

SACCA

A Newsletter for members of UNIBUDS

the UNSW Buddhist Society

<http://www.unibuds.unsw.edu.au>

Autumn Edition

March ~ May 2007



Buddhism and the Environment

In the early Buddhist scriptures -
those, that is, which can be said to reflect
the historical circumstances under which
the Buddha taught - there is evidence of a
very great sensitivity to the natural world.

The Buddha himself, as also his immediate
disciples, lived close to nature. He was born
in an orchard - his mother holding on to the
branch of a tree. He gained Enlightenment at
Bodh Gaya sitting underneath a tree. He died
in the sal tree grove of the Mallas, stretched out
between two sal trees. And of course he spent
much of his time wandering from place to place,
from village to village, in the open air.

*Sangharakshita,
In the Realm of the Lotus*

Enlightenment is like the moon reflected on the water.
The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken.
Although its light is wide and great,
The moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide.
The whole moon and the entire sky
Are reflected in one dewdrop on the grass.

Dogen

Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains,
and waters as waters.

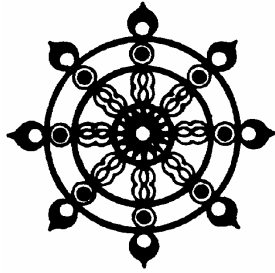
When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point
where I saw that mountains are not mountains,
and waters are not waters.

But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest.
For it's just that I see mountains once again as mountains,
and waters once again as waters.

- Ching-yuan -

Everything
just as it is,
as it is,
as is.
Flowers in bloom.
Nothing to add.

Robert Aitken



UNIBUDS *The UNSW Buddhist Society*

Where a bud can bloom in full...

SACCA

Autumn Edition

March 2007 – May 2007

Come and join us!

Special Events:

- Potluck (1st April)
- Buddhist Exhibition (15th-18th April)
- Meditation Workshop (5th May)
- Potluck (26th May)

Weekly Events:

- English Dhamma Talk (Friday 7-9 pm)
- Chinese Dhamma Talk (Thurs 6-8 pm)
- Lunchtime Meditation (Tuesday 1-2pm)

Note: Weekly events will not run during the mid-session break.

Contents

- o Editor's column - 2
- o Letter of the Month - 2
- o Path of Awakening - 3
- o Where a bud can bloom in full - 5
- o Renewable energy - 6
- o Summer Retreat - 9
- o O-picnic - 10
- o In Breath, Out Breath - 12
- o Buddhism for Greenies - 14
- o Tales of an Indian Mynah - 16
- o Rumi poems - 19
- o Dhamma Digest - 20
- o Upcoming Events - 21
- o Birthdays - 22

President's message

Dearest UNIBUDS members,

A very warm welcome and greetings to everyone! I'm here again sending my regards to all of you, whether existing or new members, through our UNIBUDS quarterly publication, SACCA. May all of you take good care of yourself and be well in preparing for a better year.

We hope that you will enjoy your stay with UNIBUDS throughout the year and in the years to come! Always remember that at times of stress and burnout, UNIBUDS will always be there for you to have a little break and meet some good friends to talk to.

As usual, UNIBUDS has prepared a list of interesting and exciting activities for you throughout the year, to keep up your fruitful journey besides the usual routine of work and study that we have. Our regular weekly activities include **English** and **Chinese Dhamma Talks**, by Venerables and lay-teachers, **Lunchtime Meditation** led by our Meditation Coordinator and **Special Sunday Activities**, catering for enthusiastic people who are interested in volunteering and outings.

In April this year, we will hold a major event, the **Buddhist Exhibition**, with the theme "**Path of Awakening**". This will bring everyone back to the journey of Buddha's life, to walk along the path of the Buddha together. It will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for everyone who is involved in organising and preparing for the exhibition. Come and join us!

Continuing in May, we have **Vesak Celebration** to commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and *parinirvana* of the Buddha, followed by **Winter Retreat** in early July, where you can experience monastic life and practice according to Buddhism. Meanwhile, don't forget to join our **Meditation Workshops**, which only run twice in each semester.

We hope that you will find your journey with UNIBUDS wonderful and fruitful in practicing Buddhism, learning the Dhamma and forming friendship. Besides the busy schedule that every one of us has, remembered to take good care of your body and mind from time to time. May everyone rejoice in everything that you do!

With Loving-kindness,

Su Sian TEH

Editor's Column

Hello, and welcome back to SACCA! Hope you all had a great Summer break, and are ready to work, study and practise the Dhamma again this year! This month's SACCA is themed 'Buddhism and the Environment' – a closer look at the similarities between how we can care for nature, and how we already care for ourselves and others in Buddhist practice. Before that, however, we will hear about UNIBUDS' upcoming exhibition, *Path of Awakening*. The exhibition is only weeks away, and a lot of help is still required for decorations, transport, multi-media and other departments! Please visit the *Path of Awakening* section to find out what you can do to help ☺

In this edition, **Eric** provides his thoughts on how our Buddhist practice can be enhanced by our understanding of nature. Then **Adeline** will tell us a story about how she started university and made a decision to help save the environment. In the general section, **Jess** describes her experience of Summer Retreat, and **Clara** tells us about the recent O-picnic! Finally, there are some comparisons between the core teachings in Buddhism and environmentalism, and a short story ☺

That's it! Hope you are well, and hope to see all your smiling faces at our UNIBUDS events this session!

With Metta,

Julian

P.S.

- Got any feedback or ideas for SACCA?
- Want to write an article for one of the upcoming topics?

Email: run4thehills@gmail.com

Phone: 0410 612 358

Letter of the Month

How's it going? I've already received the e-mails for the upcoming activities for the coming semester. How exciting!!! It just feels like the uni days and UNIBUDS days are all coming back again. But of course, this time I can only observe from without, not participating within. Well, it's just that the condition is not there for me to be with UNIBUDS physically anymore. But remember, like so many others whose life's been touched by UNIBUDS, I thought will always be with UNIBUDS. Hope this will be a fruitful and "dhammaful" year for UNIBUDS as a whole, for you personally and of course, also for the rest of the EXCO team! I am confident that you guys will do a beautiful job! All the best and do keep me informed!!! (although I know I've got quite a number of informants in UNIBUDS, haa haa haa..)

Regards,

Boon Hua TAN

Keep in Touch! Contact UNIBUDS!

Mail to:

UNIBUDS, c/o The Religious Centre,
Room 311, 3rd Floor, Square House,
University of New South Wales
NSW 2052, Australia

Phone: (02) 9385 6082

Email: unibuds@yahoo.com

Website:

<http://www.unibuds.unsw.edu.au>

~ **UNIBUDS** presents ~

The 2007 Buddhist Exhibition

“Path of Awakening”

After the Buddha was enlightened, a passer-by was once amazed by his bright and calming complexion.

“Are you a god?” asked the traveller.

“No”, replied the Buddha.

“Then, are you an angel?”

“No indeed”

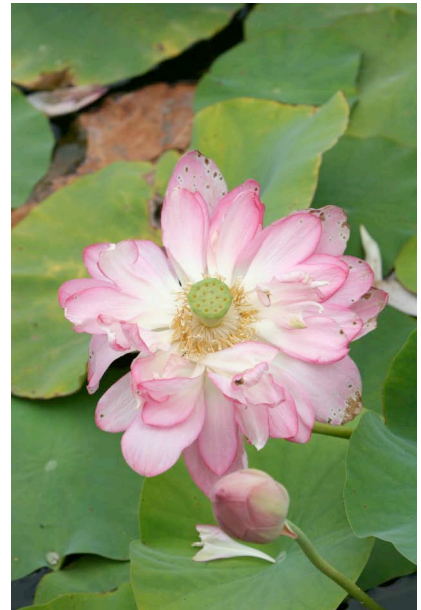
“Then what are you, sir?”

