

Wisdom with a Heart

*Mindfulness: Right here,
Right now*



UNIBUDS **30th** Annual Magazine
31st  2010 | 2011

Theme Introduction



Wisdom and Compassion; Wisdom with a Heart

Wisdom, also known as paññā in Pali, represents the realisation of the true nature of all things. With the faculty of wisdom, the Buddha perceived that everything in this physical world is marked by three characteristics (three marks of existence), namely impermanence (anicca), suffering (Dukkha) and non-self (anatta). The full understanding of these three can bring an end to suffering. As a matter of fact, wisdom is based on direct realisation and understanding of Buddha's teachings such as the Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Paths and Twelve Links of Dependent Origination. However, true wisdom is only attained by understanding and experiencing all these teachings rather than believing in it blindly.

Compassion, on the other hand came from the Pali term karuna, which meant relieving one from suffering. Just as wisdom covers the intellectual or comprehending side of our nature, compassion covers the emotional or feeling side of our nature. When we see someone in distress and we feel their pain as if it were our own, and strive to eliminate or lessen their pain, then this is compassion. It is the loving nature of human to relieve all beings from suffering that constitutes compassion and is often found together with metta or loving kindness. Therefore, all the good qualities in human being such as sharing, sympathy, concern and caring are manifestations of compassion. In fact, Prince Siddharta left the palace in search of the truth out of his compassion for all sentient beings.

In Buddhism, both wisdom and compassion are the key elements to its practice. Attainment of wisdom allows oneself to realise and understand the truth of all things while cultivation of compassion guides oneself in the practice. As Buddhism preaches the middle path, wisdom and compassion must come hand in hand. They are nothing but two sides of the same coin, the very essence of an enlightened life. Without compassion, wisdom degenerates into an escapist entanglement in concepts, theories and dogmas; without wisdom, compassion lacks the detachment essential to perspective and constructive support. Imagine if we are a lost ship, wisdom is the navigator that provides the direction to sail through the stormy ocean of suffering while compassion is the engine that provides the thrust to move the ship forward. Therefore, one cannot exist without another as true wisdom cannot be attained without compassion. Compassion helps in perfecting wisdom and true compassion comes from understanding non-self and non-attachment. Only without a self one can have the loving nature for all beings. With proper balance, wisdom and compassion suggest endless possibilities to remove unwholesome thoughts and actions, to reducing suffering and to finally to attain enlightenment.

Mindfulness; Right Here, Right Now

Mindfulness can be found in many Buddha's core teachings where clearly it is one of the important aspects and factors that lead to liberation. Mindfulness is the first step of the factors to enlightenment, it encompasses the four foundations of mindfulness, one of the five faculties and powers, and one of the eightfold path. The notion of mindfulness has become increasingly popular in this modern age. There are many definitions given in the new age on mindfulness, the word has been stretched to its possible uses. Notably, it can be applied in many parts of our practices. Mindfulness is the English translation of the Pali word Sati. Sati is an activity. The Pali term Sati also bears the connotation of remembering. It is not memory in the sense of ideas and pictures from the past, but rather clear, direct, wordless knowing of what is and what is not, of what is correct and what is incorrect, of what we are doing and how we should go about it.

This Annual Magazine aims to discover and explore how we can find a balance between wisdom and compassion. As well, understand the essence of living in the present moment through mindfulness. By having the mindfulness in mind, we can practice wisdom and compassion in our everyday life and may that bring happiness and contentment in our life.





Editors' Note

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your interest to read this annual Magazine. Whoever you may be, we wish you well and happiness. This is a special two terms combined annual magazine for 30th and 31st UNIBUDS, due to unforeseen circumstances, causes and conditions, it took much longer than we expected to produce this precious magazine. And it is finally been produced by a group of enthusiastic members.

What have been started have to be accomplish. Even though we encountered many obstacles and difficulties, these do not stop us from making great efforts to produce this magazine. We wish you would treasure the dhamma insights and articles in this magazine.

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

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

We sincerely thank all who have contributed to make this magazine possible. In turning each page, we hope that you would gain more insight and find inspiration to live each day with more wisdom, compassion and clarity.

Editors Team

Acknowledgements

Note: Where appropriate, names are listed in alphabetical order according to the last name.

Editors Team

Kia Sheng Chew, Kai Yi Giam, Den Neil Ooi & Su Sian Teh

Layout Designer

Nee Shuang Heng

Cover Illustration

Shi Ying Ooi

Photo Section Layout

Nee Shuang Heng & Den Neil Ooi

Editorial team/ Transcription

Bing Sen Koh, Khai Yi Ng, Den Neil Ooi, Su Sian Teh & Kelly Wong

Editorial team/ Contribution

Joffre Balce, April Cheah, Vickey Chen, Bing Sen Koh, Aggie Lawer, Rosiana Lim, Zen Low, Adeline Lukmantara, Tina Ng, Dr Keith Ong, Pojdanai Sukijjakhamin, Xian Hui Tan, Ming De Teh & Su Sian Teh

Editorial team/ Editing

Wei Yin Chen, Kia Sheng Chew, Allen Kha, Rosiana Lim, Den Neil Ooi, Win Sum Siew, Pojdanai Sukijjakhamin, Ming De Teh and Su Sian Teh

Editorial Illustration

Nee Shuang Heng, Den Neil Ooi & Su Sian Teh

Photo Contributors

Bernard Chen, Kai Yi Giam, Lucky Jeong, Cheng Hiang Lee, Eric Lam, Den Neil Ooi & Ming De Teh

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UNSW Buddhist Society (UNIBUDS)

Religious Centre

University of New South Wales

www.unibuds.unsw.edu.au





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Patron's Message

Wisdom and Compassion



by Venerable Tsang Hui

"Compassion is the root of Buddhism" and "wisdom is the distinctive characteristic of Buddhism". These statements highlight the importance of wisdom and compassion in Buddhism.

When the Buddha realised the truth of life and universe under the Bodhi tree, he broke through darkness and ignorance, and his wisdom brought brightness to the world. With great compassion, he skilfully expounded the profound teachings that he had realised to us, with the hope that we could also one day attain liberation and freedom. Without the Buddha's compassion, there will be no Dhamma for us today. We should always remember the gratitude of the Buddha for his great wisdom and compassion. Thus, while we are trying to learn the Buddha's teaching, we should bear in mind the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. In this way, we are learning from the Buddha. By doing so, then it is possible for us to attain perfection in wisdom and meritorious virtues like the Buddha in the future.

The cultivation of meritorious virtues relies on our mind of compassion. By practising giving, upholding precepts, tolerance with a mind of loving kindness and compassion, we create good affinity with others, and help others to relieve from suffering and gain happiness. It also helps to overcome our stinginess, greed, jealousy, hatred and selfishness. These wholesome acts bring us merits. However, to ensure perfection of our wholesome deeds, we require the guidance of wisdom. We need to regularly listen to and reflect on the Dhamma, practice meditation and contemplate on the teachings of impermanence, selflessness, dependent origination and emptiness with

a mind that is focused and concentrated, hence develop real wisdom. It is with the guidance of wisdom of selflessness that our wholesome deeds can be pure. And it is by putting wisdom and compassion into real practice hand in hand as such that our wisdom and compassion can gradually attain perfection. Of course, in order to fulfil this practice, we must always be diligent, reminding ourselves to reflect on the teachings of the Buddha and to be caring and kind to others.

Due to the limitation of our wisdom, we generally are not completely pure in our wholesome deeds. We are unable to see the truth of ourselves and we have a very strong self-centredness. Everything we do come from our self-perspective. Thus, wholesome deeds that we do are always lop-sided. It is difficult to be completely fair and non-self-inclined. To overcome this, there are two practices we can try:

To put ourselves in others' position and share the feelings of others. This can help to reduce our self-centredness and strengthen our loving kindness and compassion to others.

To contemplate on the teaching of Dependent Origination.

We should reflect on the Law of Dependent Origination and understand that everything in the world arises due to the coming together of causes and conditions. Everything is interdependent on one and another, including our life. Thus, we should appreciate the kindness of others, develop a mind that is modest, kind and caring, and be willing to help others.



In addition, we should contemplate on our own body and mind, and realise that this body and mind is also dependent originated. There is no permanent "self" or "I" that can be found.

Furthermore, all phenomena are also as such, they are also dependent originated and have no permanent self-identity. Everything is empty in nature. With this realisation, we attain the state of equanimity and non-attachment. There is no discrimination between "I" and "you". Great loving kindness and compassion that develop from this state of equanimity and non-self is the real integration and manifestation of wisdom and compassion.

The Buddha's wisdom and compassion brought us brightness and warmth. A person with wisdom but without compassion tends to fall into the trap of practising for self-benefit. A person with compassion without wisdom tends to get caught in afflictions. Both these practices are not ideal practices for the Buddha's path. Thus, it is hoped that members of Unibuds can remember the example of the Buddha, and be balanced in your cultivation of wisdom and compassion. Those who are interested in studying the Dhamma, please do not forget putting the Dhamma into practice and cultivate your compassion. Those who like to help others and have a good sense of sympathy should also remember the importance of listening, reflecting and contemplating on the teachings of the Buddha. It is by doing so that our faith and confidence in Buddhism can continue to grow, and our cultivation of wisdom and meritorious virtues can enhance day by day.

The continuity and progress of Unibuds requires members with great Bodhi mind, compassion and wisdom. It is hoped that all Unibuds members can develop their Bodhi mind, practice wisdom and compassion, rejoice in the Dhamma and helps Unibuds to grow and flourish. May the righteous Dhamma continue to pervade and prolong on the campus.



“佛法以慈悲為根本”，“智慧為佛法之特色”，此說明慈悲與智慧在佛法的重要性。佛陀在菩提樹下覺悟了宇宙人生的真理，破除了黑暗與無明，其智慧給世間帶來了光明。在大慈悲心的驅使下，佛陀更將他所覺悟的甚深妙法善巧的向眾生闡明，期使眾生亦能得解脫自在。沒有佛陀的慈悲，就沒有我們今天聽到的佛法。佛陀的大慈悲與大智慧是我們永遠感念的。因此，當我們向佛學習時，必須注意慈悲與智慧的培養，唯有如此，我們才是真正的學佛，最後也才可能達到像佛一樣的福慧圓滿。

福德培養有賴我們的慈悲心。以慈悲心行布

施、持戒、忍辱，廣結善緣，使人離苦得樂，減少自己的慳貪嫉妒瞋恚自私，有助增長我們的福德資糧。然而，要使培福的過程更圓滿，我們必須要有智慧的引導。多聽聞佛法，思惟佛法，修學禪定，在定心中深觀無常無我，緣起性空的道理，啟發真實的智慧。以無我的智慧引導我們的善行，才能使我們的善行得以清淨，也唯有在智慧與慈悲行相輔相成的過程中，才能使我們的慈悲與智慧臻於圓滿。當然，要完成此一修行，我們必須時時提起精進的力量，警策自己憶念佛法，關懷他人。

我們一般人行慈悲難以做得圓滿乃因智慧不足，不能透視自我的真相。我們有一個強烈的我執，處處以自我為出發點，因此所行之善總是有所偏差，不能做到真正的平等無私。要對治這一點，我們可從兩方面下手學習：

一、 自他互易，以己度他情：多設身處地的把自己放在別人的立場來考量問題，體會他人的感受，這樣有助於增長我們的慈悲心，同時減少以自我為中心。

二、 深觀緣起：依緣起法觀察現實人生，了解世間的一切有賴因緣和合而成，都是相依相成，關係性存在的，包括我們的生活。因此，我們要學習感念他人，培養謙虛、慈悲、互助的精神。進一步的我們要觀察自我身心，了解“我”亦是種種因緣條件促合而成，並沒有一個實在的“我”可執著。再者，觀察諸法，了達一切法亦無自性，進而對自他都傾向於平等和同。在無所染著，平等一如的心境中生起同體大悲，這才是真正的慈悲與智慧之融合與流露。

佛陀的智慧與慈悲給我們帶來光明與溫暖。只有智慧沒有慈悲容易偏向獨善，只有慈悲沒有智慧易墮雜染，皆非佛道完備正行。因此，希望慧命社的同學們緊記佛陀的模範，注意慈悲與智慧的平衡發展。喜歡研究佛學者要記得佛法的實踐與慈悲心的培養；歡喜助人同情心強者，亦不能忽略聞思修佛法的重要。如此，才能使我們在學佛的過程中道心日愈鞏固，福慧日漸增長。

慧命社的延續與進步有賴有菩提信願、慈悲心及智慧者的努力。盼慧命社的同學皆發菩提心，悲智雙運，福慧雙修，不但令個人法喜充滿，也使慧命社發揚光大，願正法在校園源遠流長。

導師的話

智慧與慈悲

上藏下慧法師





Patron's Message
Wisdom and Compassion
by Venerable Chao Khun Samai

If there are any virtues that make our Lord Buddha so well respected and honoured by millions of human beings including countless deities in the heaven, those virtues would be his great compassion and his great wisdom. Some people might like to know why in this particular place his great purity has been omitted. The true answer is that a truly compassionate mind cannot take place without purity, or, a truly wise person cannot live without a pure moral conduct.

According to Mahayana school, if anyone has a strong determination to be the Buddha in the future, he has to perfect the six perfections: generosity, morality, patience, effort, meditation and wisdom. Supported by the two great virtues, patience and effort – our Lord Buddha, as a Bodhisatta, has practised his generosity and morality since time immemorial. By being a very kind and generous person, in every life he has gone through, the great majority of living beings gained great benefits from him through his material support and spiritual advice. Many live happily on earth, many take good rebirth in the heaven. When the time comes, when the Buddha-to-be attains enlightenment, they all come together, taking rebirth on earth as his follower and then make effort to free themselves from sufferings.

Generosity and morality or compassion and purity always go hand in hand. People might not know how well-disciplined we are, that our compassion, given to anyone in the form of material gift is easily notified. In some case, it would touch the heart of those who have been given.

It is true to say that Buddhism originates, grows up to its maturity, prospers, and brings happiness to many people because of its great compassion.

It is very inspiring to learn how the great compassion works before and after his enlightenment. Long, long before his enlightenment, life after life beyond anyone can count, so many different kinds of material gifts have been given away for happiness and peace of all living beings. On top of that, he sacrifices his so many lives for the survival of others.

After his enlightenment, his way of giving has been changed to a far better and a lofty gift, the gift of the Dhamma. In the past, he could send them to a happy rebirth either on earth or in the heaven. Now he could send them to Nibbana, freedom from sufferings.

Having so many duties to perform, our Lord Buddha rest only four hours a day. Three hours before the sun rises, he would surveys the whole world - who would get the great benefit from his approach or his teaching and who would need an urgent support. Without this support, a person involved would die in vain, without attaining enlightenment, or would commit a serious crime, having no opportunity to be a better person.

After the sun rises, the Lord Buddha, together with the Sangha would walk calmly for the alms collections. It is the time when the great majority of the people would gain the great benefits. Whoever has faith and confidence, if they just give any kind of food, that giving alone would bring untold benefits. They can secure their happy rebirth



both on earth and in the heaven. Even without anything to give, just an act of faith alone that flows from their heart, their happy life and happy rebirth are naturally secured. On the late morning and early afternoon, there are streams of people coming to listen to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. He always spares his late afternoon for his ordained disciples. When the late night approaches, he spends his time for numerous visiting deities. Every word he said, almost like a treasure falling from his mouth. They honoured it with the good practise and later memorised it and put into palm leaves as a Buddhist scripture.

As for his great wisdom, before his enlightenment, he was able to advise people to avoid evil and do good. He would convince everyone to believe in the law of Kamma, paving the way for a good rebirth in the life after. Only after his enlightenment, the Four Noble Truths have been taught and the Noble Eightfold Paths have been perfectly explained. Now every good person has access to the Middle Path and the door to Nibbana is widely opened. When one has strong foundation of morality, a great effort must be made to develop meditation. Only after good meditation, the knowing mind can be very calm and peaceful and will be able to release itself from the cause of suffering. When we light the candles, we always light two, one represents his great compassion, the other represents his great wisdom. As long as these two virtues exist in the heart of many Buddhists, Buddhism as a good religion would prosper forever.

May all living beings be well and happy.





30th President's Message

by Ian Ch'ng



Dear friends in the Dhamma,

I hope it has been a fruitful and meaningful year for all of you. Let us learn from both the good and bad throughout the past year and welcome the new year with an open heart. First of all, I would like to thank the Annual Magazine editor Kia Sheng Chew and co-editors Den Neil Ooi and Su Sian Teh for their hard work in publishing this edition of the annual magazine.

It has been an eventful year, I am sure you have enjoyed our regular activities such as English and Chinese Dhamma Talks, meditation sessions, Winter and Summer Retreats, Vesak Day Celebration, and Cook of the Year. Besides that, we have organised Amazing Race which is a new and fun way of spreading the Dhamma! But of course, the highlight of the year was Bodhi Nite which was also the 30th anniversary celebration of UNIBUDS.

What is so special about 30 years? 30 years can represent a time line separating 2 generations. My father was the 6th UNIBUDS president in 1986, and now in 2010, I am the 30th president of UNIBUDS. For this significant celebration, we have invited past UNIBUDS presidents and committee members from various countries. Among

them, there were 14 past presidents and many of them came back to Australia from overseas just for this event. This shows that UNIBUDS still means something special to them. Gatherings were organised with our Patrons Venerable Tsang Hui and Venerable Chao Khun Samai, stories and laughter was shared, and tears were shed too. I am truly honoured to be part of all these events, as it made me realise even more that UNIBUDS is a collective effort, for which many people have put in their heart and sweat in the past 30 years. I would also like to take this chance to express my gratitude, to all UNIBUDS Executive Committee and members in the past 30 years.

The Bodhi Nite theme this year is "Wise Heart, Compassionate Mind - Wisdom says we are nothing, love says we are everything, in between these two our life flows". I would like to emphasize the importance in applying the teachings in our daily lives. It's by wisdom, that we make the best decision. It's by compassion that we can care for others. We learned that wisdom and compassion goes hand in hand, and we can never neglect either one in this process. I believe that faith is not declared; rather, it is practiced in the most minor details of our life, it is revealed in every little decision that we make. That way, we will be able to be mindful of our actions, and be totally truthful to our Buddhist practice.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my follow committee members for their guidance, patience, wisdom, and compassion. It takes team effort for UNIBUDS to have yet another successful year. I would like to extend my gratitude to our Patrons Venerable Chao Khun Samai and Venerable Tsang Hui for their spiritual guidance, and Buddhist Chaplain Venerable Neng Rong for her continuous encouragement, support and guidance.

Joining UNIBUDS has been the best decision of my life, whoever you may be and wherever you may come from, I hope you share the same happiness as me in this wonderful society.

May you be well and happy.

Metta, Ian Ch'ng
30th President of UNIBUDS





31st President's Message

by Foh Fan Yong

Dear friends,

Another year has passed. I hope you all have gained something throughout this year. Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to the 30th and 31st Annual Magazine Editors, Kia Sheng Chew, Kai Yi Giam, Su Sian Teh and Den Neil Ooi as well as the editorial team and members for their collective efforts in producing this magazine. There have been hiccups along the way but I am really glad to witness this magazine come to fruition.

This year has indeed been a challenging yet meaningful year for all. UNIBUDS has successfully organised two major events in a term, which are Buddhist Exhibition and Bodhi Nite 2011. After 4 years since the last Buddhist Exhibition, UNIBUDS was fortunate enough to present another exhibition with the theme "In the footsteps of the Buddha". The exhibition was open to the general public and communities on campus. The theme explored the teachings of the Buddha from his enlightenment until the final passing of the Buddha. I hope everyone who has attended brought home the precious teachings of the Buddha. We are very pleased with the smooth progress of the event. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the monasteries who have given us support in organising the event. Your generosity and advice are much appreciated.

The theme for Bodhi Nite this year was "Mindfulness: Right Here, Right Now". It was organised on 27th August in Science Theatre, UNSW. Despite the change of venue for the first time in more than 10 years, the event was a huge success. Although mindfulness is a well-known term, the meaning it has is rather vague for many. Right Mindfulness is undeniably the heart of the Buddha's teachings. It is a whole-body-and-mind awareness of the present moment. To be mindful is to be fully present, aware of what we are doing now. We do not dwell in the past or dream of the future. Through Bodhi Nite, I hope we have shown the meaning of Right Mindfulness and demonstrated the ways to practice it in our daily life.

On behalf of UNIBUDS, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our beloved patrons, Venerable Tsang Hui and Venerable Chao Khun Samai for their endless guidance. We would also like to thank our Buddhist Chaplain, Venerable Neng Rong for her unconditional support



towards UNIBUDS over the years. Without their support, UNIBUDS will be a ship without compass, unable to sail towards its destination. Moreover, UNIBUDS would not be able to exist without support from its members. I sincerely thank members who have supported the team along the journey. Your enthusiasm, laughter and contribution have made our society more lively and colourful.

Lastly, I would like to thank UNIBUDS and every single one of you for giving me the opportunity to be the President for 31st term. Special thanks to all the committee members who have patiently supported me over the year. The ups and downs throughout the term would always remain in my heart. Although the term has come to an end, I hope we all can continue our Dhamma practice and let the teachings of the Buddha be our guide in the future. This journey has indeed been wonderful and I wish the seeds we have planted today, would help UNIBUDS blossom for another 30 years.

May the light of the Buddha shine on all sentient-beings.
May all be well, peaceful and happy.

With Metta,
Foh Fan Yong
President 2010-2011

Messages from the 30th & 31st EXCO



“

With faith and confidence we tread
We, we move as one
Along the path of peacefulness
Open your eyes, live every moment
All of us walking together
O yes! Walking together
For the happiness of all

Come and join us
Let our hearts be our voices
Come, let us show you loving kindness
Forward and onward
Without fear on the right path
Forward and onward
Buddha my only faith ”





Messages

from the 30th Executive Committee



Dear friends in the Dhamma, I am Ming De, and I am the external vice president of UNIBUDS. It has been a pleasure serving UNIBUDS and members. It is now time for us to step down as the term finishes. While we step down as EXCOs, the Dhamma continues to live on as long as we practice it whole heartedly. UNIBUDS will continue to serve members and provide an avenue for students and others to learn Dhamma, so let us continue to help each other and support UNIBUDS!



Time flies, it's hard to believe this term is coming to the end. It was my pleasure to work with the rest of team. Being an Honorary Secretary gave me the chance to learn and interact with patrons, venerables, speakers and members. Special thanks to those who have supported UNIBUDS in the past and hope all of you enjoyed the time in UNIBUDS. Hope to see you all around next term. Thanks for the memories! May you all be well and happy.



It's amazing that time passes really quickly before I even realised it. I can still clearly remember the first time sending weekly e-mail as though it's just a week ago! Taking the role of Internal Vice President opened up my eyes to the details in our daily lives (awareness towards our surroundings) and the opportunity to learn the Dhamma in a fun way. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has given me this opportunity to learn and be a part of this awesome team and everyone who has supported me during my EXCO term =D It's a good thing that everyone has contributed and given their best, but at the same time, I hope that you have also taken something with you throughout this Dhamma journey with us. Sadhu, sadhu sadhu!



It is time to say goodbye to the wonderful memories of yesterdays working together with 12 amazing beings and an unbelievable journey through the term. It was a great pleasure having wonderful teachers and Venerables and also the bonds fostered among friends. A special thanks to all those that supported, smiled and enriched the whole experience and that is you! It is time to step down from being the Honorary Treasurer, something I truly enjoyed, which I realised was never meant to be a burdened responsibility but a gifted opportunity of possibilities. Sadhu, sadhu, sadhu!





First of all, i would like to thank everyone for all your help, guidance and support. For me, everyone in UN-IBUDS played a major part in helping me to grow in the past one year and I admit that I'm very grateful to be part of the 30th EXCO team. May all sentient beings be well and happy~



It is coming to the end of my second exco term. It was a wonderful experience to be an EDT coordinator. Apart from learning Dhamma, I had more chance to interact with our Venerables and Speakers and meet new members. Being part of the EXCO is the most valuable experience and gift for me before I graduate at the end of this year. Thank you everyone for supporting me during this Dhamma journey. May the Triple Gem be with you all the time.



Beginnings and endings are no different from each other. In fact, the two are the same, it is just that we choose to view the situation from different angles that leads us to give it a label. To me, this Exco term has been a journey, a journey of discoveries. Discovering more about myself and others, and of course the Dhamma. I had great pleasure in working with these 13 individuals throughout the year and would like to thank them for the wonderful experience and memories that I will cherish for years to come. I would also like to thank Teachers and Seniors who have given me guidance and support. I wish UN-IBUDS and it's members all the best in the future and be guided by the Triple Gems forever. With Metta.



I am grateful for the exco for giving me the opportunity to take over Yee Heng's position as the Chinese Dhamma Talk Coordinator. And I would like to specially thank Yee Heng for her guidance. Even though she was not in Sydney, she constantly gave me advices through email and phone calls. Apart from that, I have learnt a lot in this exco team in term of organising and planning an event. Furthermore I am very thankful for Venerable Neng Rong's teaching. Back then I always blame others for my suffering. For instance, sometime I questioned: "Why he is doing this to me?", "Why I can't be better than him?" ... But as I attended the Chinese Dhamma Talk, I realised that all these suffering or dissatisfaction are due to our self – centeredness or ego. We constantly want our expectation to be met, we want others to follow our will and we want to be better than others.

