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# sacca

newsletter for the members of unbuds

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# *Mindfulness*

*where a bud can bloom in full*

*where a bud can bloom in full*



**unibuds**

UNSW BUDDHIST SOCIETY

# s a c c a w i n t e r e d i t i o n

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*where a bud can bloom in full*

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## editor's letter

Dear readers,

Hope you're well and happy.

Once again, I would like to thank those who has contributed in the production of this edition of *Sacca*.

In this edition of *Sacca*, let's explore and learn more about **Mindfulness**. What is 'mindfulness' in the context of Buddhism? Have you been un-mindful lately?

unibuds activities such as Winter Retreat 2011, Photography Workshop, and Bodhi Nite 2011 have been recapped under the Event Coverage section. If you've missed out these events this year, fret not as you can always join us next year!

Coming up, is one of the unibuds' major events—the Annual General Meeting 2011/12. Details of this event can be found in this issue. Do come and show moral support to our outgoing and incoming committee members.

The upcoming Spring Edition of *Sacca* will focus on how Buddhism has changed our view of life in general. The title will be '**Change. For the Better**'. I look forward to your contribution. If you have articles or photos to share, please email them to [clarissewy.chen@gmail.com](mailto:clarissewy.chen@gmail.com).

Enjoy this edition and stay tuned for the next!

Kind Regards,

Wei Yin Chen  
(SACCA Editor 10/11)



***Better than a  
thousand hol-  
low words, is  
one that brings  
peace.***

***~Buddha***

## president says

Dear friends in the Dhamma,

How are you doing? Hope this SACCA finds you well.

This Sacca themed "Mindfulness", is aimed to raise the awareness of the reality of things, especially the present moment. Human mind comes and goes. There is hardly a single moment that our mind is able to stay calm, peaceful and free from distraction. At times, we tend to follow our feeling closely that we are unable to see things as they truly are. I hope, by reading this Sacca, you can get the glimpse of Right Mindfulness and start practising it!

Few weeks ago UNIBUDS organised the biggest event of the year, Bodhi Nite 2011! It was a wonderful event with about 700 attendees. Many people came and enjoyed the performances. Same as the title of this SACCA, we have explored Mindfulness through the lively performances on stage. There were dance, choir, sketch performance and multimedia animation. We also celebrated UNIBUDS's anniversary on that day. Thanks everyone for your participation and making it a successful one. To those who missed it, we have the Bodhi Nite DVD for free distribution. Do let me know and I will get you a copy!

Other than Bodhi Nite, UNIBUDS also organised Winter Retreat in Sunnata-ram Forest Monastery in early July. It was a great and inspiring retreat guided by Venerable Phra Mana. His unique way of explaining the Dhamma really helped us in understanding the teachings of the Buddha. There were more than 40 participants and every single one of us truly enjoyed the re-



treat. Thank you so much to the organisers and Venerable Phra Mana in making that event possible.

Also, we will be having **Annual General Meeting** on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September. I sincerely hope all of you could come to attend this important event. Please come and support your favourite nominees! Give them a chance to be the leaders in UNIBUDS and guide this society to a better place! If you are interested in being part of the committee, do not hesitate! Fill up the **nomination form** in this SACCA and drop it into the nomination box outside the UNIBUDS Library!

Thanks again to Wei Yin, our SACCA Editor for her effort in producing this Sacca, thank you those who has contributed in various ways as well. I hope you all will appreciate reading these articles. Enjoy the season full of flower and I will see you all around!

May all be well, peaceful and happy.

May all develop great Bodhi Mind.

May the light of the Buddha shines on everyone.

With Metta,

**Foh Fan Yong**

(UNIBUDS President 2010/11)

# Mindfulness & Multitasking

- Tina Ng -

Before I embark on this topic, I first want to introduce some terms, and the best way is by way of an example.

If you are reading this article whilst chewing your meal, listening to music, or chatting online with friends, you are *multitasking* right now. If you have to read this sentence again because your mind has already wandered off somewhere else, then you were *distracted*. Finally, if you are fully here reading this article, then that is *mindfulness*.