“I am awake”

In fact, the word “Buddha” means “Awakened one”. The Buddha had awakened from the illusory and superficial world that had previously bound him, like it binds all other sentient beings. He had awakened and seen the truth of the world for what it was. He had realised the Four Noble Truths of suffering and happiness

But this awakening did not happen overnight. It took many years of cultivation and practice. The path of awakening began on the day of the Buddha's birth, and continued until his enlightenment. However, his journey did not end there. After his enlightenment, the Buddha taught what he had learnt, and his teachings continue to help “awaken” those who are suffering – even in the modern era!

The 2007 Buddhist Exhibition, presented by UNIBUDS, aims to present the story of the Buddha and his life. This life cannot be separated from the teachings it created, for the Buddha's life is an example of his teachings – a timeless message in itself. This Exhibition also aims to show the spread of Buddhism to various countries around the world, which are responsible for the different traditions and interpretations that exist today. However, despite their apparent differences, all these traditions stem from the single source – a man who walked on a path and awakened from a dream. This man was Buddha – the Awakened One.



**UNIBUDS needs
your help!**

**The following
departments (next
page) are open to
volunteers!**

**Please call now,
while spaces are
still available!**

❖ **Program Master Department** Ang: 0405 989 208 isoboy@gmail.com

Here's a chance to speak up, to aid in the spread of a teaching that leads to a life of wisdom. Let your voice touch every single heart nearby, and reinforce their confidence with your words! The Program Master department is looking for two Masters of Ceremony (MC) fluent in English. Someone has to do it. Why not you?

❖ **Reception Department** Adeline: 0404 637 818 begabegu@yahoo.com

Do you like welcoming people with your warm vibe and friendly nature? Do you like sharing your knowledge with other people? Do you like being a cool tour-guide? Do you like escorting Venerables? It doesn't matter whether you have a nice smile as long as your answer is a keen 'YES' to any of those questions...please feel free to join us in the Receptionist Department! *It's gonna be good. It's gonna be FUN*

❖ **Marketing Department** Aun: 0401 485 15 pojdanai@gmail.com

Do your friends think you are super-persuasive and tactful? Do your parents always give in to your sometimes unreasonable requests? Do you feel the urge to let the world know about the upcoming Buddhist Exhibition? If you answer 'yes' to any of the above, please join our marketing department!

❖ **Decoration Department** Zhang Yi: 0421 818 512 lahdidadida@gmail.com

Are you creative and artistic? Do you have an interest in design and decoration but can't find a way to put it to use? If so, you are who we are looking for! We do not need you to be experts in this. All we want is a your interest and enthusiasm. This is an once in the 3 years event, surely it will be a great experience for all of us. Please hurry, we await for you to come on board! Let's work together hand in hand to make this journey a memorable one! Looking forward to working with you all =)

❖ **Publication Department** Wilsen: 0405 001 333 wilsen3@debourk.com

When it comes to creating a medium for informing and creating public awareness, there is no department other than the Publication Department that is responsible for it. From the conceptualising stage to the finished product, such as flyers, posters, and information booklets, this is what we do in the Publication Department. Anyone with design background and strong creativity is welcome to help us.

❖ **Technician Department** MingDe: 0404 510 077 mingde.teh@gmail.com

Hello~! Are you interested in helping out with our Buddhist Exhibition but are not sure how to? Join the technician department! We will lay out the lightings, cables, extensions, multimedia etc. It is an important job because an exhibition will not be decent without appropriate lightings! No experience is required, all you need is to be enthusiastic! So, if you are shy, but like to help out, the tech team is for you. Join us!

❖ **Transport Department** Julian: 0410 612 358 run4thehills@gmail.com

Hi! We are urgently in need of drivers for the Buddhist Exhibition to transport the many beautiful artefacts from their present homes to UNSW. You should have a valid driver's license and a reasonable amount of experience. Drivers with their own vehicles are appreciated, but if not, it is ok, provided you are 25 years or older. If you don't fit the descriptions above, don't worry. We still need expert navigators to entertain the drivers to keep them awake!

❖ **Security Department** Alex: 0401 060 394 alex.voevoda@gmail.com

Hey, hey! Here is a department for people with sharp eyes! Actually anyone is welcome, come and help keep the exhibits safe and keep the people safe. It will be a good opportunity to make some friends as we watch over the exhibits together. If you've got a couple of hours to spare during the day on Monday or Tuesday - then come one down and join the Security Department. This is a good opportunity if you don't have much time, but would like to help out during the exhibition and meet new people. Even if you can only help for a couple of hours, please sign up!

Buddhism and the Environment: Where a bud can bloom in full



“Buddha’s beneficial influence will pervade the thousand million worlds like the rays of the sun.”

“Just as water cools both good and bad and washes away all impurity and dust, in the same way you should develop thoughts of love for friend and foe alike, and having reached perfection in love, you will attain enlightenment.”



There is a direct connection between Buddhism and the environment. When looking at the above quotes, and thousands alike about the Buddha and his teachings; one can find that nature is present in many parts of his wisdom. The messages of the sun and the water are important keys to understanding the true meaning of these above quotes and how they relate to each of our lives and coexistence. Two of the main importance’s are that both water and the sun are there providing for us on daily basis, and were there before the Buddha came. Next, look at the second quote: words such as ‘impurity’ (which equals pollution) and ‘dust’ (that originally comes from the nature as soil). When these natural words are removed, there is a significant loss in the quotes’ essence.

Fortunately in everyday life, we all feel the warmth of the sunshine and the freshness of raindrops on our faces. Also, we can realize that a tree grows from their presence. Furthermore, a tree provides shelter for birds, oxygen for all of us to breathe, and shade on a hot day; or just beauty for our mind to reflect on. With this outlook, it can be distinguished that a tree is giving loving-kindness (*metta*) to all the world’s inhabitants in countless ways.

What lies before us is to see that Buddhism and the environment are linked. It already exists; however it is not easily seen without mindfulness of ourselves and the environment around us. For example, if greed and materialism are lessened according to Buddhism, then a true burden is lifted on the natural world and all its sentient beings. In turn this will also help lower suffering in the world by balancing food resources and compassion amongst all people including animals.

It is my opinion that, for the sincere progression of Buddhism in the world today, there needs to be a realization that the Buddha’s enlightenment blossomed with the help of the forest he spent six years meditating in. The insight he absorbed was partially due to the natural cycle that existed all around him. The Buddha used his mind to acknowledge that all things on this earth have a place of importance and share interdependency. Lastly, this perspective implies that if we let go of delusion, greed, and hatred, we will see that everyone is surrounded by nature, which leads to distinct knowledge and peace within.



One question for us all to ask ourselves is: “How can we develop an awareness of the natural environment at every moment, and its connection to each of us?”

by Eric Bohme



RENEWABLE ENERGY - IS IT THE WAY TO GO?

The form was submitted. *Sigh*. Finally! It was one of the hardest decision making in my life: choosing my university degree. I really didn't know what to pick. Mom wanted me to go into Petroleum Engineering. It made heaps good money, but somehow I knew it wouldn't fit me. Fossil fuels are running out. I only knew a little about global warming, but I didn't want my work to pollute the environment even more. So, after days of pondering, I finally put "Renewable Energy Engineering" as my first choice. Since then many people whom I encountered have asked me why. To be honest it was more because it was something new and different from other types of engineering. Well, in short, it just sounded cool. I liked being different, but for quite some time I asked myself, "Is it the way to go?"