Seeing that these suffering arise from our self – centeredness or ego, we could slowly train ourselves to be more selfless or try to realise that this "self" which we cling onto is impermanent. This will eventually reduce our suffering. Thus I hope everyone could spend some time attending Dhamma Talk as it is very relevant to our daily life.

Besides that, I would like to thank the members who have been helping me with the setting up for Chinese Dhamma Talk especially Soo Siang Ooi who have been my regular helper. Last but not least, I would like to wish everyone be well and happy!!!



Derek and Yee Heng left the committee halfway through the term. We would like to acknowledge their participation and effort for UNIBUDS



It is hard to believe how fast time goes by, especially when one is having a great time. 3 years have gone by since I started my journey with UNIBUDS and it is now the end of my 2nd EXCO term. In this time, I have learnt so much from everyone in UNIBUDS and truly appreciate this opportunity to contribute to such a fantastic organisation. Although the time has come for a new chapter in my life as I return to Singapore to create a new future, the memories and experiences from UNIBUDS will be with me always. May the spirit of UNIBUDS always shine brightly and may everyone be well and happy!



Being in the 30th EXCO term has been a wonderful experience for me. It was fun and exciting journey to be able to learn and grow together with other EXCOs as well as get to know more members. I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and effort in UNIBUDS. I hope that the light in UNIBUDS can be passed down and UNIBUDS will continue to blossom! May all of you be well and happy.



I feel most fortunate to have been chosen for Publicity Director for this past year which is the 30th Anniversary of UNIBUDS. I feel my life is endowed with luck to be involved in promoting every aspect of UNIBUDS.

UNIBUDS aims to provide the right climate through Dhamma so that people can make their own choices to improve their lives which is now burdened with modern materialistic life causing both mental stress and physical diseases resulting in much pain and suffering.

I strongly feel that Dhamma can improve one's confidence in the world; especially, meditation. Meditation can help us to discover our own nature and ourselves better. What is amazing is that Dhamma helps us to love ourselves correctly, we can reach true happiness. Dhamma opens your heart to the journey to the true happiness. In parting, I would like to thank everyone who gives me support all during the past year to promote UNIBUDS toward its aim.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu..



Messages

from the 31st Executive Committee



It is an honour to take up the position External Vice President of UNIBUDS. And I am very grateful to the excos and members for giving me this opportunity. As usual, joining UNIBUDS is enjoyable because this is a place where we get to know more FRIENDS, have FUN as well as learn about BUDDHISM. And being an excos, it also allows me to learn more about organising events such as Buddhist Exhibition and Bodhi Nite.

Throughout this year there were several lessons that I picked up along the way. First of all, I realised that every contribution counts and every effort put in makes a difference. For instance, every agents of the Bodhi Nite Marketing Department tried their best to sell the tickets for Bodhi Nite. Even though each agent just sold a few tickets, this collective effort leads to the sales 800 tickets. Thus never look down on the slightest good deeds; collectively they have a huge impact.

The second lesson that I learn from this term is "Give your very best, usually you will get the best". There are times when we have put in whatever we could to make something a success, yet it doesn't seem to work. Don't be disappointed!! What we need is to wait for it to ripen. For instance, after promoting Bodhi Nite through marketing stall, poster, advertisement, selling ticket through agents, initially the ticket sales isn't that good. However thanks to everyone continuous effort, when the time are right the sales suddenly increases drastically.

Once again I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow excos and members who have put in so much effort and time in supporting UNIBUDS and the Dhamma. May you be well and happy. May you be successful in your family, career and life.



Dear Unibuddies, this is the last message that I am writing to you all as the Internal Vice President of UNIBUDS. I can't believe that one year has passed! Along the year, I realised that I really liked UNIBUDS, the people I met, the friends I made, the fun I had with the friends I made, the Buddhism I learnt, the mistakes I learnt from, the skills I gained, all these made UNIBUDS a special society that I bonded with and grew to stay in it. It was quite a year for us, having organised Buddhist Exhibition along with Bodhi Nite, the currently two biggest event that we could organise. And since it was a tough year, with all the ups and downs, especially for us the committees, I never regretted joining the team, to work with 14 other great individuals and form the EXCO team, to organise countless activities for the members and non-members with the benefit of learning Buddhism or just having a great potluck together. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow ExcOs for their support and their effort throughout the term. I would like to thank the members as well for their continuous support for the team and UNIBUDS. Lastly, I wish UNIBUDS will continue to grow so that more people will be able to learn more about Buddhism.



It has been a great year in UNIBUDS. We sincerely thank for your involvement and support for UNIBUDS activities.

It was a great experience as the Honorary Secretary for this term. I feel that I have grown a lot in skills and spiritually. I am very thankful for the opportunity given to me to be part of this team. I have given opportunity of the lifetime to be close with Dhamma and experience it.

For new members who are reading this and up for the challenges in your university life. I highly encourage you to nominate yourself in the next Annual General Meeting!

May Dhamma continue to be the light for everyone and may UNIBUDS continue to be part of this light.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!



It feels rather surreal, that a year has passed since I became part of the 31st EXCO team. Reminiscing, it has been a journey of ups and downs, of challenges and fervour, and of struggles and laughter, through which I have made amazing friendships, learnt countless lessons and formed wonderful memories. The Dhamma has certainly provided great companionship in this adventure of mine, for which I am incredibly thankful for.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my amazing EXCO teammates, for your relentless support, understanding, encouragement and help throughout this journey. It is truly a privilege, to have been able to work with you. A heartfelt thanks to those who helped me with my treasury duties and my roles in Buddhist Exhibition and Bodhi Nite, it would have been unimaginably arduous without your help – you know who you are! Of course, not to forget, the lovely members of Unibuds, thank you for your enthusiasm and support.

As the saying by the Buddha goes - "Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared". May Unibuds continue to bring people closer to the Dhamma, bringing joy and positively impacting their lives.



First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all members for the time we spent together during the 31st term. Although it has been quite a while, the fact that I still remember (some of..) those moments vividly, it shows how meaningful those period to me.

As an ex-General Secretary, I would like to thank the librarians who have helped UNIBUDS in keeping the library open throughout the week and maintaining the cleanliness of the library. For the choir members, it was my biggest pleasure working with all of you. Although I have no music background or whatsoever, you guys were so patient in dealing with me and I salute the amount of efforts you guys put in for Bodhi Nite.

For all the other members... well, its not that you guys are not so important that i use the term "others", but it is just there were too many people that I would like to thank to. I believe everyone has played their own unique role in making the 31st term so AWESOME! =P

Last but not least, I really hope UNIBUDS will continue to inspire more people, especially within UNSW, to learn more about the Dhamma and maintain a very supportive condition for the members to practice the teachings. Thank you very much and may everyone be well & happy!



Dear Dhamma friends,

I was the 31st general secretary assistant. This year was my 3rd year in EXCO and was also my last EXCO term. I found that every year I met new faces and continued to learn dhamma through dhamma classes with our fellow friends and practice dhamma in daily life.

In addition, this year experience was slightly different. Firstly, it is because I was the general secretary assistant. Therefore, I spent more time in Unibuds library in which I had more time to read dhamma books. Secondly, we had a big event – Buddhist Exhibition this year. During the preparation process, I had to drive to different temples to look for artefacts in which I had opportunities to speak to Venerables directly. This experience enriched my dhamma knowledge.

Here comes to the end of the term. I have to say thank you to everyone who supported and helped Unibuds. Without you, all the events wouldn't be a great success. May I wish everyone be happy all the time and have a good year ahead.



Dear members,

Time flies and it is time to say goodbye. It has been such an honor to be your Activities Director in the 31st term of UNIBUDS Executive Committee. With the collective efforts from all members, I hope that I have served the society well with fun activities and at the same time, you have made some true friendship. Perhaps the most importantly, I hope that all of you have learned some new Buddha's teachings throughout the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all for your kindness, giving, support and guidance during my tenure as an Activities Director. I have had a great experience to work with my fellow 31st executive committees and I truly thank them for being part of this journey to work the best we can.

Last but not least, thank you to the Annual Magazine team for your effort and I believe that all members will enjoy the 31st UNIBUDS Annual Magazine as much as I do. May all be well and happy.



Within a blink of an eye, a year has passed and here I am writing this message at the end of a wonderful and meaningful EXCO term. It was a fantastic experience being part of the 31st EXCO team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow EXCOs for the memorable journey. I came in as a so called "newbie" who didn't know much about organising events and certainly without much knowledge about the Dharma! But everyone on this 31st EXCO team always gave me support and guidance whenever it came to organising UNIBUDS events. Moreover, learning about the Dharma in the process of planning many key events did make me understand Buddhism even more. In no time at all, I found myself being more confident in organising activities and I also understood the objectives of UNIBUDS together with Buddhism itself.

I would like to express my many thanks to all our members for always participating in our events, UNIBUDS events are always delightful with the laughter, joy and support of our members. Not to be forgotten are also my fellow sports session attendees! Thank you so much for coming to support the almost-every-week sports session, without you guys and girls, sports session would never be something exciting to look forward to. I would like to apologise too for not being able to organise some new sporting activities for the year. Nevertheless, I hope that everyone would continue to attend UNIBUDS' sports session!

With that being said, I also hope that everyone can continue supporting UNIBUDS and also attend UNIBUDS' activities, as the joy of learning the Dharma together and making new friends along the way is simply priceless. May everyone be well and happy always! Saddhu x 3



Dear members, thank you for the encouragement, support, and friendship in the past one year. It is because of you, I found meaning in what I am doing. It is because of you, I learn and grow as a person. It is because of you, I have memorable moments in UNSW that I will remember for life. Being an English Dhamma Talk coordinator is my best one year in UNIBUDS so far. Why? Because I love seeing your faces on Friday night, and I believe that the gift of Dhamma is the best gift that I can share with you all.

May we continue to grow in this dhamma journey. As the saying goes "every end is a new beginning", may this start be another memorable one, for me and you. May all be well and happy.



First, thank you for picking up this magazine, out of the many magazines in the universe. It is a wise choice indeed, just like why we are interested or committed to learn more about what the Buddha taught centuries ago. The propagation of these invaluable wisdom needs collaborative work from everyone, including you and me.

I have joined this EXCO term to do my part, and have been greatly helped by many compassionate UNIBUDS members and non-members. This experience of working together was an interesting experience that will be a stepping stone for my further work in the spread of the Dharma in the future.

With the Dharma that I have learnt during my university studies, I believe that I have secured the best insurance policy for my mind and body to solve the daily challenges. We are grateful to have a working mind and body as well as the chance to learn the Dharma. Let us live mindfully, improve our Spiritual Quotient together and be a useful Bodhisattva to all. Live freely and healthily!
Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu~~



Let's start with taking three mindful deep breaths with a smile, breath in... breath out... x3 Thank you for bringing your mindfulness to a state of peace, with no attachment and no judgement, just a taste of freedom.

First of all, thank you for all the kind friends who have helped in the meditation workshops and lunchtime meditations, without you, others couldn't have a great place to practice. Thank you for all friends who have participated in the meditation workshops and lunchtime meditations, without you, the atmosphere of learning couldn't have been so peaceful. Thank you for all beings who have facilitated and joined in any UNIBUDS activities, your presence have been a great motivation for everyone to continue to learn the Middle Way. I wish that everyone who has dropped by along the journey has gained something in our own way, not only just absorbing teachings from talks, but also in putting all the teachings we have learnt in actions, making the teachings a real-life experience.

Looking back at the 31st year of UNIBUDS, I'm grateful for given the opportunity to be a part of the wonderful team to serve voluntary to the community. Not only it was filled up with many joys and uncountable funs. It's also those days that packed with challenges that I actually missed the most. Because those are the days that had made me grew extensively and learned thoroughly with mindfulness on feelings and attachments. I appreciated opportunity given to give to the society. May the Triple Gems always be your guide and protect you.



Dear members, thanks for your support and involvement in Unibuds over the past one year.

I hope you have gained as much as I did in terms of Dhamma knowledge, friendship, and health (through the various sport activities). It was a great experience being the Sacca Editor for Unibuds and I truly thank those who have contributed in writing the articles, proof-reading, collecting photographs, and providing guidance throughout the year. Most important of all, I would like to thank those who have persuaded me in taking up this role as this is a life experience which has brought me closer to the Dhamma and changed my view on life. May Unibuds continue to bring Dhamma to people's life and help them to change for the better - one better person is not one too many.



The past EXCO year has been fruitful and is a good learning experience. I had the honour to work alongside with highly motivated and competent people which have taught me many things. Despite having a busy year myself, I am glad that the other EXCOs have been kind to me by constantly assisting me with my work. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their much appreciated support. All in all, it has been a wonderful year and I hope UNIBUDS will continue to blossom.



Dear Buds,

Time flies. Before my eyes could even keep up, another wonderful year has come to an end. Throughout the year, I found that there's much more to learn even though I'm in my second year as an EXCO. The Buddhist Exhibition 2011 being one of the main agenda in UNIBUDS calendar has made the year all the more special. I personally felt that having 2 major events in a year is not an easy task, and for all of us to be able to successfully organise them proves the existence of the UNIBUDS spirit in us.

I must say it has brought all of us closer while we learn, laugh, share and care. With that I would like to express my gratitude to all parties, who've shown their unconditional support to make this year a great one! But it's not the end yet! Because this marks the beginning of another amazing year!

Once again, I would like to thank all fellow EXCOs and fellow members who've helped and guided me throughout my journey this year and making this year a memorable one. Looking forward for your continuous support! Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu! May all be well, peace and happy...



Dhamma Insights



“ On hearing true teachings, the hearts of those who are receptive become serene, like a lake, deep, clear and still. ”
Dhammapada VI. V 82



Heart Sutra and its Implication in our Daily Lives

by Venerable Neng Rong

Introduction

Its official name is Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya, literally translated as the heart (essence) of the pāramitā (perfection) of wisdom. Besides that, we can also say that the perfection of wisdom, prajñāpāramitā is the heart (emphasized) among all Mahayana practice.

This sutra is different from other sutra, as it doesn't have an introduction and conclusion paragraph. This is because Heart Sutra is an extract from the large sutra, Prajñāpāramitā Sutra. It is very similar to one of the chapter in the last volume of Prajñāpāramitā Sutra.

Explanation of the word pāramitā

Pāramitā: Completeness or perfection / which has gone beyond; transcend beyond (from this side of the river to the shore of bliss)

Pāra: Beyond Mitā: which has arrived

Why do we have to cross and arrive at the shore beyond? As the aim of Buddhism is to solve suffering of life, currently we are at the side of suffering, and we want to cross this ocean of suffering and arrive at the other shore of bliss and happiness. Practice or action of transforming ourselves to transcend suffering is called Pāramitā.

Firstly, what suffering do we have? We have physical suffering and mental suffering. Birth, old age, sickness and death are example of physical suffering, while separation from beloved one, be with people that we do not like and have to confront them every day, desires are not fulfilled are examples of mental suffering.

Next, where does this suffering comes from? Our attachment. Why do we have attachment? We crave. Why do we crave? When we see something that we like, we crave for it and attach to it. It is just the sense of satisfaction that we have more belonging than others. What do we gain from having more? We do not understand why we need so many things; in fact, it is good enough to have food to survive. At the end, this gives us stress, takes away lots of our time and energy. We have created all this for us. In short, we do not understand ourselves, the thing we are attached to, and the things going on in our mind. We can't even control ourselves, not to say control other things.

Finally, how to end suffering? Live in the present. If you

can live in the present, not to dream too much about what you want, or stay in the past, you probably feel more enjoyable. We need to understand that, what we have now, we appreciate them. So you don't carry with you so many burdens. Besides that, we can strengthen the resistance toward unfavorable circumstances, tolerance toward unfulfilled desires. After tolerating, it would be better if it could be let go. Some people have better resistance, but it does not end suffering.

To end the fundamental cause of suffering, we need to identify it actually come from our ignorance, our craving, our wrong view. To eliminate them, the practices of Six Pāramitā are very important. Besides improving ourselves, these six ways of practice can slowly develop wisdom.

Generosity - We learn to share with other, rather than having everything for ourselves. We have to understand that although we work very hard for what we have, they actually come from the support of many people. "I have studied so hard at the university; therefore I have this ability to earn." But think about it, if no one takes care of you when you are baby, no one to teach you in childcare, preschool, kindergarten, primary school, high school. How can you have the ability today? We should not think that this ability is our sole properties and should learn to share with others. By having such attitude, we have sense of gratitude and are less egoistic. Hence we will be a happier person.

Upholding precept - Precept is like a mirror for us to see whether our desire have gone beyond the guideline (set by the Buddha)? We do have some desire, and we can have some desire within our right. But we need to make sure our desire do not infringe other people right or bring harm to the others. So, the principle behind the precept is to remind us to put ourselves in others' position. Whatever we do not like to happen to us, do not do it to others. In that way we can learn to reduce our greed, hatred, jealousy and arrogance.

Patience - We have to be patient to ourselves, to the others, and to the environment. For example, if you are very impatience in meditation; "Too hot, I can't practice, tomorrow is too cold I can't practice". When are we going to practice? We have to understand that we have a lot of frustration; and the suffering of not understanding the truth, it is worse than numbness in the leg. Our mind has a lot of thought and desire, if we get carried by them and



Heart Sutra

do not reflect why do we have this urge, then there is no way for us to see the greed is arising in ourselves. We want to have a better control of ourselves, and be master of ourselves. So, we need to have patience, be able to tolerate the uncomfortable environment, be patient to the others and ourselves.

Why we feel that we need to tolerate? This is because what we want to do is not in accordance with our habit. To some people, they do not need to tolerate certain issue, they feel comfortable with it. When we practice tolerance, we need to ask: "Why is it difficult to me, but for my friend, it is easy?" For example, you are a driver who likes to speed. At the school zone, you will feel impatient. But if you always follow the rule, you will find that 40 km/hr is fine. So, you don't need to fight with yourself. To practice Buddhism is in our daily life; if we are mindful of the teaching every moment, at every moment we can reflect ourselves.

Diligent - As we say these practices are not our habits, so we need to put effort to cultivate it. Thus diligent is important. We need to have this right effort in practicing giving, upholding precepts and tolerance.

Meditation - We need to practice meditation as it could help us in resisting external distraction. If you practice regularly, observing your breathing: "Thought come, let it go, bring your mind back, noise come, let it go, bring your mind back." You know what your primary focus is. So when you need to focus, your ability to bring your mind back will be much faster. In fact, a lot of time is wasted in day dreaming; we wasted our time going around and not settling down before we start. So if you spare sometime practicing meditation every day, you find that your study

is more efficient.

Development of wisdom - Among these six perfections, the most important is the wisdom. These five Pāramitā are to be guided by wisdom, otherwise we may still fall into attachment. For example, people praise you when you practice giving. Thus, you become arrogant. Next time, no one say anything when you practice, you get very upset.

So with wisdom, we understand that self that we tend to cling onto is actually combination of many causes and conditions. Hence, we should not be self-centered, learnt to appreciate other, learn to be selfless. "Now that I have the ability to help, but where does the skill come from? And that I am able to help is because I happen to have this skill, and there is a recipient happens to need this kind of skill, and we met at the right time, right place." Prajñā is the wisdom that guides the other five pāramitā, but it doesn't mean we only need to practice prajñā. Prajñā itself without the other is just wisdom with no application. It is just like having the skill, but there is nowhere to use it, so it is useless.

Explanation of the word Prajñā

Prajñā is the profound realization of the truth (the truth of cause and effect, and its implication: the truth of impermanent, the truth of causes and conditions /selflessness, and the truth of nibbāna). The Buddha realizes these truths when he attains enlightenment.

How does the cause and effect happen? If everything has fix identity, it stays the same all the time. How can the cause end up to the effect? You plant an apple seed;

"Prajñā is the profound realization of the truth (the truth of cause and effect, and its implication: the truth of impermanent, the truth of causes and conditions / selflessness, and the truth of nibbāna). The Buddha realizes these truths when he attains enlightenment."





it will become an apple tree. During this process, impermanent is going on. With some causes and conditions: water, fertilizer and so on, it starts to sprout. This is the same as our body and mind. And during these processes, these series of cause and effect, you find that the truth of impermanent and selflessness.

When the causes and conditions come together, the temporary stable state looks like certain appearance. Because our wisdom is not thorough, we tend to cling onto that appearance and name it something. It is just like when we see the cloud in the sky; sometime it looks like Santa Clause, sometime it looks like an aero plane, but we know they are just water vapour. When the wind blows, it keeps on changing. It is also like the ocean. Sometime the wave is rough, sometime it is peaceful. But the water itself, the essence of the water is still the same. Everything that we see, may transform from one appearance to another. But the essence is always the same, is always as such. And that is what we meant the state of nibbāna.

Nibbāna is the truth that Buddha realizes, and in the Mahayana teaching we tend to use the word emptiness to describe the state. The state where the existence is due to causes and conditions, it is always in the process of changing and there is no fix identity that you can cling onto. Because this stage is very difficult to describe, so we use the word emptiness (please do not fall into the trap thinking that everything become hollow, everything disappears).

Prajñā sometime is translated as wisdom, which is different from this worldly knowledge. Worldly knowledge is common understanding that can help us but it may be just partially correct or not correct. Those studying in the university, you know that there are always rooms for im-

provement. And that why you want to write another thesis on top of other thesis, try to find their loophole, try to find their mistake, try to find the part which they haven't investigate. And worldly knowledge always encompasses our perception, our self-perceive and our consciousness.

So why we say the cause of suffering come from our ignorance and craving? It is because we don't understand ourselves; do not understand the things around us. And then because of that we develop strong craving, desire for things. So, in order to eliminate this wrong understanding, we need to rely on the realization of the wisdom of the prajñā. Besides that, we have to understand that there is attachment (to ourselves and to phenomenon) which is the fundamental causes of suffering. So to eliminate this, we need to realize the emptiness of self.

Sutra

The sutra is spoken by the Buddha to Sāriputta on how Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was practicing the profound prajñāpāramitā. The first paragraph is the essence of the whole sutra; it say that, when Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva was practicing the profound prajñāpāramitā, he illuminate the five aggregate and saw that they are all empty, and he cross beyond all suffering, and difficulties.

Form refers to the physical body. So once we have this physical body, our eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, we will have contact with external environment and have sensation/ feeling (Like, dislike; comfort, discomfort). And we develop perception: "Round, soft, smooth." And once we have this perception, and then we have mental formation, process of making decision: "I like this, I am going to take this, and I want to buy this..." Next is consciousness, where we start to have this awareness, start to discriminate the things that we perceive.





So this is what happens with the physical part and mental part of us in daily activities. And this is what we call as 'I'. But we look at this 'I' and think that it is so great; but it is no other than the five aggregate which actively working together so that we are a lively, energetic human being.

We clean our body every day, put perfume on, and comb our hair; but your hair drop, our body smell. The body is changing every moment. So, there is no one point that is exactly the same. So we start to realize that the body that we cling onto changes every moment. There is no fixed identity, that why we say it is empty in nature. Same with sensation, perception, mental formation and consciousness; they are all combination of causes and conditions and all in the process of changing. There is actually nothing that we can cling onto. Hence, letting go this self-attachment will cross beyond all suffering.

And then Buddha tells Sāriputta: "Form does not differ from emptiness; emptiness does not differ from form." What does it mean? As we say the form itself is an appearance that we see, but this appearance arises due to causes and conditions and it is always in the process of changing, although at the stable state it looks solid. Its essence is empty. Emptiness does not differ from form. It is just like the example of the cloud that we see, we thought it is a Santa Clause but it is not real. It is just combination of many causes and conditions.

So that is how Avalokiteshvara contemplate and realize this truth; from here onward the Buddha starts to elaborate a bit more: "Sāriputta, all phenomenon, all Dhamma

is empty of characteristic, they are not produce, not destroy, not defile, pure and neither increase or diminish."

Since there is no fixed self then how can you say that something is being produced, or something is being destroyed. It is only when you have something fixed, you can say this thing is being produced and this thing disappears. And same thing, you can't say which one is pure which one is defile; it doesn't mean that when you take away the impurities then impurities arise. And same thing, since there is no fixed identity then what can you say about increase and decrease; it is only when you have certain volume and then it decrease or increase. Therefore in emptiness, no real form, feeling/ sensation, perception, mental formation, consciousness.

And then the Buddha goes on talking about eye, ears, nose, body, or mind; followed by the mind contact with sight, sound, smell, taste, object of contact; subsequently development of consciousness. All these are empty in nature, next it goes onto the twelve links of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths. Dependent Origination explains how we go round the cycle of life and death again and again; in short, ignorance leads to karma. And you can't hold on the each link and say it is from station A move onto station B. The station itself is causes and conditions. Therefore we can reverse the cycle by practicing and realizing the truth and end the cycle of life and death.

Finally, the wisdom that we thought we have attained is in the process of changing. There is no real wisdom that you can attain or the wisdom that you can hold onto. So nothing is attainable, but we tend to chase a lot of things, we want to attain this, we want to attain that.

So the Bodhisattva through realization of this prajñāpāramitā doesn't have any more worries and fear because things are just as such. Why do we have fear? Because we think that there is an 'I' so we start to protect an 'I'. We are afraid that when I go out of the cave, I might be eaten by the tiger. If you realize selflessness; there is no 'I', then who is going to be eaten? When we start to defend ourselves, we start to have worries; thinking that other people might be threatening to us, and that is how jealousy, arrogant arise.

