間，一眨眼就翻越了山頭。獨自上路，除了太陽，只有128MB的MP3 PLAYER重複地播著歌曲在伴著我。不過，也有一個人的好處，下次再來，我不會再迷路了。

一路上，出現許多似是而非的交叉點。記憶與 UBD street directory 的指引有出入，讓我停步躑躅。可是，情緒化的記憶有幾分可值得信任呢？“道”只一條，已寫在“經”上了。為何不走在康莊大道，而非要擇崎嶇而未知的路呢？

所以我一掠心神，即走回應走之路，終於到達了目的地。

畫中的靈骨塔悄然地屹立在層層叢林中。那是我走了將近一個鐘頭所看到的，令我感動的畫面。將之畫了下來，希望諸君與我分享。

湘怡 - 11/12/05 (8:57PM)



Illustration: Siang Yee Chuah

Founding President's Message

Dr. Ching Liang Lim



It gave me great pleasure in writing this message for the special edition of UNIBUDS annual magazine in conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of UNIBUDS. It did not dawn on me that time really flies that fast until I was told of Bodhi Nite 2005 – to celebrate UNIBUDS's 25th anniversary. I looked back to the pioneering year, 1981, the inaugural committee inspired by the teachings of the Buddha and under the guidance of our patrons, which sowed a Bodhi tree seed on 23rd July in Australia. It was the untiring efforts and care of the patrons and the successive committee members that germinated the seed into a seedling, nurtured the seedling into a tree and I am proud of this Bodhi tree today. I must say the inspirations of the members, the unwavering commitment of the Sangha communities and the support of the public has made UNIBUDS **a society for the students, by the students, which flourishes in a university environment**. I must congratulate all the past presidents and the committees for successfully championing a very noble cause – to promote Buddhism and to unite all Buddhists on campus. Credit should be given to them for preserving the objectives and integrity of UNIBUDS.

Members of UNIBUDS are budding Buddhists and should not be afraid to venture out to learn and practise the teachings of Buddha. When a UNIBUDS member takes refuge in the Triple Gem or “ordain” as a Buddhist, he/she is not a monk/nun; in other words he/she is not a member of the Sangha community. He/she is only a practising **lay** Buddhist. As such we should not be afraid to make mistakes in our pursuit to practise the Lord Buddha's teachings to seek Enlightenment for we are still human beings.

Over the last 25 years, the membership has grown steadily from a mere handful when we first started to a strong 200-plus members of different races and from different countries. UNIBUDS's activities have been well attended and the recent Bodhi Nite held at Clancy Auditorium to a full capacity crowd is testimony of the support enjoyed by the society. Looking at the success of the recent Bodhi Nite (back in the early 1980's, it was known as Buddhist Nite), one cannot help but to conclude that the inspiration and unity then (25 years ago) has never abated; instead it has strengthened over the years. I must, as a founding president, congratulate all the succeeding presidents and their committees for the continuous good work.

I would like to encourage more students on campus to join UNIBUDS. It should be noted that one need not be a Buddhist to join UNIBUDS. I would like to urge current members (including associate members) to participate in the activities more, study hard and practise the Dhamma for one's eventual Enlightenment.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE

WELL AND HAPPY

MAY ALL BEINGS BE BLESSED

BY THE TRIPLE GEM

President's Message

Desy Juliaty



The blossoming of the flowers owes its brilliant shine to the constant sunrays, sufficient moisture and essential fertilisers. Nevertheless, the successful publication of the UNIBUDS Annual Magazine 2005 is the result of the dedication and hard work of the UNIBUDS Annual Magazine publication team 2005. Hence, I would like to congratulate and express my gratitude towards the editor and her team for the excellent work. This publication is a special edition which attempts to capture UNIBUDS's journey throughout the 25 years, its tradition and its mission in learning and spreading Dhamma. It is indeed a masterpiece that brings together the essence of UNIBUDS, the society as a whole, for the past 25 years.

UNIBUDS has definitely come a long way since its establishment in 1981 as the first Buddhist society on a university campus. Along the way, it has planted the seeds of Dhamma, friendship, loving kindness and gratitude in each and every one of us. It has touched the hearts of many and would continue to do so. With activities such as weekly Chinese and English Dhamma talks, meditation sessions, various retreats and unforgettable events such as Bodhi Nite, UNIBUDS has shown us that learning Dhamma could be fun and interesting too.

I am very grateful to be part of this big family and even more thankful to be given a chance to lead the UNIBUDS Executive Committee for 2004-2005. It is definitely the most beneficial and unforgettable learning journey for me. I have gained much understanding about myself, my friends, UNIBUDS and the Buddha's teachings. Happiness, excitement, challenges and tears of contentment were shared among the friends in Dhamma. A special thank you to the 25th EXCOs for their hard work, understanding and company throughout this wonderful year. Each and every one of you has made an impact in my life with your dedication towards spreading Dhamma and UNIBUDS. Nevertheless, the support and encouragement of the senior members and other members of UNIBUDS have been the inspiration for me to work harder to overcome any hindrances along the way. May this valuable friendship in UNIBUDS continue to benefit many generations to come.

The achievements of UNIBUDS over the past 25 years have been made possible through the countless contributions of members, non-members and everyone who has given support to UNIBUDS. I would like to use this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude towards the patrons of UNIBUDS, Venerable Tsang Hui from Hwa Tsang Monastery and Venerable Chao Khun Samai from Wat Pa Buddharangsee for their endless support and encouragement towards the society; all members of Sangha and teachers for their teaching, guidance and support; fellow Buddhist societies and friends; and the readers and sponsors of this annual magazine.

With loving kindness I shall end this greeting, may all be well and happy. May UNIBUDS continue to flourish under the teaching of the Enlightened One and the dedication of the friends in Dhamma.

Yours in Dhamma,
Desy Juliaty



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Voices from

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5

the Past

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1982 - 2004



Year	Name
1982	John NG
1983	KHOR Kok Poh
1984	ONG Yen Lee
1985	SAW Quee Kiim
1986	Dr. CH'NG Eng Chye
1987	WONG Kah Loon
1988	LEE Kim Kwong
1989	WONG Kah Loon
1990	Dr. LIM Sean Teik
1991	CHAN Tye Kooi
1992	Desmond KOK Eng Tiong
1993	Eric TAM Yong Soon
1994	NG Lee Yoong
1995	Gloria WOO Mun Yee
1996	Hadi Utomo WONG
1997	Desmond ONG
1998	Tracy Tilaka WEERASINHA
1999	Merry CHANDRA
2000	CHOW Mei Ling
2001	GOOI Chien Hoong
2002	Agus SANTOSO
2003	Agus SANTOSO
2004	Stephanie PAN



Note: The Chinese have their surname come before their first name. Here, the surnames are in capital letters.

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1982 - 1983



John NG (President 1982)

Being the second president was not easy after a super enthusiastic president like Dr Lim! At my time, there were many Associate members from Hwa Tsang Monastery, who were helpful in terms of financial support. Money was hard earned. I even had to work part time as a cleaner at UNSW to subsidise the society's expenses. We managed to buy an old car for a few hundred dollars as transportation for monks to give Dhamma talks. To help introduce Buddhism to this foreign country, we even gave free tuition to Vietnamese students at Redfern, where Ven. Tsang Hui rented a small apartment. He taught Maths, and the rest taught Chemistry and English. Yes, it was a tough uphill task, but the dedication and kindness of my ExcOs were highly commendable. Thanks, team!

We managed to invite the Dalai Lama to UNSW during his World Peace Tour. The event was huge and an eye opener to the community. Mr. Graeme Lyall from the Australian Buddhist Mission helped us tremendously. As for the Buddhist Nite (a.k.a. Bodhi Nite), we will always remember the divine food sponsored by Mrs. Lee who owned a restaurant, and all alumni supporters from Chong Ling, Penang School. At our Buddhist Exhibition, we will always be indebted to Daisy and her architectural friends – Miranda and Shern who worked till early morning to complete the graphic work! We also celebrated the 1st Anniversary of Unibuds on the ferry at Circular Quay, especially to show gratitude to Ven. Tsang Hui, Mrs. Lee and all the Associate members. They were like family to us. In fact, we later established a scholarship back in Malaysia to help Unibuds in future financial needs.

Finally, I was very delighted to see all the different generations of members come together at the 25th Anniversary of Unibuds. All the hard work of setting up Unibuds has paid off. This is a wonderful feeling. My words for you is to continue benefitting the students on campus, and avoid external influences that may divide your attention to achieve this. With this, may Unibuds continue to prosper for another 25 years – then I will be able to visit Sydney again, with my walking stick!



KHOR Kok Poh (President 1983)

Reflecting back to when I first came across Buddhism, due to my limited understanding of the Dhamma, I always thought that Mahayana Buddhism was the best teaching with greatest compassion. Therefore, other traditions such as Theravada and Vajrayana Buddhism were looked down upon. When I gained a deeper understanding of the teachings, I realised that this was not the case. Each tradition is suited for sentient beings of different natures and dispositions. There is a saying that "all roads lead to Rome". Therefore, as long as one diligently practises the Dhamma, all traditions pave the path to Buddhahood. I wish that Unibuds will continue the objective of spreading non-sectarian Dhamma so that more people of different natures could come and practise the teachings of the Buddha.

回想当年初接触学佛法时，由于对其教义的认识肤浅，总认为大乘佛法是最好，最最慈悲的。内心因此对其他门派如小乘，密宗等存有轻视之意。待有深一步了解后，惭愧发现其实不然。各门各派的佛法恰好是为了迎接根性，悟性皆不同的众生而衍生的。所谓条条道路通罗马，众生只要老老实实，诚诚恳恳的修行佛法，各派别的佛法都是成佛之道。在此祝愿慧命社继续发扬光大无门派佛学会的宗旨，来推转法轮，弘扬佛法。让广大众生有机会以自己的根性，习性来学习及修行佛法。

许国保

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UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1984 - 1985

ONG Yen Lee (President 1984)

I felt blessed for being able to attend the Unibuds 25th anniversary celebration in August this year, especially seeing such a good response from the crowd. This also reflected that Buddhism in Australia still has a lot of supporters. Definitely, personally, I was very glad to meet up with a lot of "oldies".

The moment I stepped into the campus, I felt like I was being transported back to 21 years ago. Recalling the life on campus, it was hard being a student and to be active in student societies too, especially because it was a rocky journey for me who was not very brilliant in studies. However, I felt very fortunate for being able to join a Buddhist Society like "Unibuds", which has allowed me to associate with good knowledgeable friends and mentors and to listen and practise the Dhamma. The benefits are beyond words, and have been with me till now.

After graduating from uni, then I realised that working life was not as simple as the life on campus. In the process of attaining materialistic gain in terms of wealth, enjoyment and as the circle of contacts has grown bigger from family to relatives, friends, colleagues, business contacts... my attachment is getting more and more. On one hand, I feel life is full of troubles and often feel sad, but on the other hand, I just cannot let go of it. I always feel torn. I feel I need to further develop myself as I do not like to feel lost.



Nevertheless, I am grateful to Venerable Tsang Hui, who has constantly visited people like us who have graduated and gone back to Malaysia. He has constantly encouraged us to continue pursuing the learning of Buddhism by forming a Buddhist Society, despite our initial resistance for many years. Yeah! Now finally we have "Zheng Xin Buddhist Association" that was formed in year 1999, a small Buddhist group whereby we could always encourage each other on the path of learning Buddhism and pursuing Buddhahood, as well as further promoting Buddhism for the good of others. Thus, I wish everyone to continue pursuing Buddhism and to develop oneself during the life in the campus and after campus too. Along the journey, we need "good associates" to encourage and support each other.



SAW Quee Kiim (President 1985)

I was approached by the Excocos of my previous batch to take up the President position in a very interesting manner. I was very active in the Malaysian Student's Organisation (MSO) then. Unibuds at that time was predominantly Chinese speaking, so it was not an easy task (for me) to run it. However, when I took over, help just came from everywhere! You know that magic that comes in handy during crises. Even the founder of Unibuds, Dr Lim came back to help during my year which I found very touching - by his dedication and kindness.

As an English based group, I tried to balance Unibuds activities so that more members can get to understand and join our activities. Moreover, we were always a non-sectarian society, so it was good to have a better mix of languages and various foreign students in the society. Yet, we maintained a right balance under good guidance.

I can remember that we got our own Unibuds library during my year (as we never had a campus premise to store our things before). Although it was only a 'hut' - we treated it as a palace! At last, we have our very own home!

Running a religious society was different from any other student organisations I have joined, and I think it was the right time when I took over the President position. This position was different and the requirement had made me grow to be more selfless and able to share the Dhamma with those who were keen. I am one who really appreciates the closeness of members in Unibuds, learning the Dhamma together and see the deeper sense of life.

Thus, it is very pleasant to see that even up till today, many of my Unibuds friends are very active and capable in other Buddhist organisations back in Malaysia. Yes, I had the best mix of Dhamma friends during my time and I will never, even for a moment regret taking up the captain's role to guide Unibuds for a year! Therefore, thanks and sadhu, sadhu, sadhu to all in the past and future leaders of Unibuds.

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1986 - 1989



Dr. CH'NG Eng Chye (President 1986)

八一年創立
澳大學首社
“慧命”超學派
共揚南北傳
續佛陀慧命
唯正見是尚
引知識青年
邁菩提大道
宣正覺之音
佛青勤發心
校園弘正法
蓮花遍地香

旅澳十二載
故“慧命”銀禧

離澳滿一紀
綴語資紀念

Founded in eighty one
The first Buddhist society on Australian campus
UNIBUDS invites different denominations
Expounding the teachings of Theravada and Mahayana
Continuing the wisdom life of the Lord Buddha
Right view is the foremost goal
Guiding the intellectual youths
To march on the great Bodhi path
Spreading the sound of awakening
The devotions of the Buddhist youths
Propagating the Dhamma on campus
The fragrance of the lotus
Permeating every corner of the land

Having spent twelve years in Australia
And left for a similar period of time
Returned for the Silver Anniversary of Unibuds
Sharing these words as a memento



WONG Kah Loon (President 1987 / 89)

Joining Unibuds was perhaps one of the best things I have ever done in my life. It was through Unibuds that I had the opportunity to learn the teachings of the Buddha, to meet the Sangha and to make many good friends. However, it was through serving in the committee that I developed good interpersonal and communication skills that have helped me tremendously in my career. Despite all the ups and downs in my university life, I cherished every moment I had with our patrons and all my Dhamma friends in Unibuds. It was also through Unibuds that I got to know the girl whom I married upon returning to Penang (Malaysia). Unibuds is indeed a very good place to find a good partner in practising the Dhamma for life. Go to the university for knowledge on how to make a good living but join Unibuds for wisdom on how to live a meaningful life. My message to all young buds is to enjoy all the best things that Unibuds offers. Take all the opportunity to participate in the society and make the most of your university life.

**LEE Kim Kwong
(President 1988)**

During my service as President, Unibuds was very well supported by the seniors on the past, thus I am very grateful for the right foundation that they had set in place for Unibuds to grow. During my time as president, Unibuds was more or less quite visible on campus, in fact one of the most active student societies. The number of members was very significant compared to the pioneering years - with students from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Even postgraduate members were more than the previous years. Well, like everything else - bigger prospects came with bigger responsibilities. We had to work closely for all the events and needed more man power to ensure that activities were run smoothly. We were lucky that many of our members were very active and supported us in many ways.

One thing I would like to emphasise was the good foundation that the past presidents and members have put in for us, in order for my year to ride on the wave. This, I truly must thank them. I hope Unibuds is still as active as before, and if times are good - try to maintain it by learning about the past efforts. Then you will learn to appreciate what you have now, in order to preserve it with a clearer purpose.

Good Luck and May the Blessings of the Triple Gem be upon Unibuds always!

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1990 - 1991



Dr. LIM Sean Teik (President 1990)

How time flies! In a blink of an eye, Unibuds has grown up to be 25 years old. It was as if yesterday when I was involved in Unibuds, and yes, sometimes it still crops up in my dream. They were all sweet dreams, where we, a group of Unibuds members, better known as the "Buds" at that time, worked, learned and shared together. Those friendships or "dhammaships" still remain one of the best until now. We might not see each other as often, but as soon as we get together, the feeling just comes back naturally. I am sure you all will share the similar experience in future. So cherish your time while in Unibuds, making full use of your time while in the university to learn the Dhamma from various schools of teaching from different Dhamma teachers.

I am glad to learn that Unibuds has metamorphosed into a strong healthy adult now, unlike the early years, when it was struggling for survival. There were times in the early years when we had to persuade and beg members to take up Exco member positions or sometimes even just to turn up for the functions. It is great now that the Buddhists Night is so overwhelmingly attended. Frankly, not even in my dreams do I imagine the crowd to be so huge! Well done, young Buds! I hope you can keep up with the good work. Now I dare to dream that one day, in the not too distant future, all the Dhamma talks will also be so well attended!

May Unibuds be ever blossoming! May all the Buds be well and happy!

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

CHAN Tye Kooi (President 1991)

It has been a quarter of a century since the formation of UNIBUDS in New South Wales, Australia. In many ways, like any Buddhist society in this world, UNIBUDS has played a small but vital and collaborative role in propagating the teachings of our great teacher, the Lord Buddha. That role has since expanded and grown into different parts of the world. Many of us have thus come back since graduation to form a small Buddhist alumni in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1999 and proudly called itself "Zheng Xin Buddhist Association".

The greatest beauty of Buddhism is not in the number of followers, but in the quality of the practice. Many of us, including myself, had the privilege to be nurtured and trained by UNIBUDS under the compassionate guidance of our respected patrons, Ven. Chao Khun Samai and Ven. Tsang Hui in Sydney. Their support and advice have until today, led us closer to the right path of the cessation of suffering in life. We have become a person of better value to ourselves and to others compared to who we were before getting to know Buddhism.



To quote a wise saying, "It is not about what you know, but what you DO with what you know THAT COUNTS". You do not really feel the power of Buddhism by merely reading the sutta or listening to Dhamma talks, because that is not the ultimate way of a successful Buddhist practitioner. You can unleash your power of wisdom only when you use and apply what you have learnt from the text and talks in your actual life to verify and validate the true nature of existence. I have personally come across the many so-called "pupils" of Buddhism becoming increasingly frustrated, depressed and lost in their search of wisdom simply because they "failed" to work their Dhamma knowledge and put into FINAL action. Eventually, they either give up in their daily practice or give in to other forms of temptations. They have become the "drop-out" themselves.

Take care of your learning and be responsible to practise them without any fear of failure. Stay with your true self, be sincere, truthful and confident to the end. I guarantee that you will then experience the eternal bliss of life. Start today, start with yourself, start NOW.

May you find the path to end all sufferings. Sadhu.

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1992 - 1993



Desmond KOK Eng Tiong
(President 1992)

It was my honour to be elected as President in 1992; more importantly I treasured the opportunity to be more involved with UNIBUDS through my 5 years in UNSW. UNIBUDS has been an excellent platform to progress my understanding on Buddha's teaching and to gain invaluable advice about the ways of life from great Dhamma teachers. And to practise with many devoted members from different countries who we are close friends with till date. Such experiences will not be possible without the up keeping of one of UNIBUDS's motto: Turning the Dhamma Wheel. I truly thank the Triple Gem and my fellow Dhamma friends.

Knowing the teachings of Buddha has also guided me to be a better person in dealing with any obstacles I faced; challenges in work places and interactions with people. Every action and effort has opened up my options and opportunities which I could have easily missed out on.

I never regretted any single minute to be part of UNIBUDS and everything I have learnt are very practical in my daily life today. As such, I put this challenge to all members to put your 110% to discover the potential of UNIBUDS to benefit yourself and others; to find your own true value through Buddha's teaching, and have a joyous learning journey with your fellow Dhamma friends. Only your ACTIONS will turn the Dhamma wheel, towards the path of Enlightenment.

Last but not least, I congratulate the outgoing and incoming executive members for all your efforts to bring UNIBUDS to another excellent year. May all beings be well and happy.



Eric TAM Yong Soon
(President 1993)

I can recall the time when I first met Unibuds; it was in the year of 1990. Dr. Lim Sean Teik was the president and I would never forget the theme of the society in that year – "Together We Work, Together We Learn and Together We Share". My first impression of the members of Unibuds was that they were very friendly (with lots of fun), understanding, caring and had strong spirit of teamwork.

The essential part of Unibuds which I appreciated most was the encounters with the Dhamma and the teachers. This is where I started to learn about Dhamma. Although it has been many years that have passed, I could never forget the kindness and compassion of the teachers.

In worldly life, there are times of ups and there are times of downs. I am happy to know that Unibuds has sustained for 25 years continuously in the university. This must have required a lot of effort from all the committees and members in the past and also guidance from the patrons.

I sincerely wish that Unibuds will continue her role to share with more people about the teachings of the Buddha, and the members will help each other paving the path leading to happiness, peace and harmony.

Thank you.

"Together we work, Together we learn,
Together we share"

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1994 - 1995



NG Lee Yoong (President 1994)

Whilst the Unibuds society was first formed by Ven. Tsang Hui and Dr. Lim, it has been shaped over the years by the many EXCOs and other members who have come and gone along the way. It has been such a wonderful organisation due to the presence and joint effort of everyone. I wish you an exciting experience in preparing for the annual magazine, and may all beings be well and happy.



Gloria WOO Mun Yee (President 1995)

To 10 years passed like a blink of an eye. When I attended Bodhi Night this year, Unibuds was celebrating its 25th anniversary. The experience was simply "WOW"! Great applause and salute to the new generation of Unibuds committee. Many things had changed and the society is not only heading for better improvement but is excellent. Well done and congratulations to the present generation of Unibuds members.

Reminiscing about my experiences gained from leading the society 10 years ago, it has been very beneficial for my own personal development. Managing the society had taught me a lot about leadership, creativity, patience, passion and most of all the Dhamma. These values instilled in me during my days as a student has provided me personal strength and a foundation with strong principles to face the challenging corporate world.

10 years passed, riding on the waves of ups and downs in my life journey so far has been very fulfilling. If without the foundation of the Dhamma which supported my spiritual growth I guess life will never be the same. Continuous spiritual growth with the practices of the Noble Eightfold Path and keeping the precepts faithfully had lead me through times that were tough by providing me with the necessary courage and persistency. Continuous practice and using the Dhamma as my guiding principle, I believe this had led me to my achievements in life at present. I have a very good career with a well balanced family relationship. I believe I have a very fulfilling life with lots of abundance. I am truly grateful to my fellow Unibuds members and committee members who had been in my committee team and working together to create unforgettable experiences, Expo, Ski trip, Bodhi Nite, Lantern Nite and many more memorable occasions.

Perhaps without those experiences that I gained from my student days as being part of Unibuds, life would not have been the same. Life is about giving and receiving. I do hope that our future generations of members will be inspired by the Dhamma and create memorable experiences being a Unibuds member and enrich their lives with those experiences gained.

May You All Be Well and Happy!

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1996 - 1998



Hadi Utomo WONG (President 1996)



I congratulate Puay Yeong for being able to hunt me down and successfully contacting me. It has been a while since my term as 1996 UNIBUDS President.

It all started during the 1994 orientation period at UNSW. I saw the UNIBUDS stand and dropped by to find out what they had to offer. The people there were very friendly and I was also eager to learn more about my faith, therefore naturally, I joined straight away. I started to attend their functions, got to know the members, helped around, and by my second year I was filling the Honorary Treasurer position under Ms. Gloria Woo's administration.

The year after that was more challenging as it was my year as UNIBUDS president and my final year at UNSW pursuing a B.Com degree. In addition to that, my administration consisted of a fair number of new executive committee (Exco) members. Some even had no previous encounter with UNIBUDS.

Nevertheless, it was good. Everybody did their best. The Exco gained valuable experiences and got closer as a team. We had some memorable outings and meeting sessions. The Bodhi Nite began as a nightmare due to the monstrous amount of work involved but turned out to be a huge success as if by miracle. For me, I know better that the so called 'miracles' took form in the dedication of many people who contributed with enthusiasm and creativity.

Lastly, I wish the future UNIBUDS members find their time in the society as pleasant and rewarding as mine.

Desmond ONG (President 1997)

One word to describe my experience in Unibuds is "getting out of my comfort zone".

As a student, I did not just come to university to study, get good marks or enjoy social life and that's it. Similarly to our approach to life, it is not simply about wanting to live in a peaceful, happy, comfortable, secure and wealthy condition or having a fair knowledge of Dhamma but unable to cope with every changes or even the smallest obstacle that happens in day-to-day life.

I see UNIBUDS serving as a place to understand the relevance of Dhamma in life and how it can be implemented. For example, in dealing with people we do not just deal with different characters or backgrounds but also different levels of Dhamma. There is the hidden expectation that people will do certain things the way we thought they would based on Buddhism. So it is challenging in its own way.



Tracy Tilaka WEERASINHA (President 1998)



I was the UNIBUDS President for the period 1997-98. Firstly, I would like to congratulate all the UNIBUDS members, past and present, for contributing to make it what it is today: a strong and vibrant Buddhist society on campus in Australia. Twenty-five years is certainly a long time, and I hope that UNIBUDS will sustain its presence and celebrate more good years to come.

Having been involved in the UNIBUDS executive committee since 1994, it gave me a chance to observe the growth of various Buddhist groups, within universities as well as in the wider community. UNIBUDS is quite special among Buddhist groups, in that it offers a friendly and non-sectarian setting for students and others wishing to explore the Buddha-Dhamma.

What were my most memorable moments in UNIBUDS? I could highlight Bodhi Nite 1998, but I could list so many other smaller moments – moments shared between UNIBUDS friends over the years that still bring knowing smiles to our faces whenever we meet. Or rather, wherever we meet: many international members return overseas to commence their working lives and start families. So, some members' trips abroad do come with "guided tours" and "accommodation" included!

Happy 25th Anniversary UNIBUDS!

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 1999 - 2000



Merry CHANDRA (President, 1999):

Hi I am Merry, the 19th President. When Puay Yeong asked us to say a few words about our time in Unibuds, I thought what can I write to express my feeling towards Unibuds that can really capture the essence of what I truly feel. Unibuds is a great society from which I have learnt many valuable things. It has provided me with a better understanding of the Dhamma, the purpose of

life and the opportunity to build good virtues within myself. Being a Unibuds member I am always surrounded by great people who is able to inspire others through their generosity, compassion and dedication in spreading the Dhamma as well as helping other people. I too, am often inspired by some of them. This is the beauty of Unibuds.

The members learn and grow together to perfect themselves as human being. I have seen many examples of Unibuds members who have changed from being shy and quiet to being a confident and outgoing person. This shows us that everyone has the good traits and heart in them. It takes only love, support and the opportunity to blossom.

Being a part of Unibuds has certainly made my life more meaningful. The experience and the friendship that Unibuds gives me has been so wonderful and cannot be forgotten. For this reason, I would like to encourage everyone to join Unibuds and get involved in the activities as you have to be there to really experience and benefit from it. I hope there will be many more people who will have the opportunity to experience and share the same thing that I have had from Unibuds.



Thank you for giving me the chance to say a few words. I hope you all enjoy this special edition.

Metta, Merry

CHOW Mei Ling (President 2000)



Dear everyone,

My name is Mei Ling. How are you? Hope you are well and happy :) My sincere thanks to the present annual magazine editor for sourcing me out to share with you a message. It is a rare opportunity as I'd already left Unibuds and Australia for some years. To be able to come back to the same platform again after some time is an unusual occasion and gives the hindsight to reflect on my experience in Unibuds from another angle. I am happy to share some thoughts with you.

University years are vital. I only just realised how important they were. It was a time that I began striking out independently, not only to study but also to learn/explore the world and also to establish myself. I am often quite at loss on which way to approach. It is definitely not in the books. How do you learn to live a fulfilling life for yourself, gain satisfaction from your ideals and live in harmony with other people? I was fortunate. I spent these learning years with Unibuds. Through it, I experienced and learnt how to establish the right values and right course of action, and this informs the basic framework of who I am as a person now.

Some experiences which I have gained from Unibuds:

- 1) Balance of logic and sentiment: I joined Unibuds from 1996-2002, and so was able to take on various tasks within the society. There were a lot of decisions to consider, many activities to plan and implement. It was really not easy because not just the technical issues were problematic, actual persons were affected too. We had to learn to work through the ups and downs with the right logic and concern for the greater benefit of all. It was very valuable training.
- 2) Care and concern as Unibuds is a very caring community. Till now many Dhamma friends still call on me, to see how I am getting on. My family also saw the improvement in me, as I have learnt the need to care for others and to dissolve impatience/anger with understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Spiritual calm: I also know now that those meditation sessions I attended in Unibuds paid off. It has formed a natural quiet column strength. The tougher the situation, the more the mind steadies and stills down. It is like a natural reflex that is very beneficial for the increasing hectic life we live.