I went to the bathroom and brushed my teeth. The tap was running *madly* and I was immersed on my thoughts. I doubted myself –slightly– but I was happy that the decision making was over. Time to go to bed! I hopped into bed and switched the light off. I could see a tiny mist of yellow light coming under my bedroom door – not to my surprise – as usual, all the lights outside were still on. *Argh (lazy and exhausted)!!* For the n^{th} time, I didn't want to waste a minute of my beauty sleep on jumping out of bed and turning everything off again. Besides, the electricity was not that expensive, and there's more than enough coal in Australia to be burnt anyway. *Oh well, sweet dreams!*



It's been three years since I started my Renewable Energy degree, which I enjoy so far. Many of my subjects provided updates on the ever-growing concern about global warming. Many signs are now appearing, indicating that global warming will be much more serious than previously expected. Do you notice that the weather pattern has changed recently? Summer and winter arrived later than usual, as if they were stuck in the increasing traffic of pollution. The temperature fluctuations are unbelievably unpredictable from day to day. I flip through my lecture notes. Increasing carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere mainly due to **high electricity consumption** and **transportation emission** will definitely raise the Earth's temperature by 4-5 °C by the end of the century, which corresponds to 79 cm rise in sea level. I didn't really know how significant these impacts would be, until I saw a picture of one of our beaches lost due to erosion. *No more beaches in Australia in the future!* Reports also show that more severe droughts, destructive cyclones and storms are likely to take place, regardless of our preferences. That's not all. The Australian Medical Association also predicts the number of deaths from heat-related illnesses could rise significantly from the current figure of 1,100 per year.

I quickly grab my electricity bill. On the top right it says "average daily usage of 39 kWh". Divided by five members in the house, this equates to ~8 kWh per day per person as opposed to the average of 4-5 kWh per day per person in Australia and 1-2 kWh per day per person for an energy-efficient house. *Gee! Shame on me! I am one of those contributors to the global warming! How about you?*

I realised that I have been taking things for granted. I do know that everything in life is impermanent: time goes by, day and night, summer and winter, birth and death, happiness and sadness...but coal is just too abundant for meeting our *current* energy needs that it always appears to me to be permanent! How about our future generations? Will the coal survive to meet their energy needs too? Even when we realise coal is impermanent, sometimes we have the misconception to just finish it all off as we wish. It will eventually be gone anyway. Why should we bother? The world is polluted enough already; so much that adding “just a little bit more” pollution will not make a huge difference. Therein, one can find a selfish act. It shows how much we care just for our own generation.

Once, Ajahn Brahm built a little shelter made of bricks. Two of them were misaligned such that he thought his work was a total failure. A visitor came by and to his surprise praised him for his work. Ajahn Brahm kindly asked what he was praising for. He thought the visitor was blind that he didn't see the two bad bricks on the wall. Of course, the visitor had a proper sight just like Ajahn Brahm's but he could also see another 998 beautiful bricks that were carefully placed. Since then the two bricks didn't look bad after all. The same thing goes for our current situation. There are places in the world that have been severely polluted, but there are also so much spots that still survive and preserve their natural beauty. They are spots that we shall generously share with our future generations to enjoy.



Now I feel like saving the world! I want to go on a green energy campaign. I want to organise a petition for the world to switch to renewable energy. Hang on...That sounds a bit too much for me. Sometimes we are so enthusiastic about doing things that we run straight into it and forget to build a solid foundation. I think, to save the world, one should start by saving oneself. How can one convince others, if one is not strong enough oneself? How shall I start then? Let's start from something simple:

- 1) Be mindful. Switch off appliances when they are not in use. This will make a huge difference!
- 2) Replace all incandescent light with fluorescent ones (they consume five times less energy!)
- 3) Choose energy efficient appliances
(www.energyrating.gov.au/appsearch/default.asp)
- 4) Install tap flow regulators, and check out other great tips on saving water!
(www.sydneywater.com.au/SavingWater)
- 5) Walk, or catch public transport whenever possible (they are healthier, or at least cheaper!)
- 6) Switch to “green energy” such as biofuels, hydro, solar or wind energy to power your appliances

Once, a man came up to Ajahn Chah who was well-known for his skill of reading minds. This man kindly asked Ajahn Chah to read his palm and tell him of what his future

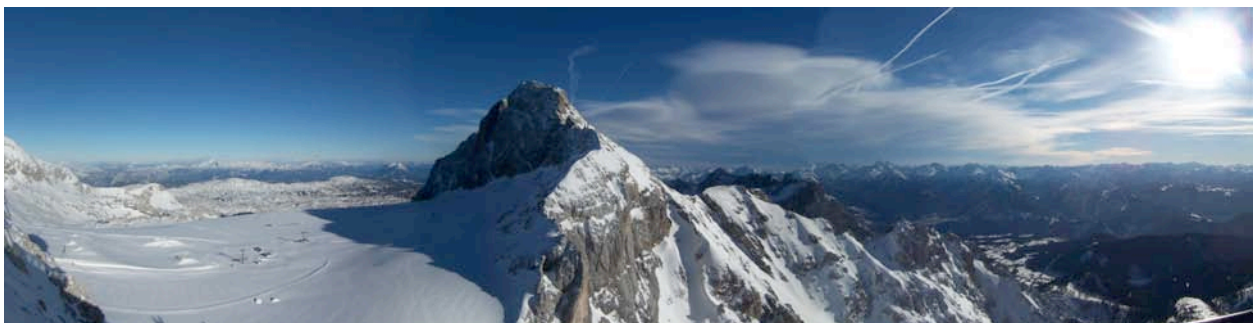
would be. At first Ajahn Chah refused, but looking at this man's persistence he finally agreed. The man was so excited to hear the good news as Ajahn Chah did the readings and kept saying, "Hmm...very good, very interesting." He was getting more and more impatient until Ajahn Chah finally said, "Your future is uncertain."

Our future is not certain indeed. It lies within our hands and is driven by our own mind. When the mind is pure, our environment will have the same quality. Whether we want to make a difference in our lifetime is entirely our own choice. Presently, the nation is spoiled by the excessive supply of coal-generated power at the cheapest price in history. This makes renewable energy hard to compete and hinders its popularity in the eyes of our government. As individuals at least we have put in the right thought and effort, and have tried our best to minimise our contributions to global warming. Imagine how big the difference can be if each of us are having the same positive attitude towards this matter. What is impossible now can be possible in the future. The seed is there, it is planted. When the causes and conditions are right, we will see more of the fruits of our effort to be ripped and enjoyed. We will hopefully see more people appreciate the importance of renewable energy in leading a clean, sustainable future.

While meditating under the tree, Siddhartha heard a group of girls singing on their way downtown: "With the strings too loose, the lute does not make a sound. Tighten the strings too much, and they will break apart. Not too loose, not too tight, and the lute sounds so nice!" Thus, he decided to stop practising asceticism and continued his mental diligence in search for the ultimate enlightenment: to walk along the Middle Path. It is true that it is important not to waste energy through excessive electricity consumption for example, just like having a luxurious life in the palace. However, it is equally important not to restrict your energy consumption so much that it affects your well-being and others – just like practising asceticism. For example, if one decides to take shower once a month to save water, it could actually affect his health, while having insufficient lighting in the house to save electricity could be bad for our sight. True prosperity comes from a generous mind, not a stingy or calculative one. Neither of these two extremes works well, but a life of moderation accompanied by wisdom is very valuable.

That's just a bit of a thought. Time to go to bed! I switch the light off and quickly pull my blanket up. I take a glimpse at my bedroom door. Everything is dark. No more mist of yellow lights. No more sounds of running taps. Sometimes, *great* findings take more than just reading books and listening to talks. It mostly comes from our own experience and self-realisation. I think I have eradicated my doubts by finding that Renewable Energy *IS* the way to go. It feels right, it feels good. May all be well and happy ☺

by Adeline Sugianto



Summer Retreat 2006

by Jessica Purwa

The Summer Retreat for 2006 was held at Wat Pa Buddharangsee, a Thai-style forest monastery in Leumeah. Running from the 8th to the 10th of December, the retreat was pretty well timed, as most of us were ready to kick back after weeks of exams, and to start our summer vacation. I had only been to one other retreat before Summer Retreat this year, and that was the Winter Retreat at Sunnataram Forest Monastery in Bundanoon. I loved the laid-back friendliness and humour of the monks there, so I had a lot of expectations for my next retreat.