So those realize the truth don't cling to themselves, that's why they are at peace and at ease, free from fear, have no worries and improper thoughts. Because whatever we think at this moment are within our consciousness which is backup by our self-centeredness and self-perceptions. For example, if we see something and our mind tell us that it is very horrifying, and then we will have the fear; this is what happens because we still have this self-centeredness which tends to protect ourselves subconsciously.

So ultimately, Bodhisattva then attain nibbāna, and is at peace and ease, free from distorted thought. So this is how all Buddha from the past, present and the future practice and attain supreme enlightenment. It says that with this prajñāpāramitā, it can remove all suffering. Finally, the sutra end with a mantra* to exemplified the greatness of prajñāpāramitā.

Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā
Gone, gone, gone to the shore beyond, everyone goes,
may all attain perfect realization soon

Gate : go
Para : beyond
Sam : everyone

In fact, the conclusion is a vow hoping that everyone can attain perfect realization

How should we apply this in our daily life?

Basically we have to remember the cause of suffering comes from attachment to ourselves and phenomenon. Besides that, we have to remember how Avalokiteshvara realize the truth and attain freedom by contemplating the five aggregate; so we should always contemplate on what is this 'self' that we cling onto. So do not always trap ourselves in attachment, ignorance and desire; do not be carried away by our emotions, habits, stubbornness, arrogance, self-centeredness but rather reflect ourselves according to the teaching. In order to remind ourselves again and again, we need to listen to the teaching regularly. Besides, when we practice giving, upholding precept we need to relate to the teaching. And by practicing meditation, the calmness of our mind will reflect the teaching clearer, which then lead on to the realization of the truth.

From the Heart Sutra we have learnt that develop wisdom is very important; as a starting point it would be good if everyone could try to think that everything is not as rigid as what we thought, there is a lot of flexibility. A lot of people tend to fall into stress, depression because they are unable to change their mind. Moreover, to realize the truth of prajñā, it is important for us to realize selflessness; as starting point is try to put ourselves others position. Do not always think from ourselves perspective only. We have to be flexible as everything is causes and conditions, and you find that there are a lot of rooms.

*We have
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Avalokiteshvara
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Transformational Power Of Awareness

by Dr Chien Hoong Gooi

“Transformational power of awareness” is to look at Buddhist based practices, in particular, Buddhist meditation and cultivation of awareness and mindfulness.

All of us have awareness which is an essential element for us to survive in our daily life; to understand what another person is saying, to cross a road without being hit by a car. Buddhist meditation helps increase, sharpen and refine our ability of being mindful in our daily life.

‘Sati’ is a Pali word and is the root word of awareness. It is translated as awareness or mindfulness. ‘Sati’ is the quality of mind of being present to whatever experience is presenting itself. Right now, the predominant experience is I am talking and you are listening. This requires some level of ‘Sati’. It doesn’t limit to this single quality. In fact, it comes with other qualities such as not forgetting the present. For instance, you may be listening and after a while you will be thinking of other things. Your focus and awareness have gone away. You may not be aware that you were thinking but you were actually in the content of thinking. Whereas, meditators would realise that the thinking process is happening. Mindfulness is about staying with the experience and not forgetting the present. To become mindful all the time, it involves sustained effort - a curiosity to investigate the feeling at that moment without any judgment. As a result of it, the process of mindfulness creates understanding. This is the importance of Buddhist mindfulness meditation.

Why do Buddhists practice meditation? How does it fit with Dhamma?

The reason why Buddhist practices mindfulness is so that one creates understanding. The Buddha said the mind is the forerunner of things to perceive the world. The importance for Buddhists to be mindful at all time is to let us know what we are experiencing which lead to understanding this world. With better understanding, it is easier to break our bad habits including anger and desire for sensual pleasure. Without a good understanding of the present moment, we cannot transcend and get rid of the problem. Some people called mindfulness as “to see things as they are”.

For instance, when you were so heated in an argument and just slapped the other person. You asked what happened and you will say “I don’t know ... I just raised

my hand and slapped the other person.’ How can it be automated? It is hard to articulate. It is because your mind is not fast enough to track what is actually happening. Anger does not come out all in a sudden. Anger comes like a tsunami wave, it comes bit by bit gaining momentum and eventually it creates the compulsion for your hand to reach out to the other person and slap him/her. In the end, you just regretted it. If you don’t even see how anger comes up, then how can you work with anger. One of the Buddhists’ aspirations is to have clarity of the entire process of the mind and hence leading us out of suffering.

“Mindfulness is the ability to see moment-to-moment and experience it yourself.”

In life, there is experience of suffering and it is inevitable. There is a root cause for it. If we just take Buddha’s word for it, nothing changes in our life. Nothing will change without practising awareness. Buddha said there is suffering because we have a strong attachment and clinging onto things. With your own awareness, when your mind is agitated or when you are suffering, what is the nature of that? What is the characteristic of suffering? Is it that bad to come out from this suffering? What’s the cause of it? Without understanding, there is no way we can solve the problem. We have all the knowledge in our mind but nothing is transformed in our life. For it to transform and change your life, you need awareness to see things in every moment. This is how you convert your knowledge into real deep change, into your whole entire being. It is like a person who has never seen the sea before. Until he go to the beach and see it for himself and until he immerse himself in the seawater, he may never know what the sea is like. This experience is more powerful than just reading description from a book. The same applies to Buddhist practice, it creates understanding. Hence, through understanding, you can then breakthrough your difficulties in life.



“Satipatthana” sutta translates into English as the teaching of how you establish mindfulness. There are four steps to train your awareness:

1. Experience with your body/postures,
2. Feeling/ sensation - pleasant/unpleasant
3. Mind state
4. Mental phenomena – what has come up in your mind – feeling of sleepiness, restlessness. The actual experience of your mind.

You can use all these objects to help you build your mindfulness/awareness. When we talk about mindfulness, we have a generic image of the Buddha in a sitting posture. Cultivation of mindfulness does not only happen in a close-eyed, sitting posture. It can happen in any posture; for example when you are walking, you are aware of walking. The cultivation of mindfulness happens every moment in our life. The Buddha said “being aware of your body and being aware of your mind.” Being mindful can transform the negative mind - craving, greed, aversion, delusion, ignorance into a mind of clarity - wisdom, stability of mind, kindness, compassion, and joy.

What does modern day science have to say about Buddhist meditation?

In the last 5 -10 years, there are more publications about science and Buddhist meditation. The practice of mindfulness came into psychology via medical science. Jon Kabat-Zinn is a medicine professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. He found that there are lots of psychiatric conditions that they cannot do much for the patients. He learnt about Buddhist meditation practices and hence he created a program called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). It was an 8-week program, which contained a 2-2.5 hours session per week. He wrote to the entire country to invite all chronic patients who didn't respond to treatment to be referred to the clinic. After 8 weeks, they found that the attendees had better wellbeing and quality of life. Majority of them had a great reduction in pain and distress level. Since then, there has been more research on meditation. It has been shown that mindfulness based practice can help alleviate anxiety, eating disorder, psychosis, chronic pain, stress and addiction. This program was also tried on psychologically healthy individuals in a company. The result showed an improvement to the immune system and a reduction in the stress hormone level. In addition, this mindfulness practice has yielded faster results compared to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for people who have generalised anxiety disorder. While CBT is considered as the best therapy for anxiety disorder, a study showed that both anxiety and co-morbidity levels dropped with the mindfulness practice, whereas only anxiety level dropped with CBT.

In the last 3-5 years, there has been more research coming from neuroscience, which is a study of the brain and how things are processed. They scanned Buddhist meditators' brain using fMRI scan through magnetic waves, they look at which parts of the brain are activated. For example, when you are studying, those parts in your



brain related to study will light up on the fMRI scan. At the baseline level, the meditators' brains were calmer and the 'happy' region was slightly elevated compared to the control group. Then they scanned the brain while they were meditating, they found that the activation level in the happy region were all lit up.

The brain we understand today is very different from what we understood 40-50 years ago. We used to believe that the brain continues to grow until adulthood and then it shrinks slowly. Not until recently that we think the brain keeps changing and continues to develop. Aerobic exercises can help the brain grow. Neuro-generation happens a lot when doing aerobic exercise. Similarly, mindfulness can also create neuro-generation. If your mind is consistently practising greed, anger, or aversion, then this habit will become stronger, and the neuro-generation in these regions is stronger. If you practise mindfulness, you can cultivate clarity of your mind which can bring a deep intuition. Therefore, you can improve your relationship with other people and yourself.

To conclude, in a traditional context, mindfulness is a quality of mind that is being in the present moment with clarity, objectivity and curiosity, of what's happening to your body at every moment. This is so that we see things as they really are. After seeing the real nature of the experience, we can then come out from the negative cycle and negative habits. In the field of medicine and psychology, it has been shown that physical and psychological well beings improved as a result of mindfulness practice. From the neuroscience's point of view, mindfulness practice can help improve how our brain functions as a human being. Understanding neuroplasticity, we know that we are able to continually shape our brain and create a better future for ourselves.



Practicing Buddhism in Daily Life

Extracted from "The Path To Happiness" by Venerable Thubten Chodron

Spiritual Life and Daily Life

Many people have the misconception that spiritual life or religious life is somewhere up there in the sky -- an ethereal or mystical reality -- and that our everyday life is too mundane and not so nice. Often people think that to be a spiritual person, we must ignore or neglect our everyday life, and go into another special realm. Actually, I think being a spiritual person means becoming a real human being. Thich Nhat Hanh, a well-known Vietnamese monk, said, "It is not so important whether you walk on water or walk in space. The true miracle is to walk on earth." It's true. In other words, becoming a kind human being is probably the greatest miracle we can perform.

One time I gave a talk in a Hong Kong school to a group of children. One child asked, "Can you bend spoons with your mind?" Another asked, "Has God ever talked to you?" They were very disappointed when I said, "No." I went on to explain that for me a real true miracle is becoming a kind human being. If you have psychic powers but lack a kind heart, the powers are of no use. In fact, they could even be disadvantageous; people may get very upset if they find all their spoons have been bent!

Upon Waking Up

How do we cultivate a kind heart? It is not enough to tell ourselves that we should be nice, because telling ourselves what we should or should not be, feel, or do doesn't make us become that way. Filling ourselves with "shoulds" often just makes us feel guilty because we never are what we think we should be. We need to know how to actually transform our mind. In other words, we must realise the disadvantages of being self-centered. We must truly want to develop a kind heart, not just keep thinking that we should develop a kind heart. In the morning, when we first wake up, before getting out of bed, before thinking about what we will eat for breakfast or which obnoxious jerk we will see at the office, we can start the day by thinking, "Today as much as possible, I won't harm anybody. Today as much as possible I am going to try be of service and benefit to others. Today I want to do all actions so that all living beings can attain the long-term happiness of enlightenment."

Setting a positive motivation the first thing in the morning is very beneficial. When we first wake up, our mind

is very subtle and delicate. If we set a strong positive motivation at this time, there is a greater chance of it staying with us and influencing us throughout the day. After generating our positive motivation, we get out of bed, wash, maybe have a cup of tea, and then meditate or recite prayers. By starting the day in this way, we get in touch with ourselves and become our own friend by treasuring and re-enforcing our good qualities.

Finding Time to Meditate Each Day

Sometimes it is difficult to find time to meditate each day. But we always have time to watch TV. We always have time to go shopping. We always have time to get a snack from the refrigerator. Why is it that the 24 hours run out when it is time to meditate? When we understand the value and effect of spiritual practice, then it will become a high priority in our life, and when something is very important, we find time for it. In this way, try to set up a daily meditation practice of maybe 15 or 30 minutes in the morning. To do that, we might have to experience the "incredible sacrifice" of giving up 15 or 30 minutes of television the previous evening so we can go to bed a little earlier. In the same way that we always find time to eat because food nourishes our body, we will find time to meditate and recite some prayers because it nourishes us spiritually. When we respect ourselves spiritually, we respect ourselves as human beings. Nourishing ourselves in that way then becomes a very important priority.

Morning Meditation

In the morning, it is good to begin your meditation session with a few prayers and cultivate the altruistic intention to benefit others by doing the meditation. Then do the breathing meditation for a while. Sit calmly, experience your breath going in and out, and be aware of the breath nourishing you. Just be in the present moment with the breath, and let all the discursive thoughts and worries subside. You may want to chant Kuan Yin's (Avalokiteshvara's) mantra or that of the Buddha. It is helpful to remember the Buddha's qualities at this time for it inspires us to emulate the Buddha's kindness, wisdom and skill in our daily activities. Or you may do an analytic meditation, thinking about the meaning of a particular teaching the Buddha gave and applying it to your own life. This also steers your energy in a very positive direction first thing in the morning.

Some people say, "I have children. How can I meditate or say prayers in the morning when they need my attention?" One way is to get up earlier than your children. Another idea is to invite your children to meditate or chant with you. One time I was staying with my brother's family. My niece, who was about six or seven at that time, used to come into my room because we were the first two to wake up in the morning. As I was reciting prayers or meditating, I explained to her that this is a time when I am quiet and do not want to be disturbed. She would come in and sometimes she would draw. Other times, she would sit in my lap. Several times she asked me to sing to her, and I would chant prayers and mantras out



loud. She really liked this and did not disturb me at all.

It is very good for children to see their parents sit still and be calm. That gives them the idea that maybe they too can do the same. If mum and dad are always busy, running around, talking on the phone, stressed out, or collapsed in front of the TV, the kids will also be like this. Is this what you want for your children? If you want your children to learn certain attitudes or behaviors, you have to cultivate them yourselves. Otherwise, how will your children learn? If you care about your children, you have to care about yourselves as well and be mindful of living a healthy and balanced life for their benefit as well as for your own.

You can also teach your children how to make offerings to the Buddha and how to recite simple prayers and mantras. Once, I stayed with a friend and her three-year-old daughter. Every morning when we got up, we would all bow three times to the Buddha. Then, the little girl would give the Buddha a present -- a cookie or some fruit -- and the Buddha would give her a present also, a sweet or a cracker. It was very nice for the child, because at age three she was establishing a good relationship with the Buddha and at the same time was learning to be generous and share things. When my friend cleaned the house, did chores or went places with her daughter, they would chant mantras together. The little girl loved the melodies of the mantras. This helped her because whenever she got upset or frightened, she knew she could chant mantras to calm herself down.

Practicing Dharma at the Workplace

Let's return to your daily practice. After your morning meditation, have breakfast and set off for work. How are you going to practice Dharma at work? First, try to remember the kind heart and the motivation you cultivated in the morning. Throughout the day, continually remind yourself that you don't want to harm anybody, that you want to be of service to them, and that you seek to do all actions for the ultimate enlightenment of yourself and others. To remind yourself of this, you can use a frequent event as a trigger to call you back to your motivation. For example, every time you stop at a red light, instead of being irritated and thinking, "Why is this red light so long? I'm late for work!" think, "Today, I want to have a kind heart towards others." Thus the red light becomes an opportunity to remember the kind heart. When the telephone rings, instead of rushing to pick it up, first think, "May I be of service to whomever is on the line." Then answer the phone. Every time your pager goes off, calmly come back to the kind heart, then respond to the call. A friend told me that her trigger to come back to the kind heart was her children calling, "Mommy! Mommy!" Since this happened frequently throughout the day, she became familiar with the kind heart and also was much more patient with her children.

Throughout the day, try to be aware of what you are thinking, feeling, saying, and doing, instead of living on "automatic pilot". When we live on automatic, we go through life reacting to things but never really experiencing what life is about. This is why we feel out of touch with ourselves, like strangers to ourselves. For example, you get in the car and drive to work. When you got to work, if somebody asked you, "What did you think about during the half hour you were driving?" You probably wouldn't know. We are unaware of what is going on inside us. Yet a lot is going on and this influences how we feel about ourselves and how we relate to other people.

Cultivating Mindfulness

The antidote to living on automatic is to cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being aware of what we are thinking, feeling, saying, and doing each moment. It also means being mindful of our ethical values and of the kind heart, so that we can live according to them in our daily lives. By cultivating this awareness, we will no longer be spaced out, just reacting to things, and then wondering why we are so confused and exhausted at the end of the day. If we are mindful, we will notice that we have a kind heart and will enrich it and let our actions flow from it. Or, we might become aware that we are upset, irritated, angry, or are on the verge of scolding somebody. If we realize that, we can come back to our breath, come back to our kind heart, instead of throwing our negative energy out in the world.

Being Mindful of Living in an Interdependent World

We also become more mindful of how we interact with our environment. We realise that we live in an interdependent world and if we pollute our environment, we are affecting ourselves, our children and other living beings. Because we are mindful of being kind, we will curtail the ways in which we pollute the environment. We will carpool when going to work or school, instead of using up gasoline in a car by ourselves. We will recycle the things we use: paper, cans, plastic containers, bottles, glass jars, and newspapers. We know that if we throw these away in the garbage, we are destroying our planet and are affecting other beings in a negative way. Thus, we will re-use our plastic bags and paper bags when we go to the supermarket. In addition, we will not leave our air-conditioners or heaters on when we are not at home, and will not use products, such as styrofoam whose production releases many pollutants into the air.

I think that if the Buddha were alive today, he would establish vows that said we have to recycle and stop wasting resources. Many of our monastic vows arose because lay people complained to the Buddha about what monks or nuns did. Each time this happened, the Buddha

Throughout the day, try to be aware feeling, saying, and doing, instead of



would establish a precept in order to curb the detrimental behavior. If the Buddha were alive today, people would complain to him, "So many Buddhists throw out their tin cans, glass jars, and newspaper! They use disposable cups, chopsticks and plates, which not only make more garbage but also cause the destruction of many trees. They do not seem to care about the environment and the living beings in it!" I would feel pretty embarrassed if I was doing that and someone complained to the Buddha about my behavior, wouldn't you? That's why I think the Buddha would definitely set down vows saying that we have to recycle and to curtail consumption.

Being Mindful of Our Actions

Mindfulness also enables us to be aware if we are about to act destructively as we go through the day. Mindfulness says, "Uh oh! I'm getting angry," or "I'm being greedy," or "I'm feeling jealous." Then we can apply the various antidotes the Buddha taught to help us calm our minds. For example, if we discover we are annoyed and anger is arising, we can stop and look at the situation from the other person's point of view. When we do this, we recognize they want to be happy, and because they aren't happy, they are doing that action we find objectionable. Then instead of harming them out of anger, we will be more compassionate and understanding, and will work with them to negotiate an agreement.

But how do we do this when a quarrel is just about to start or we're already in the middle of one? We have to practice beforehand, in our meditation practice. In the heat of the situation, it is difficult to remember what the Buddha taught if we haven't practiced it already when we were calm and peaceful. In the same way that a football team practices on a regular basis, we need to meditate on patience and to recite prayers daily to get well-trained. Then when we encounter a situation in daily life, we will be able to use the teachings.

Offering Our Food

Another practice to increase our mindfulness and help us remember our motivation is offering our food before we eat. We imagine the food to be blissful wisdom nectar -- something very delicious that increases our bliss and wisdom, not our attachment, when we eat. Then we imagine a small Buddha made of light at our heart. When we eat, we offer this nectar to the Buddha at our heart. The Buddha radiates light that fills us up. To do this, you don't need to sit in perfect meditation position in the middle of a restaurant! You can visualise and contemplate in this way while waiting for the food. While your companions or business associates continue to chat, you can do this visualisation and offer your food to the Buddha without anyone knowing. Sometimes, for example, when you're at home with your family, you can pause and focus on

offering your food. It's very nice for a family to recite together a prayer offering their food. I stayed with one family and their six-year-old son led us in reciting the prayer. It was very touching.

When you eat, eat mindfully. Be aware of the effort other people put into growing, transporting, and preparing the food. Realize your interdependence with other living beings and how much benefit you have received from them, such as the food we eat. If we reflect in this way before we eat, we will feel very happy and grateful when we eat, and we will eat more mindfully too. And if we eat mindfully, we won't overeat, and then we won't have to spend so much money on special diets to lose weight!

It is important to eat in a dignified manner. Sometimes we see people in a cafeteria line who haven't even paid for the food yet and are already shoveling it in. This is eating on automatic. It resembles a dog who runs to the bowl and slurps up the food. When we do this reflection and offer our food to the Buddha at our heart, we eat slower and are more relaxed. This is how human beings eat.

Reviewing the Day

In this way, we maintain mindfulness and enrich our kind heart as we go through the day. When we come home in the evening, instead of collapsing in front of the TV or dropping on the bed and falling asleep, we can take a few minutes to sit quietly by ourselves. We reflect about and come to terms with what happened during the day. We look back over our day and think, "What went well today? Did I act with a kind heart?" We notice the instances when we acted kindly and rejoice. We dedicate that merit, that positive potential, for the enlightenment of ourselves and others.

In reviewing the day, we may discover that we were angry, jealous, or greedy. We didn't realize it at the time when it was happening. But looking back over the day, we don't feel so good about what happened. It may have been our attitude, or what we said to somebody, or how we acted. To remedy this, we develop regret and do some purification practice so we can forgive ourselves and let that negative energy go. In this way, we "clean up" emotionally and resolve any uncomfortable feelings or misdirected actions that may have arisen during the day. Having done this, our sleep will be peaceful. When you lie down, imagine the Buddha sitting on your pillow and put your head in the Buddha's lap when you go to sleep. This is very comforting and helps you to remember the Buddha's good qualities and to have better dreams.

Our Life Becomes Meaningful

Practicing Dharma is not difficult or time consuming. We always have time; there are always 24 hours in a day. If we direct our mind in a positive direction, we can transform whatever action we do into the path to enlightenment. In this way, the Dharma becomes part of our life in an organic way. Getting up in the morning is Dharma, eating and going to work is Dharma, sleeping is Dharma. By transforming our attitude in the midst of daily activities, our life becomes very meaningful.

*of what you are thinking,
living on "automatic pilot"*





Looking Deeply into Dependent Origination

by Venerable Neng Rong

When the Buddha was a prince, he tried to understand what life was all about. He saw a farmer whipping the buffalo to plough the field of mud. In the mud there were earthworms and small birds came and ate the earthworms, and then the bigger bird came and ate the smaller bird. He contemplated that everyone in the world, including the farmer, the buffalo, the earthworms, the birds wish to be happy, but why they are killing each other?

We caught ourselves in suffering, yet we longed for happiness. We worked so hard throughout our life, and at the end of it, we will die. We always have the sense of insecurity, so we continue trying hard to earn more money in order to be happier. We work hard to earn the things we don't have. However, those happiness do not last forever, it is only temporary. Likewise, we will not have all material things, power and belongings we have today forever too.

We spend our time, day and night, working but there is something to ponder, what are we trying to fulfil? How many things that we want to fulfil that are necessary? How many percent of them is not a necessity? How many percent of the things I did in a day are helping me to becoming wiser? What is the real meaning of life? According to the sutra, when the Buddha attained enlightenment, the first part of the night he practiced meditation and developed mental power. His mind was very peaceful and he recollected his past life in detail. It is like a pond of water when all dirt subsided, the water is crystal clear.

Then he further continued to focus and developed the second level of mental power, which he could see the past life of others and understood the universal law of cause and effect. He realised that in order to have ultimate happiness, there must be certain actions to cultivate and achieve it. Also, he realised that wholesome action will reap good result, while unwholesome one will reap bad consequences.

After realising these truths, his mental power further developed and he attained the highest level of concentration and wisdom, in which he understood the dependence of causes and conditions – also known as dependent origination. He realised that desire and ignorance lead to suffering. If we can eliminate desire and ignorance, avoid bad thoughts and action, suffering can be ceased.

We tend to be misled by the word "I". What is "I"? Which one is "I"? Is it the eyes? The nose? The body? In fact is that "I" is made up by many organ parts, blood vessels and cells, and they are constantly changing. There is no one moment that we remain the same. "I" is not a fixed entity, "I" is only for us to use for ease of communication. We failed to see the truth that "I" is not a fixed entity, because changes are happening continually that we did not realize we are changing. As such, we have the strong sense of self; consequently developed self-centeredness in us. We became very protective and attached towards ourselves.

When someone commented on us that we are not handsome or not pretty, we can be so upset by their words. That is due to us clinging to ourselves so much so that we became upset when someone judges us. In reality, perspectives on handsome and beautiful is also dependent originated; it depends on our upbringing, culture, environment. And the scale of handsome and pretty are different in everyone.

Another example would be a piece of artistic artwork. Some artistic people would admire at a piece of artwork, which people like us would never understood what the piece of artwork is all about. This then explains the different level of judging the value of the artwork.

We do not understand self and dependent origination, hence it causes us to have a lot of suffering. We cling to ourselves, which is actually not necessary. If we can let go ignorance and attachment to self, then we can attain perfect wisdom and enlightenment like the Buddha.

When the Buddha attained enlightenment, he could see clearly how things exist in this world. Because our minds' awareness is not subtle and refined, so we are yet to realize the truth. So the Buddha explained dependent origination in a simpler way to us. If we can relate all happenings and existence in this world to the teaching of dependent origination and not judge from a self-perspective, but instead try to relate to what the Buddha has taught, then we can develop to be a more flexible person and reduce self-centeredness, as we understand that things happen with causes and conditions. During a situation when a factor (condition) is missing, we are able to make use of existing factors around us to change immediately and fit into the situation. If conditions are not as expected, we are flexible enough to change and work through it. We will also be more peaceful and less emotional when condition changes.