I think many Dhamma friends share the similar experience and benefits like me. Thank you Unibuds and all the Dhamma teachers for your guidance and support all these years.

To all the present and future Unibuds: You have been doing well and I am confident that you will continue to do well. Nevertheless, I think you can do even better for yourself and Unibuds in the next 25 years!

Metta

UNIBUDS Presidents Messages

Year: 2001- 2004



GOOI Chien Hoong (President 2001)

I have been very fortunate to be a part of Unibuds over the past 7 years leading up to its 25th anniversary. This society has grown from strength to strength while maintaining the good virtues and energetic spirit that has been passed down over the generations. It has created a platform for the free enquiry of Dhamma and has provided a great environment for learning all aspects of Buddhism. I have personally learned and grown so much in Dhamma during my time here. I hope that Unibuds will continue strongly in its work of spreading the Buddha's message of peace, wisdom and compassion. May Dhamma always be the guide for those leading the society!

Agus SANTOSO (President 2002 / 2003)

It is indeed a blessing given the chance to be involved in a Buddhist society that has been 25 years actively serving to excel Dhamma learning. An organised and well structured student society, Unibuds provides a conducive atmosphere for the members to grow and shine.

During those few years of service, I was amazed by the level of energy the members projected towards learning and serving. We worked together through moments of joy and struggles, but were always accompanied by understanding and support for one another. It was truly a great experience for many of us and was certainly a meaningful portion of my life.

As we realise the paramount importance of the Dhamma, we shall strive to promote and integrate the teachings in our daily life. With this I wish that Unibuds continues to grow and maintains its pure objectives, and thank the members, patrons, and Dhamma teachers for their continuous support towards Unibuds. May the light of Dhamma be passed down endlessly. May all benefit from the teachings of the Buddha.



Thank you. All the best with the annual mag.

Metta



Stephanie PAN (President 2004)

Dear Friends in the Dhamma,

A very good day to all of you. Allow me some time to introduce myself. I am Stephanie Pan, president during the 24th UNIBUDS executive committee. I am truly thankful for being given the chance to get in touch with all of you again from the lion city, Singapore. Currently, I am working here, moulding the future of the young.

Often, people will ask me what was most memorable about my undergraduate days in Sydney. I would often reply that UNIBUDS was the place that made my 3 years in Australia fulfilling. It is the place whereby I experienced Buddhism at a more intricate level, and it is also where I learnt the Dhamma. Whether it is from the venerables, the books or my fellow peers, UNIBUDS is always there for me. As I am writing this, images of the UNIBUDS library, sports sessions at Unigym, weekly Dhamma talks, the venerables and my dear friends swarm my mind. Tears well up in my eyes as I recall the laughter, the tears, the sorrows and happiness that I experienced in UNIBUDS. With UNIBUDS, there was never a time when I was free. Everyday of the week, I was busy, and I was happy to be busy. To be able to learn and to serve was the greatest joy of my life. Seeing the familiar faces at the weekly dhamma talks and meditation sessions, hearing them discuss about Buddhism and thanking us for organising the talks gives me a great sense of gratitude and satisfaction. That I have been given this chance to be of service to all. Here's to UNIBUDS for coming a long way. You are already ¼ of a century. May you have many more years to come, and may all sentient beings be well and happy.

Metta

Founding President's Article

Dr. Ching Liang Lim

My Encounter with Buddhism in Australia, Formation of UNIBUDS and the first 25 Years of UNIBUDS.

It is an honour to be invited to write an article on the formation of UNIBUDS and the difficulties faced by the society in her formative years. I had the opportunity to learn the Dhamma (Tibetan Buddhism) when I was pursuing my B. Sc degree in Metallurgy and Science of Materials in Birmingham University in the U. K. At that time I gave it a miss because the temple was too far from the university and I needed to concentrate on my first degree.

It started with me getting a place to do a Masters degree at UNSW without even applying for it. I was surprised to be offered a place, and later found out that a visiting professor from UNSW whom I met in Birmingham University applied on my behalf when I casually mentioned during a tea break about doing a postgraduate study in Australia.

In Sydney, the first time I met Venerable Tsang Hui was when we walked past one another at Central Station. He gave me a warm smile and I reciprocated. During the train journey to the North Shore to meet with my Supervisor, I was constantly reminded of this unusual and friendly monk. My impression of monks is that they are a serious lot waiting for us to say "Amitufo"¹ or address them as "Shifu"² first before they would respond to you, but this Venerable is different.

Eventually, an outing to Snowy Mountain with some university mates in two cars nearly ended in fatality and this prompted me to look for a temple in Sydney to thank divine beings for the blessing. With the help of a departmental secretary, I found a Taoist temple in Glebe. Later I found a Buddhist temple in the heart of Chinatown. Vegetarian dinners on a Saturday in the temple was cheap – only \$1.00 per meal followed by chanting sessions. Being an uninitiated guest, at first I was only interested in a cheap meal and not the chanting. Miss Leung³ Tiew Kien from Vietnam persuaded me to participate in the chanting sessions, so I stayed back on one Saturday to observe and found the chanting to be very musical. Apart from having a calming effect on me, I also found peace within after each chanting session. I became a regular at the temple and later I was put in charge of organising some of the ladies to do the cooking in the temple on Saturdays.

It was also Miss Leung who persuaded me to attend a Dhamma talk by a monk. I was very unsure whether I should or should not go because I had never attended any Dhamma talk before. My previous experience with other religions made me very apprehensive and I felt that it was going to be another brain washing session by a monk. Miss Leung was very persistent and I obliged out of courtesy, although she also told me that there would be good vegetarian food donated by a restaurant for the talk. I thought the food prepared by a restaurant must be better than what I normally organised in the temple so I decided to try out some new vegetarian food.



Source: UNIBUDS

The Dhamma talk was held in a restaurant, and to my surprise the monk who was giving the talk was the very same monk I had met at Central Station. After the good vegetarian meal and before Ven. Tsang Hui began his Dhamma talk (my very first Dhamma lesson) I bluntly told him that Dhamma talks were brain-washing sessions and if I decided to leave his Dhamma lesson anytime in the future upon concluding for myself that the talks were indeed brain-washing sessions, I would not wish to be pestered by Miss Leung asking me to stay on any longer. I was expecting some kind of tongue lashing from him for being so disrespectful to a holy man. It never came and instead I was taken aback with his reply, which I quote here: "In Buddhism we do not force anyone to accept. If you feel that it is not for you, you are welcome to leave anytime." I was inspired by his words so I decided to stay and had my very first Dhamma lesson in 1980. The topic was about compassion and that the offerings of food to the Buddha should be vegetarian. I could not accept his teaching initially because if I accepted it, it would mean that my mother had been wrong for umpteen years (she always offered chicken, fish, prawns, etc). Due to time constraints, the restaurant had to be opened for business and Ven. Tsang Hui was not able to complete his Dhamma talk.

My second Dhamma lesson was held in a rundown house in Redfern so the operation of the restaurant would not be affected. Soon I became one of the few regular students of Ven. Tsang Hui's Sunday Dhamma classes, arguing with him in almost every lesson. The few other regulars were Miss Leung³ Tiew Kiew, Mrs. Lee Shu Sum of House of Chow Restaurant, "Tang Da Ge" (in Mandarin, this means Big Brother Tang) and myself. Others who turned up would be a bonus. I was inspired by the teachings of the Buddha and I never missed even one Sunday. Ven. Tsang Hui said to me one day that if an opportunity arose, I should consider sharing my inspiration with others and at that moment I did not have the slightest idea how to do so because the other students on campus were quite apathetic to Buddhism, even those from Buddhist families.

'With the inspiration from the teachings of the Buddha and assurance from Ven. Tsang Hui...

...I started the process of forming a Buddhist Society on campus.'

One Friday as I was loitering around the Roundhouse during lunch hour, I spotted a Muslim (Pakistani) postgraduate student whose laboratory was in the same building as mine. He was praying in one of the rooms with his friends. I was mischievous and said to him later that I will organise a chanting session every Friday next to his prayer room in the Roundhouse to distract him and his friends from praying. He surprised me by telling me that I should start a Buddhist Society on campus and I could get funding from Campus Societies or CASOC in short. I almost fell off my chair when he further said that I was welcome to do our chanting next door – which was unheard of in Malaysia where I lived. The next thing I remembered asking him was how much money it would cost and he replied depending on how active we were and how good our justification for the expense was. It could be anything from a few hundred dollars up to maybe a couple of thousand. I broke the news to Ven. Tsang Hui and he fully supported the idea and encouraged me to form a Buddhist society on campus. Ven. Tsang Hui assured me that if the money from CASOC was not enough, I could try raising some funds from the regulars of Hwa Tsang Monastery. If there was no one to give Dhamma talks at our activities, he assured me that he would.

With the inspiration from the teachings of the Buddha and assurance from Ven. Tsang Hui and confirmation from CASOC regarding funding, I started the process of forming a Buddhist Society on campus. I had never been involved in society work during my school days and I did not know what a constitution was and now I have to come up with one without which I could not register the Buddhist Society with CASOC. I borrowed from my Muslim friend his copy and modified them. My wife Ms. Tham³ Lai Fong, who had just arrived from Malaysia, then typed up the constitution. My second hurdle was to find at least four interim committee members, so I set up a table outside the library and "begged" some students to take up the positions. I managed to round up Ms. Daisy Lie to be my VP, Ms. Wong³ Boon Choo to be the Hon. Treasurer and Mr. Foong³ Mun Choy to be the Hon. Secretary. We decided to give a more convenient name for the Society. Instead of a big mouthful "University of New South Wales Buddhist Society", we deliberated and decided to call ourselves **UNIBUDS** because we were the university's budding Buddhists.

The problem did not end there. I attended the first CASOC meeting to present UNIBUDS and to get it accepted and registered with CASOC. I found that on campus there were a lot of Christian groups – all who were opposing the formation of a Buddhist Society on campus. The debate was hostile and the opposition from the Christian groups was strong to say the least, which was totally unexpected.

Luckily, the Gaysoc was strongly behind the idea of having UNIBUDS on campus and it ended with a walk out by the then Gaysoc president and his friends who also ran other societies on campus. Due to lack of quorum, the meeting was called off and UNIBUDS was spared from being rejected by CASOC. I think the Gaysoc liked UNIBUDS perhaps because it was something new and preaches moderation, refraining from “Thou Shalt Nots”. Credit must be given to Gaysoc, for in the subsequent meeting they lobbied enough societies to admit UNIBUDS into CASOC in 1981. Thus UNIBUDS was officially formed and registered with CASOC in that year.

25 years ago... the beginning...

We needed to have a logo for the society. My flat mate, Mr. Ooi³ Soon Chuan, an architectural student was persuaded to take up the job of designing a logo. He did some research by flipping over a few Buddhist books to get some inspiration and then designed a logo for UNIBUDS, which was a Dhamma wheel and also represented the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism.

We needed to have at least 15 members too (if I remember correctly) before we could call for the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) to elect the official committee members and to dissolve the interim committee. It was not easy because nobody wanted to become a committee member. We had to persuade and coerce them into accepting the various committee positions; otherwise we would lose our registration with CASOC. The ongoing exercise of recruiting members outside the university library was managed by the four interim members. I was only exposed to the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism at the time. When some students enquired whether we were promoting Mahayana or Theravada Buddhism, I then realised how little I knew about Buddhism. The reality is that there were different sects in Buddhism just like how there were different types of Christianity.

We (the inaugural committee) decided that as long as the sect taught about non-self, impermanence or

Dhamma, it should be accepted into UNIBUDS irrespective of his or her inclination to either Mahayana, Theravada, Zen or Tibetan Buddhism. This was the way to unite all Buddhists on campus. It was the wish of the committee that this unity be the hallmark of UNIBUDS as long as it was in existence. Another important decision of the inaugural committee was that **UNIBUDS is for the students, by the students and should flourish in the campus environment**. In other words, it should not be infiltrated by other Buddhist groups outside the campus. In any case, CASOC would disapprove of such a move. Consequently, the committee decided to invite two Venerables to be patrons of the society to provide guidance, advice and support during the formative years of UNIBUDS. Since the majority of members subscribed to either Mahayana Buddhism or Theravada Buddhism, Ven. Tsang Hui and Ven. Phra Mahasamai (now Ven. Chao Khun Samai) were invited to be the patrons of the society.

“SACCA” means truth. It was the brain child of Mr. Lai³ Wai Choong and the members of the Ong family. When they approached me for publication of a bulletin for UNIBUDS, I was actually at a loss of what to do. I did not know enough about Buddhism to write articles and my training in Buddhism was primarily in Mandarin. The willingness of Mr. Lai³ Wai Choong and the Ong family helped save the day. Credit should be given to them for initiating and contributing articles for the SACCA.

I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Wong³ Kim Kooi (popularly known as Datuk⁴ Kim – a self proclaimed Datuk) for designing and coming up with the idea of the Cook of the Year contest. Mr. Graeme See was another champion. He initiated and organised daily meditation sessions on campus and promoted Zen Buddhism within UNIBUDS by citing some interesting Zen Buddhism stories. Credit should also be given to the silent workers of UNIBUDS as they were the ones who would help in all the functions and go round the campus to paste posters in the middle of the night. They did not want to hold any official positions but would be there to help without being asked.

During the formative years, particularly in the first year, we were really poor. We would sell vegetarian food on campus outside the library to raise funds. Some of the members cooked and donated their food; the House of Chow Restaurant was another strong supporter donating food for all the occasions. Dr. Ong and family (popularly known as the Ong family) would donate “Nyonya kueh”⁵ and/or vegetarian spring rolls for our functions. We organised Buddhist nights (a few times a year) to raise money. Our Buddhist nights were rather low key (no money, no resources) compared to the Bodhi Nite I just attended earlier this year to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of UNIBUDS. There were

no sketches or multimedia animations; instead we ate vegetarian food and had our patrons giving speeches and Dhamma talks. We also had a Buddhist Choir singing a few Buddhist songs. Occasionally, we would organise outings to the Blue Mountains or Sydney harbour cruises to raise money. We asked for donations from the devotees of Hwa Tsang Monastery after each festive occasion when I would give a short speech on our fund-raising activities and the members would then fan out to collect donations. Speaking of donations, I cannot go without mentioning Mrs. Lee of the House of Chow Restaurant. She used to ask me to see her at her restaurant and then she would take out bags of coins and notes for the activities of UNIBUDS. The bags of notes and coins were her portion of the tips collected in her restaurant. She also donated to the UNIBUDS Alumni Society (which has now been renamed as Zheng Xin Buddhist Association by Venerable Tsang Hui) when it was formally formed in Malaysia.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Ray Golding, to officially open the function and members of the CASOC were invited to grace the occasion. The president of Gaysoc commented that if he had known it would be that good, he would have supported UNIBUDS for more funding. UNIBUDS was one society that did not take off like an airplane but took off like a rocket. These were very encouraging words to the inaugural committee and the organising committee members. We had to fight off university students from different religion upbringings with their Holy books criticising us for praying to wood, metal and porcelain without realising that what they themselves prayed to was also made of either wood carving, metal casting or fine porcelain artwork.

Organising the exhibition gave me the opportunity to discover that one did not need to be a Sangha member to practise Buddhism. I was very concerned about the

'...UNIBUDS is for the students, by the students and should flourish in the campus environment.'

UNIBUDS soon submitted a proposal to CASOC for funding for the first Buddhist exhibition on campus. The amount approved was below expectation as there were no precedents since no religious societies had organised an exhibition on campus before. With the encouragement of our patrons, we worked very hard to ensure its success. We had some crucial members who backed out half way through and the project was more or less in a state of limbo. Out of the blue, someone brought in Mr. Horas Sen and Ms. Mirana Budiman who were not members of UNIBUDS but were willing to take over the project. This gave the organising committee new impetus and renewed energy to work. They had good leadership qualities and were able to guide all of us. My rented flat in Blenheim Street was turned into a workshop with members helping in whatever way they could. My wife would cook meals for all the helpers at her own expense. I did not attend to my own postgraduate project for several weeks and my supervisor could not find or reach me (I had no mobile phone and he did not know my resident telephone number). Later he found out my contact details from UNIKEN and gave me a piece of his mind. He lectured me that Buddhism is not a product and should not be 'exhibited'. As the opening date drew nearer, the organising committee was able to visualise the shape and form of the exhibition better. We decided to invite the Pro

precious Buddhist artifacts that the temple and other members of the public had loaned to us. The foyer of Sir John Clancy Auditorium had such an open layout and this posed a security nightmare to the inexperienced bunch of us. I told Mrs. Lee of the House of Chow Restaurant that I was worried that some of her items, if not properly guarded, might be stolen or lost. I still remember till today her response then in Cantonese, to quote and translate, "Ching Liang, don't worry about the items you borrowed for the exhibition. If they are still mine after the exhibition then they are mine. If the items are not mine after the exhibition (i.e. stolen), treat it as my gift to the people who have taken it" unquote. Such a profound statement from a humble kitchen hand in her own restaurant was permanently etched in my mind. Wow! She had understood and practised non-attachment, she had no hatred and anger for the people who might have taken the precious items belonging to her. Her generosity and her profound statements changed my perception of putting Buddhism into daily use. I truly admired this simple and petite lady for she was a fine example of a practising lay Buddhist.

The Annual Magazine was another meaningful project the inaugural committee was proud of. Being the very first issue, we needed to set some standards after the

success of the first exhibition on Buddhism. We sought the help of architectural students and we were fortunate to solicit the talents of our members like Mr. Keith Ong, Ms. Lim³ Lay lan and Mr. Lye³ Wai Choong on the editorial. Mr. Brian White was in charge of the text layout. Production was handled by the fine lady Ms. Jackie Tan and not forgetting Ms. Lye³ Mei Cheng, Ms. Ong³ Pin Tong and Ms. Peh³ Guat Chai who typed up the articles. Mr. Cheng³ Mun Bing, Mr. Foong³ Chee Meng, and Mr. Wong³ Kooi Kam were art directors of the magazine. They worked untiringly to produce a fine copy of the magazine bearing in mind that they started with nothing and with no experience. As a budding Buddhist, we tried to translate our little knowledge on Buddhism and depict them pictorially on the cover of the inaugural issue of the magazine. The design of the cover was very meaningful in that it showed the number of realms of existence. The lowest realm of existence was represented by the broadest dark band (bad *kamma*) at the bottom of the cover page. As the being transcended to a higher realm of existence, one's bad *kamma* got lesser and so did the thickness of the dark band – it became thinner. When Enlightenment was attained, we depicted it with a broad bright band. A simplified UNIBUDS's logo was not only to identify the society; it also suggested that the aspiration of the society was to encourage one to practise the teachings of Buddha with the ultimate aim of Enlightenment. As a budding Buddhist this may take more than one lifetime (rebirth) to achieve but nonetheless, one has to take this path to seek his own Enlightenment.

I left Australia in 1987. During my stay in Australia, I saw the difficulties experienced by UNIBUDS during her formative years. I would prefer to give the successive president the opportunity to share with you of their enlightening experiences and the trials and jubilation of their year. After returning to Malaysia, regretfully, I slowly lost touch with the society over the years as one going through different phases of one's life to carve a career and take care of family. The formation of Zheng Xin Buddhist Association was timely and essential to cater for the needs of returning students to Malaysia. The founders and pioneering members of Zheng Xin should be given the opportunity to share with us their aspirations.

The idea of returning to Australia to celebrate the 25th anniversary of UNIBUDS was mooted some time back when Ven. Tsang Hui was in Malaysia for his usual short visits. I had planned to return in 2006 for the occasion but I was wrong. A delegate of Zheng Xin visited me to inform of the date of the happy occasion this year in 2005 on August 27. Credit must be given to Zheng Xin members particularly Mr. Teng³ Wai Loon and his better half who organised my accommodation in Australia and air tickets for my whole

family. My children were lucky because the occasion fell on their school break. Ven. Tsang Hui was also one of the prime movers to get as many past presidents and committee members to attend this occasion.

25 years have passed; the university and the city of Sydney have gone through a tremendous physical transformation. UNIBUDS was no exception. From a small room in the hut (only big enough for a table, a couple of chairs and a book shelf), which we proudly called our library back in the early '80s to a decent room in the Square House now. The membership has grown many folds and the aspirations of the members and society remained strong. Testimony of the unity, strength and aspirations of the members and society is the recently held Bodhi Nite at Sir John Clancy Auditorium. The event was simply magnificent and was attended to full capacity of the Auditorium – an impressive achievement compared to ours back then, which was held in the grounds of Square House and attended by less than 100 people and not all were members. The success this year was only made possible with good resources, manpower, teamwork and a strong committee led by the President Ms. Desy Juliaty, her committee members and the organising committee of UNIBUDS Bodhi Nite. It was a job well done indeed.

My return to Australia for just a few days in August earlier this year had brought back many sweet memories and it was also an opportunity to meet with my friends in Australia and other devotees of Hwa Tsang Monastery. The short trip has no doubt left a very deep and lasting impression on my life. Bodhi Nite 2005 was also an eye-opening occasion for my children whereby they experienced the non-academic aspect of university life. The beauty of Sydney enchanted them and it was a very worthwhile trip for my family and me.

May all beings be well and happy. May all beings be blessed by the TRIPLE GEM.

Note: It is not possible to name all the contributing members in this article and your names if not mentioned were not deliberately left out but was due to age catching up with me. The Omnipresent Lord Buddha, the Bodhisattas and your kamma know your contribution to the Society.



Let me introduce my family members.

From left to right Benjamin Chin Ruenn Lim, Ching Liang Lim, Lai Fong Tham (Mrs. Lim), Aaron Chin Hui Lim and Amanda Jia Yuan Lim.

*A blessing for
all...*

(Endnotes)

¹ Amitufo (Amitābha): The Buddha of Limitless Light and Limitless Life. Chinese Buddhists often greet each other by saying "Amitufo".

² Shifu (Sifu): In the Chinese language, Shifu or Sifu means "Teacher". It is a respectful form of addressing monks or nuns.

³ In Malaysia, the Chinese have their surname come before their first name.

⁴ Datuk: In the Malay language, Datuk means grandfather. In Malaysia, Datuk is conferred as a Federal Title for some of the leaders of the country. Colloquially, it can also be an affectionate nickname.

⁵ Nyonya kueh: Similar to Malay kueh or kuih, these are the Asian concept of bite-sized "cakes" or "pastries" but contrary to the Western style, the kueh is more often steamed than baked and thus have a very different texture, flavour and appearance.

THE UNSEEN BEINGS OF UNIBUDS

Wai Loon Teng, IVP 1993

When we see an organisation like UNIBUDS and all its activities running smoothly, we usually incline more towards just seeing the physical events and easily associate with things that we are immediately familiar with i.e. what we can receive through our five senses.

So, what do I mean by the “Unseen Beings” of UNIBUDS? No, they are not the ghosts of ex-UNIBUDS members who haunt the premises that we so dearly love. Neither am I referring to the *devas* that we sometimes encounter, especially in a situation out of our control i.e. beyond human abilities, but end up mysteriously well and good.

The “Unseen Beings” actually were/are the people who help certain things to happen with accurate precision, and this minority group did exist in the past 25 years of UNIBUDS and perhaps in the present time as well.

If you were once an active UNIBUDS member, then you may recall feeling the joy of being part of a big family. You may also have experienced the type of great friendship where great compassion was extended again and again to those who were weaker or less visible amongst the more popular ones. Without being noticed, there has always been this same energy that has weaved its way through the bodies of the many generations of people in UNIBUDS over the years, to make sure that all members had a chance to benefit, to feel good about themselves, and sometimes simply being able to be themselves in the comfortable UNIBUDS environment.

This energy is a skillful mental cultivation – also a tactful balance of *bodhicitta* and wisdom. It is something that we can rarely explain in words and usually become more apparent as an end result felt by people. You may view it as a complex matter, but once you are over the steep side of the hill – it comes naturally. The point is, this is very critical for the existence of UNIBUDS and its continuity. An analogy would be good ‘quality’ blood that is required to flow through our veins in order to have a healthy body.



Illustration: Wai Loon Teng

I have seen various batches of UNIBUDS over the years. As I observed the cycle repeating itself in various ways, it became very clear that we must have such an energy to run a dynamic place like UNIBUDS. This student society cannot just run on procedures and according to some corporate structure learned in text books. This is a place where people are motivated to organise campus activities for free and at the same time also deal with the ups and downs that come with all things. I am sure there were times when the Excos have experienced disappointment when there were only one or two people attending the Dhamma talks, or faced with different views in Exco meetings that made life seem difficult to maintain UNIBUDS as a good place. But I can also see a handful of responsible people who did not give up and can still maintain a good crowd with a high degree of equanimity and harmony amongst the many. Naturally, any activity organised by them will tend to follow on successfully.

How do we move towards such a practice in order to benefit ourselves and others? The answer is to sharpen the mind. With the right platform, wisdom will easily arise. It is just like wiping the dirty windscreen of your car. Once it is clear, you will be able to see what is out there and make an informed decision. The end result is therefore almost certainly a precise decision. In addition, you have therefore planted a good seed of merit along the way.

Now, why do most people not see this happening? Well, people tend to view intangible factors such as friendship in a place like UNIBUDS as just being warm towards each other, have a so-called extended family for that short period of time. But there is usually no greater intention to plan for the future of UNIBUDS e.g. what happens in 10 years time, or how can good qualities be preserved or even enhanced so that we do not repeat mistakes, etc. We think by observing a handful of guidelines and moral precepts, it will be enough for our one lifetime? No, because in life, individualism will not be sufficient to get Enlightened. You

perhaps need to expand and reach out to the rest, then by placing the importance of our 'self' smaller in the picture by extending help to the larger community, we will be able to establish a better understanding of non-self. So, in an environment like UNIBUDS where people are supposed to help one another, it is a good basis to cultivate such a practice.

In fact, when we are faced with complexities in life, with no evident solutions, we tend to conveniently name it *kamma*, or blame it on fate. This is where we often experience that after many years of Dhamma talks, and yet it does not necessarily translate to full understanding of even the simplest form of *kamma*. That is why we really

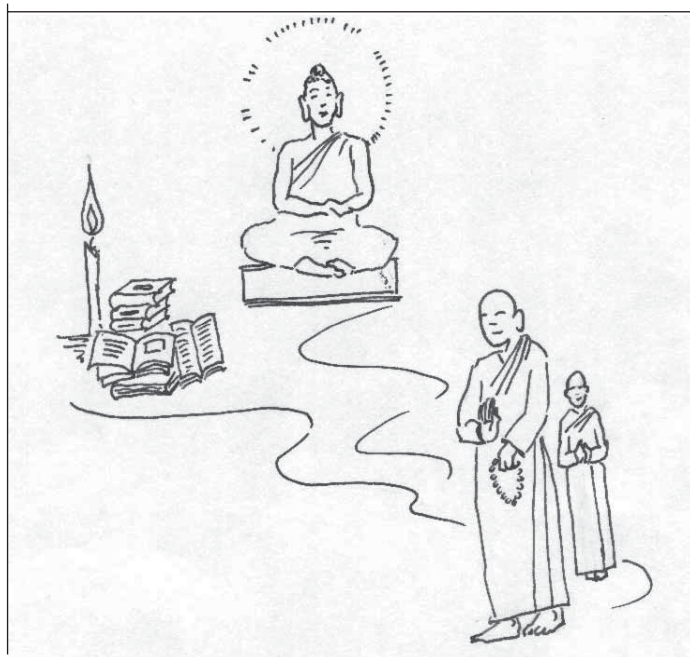


Illustration: Wai Loon Teng

have to spend time to sharpen the knife (the mind). There are various objects and tools to do this, as long as we initially achieve one important thing - Right Understanding. Without this, how can we even have the urge to aim for a sharp mind to help improve and instill right balance for the many? Thus, there will always be a shortage of people who can correctly pave the right steps and create the good seeds for UNIBUDS as a whole.

There are many reasons why people may not want to take up this challenge. It could be because it is an unknown territory or perhaps due to the lack of visibility and glamour that one cannot resist due to the pressure from the modern community. Therefore to do it right, one must have the aspiration and proper steps to create such strong

energy and knowing the skills to balance it without causing harm to oneself and others. There is obviously no fast track to learn these skills, but it is not rocket science either.

One must be very observant and brave enough to venture out of the comfort zone. This can be applied in small doses every day through action and speech. Be observant and always learn to balance people skills. We live amongst so many living beings and interaction skill is definitely one area that we must somehow master in this worldly life. Always have the thought of changing for the better. Meditate occasionally while sitting, working or performing any action that can provide you with an "object of meditation". Yes, it can be as casual as you want, as long as you can feel relaxed when doing these methods so that the effort and result can easily merge with your body and mind as ONE.