After the train trip from Central on Friday morning we arrived at Wat Pa Buddharangsee around noon. The weather was drowsily hot that day but we all received a very warm welcome from Chao Khun Samai, the abbot of the monastery and long-time patron of UNIBUDS. Our first day started with a *dharmma* talk and a light lunch, then a short tour around the monastery with Chao Khun and his friendly assistant, Justinian. We had to brave the summer heat and the army of savage bull ants that crawled the ground to visit the *stupa* and explore the surrounding gardens. The highlights of the tour included the shrine of a famous Thai monk, who was famous for his powerful protection amulets, and a statue of the Buddha being guarded by *nagas* (snake spirits). We finished the day with dinner and a *dharmma* talk, then an outdoor walking meditation at night.



I knew that waking up at 5:30am the next morning for chanting would be a real challenge for me. As a typical university student, I tend to over-indulge in sleep, so thankfully I had some trusty roommates to drag me out of bed at dawn! After chanting, we headed to a nearby school field for a morning soccer game. It was an impressive match as both teams went head to head against each other. There were twists, dives, great kicks and fantastic saves that had me almost convinced me that I was watching a World Cup try-out. Our game ended with a 2-

2 score line, and it was time to head back to help out with the midday *dana* offering. We had a pretty relaxed schedule for Day 2, with plenty of free time interspersed between the chanting, *dharmma* talks and meditation sessions, for solitary spiritual practice, resting and spending time with friends. I spent a lot of my breaks in the kitchen helping out with food preparation and clean up. It wasn't boring doing the chores, since there were always people to talk to, and I did pick up some cooking tips from our very talented chef, Samuel,

who served up some great-tasting vegetarian dishes! With the sun still shining, we made an adventurous trek through the rugged bushland outside the monastery. Our roving photographer, Cheng tuck, snapped up plenty of fun pics along the way. On our last night, Chao Khun led us for another walking meditation and together we lit candles by the *stupa*.

We began Day 3 with another early morning chanting and meditation session. We had lots of lunchtime enter-tainment, including a joke and riddle session by Wendy, Jessica A and Ronny and a very funny and random rap by our first UNIBUDS rappers, Nishan and Alex. Our time at the retreat ended with one last *dhamma* talk by Chao Khun, who gave us each a protection amulet to wish us happiness and security in our lives. Looking back now, summer retreat had been a great way to catch up with old friends (and make new ones!), enjoy nature and continue my practice of meditation and mindfulness. If you haven't been to a retreat before, I would encourage you to try it sometime and if you're like me, you'll be back again this year!



O-picnic

Cloudy skies, breezy weather. In front of the little hut lies the bright yellow sand and vast turquoise ocean. What a pleasant day it would be, I thought to myself. Reaching there just before the O-picnic started, there were some people gathered at Coogee beach already. A sense of awkwardness filled the air. After all it was the first time all of us were meeting-old members and new members. It started of with this girl called Jess who went around distributing name stickers. Brilliant! I am totally bad at names. Soon a bunch of yellow shirt people (Excos) started to give their speech as we gathered around them. One by one, they introduced themselves and were actively promoting the activities that were going on in UNIBUDS.

While listening, I was attracted by the air of pleasant scent from somewhere near by. Down at the side were some UNIBUDS members barbequing some sausages. Turning around, I realised that I was surrounded by a table loaded with an abundance of mouth-watering food! In my vague memory, I remembered people telling me that where there is UNIBUDS, there will be food. Point proven. For a moment I heard my tummy growl. I guess I was not the only one as the guy beside me was also admiring the food.



However, on the activities list, Zhang Yi and Mandy (the organisers of O-picnic) planned for a round of games before food. Hunter, Squirrel and Earthquake it was called. It got everyone hyped up due to all the running and screaming. Before we knew it, it was lunch time. Hurray! While everyone was still having the "stranger stigma", I decided to start the ball rolling upon Tina's request. There were 2 sections - vegetarian and non-

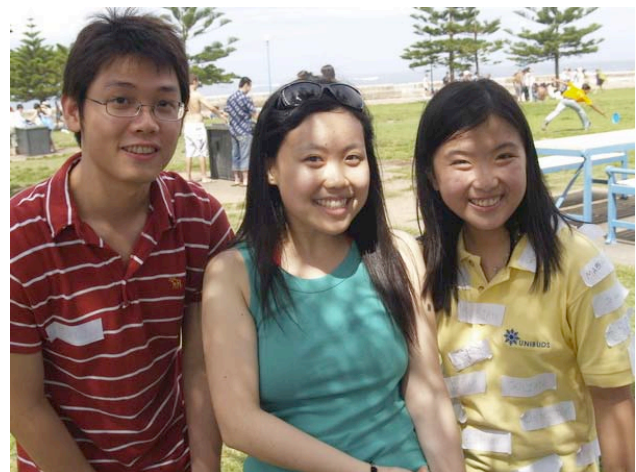
vegetarian. I personally loved the tofu with picked vegetable. Perhaps it was after the first round of ice-breaker games that people started feeling more comfortable. Or maybe as the saying goes, "Food bonds people". They mingled around talking about their common interests and personal life. The ExcOs were also very actively socially around.



Time passed really quickly and we started off our second game. I suppose it was called the BANG BANG game. Surprisingly in this game, there were a couple of ExcOs who were really good, namely our president Su Sian and Aun. Nearly the sole survivors, they lasted till almost the end.

Last but not least came the photo taking session. As usual, our full time photographer (UNIBUDS), Wilsen, was ever ready with his professional yet intimidating camera. Being a photo lover (me being taken in the photo), I was there waiting for the beautiful memories to be captured in the photo. At the end of the day, glad I was that I made it for O picnic, not only for the fabulous experience but the new friends I made too.

by Clara Ong



Nice to meet you! I'm Monk Wally. Wasn't O-picnic great!

IN BREATH, OUT BREATH: BUDDHISM AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

These are a few key concepts that the author feels links Buddhism to concerns of environmental protection and ecological sustainability:

1) The 5 Precepts

The five precepts are an essential and common practice prescribed to lay Buddhists (the rules are more extensive for monastics) of varied traditions. Among these key precepts is the following: 'I undertake the training to refrain from taking life'. This is extended to include non-human life and restraint from causing harm in general. A reverence for life seems basic to an ethos that will allow for the protection of the planet's current ecological heritage.

2) Defilements

Several Buddhist discourses discuss the inner defilements i.e. greed, hatred, ignorance, delusion and ego and means of their eradication through meditative and moral practices. *Sila*, or morality, and generosity is considered a basis for allowing the development of mental clarity or *samadhi* through meditative practises, and through investigation into the nature of phenomena, leads to insight or wisdom, known as *pañña*. All three are interconnected. This emphasis on the eradication of greed etc. seems a vital link to environmental concerns, as such 'defilements' are often the root cause of many environmental problems.

3) Metta

Metta refers to the development of unconditional loving kindness, ultimately, for all beings. It refers to the kind of feeling that a parent feels for their child. However, it goes beyond a reactive emotion or mere words. At its height, it is a powerful meditative tool for gaining high spiritual attainments, clarity, bliss and insights. At the very least, it is a way to develop peaceful and understanding relationships with those we come into contact with, and strengthen our own peace of mind. It can be developed through systematic meditative practices. It is the wish that all beings be free from pain and anxiety, and be well and at peace. This state of mind is in stark contrast to the fear and competition that is a feature of many relationships, including those between humans and non-humans.

4) Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers partly to sustaining clear comprehension or introspection into our minds in the present moment, without getting carried away by the tsunami of the constant internal commentary of our thoughts. It is a strengthening of self-awareness and leads to becoming conscious of our ordinarily unconscious mental activity, and this leads to greater understanding on all levels. As a part of meditative practice in the cultivation of mindfulness we try to focus our attention on one simple thing in the present, and gradually this influences our everyday lives more and more, making us more conscious of our intentions and feelings, and others; but we do not need to take this practical part of meditative method as an ideology of carelessness towards past and future, which would obviously have harmful results. In not becoming lost in unconscious worrying or fantasising

about the past or future, we become more fit to deal skilfully with the present. Meditators also become more sensitive and appreciative of the peace and normalcy offered by nature, and the many spiritual lessons that the natural world tries to teach us.