To go in depth into the teaching of dependent origination, we first must understand the definition of dependent origination. Dependent origination is defined in the sutra as

*"When this exist, that comes to be.
With arising of this, that arises,
When this does not arises, that does not comes to be,
With the cessation of this, that ceases."*



It is because of "this" "that" arises. "This" and "that" are dependent originated. If we cease ignorance and desire, suffering will cease. Everything that we see, are rely on conditions to support for it to arise. The teaching is indeed very profound and not easy to be understood. To further explain this, Buddha taught us to look at things from a different perspective.

When we look at our baby photo and compare it to ourselves today, we see that they are not identical. We grow and change because there are causes and conditions that help us to grow. We can then understand that the baby and us today are not identical, but yet they are not totally different. "This" and "that" are not permanent themselves, we can neither say that they are connected nor disconnected. They have links to each other which are the causes and conditions.

Things are in the process of changing, it is just the phenomenon has changed into a new one. The clouds that we see in the sky also changes shape with the wind strength and direction. It does not remain the same form at all times. When the shape changes, it does not mean that the previous clouds have disappear (fall), and new clouds have formed (arises). It seems like they are disconnected with different identity, but in reality both the clouds formation are inter-linked to each other with the conditions that are constantly changing them (wind direction, temperature, water vapour, etc).

All phenomena happen due to causes and condition, and it is constantly changing so there is no fixed identity. The identity that we have in our understanding is only an appearance. So in real fact, things do not really arise or cease.

The reason why we fall into the trap of something arises and something fall is because we cling on to a phenomenon as an identity. The Buddha taught us to observe things as it rises and falls, and ask us not to attach to it. If a person can understand things rising and falling, then Buddha will continue to teach him to observe, what is rising and what is falling? We will then understand that thing does not have a fixed identity; hence there is no rising or falling of a phenomenon, only the causes and condition that changes the phenomenon. With this, we will be able to understand the teaching of causes and conditions better.

There is some principle that the law of causes and condition follows. There must be some causes that lead to arising of the effect. We do not wait for causes and conditions for us to achieve happiness, in fact we could create the causes and conditions that lead to happiness. This is the law of cause and effect. We try to create the correct causes and conditions, so that they lead us to the end product that we want. The Buddha realised this truth when he attained enlightenment. Through his profound mental power, he saw how everything in the universal happen due to causes and conditions; and all events follow the law of cause and effect – this law is not created by the Buddha.

If we cultivate wholesome deeds, then it will lead to happiness. The causes and condition are possible to be created by us, and they are subject to change. We can change the causes and conditions to go to the direction that we desire, because things do not have a fixed identities, they are empty in nature hence improvement is possible.

People cling on to themselves, which leads to a lot of desire, greed, hatred, also rebirth and death. Everyone longs for continuous existence, hence constantly searching for a new life. Dependent origination tells us about the principle of rebirth, how it leads us from one life to another life, how rebirth repeats in cycle. It is actually because of us clinging on to continuous existence, it is us who seek for the rebirth. To attain liberation (nibbana) is to be able to let go attachment, to see the truth of not clinging to self (non-self).

The twelve links of dependent origination basically explain how we go about the cycle of life and death. Due to our ignorance and desire, we create a lot of unwholesome karma, actions, speech and thoughts. At the end of our death, we still seek for new life. It explains how we go about rebirth again and again.

Ignorance and mental formation are the past causes. We did not attain enlightenment in the past life, hence we still have attachment and crave for continuous existence. This craving became a motivational force to search for a new life. The karma that accumulated in the past life will then dictate who you will be reborn to. A new life begins when the sperm and ovum met and fertilised, that is when the consciousness starts to develop. In Buddhism, that is where life starts. Then organs start to develop, the embryo grows and develop. Consequently, the body and mind develop. After which, six senses develop, the touch, taste etc. With six senses, when we have physical contact, feeling arises. These are known as the present effect.

With feelings, we start to have desire and crave towards things, feelings, and thoughts. These lead to attachment and clinging, and hence craving for continuous existence. These are the present causes.

With the cultivation of present causes, it leads to future effects, which are rebirth and death. The cycle repeats if the links are not breakthrough, these are the twelve links of dependent origination.

We can shuffle some of the causes and conditions in order to end the cycle. The point to tackle in order to break the link is at the "contact". At this point, when we have any contact, if we can contemplate according to the teachings, we can break the link of dependent origination. The Buddha advised that if we can control our thoughts and develop understanding at the point of "contact", that would be optimum. Vipassana meditation focuses and contemplates on the feelings that arise from contact, yet not to go to like nor dislike them. When we can contemplate and understanding the teachings at "contact" or "feelings", there will be no desire and no clinging.



We can also understand the twelve links of dependent origination by looking from a different perspective. How does clinging come about? It is because we have desire. How does desire come about? It is because we have sensation. How does sensation come about? It is because we have contact. How do we have contact? It is because we have six senses. How do we have six senses? It is because we have this body. How does this life come about? It is because of our past karma and ignorance.

This present life, if we can contemplate with wisdom, then we can breakthrough ignorance. If we don't cultivate unwholesome and ignorant actions, speech and thoughts, then we will not create karma to be reborn.

Next, how can we practice to cultivate mindfulness and be alert when we have contact, so that we do not jump into conclusions of liking and disliking? How can we make sure we develop mindfulness and contemplate according to the teachings? The Buddha taught us the Four Noble Truths, and the Practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. The practice of the Noble Eightfold Path is actually the teaching of Dependent Origination in action – which is also known as the teachings of Middle Path. The teaching of Dependent Origination is telling us not to fall into the two extremes of attaching to things as permanent or everything is nothing at all (nihilism). Dependent Origination emphasises that everything is dependent on causes and conditions; they are in the process of changing and do not have a fixed identity. They are not void (nothing) all together, at the same time, they are not permanent.

Practising the Noble Eightfold Path is to practise to have right speech, right action, right livelihood according to the Buddha's teachings, and not get carried away by our greed, hatred and delusions. Right speech reminds us not to tell lies to cover our own mistakes, avoid gossips, backbite, and idle talk – things which are meaningless (movie star, private life, etc). We must have effort and determination to remind ourselves on the bad thoughts, unwholesome speech or action, and avoid committing them.

On the other hand, we need to put in effort to encourage ourselves to do more good deeds. We can also practice meditation with effort and determination. We should avoid habits that are not conducive in developing our wisdom (e.g., laziness, providing excuses, complaints).

With right understanding, we should learn to control our arrogance and ego, and not allowing self-centeredness to grow. We need to have the right understanding to decide on right or wrong, good or bad. With right understanding, we can slowly develop wisdom in us.

The teaching of Dependent Origination is indeed profound. It reminds us to reduce our self-centeredness, to practise meditation, to understand the universal law and develop wisdom.



The Noble Eightfold Path also corresponds to the teaching of Dependent Origination. In our practice, from the time we begin to the time we attain enlightenment; we do not depend on one teaching/method alone. Sometimes we do meditation, sometimes we practice generosity, sometimes we listen to talks or Dhamma discussions, we practice right thoughts, right speech, and right actions. Many methods can be used to help us develop our wisdom. The way to develop our wisdom is dependent originated; the practice itself is also dependent originated.

The teaching/method of practice itself is also dependent originated, it is empty in nature. Some people cling on to the teaching/method even though they have let go all the other attachments. The Buddha reminded us that the teaching/method is a tool to help us to develop the wisdom and we should not cling on to it. If we attach to it, we will not be able to attain enlightenment.

We rely on cultivating wholesome deeds to get rid of bad habits and unwholesomeness. With that, we will develop some good merits. People like to cultivate merits, and thought that with merits, they will have a good live and becoming rich. However, for one who wants to have true realisation, merits should not be clung on to. As Buddha says, merit is like a hot burning old coin; though it is valuable, it is untouchable. It is a tool for us to practice and develop wisdom. We can rely on merits to get rid of defilements, then we should rely on equanimity to let go of merits. Merits itself are also dependent on causes and conditions, and they are empty in nature.

By letting go attachment to merits, method of practice, and having the right understanding of the teaching of Dependent Origination, we can realise the state of Nibbana.



The Heart of the Buddha's Teachings

by Jim Teoh

Firstly, the "Heart", in this context, does not mean the pulsating "heart" that we always know, the "heart" here means the middle of it. Just like when you are peeling a lettuce, as you peel to the end you will reach the "heart". Rather than calling it the "heart", we can say that there is a "foundation" and this "foundation" is very important. Just like when we are building something, if the foundation is not strong enough, then whatever we build on it would not be stable.

Therefore, it is very important that we build a very strong foundation in our Buddhist practice. Now, for anybody to start a good practice in Buddhism, we got to develop a very good foundation. What comes after that will be the "building" and it is not as important as the foundation. The way we can build this solid foundation is through understanding what the Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path is. This is called the "Turning of the Wheel" sermon or discourse. This sermon or discourse outlined the Buddha's whole teachings just as he understood what the nature of existences is and how do we make the best of this "nature of existences". In fact, the last sermon is also preached in a similar way. We can see how much importance the Buddha placed in The Four Noble Truths and this by itself is the "heart" of the Buddha's teachings.

The Four Noble Truths is about the nature of existences, about what is happening to us, at every moment. This is what the Buddha refers to as the Dhamma. Everything that happens to us teaches us, but the Buddha manages to put it in a much better way, making it into a system, the Four Noble Truths. The reason why we call The Four Noble Truths as "Truth" is because it is true and not subjected to argument.

The First Noble Truth is "There is suffering /unsatisfactory in life" and no one is exempted from it. The Buddha used the word "Dukkha" which means anything that causes us discomfort or possibly uneasiness and sadness. Things or events that bring us happiness can also turned into "Dukkha" in the next moment. Some of us might deny having these feelings or thoughts, these sorts of unhappiness, just like people denying there is a climate change.

So when we talk about the Buddha's teachings, which is about life. Your unsatisfactoriness and my unsatisfactoriness are the same. People who live 2500 years ago, in the Buddha's time have fear and worries while people who live 2500 years later, in our time, have fear and wor-

ries. The fear might be different from back then, such as we are afraid that we might be knocked down by a car, but 2500 years ago people are afraid of being knocked down by a chariot. Thus, the Noble Truth is universal and no one is exempted from it. This is a simple and plain truth, but the good thing about the Buddha's teachings is in the Second Noble Truth.

The Second Noble Truth is "How does this suffering / unsatisfactory comes about?" It is easy to understand the first truth, which is we have worries in our lives, but more importantly, we should understand that our actions and reaction is causing these worries. If we can do it skilfully, then there will be no problem. If we do it unskilfully, then there will be plenty of problems. Skilful actions also refer to actions that we do which are free from attachment; unskilful actions are actions that we do which are filled with attachments. An example would be helping someone just because we want to show how great we are or because we expected gratitude back from the person or simply because we wanted something in return.

Next, where do these skilful and unskilful things or possibly the action and reaction come from? Before we understand this, we have to understand the nature of impermanence. Taking ourselves as an example, we have changed physically and mentally. The physical change is simple as we can see it when we grow up. However, there are more subtle changes in every moment, when new cells are produced. Let us compare ourselves now with a childhood photograph of ourselves. What caused the difference?

Apart from human, other things are also subjected to change. Let us take a look at the tables and chairs. Our first impression would be they do not change, they are fixed. After a few years, the tables and chairs will have slight differences and longer, they might not be there anymore. We can notice the changes because of the passing of time, but nonetheless, the changes still exist even if no time has passed. If we cling onto these existing things, it will lead us to unsatisfactory when the things change.

The way we can build this solid foundation is through understanding what the Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path is.



The changes in our mind are more drastic. When we hear something and it affects us, we change a little. Sometimes we might have some drastic changes. An example we are so muddle with our thoughts and worries, however after listening to a pleasant Dhamma talk, our mind changes. Another example would be broccoli, many people dislike broccoli when they were young, however grew to love it when they are older. After understanding these, we have to be more aware of the changes in our mind. This impermanence affects both the body and the mind. If we were to grip onto whatever we think of now and do not accept the changes that it will undergo, then we will get into suffering.

We can see that the Buddha taught us in depth on the Second Noble Truth. Suffering arises when we cling onto things. Clinging on to good things and bad things will both lead us to suffering. This clinging/attachment come from our desires and the desires come from us. A person developed a desire and it leads to attachment and then suffering.

In the Buddhist context, a human sense bases are made up of six (6) parts. The five (5) parts namely the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the skin/body which forms the body. Another part is the mind/consciousness. In this case, we can put the mind equivalent to brain. These are called the bases to receive signal and to do actions. When we have this body and mind, we will come into contact with things. "Contact" means something meet with something. So when we talk about "contact of eye", it is the contact of eyes with the object, which is called form. What you perceive with your eyes is called form. Ears come into contact with sound. The ears can't see and the eyes can't hear. So it has to be matched appropriately.

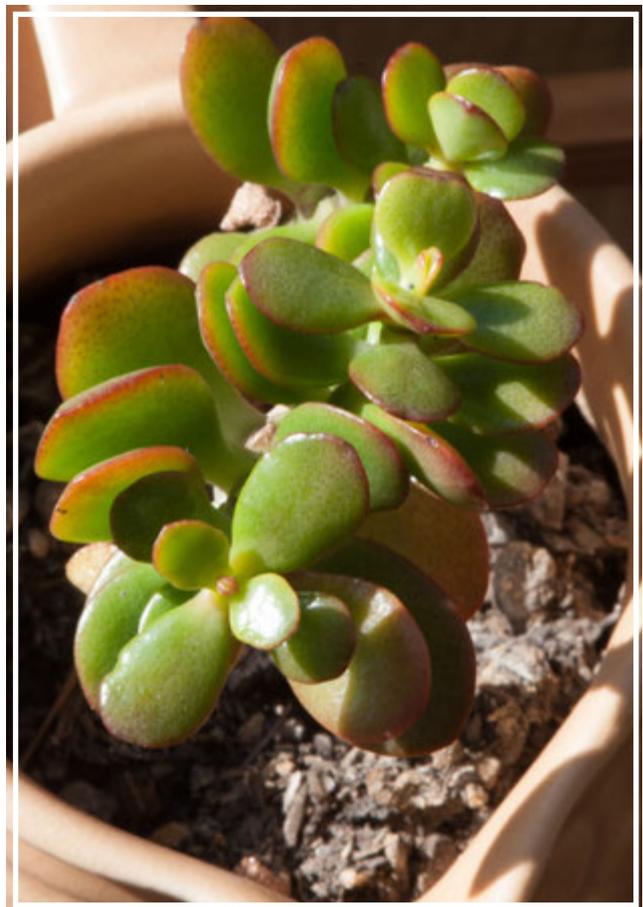
When you have contact, there would be certain sensation arises. While these sensations are working, you are conscious of it. So there is this "consciousness". When you see something you have to be conscious about it, when you are unconscious, you don't see anything. Supposedly someone flash a light on you and you can't see a thing temporarily. Therefore there is no contact even though the eye is there. The eye, object and eye consciousness must be present to see something. The same goes for the ear, nose and so on.

Pleasantness and unpleasantness depend very much on our past. The way we are taught to think, from the day you are born, you are trained to think in a certain way. The thinking itself builds up our memory, and it builds up our experiences. So when you see the Buddha, due to your past, when you were a kid, your parents brought you to temple and pray to it, if I were to take the Buddha statue and throw it on the floor, what will happen? You all will jump up because you consider that to be a holy object. When this sensation starts to develop into perception, we perceive that to be the Buddha. In future, when you come into contact with certain sensation, this sensation will generate "this is a Buddha image". And then from there, the mental formation starts. This perception is like recognition of condition, knowing what the thing is. And when we know what the thing is, we start to put

value onto it. These four things (consciousness, sensation, perception and mental formation) are the working of the mind. That is how the mind works and it works in conjunction with the body.

After the "contact" develops "sensation", the "sensation" develops "craving". when the will arises, I want to do something, the craving arises. If the craving is strong enough, you want to have one of them. If you think that image is a horrible thing, then the will is to get rid of it. If you are not careful, if you haven't changed your craving to other craving, this will develop into "clinging". You will cling stronger and stronger onto it. When people that say rude things to us, why don't we like it? It is because of our perception, it is because our mental formation. It is because of the sensation we have in our ear. When you see something you don't like, it is the same process. When you see somebody you don't know, yet we develop dislike for that person. It is because that poor guy resemble someone you don't like, the mental formation relate them together. Putting the work of the mind in simple context, when you see something, the eye comes into contact with the form, and therefore we develop this "craving". This "craving" could be positive craving or negative craving. The negative craving means we dislike it, aversion arises.

Since you know that, it is because of the body and mind, and their working, that bring about this unsatisfactoriness, anxiety, worry and so on, how can you get rid of it? Before we say how, is there a possibility to get rid of it? Looking at the whole sequence of things happening,



each one is linked to the other, for instance, clinging is link to craving. You can say that because of sensation, craving arises; because of craving, clinging arises; because of clinging arises, unsatisfactoriness arises. So we can always stop by breaking the chain. The Buddha talks about disciplining the mind, training to not have unskilful actions and reactions; what he focuses is to be aware of this "sensation" and see what develop later. If you are trained, cut of the "link", nothing will happen, "I lost it. That is it". So this is the thing the Buddha taught, unsatisfactoriness and stress can be removed.

The Third Noble Truth is called the cessation of suffering. In Pali words, it is called "Dukkha nirodha". The Buddha being a great teacher has a lot of disciples that really treat him respectfully and love him. When the Buddha passed away, his body was lying there, the enlightened ones came and look at it, they said, "Aha, that is what happen, that is what it is, he is dead," and they went away. The unenlightened one came and they cried, banging the head on the floor and grieved. When you talk about skilful and unskilful action this is what it is. You do the things, see the result for yourself and do the right thing.

After the Buddha talked about the third truth, he also gave us the path. It is called the "AriyaMagga", the Noble Eightfold Path (Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, Right Effort, Right Action, Right Speech, Right Livelihood). This Noble Eightfold Path will enable us to overcome unsatisfactoriness by making us to see things clearer. Right now we are on autopilot, our everyday action is driven by our intuition, a lot of those things that we do bring unsatisfaction. But when we start to get a clearer picture about it, then maybe we can start to walk the path of more skilful action. The important part of the Eightfold Path, is to understand these (Buddha's Teaching) and to understand these, we have to develop mindfulness.

The Buddha talks about Four Foundation of Mindfulness: be mindful of the body, the sensation, the emotion, the sort of thoughts (beneficial and unbeneficial thoughts). So from there we can start to develop more understanding. And mindfulness is usually very closely link to our meditation. This mindfulness meditation is to be aware of how your mind works. Once we develop mindfulness, we know how we come to like things, how we come to dislike things.

In mindfulness meditation, we talk about developing concentration through mindfulness. And to do this we need to have effort, this effort requires patience and energy. According to the Buddha, a proper meditation is to sit there to develop this concentration, this mindfulness, so that you can see all these things (Dhamma) happening. Usually in our daily life, we don't see any of these things happen at all. We just go along with it, in our autopilot. So when we start to develop mindfulness, we can see these things. A lot of things which we do are unskilful. In our daily life, through our bodily action, sometime we tend to do things against the Five Precepts, such as, stealing, performing adultery or improper conduct (e.g. runaway with someone's husband, wife or partner), tak-

In mindfulness meditation, we talk about developing concentration through mindfulness. And to do this we need to have effort, this effort requires patience and energy.

ing intoxicant. If we have understood the unwholesome actions, we will start to try to avoid them. Right action means to avoid these unwholesome action. You notice that right action did not say that the things you must do. When we look into these unwholesome actions, killing will bring stress, stealing will bring stress, committing adultery now you might be happy for the time being, but it becomes stress, lying bring stress, taking intoxicant blind you completely and bring you more stress. So we try to avoid these, it is called the right action.

Then we have the right livelihood which is about how you earn your money, how you live in this society. This is because we have to make sure that our livelihood does not cause suffering to others. During the Buddha's time, he talked about trying not to take up a trade like dealing with arms, dealing with poison and intoxicant. Nowadays we got so many kinds of job, try to avoid anything that will bring suffering to other people.

So these three (right action, right speech and right livelihood) are the ethics of Buddhism. You will find that this ethic is quite similar to many other religions, but the difference is that the ethic comes from within you through understanding rather than being enforced from outside. The Buddha didn't go to a mountain and say "All servant, my grand fine god give me the power to tell you to do this, this and this" It is not something blindly like that, the Buddha tells you the reason. When you commit stealing, it is unsatisfactory, lying is unsatisfactory, and you having sex with your good friend partner you have enjoyment but what can happen next? So the Buddha told us to avoid all these things, and most of us can avoid it. For those who cannot avoid it, if they undergo the training they will be able to do it. And the training is to be more mindful and see the nature of things. Things happen so fast that we just experience the result. If we start to develop mindfulness, we can really follow this sequence (the chain of link mention above). By following this sequence with understanding, this will give us the ability to cut the link. And when you start to cut one of the links, the unsatisfactoriness or the suffering gets lesser and lesser. The best thing will be eradicate suffering totally. Whatever you do as a human being, you will be



undergoing "contact" to get the "sensation", after "sensation" you can choose to do nothing about it is. Unpleasant sensation, I do nothing about it; pleasant sensation, I do nothing about it. And then you can make sure that unsatisfactoriness won't come. So the Buddha talks about this, understanding the sequence of it and going back and see one causes another. The Discourse on Causation, "Paticcasamuppada" is the teaching that deals with this chain of link.

When you practice and develop the above, naturally our wisdom will arise and be much wiser. That wisdom allows us to have right understanding and then the right thought. Right understanding means understanding the nature of things. This understanding also allows us to see that things that happen are impermanent. Things evolve, things change, from the time we see the things to the time we act on it, there are changes. So all the above practice will allow you to see the true nature of things, allow you to know that which unskillful action will bring about unsatisfactoriness, and perform skillful action through development of awareness of sensations and act accordingly. Now when you look into this, it doesn't mean that we just shut ourselves away from things, it is just that we are quite clear in seeing the coming of these craving and start to do things that are free from craving.

So in Buddhism is not about dictating the disciple or the followers what to do but it is just giving them choices. For people like me who is many years in Buddhism, I can see even right now, sometimes I follow the desire and I been to the "dump". After I go to the "dump" a few times, I am not going to give in to this desire. Next time when it happens again, I will look into another way, by following another way I got no problem and become more peaceful, so this is the training. So we keep on training ourselves, from moment to moment, from day to day. And this training is what the Buddha taught during the first time he preached and also the last time he preached. There are many other things that he taught but he taught this one again and again to make sure that his disciples remember them after his death. So if it is that important to the Buddha, it must be important to us. If one is serious in following the path that the Buddha has taught, we got to develop some understanding of it. And when we develop understanding of it, we have to commit ourselves to do it.

Samsara is imperfect. But thankfully, it is impermanent too. People will come and go in your lives. Things will keep changing.