I think this is an important distinction because in the literature I have read so far on the topic many writers have mixed up multitasking and mindless distractions, and then implied that multitasking is “bad”, while mindfulness is good.

To them, multitasking and mindfulness can’t go together hand in hand.

***“We race through  
life, without  
experiencing  
it completely.”***

## ***Being Present***

When I was a first-year law student, I recall sitting in the classroom listening to my lecturer whilst I madly scribbled down notes like everyone else around me. Then one day, the lecturer said to us, “For today, I want you all to put your pens down and just listen to me.” Throughout the class, there was no writing allowed. I remember a slight anxiety

creeping up as I kept thinking to myself, “How am I going to remember all of this?” I looked around me and saw other people fidgeting too. One girl even reached out for her pen, only to drop it down sheepishly after she got a “look” from the lecturer.

***When you eat,  
just eat. When you  
read, just read.***

It took a while, but eventually I just listened. Surprisingly, it took a lot more effort than I thought would be needed to just listen, because my mind would wander and I had to continuously bring it back into the classroom to really focus my mind on what the lecturer was saying. I had to understand what she said, rather than just writing down her words. I had to appreciate each moment I was there because if my mind wandered away, I wouldn’t be able to follow her subsequent logic. After class, students were complaining and even I didn’t find value in it. I felt I didn’t retain much of the information, compared with when I was taking notes.

Then I graduated from law school and became a junior solicitor. One day, I went to court with an experienced barrister, and during his cross-examination, I was again scribbling like mad to ensure I got down all his questions and the witness’ answers. At one point, he kindly told me to put down my pen and just listen. So I did. This barrister got out very detailed information from these witnesses, including dates, times and places for when things happened. He didn’t write a single

## mindfulness & multitasking

word down. At the conclusion of the case when he was addressing the jury, he recalled everything in great detail all the evidence to support our case. I was amazed.

***“...excessive multitasking and distraction seeking can erode our ability to concentrate...”***

Now when I run my own cases at court, I still scribble notes here and there, but the most valuable times are those when it's just me being present with the witness. Not only do I recall the information later on, I also pick up on body language and the subtle facial expressions that I otherwise wouldn't have seen if I was too busy scribbling away like mad.

When I reflect on it, I realise that my pen and paper are like my safety nets for fear that my memory will fail me, and they were like an anchor point so my mind doesn't wander off too far. I now realise why it was so difficult for me as a first year student to just listen: I hadn't trained my attention, memory and mindfulness. Over time, by exercising my attention and memory, and practising mindfulness meditation, I began to develop this invaluable skill of listening and being present to each moment that arises.

***“...mindfulness practice is about being aware of what is happening in this present moment...”***

I won't be surprised if readers find my 'pen and paper' story outdated, because by my last year of uni, pen and paper were steadily replaced by laptops. Lap-

tops are probably a more difficult distraction to overcome than writing. Sitting at the back of the class, I can see students flipping between their Word Document and Solitaire game. (This is also before UNSW had wireless internet available to all students, so I can only imagine what students do now.)

When I was studying, I would find myself checking my email, reading the news, chatting with friends – basically finding a distraction to occupy my mind each time I was bored. In my chill-out time, I would be able to chat to three different people at once online, reply to my emails, pay bills online, and sometimes even clean my room in the process, with music playing in the background. I used to think I was making the most of my time by multitasking.

***“...enjoy each moment of your life with equanimity and gratitude...”***

### Multitasking

If you look up the definition of “multitasking”, you will find that it is actually a computing term, in which the CPU executes various diverse tasks concurrently or in interwoven execution. A secondary definition of the term describes a *person* carrying out two or more tasks at the same time. So the term “multitasking” was first used to describe the function of computers, not humans.

I remember in my uni days I used to argue that humans were capable of doing a few tasks at the same time. Others would argue that the mind can only do one thing at a time. I still don't have the definitive answer to this, but looking back I realise that we were actually disputing

## mindfulness & multitasking

different things (typical bored students) and I now think both answers are essentially correct.

***“...the most valuable times are those when it’s just me being present...”***

This is because I can do tasks simultaneously (multitasking), but when I do this, I am actually undertaking one task at a time in quick succession. So I am able to listen to the radio while I drive, and file my nails while on the phone. However if I slow down the processes, I can see that my mind is only attentive to one thing at a time. This became clear to me during meditation, when the level of distraction is diminished and the level of awareness is heightened.