Perhaps much environmental destruction comes almost ‘by the way’, un-purposefully or even unconsciously, as a poorly considered by-product of varied distracted activity. The development of mindfulness may therefore help human beings to become aware of the wider impacts of their actions and notice their contribution to the occurrence of environmental destruction, as well as grow more sensitive to symptoms of environmental degradation.

5) Conditioned Existence:

Conditioned co-arising is another significant Buddhist concept. The details of the theory are better explained elsewhere by more qualified teachers, but it can be noted that it acknowledges the conditioned nature of phenomena. The fact that all effects have causes.

Similarly the concepts of *kamma* or *karma*, notes the correlation between present happiness or suffering and past actions, perhaps extending to previous existences by the same process of consciousness through ‘rebirth’. From an environmental perspective, an understanding of conditionality may be a basic prerequisite for human and environmental sustainability and wellbeing, through a more long-term sense of responsibility and a more natural attitude to nature, rather than the ideologies of ‘dominion’ or ‘progress’. Our intrinsic interdependence on several interlinked environmental factors may then be better acknowledged. The happiness of many beings is likely to be linked to their environmental conditions. In addition, the negative *kamma* produced by actions that degrade those conditions and impact on other beings, e.g. air pollution or habitat destruction, may also affect the happiness of the owner of that action. We may also become more humbled, tolerant and kinder through awareness of the extent of the relativity of much of our own views and practices and the conditionality of our ‘self’ and others. This may lead for example, to a greater emphasis on an educational approach in solving environmental problems.



Suggested further reading:

Several works by Thich Naht Hahn link Buddhism to modern (and ancient) environmental discourses. HH Dalai Lama also regularly speaks on Buddhism and the environment, see for example: <http://hhd1.dharmakara.net/hhd1speech.html> in which he notes “conservation is not merely a question of morality, but a question of our own survival”.

NB: It is recommended that readers make their own diverse and critical enquiries in this subject matter.

By Nilushi Disanayake.

Buddhism for ‘Greenies’

by Julian Craig

The Dhamma is both simple and profound - able to be contemplated by anyone, and applied to all aspects of life. It would be unwise to paint the Dhamma in any particular colour, since, by all accounts, it is *colourless*! However, here are some ideas from a non-expert about how Buddhism could be applied specifically to the ‘green’ part of the spectrum of our daily lives.

➤ THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH “There is suffering” (*dukkha*)

General case: Realising that we have a problem – we are suffering – what we are doing now will never make us happy.

Special case: Realising that our planet is suffering, causing all living beings (present and future) to suffer. The way we do things now cannot be sustained.

➤ THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH “There is a cause of suffering” (*samudaya*)

General case: The cause of suffering is attachment ... to liking and disliking, to getting what we want, to not getting what we don’t want, etc.

Special case: The cause of suffering is attachment ... to consumption, progress, material wealth, and our pleasant ways of life.

➤ THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH “There is an end to suffering” (*nirodha*)

General case: The end of suffering is the extinction of attachment – *nibbana* – being able to live at peace with the world and other sentient beings.

Special case: The end of suffering is to live sustainably, in harmony with nature, no longer taking more than the earth can provide.

➤ THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH “The path to the end of suffering is ...” (*magga*)

General case: The path to the end of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path of right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

Special case: The path to the end of suffering is *also* the Noble Eightfold Path (see below)

The Noble Eightfold Path

❖ **Right Understanding** – in Buddhism, right understanding means understanding the true nature of phenomena. According to the Buddha, all real phenomena have three important characteristics – sometimes known as the “three seals of *dhamma*”. These are:

- Impermanence (*anicca*) – all phenomena that arise, must cease.
- Non-self (*anatta*) – nothing has a true, independent identity.
- Unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) – no phenomena will bring lasting happiness to sentient beings.

In terms of the environment, these ‘seals’ are also present, and a ‘right understanding’ of nature would mean understanding the following truths:

- Impermanence – materials are limited, energy is limited – in short, everything our civilization relies upon is limited.
- Interconnectedness – no country or region is isolated – the actions of people in one city/country affect all other cities/countries.
- Unsustainability – our current lifestyles, although pleasant, cannot bring lasting happiness. Eventually, we will be forced to live more sustainably.

❖ **Right Intention** – in Buddhism, right intention means caring about others, and wanting them to be happy. Based upon right understanding, this will lead to right speech, right action and right livelihood.

In terms of the environment, right intention is the same. It means not limiting *who* we care for – but thinking about people in other countries, future generations, and animals.

❖ **Right Speech** – in Buddhism, right speech means speaking in a way that does not bring unhappiness to others and (importantly) does not prevent them from understanding the truth. This means not lying, swearing, gossiping, or criticising too harshly.

In terms of the environment, right speech means not encouraging people to become attached to their unsustainable lifestyles, informing them about the problems in nature, and not misleading them with regards to these problems. However, it is also unwise to criticize others harshly about their lifestyles.

❖ **Right Action** – according to the Buddha, right action means not killing, stealing or committing sexual misconduct. In general, it means acting with right intention and right understanding.

In terms of the environment, it means “Do the right thing!” – i.e. not throwing rubbish, or polluting the air (or water) with toxic chemicals. On the positive side, it can mean recycling, composting, or buying ‘green’ products!

❖ **Right Livelihood** – according to the Buddha, right livelihood means not choosing a job that requires you to commit wrong actions or wrong speech, or to support others who commit wrong actions or wrong speech.

In terms of the environment, right livelihood means not working for companies that pollute the environment, or that expect you to lie in order to protect those who do.

❖ **Right Effort** – in Buddhism, right effort means constantly striving to purify oneself in body, speech and mind, and not relying on others for our own salvation.

In terms of the environment, it means not being lazy or complacent, expecting others to fix problems for us. It could also mean walking or riding a bike to uni (wherever possible) instead of driving!

❖ **Right Mindfulness** – right mindfulness, in Buddhism, means being aware of our surroundings at all times, remembering our duties, and not becoming too absorbed in our own thoughts and feelings, so we are able to make good decisions consistently.

In terms of the environment, right mindfulness means saving energy, switching off appliances, and doing things more efficiently to avoid waste.

❖ **Right Concentration** – in both cases, right concentration means practising meditation!

~ Tales of an Indian Mynah ~

There was once a small kingdom, a calm and peaceful place, where the sounds of the ocean could be heard echoing deep within the leafy valley upon which an orange castle stood. The kingdom contained many people, and they were very prosperous. The people lived a moral life, and that is why the kingdom was peaceful. It was a kingdom of men, but there were also many birds ... and cats. The people were the friends of the birds, and the cats were the servants of the people. Both cats and birds were loved dearly by the people,



however the cats loved mischief, and had the instinct to hunt and kill the birds whenever possible. No matter how hard the people tried to restrain them, they continued to hunt, and in this way, the birds were terrorised for many years.

Now there were many types of birds in that valley. Those who had been there longest were the lorikeets. They were fierce warrior birds, proud of their colourful feathers, but never able to reach any agreement amongst themselves. For this reason, they were always fighting over the nectar contained in the gum blossoms that adorned the kingdom. Many lorikeets were killed by clever cats, who took advantage of their constant disputes to turn one bird against another. In this way, the lorikeets were never able to enjoy peace in the valley. There were also gulls. The gulls were

constantly disputing each other for food and shelter. There was never a gull who gave his ground easily. The gulls and the lorikeets occupied different lands, but both were too absorbed in their own disputes to cause each other any trouble. Because of this, the kingdom remained relatively free of bloodshed.