感情與理智的平衡

上能下融法師

今天要談的是感情與理智的平衡。很多人常常問：“佛陀教我們做人要有智慧，有智慧是不是就沒有感情？”在還沒有討論這個問題之前，首先，讓我們先來談“什麼是感情？”

什麼是感情？

人與人之間的交情叫感情？我們時常用感情這兩個字，卻往往沒辦法把感情這兩個字解釋清楚。其實感情並不單純是人與人之間的一個關聯或感覺。感情是情識的一個作用。當我們面對外境，無論是人是事物時，會產生的一種感受。這個感受是怎樣產生？是由於我們的意識認識了一個東西，對它產生“喜歡”或“不喜歡”。喜歡的，我們就開始染著於它，染著久了就會執著於它。當我們要把這個物體和我們分開的時候，我們就會難分難捨，這便是感情產生的過程。

感情與情愛相關，但並不完全與真理相應。當我們的六根對外境，無論是與人，事情，或語言接觸，有所認識後，我們就開始去分別“喜歡”與“不喜歡”。這個意識其實是以“自我”為主導。我們沒有透視外境的真相，我們看到的只是表象。

例如，當我們去逛街時看到一個皮包，見了喜歡就買，並沒有想清楚。買了皮包把它帶回家，放久了就會褪色，兩年後很可能就丟掉了。但我們往往不會想得那麼遠，我們只知道目前非常喜歡這個皮包。在商場看到一個新的iPhone, iPod 或衣服時，我們常常會流連忘返。如果一件衣服的價錢太高，不捨得買，我們走開了又依依不捨的一直回頭望，我們從沒想到這件衣服的真实性何在？最後，咬緊牙根把它買下來了。買回家後，我們穿過多少次呢？過了幾年可能我們也不要它了。但是我們常常都在做這樣的事，也沒有想過它是會變的。當我們的肉眼看到這件衣服時便產生眼識，然後產生一個意識：“我很喜歡這件衣服”，我們被它的外表迷惑了。我們的意識執著於我們的六根所接觸到東西，對自我身心也把它當做實在的“我”。“我”要把這件衣服變成“我”的衣服。當這個意識產生時，我們便有一種染著、貪戀的感覺，久了就會變成感情。當我們要把它拔開的時候就會很痛苦。換句話說，這感情是由非正確的自我意識出發，在對自我與對外境都沒有完全正確的認知的情況下產生的。我們隨著表象產生喜怒哀樂，把它當成己有，認為是我所有的。當我所愛的東西受到威脅或變動的時候，我們就發動自衛的能力保護它，進而產生憤怒、瞋恨、嫉妒等種種煩惱。

什麼是理智？

世俗說一個人比較理智，一般指他比較不情緒化，遇到

事情他不會太感情用事而能夠以事論事。從佛法的角度來說，不被感情迷惑是一個基礎。因為感情都是從自我出發，所以往往會從我的角度去看待事物，也會因為“我”喜歡這個人或這件事而去找理由將它合理化，這些都不是真正的理智與平衡。

例如，一位大哥看到有兩個弟弟吵架，如果大哥比較喜歡小弟弟，但這一次是小弟弟做錯事，大哥就不能一直偏袒小弟，這樣是感情用事。如果大哥能夠針對事情跟他分析，雖然一向不是太喜歡大弟弟，大哥還是會稱讚他。因為這件事情大弟弟做得對。這樣就是依理行事而不是以感情來處理事情。從世俗的角度，能夠做到這一點已經很不錯了。

從佛法的角度，除了能夠以事論事，不感情用事之外，還要能夠以智慧去看待，更深一層的了解事物的真相，能夠了解一切是無常、無我、緣起的。我們所執著的東西，喜歡的東西，染著的東西，事實上並不是實在不變的，不要被表象騙倒。表象是由種種因素組合而成。因緣條件不斷的在無常變化中，可以隨時又呈現出新的現象，這要看我們提供怎樣的因緣條件。這也說明我們可以培養善的因緣條件創造美好的未來。

在這樣的思想之下，我們對於自己所看到的東西就不會太過染著，因為我們知道它是可變的。當因緣條件和合的時候，它有它的功能，我們可以利用它做自利以及利他的事情。但我們心裏要做好準備，知道它會變的，如何提供適當的因緣，盡量保潤它的功能，讓它的功用發揮到極致。所謂變，可以變得更好，也可以變差。我們要隨時提供好的因緣條件，讓它越來越好。了解緣起無常的可塑性，我們看待事情的時候，就不會為一點點挫折困難而耿耿於懷，覺得是死路一條或世界末日，條條大路通羅馬。佛法所謂的理智是能夠依中道來行事。

什麼是中道？

佛法常常提到中道，一些人認為是中庸之道，也以為是找個平衡點，就像站在蹺蹺板的中間不動，找到一個平衡點，之後不能再移左或移右，否則就會失去平衡，這不就變成一個木頭人或機械人，不敢動了嗎？

其實，佛法的中道是指在任何的情況之下都能保持一顆清晰、平和的心。即使在惡劣或非常歡喜熱鬧的情況下，也能保持一顆清楚安詳的心，還是一樣的明朗自在，這才是處於中道。也有很多人認為佛教的中道就是生活得不苦不樂，不吃太多也不吃太少，這只是從外表來看而已，真正的是要從內心來看。佛法的中道強調我們看清事物的真相，不要被表象迷惑。能透視事物的真相，就不會情緒起



伏。中道不是叫我們不做判斷，也不是叫我們做一個木頭人。而是要我們以智導行，以智化情，以明澈清淨的心面對事情，不產生染著與煩惱。

比如，媽媽煮了很好吃的東西，我們不應該說這太好吃了，我不能吃好吃的東西否則我會染著，這個是很消極的修行，是在逃避。如果知道自己做不到而逃避，其實也是我們的貪染。這種方法只是暫時的克制自己。有好吃的東西給我們，我們能夠適量的吃，同時抱著一顆感恩的心，感謝媽媽煮了這麼好吃的食物，希望以後能夠報答媽媽的恩惠。心保持安穩，感恩而不染著，才是行中道。中道是指我們的心能夠時時保持清楚平穩，在處理事情或個人修行的時候，能有都以一顆明淨安穩的心引導我們的行為與感情。

我們要依中道的智慧去處理事情，做到恰到好處又與佛法真理相應。我們現在的智慧不夠，不能像佛陀與大菩薩一樣清淨自在。佛菩薩已經證得無我的智慧，透視緣起的道理，所以他們處理事情總是那樣的圓融，不會讓我們難受，又能讓我們覺悟真理。我們沒智慧，有時候總是好心做壞事，把事情越搞越糟。

要怎樣讓處於中道？

首先，我們要了解一切都是緣起，是由很多因緣條件促合而成，同時也是無常變化的。當我們在考慮和面對一件事物時，多從各方面去考量促成這件事情的因素。透過耳朵能夠聽到的，眼睛能夠看到的，做比較合理的分析以及全面的思考，在思考的過程中，以無私的心態去思考，不要只是想到自己的利益。盡量把“我”放開，不要想到事情對“我”會有什麼影響。比如，慧命社要舉行菩提之夜，在考慮到入門大廳的佈置，或許每個委員都有不一樣的喜好，但是我們應盡量考慮到不同人的需求。如果有人從那個角度走進來，他會怎樣想，觀眾來的時候，他會希望得到什麼樣的招待，我們不要只想，“我不喜歡這樣或我喜歡那樣，我們做方便我們的就好”。我們要考量來的觀眾會有那些人，比如有年長者來，現場應該有座位讓他們坐等等。放開自己而從各個角度去思考，這樣做出來的事情會比較周全。尤其是當我們服務大眾的時候，我們要盡量把自己放在別人的立場，考慮對方的需要，而不是一廂情願的依我們自己的喜好去做，這樣是很難做得圓融的，同時也容易落入了自我感情的意識，而非理智。佛教所說的理智，是要以智慧去看待，依中道去行事。

感情與理智

如果沒有愛，我們的社會不是冷冰冰嗎？要怎樣有愛同時又有理智去面對事情與表達關懷。一般認為沒有感情就會痛苦。我們要了解感情也是世間的一個現象，它是會變的。所謂感情，它是從自我意識出發的。我們不了解對方隨時在變，我們自己也一直在變，還有感情本身亦在變，這三者沒有一個是不變的，只是我們以為它不變而已！其實是種種因緣條件促成了這樣的一個感覺，這個感覺本身就沒有實在性。

感情的情愛與佛菩薩的慈悲是不同的。佛給我們很多的溫暖，我們和佛陀在一起的時候會感覺很舒服。佛給予我們愛護但沒有染著。他能夠給眾生這麼好的感受，甚至能夠透過愛護、慈悲與光明，引導眾生得到解脫，佛依然還是那麼樣的自在。為什麼當我們愛護一個人，希望他成長的時候，就不能像佛一樣的自在呢？

身為媽媽的愛護她的孩子，為甚麼會產生痛苦？小孩不讀書，她痛苦；他讀書，她要他讀得更好，也痛苦。為什麼我們的愛會產生煩惱，佛菩薩的愛就不會產生煩惱呢？因為我們都從自我意識出發，當我們產生感覺的時候，這個感覺其實已經不清淨了。我們常常把他當作是自己的。比如他是我的孩子，我們有一種想要控制他的權利，當他不聽話的時候，我們就很煩惱，因為他影響到我們。佛的慈悲不一樣，佛是身心清淨的，他已經斷除煩惱，破除了自我的染著，他沒有像我們一樣的強烈的自我意識，他已經透視了真理。因為慈悲眾生，希望眾生也能得到解脫自在，他了解眾生的可塑性，需要種種的因緣條件去鼓勵他們，所以佛沒有瞋恨，也沒有嫉妒，只是想盡方法來鼓勵引導我們這些眾生。

其實不見得有了理智就不能有感情，我們可以看到佛菩薩都很有理智，但也充滿著慈悲。他們的慈悲是無私無我的，沒有要求回饋的心，也沒有佔有欲。很多人認為如果沒有我，我就不會有推動力去做事，更何況去愛別人。但是佛菩薩很慈悲，希望眾生離苦得樂。他們了解眾生的苦惱，他們也曾經像眾生一樣煩惱，不明白事物的真相，也體會過眾生所經歷的情況。他們知道每一位眾生都可以透過修學得到解脫的，因此，他們不斷的指導眾生。我們要學佛，在修學的時候就應該不斷的向佛菩薩看齊，培養慈悲心。如果我們只求自己解脫，慈悲心就很難生起來，修行成就後就想趕快進入涅槃而不想去幫助眾生。但是，如果在修學的時候也能夠增強慈悲的力量，悲願就能推動我們繼續幫助其他眾生。

怎樣修學才能達到感情與智慧平衡？

剛才我們談到，凡夫因為有自我意識，處處都是我所愛、我所有，一切都從自我出發而難得心的平衡，也很難看清事情的真相。但是，佛菩薩因為他們的智慧，並在修行的過程中培養了慈悲心，所以最後才能達到智慧與感情的平衡。

佛教所說的戒，其實也是以慈悲為本。佛陀制戒是告訴我們，我們自己希望得到快樂，其他眾生也希望得到快樂。因此，我們必須要淨化自己，不要讓我們的行為觸惱他人。持戒讓我的身心能夠安樂，也希望能夠帶給別人安樂。這樣的修學，讓我們的智慧與慈悲同時進步。

還有多聽聞佛法，提升我們對緣起無常的認識與掌握，讓我們不要太自我染著與膨脹，同時能夠珍惜與包容他人。透過聽聞佛法也增強我們對三寶的信念，了解佛的功德，以佛為模範。佛不但自己修學，成道後又以慈悲心廣度眾生，讓兩千六百年以後的我們還有機會學習佛法，讓我們能夠有得度的因緣，我們要感念佛的慈悲。在修學的過程，當我們在增強理智的時候，同時將慈悲心培養起來是很重要的。

菩薩道的修學過程

菩薩的修學最重要的就是發菩提大願。修學者明白了三寶的功德，了解佛的偉大、清淨、慈悲與大智慧，所以要向佛學習，而發起菩提大願，希望有一天能像佛一樣成就佛道，希望能像佛一樣具足慈悲與智慧，以及身心的清淨。

發了菩提願，就要修慈悲行，把我們所學的付之於實踐，幫助眾生。發了菩提願要學習布施，持戒與忍辱。在修行的過程中難免會有不順利的時候，甚至遇到無禮的人，我們要有耐心，不可因此而生氣，應該想方法幫助他。無論



感情 與 理智 的 平衡

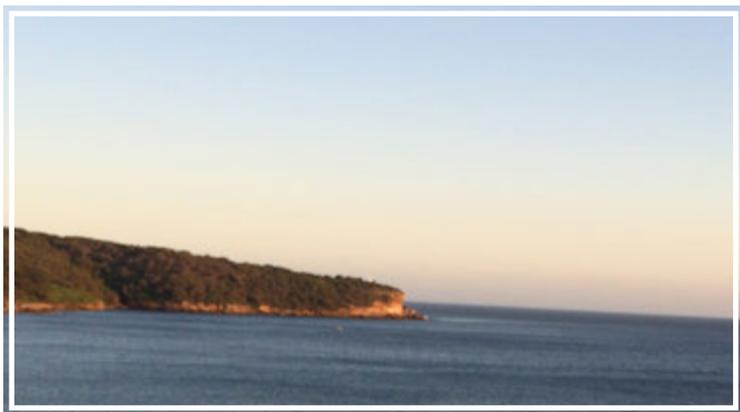
自利或利他方面我們都要精進學習。我們要提起精進力把慈悲心轉成實際的慈悲行。要把慈悲心與慈悲行做得好，我們需要智慧。比如，有時候行布施但沒有做到與法相應，我們也可能從布施當中生起染著。所以在這過程中我們要常常記得佛法，明白緣起無常無我的道理，了解我今天有能力布施是因為種種因緣條件促合而成。我們要感謝對方成就我們，讓我們有布施的機會，感謝父母師長的栽培，讓我們有今天的能力。在日常生活中常常反觀自己，觀察什麼是緣起，什麼是無常無我，體會佛所說的真理。當我們面對逆境的時候，反觀自己的心，看看問題何在，了解自己的因緣條件，然後學會面對，接受與放下。多觀察緣起的真理，幫助我們減少自我的執著。菩薩道的修學是在慈悲行中去提升的，而不只是靜坐唸經而已。

很多時候，我們或許有這樣的經驗，聽聞佛法後知道要減少我執與我慢，一方面告訴自己不要那麼執著，但另一方面當我們被別人罵的時候，我們還是覺得沒面子，很難過。如果我們能以佛法反觀，我們就能慢慢的把我執減輕。有時候有人糾正我們，我們知道別人是好意的糾正，但是我們心裡還是不高興，結果花了兩個星期才能放下。如果我們能以佛法提醒自己，實際上是我們的不對，我們應該坦然承認自己的錯誤，這樣可能就可以比較快得到輕鬆。這些都是讓我們修習的機會。如果沒有事情來磨練我們，我執是很難磨掉的。要與其他人在一起的時候，我們才能體會到我們的“我”有多大。我執越強我們就越容易感覺到摩擦與痛苦。例如，現在的學生一般都是一個人住一個房間，這樣比較難體會團體生活。自己的書桌亂七八糟，沒人會說我們。但到了圖書館或共用的客廳，如果我們也一樣雜亂無章的話，那我們的朋友就會說話了。所以要有別人提醒我們，一個人的時候不容易看到自己弱點與壞習慣。這也說明為什麼出家要到僧團共住才能夠把一些不應該有的習氣磨掉。有些人認為一個人在家修也可以修得很好，有更多時間打坐，不用管太多的事，去僧團還要照顧別人。聽起來好像不錯，但是這樣的話，“我執”就不容易去除，甚至不知不覺中自我膨脹了也不知道。

菩薩的修學強調發菩提心，修慈悲行，依佛陀的教法在生活中自利利他。在修行時以慈悲為本，並配合佛法智慧的修學，時時觀照緣起無常無我的真義，對自我不起染著，最後覺悟性空的智慧。在證得性空慧後，因為一開始就有修慈悲心，才能生起清淨而歡喜幫助眾生的心。這時的慈悲心與剛開始的慈悲心不一樣。因為之前還沒證得性空慧，實踐慈悲行時還是有“我”的意念。在證得性空慧後，是無我、無所染著的。以清淨的慈悲心更進一步的幫助眾生，引導眾生體悟真理，離苦得樂，為眾生製造優良的學佛環境，讓他們有殊勝的環境進修佛法。

總結

感情與理智是可以平衡的。我們要從緣起無常無我的道理去觀察，同時記得佛的慈悲。如果我們只是想著緣起無常無我，就容易落入只顧提升智慧而忽略了慈悲眾生，這是很多佛教徒常常落入的一個陷阱。有的人學了佛法反而變得沒有慈悲心，變得太過冷酷，不能了解別人的感受，有者甚至無形中我慢增長。也有修學者充滿慈悲心但了解佛法，這樣容易落入染著，很容易感情用事，在行善的過程給自他帶來許多煩惱。這些都是偏頗的發展。要達到理智與感情的平衡，我們需要時時憶念佛法，以佛為我們的模範，學習像佛陀一樣的那麼有智慧與慈悲。佛之所以可以成佛，是因為他圓滿了福德與智慧。福德是從慈悲與身心清淨而來。要悲智雙運，福慧雙修，才能真正達到像佛一樣圓滿的境地。





三法印

上能下融法師

什麼是真理？

今天要談的是佛教的三個真理—三法印。所謂真理，也就是說這個道理無論在什麼時候，在什麼地方，都是如此的。這個道理無論用在任何場合，任何地方，任何時間都應該是正確的。放之四海，它還是行得通的。這個道理是遍宇宙，遍法界的，而不是只有在澳洲可行，到了其他國家就不可行。在澳洲開車是開左邊，但是去到中國卻不一樣，開車是要靠右邊。這交通規則，在澳洲靠左是對的，去到中國就不對的，換句話說，這個不叫做真理，這只是在澳洲的一個規則。

我們現在所說的真理是不限於佛教徒而已，這個真理，不管你信不信佛，它還是一樣的。即使你不相信它，它還是會影響你。在任何情況之下，這個真理都還是一樣的，它一直如此的運作。

佛教所談的三個真理，是宇宙的自然法則。但因為是佛陀透過他的修行、覺悟，而體會到的真理，由佛陀說出來，所以我們說這是佛教的三個真理。

其實，不管佛陀有沒有覺悟，宇宙的運作還是如此。佛陀只是覺悟這個真理的人，他並沒有創造這個真理。即使沒有佛陀，宇宙還是如此的運作。佛陀覺悟了這個真理，告訴我們這個宇宙是依如此的法則而運行的。因此我們稱佛為覺者。

我們凡夫眾生的心太散亂，看不清楚宇宙的運作方式，所以常常逆著宇宙的自然法則而用自己的方法去追求想要的東西，結果給自己帶來很多苦惱。

這三個真理是什麼？

第一：諸行無常

世間的一切現象是無常變化的，世界上的一切，有哪些東西是永恆不變的？樹木是永恆的嗎？從小小的樹苗，慢慢長成大樹，它是無常變化。花開花謝，也是無常的。地球近年來變化很多，一下海嘯，一下地震，一下火山爆發，這說明地球不斷在變化中，只是我們平時沒有覺察到它的變化。火山爆發、海嘯並不是突然就產生的，其實地殼時時都在移動中。

我們對無常的覺察能力很遲鈍。我們在生活中都應該有一個目標，但是很多人不了解人生的目標是什麼？我們希望自己的生命可以不斷的延續，這是後有愛。但我們又知道我們的生命並不能夠永恆，於是便把希望寄放在家庭，希望家庭能永遠的延續。因此就有傳宗接代的思想出現，想盡辦法讓家族能夠永恆的延續下去。能夠子孫滿堂，傳宗接代，就覺得心安理得了，好像自己的責任與目標已經達

成了，其實這是一個非常短的目標。這是自我愛的擴大，把家庭當做自我的延續。但是，他們沒想到，他們所寄望的東西，其實也是無常的，最終還是有很多生老病死愛別離等苦惱。

有些人就把生命投入社會國家，拼命為社會為國家奉獻。當然，這不是叫大家不要不關心社會國家，但是我們要了解，社會國家也是不斷變化的。很多人投入某一政黨無私的奉獻，為黨犧牲，但是，最後這個黨也是無常的。如果我們的目標只是到這裏為止的話，那接下來又怎麼樣呢？這是非常茫然的。

身體更是無常，年輕人身體壯，很少生病，在這麼冷的天氣只穿短袖衫，從來沒有想過什麼叫做病，什麼叫做老，什麼叫做死。醫生在醫院看到較多的生老病死現象，尤其是在臨終病房，不能醫的人只能等死，我們才會了解生命過得真快。大家回想一下，從幼兒，小學，中學，一下上了大學，很快又要去工作，然後結婚生子，最後老了，其實生命過得很快。當大家在大學學習的時候，覺得這是最新的科技，過幾年又有新的科技發明，如果我們沒有繼續跟進的話就會追不上去，最後還會被淘汰。所以無常就在我們的周遭，是我們有沒有去覺察而已。

有的人說，愛不是無常的。愛是永恆的嗎？如果你真正去想，這個愛，一點都不變嗎？從你開始認識你的女朋友，到你現在很愛她，有沒有變化呢？從開始有一點點愛，到後來很愛，你說這是不是變化？然後很愛過後，又變成有一點不愛，在這個過程當中，有時候剛好吵架，就會產生討厭，雖然生氣，後來還是和解了，還是愛回去。這個愛其實一直在變化當中。愛情比較會變，變得比較多。有人說母親的愛是永恆的，不管孩子多壞，還是一樣的愛，這樣說對嗎？每個階段都有不同的關懷，我們可以說母親愛的方式，愛的深切度，愛的情況，從小到大都會有差別，並不一定是從愛變成不愛。她的愛會隨著你當時的情況，而有不同的表現。

我們對一個人的關心，也是因緣而生。當我們看到一個人，覺得他的情況值得同情，我們就會升起一種關心與愛心。同樣的，母親對小孩會這麼樣的愛護，因為那是她的孩子！她的愛心有時候表現出來，有時候沒有表現出來，有時候表現得比較強，有時候默默的關懷，所呈現的方式也不一樣。讀書很痛苦，工作的時候更頭疼，苦也會變的，有時候變得更苦，有時候會減輕。快樂也一樣，天下無不散之宴席，再快樂的宴席，最後也是要結束的。

曾經有人說記憶是永恆的，他說過去的一些事情總是抹擦不掉，一些事情應該把它忘掉卻忘不了，所以他認為記憶是永恆的。有時候一些很快樂的事情，很難過的事情，或者很討厭的事情，一直影響我們的思緒與心情，我們想要把它擺脫，卻總擺脫不了。如果我們記得都是很好的東





西，那還好，問題是好的東西我們很快忘記，而不好的東西卻忘不了。

忘不了並不表示它不變。其實認真回想一下，從事情的發生，到我們現在的回想，它是不是完全一樣？發生的時候，你很生氣，你回來一想，越想就越生氣，反而更加強當時的情況，甚至猜想這個人的心，他一定有什麼陰謀。本來那個情況只是那樣而已，但是回來再經過內心的怨恨把那個情況惡化。當時發生的情況，他所說的那句話，再加上你現在不斷的去醜化他的形象與他的想法，當你再向朋友發泄這件事的時候，會變得更嚴重。套用一句俗話，也就是我們會根據自己的情緒將它加鹽加醋，這樣所表達出來敘述與實際情況就不一樣了，到最後連我們都不太清楚當時的真實情況了。中間若還有朋友加一兩句話進來，就可以製造另一個故事出來了。十年過後我們再提起這件事情的時候，那更不一樣了。如果記憶是永恆的，我們就不會那麼容易忘記事情。我們所記得的東西會因條件因素而加強或消退。例如，我們不斷反覆思考回憶，這樣，就讓我們一直忘不了。反之如果我們不再去想它，它就會慢慢的淡化，所以，記憶不是永恆的。

從物質來說，成住壞空說明諸行無常。所有的物質，有生起的時候，然後暫時穩定一個階段，接下來開始變壞，最後離散消失。

世間的一切不斷在變化中，一切都是無常的，這樣的思想是否很消極呢？無常說明一切不斷的變，這只是說明一個自然現象，它可以變好也可以變壞。在無常流中，如果我們不能掌控它要流的方向，而只能順著命運而流的話，那就很無奈。佛教所說的無常，強調一切是有改變的可能，我們要學習掌握它流往的方向。在無常流當中，有因果的法則。因之所以會成為果，是因為無常。若因是固定不變的，它怎麼演變成果呢？最重要的是，我們要怎麼掌握這個因讓它變成我們要的果。我們要知道甚麼樣的因會造成甚麼樣的果。善的因能夠帶來快樂的果，不善的因，會帶來苦果。如果不小心造了不善的因，在苦果還沒成熟時，佛陀說若我們能積極加入一些善的因素，即有改變它的結果的可能。比如煮飯，開始的時候放了太少的水，在過程中想到放的水不夠，飯還沒煮熟前，趕快再添加一些水，它就會得以改善。同樣的，一對夫婦吵架，如果發現這樣一直吵下去是不行的，改變方式，坐下來好好地談一談。本來可能大吵大鬧準備離婚了，因為兩個人冷靜下來，互相溝通，這個離婚的果就能得以改變。如果一切是常的，這個世間就不會像我們所看到的這樣多姿多彩。

無常帶給我們希望，一切是可改變的，它是積極的。好的現象會不斷的變化，如果我們不珍惜，當好的條件過去時我們就會懊惱。當我們身體健康的時候，可以讀書的時候，不珍惜時光而整天把精力花在無利益的事情上，這

樣，十年過去，突然想要用功時，你會發現你不會再有現在一樣的體力專心讀書。所以，我們要珍惜當下的好因緣，好好利用它，將時間用在自利利他的事情上，時間過去了再回想起來也不懊悔，因為我們已將我們的生命充分利用。

第二：諸法無我

世間的一切現象無時無刻在變化中，因為它是因緣條件組合而成的，不是獨存的個體。就像我們這個身心，我們稱為“我”。事實上，“我”有主宰的意思，主代表能夠掌握自己，宰代表能夠支配別人；同時“我”指它是獨存的，不需依賴其他因緣條件；而且是不變的。但是，我們是這樣的一個“我”嗎？

佛教說無我，並不代表“我”不見了。而是說我們一般所執著的這個“我”其實沒有主宰、獨存、不變的特質，所以用否定式的符號來否定這種錯誤的認知，因此說「無“我”」。

就像剛才我們學習觀呼吸，聽起來似乎很簡單，但我們真的能控制自己不想其他事情，專心觀呼吸嗎？我們連這一點自制的力量都沒有！在我們難過的時候，如果我們告訴自己不要難過，我們可以馬上不難過嗎？我們可以告訴自己現在馬上快樂自在嗎？為什麼會難？因為我們受到外面的因素影響，沒有辦法主宰自己。我們沒有自主的能力，更沒有支配他人的能力。所以，佛說我們是無我的。

五蘊一色受想行識

這個“我”是由很多因素組合而成，並非一個實在不變獨立存在的個體，它是由精神與物質的合成體。佛解釋我們的身心是五蘊和合的。單單物質的身體還不能說是一個活人，要配合精神才能形成活生生的一個人。色指物質的身體，受、想、行、識是精神的部分。