Your current knowledge base may not be enough, however it is never too early to test it out with every opportunity that comes by. Then only can you truly assess your skills and identify the gaps that may require refinement – somewhat like giving a grade to yourself as a self-checking system. You should never wait until you are absolutely ready, otherwise your mind will start to fool you that being in the comfort zone is acceptable after all.

At a glance, many phenomena that happen in UNIBUDS may appear ordinary, but in actual fact each end result will deeply depend on the initial mental decision. This eventually dictates the following action and the end result thereafter. During the years with UNIBUDS, we could have faced with all sorts of challenges such as maintaining the group dynamics of UNIBUDS, always trying to instill harmony to ensure that members get the full effect of the intended activity while working within a limited level of manpower. We may also face with the need to strategise on how to have well-mixed activities to ensure that the non-sectarian virtue of UNIBUDS is implemented to cater across the diversity of members. As caretakers of UNIBUDS, many of us need to ensure that succession planning is always behind the mind of each and every one of the active members (and not just the Exco's mission) especially when approaching potential candidates that have the right mix of people skills. Financial wise, we need to spend wisely when necessary and not be overly concerned with savings without a reason. Always ask why, and perhaps cross check with seniors who would have had more experience at their present stage. When it comes to assessing the right decision, always try to see from the angle of the predecessors as they must also have faced similar issues before. On the other hand, we may have to learn to groom and let the future leaders take on responsibilities as well. And this is harder to execute than

said. Again, we must exert the right level of mindfulness and apply the afore-mentioned energy/effort to get it right. To be a good role model, we must pay sincere respects to the elders including the Sangha community i.e. stay humble because we will also become an elder one day.

To know how to run a special organisation like UNIBUDS, you must read and understand the historical events of UNIBUDS through various materials, dialogue or photos in order to prescribe the best matching solution. A corporate structure is definitely not the right prescription for a non-profit organisation as the incentive schemes are not applicable. In order to be a good leader or mentor, share your thoughts and listen enough to the other party's opinion. This is the only way to understand why certain people have different approaches, although with the same intention to give the best to UNIBUDS. As a remedy for one to be stable both emotionally and physically, take time to sit and be quiet for a few moments in a meditative state. This is a form of clearing up the mind before making a critical decision for UNIBUDS.

There are usually people who are more popular than the rest in any organisation and this is the same in UNIBUDS. Therefore it is important to also know how to use or restrain one's charm and popularity without damaging the group esteem. When it comes to preservation of culture and traditions, try to learn the right ways to respect the patrons and monks, by also guiding the new faces that join UNIBUDS at any point in time. In times of change and unexpected situations, we must be able to withstand hardships and not easily fall for the trap of convenience for the short term.

Think for the generation after you as well. And if the above seems to be a lot to do, then it is advisable to listen to more Dhamma talks. Yes, it may seem unattractive and bland after going to so many talks, but you cannot imagine how one can get little sparks of Enlightenment from it. This gives an additional confidence to motivate you to continue to pave the path for the many (and for yourself). Even if you have listened to the same topic over and over again, you will realise that this is one great way to smoothen out our mistakes and be more precise in our actions.

All the above can be done by one person. You do not need to be Superman because we all already have a Buddha-nature in us. It is planted so deep and further obscured by the worldly matters that all it needs to be unearthed, is our constant effort to clear away the dust in our eyes. Like everything else, we just need to overcome the inertia, in order to enjoy the momentum thereafter.

In my eight years of active interaction with UNIBUDS, it was indeed a very colourful journey not only to see the good seeds being planted by these "Unseen Beings" for each one that crosses paths with us, but also be amazed by the positive energy that was passed down from one generation to the other. This is the relevance of the 'Endless Light' event in Bodhi Nite. Unknowingly, those who have contributed in such a manner will have very great merits and perhaps help shift the course of certain weaker *kamma*.

Many "Unseen Beings" in UNIBUDS have come and go. This we may not know. Very rarely do we notice this minority group touching the lives of many members and their sacrifice for the continuity of UNIBUDS. By realising this nature, I hope that more people will be looking at things from a wider angle. At the very least - learn the skills to continue the good work of the past. Then UNIBUDS may have a golden life span of another good 25 years to come!



Source: UNIBUDS

Through The Lens Of The Past

Kah Loon Wong

Taking the steps up from the lower campus through the Faculty of Architecture to the Clancy Auditorium was like making a journey back in time. Despite the chilly evening breeze and the somewhat alien looking recently uplifted buildings along the central boulevard, warm memories of the university days kept flashing in the mind.

I could hardly believe that those vivid memories were moments of my life 15 to 20 years ago. And now, I am returning to UNIBUDS with my wife and two kids. How I wish my wife and I had had more time to go back to every nook and cranny that we had spent precious moments together before. As I brisked my way to the Clancy Auditorium, I was too excited about what was going to be unveiled before me than to discover how much the university had changed over the years.

The crowd at Bodhi Nite was certainly overwhelming. I must congratulate the present committee for such a big turnout and a very successful evening. Over the years, Bodhi Nite or better known as Buddhists' Night to those older buds, has evolved from a casual gathering by a handful of homesick overseas students to a full audience at the Clancy Auditorium with such a professional performance.

From the slide / multimedia presentation, we could see how the society has changed over the years. Well, change is the fundamental of Buddhism without which there would be no room for improvement. But change could also

bring about uncertainties, anxieties and fear of the unknown. This emotion was clearly expressed in the gathering at Hwa Tsang Monastery and Wat Pa Buddharangsee on the next day after the Bodhi Nite.

To all the young buds and the new committee, this sense of uncertainty and insecurity is not new. During my terms as committee member and later as president of UNIBUDS, I cannot recall any period of time where there was no fear and uncertainty over the future of the society. Life is uncertain. There is no need to build up a false sense of certainty and security over what our future would be. Once we have the right understanding on impermanence, we will be able to take this positively.

Just to share with you some of our worries during our time at UNIBUDS. We were always worried about not having enough money and articles for the annual magazine, not meeting the quorum in the next AGM, outsider infiltrating to take over the society or manipulating resources of the society for their own selfish interests, losing the room/library for the society on campus, fanatics from other religion interrupting our functions, no nomination for the president/vice president and other key positions, insufficient new blood for the society... the list may go on. Does this sound familiar to you?

Outside the ivory tower, life is much more complex and demanding. I can assure you that there will be more uncertainty and volatility in life after university. We had been through the financial crisis in 1997, collapse of the twin towers, divorces, sicknesses, deaths, accidents and disasters to our close friends. I must say that learning the Dhamma well and the experience in UNIBUDS certainly helped to prepare us to weather uncertainties and volatilities in life after university.

As an honorary member of the society, I must apologise and am certainly embarrassed for not doing anything for the society after leaving Australia. This is partly due to exhaustion from blind pursuit for worldly gain and predominantly from procrastination. After years of straying into the path for mundane achievements, I suddenly realised that I am already forty and it is time to seriously look at what is actually important in life. Well that shows how fragile and ignorant one can be even if he had been 4 times committee member: 2 times vice president and 2 times president of UNIBUDS. It must be the good kammic seeds planted during my service in UNIBUDS that initiate such realisation. The old buds in Kuala Lumpur had such "enlightenment" much earlier and they are doing well with the formation of Zheng Xin. In Penang, Dr. Ch'ng and I have just started a weekend meditation and Dhamma study

group with the wishful thought to recoup all the time lost in practising the Dhamma. Wish us luck in our weekend meditation and Dhamma study group. Anyone returning to Penang is most welcome to join us.

I hope UNIBUDS will continue to develop and mature as a leading Buddhist organisation for the students and by the students on campus. This can be a big challenge to the current committee especially during a time when on one hand, the population of overseas students is dropping and on the other, more organisations are being formed to share the pie. I would like to forward the following suggestions to the new committee with the hope that UNIBUDS will survive this evolutionary survival-for-the-fittest test :-

- 1.0 Put more effort to build up a strong relationship with the patrons. They have been giving selfless support and guidance to UNIBUDS since its inception. Trust me, they shall continue to be the strongest spiritual pillar to the society. Go for them for direction when you are lost.
- 2.0 Establish more ties with the old buds, especially those in Australia. The old buds are a good source for experience in running the society as well as in life after university. Upon graduation, most of us will face a lot of problems in getting jobs, getting married, making business and having kids. I noticed that most buds tend to alienate themselves from the circle of UNIBUDS friends for several years in order to focus on their own problems. Some manage to catch up with the other buds after grinding through their early years after university but others simply vanish from the social landscape. That is a pity as we should be giving more moral and spiritual support to one another in life. Maybe we should have some annual camp or retreat for the old and new buds to get to know one another. Perhaps the internet is another good way to keep everyone in touch.
- 3.0 Setting a clear direction for the society. To me, it is very important to reiterate that UNIBUDS is a **non-sectarian society for the students by the students on campus**. Politically, the society must be independent from all pressure and interference from any source outside the campus.

Some may argue that we are under the influence of our two patrons. Well, we need to understand that the patrons were appointed by the committee as spiritual guides to the society during the formative years. At that time, there were simply too few

Buddhist monks in Sydney for us to choose from. They were chosen because in order to establish our position as a non-sectarian society, we thought we needed to have at least two spiritual teachers from two distinctly different schools of practice to be the patrons of the society. I must say UNIBUDS was extremely lucky to have such selfless spiritual teachers as her patrons. Over the years, they have given UNIBUDS so much help and support but never asked for anything in return. They have never controlled the election nor interfered in the selection of the committee members other than showing concern on whether they had sufficient resources to do their job well.

Although we can find many different sects and practice of Buddhism in Australia now, I do not think we should appoint more patrons or affiliate with more Buddhist groups simply to further convince others that UNIBUDS is a non-sectarian society. Firstly, appointing more spiritual advisors and forming more affiliations will only complicate the society further. Again, we are extremely lucky to have such understanding and compromising patrons from two distinctly different schools of practice.

UNIBUDS committees never had a problem with making their own decisions because the patrons simply do not interfere with the society. I have never seen any Buddhist organisation with spiritual leaders from distinctly different school of practice and yet be able to work harmoniously together. Even groups with the same school of Buddhism may have different opinions within the group, let alone two advisors from different schools of thought. This is a blessing, do not take this for granted! More affiliations will only bring more confusions and internal conflicts to the society.

4.0 UNIBUDS is a neutral platform for everyone to get to know Buddhism. We should keep our door open to everyone. Hopefully, everyone will find something worthwhile in Buddhism that may one day help them to move forward in life. Being neutral allows UNIBUDS to accommodate students from all walks of life and in different time and space. If you watched the slide presentation during Bodhi Nite this year, you may notice the difference between old buds in the 1980's and new buds in the new millennium. But how does UNIBUDS accommodate people from such a diverse cultural, geographical and historical background? The answer is simply because UNIBUDS is empty. Being empty enables UNIBUDS to evolve over time and respond to ever changing conditions. This is wonderful. Imagine if we fixed a format for our members (i.e. hairstyle, dress code, language, mode of conduct, school of thought, etc) the society would not be able to evolve. It will eventually be phased out in the process of natural selection. Being empty allows UNIBUDS to be truly contemporary in sync with current trends and issues of the society.

However, being empty does not mean we could do anything we like. Fundamentally, members of a Buddhist society must pay respect to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Other than that, each may have his/her own preference in the practice of the Dhamma.

5.0 With so many cults and extreme religious groups arising in recent years, it is very difficult for newcomers to distinguish what are and what are not the teachings of the Buddha.

As a non-sectarian society, UNIBUDS invites teachers from different traditions of Buddhism to deliver Dhamma talks on campus. Sometimes, new members may be confused. We have to be extremely careful not to allow penetration of non-Buddhist teachings into UNIBUDS. Many religious cults disguise themselves as Buddhist organisations but propagate mysticism, beliefs in one particular teaching only, absolute surrendering of oneself to a particular master/group, absolute certainty in Enlightenment via certain simple practices and alienation of cult members from the society.

It is imperative that the committee members of UNIBUDS have a basic understanding about Buddhism in order to differentiate what is and what

is not the teachings of the Buddha. UNIBUDS has two good spiritual advisors on the board, representing two major streams of development in Buddhism. They are the treasures of the society. Go to them should you have any doubt in the teachings of the Buddha.

I would strongly recommend that the committee members attend a crash course on the teachings of the Buddha and consult the patrons on matters which look fishy. The worms are ever ready to devour the flesh of the lion king. Seek them out before they manage to hide under the skin.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for the invitation to Bodhi Nite 2005. It was a wonderful evening. Hope the new committee will keep up with the good work. Do keep me informed and send me email if there is anything that I could do for the society (my email is klw_a@streamyx.com). Although I am still very much engrossed in my worldly pursuit, I will try my best to participate. May you be well and happy.



Source: UNIBUDS

Buddhist Awareness: From Bodhi Tree to *Eucalyptus fibrosa*

Mick Kiddle

I was six months old when I arrived in Australia. I grew up in the country, in a place called Mt. Eliza, Victoria in the 1960s. Very few people lived in the area, and it was mostly covered by bush. I attended the local school. As a child of six or seven, my friends and I often played around some wonderful stringy-bark eucalypts in the schoolyard. My friends and I would peel and play tug-of-war with the stringy bark. We would also barter with the silvery bud-caps that dropped in spring. I remember that these lovely trees gave the school a unique eucalyptus-peppermint smell.



Eucalyptus bicostata

(People are included to show the tree's height.)

Although we were surrounded by native bush, my own parents never grew or allowed Australian plants in our garden. Turkish roses, North American liquid-amber and pine trees, South African agapanthas, South American morning glory, very thirsty Japanese hydrangeas and Chinese azaleas and camellias, English elm trees, Egyptian Phoenix palms, and Brazilian jacarandas, always received far more praise and appreciation when I was a boy. Similarly, European couch-grass, Turkish rye-grass, and Uruguan paspalum grasses were considered far superior to Mt. Eliza's own kangaroo and blady grasses, and we were asked to remove bracken fern.

So there was always a complete botanical changeover when I left my house to go out, forty years ago. Every morning and afternoon, I had to ride my bicycle 4 km to and from my school, cycling through *Eucalyptus obliqua*, casuarinas, acacias, wallaby-grass and others.

In July 2002, we organised for the Hwa Tsang Monastery's tuition class students to attend the Strathfield Council's National Tree Day activity along the Cooks River. 55 of our 180 students attended. The week after the activity, students complained about the state of the Homebush Boys' High School grounds, which is where the tuition classes were held. They said, "The school gardens are sad. They need considerable regeneration!" These comments from the Year 8 girls led the monastery to organise monthly bush care activities with Strathfield Council at local parks for all Year 7 to 11 students.

The students' enthusiasm inspired me to learn the botanical name of the stringy-bark trees I had enjoyed so much at Mt. Eliza Primary School, all those years ago. It took me several visits to Victoria and a year to work out that my favourite trees were a disjunct community of *Eucalyptus bicostata* (Southern Blue Gums).

I was also pleased to find that five *Eucalyptus bicostata* trees continued to survive at the school. But these trees were the only pre-European settlement vegetation remaining. Just outside the school's fence, I noticed that there was still a small, valuable oasis of indigenous plants including acacias, casuarinas, banksias, bursaria, exocarpus, and wallaby grass. It seemed sad that this small oasis now only existed outside the school's fence, and was no longer honoured within the school grounds.

Unfortunately, most schools, universities, and indeed, Buddhist temples around Australia no longer feature any indigenous vegetation. Sadly, the younger generation no longer sees the daily beauty and variety of the Australian plants and wildlife that I enjoyed as a child.

Australia's landscape and the concept of "garden" have changed dramatically since European arrival in 1788. When settlers arrived in Australia, they knew nothing about the indigenous Australian plants. There was little dialogue with the Aboriginal people. So they cut down the bush, and brought and grew the plants that they knew about from overseas, both for food, for flowers, and for other agricultural products.

Fear of snakes caused larger bush areas to be cleared. "Assimilation Societies" (societies to make Australia look like England by using English plants) in the 1900s created huge changes to the landscape. For example, settlers planted London plane trees all around Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane, and Willow trees in the Murray River.



Dianella caerulea - Edible berries that are delicious raw, as well as in jams.

Cheap tap-water and irrigation extracted from inland rivers these past 100 years has further turned Australia's botanical heritage upside down, with the diversion of water from river systems and the cultivation of many inappropriate, water-hungry plants. Regular lawn mowing has also contributed to the destruction of suburban ecology.

When I was younger, the "nature strip" was literally a small strip of land that did retain the native vegetation. It was indeed a lovely piece of nature that was home to small birds, marsupials, and other interesting creepy-crawly things! Most people were too busy looking after their own gardens to be bothered with modifying it. But these days, the "nature strip" is fastidiously mown and stripped bare of any nature.

With Australia's rising wealth and profligate water use, locals and migrants of all colours have installed their favourite plants from overseas, rather than local plants. Local nurseries promote the "latest plant fashions" observed from the gardens of a popular TV series, or the gardens of famous people. Plant "fashions" have no allegiance to any particular country, and no empathy for local ecology. "Instant make-over gardens" are prescribed to soothe depressed landowners, to titillate neighbours, and to generate economic activity.

Modern gardens have become symbols of consumer consumption, social status, and domination. Boring, mono-culture plantings of water- and fertilizer-hungry roses, azaleas, and manicured foreign grasses now

dominate Australian suburbia. Each plot pretends to be more controlled and cleaner than the last. No dead leaves or twigs may ever be seen. In the process, a huge variety of smaller, indigenous plants (and wildlife) are condemned to extinction. Sterility dominates garden fashions.

In the heart of Sydney, and during Christmas time, cheap electricity has inspired a new, fashionable, high technology weed. This is the Light-bulb tree creeper, which sparkles and flashes in all colours after dark!

In the country, foreign plants have been essential for Australia's food and livestock production. But we have been extraordinarily disinterested to investigate and cultivate our many valuable, edible, and useful indigenous plants. Of the estimated 16,000 vascular indigenous plant species in a continent of almost 8 million square kilometers, we (non-aboriginal) Australians only regularly eat and export one species – the Macadamia Nut! But this was only farmed after Americans successfully cultivated it overseas. Even our foreign species livestock (cows, sheep, pigs, chickens) are mostly bred on foreign species grasses grown here.

Few people appreciate that we have about 2,000 plant species in the greater Sydney basin, while the whole of the United Kingdom has only 1,600 species! What business opportunities might abound for those that might investigate our native species that grow so well here, without the need for any fertilizers or additional watering?

Paleontologists tell us that several hundred million years ago, vegetation around the world had very little colour. Then, when organisms developed colour vision, vegetation life forms and flowers changed dramatically. Here in Australia, we are told that some millions of years ago, Casuarina trees dominated the Australian landscape. But when bushfires became prevalent, Casuarinas were killed and receded to the river banks. In their place, Eucalypts have sprung up.

'Unfortunately most schools, universities and indeed Buddhist temples around Australia no longer feature any indigenous vegetation.'

While we should accept that everything is subject to change, we should not ignore, nor condone, the killing of entire species of plants and animals. Nor should we accept or encourage wanton environmental destruction. Most scientists now consider that the man-made Australian environmental evolution of the past 220 years can hardly be called favourable, when it has included species loss, spreading salinity, die-back, massive soil erosion, and adverse weather changes. These days, it is hard to find a garden with more than three indigenous species. And yet, without the food and shelter from these indigenous plant species, there can be no indigenous animal species, and no bio-diversity.



Bursaria spinosa – Valuable habitat for small birds

Visit the NSW Art Gallery. Look at the works of the early Australian Impressionist painters from the Heidelberg School, such as Tom Roberts or Frederick McCubbin. These painters loved this country. These painters accepted this country. They painted what they saw. They painted the activities of early settlers to this country, and featured accurate natural backdrops. These backdrops included our striking eucalypts, our stately ironbarks, our beautiful acacias, our unique xanthorrhoeas, our wiry kangaroo grass, and our wispy wallaby grasses. Not for them were the simplistic, botanically shattered, non-biodiverse scenes of green mono-culture fields as portrayed by modern department stores and TV advertising.



Kangaroo Grass

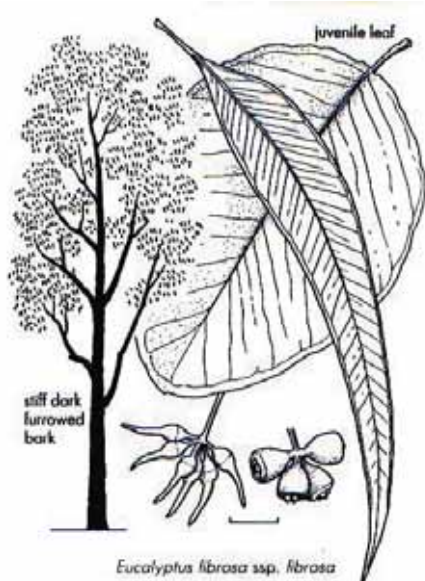
For the past four years, we have had about 140 students attend at least one bush care activity during the year. Although plants are not very responsive (or exciting) for teenagers, we teach the students the plants' names and their characteristics, and we encourage the students to make them their friends! We emphasise the importance of native grasses in ecology. Trees provide wonderful habitats for birds and some insects, but grasses are sometimes a bigger food source for many animals in the food chain.

While we encourage our Sydney students to look after the plants of the Sydney botanical provenance, we hope that students of all other botanical provenances around the world will look after their heritage. This means that the students of Strathfield, Randwick, or indeed Malaysia or Indonesia, or any other area, each have a small, but different part of the world's species to look after.

The *suttas* tell us that on a full moon night, in the fifth month of the year, about 2,560 years ago, the Buddha gained Enlightenment. We know he was facing east, on the bank of the river Neranjara at Buddhagaya, sitting under the Bodhi tree - *Ficus religiosa*, known as the "Tree of Enlightenment". He was probably surrounded by elephant grass, in the tropical deciduous monsoon forests at Buddhagaya, in north-eastern India. The Buddha commented that the Bodhi tree had provided "coolness" during his quest for the Truth.

But if the Buddha had found Enlightenment in the Strathfield area, he would not have been sitting under a *Ficus religiosa*, but most likely a Turpentine - *Syncarpia glomulifera*, or a Broad-leaved Iron bark, - *Eucalyptus fibrosa*, or a smooth Barked Apple - *Angophora costata*, surrounded by Weeping Meadow grass - *Microlena stipoides*, and Kangaroo grass - *Themeda australis*. Possibly he may even have been sitting under a 500-year-old Red Cedar *Toona ciliata* tree, which existed in the area before British settlers made a point of harvesting every single one of them. These types of trees and grasses would have

provided a similar ambience and “coolness.” We always encourage our tuition class students at bush care to grow their own Aussie Bodhi tree!



Drawing by Les Robinson –
Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney

Some people think that the Buddha thought the Bodhi tree was so special, that only by meditating under this tree, could people find Enlightenment. Some people believe the Buddha loved the Bodhi tree so much, he wanted it planted as a symbol of his progress, in temples and monasteries everywhere, all around the world, even to the detriment of local species. Others suggest that the Buddha had no attachment to the particular tree. The Buddha was just keen to highlight that the human species is sustained and supported by a huge variety of plant and animal species.

“One may conquer in battle, a thousand times a thousand men, yet he who is best, conquers himself.”

- Dhammapada

Some people have their own interpretation of the *Dhammapada* verse: “One may conquer in battle, a thousand times a thousand men, yet he who is best, conquers himself.” They think this means to train and restrain themselves, and to accept and appreciate their environment and surroundings. They try to live their lives leaving a small ecological impact footprint.

Some people suggest that trying to preserve the environment and local species represents the suffering of extreme attachment to the (botanical) past.

Others suggest that migrants to Australia have the deep sufferings of (i) separation from loved ones, (ii) associating with unpleasant people and conditions, (iii) not getting what they desire, and (iv) suffering based on the ills of the Five Aggregates. They are unable to let go their attachments to their own country. To ameliorate their suffering, they grow foreign plants to remind them of their home country.

Some suggest that humans have moved beyond ecology. They claim that bio-technology, (motivated by investment for greed and profit) can shape or order any desired vegetative characteristics. They suggest that the plant (and animal) kingdom can, and should, be redesigned for the exclusive sustenance and enjoyment of one single species on the planet – *Homo sapiens*.

Others suggest that in having more money, it is better to display one’s wealth and superior survival characteristics in growing “fashionable” plants, rather than worrying about biodiversity. They say all modern consumers have contributed equally to the current state of the environment.



Acacia pubescens – In the middle of spring, when most acacias have such beautiful flowers, why are they not available in florist shops??

Some suggest that it is not possible to stop entropy (the natural mixing of all life-forms). They say that the extinction of many species through the domination and destruction of the environment by humans will eventually pass. In a few million years, the huge dispersal of animal and plant species assisted by humans jetting around the world, will result in far greater diversity of animal and plant forms than ever seen before on earth. The only problem is, humans may not be around to see it!

Others suggest that those organisms that cause humans so much suffering, do not deserve to exist. These include mosquitoes, spiders, cockroaches, bugs, beetles, ants, snakes and flies. These species should be eliminated, along with the vegetation that supports them, and also all the higher animals in the food chain that depend on them! They have no compunction about using pesticides, herbicides, or poisons.

My parents used to tell me that Australian vegetation was red, orange, brown, green, grey, wiry, and stringy, and was both unappealing, and lacking in colour. Yet in the next breath, they would tell me that beauty was in the eye of the beholder.

Whatever the case, it seems that modern people have great difficulty in loving and accepting the fabulous, indigenous vegetation, of this great country Australia. What do you think? What should our Buddhist practice be?



Source: UNIBUDS

Member Contributions



Illustration: Wai Loon Teng

Bodhi Nite 2005: A Fusion of Enlightenment and Entertainment!

Alex Pui

Nervous glances filled with trepidation and racing heartbeats are abound in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium, out of the eager audience's sight... even the occasional drop of cold sweat. There are performers taking deep breaths to maintain composure while others rehearse their lines one last time. Some fidget uncontrollably, unable to quell their excitement as backstage crew members bark orders to get everyone organised. The moment of truth is drawing close, in fact, too close for comfort! Months of tireless dedication, perseverance and close-knit teamwork were about to culminate very shortly.

Despite our initial reservations, everyone involved gave it their all and put on an excellent show. What the audience did NOT get to see was the rapport behind the scenes – with performers giving morale-boosting encouragement to each other all the way, sound technicians ensuring that all six microphones were switched on/off at the right time, program coordinators orchestrating the proceedings to perfection from start till end, and even a multimedia team to recollect all those hilarious moments both on and off stage on a DVD! Ironically, the Bodhi Nite theme of interdependency turned out to be the reason behind its unparalleled success! Performances that were particularly well received by the audience included the choir's opening act of the “*Ratana Sutta*” chant, the lively and colourful sketch as well as the insightful Dhamma shared by our sages, Venerable Chao Khun Samai and Venerable Tsang Hui. I was simply relieved that my piano performance with Desy and Shie Haur (less grand, but somewhat more intimate) finished without major incident other than an awkward silence at the end due to our syncopated pause, catching the audience off guard. Thankfully, rapturous applause soon ensued! Phew!

On a personal note, joining UNIBUDS to better understand Buddhist teachings and learn to grow spiritually, while forging lasting friendships with a group of vibrant, fun and amiable group of people from different walks of life, has been a wonderful experience for me. In short, UNIBUDS is in a sense an idyllic refuge from the stresses of academia (even if it is only transient) be it through meditation sessions, summer retreats, social activities and of course, the unforgettable, magical Bodhi Nite!

(Left to Right): Alex Pui, Desy Juliaty, Shie Haur Tan



Source: UNIBUDS



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Composer : Alex Pui
Lyrics : Puay Yeong Teh
Chien Hoong Gooi
Performers : Shie Haur Tan
Desy Juliaty

Nature's Story

Rain falls

*Ever so softly from the sky
From the ocean and the clouds
Rolling back onto the earth
It is all in nature's cycle we must see*

Wind blows

*Ever so gently from all sides
No matter how strong it may be
It arises just to cease
Coming from somewhere then it's gone*

*No matter where it's from
Or on to where it may go
Each thing touches deeply in our worlds*

Plants bloom

*It tells a story oh so true
Without the rain or blowing wind
There'll be no flowers and no trees*

*We have much to be grateful for tonight
'Cause without you there wouldn't be me*

Cloud Kingdom

Tina Ng

Fifi flew into another cloud.

He emerged five frenzied minutes later, flapping frantically. His eyes darted around for direction as if still lost, and his feathers were soaked by the mist. He was a mess.

Louder than his thumping heart, he could hear the other birds jeering at him. He hung his birdie neck in shame, and burrowed his beak in his chest. It was not his fault he flew into the “Bad Clouds Zone,” where the mist was thicker than any other place in the forest. Usually no one would come anywhere near here, but this time he just got lost.