However, one summer, a new type of bird came to the land. They were the Indian mynahs – nomadic birds from the North, whose skills were to work as a team while finding food and building their nests. Rumour had it that these visitors came from a place where the land was dry and food was scarce. At first, there was deep suspicion of these newcomers, and the other birds suspected that their strange behaviour might actually be some sort of conspiracy to take over the land. However, they were all too divided by their own disputes to make any serious attempt to drive the nomads out. As a result, the mynahs were soon able to flourish within the kingdom, and build nests in all the main areas. In particular, they seemed to avoid conflict with the cats, who did not appear to take much interest in their new neighbours. This was a matter of great curiosity for the other birds, who loved to debate the issue at feeding time. The lorikeets argued that it was only a matter of time before the cats developed a strategy to attack the mynahs, while the gulls argued that the cats simply did not like their taste.



One day, a group of lorikeets decided to spy on their visitors to see whether it was true that there was a conspiracy to take over the kingdom. What they saw became the talking

point of the kingdom for the entire summer. The biggest cat in the valley, Big Tom, had also been spying on the mynahs that day, trying to catch a meal. However, his red fur did not camouflage well behind the fig tree in which he was hiding, and he was spotted by the mynah chief, Golden Beak. For the lorikeets, this would normally sound the alarm, and the entire flock would migrate to another tree where it was safe to feed. However, the mynahs immediately began to organise themselves, forming an attack formation. Several young



male mynahs then began to dive right towards Big Tom, one after another, pulling away just beyond his grasp. One brave mynah even managed to hit the giant cat square between the ears! Whilst they were doing this, a chorus of female mynahs made high-pitched squeals from the branches above, making Big Tom's fur quiver in annoyance. It seemed that the mynahs were using teamwork to scare away the fearsome cat. In the end, Big Tom retreated back into the human refuge where he lived – his red fur standing on end!

The lorikeets hurried back to their flock to spread the news. At first, there were few who believed their story, but it was gradually confirmed by more and more lorikeets over the coming weeks, who had seen similar events unfold. As the end of summer, the chief of the lorikeets, Green Claw, held a meeting. It was decided that an envoy of the wisest lorikeets should be sent to the nest of the mynah chief, Golden Beak, offering territorial concessions in exchange for knowledge about their tactics. The gulls were invited, but they declined, saying that sooner or later the cats would learn to catch the mynahs anyway, and at any rate, they were too busy with their own internal affairs.

And so the envoy departed the next morning, and met Golden Beak in a small fig tree, only modestly adorned with twigs and flowers. Golden Beak was found to be courteous and wise, and polite conversation was made about the origin of his tribe, the nature of their homeland, and their reasons for their coming to the kingdom. Then discussion turned to business. An offer was made, counter-offers were put forth, and a final decision was reached. In exchange for three large coral trees, the mynahs would train young lorikeets to ward off the cats, just like the mynahs had done. The envoy departed in good spirits. The very next day, three large coral trees were abandoned, and the teaching began.

The lorikeets trained throughout the whole winter, practising their dives, enhancing their screeches. Finally, summer came, and they were ready to practice their skills. The first attempt was moderately successful. However, there were some disagreements about formation, and in the end, one bird was almost caught. Still, the approaching cat was scared away, and the lorikeets were able to continue to feed happily. After this, there was much celebration, and the chief of the lorikeets organised a banquet of coral blossoms, which lasted well into the night.

The next day, the lorikeets were tired and drunk, and lay sleeping in their branches until late in the morning. Then, the clever house cat, Sabrina, sensing her opportunity, managed to climb one of the trees without notice. Just as she was about to snare a sleeping lorikeet, someone sounded the alarm. However, the attack formation was in chaos, and in the end, one female bird was killed and taken away. At first, all the birds were overcome with grief,

but then a violent argument ensued, as the young males fought over who was to blame. The lorikeet chief, Green Claw, could only put an end to this by suggesting that an envoy be sent back to the mynahs, asking them to resolve the issue. The other birds agreed, and so they departed early that afternoon to visit Golden Beak.

When told of the incident, a look of deep concern spread across Golden Beak's face, but then he began to laugh coarsely. This made the lorikeets feel very uncomfortable, and they began to murmur. They must have showed their discomfort clearly, because the mynah chief quickly composed himself, clearing his throat, and said: "You cannot expect teamwork to happen in the case of an emergency alone! There must be teamwork in all aspects of a bird's life before he can be expected to work as a team in such a dire situation. My birds work together all day. Then, when the situation turns bad, they are able to co-operate without disagreement."

The young lorikeets were inspired and happy. Their hearts filled with deep respect for the mynah chief, and they bowed their beaks in unison before leaving to report to their own leader, Green Claw. However, when they repeated the words of Golden Beak, the chief was furious: "How dare these newcomers lecture *us* on how to do our day-to-day business? We lorikeets have lived here for hundreds of years! We are noble warriors! We will never become soft like these ... foreigners!" The chief dismissed his envoy, before returning to his nest, muttering to himself.



But the next day, there was an official announcement from the chief's palace: The entire lorikeet community was to be transformed. From now on, all nest-building would be done in teams. There would no longer be any rivalry permitted in food-gathering. Instead, all birds would be assigned to local food-gathering committees, each catering for their own part of the kingdom. In addition, the Indian mynahs would be invited, as guests of honour, to stay within the lorikeet kingdom, and be allowed access to the best trees. This news came as a great surprise, and many of the lorikeets expressed concern that these new laws would destroy their own lorikeet traditions. However, those wise birds (who had been part of the envoy) were able to convince even the most reluctant members of the community that these new rules should be accepted, and would benefit them all.

Over the next few summers, the lorikeets and mynahs learnt a lot together. The lorikeets taught the mynahs ways of extracting nectar more effectively from the gum blossoms, while the mynahs continued to train the lorikeets in how to ward off cats. However, by far the best protection for the new combined community came from the Mynah Army, which now served as the protector for both communities, patrolling the furthest reaches of the kingdom. As a result, both species of bird were able to enjoy greater prosperity than ever before, and they soon became the envy of the poor gulls, who were still too busy with their own disputes to even *think* about changing their ways.

ANONYMOUS

Poems by Rumi

from Tonia Rose

THE WORM'S WAKING

This is how a human being can change:

there's a worm addicted to eating grape leaves.

Suddenly, he wakes up,
call it grace, whatever, something
wakes him, and he's no longer a worm.

He's the entire vineyard,
and the orchard too, the fruit, the trunks,
a growing wisdom and joy
that doesn't need
to devour.

ONLY BREATH

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu
Buddhist, sufi, or zen. Not any religion
or cultural system. I am not from the East
or the West, not out of the ocean or up
from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not
composed of elements at all. I do not exist,
am not an entity in this world or the next,
did not descend from Adam or Eve or any
origin story. My place is placeless, a trace
of the traceless. Neither body or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two
worlds as one and that one call to and know,
first, last, outer, inner, only that
breath breathing human being.

There is a way between voice and presence
where information flows.

In a disciplined silence it opens.
With wandering talk it closes.

Jelaluddin Rumi

Dhamma Digest

This section explores the world of literature in relation to each topic and Buddhism. So, feel free to 'read ahead' and suggest some books for the upcoming topics!

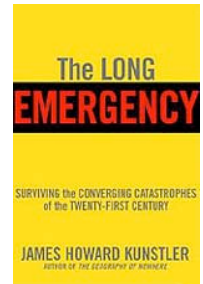
- 1) *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology* edited by **Allan Hunt Badiner**, includes articles by Thich Nhat Hahn, John Seed, and Joan Halifax.

Gives readers a brief taste of the connection between Buddhism and Ecology, and how Buddhist teachings such as "no-self" can help us to understand, and possibly solve, today's major ecological dilemmas.



- 2) *What the Buddha Taught* by **Walpola Rahula**

This is an excellent guide to the most universal Buddhist teachings (i.e. those shared by all schools of Buddhism). Explanations are clear, concise and non-dogmatic. This book is for free distribution.