六處一眼耳鼻舌身意

除了透過五蘊告訴我們無我，佛陀也用六處開示“我”的不實在性。

我們這個生命是由種種條件組成一眼根，耳根，鼻根，舌根，身根和意根。眼、耳、鼻、舌、身是物質的部分，意是精神的部分。由此可見，我們的身心非獨立存在的。

六界一地水火風空識

佛也依六界來分析我們的身心。觀我們的身體，地是堅固的部分，如骨；水是體內的液體；火是溫度；風是呼吸進出；空是體內的空間；識就是我們的意識。這是從物理的元素來分析。

所以，我們這個身心是無我的，並不是獨存的，它是由很多因素組合而成，無時在變化中，沒有主宰及支配別人的能力，並不是一個實在不變的我。佛陀透過五蘊、六處、六界種種方法，為我們說明無我的觀念。

第三：涅槃寂靜

諸法因緣生，諸法因緣滅，一切是無我的。因為相的呈現，所以我們說有生有滅，事實上，在本質上，並沒有實在不變的自性，我們不能說什麼生起，什麼滅去。我們會說有生有滅，是因為我們被所看到的表象所迷惑。如果我們了解諸法並沒有實在不變的自性，是無我的，我們就能



明白事實上並沒有什麼東西能生能滅。所謂涅槃寂靜，即說明一切是平靜的，沒有生滅，沒有對立，就是如此如此而已，是一個絕對的境界。

當我們有一個“我”的時候，我們會愛護自己，保護自己，貪染自己，然後瞋恨別人。貪，瞋，癡給我們帶來很多煩惱。因為不能夠了解自我的真相，我們不斷貪染，執著自我，希望繼續生存，臨命終時，我們還強烈的希望繼續生存下去，這就是後有愛。

生死輪回就像大海的波浪，貪，瞋，癡的風不斷的吹，讓我們在生死大海中生起又滅去，一生一世的過去。當我們覺悟到無我，破除了貪，瞋，癡，煩惱斷除，煩惱風不吹，海就波平浪靜，這就是涅槃寂靜的境界。當我們放下這個“我”的時候，還有什麼東西在生滅無常呢？無生就無死，無生就無滅。透視無我的真相，放下染著，既然沒有一個我，就超越了時空的限制。

“諸行無常是生滅法”，是對我們還有所染著的人，告訴我們世間的現象。能夠透視真理，了解不生不滅，則“寂滅為樂”。生滅是相對的，從這當中了解不生不滅，即達到寂靜涅槃。

有人問，佛說有生有滅，又說不生不滅，這有衝突嗎？涅槃寂靜是不生不滅的境界，與諸行無常的有生有滅並沒有衝突。

三法印其實是互相關聯的。一切事物之所以生滅無常，是因為它是無我的，因緣條件可以隨時改變，既然是無我的，沒有一個實在性，所以就是不生不滅。

如果用數學來說：A=無常， B=無我， C=涅槃寂靜
A = B
B = C
所以：A = C

生滅無常是表象，它是條件性的，因此它是無我的。既然無我，那就是不生不滅，涅槃寂靜的。所以，無我把三法印貫串起來了。

佛陀非常善巧的帶領修行者修行，在一些經典中，佛從無常切入，透過無我，再進一步了解涅槃寂靜；也有從無我切入；也有從涅槃寂靜直接進入。

從無常入門，了解生死輪回是苦的，這是無願解脫門。從無我入門的是空解脫門，了解空性。從涅槃寂靜入門的是無相解脫門，了解不能著於它的表象，沒有一個表象可以捉摸的，既然是無自性，還有何相？

佛陀開示的時候，常常問比丘們，無常是苦否？比丘們說是的。佛說，既然是苦，那就表示這個我不是實在性的。「無常故苦，苦故無我」，能這樣慢慢觀察，就能夠從無常無我進入涅槃解脫。

總結

除了諸行無常，諸法無我，涅槃寂靜之外，經典有時也提到第四個法印——“諸受皆苦”。所有的覺受之本質是苦的。一切是變動性的，所有的感受也會起變化，如果我們染著它，就會產生苦。所以，“諸受是苦”亦可以用“諸行無常”來解釋。因此，真正來說三法印就足够了。“諸受皆苦”是針對對感受比較染著的人，而特別把“受”強調出來。

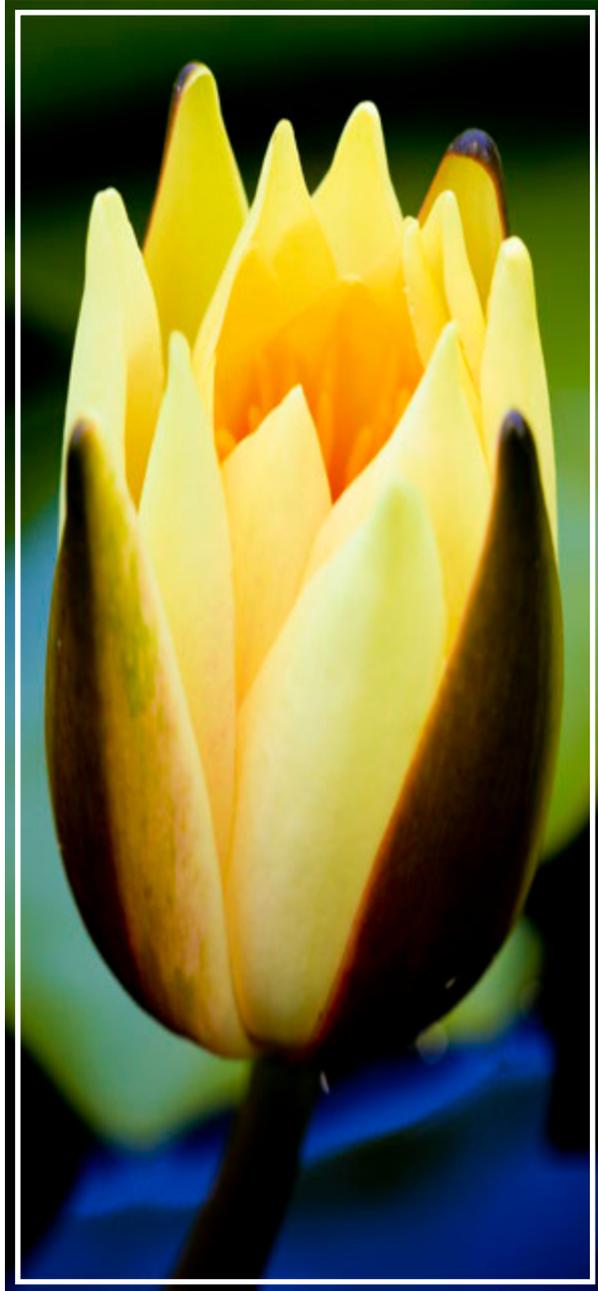
三法印是很重要的真理，我們都應該認真學習，啟發智慧，體悟涅槃寂靜的境界。佛陀所說的教法是不離無常，無我，涅槃寂靜的。因此，如果有人所說的法偏離三法印，那就不是佛所說的法。所謂法印，即是用來印證這個法是否符合佛說。

經典亦說，所有貪，瞋，癡滅盡，就是寂靜的境界。換句話說，涅槃寂靜即貪，瞋，癡的熄滅。鑒此，如果有那一個教法讓我們越學我執越強，或越修越煩惱，我慢越強，嫉妒心越強，那就是不順於佛的教法。佛法是讓我們越學越快樂，越學越清淨，越能夠放下，讓我們朝向涅槃寂靜的清涼境界的。

希望大家明白了三法印，知道如何運用三法印來辨別所聽到的法是否符合佛的教說，也希望大家能在生活中以三法印來反觀自己，觀察周遭的現象，提升智慧，成就清淨自在。



Members' Contribution



“As a bee gathering nectar does not harm or disturb the colour and fragrance of the flower, so do the wise move through the world.”
Dhammapada V49



Inflated like a Balloon

by Tina Ng

*Inflated like a balloon,
infatuated in love,
smiling at the man,
who stands still from above.*

*On a staircase spiralling down,
tumbling her round and round,
she stands there inflated with bliss
as she waits for her first kiss.*

*She hears the man sigh
as he takes his first step.
She hears the man stop
which makes her hold her breath.*

*She looks up at the man,
who still stands high above.
She feels her balloon burst
as he turns away from her love.*

*Floating like a balloon,
aimlessly in love.
Crying for a man,
Who won't descend from above.*

*She struggles up the staircase
now empty round and round.
Her thoughts in a spiraling chase,
her memories the only sound.*

*Each step makes her leave behind
all the things she's been carrying all along,
all the baggage that's weighed her down,
that's cluttered her life and heart for so long.*

*Each step looms higher than the last.
Each step takes her further from her past.
Each step makes her realise why her man
didn't descend to take her hand.*



*When she reaches the top and looks down,
she sees a girl struggling in her sorrow,
hoping to be lifted by her balloon of hope,
to be rescued into a better tomorrow.*

*In kindness she reaches out
and grabs hold of the balloon.
The girl ascends though the air
towards the clear full moon.*

*Suddenly the string tightens
from the girl's heavy burdens.
She tells the girl to cast aside her weight.
The girl doesn't know how, and then it's too late.*

*Inflated like a balloon,
infatuated with pride.
A man smiles at her from below
looking for an easy ride.*

*She takes her first step down
but comes to a stop.
She tells him to start climbing
and she'll meet him at the top.*





Inflated like a Balloon

Author's Note by Tina Ng

In a world where uncertainty abounds, where we are constantly chasing for fulfilment of our inherent dissatisfaction, we naturally try to build a fortress of stability and predictability around ourselves. This fortress manifests itself in the form of daily routines, micro-management of things around us (including our loved ones), hoarding possessions that we think creates our happiness, and so forth.

Soon, we begin to attach to things and people in our lives, to our way of thinking and our feelings, to the image we have created of ourselves and our assumptions about other people, and to this very body that we carry with us.

We begin to identify these attachments as "me" and "mine". This body defines me. This self-image is me. These things that I have are all mine (and not yours). We may even identify with our emotions, for example, letting anger turn us into an angry person.

When we identify things as "me" and "mine", we start seeing them as things we can control, and part of that control is to ensure that pleasant things remain with us forever and unpleasant things are always kept away from us. In reality, however, we cannot control change, nor control how they change. Even our own body, something so dear and close to us, is subject to sickness, old age and ultimately death. No matter how much willpower or control we try to exert on our body, it will still follow nature's design.

Misery and unhappiness comes when we struggle to control the uncontrollable, and attach to permanency in the face of its inevitable change. In wanting only the good of life and none of its ugliness, we are deceiving ourselves in chasing perfection without really appreciating what is actually there. In essence, we become lost in what we want to see and lose insight into reality.

Once we are able to see the link between our suffering and our attachment, we would naturally loosen our grasp. This does not mean we become disconnected and detached with life. In fact, it is the opposite: we become reacquainted more intimately with life again by recognising what is really there at each moment and abiding by the natural way of things. We start sowing wholesome seeds and provide the supportive conditions for wholesome results to arise, without being attached to the result itself. Likewise, should impermanence visit, we do

not personalise it but understand cessation as a natural phenomenon.

The more we investigate into impermanence and non-attachment, we start to realise that even ourselves are subject to change, and is made up of different elements without a substantial core 'self' for us to attach to. In Buddhism, the Pali word used to describe this is "anatta", which is often translated as "non-self".

When we understand this, we may start telling others and ourselves, "Let go of your attachments. They are no good for you. Just let go!". However, without a proper understanding of our attachment and its link with suffering, it is difficult for us to free ourselves completely. As such, the road to complete freedom from attachments needs to be undertaken one step at a time, one attachment at a time. It is the journey itself that allows us to realise the deeper meaning of impermanence and non-attachment, and we need to walk this path ourselves without relying on others to save us or carry us. We become responsible for our actions and its subsequent consequences. We are our own salvation.

For those of us who wish to help others escape from their misery, it is important to use compassion, as well as wisdom. We need to recognise that although we can help show others the right path, they need to walk it on their own so as to discover the truth for themselves. A good teacher, for example, would teach his or her students what they need to learn and ask them to study hard to complete assignments and tests. The teacher may empathise with the stressed students, but he or she would not do the assignments and sit the exams for the students. Wise compassion is allowing the students to struggle on their own – with some encouragement and advice from the teacher from time to time – so the students can properly understand the information, but more importantly, to develop the skills and qualities of a good student: intelligence, determination, patience, diligence, independence, stress and time management, and so forth. Even if the teacher tells the students about these qualities, the students would not be able to generate these qualities unless the students practise the qualities for themselves.

So for those looking to you for an easy ride, with wise compassion, you can tell them to start climbing, while you stay by their side.





Developing Compassionate Wisdom

by Zen Low

Wisdom and compassion are terms that are not sole monopolies of the teachings of the Buddha (*Buddha Dhamma*). There are many religions in the world today that advocate the development of these two qualities. So what are the features of these two terms from the perspective of what the Buddha taught? It is important to distinguish the differences so that we have a better understanding for practice.

These two modes of practice do not exist in isolation from each other; in developing our wisdom on the path of Dhamma, compassion naturally flows when we see the suffering of others as we had previously suffered. A sincere wish will arise that others be free from suffering.

Similarly, when we are more in tune with the matters of the heart, we have greater feelings of empathy and compassion for the suffering of others, we feel compelled to help others alleviate their immediate suffering. However, we soon find that this is not enough, in order to truly help them, we have to investigate how and why suffering arises so that others' cause of suffering is eliminated as well.

So there is a symbiotic relationship between the qualities of wisdom and compassion; one helps the other.

What is wisdom according to what the Buddha taught?

Liberating Wisdom

Wisdom can be worldly wisdom or wisdom pertaining to the Dhamma. In the context of the Dhamma, there can be *sutta-maya-panna* – the wisdom that comes from reading about a particular subject; *cinta-maya-panna* – the wisdom that arises from inference and discussion and finally there is *bhavana-maya-panna* – the wisdom that arises from our own experience. It is the wisdom that arises from our own experience that true liberation and happiness can be found. For how else can our thirst be quenched? If say for example we were walking along in the desert and the map says that there is an oasis up ahead, we have book knowledge that there is a path that leads to the oasis, but the thirst is not quenched; this is *sutta-maya-panna*.

However if we see other refreshed travellers coming back from the oasis having quenched their thirst, we can infer by observation and discussion, that yes there is an oasis up ahead. This is *cinta-maya-panna*, but our own thirst is still there so long as we have not taken a drink from the

waters ourselves. Despite all this, no form of knowledge, discussion or inference can liberate us from our thirst. So we must walk the path and drink from the oasis and this is *bhavana-maya-panna*, the experiential wisdom that liberates.

This was the Enlightenment of the Buddha. From his very own experience, the wisdom arose on the full moon night, under the Bodhi tree, the knowledge of his countless previous lives, penetrating the workings of kamma and dependent origination; in short, the discovery of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The wisdom of the Buddha was that skilful intentions and skilful actions have good results. Conversely, unskilful intentions and unskilful actions bring bad results.

So the wisdom of the Dhamma is not a worldly wisdom, but it is the wisdom of how we can understand the existence of suffering within, and how to end this suffering in our own mind through practising and developing the skill of how to make use of skilful intentions and actions. To develop the wisdom of the Four Noble Truths, there are no shortcuts. We must develop generosity towards others, we must uphold the five precepts and protect our virtue, and we must practice meditation and develop *samatha-vipassana* and practise the Noble Eightfold Path in all its aspects.

The wisdom that develops is the experience of impermanence (*anicca*). Impermanence can be seen in the conventional sense, in terms of the world outside of us, like the change of the seasons, the leaves shedding the trees and decaying, new saplings sprouting, old friends and family passing away and newer family members being born into this world. But we can also see the impermanence within the sphere of our experience, this body that we have, the feelings that arise, and subtler objects like the mind and the mind objects, are all subject to change and inconstancy. They arise just to pass away. It takes a very sharp and subtle mind to see this and it takes time and patience to develop this subtlety. This is one of the reasons why we practise the precepts, and meditate; so that we train the mind to observe subtler and subtler realities.

This seemingly simple truth once we experience it is like revelation, a light in a dark room that illuminates. We begin to know for ourselves, once we see *anicca* within the spheres of internal and external experience that yes; there really isn't a permanent abiding self to hold on to. We know for ourselves the truth of non-self (*anatta*).



We subsequently see for ourselves with wisdom how suffering (*dukkha*) arises. Suffering arises because of craving and attachment to things that are subject to change. We are so attached to this body, and the feelings that arise. We are so attached to our views and thinking and this sense of ego, the sense of "I" and "mine", but how can we be so attached to so many things that are subject to change? It becomes no longer rational to base our happiness on things that are so fleeting, ephemeral and impermanent.

When we see with wisdom how suffering arises and how it is caused, there is a natural letting go, which opens up to a sense of relinquishment and a real happiness and release (*vimutti*).

This wisdom and happiness brings a profound sense of peace and equanimity which is like a fertile soil which allows genuine compassion to flower. As ill will, hatred and jealousy subsides from non-attachment, we naturally become less self centered.

Loving kindness (*metta*) flows much more easily as a result and we are able to be more in tune with the predicament of suffering of those around us.

Yet it is because we have learnt how to develop the wisdom of how to deal with the issue of our own defilements of greed, hatred and delusion, we are in the best position to help others because we can try our best to help them deal with their suffering and the cause of their suffering.

Boundless Compassion

When we walk along the Path and experience the happiness of the Dhamma, many of us develop a wholesome motivation to want to share what we have learnt with others. The Buddha said that the Dhamma is the best gift we can give to anybody as an act of generosity (*Sabba danam dhamma-danam jinati*) so one must not only feel motivated to help others come out of physical suffering, but also be compassionate to help others be alleviated from the suffering of greed, hatred and delusion.

However, compassion is not practised in isolation and forms part of the four sublime states of mind (*Brahma Vihara*) which are mutually supporting. Loving kindness (*metta*) is the goodwill and wish for happiness for all beings. This same loving kindness turns into sympathetic joy (*mudita*) when encountering the good fortunes of others and into compassion (*karuna*) when encountering those less fortunate. Finally, equanimity (*upekkha*) is the state of mind which is non-attached and in perfect balance and equipoise when faced with neutral, pleasant and unpleasant situations.

When it comes down to the practice, it is easy to spread loving kindness to those whom we love and feel dear to, but it is very hard to feel loving kindness towards those we are neutral to and those whom we dislike. Similarly, it

is easy to feel compassion for those who are physically suffering, or disadvantaged in other ways, but it is hard to feel compassion for those who are of unpleasant character or commit unwholesome deeds.

To overcome these obstructions, we need to apply skilful reflections.

Everybody wants to find happiness just like me, but due to their previous kamma and present unwholesome actions, they are encountering suffering. To see that the desire for happiness is universal amongst all beings is not easy because it takes the wisdom to be able to see and actually feel the suffering of others. Furthermore, we need to reflect that it is not possible to discern the seeds and ripening of *kamma* in a person, so the question of whether a disliked person 'deserves' your goodwill and compassion should not be an issue at all; perhaps the disliked person will run of his or her good *kamma*, it is uncertain. It becomes easier to let go of the sense of grudge or injustice and ill will one holds onto in the heart.

In addition, in applying wisdom to the practice of compassion, we also need to understand that equanimity is also needed with the understanding of *kamma* because sometimes, even though we spread thoughts of loving kindness and act out of compassion, it is not in our control that they respond positively to our well wishes. So it is important not to lose the balance of the mind or to think that the effort is wasted. We have done what we can for now, we have planted a seed and it is a matter of time and right conditions before the seedling will sprout.

This is how both qualities of wisdom and compassion are developed so that the barriers are broken down and the *Brahma Viharas* become an abode of infinite goodwill and compassion, without boundaries.

In summary, for many of us, the starting point of the practice is to develop wisdom, and to do this we need to practise the Noble Eightfold Path. It is possible to develop purity of mind through the practice of compassion and loving kindness, but this does not exist in isolation and should be developed with the other sublime factors of sympathetic joy and equanimity along with the wisdom. These are all factors of enlightenment that mutually support each other and take us closer to the final goal of ultimate happiness.

May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be happy. May all beings be liberated.





Being Wise When Making Decision

by Dr Keith Ong

Being wise means having or showing experience, knowledge, maturity and good judgement in our behaviour and actions, including when making decisions.

Life involves making decisions all the time, and this can sometimes be a dilemma when there is no obvious correct choice and the outcome is unknown or unpredictable. We have to make decisions when answering a multiple choice question in an exam or quiz, or when deciding what to do with a patient or a business venture. Obviously, we will know whether a decision is a wise one or not when the event is over and the outcome is known.

We are more likely to make the right or wise decision if we have more wisdom. Wisdom comes with age and experience as the saying goes. We consult our elders or seniors when we are not sure of what to do.

Do we get wiser as we get older or do we have to make an effort to get wiser? There are ways that we can foster the development of wisdom. One of the ways is to reflect. As the Buddha said in advice to Rahula (Ambalaththika-Rahulovada Suttanta – Ambalaththika Exhortation to Rahula): "Before doing any mental, verbal or bodily action, reflect on whether it will cause any harm to others or oneself. If it causes harm to others or oneself then refrain from doing it; and if it causes no harm, then go ahead and do it.

Panna in Buddhism means wisdom or knowledge, which can be of three kinds. Knowledge can be acquired through learning, thinking or meditation and contemplation where one realises intuitive truths which are beyond logical reasoning.

For lay Buddhists, we have to deal more with knowledge acquired through learning, such as doing a course in university; or through thought processes such as when doing research and inventing or discovering things.

We learn from experience, and it helps when we reflect on what we have done. If we do not analyse our actions, we may miss a valuable learning experience. To gain experience, we have to do more and learn, rather than sitting around doing nothing. Becoming well-read in the literature is a speedier method of gaining knowledge; although being able to apply what is learnt comes from experience.

A wise person does not make rash decisions. Emotions are set aside, and he/she takes his time to make decisions. Children tend to say or do things without thinking, and sometimes, this can lead to undesirable consequences.

However, taking time does not guarantee a good decision, although it is more likely to lead to a good decision. To help us make a decision, we may consult friends and colleagues or literature. It is good to seek other opinions, but one has to make the final decision. It is important as a wise and mature person, not to blame others if the decision made did not turn out to achieve the ideal outcome.

Having friends who are wise helps us become wiser. Close friends and relatives do influence our decision making process. Having wise parents is a help if the children listen and follow. It is important for parents to foster the foundations for making wise decisions.

Learning to observe rather than jumping in can help in making wise decisions. Following successful mentors would help. Wisdom from experience can also help us decide when not to just keep observing and therefore miss an opportunity to do something.

When the event is over, that is with retrospection, it is always easier to know what would have been the wise decision. Hence, by reflecting, we hope to learn from the process and from our past experience, help us make wiser decisions in the future.

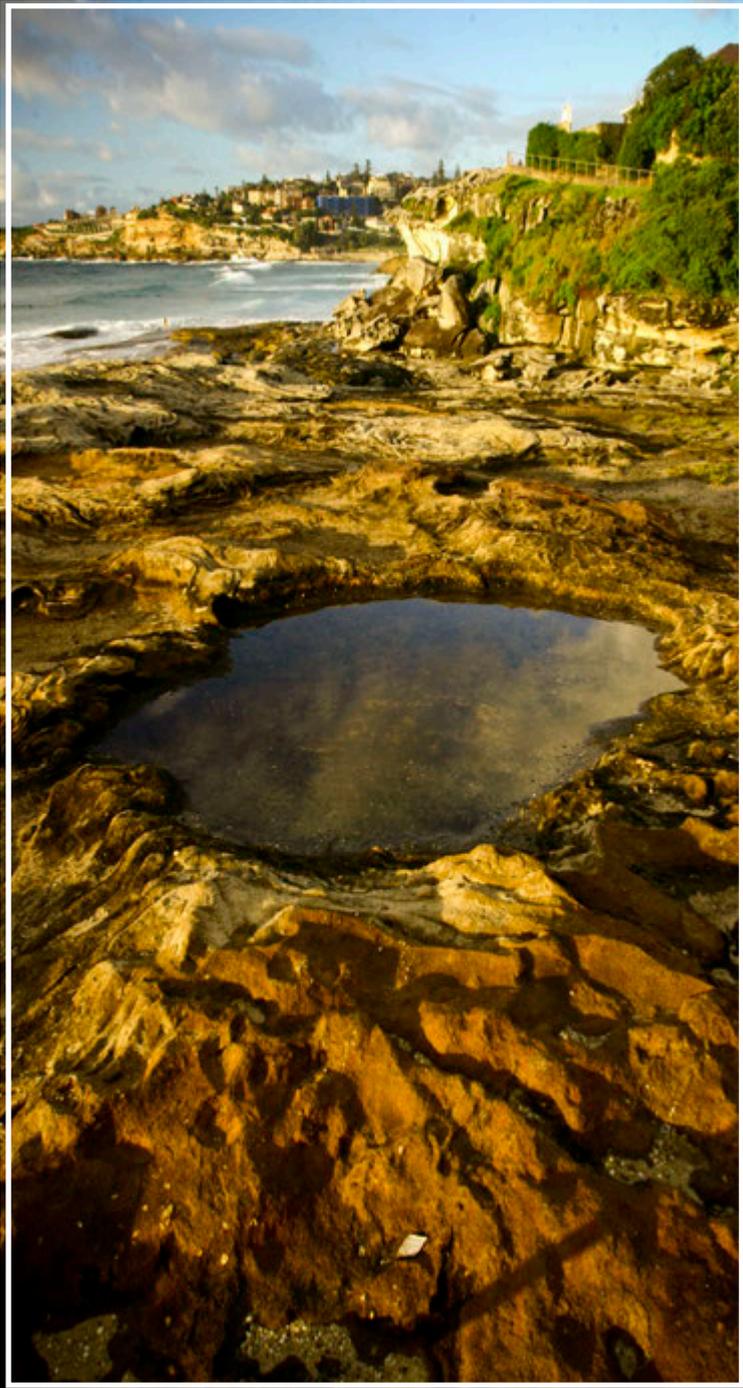
In conclusion, to help us become wise when making decisions, we should take sufficient time to reflect and analyse possible outcomes, analyse previous experience of our own or of others, and consult others and literature if possible. If we make the decision with good intention and wholesome thoughts, then more likely that the outcome will be good and wholesome.