He sighed loudly. Of all the birds in the Cloud Kingdom, he must have been the dumbest. All the birds could dart in and out of clouds fine, and always maintained a sense of direction. But whenever he flew, it was as if a cloud would suddenly appear in front of him, catch him in its arms, and tauntingly spin him around and around. Oh, how he hated clouds!

He wished he could live somewhere else, away from these clouds. His great grandfather, Big Bird, had once told him that beyond this cloud forest, there were plains far and wide, where birds can fly free, without worrying about stupid clouds. Where the sun shone bright, rather than being caught between the trees as it did here. In fact, there were places called “deserts” where usually not a cloud was in sight! It was his lifelong dream to go there.

He soon got his wish. One morning, when the birds were chirping their morning chanting, they were interrupted by loud sounds that were foreign to the Cloud Kingdom. They flew towards the sounds, hiding amongst the trees and clouds. They saw people driving heavy machinery through the forest, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. They saw people slashing plants and chopping trees. They saw their homes fall, one by one.

“What are they doing, Mother?” Fifi asked timidly. His mother’s tears overwhelmed her and she could not speak. All she could do was hold him close.

“They’re cutting down the trees, Fifi,” answered Big Bird.

“What for?”

“Because they need the land to grow food, and they need wood from the trees to build houses and cities.”

“But that’s our food! That’s our home, and our world! If they take it away, what are we going to do?”

There was not anything the animals in Cloud Kingdom could do, but watch as their beloved forest shattered in front of their eyes. As the trees fell, the forest’s canopy was removed, and sunlight poured through. The heat dried up the mists of clouds, which could no longer suppress evapotranspiration. The delicate ecosystem was destroyed, and all those that depended on it died. The Cloud Kingdom was no more.

Most of the animals fled. Those who could run, ran; and those who could fly, flew. But there were many who could not. Amongst them was Fifi’s family. Fifi’s mother was extremely sick from prolonged dehydration, and Big Bird was too weak to fly. Fifi watched his mother’s health deteriorate day after day. Like the animals witnessing their Cloud Kingdom evaporate, he felt helpless watching his mother’s breath becoming fainter.

For the first time, Fifi need not fear clouds. He got his wish, and felt the rays of the sun. But now, the only moisture he felt was from his silent tears.

One day, his mother whispered that she wanted to hear the story of Cloud Kingdom one last time. Big Bird nodded, and told of a time long ago, when Super Big Bird had first stumbled upon this forest. He was young and wanted to travel far and wide. He went to bushlands, grasslands, jungles, deserts, and even cities. He met many animals and saw many things, but he found they were all similarly engulfed in their selfishness and ignorance. Animals hunted one another for their own survival, and they all lived in fear and discord.

Seeing so much suffering and egoism, Super Big Bird began to believe that this was the natural way of things. He decided to give up his pursuit for peace and harmony. On his trip home, a ferocious hawk attacked him, wounding his right wing. In his fright, Super Big Bird flew towards the



Source: Wilson Lius Lau

mountains, and soon lost the hawk amongst the clouds. At first, Super Big Bird thought he was in the Heavens, but later realised that the 'clouds' were merely mists due to the altitude of the forest. He found a quiet spot in the pocket of a tree to rest and heal his wounds. He was thirsty and weak, and knew he would die soon.

To his surprise, a green tree frog suddenly appeared. It hopped towards him, and he instantly backed away. But he was too weak to fend off the frog, and screamed in agony as the frog wrapped its slimy fingers around his right wing. He scratched the frog with the sharp claws on his feet, but the frog persisted. Finally, the frog stopped. Before it hopped away, Super Big Bird was sure he saw a faint smile under those bulging eyes. He looked down and gasped. His wounds were carefully sealed by the frog's moisture, and he had stopped bleeding.

His next visitors were a bird and a howler monkey. The bird – who was naturally painted with twelve brilliant colours – carried water in a tree pod, and the monkey brought various fruits for Super Big Bird to eat. For six days, the bird and monkey came, along with other animals with their own gifts. Under the protection of the tree, and kept cool by the moss, Super Big Bird soon recovered his health and strength.

In his calmness, he began to see the life of the forest, and hear its orchestra. He felt the animal's warmth and nature's coolness. The peacefulness soon eroded his initial pessimism of the viciousness of the world. He settled there happily, and became a part of Cloud Kingdom's interdependency.

"And that," concluded Big Bird, "is the end of the story. Or more accurately, the beginning of *our* story. For you see Fifi, the interdependency of Cloud Kingdom lies in the interactions of different animals and their environment, as well as the relationship between the past and our present. All actions create an effect, and peace can never be gained through selfishness."

Fifi nodded as he looked around at the ruined forest. His eyes rested on his mother, who had fallen asleep from heat exhaustion. Then his eyes lit up.

"Great grandfather Big Bird, I have an idea! Like the colourful bird who helped Super Big Bird, I'm going to find water for Mother too!"

"Oh Fifi," replied Big Bird slowly, "it's no use. I have thought of that already, but the sun has dried up all the springs."

“There must be a way!” cried Fifi. “We mustn’t give up!”

With that, Fifi flew away in search of water, despite Big Bird’s calls of hopelessness. Fifi searched far and wide through the forest, and as Big Bird said, all the springs were parched. All around him, there were dead animals and trees. Plants and flowers had withered and perished. He could feel the sun burning his back and squeezing out all the moisture within him.

Then it struck him: “Bad Clouds Zone!” – the place where the mist was thicker than any other place in the forest. He remembered the interdependency of the forest and flew towards the place as fast as his tired wings could take him. If that place had the thickest clouds, it must have the most moisture. If it had the most moisture, it would take the longest to dry up. If it is not dried up, there must be... water!

When Fifi reached Bad Clouds Zone, he was surprised to see the bustle. Animals were hurrying to and fro, and on closer observation, Fifi realised they were bringing in sick animals, while others were carrying healthier animals away. Although there were no more clouds, the place was still relatively moist. The animals had built a small shelter from dead twigs, and had successfully burrowed into the ground for water.

Fifi told them about his mother and great grandfather, and they quickly followed him to find them. His mother was very ill, and gulped down the water from the tree pod. A spectacled bear carried them back to Bad Clouds Zone where the animals took good care of them. Fifi’s mother gradually regained her strength, but did not leave the forest. She stayed to help all the other ill animals, while Big Bird kept them entertained with his stories. Fifi helped carry the healthier animals away from the forest to safer places. Sometimes he would fly into clouds of mists, and sometimes it would even rain upon him. In those times, he could not be any happier.

Author’s note:

Cloud Forests do exist. Currently, there are 605 Cloud Forests in 41 countries, mainly in Latin America. The problem of deforestation is real. The aforementioned spectacled bear and howler monkeys are endangered species dependent on Cloud Forests for their habitat and survival (and Big Bird is exclusive to Sesame Street).

Further Reading:

- Tropical Montane Cloud Forest Initiative
- John Roach, “Cloud Forests Fading in the Mist, Their Treasures Little Known” in *National Geographic News*, 13 August 2001 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/08/0813_cloudforest_2.html>



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Siang Yee Chuah



In Unibuds, our weekly Dhamma talks demonstrate very clearly how all of us are interdependent. In order for the talk to take place, many factors need to be considered, e.g. inviting the speaker, booking the venue, informing our members, etc. However, just planning ahead does not necessarily guarantee success. In other words, the conditions need to be right before any occasion can take place. Hence, we are all interrelated through causes and conditions. So we should be thankful to have the Buddha's teachings and make our best effort to practise it and share the Triple Gem with others.



Rain Falls, Wind blows, Plants bloom

Henry Makgawinata

When the sun starts to smile,
the world starts to simper as well,
 a gentle smile,
 the smile which melts the darkness of the night...

When the rain falls, the sun may hide itself behind the cloud.
And the wind blows,
 the breeze that calms every heart,
 as a gentle smile melts and calms the hardest stone of the heart,
 and the wind that may carry the seed of life....

The seed may not grow without water – the essence of life.
Without rain, the tears of nature, which brings the life...

When the plants bloom, the tears may not be enough for the growth.
The warm light of the sun is needed as well.
And,
 if the conditions are right,
 the plants may bloom beautifully...

All phenomena in this world are interrelated with causes and conditions.
One may be the cause to others
 and others may cause yet another.

What we are now is what we were in past lives
What we are in the future is what we are now in the present moment.

A living being cannot live on its own.
A living being needs others to help its growth
 as a baby needs a mother's loving kindness to grow up.

Rain, wind, plants are the symbols that represent causes and conditions.

Seeds of Happiness

Tina Ng

Suffering was a natural occurrence for Flora, and tears were her livelihood. Day after day, she sat in on the miseries of people's lives, and spoke of the miracles of happiness. People came to tell her of their problems, pouring out their sorrows, and left feeling rejuvenated and purified. They dropped their unhappy seeds, and walked away. But alas, those seedlings grew in Flora, whose mind became a knotted forest. She was overjoyed when her patients recovered, but saddened when they did not. The burden became overwhelming, and Flora – a specialist counsellor for those with depression – became depressed herself.

She soon lost all happiness in her life. All her motivations to help other people, all her aspirations to change the world, all her hopes for the future generation – all lost within her internal forest. She shied away from social gatherings, broke off her relationships with friends and family, eventually quit her job as counsellor, and fell to tears whenever things got too stressful. She lost faith in the world, and in herself.

The only joy she found was in her daily walks along the beach, beginning her day watching the sunrise and ending it with a sunset. It reminded her of the time she visited her dying aunt in the hospital.

"You bought me a card! Oh, it's beautiful Flora!" Flora was surprised at her aunt's reaction. It was just a \$2 card from the florist downstairs.

"And it has a picture of a sunrise too!" Her aunt exclaimed.

"That's not a sunrise, Aunt Mary," corrected Flora. "It's a sunset."

"No dear Flora, it is most certainly a sunrise. Another glorious day has just begun and the world is coming alive!"

Flora remembered she had shaken her head and mumbled that it did not matter whether it was a sunrise or sunset. Aunt Mary died with a smile on her face less than a fortnight later, which was when Flora's depression was at its worst.

Aunt Mary had been a beautiful woman, and left seeds of happiness in many people. But her death grew many thorns in Flora as well. Flora could not understand why such a kind-hearted woman had to endure so much suffering, just as she could not understand why her patients were still depressed, despite working so hard to be happy again. It all seemed unfair.

She told her wise father this, and he replied that true happiness is not something external one works towards. You first need to cultivate the right causes and conditions in your life, and internalise a sense of contentment.

"Causes and conditions?" asked Flora curiously.

"That's right, Flora," nodded her father. "The Buddha had spoken of the Four Noble Truths to show that suffering exists and originates from our attachments and ignorance of the interdependency of all things. So suffering arises when you are attached to sense pleasures, desiring what you like and ridding of what you dislike. We suffer because attachment to status quo goes against the truth of impermanence, and attachment to self contradicts the fact of interdependency. The "Flora" I am looking at is not the same "Flora" I held in my arms 25 years ago. Nor are you a sole individual existing in isolation, without the help of anyone around you. You are who you are because of the various causes and conditions in your life."

Flora was deep in thought. "You spoke of two Noble Truths, but what's the other two?"

"After diagnosing our suffering, the Buddha illuminated the existence and path to end this suffering via the Noble Eightfold Path." He then carefully wrote on a piece of paper and handed it to his daughter:

"The elements of the Noble Eightfold Path are right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Understand each element individually, but practise them collectively."

Happiness...

He continued. "The famous four sights the Buddha saw were a sick man, an old man, a dead man, and a monk. Due to modern sanitisation of our streets, maybe you can try a different setting." Flora's father thought for a bit and suggested she take a trip to the airport.

Flora was shocked, a bit sceptical, but very curious. It took her three days to finally accept the challenge. She felt a little silly coming here without a purpose of picking anyone up, or of leaving the country. She did not even know what her father wanted her to look for. She wandered around the airport a bit, especially drawn to the duty-free stores. Turning the corner, she found herself at the departure gates. She saw families hugging and lovers embracing. Tears streamed down their faces.

"Is this the suffering my father wanted me to look at?" she thought. She continued to observe, and felt a tug on her heartstrings. The tears reminded her of her aunt and her depressed patients. But her attention shifted to a loving couple smiling and laughing as they said their final goodbye.

"Bye Fauna!" cried the man. "If the causes and conditions are right, we shall meet again."

"Yes, so don't come back unless you're a multi-millionaire!" joked Fauna.

The man laughed heartily and turned towards the gate. He looked back once more to see a smiling Fauna waving him goodbye. He laughed again and disappeared through the gates.

As Fauna was about to walk away, she saw Flora looking at her. She smiled, and Flora blushed.

"Sorry for staring," stumbled Flora. "I...I was just surprised at your laughter, especially amidst all this crying."

Fauna's eyes sparkled as she laughed cheerily. "You seem surprised to see happiness." Flora stared at her in disbelief. The words resonated within her, and she tried to regain her composure.



Source: *Wilsen Lius Lau*

"Your friend spoke of causes and conditions," began Flora. "If it takes so many causes and conditions for people to be together, why must we part? It seems cruel."

"Or maybe we should be grateful that so many causes and conditions *allowed* these people to be together for the time they had. Happiness and sorrow are merely the flutters of the mind."

"Just as likes and dislikes are merely a discrimination by our perception." Flora added.

Fauna nodded. "That's why parting doesn't upset me. The impermanence in our lives means people and things will come and go. Yet paradoxically, the interdependency of all things means they may come and go, but they still remain connected with us. What better thing to do but let go and let everything pass us like the wind?"

For the first time since Aunt Mary's death, Flora felt her internal forest untangling. But something else was troubling her.

"Although I understand this, I still can't help but feel upset when I see all the unhappiness around me."

"But when you're being unhappy at the unhappiness of others, aren't you contributing to the world's unhappiness? If you want to help alleviate the world from its suffering, shouldn't you be a role model of contentment?"

This time, Flora laughed. She had only one question left to ask Fauna.

"You are wise, but can you answer this: what is the difference between a picture of a sunrise and a sunset?"

Without hesitation, Fauna replied, "the movement of the mind."

Flora understood and beamed happily. Like the friendship that grew between her and Fauna, her internal forest started to blossom flowers.

'You are wise, but can you answer this: what is the difference between a picture of a sunrise and a sunset?'

From Seed to Seed

Toffee Tanaka



Illustration: Toffee Tanaka

In a series of seemingly random and totally unconnected people lies an invisible but unquestionable link. While each of us live each day in a world that we call our own, little do we realise that all our lives are intertwined and inseparable.

Dharma



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Brief History of Buddhism

佛教簡史

Venerable Neng Rong

上能下融法師

1. Prologue

Many students do not have much chance to come across the history of Buddhism, therefore a short introduction is provided here. If we understand the history of Buddhism, we will know that the Buddha had once lived in this world. He had shown his path of practice in the world and preached that which is suitable for cultivation by human beings. This makes us realise that the Dhamma is practical. Therefore, it is important for us to understand the history of Buddhism to help us in our Dhamma cultivation. If we understand the evolution of Buddhism we will also be able to understand the reason for the changes in the Dhamma that has occurred since the Buddha's time. This is especially important in current times when we have large amounts of information on Buddhism, including teachings from the *Vajrayana*, Southern and Northern traditions of Buddhism. There are also teachings from the *Madhyamika*, *Vijnanavada* and *Tathagata-garbha* schools, and also teachings pertaining to "emptiness" and "existence", etc. If we are able to understand the evolution in Buddhism, we will be able to understand why there are so many different schools of thought. Therefore, understanding the history of Buddhism is an integral part of learning Buddhism. More importantly, with this understanding we will have a clearer comprehension and thus a better ability to pick suitable materials.

2. The Buddha is in the World

Some people do not know that the Buddha had once appeared in this world and had cultivated himself from an ordinary human being into becoming a Buddha. Instead they only look at him like a deity to be worshipped. The Buddha was born over 2600 years ago in a small kingdom called Kapilavastu in ancient India. His father was King Siddhodana and his mother was Queen Maya. Before gaining Enlightenment, his name was Siddharta.

Since young, Siddharta was a sensitive and compassionate person. Moreover, he liked to quietly contemplate the many questions in life. Afterwards, when he went touring the four gates of the city he saw the sights of suffering arising from birth, old age, sickness and death. This made him aspire to find the truth pertaining to life. Therefore, one night accompanied by his attendant, he left the palace riding his horse.

In those days, asceticism was a very common practice. Siddharta also experimented with these practices but after six years he realised that this did not help in realising the truth. These practices merely tortured his physical body, and yet his suffering and doubts were not eradicated. Therefore, he abandoned the ascetic practices and instead sat in meditation under the Bodhi tree. He turned his attention inwards as he contemplated and observed the truth within himself. Finally, he realised the ultimate truth pertaining to all existence. Everything in the world arises out of causes and conditions and therefore has no innate stable nature. Since his Enlightenment, he has been referred to as the Buddha. He spent his entire life traveling the two banks of the Ganges River preaching the Middle Path with great skill depending on the nature of individuals, in the hope that all sentient beings could also understand the truth of the world and as a result liberate themselves from suffering.

3. Different Periods of Buddhism in India

3.1 Buddhism Period

Venerable Yin Shun divided the history of Buddhism into four periods. Under this categorisation, the history of Buddhism is divided into the Buddhism, Early *Mahayana*, Late *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* periods. The first period includes what is commonly referred to as Primitive Buddhism and Sectarian Buddhism. The period from when the Buddha was alive until one hundred years after the Buddha's *parinibbana* is considered the Primitive Buddhism period. From one hundred years after the Buddha's *parinibbana* until the early Mahayana period is considered the Sectarian Buddhism period.

After the Buddha's *parinibbana*, one of the important tasks was to collate all the teachings given by the Buddha. In the summer after the Buddha's passing away, Venerable Maha Kasyapa invited five hundred *Arahats* to convene the first council. These five hundred *Arahats* recited what they had remembered of the Buddha's teachings and these recitals were verified by all the *Arahats* present.

During the council, the Buddha's personal

attendant, Venerable Ananda, also recited the teachings of the Buddha. These teachings were verified by the council and collated as the *sutta-pitaka*. On the other hand, Venerable Upali recited the precepts for the Sangha and these were collated as the *vinaya-pitaka*. In the first council, there were only the *sutta-pitaka* and *vinaya-pitaka*. The *abhidhamma-pitaka* only emerged much later and these are commentaries of the suttas. The compilation of the *sutta*, *vinaya* and *abhidhamma pitaka* are collectively known as the *Tipitaka*. (Editor's Note: Readers can refer to the article by Venerable Tejadhammo on "The Origins of the *Tipitaka*" that is also published in this magazine.)

One hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha, a second council was convened with seven hundred present. After the second council, due to the differing views towards the *vinaya*, Buddhism was split into different sects. Those who were more conservative formed the *Sthaviravada* movement while those who were more liberal formed the *Mahasamghika* movement. What we see today as the southern school of Buddhism originated from one of the lineages of the *Sthaviravada*, while Mahayana Buddhism evolved from the *Mahasamghika*. Initially there were only two sects but gradually it divided into 18 sects. This period is known as Sectarian Buddhism. What Venerable Yin Shun referred to as the Buddhism period spans from around 500 B.C. to 100 B.C. and includes this period of sectarian schism.



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

3.2 Early *Mahayana* Period

During the period of around 100 B.C., as time went by, the people felt the absence of the Buddha more and more. Although everyone was still following the teachings such as the Noble Eightfold Path, Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination, the attitude and atmosphere of cultivation was rather different from the Buddha's time. It lacked the warmth and brightness of the Buddha's days. Therefore, around 100 B.C., the people started to recollect the proactive qualities of the Buddha such as compassion, generosity and tolerance, and thus began the rise of *Mahayana* Buddhism.

During the early *Mahayana* period, the famous Venerable Nagarjuna expounded on the teachings of emptiness based on dependent origination. All things arise based on the law of dependent origination. They arise due to causes and conditions and are subjected to change. The innate nature is of non-self and is therefore "empty". In actual fact, the notion of "emptiness" was not created by Nagarjuna. It is a further expounding of the profundities of dependent origination and impermanence. "Emptiness" does not mean that nothing exists but rather that all things are subjected to causes and conditions (dependent originated) and impermanence.

3.3 Late *Mahayana* Period

Around 300 A.D. to 500 A.D., there were some people who considered the notion of "emptiness" too difficult to understand. Not everyone was able to observe dependent origination and penetrate the meaning of "emptiness". Therefore, the *Vijnanavada* school of thought started, stating the existence of an *Alaya* consciousness as the storehouse for our kammic seeds.

Later on, the *Tathagata-garbha* school of thought emerged, which stated that all of us have *Tathagata-garbha*, which is an innate Buddha-nature. This nature is temporarily obscured by our afflictions, leading us to make various mistakes. As long as we are able to clear away these obscurities, we will be able to regain our initial purity. For those who cannot understand "emptiness", this type of teaching gave them a sense of refuge and hope. However, eventually, people started to be attached to the notion that our *Tathagata-garbha* is our permanent true self and failed to realise that even this is also empty by nature.

3.4 *Vajrayana* Buddhism Period

After the period of 500 A.D., Brahminism, which encouraged the practice of reciting *mantras*, doing prayers

and asking for protection from the deities, became popular in India. In order to continue its survival, Buddhism also incorporated some of these elements into its practice. During the *Vajrayana* period, Buddhism became similar to the deity-worship religions. By using various prayers, *mantras*, *mudras*, etc, the protection and blessings from the Buddha were sought so that people's own Buddha-nature could be uncovered. This deviated from the initial teachings of the Buddha, which was to use our own efforts to eradicate our greed, hatred and ignorance.

Up until 1200 A.D., with the invasion of the Muslims and the flourishing of Brahminism in India, Buddhism gradually deteriorated in its home country until it was totally lost. This shows that although Buddhism once flourished in India, it also underwent the inevitable change and deterioration. This highlights that all things arise only with the presence of right causes and conditions.

Venerable Yin Shun divided the history of Buddhism in India into the above four stages. However, in some instances, he also classified the history into three or five stages in his writings. The changes in each stage happened gradually and therefore each stage embodied elements from the previous stage. Under the three-stage categorisation, the history of Buddhism could be divided into the Buddhism, *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* periods. Under the five-stage categorisation, the first stage is the Buddhism period with the adherents being predominantly the *sravakas*; the second stage is predominantly adhered to by *sravakas* inclining towards *Bodhisatta* ideals; the third stage is predominantly adhered to by those cultivating the *Mahayana Bodhisatta* path; the fourth stage is predominantly adhered to by those cultivating the *Bodhisatta* path holding the *Tathagata-garbha* view; the last stage is adhered to by those holding the notion of the culmination of Buddha and heaven, which also meant that the Buddha was worshipped like a heavenly being.

4. Spread of Buddhism

The period between 500 B.C. and 100 B.C. is considered the Buddhism period. Around 300 B.C., there appeared a great Buddhist emperor in India by the name of Asoka. He contributed greatly to the spread of Buddhism. His empire was very strong and extended into areas such as the present day Afghanistan and Greece. Emperor Asoka constructed 84,000 stupas housing the relics of the Buddha in all parts of India. This commemorated the Buddha's teachings and also allowed non-Buddhists to be exposed to Buddhism. Apart from that, Emperor Asoka also erected stone pillars inscribed with the Buddha's teachings in all parts of India, blending Buddhism into the governance of

the country. The son and daughter of Emperor Asoka also brought the lineage of *Tamrasatiya* Buddhism (a branch of *Sarvastivada* Sect) to Sri Lanka around 300 B.C., which is what we now know as the Southern tradition of Buddhism practised in countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and Laos.

Emperor Asoka also sent ambassadors of Dhamma to northwestern India including the regions of present day Afghanistan and Iran. During the Han dynasty of China, many Chinese traders traveled the Silk Road to the northern parts of India. They were exposed to the local culture and Buddhism, which resulted in their bringing Buddhism back to their home country. The then Han emperor took great interest in Buddhism and sent delegations to India for further studies and also brought many Buddhist scriptures back to their country. Due to the great imperial support, Buddhism flourished in China. Around 100 B.C. to 300 A.D., the work of translating the Buddhist scriptures was given great emphasis. Later on, around 600 A.D., Venerable Xuan Zhang with the support from the Tang dynasty traveled to India to obtain additional Buddhist scriptures. He brought the scriptures back to China and began intensive efforts of translating these scriptures. Therefore, there are numerous translations of Buddhist scriptures by the Chinese Buddhists and are well preserved even to the present day. When China received Buddhism from India, this was during the early *Mahayana* period. On top of that, the ideals of early *Mahayana* Buddhism were suited to the character of the Chinese people, therefore Chinese Buddhism to date is still largely based on *Mahayana* Buddhism. This is also called the Northern tradition as it was spread from the north of India.

Tibet got in contact with Buddhism during the period of *Vajrayana* Buddhism. At the time, Buddhism in India had already incorporated elements from Brahmanism. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism has an inclination towards *Vajrayana* Buddhism. Consequently, the Buddhism we see in Tibet also emphasises rituals with the use of *mudras*, *mantras* and prayers.

Conclusion

We have discussed how Buddhism evolved since the time of the Buddha till the present. From the rise of early *Mahayana* Buddhism to the development of *Vajrayana* Buddhism, we can see that when Buddhism developed further from the Buddha's time, the teachings included more elements of imagination. This is one of the realities of the evolution of Buddhism in India.

Therefore, Venerable Yin Shun has emphasised that

we should “base ourselves in the purity of early Buddhism, propagate the practices and understanding of middle period Buddhism, to absorb the suitable elements of later period Buddhism, and revive the essence of the Buddha’s teachings”. At the same time, he hoped that everyone could “always reflect and not forget the true essence of Dhamma by understanding the evolution of Buddhism in India and to remember the Buddha as one who had once appeared in this world”. We should “investigate the origins of the teaching, understand its evolution and choose the right practice for our cultivation”, so that Buddhism could become a teaching that is in accord with present times, beneficial to the welfare of humans, and a teaching that is for and “based on human beings”.

In other words, we should understand the history of Buddhism and absorb the essence of the Buddha’s teachings. We should preserve what is good and filter away what is not suitable. That which has been spread the longest may not necessarily be the best, because they may encompass too many changed elements within them. However, that which is the earliest is also not necessarily the most perfect. Therefore, we need to uphold the core aspects of Primitive Buddhism, such as the teachings on dependent origination, impermanence, *dukkha*, etc. We should also learn the *Bodhisatta* ideals promoted by *Mahayana* Buddhism because that was also exemplified by the Buddha. From the history of Buddhism, we understand that the Buddha did once exist in this world and we should not treat the Buddha as a deity to be worshipped only. The Buddha is like a teacher who had taught us the way of cultivation to become a Buddha ourselves. Apart from that, we also need to realise the truth of impermanence from the evolution of Buddhism and also constantly return to the essence of the Buddha’s teaching so that we can properly practise Buddhism in our daily lives and help to protect the pure and righteous Dhamma.