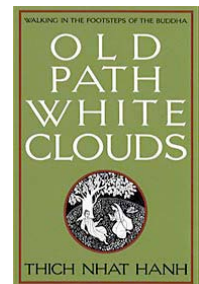


- 3) *The Long Emergency* by **James Howard Kunstler**

A very well-articulated argument for why our present way of life can never be sustainable in the long term, and why there is a need to work together as a human race to build an alternative future.

- 4) *Old Path, White Clouds* by **Thich Nhat Hahn**

Thich Nhat Hahn gives a beautiful (although partially fictitious) account of the Buddha's life, recounted from the perspective of his followers and lay-disciples. The book is full of natural imagery and inspirational emotional scenes.



Sneak Peek!

To all those who have contributed to this month's SACCA, thank you! Without your time and effort, there wouldn't be anything to print in these pages! Here is a brief summary of the next edition - to be titled "Buddhism, Democracy and Human Rights":

- Buddhism and Democracy
Is Buddhism 'democratic'? Can Buddhism survive in a democracy, or does it need 'strong' leadership to protect it?
- Buddhism and Human Rights
What is a 'human right' according to Buddhism? Do all beings have intrinsic 'rights', or do we simply suffer according to the law of kamma?
- Buddhism and <insert topic here>
Got another angle? Contact the editor at run4thehills@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Buddhist Exhibition

The 2007 Buddhist Exhibition, '*Path of Awakening*', is only weeks away! For a short time only, UNIBUDS will have the privilege of displaying many artefacts and artworks from temples and monasteries across Sydney. It will be a rare public opportunity for us to share a taste of *dhamma* with the staff and students at UNSW, as well as the Australian public. The exhibition will run for 4 days in the Scientia building in April. Please contact the department heads (p.4) for more details, and to find out how you can help!

Dates: Sunday 15th -
Wednesday 18th April 2007
Venue: The Scientia, UNSW

- For general information, please contact Su Sian Teh (Ph: 0431 162 647)
- To volunteer, please contact the respective departments (page 4)

Potluck

Do you like food? Do you like cooking??? Then come along to one of our regular potlucks, to be held at a warm and friendly environment near you! Potluck is a great chance to socialise and meet other UNIBUDS members, young and old. Details will be advertised closer to the date during weekly *dhamma* talks. Stay tuned!

Dates: Sunday 1st April (1) and
Saturday 26th May (2)
Time: 10:30am (1) and 6pm (2)
Venue: Centennial Park (1) and TBA (2)

Contact Wilsen:
Ph: 0405 001 333
Email: wilsen3@debourk.com

Meditation Workshop

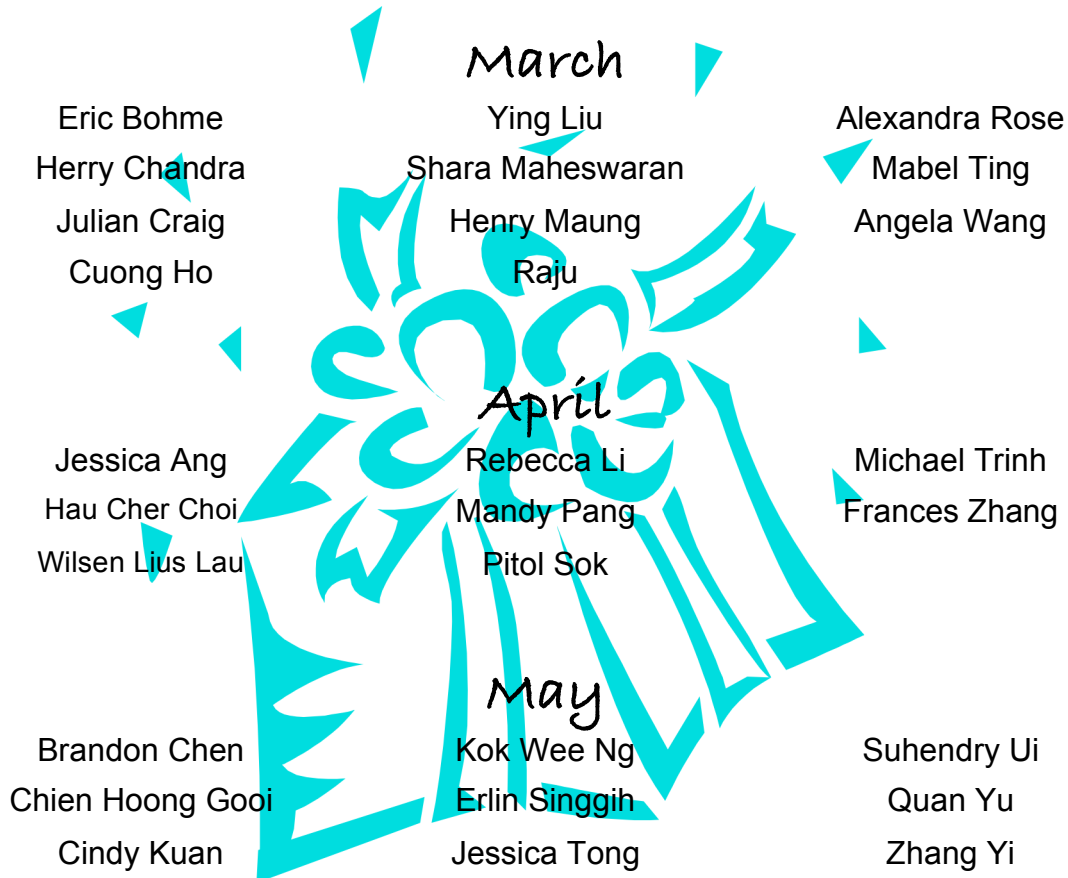
Interested in investigating becoming a happier/ more peaceful person? Perhaps one way to do this is to practice meditation. On the 10th of May we are privileged enough to have an experienced practitioner, Rod Lee, to come and teach us about Tibetan Meditation techniques for developing loving-kindness and calmness. What could be better than people getting together to try and learn such valuable things? The workshop is free and there will be tasty food! If you'd like to bring some food that would be great, too! Come along, it should be fun and a good opportunity to socialise with a great bunch of people. Hope to see you there!

Dates: Saturday 5th May
Time: 10:00 am
Venue: Room D10, UNSW

Contact Alex: **Ph:** 0401 060 394
Email: alex.voevoda@gmail.com

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday dear ...



Happy Birthday to YOU!

List of Credits for this SACCA

Thanks to Eric Bohme, Adeline Sugianto, Nilushi Disanayake, Jessica Purwa, Clara Ong and Tonia Rose for their contributions to the English section. Thanks to Francis So for his Chinese article, and to Wee Han Lim, Su Sian Teh and Shie Haur Tan for their help with the Chinese section.

Photos: Thanks to Cheng Tuck Lim, Florian Wiesenbacher and Denny Letz.

May all beings be well, happy and peaceful; free from enmity and suffering. Whatever merits we have done, may these merits be shared by all!

Sadhu!