Wisdom and Compassion, the Breakfast of Champions

by Joffre Balce



Hector left the clinic feeling like, for the first time in his life, a loser. The doctor diagnosed him with having an enlarged heart, a congenital condition he inherited from his parents. From childhood, he was made aware of his family health history and his parents took the necessary precautions from ranging across diet, exercise and even meditation. He grew up appearing to have overcome his inherited limitations by excelling and winning the gold in a wide range of sports and representing his school in competitive swimming, cycling, and long distance running. Hector has been training for an event that combined the three – the triathlon – and was looking forward to adding another gold to his collection until the university physician took note of an irregular heartbeat and required more tests before he was given a clean bill of health to compete. The battery of tests revealed Hector's fears – his heart can no longer take the strain of competitive sport without risk of serious and permanent damage.

The doctors, however, encouraged him to continue his regular physical exercise, although on a more leisurely pace. "Just don't push yourself," advised his family doctor who looked over his file. "Besides, how many men your age can brag of your collection of medals? You have proven yourself beyond anyone's expectations."

"Anyone's expectations but mine." Hector muttered to himself. "I wanted to graduate from university with the crowning achievement of winning a triathlon, going on to break a record and eventually become a coach to help others win like myself. Now I'm told I shouldn't strive to win, my heart is broken and I'm too young to coach."

Out of pride, Hector decided to run a triathlon anyway, not in the inter-university competition but at a public event. Organisers who were close friends of the family, knowing of his athletic record but not of his current condition, did not bother to ask for a medical clearance. On the eve of the race, however, Hector's parents gently confronted their son after dinner. There was no way he could keep it a secret from them but they also knew there was no way they could prevent him from pursuing his interest, even if it killed him.



"You are our only son. If you seriously injure yourself or worse, if we lose you, it will be an even bigger loss and risk to us," said the father yet knowing very well that forcing his hand on the matter risks their son losing face as well.

"It's a shorter triathlon, mum and dad. A kilometre swim, 15k bike ride and a 5k run. It will be easy and a cinch for me to win. Will you begrudge me even of this small opportunity?" begged Hector. "Have you stopped believing in me?"

The mother replied "You have come of age son and have performed physically well beyond the expectation of parents who sadly passed on the limitations you now face. Your father and I will respect your decision to run the race because the more important decision is how you will run the race." She looked at her husband who could only manage a deep sigh, weak smile and a nervous shoulder shrug in a reluctant but profound acceptance.

The three hugged each other. No words were necessary. The actions expressed and emanated a deep trust in each other's wisdom and compassion as a family.

On the day of the race, Hector showed up by the river where the first event was to be held, a 1k swim across to the other shore and as expected, he was at the lead pack. "No sweat racing with these amateurs" he thought to himself but halfway through, there was an elderly but more experienced swimmer beside him who unfortunately started getting a cramp on his calf muscle. Hector looked at the grimace on his competitor's face and thought "I can help him to the boats alongside us and still have time to spare to catch up with the lead pack." This he did, even as he lagged considerably behind the top swimmers.

After crossing the river, the triathletes rushed to their bicycles. Hector was steadily making up for time lost in swimming and was joining the top ten contenders until three bikers before him had a mishap. Instead of simply swerving to avoid the pile up, he stopped to help untangle the three bikers, warn the other speeding competitors to avoid any further damage but at a cost of having over 50 overtaking him and ending up finishing the bicycle course closer to the tail end.

"Maybe I can still catch up in the 5k run." In an effort at positive self-talk. "It will take a lot of effort though but I'm more experienced than most of these beginners." But just when he was starting to muster up some speed after the first kilometre, he notices a teen lass starting to slow down, to cry and to seem to give up. Hector could not help but stop and ask "What's the problem, luv?"

"I ran just to be with friends. I wanted so much to be long but now not only that I'm lagging behind, I'm out of energy, I'm tired, thirsty and I wanna quit!!!" Apparently, she was an absolute beginner who went two course on

sheer grit and determination that had just about run out. She turned to him and recognised Hector. "Wait, you're Hector. My brother goes to uni with you. I'm so sorry" with embarrassment of whinging in the presence of a star athlete adding to her mortification.

"No. No. It's perfectly alright. Swimming and biking the distance is hard enough. You just need to pace yourself and not forget to hydrate and breathe." Hector explained as he pulled to the side to get a drink for the girl and himself. Amidst much argument, Hector paced the girl through the rest of the run, guided her breathing until they both finished the race with her friends waiting at the finish and ribbing her as she crossed the line with her new triathlon mentor.

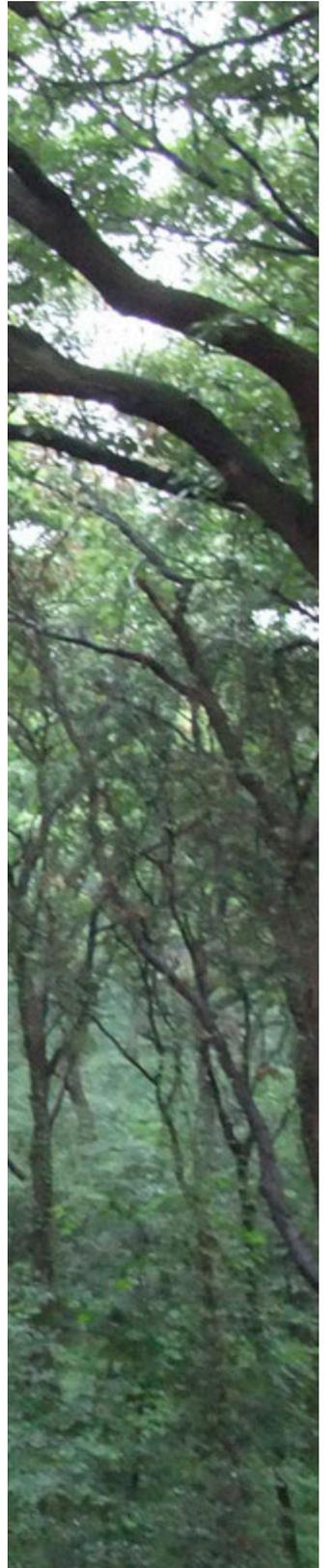
A week later, after breakfast, Hector's dad hands over an envelop "Another thank you note, this time from Mr. Chambers. Isn't he the man you saved swimming across the river?"

"Yes dad." Said Hector, opening the envelop and reading its contents. "He's inviting us to dinner next weekend."

"Isn't that wonderful?" exclaimed Hector's mom who began discussing plans for it and what dishes she would cook.

After breakfast, Hector returned to his room and placed Mr. Chambers's letter in a box with the other letters expressing gratitude and expressing friendship from the other triathletes he helped and their families, free from the desire to accumulate medals, appreciative of the skills so useful in helping others, and grateful for the new friends for whom his enlarged heart has made space. Wisdom and compassion has opened a path to a new race to run – a human race.







Inner Peace

by Vickey Chen

Robert plopped himself down on the red plushy couch, heaved a long sigh and stared at the white ceiling, feeling perplexed. With his head aching, he tries to figure out what he had done before this.

Just a few minutes ago, he awakened with a jolt. His head was spinning, and his legs were pins and needles. When he tried to open his eyes, the blazing Sun was glaring angrily at him. Squinting and blinking hard, slowly he opened his eyes, and that's when he realized that he's been lying face down on his carpet, in his own vomit.

He turned away from the disastrous pool of muckiness and glance at his watch. With his groggy and throbbing head, he decided that yah, 4pm is just about the right time to wake up to a day of nothingness.

Hang on, he told himself. Wasn't it just 9 a.m. a while ago? That's not too bad, he thought. He checked his watch again. Oh dear, it's 4pm of the next day! Ah, that's why his head hurts so badly.

After taking some painkillers, Robert tries to recall the flow of events before he passed out. He remembers being rejected by a girl, not just any girl, but the prettiest girl in his class. He felt like he was crushed by a boulder when she said to him coldly, "No, thanks" without even looking at him. That was late in the evening, after their Chemistry study group session. Then, on the very next day, he received an e-mail from his faculty saying that his application for a scholarship has been rejected. It would have meant the world to him to be granted that scholarship. It hurt even more as it was his second attempt applying.

Feeling down in the dumps, he instinctively grabbed the bottle of Jack Daniel's Black Label, which was conveniently within an arm's reach on his computer desk. He poured his first glass of Jack Daniel's on the rocks. It was only 9.15 a.m., and he's already late for his first lecture of the day. He'll miss the class and all the other classes, but who cares?

He doesn't remember how many drinks he's had, and how long he had been drinking, but he liked the way the icy cold liquid slides down his throat and the burning sensation that follows. It was somewhat comforting, he thought. Just what he needed at the moment. That was probably the last thought he had in his mind before he passed out.

For the next few weeks, his days passed by without him remembering much. Studying felt secondary to him. He skipped most of his classes, barely scraping a pass for his assignments and mid-session exams. What he wanted to do was to drink and drown all of his sorrows. Failure, in any sense, isn't what he was used to. He has always gotten what he wanted. After all, he was a prince back in his country. Of royal blood, and here he is, struggling with his daily life. How can life be so difficult? What is it demanding from him? He couldn't understand what was on his father's mind when he decided to send him here, an island far away from home. "It will help you grow and become a better man", his father said. What a total lie!, Robert started cursing.

Day after day, he would ring up his friends; they would go out for some drinks and lavish dinners which he would pay, and then more drinks. If they wouldn't go with him, then he'll go on his own. This went on for a while, until one day, he couldn't fit into his pants anymore.

He stared at himself in the mirror and almost couldn't recognize himself. The sight before him was gruesome, repulsive even. Just a year ago, he was as fit as an Olympian and exudes confidence. He was always clean-shaven and nicely groomed. But now, he's just accumulating fatty adipose tissues, with his hair in a tangled mess, his eyes dull and sagging heavily under the weight of his eye bags, and his chubby face left unshaven on most days. A feeling of disgust overwhelmed him. This isn't right, he thought to himself. What have I done? How did I lose myself like this?

As he contemplates about his past and what he has done to his life, he felt a sudden urge to turn his life around. He wants to be happy again and do the right thing. He has to set his priorities straight. He suddenly thought of his ex-housemate – the one person whom he can talk to and confide in, although Robert has not been nice to him the last time they saw each other, Robert knew that Matt's a reliable friend and would not hold a grudge against him. In fact, Matt seemed happy to hear from Robert and invited him over to his place on Sunday to talk about his troubled and messed up situation.

Once Matt opened the door and greeted him warmly with a firm handshake and big bear hug, Robert smelled something smoky yet fragrant and soothing from inside the house. He sat down on the couch and then realized that in the soft background was a song being played:



*~ Breathing in, breathing out, (x2)
I am blooming as a flower,
I am fresh as the dew,
I am solid as the mountain,
I am firm as the Earth,
I am free.*

*Breathing in, breathing out, (x2)
I am water,
Reflecting what is real,
What is true,
And I feel there is space deep inside of me,
I am free. (x3) ~*

Robert immediately felt relaxed and at ease. He closed his eyes, and he must have dozed off for a few minutes, because when he opened his eyes, there was a cup of tea on the coffee table, and his friend Matt was nowhere to be seen. Robert explored the apartment and in one of the rooms, with the door ajar, was Matt sitting down on a round cushion. He was still and his eyes were closed.

As Robert stood by the door, Matt slowly opened his eyes, smiled and motioned for Robert to sit on the cushion next to him. Matt explained that he was meditating, and not long after that, for the first time in his life, Robert meditated alongside his friend; the first person he had known in Sydney, his first friend, and a person he had lost touch with when he started getting drunk a lot and kicked him out of the apartment, which was tenanted by Matt first.

That Sunday was a day Robert will never forget. It changed his life. Matt taught him a lot, and Robert began to feel that he has opened up his mind. He felt more positive towards life and decided to give it another go; this time, with more optimism and compassion. He started eating healthily and went for regular exercises. Sometimes he would cycle, swim or jog at the nearby beach. He started attending all of his classes, spent more time on his studies and made great use of his tutors.

Robert is now sure that in a few months down the track, when he looks back at his life again, he would laugh at how silly he had been to be unkind to his body and mind, when instead, he should have treated it with respect and kindness. He should have been happy for himself and for others, instead of being filled with hatred and jealousy. Robert smiled and closed his eyes. It is Sunday, and time for his routine weekly meditation session.





Mindfulness and Daily Life

by Rosiana Lim

Mindfulness has become a hot topic nowadays particularly among the field of contemporary psychology. Many researches and studies done on mindfulness and they have shown how mindfulness benefits the body and mind. The popularity of mindfulness in the West has been contributed by some Buddhist practitioners, such as Jon Kabat-Zinn, Dalai Lama and Matthieu Ricard, to name a few. But what is Buddhist mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the English translation of "sati" (Pali), which literally means memory. The common definition of mindfulness is awareness of the present moment. It has the qualities of objectivity and non-involvement in observing each arising phenomenon. Whatever experience arises, mindfulness just accepts it. It also has the qualities of heedfulness and clarity. It sees whatever arises without any distortion. Also mindfulness has no likes or dislikes. It sees things as they are.

In Buddhism mindfulness practice is normally associated with meditation. The most common one is mindfulness of the breathing. One who practises mindfulness of breathing constantly remembers its object, which is the breath, and be aware of any mental activity or phenomena arising such as feeling or thoughts and let them go.

The most important aspect of Buddhist mindfulness is it acts as a wise gatekeeper. It remembers the instruction, which is part of the Right Effort (see below), to let go unwholesome states of mind and to arouse wholesome states of mind .

However, mindfulness does not end at the meditation cushion. In fact, mindfulness practice continues outside the formal meditation practice.

Mindfulness is in the heart of Buddhist practice and it is greatly emphasised by many teachers and in many teachings. We can find mindfulness in the Noble Eightfold Path, five spiritual powers (Pali: pañca bala), seven factors of enlightenment (Pali: Bojjhanga) and in many suttas . Obviously it has an important place in Buddhism. Why is that?

The purpose of the teachings of the Buddha is to purify one's own mind. Mindfulness is an essential factor to have to be able to purify one's mind, as without mindfulness one is blind with whatever happening in the body and mind. It is impossible to train something that we can't understand or see. Therefore mindfulness can be compared to a torch light that dispels darkness.



Integrating Mindfulness into Daily Life

To see how mindfulness sits in the core teaching of Buddhism, let's have a look at the Noble Eightfold Path which could be categorised into three groups:

1. Wisdom (Panna):
 - 1.1. Right View – the view that all phenomena are unsatisfactory(dukkha), impermanent (anicca) and non-self (anatta)
 - 1.2. Right Aspiration – aspiration to renounce and an accordant to greater commitment to spiritual path; good will; and a commitment to non-violence, or harmlessness, towards other living beings
2. Morality (Sila):
 - 2.1. Right Speech – abandoning false speech, divisive speech, abusive speech and idle chatter
 - 2.2. Right Action – abstaining from taking life, from stealing and from sexual misconduct
 - 2.3. Right Livelihood – abstaining from livelihood that, either directly or indirectly, results in harm for other living beings
3. Concentration (Samadhi):
 - 3.1. Right Effort – persistent effort to abandon and prevent all unwholesome thoughts, words and deeds, and also to bring up and maintain wholesome thoughts, words and deeds
 - 3.2. Right Mindfulness – ardently being aware of the body, feeling, mind and mental qualities
 - 3.3. Right Concentration – practice of meditative absorption (jhana)

Essentially mindfulness practice brings us back to the present moment, instead of being caught up in the past or future. For example when someone is talking to us, we listen attentively and not let the mind wander to the future or the past. This sounds very simple but due to our mind's habit, it's not as easy as it sounds. The mind has been habituated to jump to the past and future so it hardly stays in the present moment. That is why the training of meditation is essential in Buddhist practice as it is a means to train the unruly mind. The training of concentration (Samadhi) will provide one the skill to guide the mind. However it's not enough just to cross our legs and meditate. Buddhist practice also encom-

passes other aspects that are applicable when we relate to our lives and the people in the society. This is part of the morality aspect in the Buddhist training.

Morality aspect is commonly explained as the five precepts, which are: (1) to refrain from killing; (2) to refrain from taking what is not given; (3) to refrain from sexual misconduct; (4) to refrain from lying; (5) to refrain from intoxicants. The training of morality could be on the body and mental (mind) level and both require mindfulness. Thus applying mindfulness into morality training means we are aware of our bodily actions and speech and also our thoughts, emotions and intentions.

Interestingly the relationship between morality and mindfulness goes both ways. When one has mindfulness, one could develop one's morality. When one's morality becomes purer, one's mindfulness gets stronger. So each part of the Noble Eightfold Path supports one another. Therefore it could be said that when one practises morality, he/she also practises mindfulness and wisdom.

Thus the practise of mindfulness extends outside the meditation cushion. And I think since we spend the majority of our time with our eyes open, it is necessary to apply our mindfulness into our behaviour and thoughts. The application of mindfulness into our daily lives will improve our relationship with others, happiness and health. It certainly brings much benefit and joy into our lives.

1. *Right mindfulness (samma sati): one path of the Noble Eightfold Path*
2. *Unwholesome states of mind are normally expressed as greed, hatred and delusion*
3. *Sutta: a discourse of the Buddha
Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's mind – this is the Teaching of the Buddhas
(Dhammapada Verse 183)*

*The practise
of mindfulness
extends outside the
meditation cushion.*





Mindfulness Today

by Aun Pojdanai Sukijjakhamin

Indisputably technological advancement has benefited humankind in various ways. It allows us to be more efficient, effective and connected than ever before. However, many of us have also grown more dependent on technology and might find it difficult to spend a day without some electronic devices. Nowadays, it doesn't take long for some innovative, nice-to-have gadget to become what seems like a necessity.

While technology certainly has its advantages, it can also give rise to unwholesome deeds if not used wisely. We all want to be happy, seeking out what's good for us and avoiding things that make us suffer, but have you thought about whether the way you use technology might have put you in negative states that you seek to avoid in the first place like impatience, lack of attention and restlessness, to name a few?

To understand why and how this happens, we need to look within. We know that our mind works faster than the speed of light - when you think of something, it's there almost instantaneously. Now let me describe what typically happens to one's mind when it engages in a selected number of information carriers with varying levels of technological advancement.

Item #1: Books

How it works: The good old way of absorbing information is to read. Most books are organised into chapters; each of which typically represents a concrete set of ideas that piece together into a whole. When reading a book, you absorb the information sequentially and you can always go back and check your understanding. If you want to ponder on a particular idea, you simply pause your reading then resume as you see fit.

Impact on the mind: Have you ever wondered why you tend to fall asleep faster when reading a book compared to engaging in some other activities like watching TV? Well, books tend to offer one stream of ideas - when you read it you are taken on a journey that requires your full attention. Recursive thoughts can happen, but when they do your reading stops. You are unlikely to be able to 'hop out' and think of something irrelevant then 'hop in' to read a few words effectively. In a way, reading a book trains you to persist with thinking in a suggested frame of mind.

Item#2: TVs

How it works: Each TV channel airs different programs in their time slots. Each program is akin to a chapter in a book and typically representing a concrete set of ideas. However programs that appear sequentially do not normally have much continuity. Further there are multiple TV channels, so you can flick to watch something else at a click of a button. There are also commercial breaks embedded in the airtime of most programs, which disrupt the information flow. Also, unlike books, TVs offer not only sight, but also sound. The visual stimuli on offer are also a lot more vivid than books.

Impact on the mind: Given that TV offers rich stimuli, you might find it difficult not to identify with what's on screen rather than merely watching it and being aware of what's arising (and falling) within your mind. In its 'make believe' world, you can also be easily led to watch something you would not do in real life but feel justified to do so for entertainment's sake (crime scene anyone?). In many news stories, TV series and reality shows, there seems to be a lot of violence, harsh speech and other unwholesomeness to cloud your mind. Worse still, if you feel bored with a program, you can simply flick to another channel adding to your already heightened sensory perception with even more stimuli. Occasionally, you may also find yourself staring blankly into the rectangular box and submissively absorb the information without being aware of the wholesome or unwholesome nature of what you're watching.

Item#3: Facebook, Twitter, BuzzFeed-enabled smartphones

Let me jump ahead past the early inventions of internet and discuss what technologised social media are capable of doing now.

How it works: No longer do you need to proactively access or 'pull' the information, anything that these apps/programs determine to be worthy of your reading would be 'pushed' to the home screen of your smartphone. You now have wide-ranging access to whomever you've 'befriended' with and/or decided to 'follow'. Their status updates, likes, tweets and other social media messages do not come in a neat package but instead largely represent various and often fragmented ideas and concepts.

Impact on the mind: To give you an analogy, engaging in one set of ideas is like reading a book in your hands. Watching TV is like having tens of books on your table where you put one down and pick another up - often quite reactively. As for using social network apps, it is like having your room filled with papers that constantly fly across your face. It should therefore be no surprise that when you engage in these electronic social networking channels, your mind tends to be scattered, easily distracted and restless.

But it doesn't have to be this way. As a Buddhist practitioner, you do have a choice. You can either let external

stimuli overcome your mindfulness or find skilful ways to address these social media-induced negative states. The power of mindfulness has been talked about extensively in Buddhist teachings. Ajahn Chah once compared what to do with our mind to having a sharp knife. We should use it to cut only those things worth cutting; otherwise the knife can become blunt. Similarly if we let our mind wonder aimlessly, chasing after thoughts or feelings which have no use or value, it will become restless and weak. Without strong mental energy, wisdom has little chance to arise. With this in mind, let me introduce three practical steps you can adopt to increase your mindfulness in the age of technology.



Step #1: Create a more conducive environment

The approach that arguably requires the least effort is to create a more conducive environment for mindfulness. Knowing that watching TV and using social media on smartphones can lead to restlessness, you should adopt alternative approaches to use them more skilfully. For instance, you can limit how much TV or social media you are willing to consume per day. You can plan a week ahead so you know exactly what TV programs you will be watching and stick to it. You can choose to turn off the push notifications on your smartphone or, even better, start liking wholesome Facebook pages (e.g. Buddhist quotes) and/or follow tweets of revered monks and nuns or Buddhist practitioners. This can help bring you back to mindfulness, perhaps after you have been madly checking your friends' Facebook status updates or pictures, and plunging your mind down the cyber rabbit hole. You can even reserve watching TV or checking social media sites as a way to reward yourself after engaging in more beneficial activities like studying for exams. For a serious dhamma practitioner, this could mean having a rather neutral, leisurely read after an hour of meditation.

Step #2: Study the Buddha's teachings

As skilful as the above techniques may be, they are not addressing the issues relating to mindfulness at its cause. Over the years, most of us have developed a strong habit of chasing after what we think is good for us at face value. It is no doubt then that we sometimes crave for things that aren't ultimately beneficial for us. It is difficult, for instance, to keep up with steering away from violent TV programs if we don't see anything inherently wrong with it. In order to see things more clearly, you need to get more acquainted with the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness. Studying the discourse on the four foundations of mindfulness (i.e. Satipatthana Sutta) or listening to a talk on this topic would be highly beneficial. In a nutshell, the discourse encompasses the contemplation of the body, feelings, mind and dhamma. Taking the five precepts is also an excellent way to keep your mindfulness in check as you are required to constantly observe your thoughts, speech and action. There are other Buddhist teachings available through various sources that offer information on mindfulness. Authors of these

information sources (e.g. books, articles, blogs) are able to articulate the teachings much better than I possibly can, so I shall not elaborate anymore here but leave it to you to explore further. By gaining more knowledge of the Buddha's teachings, you will start to see the world with a different perspective and your view of the benefits of mindfulness will be amplified. You can then use this knowledge to draw a parity between how you live your life in the age of technology with the blameless lives lived by the noble ones, and adjust your approach accordingly.

Step #3: Be diligent with your dhamma practice

While it is undoubtedly wholesome to study the Buddha's teachings; knowledge alone is inadequate and you should put what you've learned into practice. Luang Ta Maha Boowa kindly made a distinction between a theoretical understanding acquired from memory (sanna) and a genuine understanding based on wisdom (panna). Intellectual comprehension such as those gained from reading a book is incomplete. Relying on personal views and opinions, this type of understanding is prone to speculation and clouded by predispositions. Only when you directly investigate internal phenomena, will you gain a clear, indisputable and intuitive insight. As such, you need to put the teachings into practice by investigating and understanding how TV and other social media devices really impact your mind. Little by little, you will find more skilful means to think, speak and act more wholesomely in the age of technology.