1. 前言

在座的同學比較少聽到佛教歷史的介紹，因此，在這裡為大家做一個簡介。如果我們對佛教歷史有所了解，就會知道佛曾經實實在在的活在這個世間。他曾經在這個世間展示他修學的道路，所說的法也是為世間的人而說的，這讓我們覺得佛法是實在的。由此可見，了解佛教歷史對修行來說是很重要的。如果我們了解佛教從以前到現在的變化過程，我們也會更了解佛教為何會從佛陀時代演變到現在這個樣子。尤其是現在，我們面對的資料很龐大，有密教的、南傳的、北傳的；又有中觀，唯識，如來藏的；談“空”的、談“有”的等等。如果我們能夠了解佛法的演變過程，我們就會了解為什麼會有那么多不同的說法存在。由此可見，了解佛教歷史對學佛來說是很重要的。更重要的是，了解了佛教歷史的演變，讓我們有比較清晰的思惟，能夠更明確的選擇資料。

2. 佛在人間

有些人不知道佛出生人間，是從人修行而成佛。他們把佛當神明來膜拜。佛陀在兩千六百多年前誕生於古印度北方的一個小國家—迦毗羅衛國。父親為當時的國王淨飯王，母親稱為摩耶夫人。佛陀在成佛之前，名為釋迦太子。

釋迦太子從小靈敏性與慈悲心就非常的強，而且也喜歡一個人靜靜地去思考許多生活上的問題。稍後，太子出宮遊四門，看到生老病死之苦，激發了他尋找人生真諦的心願。於是，在一個夜晚，他帶了一位親信及一匹馬離開了皇宮。

當時印度很盛行修苦行，太子也跟著修苦行。但是，六年的苦行當中，只限於折磨身體，並沒使太子的思惟更清晰，他心裡的煩惱與疑惑並沒有因此獲得解決。於是，他放棄無謂的苦行，改變其修行模式，在菩提樹下靜坐了下來，專注其心，思惟觀照。最後，他體悟了世間一切的真相。世間的一切都是因緣合和，沒有實在性。他覺悟後，我們稱他為佛陀。佛陀一生中，不斷的在恆河兩岸弘法，倡導中道，深入淺出的教導度化眾生，希望眾生也能了解世間的真相，得到解脫自在。

3. 印度佛教的分期

3.1 佛法時期

印順導師把印度佛教歷史分為四期。在四期的分類下，佛教歷史可分為佛法時期、初期大乘時期、后期大乘時期、最後是祕密大乘時期。第一個佛法時期，包括一般所說的原始佛教時期與部派佛教時期。從佛陀

在世直至涅槃過後的一百年屬於原始佛教時期。從佛涅槃後一百年至初期大乘佛法之前屬部派佛教時期。

佛陀涅槃後，一重要的工作就是把佛所說的法結集起來。在佛涅槃後的第一個夏天，大迦葉尊者召集了五百大阿羅漢進行第一次結集大會。五百大阿羅漢們把自己所記得的佛敎誨誦出，再由與會的大阿羅漢們確認。

當時，佛陀的侍者阿難尊者誦出佛的敎法，經大會確認，結集成經藏。優婆離尊者則誦出戒律，結集成律藏。第一次結集時，只有經藏與律藏，阿毗達摩或論藏是後來才有的，這是對經典的解釋。經、律、論結合起來我們稱為三藏。

佛陀涅槃後一百年又有第二次的結集，出席人數有七百位。第二次結集後，由於人們對戒律起了不同的看法，佛教開始分成不同的部派。比較保守的組成上座部，比較開放的則組成大眾部。我們今天所看到的南傳佛教就是上座部流傳下的其中一派，而大乘佛法則是由大眾部派演變而來的。開始時只有兩個部派，之後又再慢慢地分化成十八個部派，這個時期我們稱它為部派佛教時期。印順導師所說的佛法時期指約公元前五百年至公元前一百年的時段，其中包括部派分化的這個階段。

3.2 初期大乘時期

到了公元前一世紀，離佛陀涅槃的時間越來越遠，人們對佛陀的懷念也越來越深。雖然大眾一樣修持八正道、四聖諦、緣起等佛陀的敎誨，但所散發的氣質卻與佛陀不太一樣，缺乏佛陀的溫馨與光明。因此，就有人回憶起佛陀也曾說過我們應該慈悲，要幫助別人，積極做一些利他的工作。到來公元前一百年，大家開始憶念佛陀的精神，也記起佛陀除了言教，還有他親身展示的各種身教，如慈悲布施忍辱等的示範，因此，大乘佛法漸漸的興盛起來。

在初期大乘佛法時期，著名的龍樹菩薩開示緣起性空說法。萬物一切皆緣起，都是有條件性存在，無常變化的，其本質是無我的，是“空”的。其實，“空”的說法並非龍樹菩薩創造出來的。它只是更進一步把緣起與無常的深義發揮，“空”並非空空洞洞的意思，它背後包含了緣起、無常的道理。

3.3 後期大乘時期

在公元三百至五百年間，一些人認為“空”的說法太深奧，很難明白。從觀緣起而直入“空”並不是每個人都能透視的，因此就有唯識思想的出現，成立阿賴耶識為我們業種子之儲藏處。

後來，又有如來藏思想的產生，說我們本身具有清淨的佛性，只是暫時被煩惱覆蓋，導致我們做出種種錯誤。只要我們把污垢擦乾淨，就能恢復本來的清淨。對一些不能理解“空”的人來說，這樣的說法讓他們覺得心靈上比較有寄托和希望。但是，最後，人們開始執著於如來藏為常住不變的清淨真我，而不了解如來藏本身亦是空性的。

3.4 祕密大乘時期

大約公元五百年之後，提倡咒語、祈禱、祈求神明保護的印度婆羅門教開始興盛起來，為了在這樣的環境繼續生存下去，佛教也融合了一些婆羅門教的色彩。到了祕密大乘時期，佛法已演變到和神教相通了。人們透過種種祈求，咒語、手印等儀式獲得佛陀的庇護與加持，希望讓自己的如來藏顯現出來。這與佛陀當初敎導我們要靠自己的努力去斷除貪、瞋、痴煩惱而獲得解脫的說法已經有相當大的出入。

到了公元一千兩百年後，在回教的侵入以及婆羅門的興盛下，佛教在印度已開始慢慢衰敗直到最後完全滅亡。這些都說明，雖然佛教曾在印度興盛過，但其本身也還是面臨無常變化的命運，這也說明一切都是隨著因緣條件而變化的。

印順導師把印度佛教的演變過程分成了四期，不過偶爾也在不同著作中把佛教史分成三期或五期。每一期的變化都是漸漸形成的，所以每一期都會有上一期的影子。在三期的分類下可以分為佛法時期、大乘時期以及祕密大乘時期。在五期的分類下，第一個時期是以聲聞乘為主的佛教時期；第二期以有菩薩傾向的聲聞乘學佛者為主；第三期以修學大乘菩薩法的學佛者為主；第四期以傾向如來藏思想的菩薩學者為多，最後一期則是天佛合一的思想，也可以說人們已把佛與崇拜的神明混為一體了，把佛當成神來崇拜。

4. 佛法的流佈

公元前五百年到公元前一百年乃佛法時期。在公元前三百年，印度出現了一位偉大的佛教徒國王名為阿育王。他對佛教的傳播有相當大的貢獻，當時他的國土非常的強盛，甚至包括阿富汗以及希臘一帶的地方。阿育王在印度各地建了八萬四千個佛陀舍利塔，讓佛教徒可以憶念佛陀的敎誨，也讓非佛教徒透過舍利塔開始與佛教接觸。此外，阿育王也在印度各地興建刻有佛法的石柱，把佛法融入國法中。阿育王的兒女也於約公元前300年把佛教傳到斯里蘭卡，這是赤銅碟部的佛教，也是我們現在所稱的南傳佛教，為現在斯里蘭卡，緬甸，泰國，寮國等地所奉行。

另外，阿育王也派遣末闍提到西北印度，包括當今的阿富汗，伊朗一帶。在中國漢朝時代，許多中國商人透過絲綢之路來到靠近北印度西域一帶貿易，他們接觸到當地的文化及佛教，並把佛法帶回中國去。當時漢朝國王對佛法很感興趣，派了一些使者到印度去學習佛法並把很多的經典帶回中土。在皇室的大力推動下，佛法開始在中國盛行，於公元前一百年至公元三百年左右，翻譯經典的活動相當受到重視。隨後，玄奘大師在唐朝皇室的鼓勵下，也於公元六百多年時期到印度取經，回到中國積極進行翻譯，因此，中國佛教翻譯的經典非常多，這些經典直到現在都保存得很好。中國接觸佛教正值印度初期大乘佛法興盛時期，再加上大乘佛法適合中國人的根性，所以，中國佛教至今還與大乘佛教為主。由於中國所接觸的佛法由印度北部傳來，因此，我們也稱它為北傳佛教。

西藏是在大概公元七百年印度密教大乘盛行時期接觸佛教。當時印度佛教已受強盛的婆羅門教影響，所以藏傳佛教就有祕密大乘佛教的偏向。因此，今天我們看到的西藏佛教也比較重視手印、咒語，祈禱等的儀式。

5. 結語

今天，我們談了佛教如何從佛陀時代發展至現在的情況。從初期大乘佛教的興起，人們對佛陀的懷念，發展到最後密秘大乘以祈求加持為重的過程，我們可以發現到離世尊的時代越遠，想像的成份越多，此乃印度佛教演變的一個事實。

因此，印順導師強調「立本於根本佛教之淳朴，宏闡中期佛教之行解（梵化之機應慎），攝取後期佛教之確當者，庶足以復興佛教而暢佛之本懷也歟！」同時，希望大家「從印度佛教思想的流變中，能時時回顧，不忘正法，為正法而懷念人間的佛陀！」我們應該「探其宗本，明其流變，抉擇而洗練之」，使佛法能成為適應時代，有益人類身心的，「人類為本」的佛法。

換言之，我們應了解佛教歷史的演變過程，攝取當中淳樸的中心要點，把應該學習的保留，應該淘汰的適當的淘汰，流傳得越遠的未必最好，因為當中的變質也當然越多，但最原始的也未必是最完美的。因此，我們要掌握原始佛法一些根本觀念，如緣起、無常、苦等教法，但我們也應學習初期大乘所展現的菩薩精神，因為那也是佛陀所示範的。從佛陀的歷史，我們應了解，佛曾真實存在人間的，不要只把佛當神來拜，佛像一位導師，他告訴我們人是可以修行成佛的。此外，我們也要從佛教的演變中，體會到無常的真理，並時時刻刻回顧佛陀根本的教誨，在生活中實踐佛陀的教法，維護純正的佛法。



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

The Origins of the Tipitaka

Venerable Tejadharmo

Regardless of which school of monastery you visit, if you asked to look at Buddhist scriptures, you would be shown an enormous collection of books. Typically, they would be very thick books, printed on very thin rice paper. Amongst the different traditions, the *Vajrayana* (Tibetan) tradition would have the greatest amount of literature followed by the Chinese *Mahayana* and the *Theravada* tradition.

The *Tripitaka* (Sanskrit) or *Tipitaka* (Pali) is considered to be the most revered Buddhist collection of scriptures. The *Tipitaka* literally means the three baskets with “*t*” meaning three and “*pitaka*” meaning baskets, derived from the way they used to carry the scriptures in olden days. The three parts of the *Tipitaka* are the *Vinaya Pitaka* (Code of Ethics), *Suttanta Pitaka* (Discourses of the Buddha) and *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (Buddhist Philosophy).

How did the *Tipitaka* come to be? This collection of scriptures originated from the spirit of the Buddha. It is a record of his own living experiences and what he came to realise from it. Often, people believe that the Buddha was a person who acted like a university student who sat down calmly, deep in rational thought and came up with teachings such as the Four Noble Truths or the Noble Eightfold Path. Contrary to that belief, the Buddha’s teachings did not come from a set of theories. Instead it came from the Buddha’s own living experience, from his body, his heart and his mind.

Written long after the *parinibbana* of the Buddha, around 100 B.C., the *Tipitaka* was initially recorded on palm leaves. These leaves were cut into uniform length, washed then dried with a piece of rounded wood so it would be more flexible. Following this, they were flattened and stripped. The process of writing on the palm leaf was done by engraving the surface of a leaf, scratching out the shape of each letter – similar in the way we engrave on metal these days. In order to read what was engraved on the leaves, soot mixed with resin was rubbed across the top of the leaf. As it got caught in the dents of the engravings, the soot made the markings more prominent. As you would imagine, it took a very long time just to do one piece. After they had finished writing the pages, they would stitch the book together, threading through holes that ran through each page. The thread that they used was called a *sutta*. This is why the scriptures were called *suttas*, because they were held together in this manner.

This method of recording did not exist during the time of the Buddha. During his era, there was hardly anybody writing anything down. They relied solely on their memory. The first teachings of the Buddha were held in the memories of those who listened to him speak and then were passed on in this same manner, preserving the oral tradition. It was memorised and chanted. This is why the *Pali* chanting we do today has some elements of melody in it as it aids in remembering the chant itself. A person who mastered the skill to memorise long passages and have the ability to recite these passages was known as a *bhanaka*. Today, you would have to go to very traditional societies that promote and value the capacity to memorise before you can find a person with such qualities.

After the Buddha was Enlightened, he spent days reflecting on the experiences he had had and contemplating on his next steps. He could not communicate his actual experience of Enlightenment, even to his closest disciples, similar to how we would find difficulty explaining the phenomenon of falling in love. He said, “A Buddha can only teach and point the way. He cannot tell you in a clear manner what exactly Enlightenment is.” He had to conceptualise what had happened first to himself. In the traditional version of the story, one of the great gods said to him, “Please teach, as some beings only have a little bit of dust in their eyes. Out of compassion, please teach”. After listening to these words, the Buddha decided to teach.

Vinaya

Sutta

Abhidhamma

the

Three Baskets

Once the Buddha found the words to convey to others the message of the Dhamma, he began to teach. There were often questions asked, sometimes directed to the Buddha or sometimes by the Buddha to the people in order to polish their understanding of the Dhamma. When the Buddha's disciples started teaching, some continued to refer back to the Buddha's experience. Like the Buddha, his disciples had the same experience of Enlightenment afterwards. Their understanding of the Dhamma was according to their own life experience and there were simply no words to describe Enlightenment.

If you look through the Pali and the *Mahayana* canons, you will not be able to find the word "Tipitaka". This word is never referred to in the scriptures and is usually only used in commentaries written by other people about the canon. In the time of the Buddha, the word did not exist. The words *sutta* and *vinaya* also did not exist in the way that we know it today. These days, a *sutta* refers to the discourses or the teachings of the Buddha while *vinaya* refers to the monastic rule – different from its definition during the time of the Buddha.

In the *Suttanta Pitaka*, we often think of the Dhamma as the teachings and *vinaya* as the monastic rules. However, they were really meant to be interpreted differently. 'Dhamma' refers to the teachings but *vinaya* refers to the practice of the Dhamma in everyday life. The monastic rules are subject to change and in fact many were developed after the time of the Buddha. They are a set of practical rules that cover issues regarding interaction between monks, nuns and laymen. For example, one of the rules is, if you borrow furniture, you have to return it. Unlike common beliefs, it is not a set of moral rules. Moral conduct is to be guided by the basic five precepts.

The *Tipitaka* can be found recorded in different languages such as Pali, Sanskrit and Chinese, just to name a few. The Buddha had said not to teach the Dhamma in anything but the local languages of the region. In this manner, we can see that the *Tipitaka*, being recorded only in languages such as Pali and Sanskrit, has already slightly moved away from what the Buddha intended. The scriptures have since undergone many language translations. For example, the Pali canon had been translated from Sinhala to Pali and many other languages. The *Tipitaka* has also grown enormously since the founding of Buddhism. So, how do we decide which is the true teaching of the Buddha? There were conflicts in opinions between different schools of Buddhism as scriptures within one school did not necessarily exist in another.

It is useful for us to refer back to a teaching given by the Buddha to his stepmother. After becoming a nun, she asked the Buddha to teach her the Dhamma in an essential form. In response he said, "You know from your own experience, those things which lead to unwholesome states within your body, heart and mind. They lead to passion not dispassion, to grasping not letting go, to anger not loving kindness. When you meet these, you can be sure this is not Dhamma. And likewise, from your own experience, you know some things that lead from passion to dispassion, from clinging to letting go, from anger to loving kindness. When you know these things, you know that this is Dhamma".

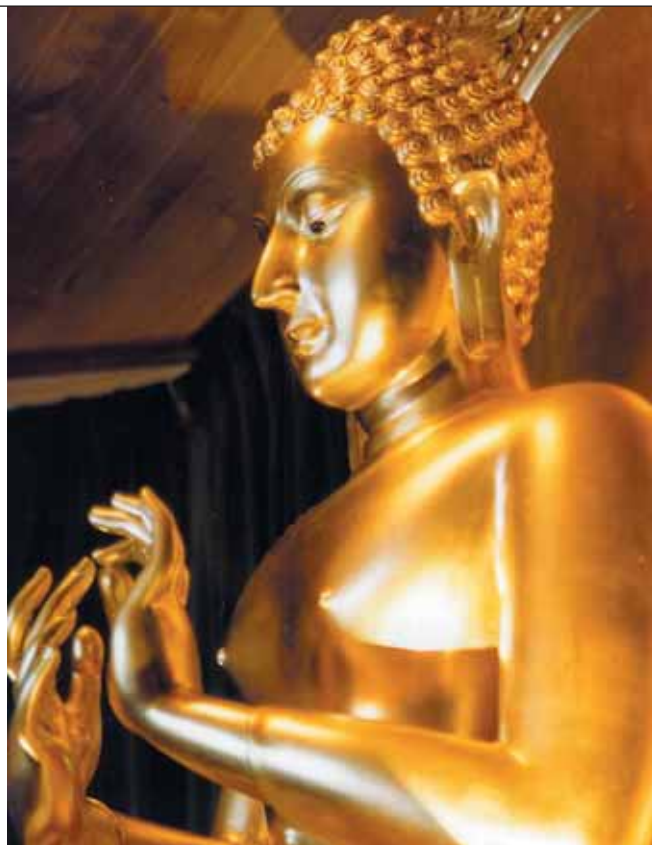


Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Can I be Enlightened?

Sister Yeshe

"Enlightenment means abandoning all that needs to be abandoned, e.g. anger, arrogance, pride, delusion, attachment, etc. That does not mean you do not love, or that you become emotionless."



Source: UNIBUDS

The Buddha started with a question, not an answer. *How can I end suffering for myself?* There is no doubt that there is a lot of suffering in the world. That is the truth, one of the Four Noble Truths. It is not meant to be abstract. Buddhism is meant to relate to your life.

But can normal human beings like us be Enlightened? Some of the greatest Buddhist saints had been murderers. Angulimala had killed 999 people. He was told if he could collect the thumbs of 1000 people, then he would gain great realisation. When Angulimala decided to kill his own mother as the 1000th victim, the Buddha went into the forest and sought him out. Angulimala, upon catching sight of the Buddha, decided to kill him instead. However as he chased after his new prey, he never seemed able to catch up. Finally, Angulimala called out, "Stop!" But the Buddha responded, "Angulimala, I have already stopped. What about you?" With utmost compassion radiating through his eyes, the Buddha explained that he had already stopped causing suffering for himself and others. Upon hearing the Buddha's words, Angulimala started to cry and lament that he had gone too far down the path of destruction to turn back now.

But goodness is the deepest nature of humanity, and though the ocean of suffering is great, look back and you will see the shore. By becoming a monk and living a life of harmlessness, you could undo all the evils that you had done in the past, and become Enlightened. Angulimala was ordained and became Venerable Ahimsa, "the harmless one". He was very motivated and practised very diligently. He did get Enlightened, and if he could do it, so can we.

Do not think, however, that becoming a monk or a nun means that it makes resting with your ego easier. Or that you do not suffer, do not know what it is like to have emotions, have stress, feel lost or depressed. Or maybe if you get a girlfriend or boyfriend, maybe when you get your own house, university degree, your first million dollars, etc, then you will be happy. People are always looking at happiness as being in the future somewhere. We climb one mountain, and then we have to climb another. We are always in this constant state of "achievement anxiety" and sometimes our parents encourage us. The truth is we will never be happy until we learn to live in the here and now. Happiness is here and now, nowhere else. Drop whatever you are holding onto, whatever you think you have to be. Because you are innately perfect.

This does not mean that you can just sit back and do nothing. You have the seeds, the potential, like a diamond. In the *Vajrayana* tradition, “Vajra” means diamond. It means pure from the beginning. Likewise you have this diamond of a Buddha-nature. But just like how diamond-mining can be hard work, digging deep into a mountain and getting very dirty in the process, so too do you need to make the effort in order to discover your diamond within.

As Buddhists, we always bow. In India, they say “namaste”, which means “I see the divine in you”. I am bowing to you, a Buddha-to-be. I bow to the Buddha-nature in you. So when you bow, really mean it, do it with your heart and not just because you feel you should be so obliged. The Buddha-nature is there, just like a lotus bud in all its purity, growing out of the mud of our negative emotions and confusions.

To understand this when you are young is a great thing, because it helps you to treasure life more. I was on the train the other day, and I saw someone about your age doing cocaine. It was 7 o'clock in the morning and this girl was with three boys. It is sad, because in a few years, she might either be a single mother or dead. And I thought to myself, what is wrong with our society today? What are our youths doing? Why are people not inspired by some inner truth, some inner wisdom? Our culture nowadays seems so vapid, and so superficial.

Maybe it takes us a while to be able to see through that. While you are young, you are constantly on the go, studying, travelling, falling in love, etc. But as you get older, you start to get a bit disenchanted. Sometimes if you are lucky, you get a big whack on the head that wakes you up. Then you feel inclined to investigate and find the answers within yourself. In Australia, people generally lead relatively comfortable lives but most of them are not very happy. We have a high suicide rate, but in India, people do not think about killing themselves because they are too busy trying to stay alive! It shows that material things are not enough to feed the heart, even though we do need a certain level of physical security.

“... if you really want to help the world, the best way is to get Enlightened because only Enlightened beings have the full capacity, wisdom and compassion to truly be of benefit.”

The Buddha started out with: “I am suffering; why am I suffering; there has to be a state beyond this suffering.” That is the best part, the Third Noble Truth. If there is no Enlightenment, then why not just go out partying and forget about practising. But actually you will find that the partying is only fun for a while but it is not really sustainable. You would not want to still be going to rave parties when you are 40!

So what is Enlightenment? It means abandoning all that needs to be abandoned, e.g. anger, arrogance, pride, delusion, attachment, etc. That does not mean you do not love, or that you become emotionless. Enlightened people’s minds are very purified and omniscient, with great capacity. For even if you have a great aspiration to help others, you will find that you soon become exhausted and feel like giving up if you have a lot of ideals. You get held back by your own ego, self-clinging and delusion. For an Enlightened being, these feelings of disconnection and being cut off from the world are gone. The conceptual mind, the endless thoughts and emotions, are purified to a luminous clear awareness. There is a complete open-hearted compassion that deeply understands other people’s suffering, and knows exactly what they need to get Enlightened too.

Therefore, if you really want to help the world, the best way is to get Enlightened because only Enlightened beings have the full capacity, wisdom and compassion to truly be of benefit. Take for example, someone like the Dalai Lama. Wherever he goes, he just touches people. That is because of the power of his practice. When you get Enlightened, you will know. Because I still get depressed, tired and angry, that is how I know I am not Enlightened! When I first joined Buddhism, I heard that the Buddha gained Enlightenment in seven years, so I thought I could do that too. That was very ambitious of me. But the Dalai Lama said to think in terms of lifetimes.

Enlightenment can be expressed in many different ways. It is so vast and needs to be expressed according to the audience’s level of understanding. For example, to an old village lady, the Buddha asked her to observe her hands when she is letting the rope go down a well for water. And she got Enlightened that way. Then for an intellectual and well-educated person, the Buddha would give him or her something like the *Abhidhamma*, the teachings on the nature of the universe. After all, everybody is different.

It is also natural that there are different schools of Buddhism, partly because over the thousands of years, cultures have divided. Buddhism went to each country and evolved. Some teachings were not ready to be expressed until the time was right. Vajrayana and Mahayana were not later inventions, but something that was kept until the wider

society was ready to understand. In *Vajrayana* Buddhism, there are so many deities or divinities that it does not seem like Buddhism to some people. But these deities are only archetypes, which are symbolic of something. They are not like gods who have control over your life. But because we live in a world of senses and desire – colour, sound, form, taste, touch – *Vajrayana* Buddhism takes these things and transforms them for the purpose of liberation.

If you are a person who is full of desire, then use the deities that are symbolic of desire. If you are the type of person who is always angry, use the deities that are wrathful-looking for transforming your anger. If you are a gentle and peaceful person, then you could chant the *mantra* of Kuan Yin, the *Bodhisatta* of Compassion and tap into the energy of Enlightenment in the form of sound to purify the negative *kammas* of speech. The *mantras* have been handed down from master to disciple from the very beginning. In *Vajrayana* Buddhism, in order to purify negative *kammas* of the mind, we merge our mind with the symbolic form of an Enlightened being, until we realise that our own mind and the Enlightened being's mind are inseparable.

A *Bodhisatta* is someone who is on the road to becoming a fully Enlightened Buddha. This is someone who is motivated and inspired to commit themselves to the liberation of not only themselves, and someone who vows to become Enlightened for the sake of all beings. While this *Bodhisatta* path may be long and difficult, look around you and see all the people whom you love. They are why you should try and walk this path. Look inside yourself - what wonderful potential you have. This human life that you have been given is a very precious gift. To have the intelligence or interest to pursue the spiritual path is an opportunity that should be grasped, so use your time wisely.

In every moment in your life, there is a lesson to learn. Open your eyes. There will always be challenges in your life, and this is the perfect opportunity for you to purify your negative *kamma* and to practise patience, compassion

and tolerance. When you look inside yourself and learn these lessons, your life gets better as those situations resolves themselves and better things start coming your way. The universe has an amazing way of putting you in the right place at the right time. The *Bodhisattas* are there; you just have to open your eyes to see them. It might be the guy selling the newspaper. Enlightened beings can take on many different forms.

Women can also get Enlightened. The *Therigatha* (Pali canon) is a collection of verses spoken by female *Arahats*, and this is the proof that women have been Enlightened. When the Buddha was thinking of making the order of the nuns, Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha, "If women were to lead the holy life, would they attain the 'four stages of liberation'?" That is, stream-enterer, once-returner, no more returner, and *Arahat*. The Buddha said yes. That means Enlightenment is possible in this life, here and now, for man and woman. Because we all have Buddha-nature, it is how you live that counts.

Buddhism is good in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. It is good in the beginning because we set a motivation not just for ourselves, not just for temporary happiness, but for lasting peace. For Enlightenment, set your motivation high, and the results will be high. If you set your motivation low, e.g. I just want to feel good now, or I just want to make merit and have a good rebirth, then the fruit will also be small. When you set your motivation high, the small things come automatically. Buddhism is good in the middle because the Dhamma does not harm anyone, but only bring happiness and peace. And finally, Buddhism is good in the end because we share and dedicate the merits to everybody. It is like putting money in the bank. After you get your paycheck, if you go out and spend it all, the wages are gone. So after listening to a Dhamma talk, when you go outside and get angry, if you have not dedicated the merits, it is gone. But if you dedicate the good energy to the Enlightenment of all beings, then it is sealed and it will go on until every last being is liberated.

Enlightenment
Enlightenment

Mindlessness vs. Mindfulness

Sister Khanh Le Van

Since we were young we have been taught by our parents to be mindful of our manners. It is our mother who often reminded us about our daily actions to avoid unnecessary accidents. Mindfulness teaching has been available to us early in our life and our parents are our first teachers. When we come to Buddhism, we learn mindfulness at a deeper level such as mindfulness of our body, our feelings, our mental formations and the object of our mental formations.

Mindfulness is in fact the core teachings of the Buddha. This is the base which helps us to release all our suffering and all the pains that we have. If we are mindful, we have the capacity to be aware of what is going on within and around us. For example, being aware of our in and out breath. Our minds are often somewhere else except the present moment. We breathe but we are not aware of it. If someone invites you to be aware of your breath, immediately you would come back to the present moment. The breathing is the quickest transportation to the present moment, quicker than taking an airplane to anywhere. So as soon as you come back to your in and out breath, you are very much in control and feel more in the here and now. You feel that you are not losing yourself because you are bringing your body and mind together. For instance when you are supposed to eat a sandwich, your body appears to be here but your mind is thinking of something else; you are not chewing the bread but you are chewing on your past or future. Mindfulness is to know what we are doing and that helps with a lot of things in our lives. To be happy we have to be mindful. Even in the factory the worker has to be mindful, if not accidents would happen. If we go about our lives in a mindless way, many accidents would happen in various ways.

The practice of mindfulness allows us to be aware of what is going on right HERE, right NOW. Mindfulness is a type of energy which would help us to decide what to do and what not to do. For example, in regards to speech, we become more aware of what we say and how our speech would affect others; therefore, we would try to avoid saying things that will cause harm to others. That is called mindfulness. We have the capacity to know our actions, our speech and our mind. So when we are aware of our mind, right actions and right speech would follow, as the outcome of the practice of right mindfulness. There is a saying:

“peace in one’s mind, peace in the world”.

As you start to be more aware of what you are thinking, you would become more selective. You would choose to be with wholesome thought. When an unwholesome thought arises, you are aware that an unwholesome thought has arisen. With a mindless state of mind, an unwholesome thought will cause you to do something that causes harm to yourself and others.

Thieves also need to be mindful when committing a crime. They have to be very careful in planning their theft. However, this is not right mindfulness. This is unwholesome mindfulness. In Buddhism, when we talk about mindfulness, we talk about wholesome mindfulness that gives joy, peace and happiness to all. So when people ask whether their actions are correct, they need to check if their actions bring happiness to themselves and others. If it does then their actions are correct.

Mindfulness of the Environment

In being mindful of others, the practice includes being mindful of our environment. We know that we are not separate from our environment. This is the teaching about non-self in Buddhism. As long as we see ourselves as separate from the environment then there will be more suffering. We need to take care of our environment, our Earth. This is because we are all so interrelated. The trees are important for our breath. We need to wake others up to the fact of the importance of the environment to us and the fact that we need to keep our Earth and global environment free from destruction. By having too much consumption we destroy the nature and by destroying the nature we destroy ourselves.