CHINESE SACCA

活动介绍！

特别活动：

- 聚餐会 (四月一日)
- 佛教展览会 (四月十五至十八日)
- 静坐课程 (五月五日)
- 聚餐会 (五月二十六日)

每周活动：

- 英文达摩班 (星期五 7-9 pm)
- 中文达摩班 (星期四 6-8 pm)
- 午间静坐 (星期二 1-2 pm)

注：每周性活动将于期中假日暂休

目录

- 转变和无常并不是一个绝望的真相 - 23
- 石头与奶油 - 24

会长讯息

SACCA的读者们，你好！很荣信能有这个机会通过SACCA与大家问好。或许是美妙的缘分在“作怪”吧！

谢谢大家这么久以来对UNIBUDS的爱戴，我也想趁这机会欢迎所有的新会员！

UNIBUDS在这一年里，也有不少的活动。除了一年一度的菩提之夜，今年更添加了三年一度的佛教展览。展览将环绕在佛陀在生的故事，让我们有机会跟随佛陀的步伐，走过他留下的每一个脚印！

希望大家能勇于参加，你们的热诚是我们的动力！

在非常忙碌之余，记得要歇一歇，休息一下，好让再走更长远的路！

希望大家永献真，善，美！

郑淑心

编辑讯息

大家好，欢迎再次阅读SACCA！相信大家也察觉到中文篇的SACCA较少较薄。这应该怪于我没趁早收集中文文章。我希望通过此讯息，大家能热烈支持，也借此与SACCA读者分享你美妙的文章！虽然我不会讲也不会看中文，但你们热心的帮忙，我将无限感激！请记通过email联系我！

在这期的SACCA里，Francis 与我们分享了佛法在温室效应中能扮演的角色。接着，我们有与轮回有关的短文。希望大家会喜欢，也希望能在UNIBUDS的活动中与大家相遇。

平常心

Julian

如果您 对SACCA 有任何意见或想投稿，请联络：

Email: run4thehills@gmail.com Phone: 0410 612 358

转变和无常并不是一个绝望的真相

Francis So

你们看过一套电影叫《绝望真相》(The Inconvenient Truth) 吗？看来越来越多人都意识到气候变化和温室效应的严重性。相信看过这套电影的人或对环境有所关注的都会很重视这个问题。根据Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)研究的报告，在这个世纪尾，地球的平均温度将会上升四度，导致水位上升七十九厘米。七十九厘米看来不是很多，但是这可以侵蚀八十米的海滩。不但至水位上升，还会有感更严重的旱灾和风暴，影响人们的生计和经济。早在三十年前，科学家已发现到这个问题，但是还没有人采取行动，也许我们觉得地球的气候永远不变，事实上，我们的地球和气候是很脆弱的，而且IPCC的报告指近来的反常天气很大可能是人为的。

阿姜查 (Ajahn Chan) 曾经说过：「你看这个杯子，看不看到有了裂缝啊？」他的弟子回答：「看不到。」阿姜查又继续说：「裂缝是在啊，但是现在它很微小，肉眼看不到，可是有一天，它会长大而打破这个杯子。」所有的东西都有裂缝，它们都是无常的，但是因为他们是无常，所以我们才会珍惜他们。如果它们是常的，我们或许看不到它们的价值。同样地，我们看不到地球也是无常，不知不觉地让自己破坏环境。

有一个故事说一个皇帝，当国家兴旺的时候，他就不理国事，放纵地狂欢。不久之后，国家开始衰落了。这个皇帝处于很低落和无助的状态，无法有效地治国事。他的臣子看到这样就做了一个金戒指给皇帝，上面刻了「这都会成为过去的」并叫他遇到什么事情都要看这个戒指。当他看到这个戒指，他觉悟到这个国家不会永远衰落下去的，于是他就努力去办事，不久之后，国家又兴旺起来了。在这时这个皇帝很高兴，但是他看他的戒指并知道「这都会成为过去的」，所以他更劳力去维持这个好景，因此好景比以前长，而且坏景比以前短。同样地，虽然天气开始反常，更严重的旱灾和风暴会越来越多，人民的生活和生计可能会大受影响，可能要转行或搬家，但是如果积极去面对它，改变我们的习惯，珍惜资源，保护环境，时常保持平常心，相信「这都会成为过去的」。



虽然气候变化和温室效应已经起步，但是我们还可以出我们一分力去挽救地球，例如我们可以多用公共交通工具和适用电器，不用的时候把它们关掉。还有，我们可以选用耗电量少的电器，列如用节能灯泡（荧光灯或光管）来代替普通电灯泡（白炽灯）。我们也可以转用“绿色能源”（green energy）或再生能源（renewable energy）来供应我们的电力需求。如果我们可以做到以上的数点，相信或多或少都会对气候变化和温室效应有正面的响应。大家加油哦~~~！！

Note: 本人的中文不是很好，如文法或用词不对，请多多包含。

石头与奶油

来源:《生活的艺术》

作者:葛印卡

某天,有个年轻人哭泣不止地来到佛陀面前,佛陀问他:“年轻人,怎么回事?”他说:“我父亲昨天去世了!”

佛陀说:“那能怎么办呢?如果他已经去世了,哭也不能使他起死回生。”年轻人:“是的,这我明白,哭并不能使我父亲再活过来,但我求您能为我死去的父亲做一些事。”

佛陀说:“哦?我能为你死去的父亲做什么呢?”年轻人:“请想想办法吧!您这么有能力,一定办得到的!您看,那些资历尚浅的巫师、术士都会为死者举行某些仪式,只要在人间举行某些仪式,通往天堂之门就会打开,死者便可以进入,得到入境许可证;佛陀啊!您这么厉害,如果您为我死去的父亲作法,他不仅可以拿到入境许可证,甚至可以永久居留——拿到绿卡!拜托您帮帮忙吧!”

这个可怜的家伙伤心欲绝,听不进合理的话,佛陀决定用其他方法让他明白。所以佛陀就说:“好吧!你去市场买两只壶。”年轻人很高兴,心想佛陀答应替他父亲举行仪式了。他跑到市场买了两只壶回来。佛陀说:“很好,把一只壶装满奶油”,年轻人照做了;“另一只壶装满小石头”,他也照做了。“现在把壶口都封住”,他封好了,“现在把它们丢到池塘里去”,年轻人也照做了,两只壶都沉到水底了。佛陀又说:“现在去拿枝大木棒来,敲破这两只壶。”年轻人很高兴,心想佛陀正为他的父亲举行非常庄严的仪式。

依照古老的印度习俗。人死后他的儿子就把尸体带到火葬场,放在柴堆上点火燃烧。当尸体烧到一半时,儿子要拿一,根大木棒敲破死者的头颅。根据古老的信仰,只要在人间敲开死者的头颅,通往天堂之门也就打开了。所以年轻人心想:“昨天父亲已被烧成灰了,现在佛陀用敲破泥壶来作为象徵。”他很满意这种仪式。

年轻人听从佛陀的指示,拿木棒敲破了两只壶。其中一只壶的奶油立刻浮上来,漂浮在水面上;另一只壶的小石头散了出来,沉在水底。然后佛陀说:“好了,年轻人,我所能做的就是这样罗!现在你把那些巫师、术士通通请来唱颂祈祷:“哦!石头浮上来,浮上来。哦!奶油,沉下去、沉下去!让我看看会发生什么事。”

“喔!您在开玩笑吧,这怎么可能呢?石头比水重,只会沉到水底,不会浮上来,这是自然的法则;而奶油比水轻,只会浮在水面上不会沉下去,这也是自然法则呀”

佛陀说:“年轻人,你对自然法法则了解不少。但你尚未体验这个自然法则:如果你父亲一生的所做所为都像石头一样重,那他必定会往下沉(堕入恶道),谁能让他上升呢?如果都像奶油一样轻,他必定会上升(进入善道),谁能拉他下去呢?”

我们能越早体验自然法则,并依照自然法则生活,就能越早脱离痛苦。

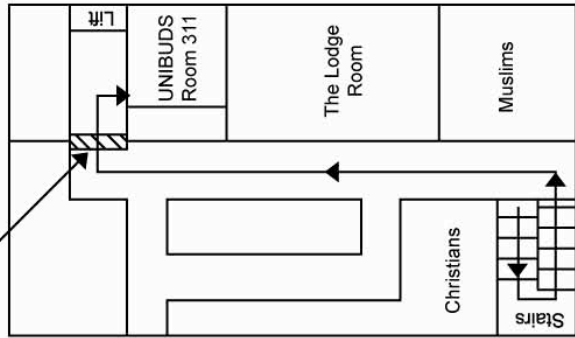
UNIBUDS Library

Room 311, Squarehouse Level 3
UNSW, Kensington Campus
Ph. 9385 6082

Opening Hours: Mon - Fri
 12 - 2 pm

SQUARE HOUSE MAP Level 3

Fire Exit Door



KENSINGTON CAMPUS MAP