Hopefully what I've discussed here is enough to trigger your mind to question your relationship with various technological devices. Hopefully you feel compelled from what you've read to try and better understand in more detail how these technological devices affect your mind. Lastly, hopefully you're convinced of the benefits of putting the teachings into practice and start investigating. Please don't take my word for it, just see it for yourself.





Mouthfulness

by Tina Ng



Me: I need some help. I have this love-hate relationship with her. I love her, but I think I'm starting to hate her. She's so annoying!

Counsellor: What makes her annoying to you?

Me: Put it this way – you are such a patient counsellor, but I think if you met her, she would drive you insane too.

Counsellor: Tell me about her.

Me: Well, she just doesn't stop talking! Whether I am having dinner, shopping, watching a movie, reading a book, walking, standing, sitting or lying down, she's just chattering away. I wouldn't be surprised if she talks in her sleep too! Sometimes I would wake up and the voice is already there!

Counsellor: Has she always been like this?

Me: Probably, but I just wasn't aware of it before. I guess initially I thought it was quite an attractive thing because the things she was saying made sense. I was able to bounce ideas off her, and the conversations kept me entertained. I would tell her about my problem and she would throw up different choices. Then we work through each of those options and find one that works best for me.

Counsellor: So isn't that a good thing?

Me: Yeah it is. But the talking just keeps going. It just keeps chattering away, chewing at my brain. It's all just noise now. Sometimes I just say to her "Shush!"

Counsellor: And how does she respond?

Me: She goes quiet for a little bit, but not long after, she starts again! Sometimes she reacts aggressively when I try to get her to stop talking.

Counsellor: How have you tried to get her to stop talking?

Me: I would go in there, right into the middle of the chatter, and tell her to stop talking so I can get some peace and quiet. I would be meditating and the voice just keeps chatting away. I would ask her gently, with great love and patience, to please leave me alone so I can continue with my journey to peace. She sits still for a moment, but very quickly is distracted and throws up all sorts of things to distract me. I then get angry and all peace is lost.



Counsellor: Sounds quite counterproductive and almost a forceful way to get to peace. Sometimes we misunderstand meditation and think that it is all about "blissing out" on the cushion with your eyes closed. Actually, you can try a mindfulness practice, where you are mindful not only of what is going on outside, but more importantly, mindful of what is going on inside of you. Don't get caught up with what is happening, but sit back and watch what is happening.

Me: Actually, I'm guilty of adding to her chatter too. I like that idea of just sitting back and not adding to her chatter.

Counsellor: In fact, if you sit back and not react to whatever she says, very quickly, she would stop reacting to you too.

Me: Like ignoring her?

Counsellor: Oh no, that won't be a healthy relationship. It's just a shift in how you approach her. You should respond to her, but not react to her like a knee-jerk reaction. You can then choose how you want to respond to her, if at all.

Me: So what's that practice called again?

Counsellor: It's called Mindfulness. Being mindful of what is happening right here, as it is, without adding onto it our own perceptions and misconceptions, our own wants or aversions. Really getting to know ourselves and our lives for what it is. It's a really enlightening process.

Me: Imagine how different life would be if I can see things clearly! I feel sometimes I'm so narrow-minded.

Counsellor: At least you're aware of it.

Me: So do you have a diagnosis for what she's going through?

Counsellor: We humans always want to label things, don't we? I suppose it gives us a sense of control and identity to give names to things. If you want to call it anything, I would name it the opposite to Mindfulness – how about "Mouthfulness"?

Me: Mouthfulness!

Counsellor: I just made it up. If we are not mindful of what is happening inside of our mind, then we are mouthing off whatever comes through our mouths!

Me: I like it. I'll remember to practise mindfulness, and not mouthfulness. Thanks doc!

Counsellor: So before we end our sessions, I'm curious to know who this woman is. Is she your girlfriend?

Me: No, no. I'm not a lesbian. What if I told you she doesn't really exist? Well, doesn't exist in the way people define existing.

Counsellor: You're starting to creep me out.

Me: If someone talks to themselves, and even has arguments with themselves, imagines things that aren't real, can be quite paranoid from time to time...is that a mental illness?

Counsellor: Yes, they're all symptoms of mental illness.

Me: I guess we're all a bit mad then. That voice I've been talking about and that I've been trying to get to be quiet is that annoying voice in my head. She just does not stop talking! She won't leave me alone. She follows me around and keeps arguing with me. I make a decision and she second-guesses me. She is always misinterpreting things and makes me believe her. She gets me into trouble all the time.

Counsellor: Hmm...sounds like mouthfulness. And you should really practice some mindfulness. I guess we are all a bit insane as we all have that little voice in our head. The only prescription is mindfulness. With mindfulness you see the insanity for what it is, and to stop those voices taking over our lives.

Me: Thanks doc. I knew I could count on you. You're always my voice of reason. Of all the voices in my head, I think I like you best.





Wisdom and Compassion

Lyrics by Tina Ng
Jane Lim Candy Tan
Lillian Ong Yong Khing Tan

Your head tells you to not hold on
Your heart tells you that they need you
Do you go alone to find the truth
Or do you stay and lend a helping hand to others

Our heart and mind work together hand in hand
One can't lose the other
For us to find the path to happiness

Cause wisdom sees nothing matters
Compassion says love all
Spread the loving-kindness
To you and all
Cause wisdom lights the path
To compassionate homes
Where the warmth awaits us
And the kindness surrounds
Our hearts will be filled with great joy
With wisdom and compassion

Your head tells you, you're a good-hearted fool
Your heart tells you that is not true
We are not alone in this changing world
Karma tells us what we do is what we get

Our heart and mind work together hand in hand
One can't lose the other
For us to find the path to happiness

Cause wisdom sees nothing matters
Compassion says love all
Spread the loving-kindness
To you and all
Cause wisdom lights the path
To compassionate homes
Where the warmth awaits us
And the kindness surrounds

However, remember, from time to time our eyes are blind
We lose sight of the truth of life
We're stranded in the mist searching for a beam of light
Step by step we learn we grow
Don't be a-fraid, you'll find your way Ey~~~~

Cause wisdom sees nothing matters
Compassion says love all
Spread the loving-kindness
To you and all
Cause wisdom lights the path
Where the warmth awaits us
And the kindness surrounds
Our hearts will be filled with great joy
With wisdom and compassion





慈慧悲智

詞 鄭淑心
曲 庄祥緣與黃凱怡

Wise Heart, Compassionate Mind

Lyrics by Su Sian Teh
Composed by Ian Ch'ng and Wei Yin Chen

慈悲如寒冬暖暖的衣裳
如晶瑩剔透的寶石
讓你擁有大悲菩提心
去關懷深入眾生的內心

Compassion, like warm clothes in the cold winter
Like the brilliance of a precious gem
Cultivating a benevolent heart
To care for and to touch the hearts of all beings

智慧如黑暗中的明燈
發掘內心沉澱的心燈
靜心引起的光明
一夕平靜透徹與了解真理實相

Wisdom, like the guiding light in the darkness
Shining through the depths of our hearts
Gaining clarity with mindfulness
Developing wisdom and insight from a moment
of peace

慈悲的定義是充滿善念給與溫暖快樂
智慧的生命是法身慧命拔除煩惱痛苦

Compassion, a heart of kindness giving warmth
and joy
Wisdom, living free from troubles by under-
standing the truths

慈慧雙修悲智雙運
慈悲心越重智慧會越高煩惱就越少

Nurturing a loving wisdom, developing a wise
compassion
With these two, our troubles will fade away





The Way Our Live Flows

Lyrics by Tina Ng
Composed by Julian Craig

He tells me that this too will pass,
That you and I one day will be gone.
He shows how in holding on I lose,
And the freedom I'll gain in letting go.

She tells me to embrace the weak,
The hurt, the lost, and the forgotten.
She shows me how in holding all
In kindness, happiness will come.

Wisdom says we're nothing,
Compassion says were everything.
Between these two our life flows.
Holding both our heart and mind grows.

Life can be so beautiful!
But life can be suffering!
Listen with your compassionate heart.
See the world with your wise mind.

Wisdom says we're nothing,
Compassion says were everything.
Between these two our life flows.
Holding both our heart and mind grows.

Wisdom says we're nothing,
Compassion says were everything.
Between these two our life flows.
Holding both our heart and mind grows.

Listen with your compassionate heart.
See the world with your wise mind.
As one we hold a wise heart...and a compassionate mind.





Mindfulness: Accepting the Present

Lyrics by Adeline Lukmantara
April Cheah
Bing Sen Koh
Composed by Vi Vian Chin

There'll be a time your mind wonders
Through the mist and in the dark
With right mindfulness, you will realise
That life is filled with ups and downs

There'll be a time your mind wonders
Through the mist and in the dark
Let your mind be in the present
Where you'll find clarity



When you're lost, bring light to the darkness
Illuminate the clouded journey with awareness
Through good or bad, see arising and falling of all
Equanimity, neither swayed nor shaken,
Mindfulness will lead us to the middle path
The reality of life shines through
Accepting the present, brings peace and ease

In the moment you shall find
Memories of the past fade away
Tomorrow is yet to come,
Experience the gift of today

Mindfulness is indescribable with words,
it has to be experienced
Investigate and see for yourself,
the real meaning of now
With non attachments
there is peacefulness





自覺 Awareness

詞 鄭淑心

Lyrics by Su Sian Teh
Composed by Aggie Lawer
Adeline Lukmantara

音樂在持續播著 心仍飄逸
舞者隨舞曲擺動 找平穩
不留戀 過去插曲
不再聯想下 一步怎回應

The music plays continuously with the flow of the heart
The dancers find balance as they sway to the tune
Not dwelling in episodes of the past
No longer absorbed in how the next step should be

觀心念 清晰每一念
讓念頭專注過程 如實觀照 看清實相

Observe the mind, being clear of every moment
Let the mind focus on the process, and see things clearly for what they are

音樂的不間斷 彷彿人生步伐
唯有心的安住 才能透視一切
確實知道每刻 與音樂的結合
親身修證才能覺悟自己與世界和諧相處的關聯

The continuity of the music replicates the pace of life
Only with the calmness of the heart can we see through reality
Let awareness of every moment be entwined with the music
Only through experience can you truly realise the harmonic bond between yourself and the world

啟發自覺 生活藝術
讓念頭專注過程 觀真實相 清涼自在

Be inspired by the art of living consciously
Let the mind focus on the process, be at ease with reality to free yourself from worries





Present Moment

Lyrics by Aggie Lawer
Adeline Lukmantara
Bing Sen Koh
Xian Hui Tan
Composed by Aggie Lawer

There'll be moments when we've gone
Dwelling ourselves in the past
Dreaming about the future
Breaking ourselves into pieces
But at times you'll realise
Mindfulness brings peace and clarity
Let yourself be strong
Let yourself be free
And all things will be fine

Saat kita termenung
Renungkan masa lalu
Mimpikan masa depan
Benak kita t'lah berpencar
Ketika kau sadari
Kesadaran membawa kedamaian
Kuatkan hati
Bebaskan diri
S'mua 'kan jadi baik

忽略了此時此刻
時時都留戀過去
常常在憧憬未來
那麼現在又何在
可是當我們發覺
正念能帶來寧靜清晰
要精進堅強
要學會放下
一切都自然無礙

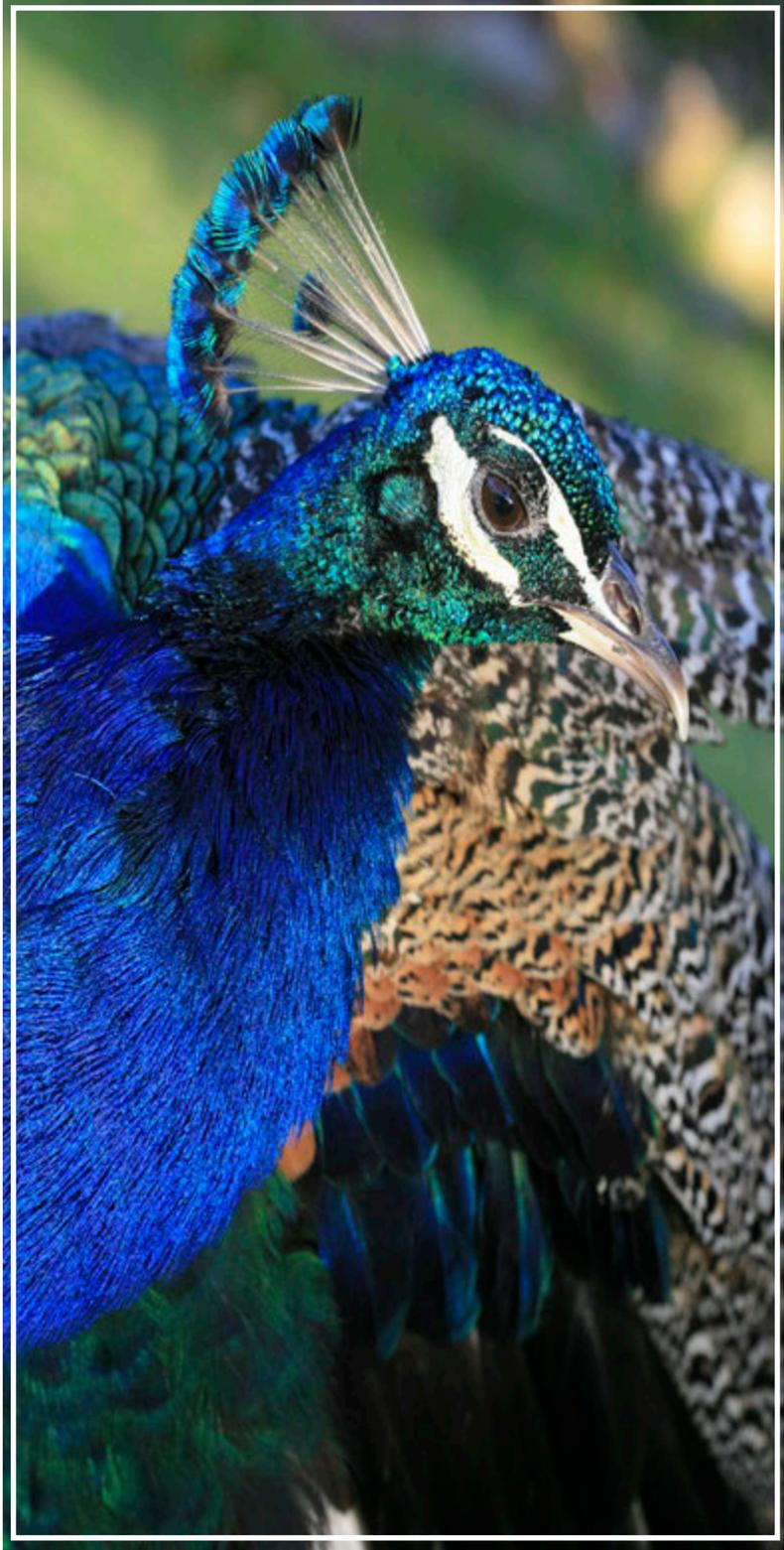
Open your eyes, see the world
Be mindful of your thoughts
Find happiness in the present moment
Though there's tomorrow
When the storm may cease
When the joy may flare
When the sun may shine
Let go, treasure this present moment

When we walk through the space of life
Thoughts and feelings may keep you blind
In the path to search for happiness
Let mindfulness and wisdom lead our way

Because present moment
Is now and here



Photo Gallery of 30th UNIBUDS





Cook of The Year



Summer Retreat



Orientation Week



Orientation Picnic

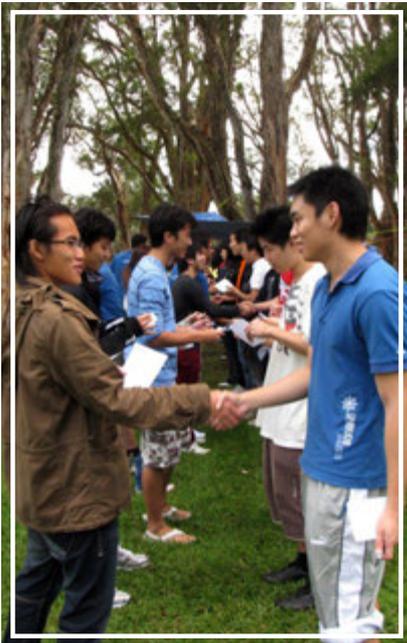




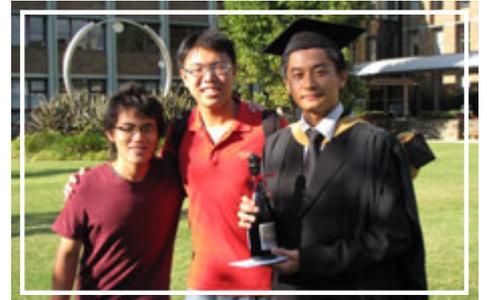
Potlucks



Amazing Race



Graduations

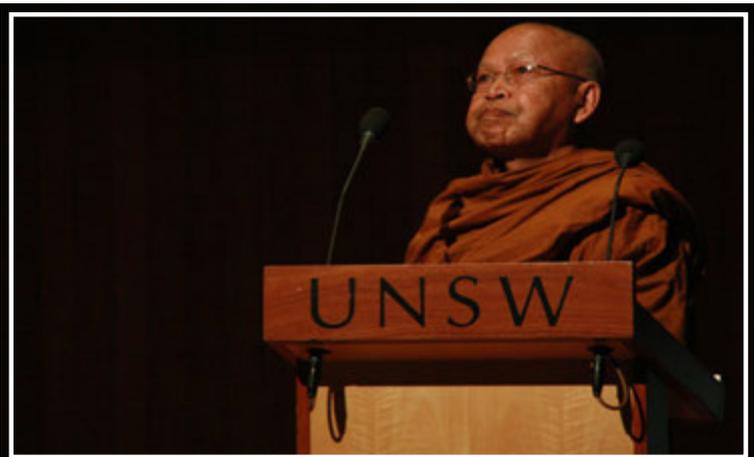




Winter Retreat

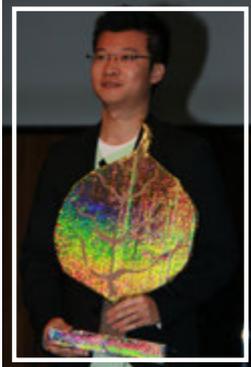


Bodhi Nite





Bodhi Nite



Annual General Meeting



Photo Gallery of 31st UNIBUDS



Cook Of The Year



Sculpture by the Sea Excursion





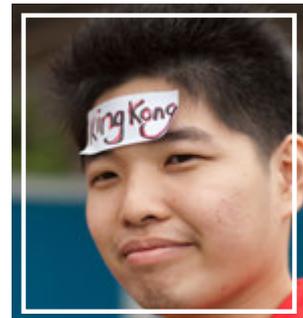
Summer Retreat



Summer Gathering



Orientation Picnic





Orientation Week



Vesak Celebration



Buddhist Exhibition

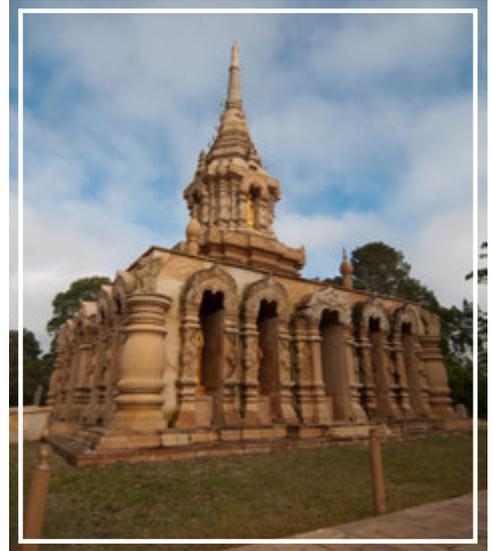




Buddhist Exhibition



Winter Retreat





Winter Retreat



Graduation



Bodhi Nite





Bodhi Nite



Annual General Meeting



Membership List 2010



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TENG Wai Loon
NG John Joon Hu
SEE Graeme
WONG Kah Loon
ONG Yen Lee
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NG Khai Yi
NG Zane Lynn
NGUYEN Uyen
NOVIANTO Rony
NURDI Meike
ONG Lillian
ONG Wu Chuan
OOI Den Neil
OOI Ivan
OOI Shi Ying
OOI Soo Siang
PANG Mandy
PHONGWARIN Tanakaan (Niky)
QUYNH Hieu
RUSLI Kingsley
RUTLAND Steven
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SIM Lany
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LI Lining
LIM Chia Chean
LIM Clarence
LIM Daniel
LIM Dennis Wei Shen
LIU Emily
LIU Huanhuan
LIU Xiaoxiao
LIZADJOHRY Meikana
LO Elsa Lok
LOH Clement
LOH Weng Sen
LONG Erica Yen Chin
LOU Shi Nee
LOW Zen
LU Xin Shu
LUKMANTARA Adeline
LUKMANTARA Ivan Ekaputera
LUONG Annabelle
LUONG Minh Duk
LUU Wilson
MAKGAWINATA Henry
NARELDA Sheehan
NEOH Yi Wen
NG Hooi Ying
NG Mega
NG Yan Ni
NG Zane Lynn
NGUYEN Nathan

NGUYEN Sharon
OOI Den Neil
OOI Hong Ing
OOI Shi Ying
OOI Yi Von
PANTAGRUD Pravitt
Pei Xuan
Pei Ye
PHAN Yen
PURWA Jennifer
QIN Kun
RAMASUNDARA Malith
RANDALL Timothy
REDA Bill
REYNOLDS-EVANS Lauren
ROEDIGER Charlotte
ROSEBERRY Olivia
SATPATHY Maheswar
SEAH Wei Chen
SEE Pei Ru
SINGGIH LIE Ervinda
SLOW Li Khim
SOO Jia Yee (Charlie)
SOVIS Asanthi
SUGIANTO Adeline
SURIANTO Yonda
TAI Yee Shyn
TAN Tek Ping
TAN Tze Hao
TAN Xian Hui
TEH Andre Yao Yang
THERASUTTHIKUL Potjanee Candy
THUNG Senk Siang
TITASATTAVORAKUL Pateera
TRAN Felix
TRAN Van
TUEN Mark Jin Ming
VARMA Sam
VARSHAN Ratnanathan
VINODH Jayaraman
WANG Diana
WANG Kai Di
WANG Zhen
WEE Pang Ping
WEE Yi Hui
WIBOWO Hans
WINZENEIED Dani
WONG Shu Qi
XIA Hong Ze
XIANG Miao Fei
XU Wenkai
XUE Meng Han
YANG Amy
YING YanMinZhi
YONG Foh Fan
YU Fang Yong
YU Yue
YUAN Li
ZHAO Hui
ZHAO Jie (Michelle)





Spiritual Reference

Patrons

Ven Tsang Hui
Mahayana
Hwa Tsang Monastery
29 Mackenzie St, Homebush West NSW 2140
Ph (02) 9746 6334

Ven. Chao Khun Samai
Theravada
Wat Pa Buddharangsee
39 Junction Rd, Leumeah NSW 2560
Ph (02) 4625 7930

Student Organisations

Non-Sectarian

MacBuddhi (Macquarie University Buddhist Association)
Box 16 Student Council, Macquarie University, North Ryde
NSW 2109

Unibodhi (University of Sydney Buddhist Society)
Box 100 Holme Building, University of Sydney, Camperdown
NSW 2122

UTS Buddhist Meditation Society (University of Technology
Sydney)
PO Box 3210, Broadway, NSW 2007

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

Library and Information Services

Buddha Dhamma Education Association Inc.
Non Sectarian
78 Bentley Road, Tullera NSW 2480
Ph: (02) 6628 2426

Buddhist Council of New South Wales
Non-Sectarian
Level 1, 441 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest NSW 2065
Ph: (02) 9966 8893

Buddhist Information Centre
Info Service
City Centre: Shop 2, 242 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2018
Ph: (02) 9280 0000

Buddhist Library and Meditation Centre Library
Non-Sectarian
90-92 Church St, Camperdown NSW 2050
Ph: (02) 9519 6054



“Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It’s a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.”

Pema Chödrön

*excerpt from ‘The Places That Scare You:
A Guide To Fearlessness In Difficult Times*

“In mindfulness one is not only restful and happy, but alert and awake. Meditation is not evasion; it is a serene encounter with reality.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

excerpt from ‘The Miracle Of Mindfulness’



Glossary



For the convenience of readers, a list of explanation for the Pali 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 (Sutta 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 apologizes 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 that 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)

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

Anicca (pl) Impermanence.

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.

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)

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 capitalized 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 mean-

ing. 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)

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)

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)
ha-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.

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.



“ *Peace is within oneself to be found in the same place as agitation and suffering. It is not found in a forest or on a hilltop, nor is it given by a teacher. Where you experience suffering, you can also find freedom from suffering. Trying to run away from suffering is actually to run toward it.* ”

Ajahn Chah
excerpt from 'No Ajahn Chah, Reflection'

“ *The vehicle of the bodhisattvas
Corresponds with bodhi mind,
Is guided by kindness and compassion,
And has the wisdom that comes from emptiness as its
skillful means. Enter by these three important gates,
And cultivate all practices skillfully,
For they all lead to the One Vehicle to become a Buddha.* ”

Master Yin Shun
excerpt from 'The Way To Buddhahood'



*May all beings be well,
happy and peaceful.*

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

...where a bud
can bloom
in full



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