The irresponsible act of throwing rubbish into the river pollutes the water and causes acid rain. One has to look deeper into how one’s action could contribute to the destruction of the Earth. Some people exploit the environment for monetary gain. The mindless consumption of resources for commercialisation purposes leads to destruction. For example, the wooden chopsticks that are provided “free of charge” with take away food are the result of deforestation. For everything we do and touch, we have to look deeply into its roots and the consequences of the action. In doing so, each of us, bit by bit, could help to preserve our Mother Earth for the generations to come. We practice to become the light of peace, the light to happiness, the light of keeping our Earth in a lush state of green. That is mindfulness. This teaching can be found in the Mahayana suttas such as *Avatamsaka sutta* or *Diamond sutta*. To be mindful is also to take care of our mother Earth.

Mindfulness of the Body

Awareness of one's breath is a technique to anchor one to the present moment. When you feel anxious, angry, tense or overwhelmed by a strong emotion, you can focus on the breath to relax the mind. Observe the rise and fall of the abdomen as you breathe in and out. Observe also the flow of the breath from the nose down to the abdomen and then back to the nose again. Visualise yourself as a tree that is deeply rooted to the ground. When strong emotions arise, it is just like a storm passing through. The branch and leaves are swaying; however, you should focus on the roots, which is the region of the abdomen. In doing so, you would be able to cut off the line of thinking that causes more fear and anxiety. It is a good way of meditation, a practice that can lead to happiness regardless of religion. Being aware of our breathing will lead to peacefulness and solidity.

We should also practise awareness of the body. Be aware of the position of the body: either sitting or walking or standing or lying down. This awareness will anchor our mind in the present moment and helps us to remain focused. One way to relax our body is the practice of lying down on the floor in a quiet place and start using the abdomen breathing technique, especially when we are tired or stressed, or feeling anxious. You can practice like this:

"Breathing in my abdomen is rising, breathing out my abdomen is falling"

"Breathing in I release all the tension in my body, breathing out I smile"

You may like to concentrate on the falling and rising of your abdomen for as long as you wish. The exercise would help us to appreciate the little things that are happening in our life that we usually take for granted such as the ability of our teeth to chew a crunchy apple, the fact that our hair is growing healthily, the fact that we are not suffering from a toothache, etc. We scan the body with our breath, every single part, from the top of our head, like our hair to the tips of our toes; from every organ inside our body such as our lungs, our heart, etc, to every single cell in our body.

During the scanning of our body parts, it could lead us to the awareness of the state of the well being of our loved ones. When the thought arises, be mindful of it. However, we should bring our focus back to the present moment and to the awareness of our body and promise ourselves to deal with the thoughts at a later time. We should never ignore the thoughts that arise during the meditation session. Instead we should be aware of it. We should learn to recognise whatever that arises in us and not push it away. Some of us may have been taught to hide our feelings, emotions

and not to acknowledge them at all. However, here we are talking about sheer recognition of what is going on, without judgment. Deep relaxation can also be called loving-kindness meditation, with oneself as the subject.

Usually when we do loving-kindness meditation, we try to give it to everyone else but ourselves. It is actually very important that we show loving-kindness to ourselves too. When we know how to love and take care of ourselves, we would know how to love and take care of others. Without knowing how to take care of ourselves, it is hard to take care of other people. The more we know about ourselves, the more we would know how to take care of others.

Mindfulness of Our Feelings

The second domain of mindfulness taught by the Lord Buddha is our feelings. We should not push away the feelings that arise in us and be judgmental about it. Judging ourselves would make us lose the opportunity to look deep into our feelings and do something about it. The suppression of feelings would lead to its outburst eventually. Someday it will burst out unexpectedly; we refer to it as reacting out of nothing. However, it is not a reaction out of nothing; it is an accumulation of all the suppressed feelings.

The Buddha taught us to be aware of what is going on using sheer recognition to acknowledge our feelings. Breathing in, I am aware of my feeling of sadness, jealousy or depression. Do not call it by any other name but its true name and that is sadness, jealousy or depression. Breathing out, we smile upon those unwholesome feelings. We embrace our feelings regardless of whether it is wholesome or unwholesome because it is part of us, contributing towards shaping who we are at this present moment and not anyone else. By embracing, we are accepting it in order to go to the next step. Embrace the feelings like the way a mother would embrace a crying baby and not push it away just because the baby is crying. The mother would embrace and calm the crying baby without first knowing the reason for the baby's cry.

There are many practices that can help us deal with our strong emotions such as anger and to remain calm. Besides the breathing technique, walking meditation would help too. Walking meditation means that we are being mindful of our footsteps. Make use of all the opportunities in our life to be mindful of our footsteps as it helps to anchor us in the present moment. Live in the present moment and make our happiness happen here and right now. Do not wait; do not lose the opportunity for doing things that can make us and our beloved ones happy. It is also essential to have mindfulness in planning for the future. Planning for

the future is important and it should be based on the true facts of today. If we do not anchor ourselves in the present moment, the plan would be unrealistic.

Mindfulness in Relationships

When we are in a relationship, our partner usually receives more of our attention and care than the other people in our lives. This helps us understand more about each other's aspirations. We would help each other to fulfill the aspirations and ensure that we are walking towards the same direction. However, there would also be times when we will be hurt by our partner. The practice of mindfulness would help us to look deeply into the situation. This could be due to the reason that s/he was not being her/himself that day or to any illnesses that s/he might be suffering at the time. In order for a relationship to work, we need understanding and tolerance. Without these, we would start to blame each other and the escalation of suffering would happen. In order to truly take care of each other, we need to look deeply into what is happening to find the cause of the suffering. To love somebody means that we truly care for them and wish to help minimise their suffering. The irony is when we love somebody, we have the tendency to make that person suffer due to our possessiveness. In a relationship, it would be good to ask our partner "Has my love stifled you? Please let me know, my beloved". This would help us have a better understanding of each other. The more we understand each other before marriage, the better chance that the marriage will last. Usually when we "fall" in love, we are falling for the idea of the person that is constructed by our mind and not the true person. Hence, we have to be skillful and mindful in gaining a better understanding of each other.

Mindfulness allows us to dig deep into our mind and be aware of what is actually going on with the relationship. It is the first step towards resolving any conflict and to make the relationship work. The couple could then discuss with each other, mindfully and peacefully, about the issues that are affecting their relationship. When one talks, the other person should listen mindfully without interrupting and vice versa. It is important to learn the art of listening to each other. In a relationship, spend more time to remind each other about being mindful, talk things out and exchange views. It is essential to recognise the positive things about each other. In our tradition we refer to it as "the art of flower watering". This should be done not only in during courtship but throughout the relationship. We need to bring out the "flower" in each other. This could be done such as appreciating the little things and saying thank you to let them know that it means a lot to us. Only after "the flower watering" period has occurred, should we mention the negative points of the other person.

Bhaddekaratta Sutta



Illustration: Wai Loon Teng

Ending the article with a verse from a *sutta*

Bhaddekaratta Sutta (Translated by the author's tradition as "Our Appointment with Life")
(Buddha's teaching on living in the present)

*Do not pursue the past,
Do not lose yourself in the future.
The past no longer is,
The future has not yet come.
Looking deeply at life as it is, in the very here and now.
The practitioner dwells in stability and freedom.
We must be diligent today,
To wait until tomorrow is too late.
Death comes unexpectedly,
How can we bargain with it?
The sage calls on the person who knows how to dwell in
mindfulness, night and day.
One who knows the better ways to live alive.*

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

十二因緣

Venerable Tsang Hui

上藏下慧導師

Buddhism does not need to be practised in a serious atmosphere. Its essence lies within our daily lives and is directed towards dealing with our suffering. The ultimate aim of Buddhism is the eradication of suffering and it emphasises the cultivation of virtue in our daily lives. Therefore, this is indeed a practice that is only beneficial and creates no harm.

The topic for today is the “Twelve Links of Dependent Origination”. Before we begin, we must first explore the meaning of dependent origination. So what does dependent origination mean? When this exists, that exists; when this does not exist, that does not exist; with the arising of this, that arises; with the cessation of this, that ceases.

The Four Noble Truths talks about suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading towards the cessation of suffering. The truth of the cause of suffering allows us to understand the truth of suffering. Due to our many afflictions, human beings create *kamma* and therefore are subjected to its effects. Whether these effects are desirable or undesirable, they have conditions that cause them to come into existence. This is called dependent origination.

To understand dependent origination, we need to understand how things arise interdependently in the world. In our lives, there is a lot of suffering but where do these sufferings arise from? Suffering arises from the failure to perceive the truth of all things and our attachment towards the body being our ‘self’ and also the extension of attachment towards the things that relate to our self. When our endless desires are not fulfilled, suffering arises. This is called suffering relating to the five aggregates. When we go to the roots of it, this is because we love ourselves too much, including our beliefs, our views, our desires, etc.

Then what is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering lies in our *kamma* from the past or the afflictions that arise from not understanding the true nature of our self. To gain liberation from suffering, we must first understand suffering and its cause so that it can be eradicated. The law of dependent origination explains this. It is the central and unique teaching of Buddhism. The twelve links of dependent origination divides this phenomenon into twelve parts.

Ignorance → Kammic Actions → Consciousness → Mind & Body → 6 Sense Bases → Contact → Feelings → Craving → Clinging → Becoming → Birth → Old Age, Sickness and Death

Dependent origination explains the phenomenon of non-self. That is, everything arises due to the coming together of conditions based on the laws of nature. The first four parts explain the activity phenomena of life (Ignorance → Kammic Formations → Consciousness → Mind & Body). The five middle parts explain the mental activity of sentient beings (6 Sense Bases → Contact → Feelings → Craving → Clinging). These nine parts collaboratively explain “becoming”, which causes all types of suffering to arise, which are birth, old age, sickness and death. The last three parts represent the journey from birth to old age, sickness and death. Therefore, these last parts are the conclusion of the phenomenon. Because of the right conditions, there is birth and because of birth there is old age and death.

From the observation of the law of dependent origination and by applying it in daily life, we are able to understand the difference between ignorance and craving. Craving is the feeling of greed that arises from the contact of the six sense bases with the corresponding six sense objects. On the other hand, ignorance means having a mind of delusion. Ignorance means not understanding the truth of suffering, not seeing the cause of suffering, not understanding the law of dependent origination and also not obtaining a way out of suffering. With ignorance arise kammic actions that lead to the creation of *kamma*.

Due to the generated *kamma*, consciousness arises. The present consciousness arises from our past *kamma* and also both the good and bad *kamma* from the present. Its nature is ever changing and impermanent. All that which is impermanent is not perfect, is void of a permanent self and also has the ability to create suffering. Then we move to the time of birth as a result of the culmination of maternal and paternal physical factors, giving rise to our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mental faculties (Mind & Matter → 6 Sense Bases). Contact arises as a result of the six sense bases and this creates feelings. By reacting to the feelings, craving arises. These feelings can be classified into pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant feelings. Craving is directed towards the objects of the six sense bases (form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mental objects). Clinging is grasping without wisdom and is divided into four types: clinging to sensual pleasures (towards form, sound, smell, taste and touch), clinging towards views (view of self and permanence), clinging to meaningless rules and vows (such as those taking on strict rules in the hope to attain rebirth in the heavens) and clinging to the belief in self (attachment towards the five aggregates). These types of clinging will lead to ‘becoming’ (the ever present wrong view), which is wanting to realise the mental clinging into material reality. As a result of that, there is birth, old age, sickness and death.

Contact is an important part of the cycle. When the body (six sense bases) interacts with the external objects (corresponding six sense objects), it naturally starts reacting to the external environment. This is called contact with the base of ignorance. If we are able to focus our attention on a particular source, that is called contact with the base of clarity. This is part of our cultivation that could lead us out of suffering. That is, to maintain right mindfulness, right awareness and right understanding. Ignorance is not having clarity in our understanding and views. That is, not having right understanding or distorted understanding. On the other hand, kammic action is using our volition to create *kamma*. Therefore, with no clear understanding we engage in creating *kamma*. That is called attachment to our passions which gives rise to craving. Therefore to eradicate suffering, we need to eradicate our ignorance and remove our attachment. Old *kamma* from the past will then be like seeds denied sunshine and water, slowly drying up. Spiritual cultivation is about eradicating suffering, understanding the truth, impermanence and removing our erroneous view of self.



Source: Chien Hoong Gool

佛法並不一定要在很嚴肅的狀態下修行，因為佛法所針對的本來就是現實生活的問題，尤其是生活上的煩惱。佛法最終的目標是幫助我們斷煩惱，它著重於如何讓我們在生活中不斷向上提升，它是一門幫助我們離惡行善的方法。

今天的主題是十二因緣，未講前，讓我們先探討緣起法。

什麼是緣起法？「此有故彼有，此無故彼無，此生故彼生，此滅故彼滅。」

四聖諦裏講述苦、集、滅、道。集諦讓我們理解什麼是苦諦。人因為有太多煩惱所造的業，因此招感果報。不論果報可愛與否，它都有其存在的條件因緣，這叫緣起。

要瞭解緣起必須透過緣生法，也就是這個現象界。現實生活中有許多苦，然而，苦從何而來呢？苦乃是因我們不能如實明瞭世間的真相，執著於身體是我，再延伸到執著於一切於我有關的事物。當我們無止境的欲望無法滿足時，苦即產生，也就是五蘊熾盛苦。追根究底都是因為太愛自己，這種我是我慢、我見、我欲。

那集諦是什麼呢？集諦就是苦的原因。無論是很久以前造的業或因為對自我不瞭解而產生的煩惱都是苦的原因。要解脫苦，先要瞭解苦，然後尋找產生苦的原因以便滅除它。緣起法就是要說明這個實相。它也是佛教的根本教理及特色，十二因緣就是把這個現象規劃成十二個專案。

無明→行→識→名色→六入→觸→受→愛→取→有→生→老病死。

緣起本身就是要說明無我，一切只是法的因緣關係。前四支說明生命的活動現象（無明→行→識→名色）中間的五支說明有情心裏活動的情況（六入→觸→受→愛→取）這前九支都說明“有”，因為它帶來種種苦及其變化，也就是生老病死苦，最後三支代表眾生從“生”至“老病死”的過程。所以結尾三支是結論。緣有故生，緣生故有老死。

透過緣起法的觀察以及應用於日常修行上，我們瞭解無明與貪愛有的差別。貪愛是在根（六根）、塵（六塵）、識接觸之後所生的貪心所致，而無明是屬於癡心所致。無明是對苦的現象不知，不觀苦之因，不明緣起的道理，以及不想辦法脫離苦。一切無明就產生行，就會造業。

無明緣行，因為有行（業），所以識才生起。這識有前世的業識，再加今世我的各種善惡業識，它是充滿變數的，無常的。凡是變異無常的皆是不圓滿的，皆不是我，皆能產生苦。如此推斷到結生時（父精、母卵）現起眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、心（由名色到六入）。觸依賴六入處生起，有觸產生受。對受採取進一步的造作反應產生愛。受可分為樂受、苦受、不苦不樂受。愛是渴愛，對六塵（色、聲、香、味、觸、法）的愛，它屬一種常見，有愛。取是無智的執取，又分四種：欲取（對色聲香味觸的愛），見取（我見，常見）戒禁取（如外道有修苦行可升天，執取某種禁戒），我語取（指凡夫對五蘊名受想行識的顛倒執取）。這種執取進一步產生有（永恆存在的邪見），執著把心裏想像的存在轉變成實際境界的存在。再接下來便是生、老病死。

在這裏，觸是一個很重要的環節。當身體（六根）對外界（六塵）時，很自然的就隨著外界打滾，也就是所謂的無明相應觸，所以我們要學習如何把意力集中在我們選擇的所緣上。要是能夠把心集中在那裏，也就明相應觸，這是修行。這樣可以離開煩惱，時刻保持正念正知正智。無明是知見上的不清楚。也就是不正知或偏知。行是動作，業行，有意識去推動而留下的叫業。知見不清楚再加上業行，叫情意的染著，也是愛。所以斷煩惱，就是要破除無明，然後將染愛取消。以前所造的業，如同種子失去陽光和雨水的滋潤，慢慢的便會乾枯，不能生存。修行即是破除煩惱，瞭解實相、無常，斷除我見。



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

What Led Us Here Today?

Phra Mick

When you see someone who has better things than you, you feel bad because you compare. You may think, "How come a guy like him has a better-looking girlfriend than me?" You think that way because you think what you have is not always the best.

It is like when you are trying to win an argument; you think you must win the argument. Buddha vs. God: which one is more important, which one is more powerful? When you try to win an argument, the name of this state of mind is called pride. Between pride and fear there is a guy called 'ego'. People express it further with slogans like "No Fear" on their t-shirts, bumper stickers on their cars. But when you ask them how many locks they have on their front door, they say three. Yes, no fear at all.

Every single agent works for the one particular agent called the 'self', that is me. My head, I do not want to lose. My hand, I do not want to lose. My body, I definitely do not want to lose. Every single agent of the mind works for the self. And in turn the self controls fear; the self controls the ego, but the mind controls everything. As you can see, all these enemies come from within the mind. How can one see this? Here, we come to the mechanics of Buddhism, the law of causality, the law of cause and effect.

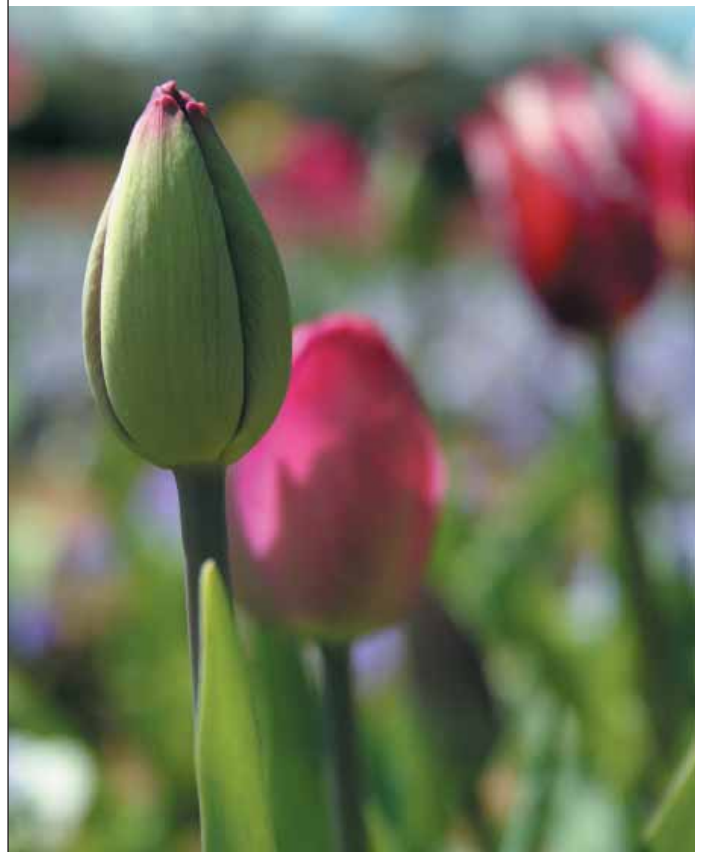
When you ask the relevant question, such as where did it all begin, I can tell you that I cannot remember. Using very simple string physics, let an imaginary string represent 100 years from now. The very first component that exist on this line is called time. Everything complies with time. Let this entire line represent the time line and with time, always comes change. Hair grows, fingernail grows; this body ages, gets sick, old and die without my approval or control because of time. Time always comes with change; from change comes cause and effect.

How many times in a day do you feel hunger?

Many times. I used to get hungry three times a day. Imagine if I have not eaten for three days. Now some people will say three days is a very long time and they will end up starving themselves in those three days. I actually fasted for seven days and it was no problem. By the seventh day, I had heaps of energy, to do whatever I wanted to.

When the 'processing centre' in the body does not get to work for four days, it starts to realise that there is no more food coming. As it thinks it does not have to expend as much energy to process the food, and so the processing centre restores all the energy back to you. Therefore, you have got energy at your command, at all times. But when the processing centre is constantly working, on a day-to-day basis, it chews up a lot of energy. At the same time, your mind is wandering all over the place. This is one of the reasons why all Buddhist monks fast.

So I get hungry three times a day, now I have not eaten anything for three days. For a normal human being, that is hell. Since I have got no money, no food, I will now make a choice. How about if I rob someone? So I get myself a knife, make a choice to go down to the petrol station, and make a choice to rob. What happens if the robbery does not



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

go according to plan? As soon as I see causality, I instantly see *kamma*. What goes around will come around. It comes from my own choice that I just made.

The teaching of the Buddha is very simple. It shows that if time exists, so must change exist, and therefore *kamma* also exists. In the very intention of the Buddha, he showed that *kamma* is very much under your control at all times. If you do not believe it, you can see that other religions share it too. In Christianity, the Bible says thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal. Why? Because people will kill you too, or they will take back what is stolen from them. The law of cause and effect is adhered to by all spiritual systems.

What we are looking at is *paticca samuppada*. It is the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination. When the Buddha reached Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, this was what he realised. Because there are no phenomena that are not dependent arising, therefore there are no phenomena that are not empty.

We now refer to a computer analogy, using the examples of “hardware” and “software”. The first “hardware” is form, followed by “software” as a representation of memories, feelings, thought-formations and ‘thought interface input-connection’ i.e. consciousness. Here, we will use computing analogy in order to explain these five representations of the Five Aggregates.

This body is like a computing device that is made up of all sorts of things. You can customise its contents by specifying them at the computer store. You could specify all the best components you can order. So you get home and turn this expensive machine on, and you get a message flashing across the screen, “Error. No operating system found”. You call the support centre and ask them what could be wrong. How come it is not starting normally like other people’s computers? The support person replies that in order to operate this machine, it requires software; it requires a mind that acts as a consciousness for the machine. The software makes all these pieces of hardware components work together.

Getting back to the concept of “hardware” as form, in Buddhism form is to mean all material things. The form that is standing here in front of you, you all know as Phra Mick. Sound is also considered form, sound frequencies that we come in contact with. We may not be able to see sound, but we can hear it. Therefore, both oral and visual ‘input devices’ that are our ears and eyes act as our input devices, similar to our computer mouse and speakers/microphone. If our ‘input devices’ can detect something,

it is called form. When you look at the word “form” alone, it is a very dangerous thing. For example, when you look at this object, you know it is called a pen. However, when you look deeper into it, where does it come from? The pen consists of various elements, including the steel and plastic that makes up the pen. It consists of all elements. Similar to wombat poo, after a gradual process of decay, the poo becomes dirt. Everything in this world will eventually decay. Next time when you see a car, try to see it as more than a mechanical thing. Try to see where it came from, try to see it as organic, down to the true nature of the components that make up the car; this is what form is about.

The second aggregate consists of two types of feelings, that is bodily and mental feelings. Bodily feelings are to do with physical sensations that we experience in everyday life. Mental feelings are to do with psychological sensations such as happiness, sadness, or anger to name a few. Then we come to memory, and to thought-formation, and to input interface device connection. This input interface device connection connects to all sections of your body, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch, and mind.

Everything in life becomes the way it does because of the way we make it become. This is the law of cause and effect. What do you think makes us do anything? It is to do with feelings. This is what motivates us to sleep, to eat, and to shower because we feel dirty. We take these feelings in almost like taking drugs. For example, anger. When someone calls us stupid, we do not recognise the meaning of the sentence the first time. The words are received through the input interface device connection, and are then processed by the computer, the mind. It is only when the computer starts to learn the concept and meaning of the word ‘stupid’ that the computer attaches a negative connotation to the word. At this point upon registering the meaning of the word, thought formation occurs in the mind. We start to feel suffering as we relate the word ‘stupid’ to being devalued. The mind starts to suffer.

Arahats say that whatever has come here, just stop here; to see, just to see, and to hear, just to hear. Basically, stop everything at your input interface connection. The same thing applies when you meditate. You train yourself to watch the breath and watch your bodily movement. You are essentially training the mind to watch what you are doing. When the mind is fully aware, it will truly be aware. You may have just heard something, the sound waves are received through your hearing channel, and now you are accessing your memory to identify the sound waves. Through that memory access, you begin to go through thought-formation. The thought-formation then is produced as an output, which is called emotion or feeling.



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

When you see the true nature of the Five Aggregates, you see that we get conned all day, by our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch senses, and the mind. Through our memories, feelings and thought-formations, we get conned on a daily basis. The Buddha explained that these feelings are a very dangerous thing. When people get angry they often do not realise it because they are getting so much satisfaction out of venting their anger. What they also do not often see when venting their emotions is what other people see – this angry person pouring out words of hatred, and the face going red. All our energy reserve is used up to vent all kinds of expressions of anger and we think this as a great drive for our self-expression.

Some people often claim that science is the way to provide proof for all the questions we ever had. They would also ask why Buddhism is not based on providing proof, and yet scientists themselves have not been able to provide the answer as to how the human body can be alive. A scientist will say that it is phenomena, that it is an occurrence of mistake. However, when we analyse closely all the physical components that make up the human body, they are nothing more than space particles, the same particles that make up all other physical matters. But in order to feel, and to touch, you will need this body to work. In order to put the body to work, you will need the mind, feeling, memory, and thought-formation, in order to get to the feelings.

Buddhism says that this body is not yours, and neither is your mind. You are just energy. How do you feel? In order to feel, you will need an input-interface connection that is the senses of sight, touch, smell, sound and taste. Once you have gained an input through one of these senses, the Five Aggregates start to kick in and you develop craving, such as wanting to taste a particular type of food again, having the desire to repeat this pleasurable experience. This craving develops into attachment, becoming and finally, suffering. You keep wanting more and more of what you had experienced. We may not realise it but this endless cycle occur hundreds of times a day, very easily.

The mind is a very delicate thing that has the ability to control the complex nervous system in our body. The ability to control such a complex system comes with speed, so try to imagine the mind acting at lightning speed at every single moment. In order to be able to control the mind at this level of speed, that is why it is essential that we train our mind. And that is what led us here today.

Two things you cannot avoid in life: Death and Sickness

Rod Lee

The Four Noble Truths is the first teaching of the Buddha. Why do you think he taught that? Why did he not teach impermanence or *kamma* first? The answer is that the Four Noble Truths is the most obvious thing that all of us can relate to: dissatisfaction and suffering

The First Noble Truth is the cause of suffering. Some Dhamma teachers may put it the other way round: that “there is suffering” followed by “the cause of suffering”. What are the four major sufferings? The first is birth. We often think that birth is a pleasurable event. Imagine that you are consciously experiencing life in a womb for nine months and then all of a sudden you are pulled out and hit with bright lights and new experiences. What is the first thing a baby does? Most of the time, they scream because it is quite traumatic for them. So birth is the first suffering.

The second type of suffering is sickness. Is there anyone who has never fallen sick at all? Did anyone here have the flu this season? You know what suffering is about when you have the flu. Headaches, fever, aching bones, sickness in the stomach... Okay, so we have all experienced that. And the Buddha was able to present this and say that this is reality, not some esoteric view of the world system or cosmology. He could point to the fact that we are born, and we have sickness. What is the third suffering? It is old age, and growing old.

Most of you are not that old yet. Do you have grandparents? They complain about poor eyesight, their teeth falling out, their aching bones, arthritis, etc. My mother is 86 years old and she said, “If anyone tells you that old age is fun, they are lying. It is not fun.” And there are various other sufferings of old age too. Aside from body pains, they suffer from the loss of many loved ones. My mother also said, “There are more people whom I love who are dead than alive now.” And so the fourth suffering is death.

The cause of our suffering is our ignorance. With ignorance comes greed and hatred. The ignorance that we have is that we do not understand the true nature of certain phenomena. Quite often, we fail to see things as impermanent. We think, hope and want things to be permanent. We want our relationships, and our happiness to be permanent. We do not want our cars to rust out. We want them to be pristine the whole time. We want everything positive to work permanently.

Also, we are ignorant of the law of cause and effect: *kamma*. Generally, people think that if they can just get away with doing something wrong, it will not matter as long as they do not get caught. However, the Buddha said

“If you want to know who you have been, have a look at who you are now. And if you want to know what you are going to become, have a look at what your mind is doing now.”

that the law of *kamma* is exact, in the sense that whatever you do returns to you in the form of a “kammic” boomerang. So, everything you do will yield a result. If you create a negative cause, you will receive a negative result. If you harm someone you will be harmed in the future. Now if the world population took that to heart, if every single member of the entire planet absolutely knew that without a shadow of a doubt, they would not harm another being.

So in a sense, ignorance of the various laws that we are governed by causes us suffering. Now, those sufferings to all of us are inevitable. However, the Buddha had two other Noble Truths to add to that. They are the True Cessation and True Path towards cessation of suffering.

In other words, although these sufferings are inevitable, they also can cease. The Buddha testified to the fact that birth, sickness, old age and death in terms of suffering could finish. And that is extraordinary. He told us that it can cease, and gave us a path, teaching us the way to finish it, once and for all. And so although we call it inevitable, it is not truly inevitable in terms of the Buddhist path.

However, not all will reach Enlightenment this life. Hopefully some will. But at least for now we can be on the road towards that. Even if you do not attain Enlightenment this life, you can create the causes to continually be blessed with the Dhamma in future lives; you can create the causes to have good conditions in the next life.

Whether we suffer or not depends on our attitude actually. If we are able to purify our minds, we do not suffer. Interestingly enough, when we feel pain we usually turn that pain into suffering. Let's say I am a concert pianist. I hit my hand on the desk and bruise a finger. And I have a recital tomorrow night. I have given myself pain, but the **fear** of not completing the recital or playing badly the next night can cause me great suffering. Do you see the difference?

It is the mental application of worry, fear and anxiety that is far worse than the pain. If we go around harbouring negative thoughts, then our lives are suffering. We often harbour anxiety and fear, and we think it is going to be fine after we clear a certain hurdle. We think, "I will keep this anxiety for a while, and when I go over the hurdle, I can let it go then." Nevertheless, more and more hurdles come our way. What we do not seem to understand is – it does not end.

If you develop the habit of having anxiety towards everything you approach, then you will live a stressful life. Consequently, people around you will become stressed as well. And that is what happens, when you start to create these negative states of mind. They are not inevitable. Even birth, sickness, old age and death are not inevitable. But we can change things. At the moment, none of us can change death, in terms of what will eventually happen to our bodies. But we can change our attitude towards it. We can change the way we view it.

If you have ever met anyone who have had a life-threatening illness, or had been confronted with death, they often say that it was the greatest gift that they could have had. All of a sudden, they saw the impermanence of life. And they could see that life is so impermanent that they had better make the most of it right now.

Now, say we lived to the age of 80. And say we are now 40 years old with 40 years left. Out of that, let's say sleep is eight hours a night on average. For the next 40 years, that is 13 years of sleeping. That leaves us now with 27 years. Eating, cooking, and washing up take another 4 hours during the day. In 40 years, six years will be used. Now we have 21 years left.



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Cleaning our bodies, and putting makeup on, shaving, cleaning house, and making beds: that takes about three hours a day? Take away these five years and we have 16 left. What about work? We all have to work. So we take another eight hours, which is another 13 years. That leaves us with only three years left. And we have not even included television yet!

Example as illustrated below:

Number of years left

40 years

Sleep (8 hours/24 hours x 40 years)

- 13 years

Eating, etc (4 hours/24 hours x 40 years)

- 6 years

Cleaning, etc (3 hours/24 hours x 40 years)

- 5 years

Work (8 hours/24 hours x 40 years)

- 13 years

3 years

So we have three years out of the next 40 years to work on our mind. This is important because at the time of death, as is during the time of living, the most important and only things that we take with us are our minds and our *kamma*. We do not take our television sets. We do not take our money or our bodies. We do not take our work or our monetary successes or our houses either. They cannot be taken. All we take is our consciousness. We leave our bodies behind, and our consciousness continues with its kammic imprints to the next life.

So if our mind is the most important thing that we have, and in the next 40 years, we only have three years for our mind, then it is essential that we really recognise the fact that we do not have any time to lose. Now that does not mean that you all run off to the monasteries and become monks or nuns. What it means is that you have to work on your mind constantly even when you are working, or when you are interacting with people. You have to create positive results all the time.

You cannot say, "Well, I will just be grumpy with them for a while and then I will be nice to them later." You might lose that opportunity. While you are shaking your fist at the driver who has just cut into your lane and being extremely angry, a semi-trailer might wipe you out the next second. The last thought that you have in your head so filled with anger is not very good *kamma* for your next rebirth. Not good at all.

So, not only do we not have a lot of time, we actually have no time except the present. The past does not exist except in our minds, the future has not arrived, and the future is only secured by our actions now. The Buddha said, "If you want to know who you have been, have a look at who you are now. And if you want to know what you are going to become, have a look at what your mind is doing now." This is because it is your mind and the way you train it that is going to affect your experience in the future. And so it is really important to recognise the mindfulness of the present, and look at the way your mind is now.

If you say, "Ah! I will leave it for a few years and then I will do a bit of meditation later" or "I will be nice to other people in a few years time", it is not going to work for you. We do not know how long our lives are. Our lives are impermanent, we only have a number of years left, and they can move very quickly. If you can remember when you were five years of age, and how old you are now, what happened to all that time in between? It is gone.

All of us here have had the extraordinary fortune to have come across the Buddha-Dhamma. We are incredibly blessed because we have the teachings, the absolute teachings of how we can improve our lives, how to benefit ourselves, how to have enjoyment, and also benefit everybody else at the same time. If we walk around with great joy and happiness, great compassion, great love for others, then we are doing something really fantastic.

We all have to learn to balance out our time for all the activities in our life, be it studying, working, playing, etc. Say when you are studying, if you can spare 10 or 15 minutes to meditate, then that is probably going to be more useful than the 15 minutes of activity focusing anxiously on your books. It helps you clear your mind and you get more energy. Calm yourself down and let go of anxiety. This way you can train yourself in your diligence with studies. That is training the mind.

This is called "taking everything into the path." You do not have to differentiate between what is "samsaric", and what is spiritual. In fact there is a prayer that you can do at night. "May my sleeping tonight be a benefit to all sentient beings so that I can wake up in a positive mood and help people tomorrow." And therefore, your sleeping becomes a "Dhammic" action. Again there is no downside. You can motivate everything that you do for the benefit of others. And that becomes an amazing practice.

So it is not a matter of meditating only when you find the right cave, or when you earn a lot of money. That will not happen. Well, not for most of us anyway. We do

not have the luxury of becoming Dhamma practitioners only when the situation is so-called right. We can do it right now. We can motivate everything that we do for the benefit of others. And then everything we do becomes what is known as a transcendental Dhammic action. We create a positive attitude for everything that we do.

We see opportunities coming up too, and when we know that we are actually using the Dhamma, our mind is a little bit more relaxed, happy and peaceful. We become useful. If you think that the work you do does not need diligence and concentration because it is samsaric and mundane, and this work that you are doing for your boss is not spiritual work so you do not have to work hard, then you are actually ripping your boss off. You are not putting right effort into your job. Most of us are not going to become nuns and monks, so we should put our effort into *samsara* in a very spiritual way.



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

Integrating the Dhamma into our everyday lives

Winton Higgins

The Buddha Dhamma is not a philosophy or a dogma – it is a *path*, commonly known as the Noble Eightfold Path. A path is something practical. It takes us from where we no longer want to be to where we want to go. The English word ‘path’ means a way to go from A to B without mechanical means of transport. It is not a freeway, a road, a railway line, a fire trail or even a bicycle track. A path is something we make our own way along, under our own steam, using our own legs.

There are two classical ways of talking about the path. The longer of them is to talk about the various aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path – right view, right emotion and intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right *samadhi* (the calm and insight that come from meditation practice). The condensed version of this teaching is ‘the three great trainings’ – morality (*sila*), meditation (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*panna*), which together summarise the Noble Eightfold Path.

These are oft-repeated teachings that go back to the Buddha’s very first discourse in the deer park at Sarnath. But sometimes we need something more *immediate*. How do we practise the Dhamma, not so much in the temple on our way to *Nibbana*, but on the way to the bus stop when we are running late for a lecture, or when the girlfriend/boyfriend rings up to say s/he does not want to know us any more, or we have just smashed the car up, or we just cannot concentrate in preparing for an exam, or we fail an exam, or a parent dies suddenly?

At such times the classical teachings may seem a bit preachy, and we do not know where to begin. But actually, it is precisely in these sorts of moments that the Dhamma is really practical, and if we do practise it, we find we make real progress along the path. But we have to know our Dhamma to select the right program for the occasion. Here are a few hints.

Going for refuge

Buddhists are people who go for refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. That is, we allow in and cultivate three wonderful ideals – the ideal of full awakening as personified by the Buddha, the ideal of understanding the experience of each successive moment (the Dhamma itself), and the ideal of working with our teachers and fellow practitioners (the Sangha) to deepen our understanding and to awaken ourselves.

These three are called true refuges because they do not fail us, ever, and no one and nothing can bar our access to them. They are ours – we do not need anyone’s permission to go straight to them. They contrast with false refuges – money, insurance policies, careers, cars, nicely toned muscles, beautiful tans, sex, drugs, rock and roll – all of which fail sooner or later and will ultimately be taken away from us. And even when we do have access to them they do not satisfy us. In fact, the more we indulge in them, the worse our dependence on them becomes, and our itches become steadily more chronic. We win the lottery, buy our dream car – say, a Ferrari – and spend the next ten years desperately worried that someone will steal it, it might be smashed up in a collision, it might begin to rust in Sydney’s humid climate, we cannot pay the insurance, there is nowhere to service it, etc. If we are lucky, after ten years it will fall in a heap and we will be free of it at last! Well, you do not have to worry like that about the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

How do we go for refuge on an everyday basis? We certainly have to think deeply about these refuges and their meanings, and study them if possible. On top of that, nothing beats having a Buddha image in our home, presenting it with a fresh flower every now and then, incense perhaps, meditating in front of it, etc. And we could make sure that, every day, we bow three times to it (once for each refuge) while saying to oneself: “To the best of all refuges I go!”

But beware! If a ritual like that is to work, our heart and mind have to be in it along with our body. We have to know what we are doing, and open our heart to the refuges. Put them at the centre of our life, which automatically puts the other refuges right out there at the periphery, where they belong. In this way our life achieves its basic orientation; we will be facing in the right direction.

Morality

In the west, morality has a bad name. It is associated with not having fun, with fundamentalist Christians and the



Source: Wilsen Lius Lau

words 'Thou shalt not' on the wall, in large letters and in a big wooden picture frame. Many people think morality does not matter, that it is stodgy old religious stuff, and smart people get over it. This is very sad!

In Buddhism, morality (*sila* and the *paramis*) is associated with happiness, and ultimately, with liberation. Dhammic morality cannot be expressed in rules (though, unfortunately, some people misunderstand it in this way). Rather, the precepts and the perfections are *orienting devices* – they orient us towards what a fully awakened person, knowing what s/he knows, would choose to do.

We can think of these principles – just taking the Five Precepts for the time being – as the principles of non-harming; not taking what has not been freely offered; not behaving in sexual situations out of greed, violence, manipulation or deceit; not speaking deceitfully or hurtfully; and not making ourselves stupid through misuse of drugs, alcohol, fanatical views, head-banging music and dumber-down television. Positively expressed, these orienting principles are: practising loving kindness (friendliness), generosity, contentment, honesty and helpfulness, and mental clarity and intelligence.

These are eminently practical principles which deserve our energetic commitment. If we give them what they deserve, our life becomes more harmonious, lighter, more spacious – more free! Furthermore, people will really like us, feel safe and relaxed around us, come to trust us. Our lives will become emotionally rich. Why is that? It is because we humans are not separate from each other. I cannot separate my search for liberation from your search for liberation. By working for my own liberation, I help you with yours. Such is the interdependency amongst us all.

One of the best things I ever did for my own liberation was to join a small "morality group". Five of us Dhamma friends would meet every fortnight with our journals. We would select a precept for the coming fortnight – let's say the fourth precept – and really work on practising it in our everyday lives, every single day. And every day each of us would write a journal entry, noting the situations in which we had tried to practise the precept, and how it went. In what situations was it easy, and in what situations was it hard? Was it easier to speak honestly and helpfully to a stranger than to a parent, a child, a life partner? And if so, why? Where do we get stuck, and why? This practice brought together the joy of living well together with that important Dhammic energy, the spirit of investigation! And each fortnight the five of us would share what we had learned, and support each other in taking the practice of morality to a deeper, wiser level.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the supreme operative virtue of the serious Buddhist. We train our minds to be alert to what is arising *right now*, and what is passing away *right now*. In this way we become intimate with our experience, intimate with the way things really are – not with how we wish they are, fear they are, judge the way they are, but how they *actually* are.

If we live heedlessly, that is, without mindfulness, then we constantly regret the way things are – we decide that 'I' do not like it this way, 'I' want it to be some other way. 'I' always want to get rid of something that is here now, and make something else be here now that is not. This way of being in the world creates stress, tension and misery. But if we practise mindfulness, and we are intimate with the way things are, then we *live at ease*. Just as when we are with someone we are intimate with, we are at ease in her or his presence, so in just the same way, if we are intimate with what is happening in the present moment, we are at ease with it.

Who are we and what is our experience? In one teaching the Buddha tells us straight out: we are the eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and taste, touch and tangible objects, mind and mental phenomena. That is all there is to each of us and our entire world! The great Thai meditation master, Ajahn Chah used to tell his western students: you spend so much time wishing you had a Mercedes Benz, a skiing holiday in Switzerland, a wonderful sexual experience, a delicious ice-cream and so on. And if you did get any or all of that, what in fact would you be getting? Just more seeing, smelling, tasting, touching, bodily sensation and thinking!

As the Buddha also explained, and each one of us can directly experience this if we pay close enough attention, absolutely every experience we have has three characteristics. First, every experience can lead to anguish or unsatisfactoriness if we do not relate to it skillfully. Second, everything in our experience – every element of our experience – is impermanent; it passes away. Third, no element of our experience refers to a self; it is non-self, *anatta*. It does not refer to anyone; it is not to be identified with. In other words, every element of our experience arises and passes away, and does not refer to anybody. Unless we attach to it, cling to it, it cannot possibly cause us any anguish. What a liberation!

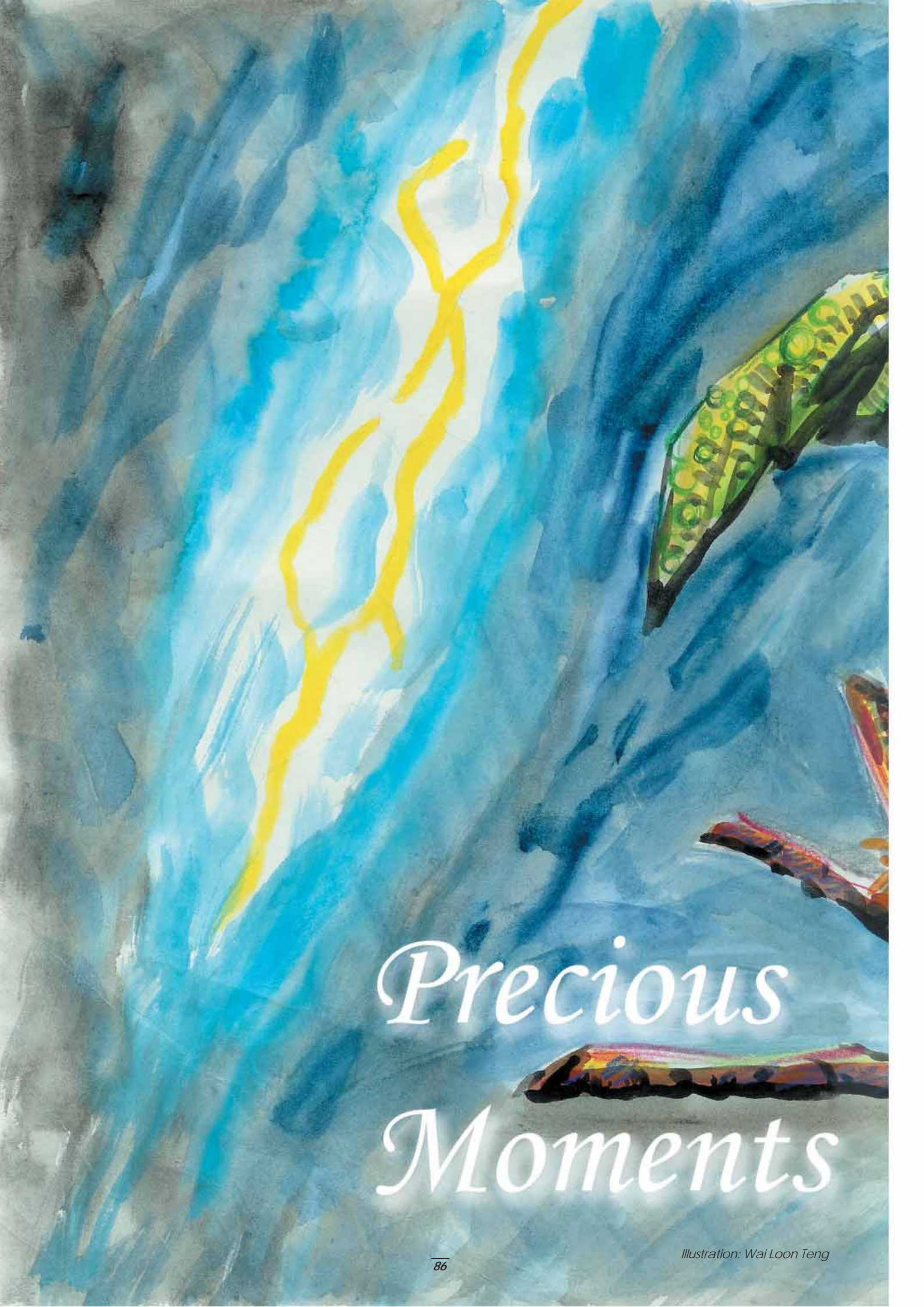
And yet it is all so simple. All we have to do is to stay alert, keep our wits about us, be mindful, and live heedfully. Of course, going on some mindfulness retreats

and learning a few tricks of the trade helps. But we can practise this mindfulness anywhere, anytime – in bed, in the bus, the shower, the toilet, the cinema, the lecture hall – even while listening to a Dhamma talk. Wow! And the benefits are amazing. We live at ease, our senses are sharpened, we live each moment vividly, we savour each moment of our conscious lives. In other words, we *live well*!

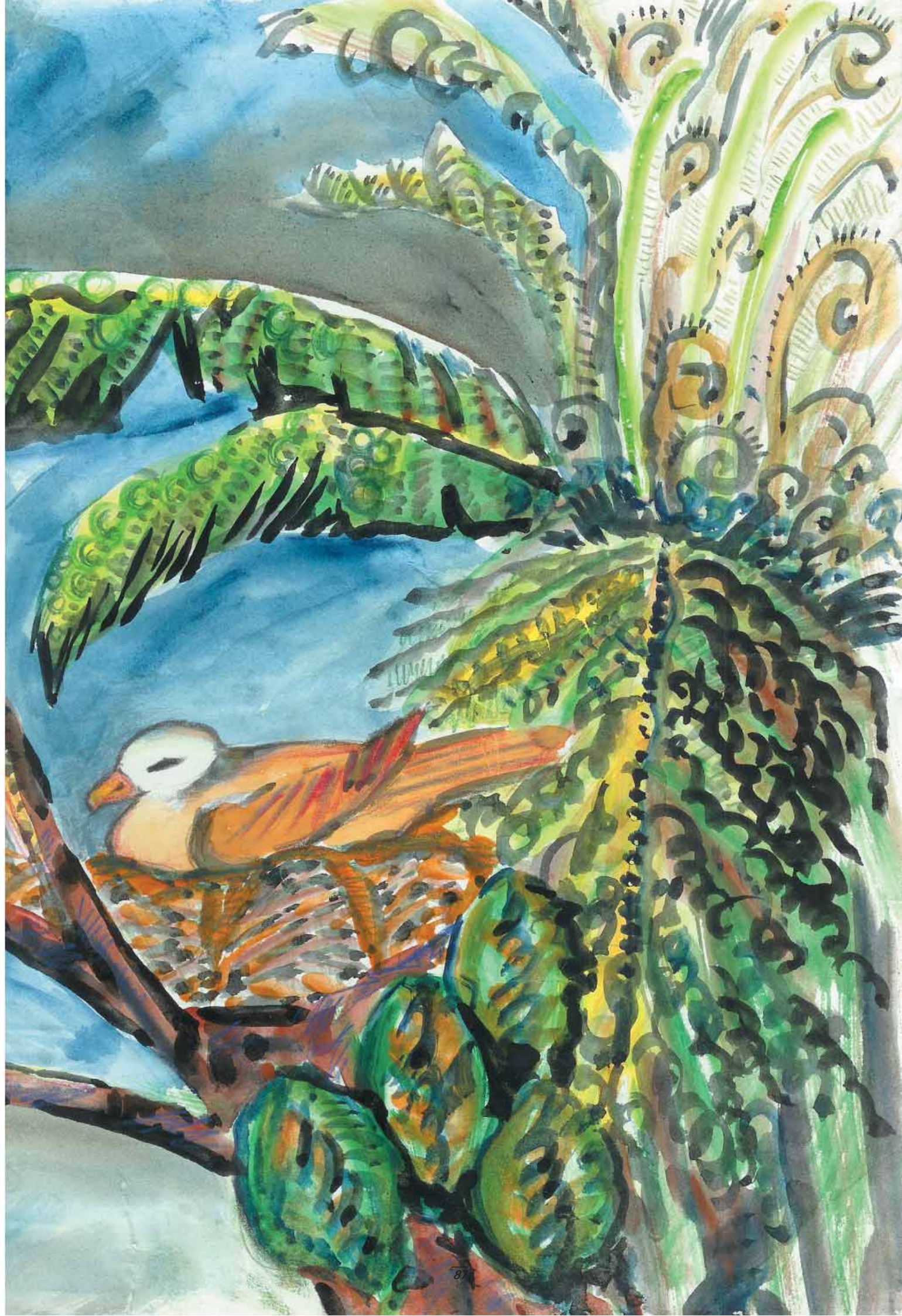
That powerful little English word 'wellbeing' – think about it. It is every Buddhist's birthright, and every Buddhist's responsibility to her- or himself. A commonly repeated blessing in this tradition says: *may all beings be able to protect their own happiness!* Which is the same thing as saying: may all beings be able to integrate the Dhamma into their everyday lives.



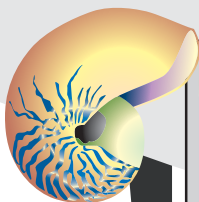
Illustration: Wai Loon Teng

An abstract watercolor illustration featuring broad, expressive brushstrokes in shades of blue and grey. A prominent, bright yellow, wavy line runs diagonally from the top left towards the center. In the upper right, there is a green, angular shape with yellow circular patterns. Below it, a smaller, colorful, elongated shape with red, orange, and yellow hues is visible. The overall composition is dynamic and textured.

Precious Moments



O-Week



Orientation Week is held in the university every year in the week prior to the start of the semester. The UNIBUDS stall is set up unfailingly everyday in that week to introduce Buddhism to new members as well as reinforce the Dhamma for old members. A Buddha statue is placed at the stall to symbolise our great Teacher as well as remind all of the wonderful teachings that he shared with us. The atmosphere is always filled with warmth, laughter and kinship.



1988



1987



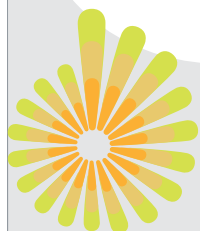
1986



1984



2005



O-Picnic



Every year, UNIBUDS also organises an Orientation Picnic usually by the beachside for all members, new and old. Our first activity of the calendar year, we take the opportunity to re-introduce our patrons as well as the new executive committee members. In addition to the usual abundance of food, we also have a short Dhamma talk by our patrons, an ice-breaking session and fun games like the limbo rock, three-legged race and others.



2001



1998



1986



1992



2005



Songkran

Songkran marks the Thai New Year and is also known as the water festival. Sprinkling water on each other symbolises the exchange of blessings and goodwill. Over the past years, UNIBUDS has been joining in the festivities at our patron's monastery, Wat Pa Buddharangsee in Leumeah and also helped to raise funds by selling food or drinks. Members also volunteered their generous support in other ways, e.g. acting as traffic controllers to ease the flow of vehicle traffic.



1991

1985



2005

Vesak

Vesak is usually held in the month of May in the Gregorian calendar and commemorates the birth, Enlightenment and final passing away of the Buddha more than 2500 years ago. Every year, UNIBUDS alternates between conducting the ceremony in the Mahayana or Theravada tradition led by our patrons. Members get together to chant and pay respects to the Buddha. Our patron also gives a Dhamma talk to deepen our understanding of the Buddha's life and his teachings.



2000



2005



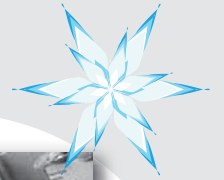
1999



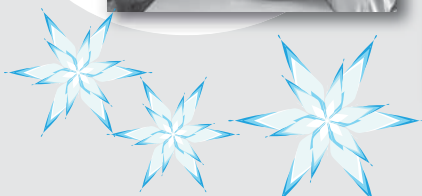
1998



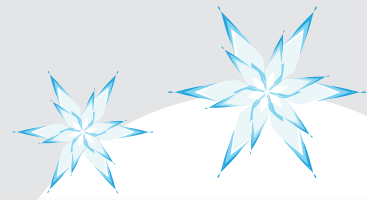
Winter Retreat 2005



When the weather is cold and students are on winter break, what better way to spend a few days than to participate in UNIBUDS's winter retreat? Generally held in July, members were at Sunnataram Forest Monastery in Bundanoon this year. While it proved to be a bit wet, everybody persevered in their pursuit of the knowledge and practice of Dhamma. Other activities included yoga, tai chi and bush walk.



Winter Retreat (Past Years)



Strolling down memory lane...While the faces may be different, the setting remains the same as members year after year continue to attend the winter retreat organised by UNIBUDS. In addition to listening to Dhamma talks and learning how to meditate, it is always important to supplement the journey with other essential parts of life to relax the body and mind.



1994



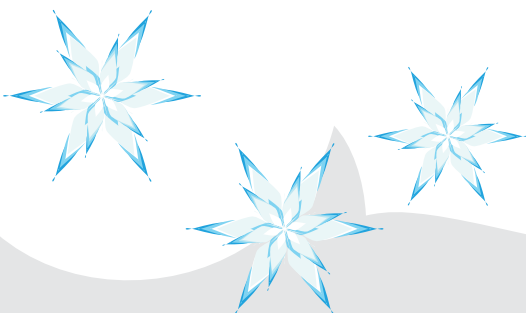
1992



1989



1990



Bodhi Nite 2005

Bodhi Nite is the annual celebration of UNIBUDS's birthday. It is usually held in late August each year in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium and marks the growth of the society year by year. In 2005, the event was sold out and the auditorium was packed to the brim with guests from Sydney as well as from overseas. We were very lucky to have both our patrons, Venerable Tsang Hui and Venerable Chao Khun Samai, as well as our founding President, Dr. LIM Ching Liang who came all the way from Malaysia with his family to attend this auspicious occasion.



Bodhi Nite 2005

In addition, we were also very lucky to invite other senior members as well as some earlier Presidents from the past 25 years to this memorable event which marked UNIBUDS's 25th anniversary. As each previous President held a lotus candle in their palms, the passing of light from the patrons down the line of these leaders symbolised the passing down of the light of wisdom, the Buddha's teachings, from each generation to the next. Other members were also acknowledged for their contributions with awards, which were kindly presented by our patrons. Last but not least, everybody certainly remembered to have fun that night!



Bodhi Nite (Past Years)

Strolling down memory lane...

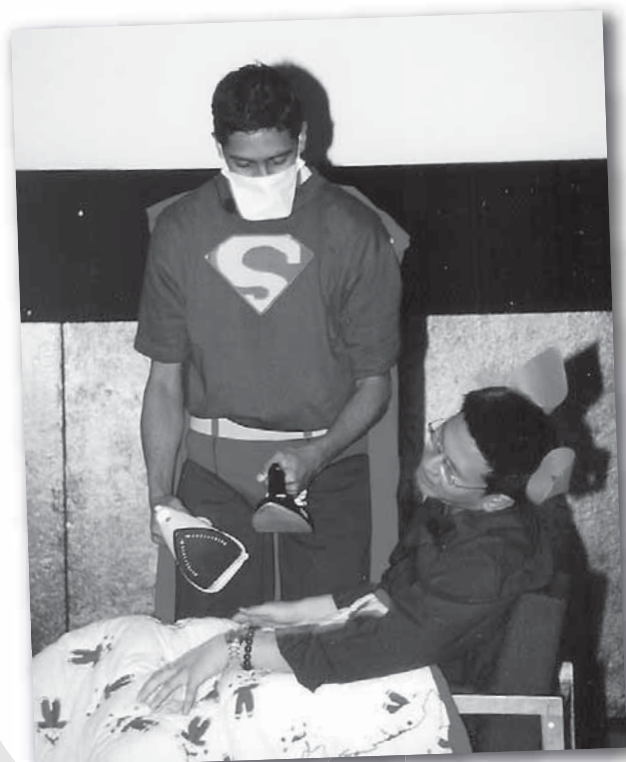
For at least 10 years, UNIBUDS has been holding their annual Bodhi Nite in the Sir John Clancy Auditorium. And every year, the program consists of exciting sketches, awe-inspiring multimedia animations and heart lifting choir performances. These are all the fruits of the hard labour and creative efforts of UNIBUDS members, who come together to combine their individual talents and strengths, and more importantly their faith and bond in friendship, to come up with such wonderful performances.



2003



2001



2000



Bodhi Nite (Past Years)

Prior to the mid 1990's, Bodhi Nite used to be known as Buddhists' Nite. While it used to be held in a smaller scale, the imagination and creativity of the members then were no less artistic! The dedication and enthusiasm was ever just as strong, hence it is no wonder the society has grown from strength to strength over all these years.



1999



1995



1992



1987



1981

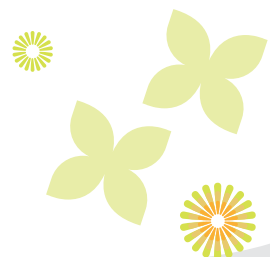
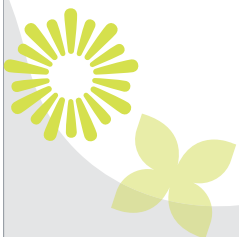
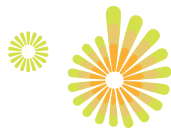


1988

Annual General Meeting 2005



The Annual General Meeting held in October every year marks the transition from one executive committee term to the next. Held by election, ordinary members of the society have the right to vote for their future leaders. The outgoing President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer also give their respective reports of the year. Our patrons are in attendance to share their words of wisdom and give their blessings.



AGM (Past Years)

Strolling down memory lane...

While it has not been necessarily easy to find suitable candidates to fill positions in the executive committee, over the years UNIBUDS has been blessed with people of high calibre and true spirit. As the society has grown from strength to strength, may we all continue to shine the light of Dhamma together and progress on the Middle Path, to learn and to serve.



1994



1989



1984



1982



1987

Cook of The Year



The Dhamma is actually a way of life, and as such can be expressed in various methods. One of the more delicious means of expression is through food. Every year, the Cook of the Year friendly contest is held for members to match wits and come up with the most creative and tasty dishes! As can be seen from photos of the past, delicious home-cooked food has always been a big medium to bring people together in the society.



2001



2000



1994



1984

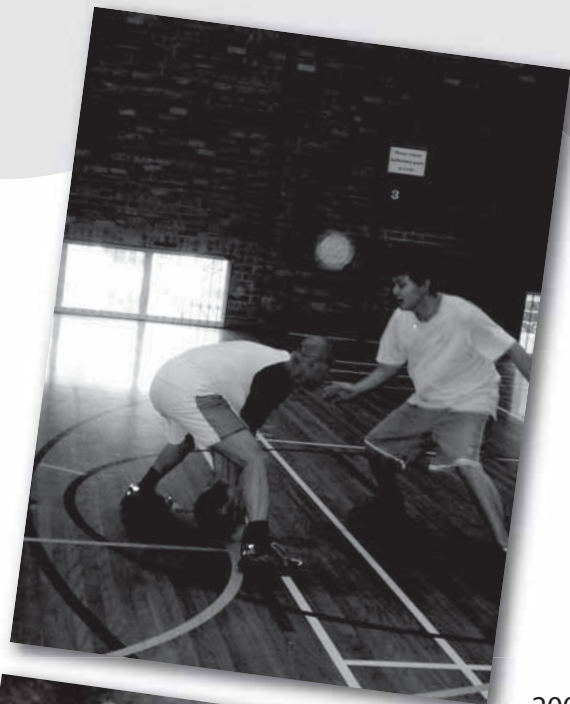


2005



Sports Session

Exercise is healthy not only for the body, but also for the mind. On Sundays, UNIBUDS members gather at the Unigym to play sports together such as badminton and basketball, which is usually followed by good food in the spirit of UNIBUDS. In the past years, we even organised tournaments and had our own cheerleading team! What fun!



2005



1992



1989



1986



Summer Retreat 2005

Summer retreats are generally held in early December each year at one of our patrons' monasteries. This year, it was held at Hwa Tsang Monastery under the guidance of Venerable Tsang Hui and Venerable Neng Rong. The members spent two nights and three days there and learned how to meditate, practise mindfulness and also listened to Dhamma talks. As always, friendships grew and everybody strengthened their knowledge and practice of the Buddha's teachings.



Summer Retreat (Past Years)

Strolling down memory lane...

Over the past years, UNIBUDS has held summer retreats at various monasteries, including Wat Pa Buddharangsee in Leumeah and Sunnataram Forest Monastery in Bundanoon. Every summer, members get together in a peaceful and conducive environment to learn the Dhamma from a member of the Sangha. In addition, members also engage in other activities such as bush walks to enjoy the natural beauty of Mother Nature.



2001



1991



1985



2000

25th UNIBUDS Executive Committee

Friendly messages for all...

Top (Left to Right):
Nicholas Yaw, Roy Ng, Shie Haur Tan, Wilsen Lius Lau.

Bottom (Left to Right):
Puay Yeong Teh, Arifiana Koeshendro, Desy Juliaty,
Vickey Chen, Adeline Sugianto, Erlin Singgih, Milani Ho.

Vickey Chen - External Vice President

Another meaningful year has gone...

More things to look forward to in the next year...

This year had been a great year: to have the chance to meet new people and walk the path of the Dhamma together. Truly grateful for the opportunity to work with a team of wonderful people, and am proud to be a part of it. Without you, there would not be me. May we all continue our journey of life with the guidance of the Dhamma.

Arifiana "Vivi" Koeshendro - Internal Vice President

Dearest UNIBUDS members.. :) One year of Exco term has gone by in a wink of an eye.. It's been a great year for UNIBUDS as well as for me. I've met beautiful people, gained new friendships, shared wonderful experiences.. I could say many unforgettable memories remain within me. Time flies so quickly and that sometimes we don't even know what we've got until they're gone. So I'd love to remind you guys that no matter how hard.. how busy your life is.. take time to realise how fortunate you are on what you've had so far and to be who you are today. Let's treasure and cherish everything we have, those people around us.. and every moment spent in our life. Thank you all.. because without you, there wouldn't be me :)

May the Triple Gem always be close to your heart..



Source: UNIBUDS

Adeline Sugianto - Honorary Secretary

To me, this Exco term was a year full of experience I should appreciate that it taught me to learn and to serve with sincerity and selflessness. Thank you each and everyone of you for the wonderful friendship and support that granted me strength and courage to pass through a lot of things I had never encountered before. Life is a book of another long story. Yet, it will still be interesting if we cherish every moment reading each of the pages and most importantly understanding what the book is trying to say. May the Triple Gem always be close to our heart and guide us along the progress of learning.

Nicholas Yaw - Honorary Treasurer

Time flies and it is indeed true for my one year experience being part of the 25th Unibuds Exco. Recalling 3 years back, I was still a newbie with little knowledge of Buddhism and only came to know Unibuds through the annual Bodhi Nite. The theme for that year was Everchanging Moments and I left the show feeling inspired to learn more about Unibuds. Ever since then I'm very thankful to have the chance to learn the Dhamma while in University: something that was totally unexpected. Besides that, the friendships made throughout the years have also made this experience meaningful. Like this year's beautiful Bodhi Nite theme, "rain falls, wind blows and plant blooms" I have learnt an invaluable lesson that everything in life is related and dependent on each element, whether big or small. There are various causes and conditions that can bring happiness or sadness in life. The chance to learn the Dhamma is indeed priceless and joining Unibuds on a personal level has been a wonderful experience in my university days. Finally to my fellow ExcOs, working together amidst minor storms along our journey I'm glad we still say goodbye on a high note. It has been a real pleasure. May everyone be well and happy.

Erlin Singgih - General Secretary

Year 2004-2005 is indeed another amazing year. I learned so much being a general secretary; what an amazing journey to be part of the 25th UNIBUDS Executive Committee. I am so grateful to have the opportunity in the first place. You guys are indeed my 2nd family, my lovely UNIBUDS Family. I learned tremendously, not only learning how to cooperate in such a B.E.A.U-tiful society with its amazingly passionate excos and members, but most of all, I learned so much about the true meaning of friendship and life in the Dhamma. I would like to thank everyone, all the members who have been so supportive to UNIBUDS, ~coz without you there wouldn't be me~ (UNIBUDS) Special thanks to the nicest and lovely librarians for the semesters. =) May we all keep progressing and always be guided in the Dhamma...

Milani Ho - Activities Director

Being part of the Exco and UNIBUDS family has been a long and satisfactory journey so far. Acting as an Exco is a privilege and the responsibility involved has forced me to become more aware of how to practise the Dhamma better. I have also met many members throughout the years and the experience made me realise just how much the society depends on their support and effort in spreading the Dhamma. All the experiences and guidance I have received throughout these times will not be forgotten. May all beings be well and happy, sadhu sadhu sadhu...

Wilsen Lius Lau - English Dhamma Talk Co-ordinator

Ohh UNIBUDS... The successes we had in Bodhi Nite, retreats, and all other events were very uplifting, it was indeed a great year for all of us. These would not have happened without the supports and contributions from everyone. The moments that we shared and experienced together in learning the Dhamma and having fun had been wonderful and remarkable, and I had learnt to cherish and appreciate all these opportunities and supports that were given to me throughout the year.

With all sincerity, I would like to thank everyone and hope that we will continue to work together for the benefits of everyone. GO UNIBUDS and may the Dhamma flow in the heart of all.

Shie Haur Tan - Chinese Dhamma Talk Co-ordinator

It has been a great experience working with all fellow ExcOs and working as Chinese Dhamma Talk Coordinator. I have learnt a lot about Dhamma in this period of time, and more importantly, I have been given the chance to practise this Dhamma with my fellow ExcOs and members. For me, the highlight of this year was the Bodhi Nite. It was the greatest experience I have ever had on stage and off stage –on stage, it was a great performance experience, and off stage, working with all the talented people and coordinating the whole choir was just a fabulous experience. Although in hindsight, there are many things that I could have done better, but we all learn from experience, so please forgive me if I have done anything inappropriate.

Finally, let's grow and grow and grow (not the waistline though) together in the Dhamma path. Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu!

Roy Ng - SACCA Editor

Dearest members!

Another year has come and gone, with it many grievances, heartache and stress! But those were what made the memories of laughter and good times the more sweeter! I can't sum up all the experiences I have in a paragraph without losing its meaning, but in the words of the *Dhammapada*: The thought manifests as the word; The word manifests as the deed; The deed develops into habit; And habit hardens into character; So watch the thought and its ways with care, And let it spring from love born out of concern for all beings... As the shadow follows the body, As we think, so we become.

Puay Yeong Teh - Annual Magazine Editor

Being a part of this special society and learning to serve others while not forgetting to serve myself has been an eye-opening experience. To have all our efforts culminating in this annual magazine now, looking through the photos again and letting each word touch a chord in my heart, I cannot help but feel a smile touch my lips as I dwell on each moment. Each person, each event, each minute... they have all helped shape who and what I am now and will be in the future. And I am grateful, for the gift of Dhamma is truly a precious one. I give thanks to the Lord Buddha and members of the Sangha who have shared so many teachings with us. May all continue to progress on the Middle Path, and be happy always.

Blessed are those who receive the gift of Dhamma, greater are those who give it.

Nicholas Lavery - Meditation Session Co-ordinator

Editor's Note: Nicholas officially resigned from the Executive Committee and ordained as a monk in July 2005. As such, his message and photo has not been included here. However I am sure he sends his good wishes to all and it was a pleasure for him to organise the activities for the members.

Top (Left to Right):
Nicholas Yaw, Roy Ng, Shie Haur Tan, Wilsen Lius Lau.

Bottom (Left to Right):
Milani Ho, Puay Yeong Teh, Arifiana Koeshendro, Desy Juliaty, Vickey Chen, Erlin Singgih, Adeline Sugianto.



Illustration: Yu Ang Tan

List of Members

HONORARY

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

OVERSEAS

	Wijoyo
CHU	Carlton
PAN	Stephanie Jia Wen
TJIN	Steffen Chandra

ASSOCIATE

ANTOFAT	Diana
CHANG	Sean
CHENG	Teddy
CHIEW	Eugene
CHIN	Shih Cheng
GAY	Sue
HO	Meisy
HO	Milani
HO	Milia
JOENG	Shanty Julius
KEE	Kevin Su Yen
KUSUMA	Henny
LOH	Denissa Hong Yin
MURNIADI	Erwin
NG	Marie Fen Fen
NG	Roy Thuan Cheong
OEI	Alimin Bijosono
ONG	Joksin
SUNG	Jovin Soo Geat
TAHARUDIN	Christine

TAY	Kim Wei
TEH	Min Fuh
TEH	Puay Yeong
TENG	Wai Koon
TRAN	Jo
TRIONO	Mely
WONG	Ching Khen
YEP	Kah Heng
YONG	Kathy S. W.
ZHANG	Timathy Xun
ZHANG	Zhao

ORDINARY

	Mariati
ANG	Eng Leong
ANG	Jessica
ARUL ADAM	Patrick
BAKER	Rachel
BEK	Emily
BENTLEY	Chris
BOJANOVIC	Boris
BUDLEVSKIS	Alexander
CAMPBELL	Caroline
CHAN	Ming Tak
CHEAH	Yiling
CHEN	Lily Ju Yi
CHEN	Vickey Wei Chee
CHOW	Vivien
DISANAYAKE	Nishan
EDWARDS	Leon Stephen
EDWARDS	Katie
ERITA	Eri
FARRELL	Charlotte
FOO	Kai Kiat
FRISCH	Yael
GU	Dong Yun
GUO	Jin
GUO	Julia
HE	Teresa
HAN	Minli
HONG	Jayky
HONG	Therese Karolyn
HONG	Yen Yee
HUYNH	Tea-Mi
JACOBS	Nathan

JOENG	Lucky Julius
JOKO	Yelly
KARUNARATHNA	Jeewantha
KOESHENDRO	Arifiana
KOH	Desy Juliaty
KOH	Devy Susany
KU	Yan Tzu
KUAH	Alex
KUOK	Cheng Man
KWAN	Wing Hien
LAU	Chee Kong
LAU	Wilsen Lius
LE	Chau
LEE	Hai Lin
LEE	Janette Jia Huoy
LIANG	Disu
LIE	Erwin
LIE	Litania
LIM	Rosiana
LIM	Wee Han
LIM	Zhi Jun
LIN	Dean
LU	Ling
MA	Thomas
MAK	Davy
MENDIS	Roshan
MOK	Billy
MYAT	Darli Theint
NAM	Shania
NG	Dixon
NG	Tina
NGUYEN	Nguoc Hong An
NGUYEN	Viet Cuong
NOVIANTI	Tanty
NYO	Yupar
ONG	Adelene
ONG	Evelyn
OO	Myat Khine
PANG	Yan Xue
PETERSON	Zoe
PHAN	Phuong
PHOUMMATHEP	Vincent Kusorn
PONGPRAKYUN	Suwannee
PURWATI	Cecilia Kartikadewi
PUTRA	Iwan Budiman
PYAE	Samuel
QUAH	Boon Guo

RANDALL	Thomas
SANTOSO	Agus
SANTOSO	Elisa
SCHMUTTERMEIER	Laura
SINGGIH	Erlin
SINTRA	Elmung
SO	Francis
SONG	Zhihang
SOONG	Looi Sing
STAMELL	Kiruna
SUGIANTO	Adeline
SUGITO	Mia
TAN	Evelyn Hong Lin
TAN	Kean Beng
TAN	Olivia
TAN	Shie Haur
TAN	Yu Ang
TANGSILSAT	Supatchara
TEH	Ming De
TING	Mabel
TJANDRA	Cindy
TRAN	Cindy
TRANG	Anne
TRIONO	Mely
TUNG	Man Kit
UI	Harris
VOEVODA	Alex
WAKAS	Yenny
WANG	Yuan Yoing
WHITE	Abbie
WIJAYA NG	Chandra
WONG	Johnson
WONG	Kathy
WONG	Kelly
WONG	Paul Shek Kung
WU	Hai Feng
YAW	Nicholas
YEE	Roslyn
YOGISAPUTRA	Eric
YU	Aurora
YUE	Yue
ZHANG	Yi
ZHANG	Jing
ZHU	Amy

Spiritual References

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President	(Non-sectarian)	Charles Sturt University Mitchell Buddhist Group (MBG) c/o Mitchell Association of Student Councils CSU LPO P. O. Box C227 Bathurst NSW 2795 Ph 0414 392 426, Fax (02) 6338 4576

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-	(Library)	Buddhist Library and Meditation Centre 90 Church St, Camperdown NSW 2050 Ph (02) 9519 6054 Fax (02) 9519 3402

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Ven Tejadhammo	(Theravada)	Association of Engaged Buddhists (see also Sangha Lodge) 20 Victoria St, Lewisham NSW 2049 Ph/Fax (02) 9590 3617
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Geshe-la Ngawang Gedun	(Vajrayana)	Australian Tibetan Buddhist Centre PO Box 1011, Murwillumbah NSW 2483 Ph (02) 6680 5788 or (07) 55352534
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-	(Theravada)	Bodhikusuma - Buddhist Meditation Centre 133 Regent St, Chippendale, NSW 2008 (P.O. Box 258, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012) Ph (02) 9310 1103 Fax (02) 9310 2269
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-	(Mahayana)	Buddhist Bliss Voice Mission of Australia P. O. Box 101 Merrylands NSW 2160 Ph (02) 9637 3172
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Ven Sik Heng Yun	(Chinese Mahayana)	Chinese Buddhist Association of NSW (see also Ding Hui Temple) Lot 1-2, 197 Forest Rd, Wingello NSW 2579 Ph (02) 4884 4208
-	(Vietnamese Mahayana)	Chung Duc Thien Duong Association 56 Hughes St, Cabramatta NSW 2166 Ph (02) 9726 0748
-	(All traditions)	Coffs Harbour Buddhist Group 189 Mastons Rd, Karangi NSW 2450 Ph(02) 6653 8350
Ven Thich Bao Lac	(Pure Land Mahayana)	Da Bao Monastery (United Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation of Australia) 191 O'Hares Rd, Wedderburn NSW 2560 Ph (02) 9610 5452

Ven Master Sheng Yen	(Zen)	Dharma Drum Mountain (Sydney) 413-425, Beamish Street, Campsie NSW 2194 Mob 0413 185 603 (Agnes), Fax (02) 9283 3168
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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 have been adopted from two different sources namely *Buddhist Dictionary* (Nyanatiloka) and *Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism* (Sutra Translation Committee of the US and Canada). 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

ch – Chinese

tib – Tibetan

Abhidhamma (*pl*) One of the three baskets in the *Tipitaka*. It is largely a commentary on the sermons or suttas, and subjects them to analysis. *Abhidharma* (*skt*)

Alaya (*skt*) Human beings have six sense organs – the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. They each represent a consciousness of their own, but in addition there is the seventh and eighth consciousness. While the first six consciousnesses may momentarily stop functioning during a coma, for example, we would continue to have body heat, blood circulation and digestive system still at work. These functions are controlled by the seventh consciousness – the *Manas* consciousness. It serves primarily to sustain and renew life by acting as the sower of seeds on the eighth consciousness - the *Alaya* consciousness. This eighth consciousness acts like a storage house that contains all our kammic traces and underlies all experiences of individual life.

Anatta (*pl*) See *Non-self* (*eng*) *Anatman* (*skt*)

Arahat (*pl*) Holy one; liberated being; one who has destroyed all his mental impurities. *Arhat* (*skt*)

Bhanaka (*pl*) A person who mastered the skill to memorise long passages and have the ability to recite these passages from memory.

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.

Bodhicitta (*skt*) The spirit of Enlightenment, the aspiration to achieve it; the mind set on Enlightenment. It involves two parallel aspects: the determination to achieve Buddhahood and the aspiration to rescue all beings. *Bodhi Mind* (*eng*)

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

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*)

Buddha (*pl/skt*) A Supremely Enlightened One, Awakened One. The term Buddha generally refers to the historical Buddha Sakyamuni who lived in India more than 2500 years ago and founded Buddhism. 'Buddhas' naturally refers to all Enlightened Beings.

Buddha-nature (*eng*) According to the view of one of the Mahayana schools, Buddha-nature is the true, immutable and eternal nature of all beings. Since all beings possess Buddha-nature, it is possible for them to attain Enlightenment and become a Buddha, regardless of the level of existence they occupy. *Tathagata-Garbha* (*skt*)

Glossary

Dalai Lama (*tib*) The word 'Dalai' means 'great ocean' in Mongolian, and was a title granted to the third Grand Lama of the Gelugpa School in 1587 by Gusri Khan, a Mongol prince. There have been 14 Dalai Lamas; the current 14th Dalai Lama is "HH the XIVth", Gyalwa Tenzin Gyatso.

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*)

Deva (*pl/skt*) A divinity or god; a heavenly being. Devas, including Hindu gods, are believed to inhabit the heavens above the human realm, but are still unenlightened, bound to *Samsara* and subject to birth and death.

Dhamma (*pl*) This word has several meanings: (a) The teachings of the Buddhas (generally capitalised in English); (b) Law, doctrine; (c) Things, events, phenomena. *Dharma* (*skt*)

Dhammapada (*pl/skt*) The most famous scripture in the Pali Canon, this *sutta* exists in two versions; i.e. the Theravada and the Mahayana. The many translations of the Dhammapada has given it worldwide popularity, representing for Buddhism what the Tao Te Ching is for Taoism.

Dukkha (*pl/skt*) Suffering; unsatisfactoriness. One of the three basic characteristics of existence and the first Noble Truth. The term *dukkha* is not limited to painful experience, but refers to the unsatisfactory nature and the general insecurity of all conditioned phenomena, which, on account of their impermanence, are all liable to suffering; and this includes also pleasurable experience.

Emptiness (*eng*) The concept that entities have no fixed or independent nature. This idea is closely linked to that of dependent origination. *Sunnata* (*pl*) *Sunyata* (*skt*)

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

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 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*)

Four Stages of Liberation (*eng*) These are the four stages of Enlightenment in the Theravada tradition, namely the stages of (1) stream-enterer, *sotapanna* (*pl*), *srotapanna* (*skt*) (2) once-returner, *sakadagami* (*pl*) (3) non-returner, *anagami* (*pl*), *anagamin* (*skt*) (4) the holy one, *arahat* (*pl*), *arhat* (*skt*).

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*)

Kuan Yin (*ch*) The *Bodhisatta* of Compassion. Also known as the 'Goddess of Mercy' in China and 'she who hears the cries of the world'. Kuan Yin is one of the Three Pure Land Sages and is generally represented in the feminine form especially in East Asia. *Avalokitesvara* (*pl/skt*) *Chenrezi* (*tib*)

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

Mahayana (*pl/skt*) The Great Vehicle tradition. Mahayana is one of the main traditions of Buddhism, and expounds on the *Bodhisatta* practice as the means towards Enlightenment of both oneself and others.

Mantra (*skt*) Incantation. Literally, 'uniting and holding', i.e. uniting all Dhammas and holding all meanings. A mantra is a formula said to protect one who recites it and to benefit him by virtue of its mystic power. Mantras are recited in Sanskrit and sometimes have no literal meaning. They are especially valued in esoteric Buddhism.

Metta (*pl*) See *Loving-kindness* (*eng*) *Maitri* (*skt*)

Middle Path (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*)

Mudra (*skt*) Literally, 'seal, sign'. Ritual gestures of the hands used in symbolic magic, especially in the esoteric schools. They are used in conjunction with mantras as aids to meditation. Buddha images are found in a variety of mudra positions.

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*) *Anatman* (*skt*)

Pali (*pl*) The canonical language of Ceylonese Buddhists, believed to be very similar to the colloquial language spoken by Sakyamuni Buddha, in which the canonical texts of the Theravada are composed.

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*)

Parami (*pl*) Perfections. The stages of spiritual perfection followed by the *Bodhisatta* in his progress to Buddhahood. In the Theravada ten qualities are given: (1) Perfection in Giving, (2) Morality, (3) Renunciation, (4) Wisdom, (5) Energy, (6) Patience or Forbearance, (7) Truthfulness, (8) Resolution, (9) Loving-kindness, (10) Equanimity. In the Mahayana scriptures, a partly differing list of six is given: (1) Liberality, (2) Morality, (3) Patience, (4) Energy, (5) Meditation, (6) Wisdom. *Paramita* (*skt*)

Parinibbana (*pl*) Translated as 'perfect quietude'. This term originally had the same meaning as *Nibbana* (*Nirvana*) and referred to the stage in which all illusion had been eliminated. It is commonly used to indicate the passing away of the physical body of a Buddha. *Parinirvana* (*skt*)

Paticca samuppada (*pl*) See *Dependent Origination* (*eng*) *Pratitya samutpada* (*skt*)

Ratana Sutta (*pl*) The Buddha's Discourse of the Jewels.

Relics (*eng*) The cremated remains of Enlightened Beings.

Sacca (*pl*) Literally, 'truth'.

Samadhi (*pl/skt*) 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.

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.

Sangha (*pl/skt*) Literally, 'congregation'. The monastic order founded by the Buddha, the members of which are called Bhikkhus (males) or Bhikkhunis (females). Sangha is the third of the Three Jewels (Triple Gem) of Buddhism, i.e. the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

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. *Shila* (*skt*)

Sravaka (*skt*) Literally, 'hearer'. One who has heard the Buddha's teaching. In Mahayana Buddhism, *sravaka* generally refers to a person in the Theravada school. *Sravaka* is also translated as 'disciple'.

Stupa (*skt*) A Buddhist monument, generally of a dome-shaped form, originally erected over sacred relics of the Buddha and at places consecrated as the scenes of his acts. In East Asia, the stupa developed into the tower-like pagoda, in which are enshrined various objects sacred to Buddhism.

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*)

Tathagata-Garbha (*skt*) See *Buddha-nature* (*eng*)

Theravada (*pl*) Literally, 'teaching of the elders'. The teachings of the Buddha, in the form in which they have been preserved in the countries of south Asia (Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia). Generally recognised as the oldest form of the teachings. Sometimes called Southern Buddhism or Pali Buddhism.

Therigatha (*skt*) A collection of verses attributed to 'senior' (*theri*) nuns of the same period. It forms part of the *Khuddaka-Nikaya*, which is part of the *sutta-pitaka* in the *Tipitaka*.

Tipitaka (*pl*) Literally, 'three baskets'. The three parts of the *Tipitaka* are the *Vinaya Pitaka* (Code of Ethics), *Suttanta Pitaka* (Discourses of the Buddha) and *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (Buddhist Philosophy). *Tripitaka* (*skt*)

Triple Gem (*eng*) The Three Jewels or Three Gems, which by all Buddhists are revered as the most venerable things, are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Holy Sangha. *Tiratana* (*pl*)

Vajrayana (*skt*) Tibetan Buddhism. Also called Tantric Buddhism and Lamaism. Found principally in Tibet, also now Mongolia, India and parts of China. It is hierarchical and presided over by the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama.

Vinaya (*pl/skt*) The body of ethical rules and disciplines for Buddhist monks and laypersons prescribed by the Buddha.

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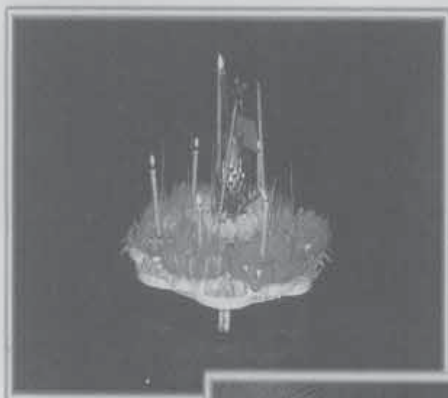
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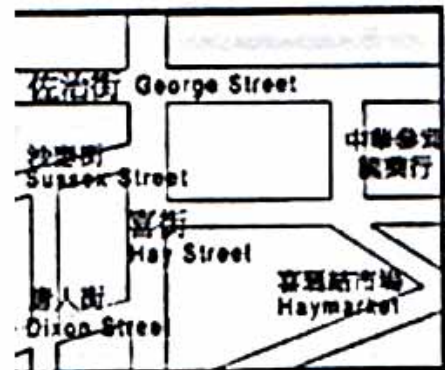
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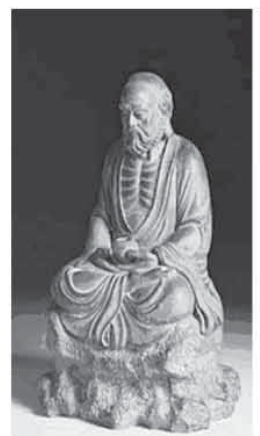


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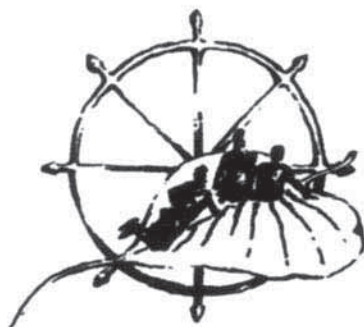


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