With this view in mind, I don’t think that multitasking and mindfulness are at odds with one another. After all, multitasking has become a fact of modern life and as Thich Nhat Hanh would say, “There is no enlightenment outside of daily life.”

To illustrate this further, let me share a Zen story with you. A Zen master used to tell his students to be mindful of what they do, and his instructions are simply, “When you read, just read. When you eat, just eat.” One day when his students came down to the breakfast hall, they saw their Zen master reading the newspaper over breakfast. One horrified student approached the Zen master and asked, “Master, how can you read the paper while having breakfast? You always teach us, ‘When you read, just read. When you eat, just eat?’” The Zen master smiled and said simply, “When you eat and read, just eat and read,” and then went back to reading the paper over his breakfast.

### Hindrance of Multitasking

Even though it is possible for multitasking and mindfulness to go hand in hand (and later I will discuss how mindfulness enhances multitasking), multitasking can become a hindrance to our mindfulness training in our initial training stages.

This is because multitasking hinges on jumping from one thing to another, and if this is done repeatedly, it becomes a habitual tendency. Our mind – which is very delicate – then is used to short bursts of attention before it moves onto the next object. We become less patient with what is difficult and boring. We become less-inclined to follow through with long projects to their end because we give up in search for something else.

In time, excessive multitasking and distraction-seeking can erode our ability to concentrate on one object at a time, and finally stillness becomes seemingly impossible to achieve. After all, stillness only comes if we allow the mind time to settle without attaching onto the next distraction to keep itself preoccupied. Lao Tzu once said, “Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the mind is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?”

***“When busy, go slow.”***

### Mindfulness achieves more than Multitasking

If we think multitasking makes our life more fulfilling in being able to fit more into it, or make us more productive, then I think mindfulness practice is more effective in allowing us to achieve this.



## mindfulness & multitasking

When I am chatting online with three different people, the quality of the interaction is very different to if I was only talking to one. If I was reading a book with music in the background, the quality of my reading (or listening to music for that matter) is different to if I only read or listened to music. If I was racing down the motorway to get to my destination, I am likely to have missed the whole journey.

### ***Multitasking: Undertaking one task at a time in quick succession***

To me, it is possible to experience many things at once, but the *fullness* of each experience is lost. The subtle nuances of life aren't heard, nor felt, nor understood. We race through life, without really experiencing it completely. In that sense, even if we fit more *stuff* into our day, what we get out of it is much less.

As an exercise, next time you are dining with someone, give them your whole presence and then take a moment to give your food your full presence. Observe any changes in the quality of your experience.

As for productivity, if we have too many things happening at the same time, we are likely to miss out on something or forget something. As the Buddhist saying goes, "When busy, go slow." After all, when you are busy, you don't have time for mistakes that are made by hasty action.

### **Why Mindfulness Practice is so important when Multitasking**

Multitasking is life in the fast-lane, while meditation is a time for you to slow down and recuperate after a busy day of run-

ning around, physically and mentally. With a fresh mind, you are able to tackle the busy day that awaits you the next day.

### ***When you eat and read, just eat and read.***

Further, mindfulness practice is also about being aware of what is happening in this present moment and seeing things as they are (*vipassana*). Even if things are busy around you, you are neither subsumed in the workload nor drowning in your own anxiety or stress. So much of our mental energy and time is wasted on thoughts of self-doubt and unproductive mental chatter.

Imagine if you could just watch the raving thoughts and feelings without getting caught up in them – how efficient can you be! Externally, say studying, you can focus your whole presence on your studies, without being distracted by the internet or Facebook.

### ***"...mixed up multitasking and mindless distractions..."***

Finally, with the joy that comes from mindfulness, hopefully you can enjoy each moment of your life with equanimity and gratitude for all that is happening right now. Even studying! It takes a lot of favourable causes and conditions to allow you to have this time to study and learn, and pursue your life accordingly. So I hope each of us can fully embrace our mindfulness practice in our lives, so we can stop the computing process and become more human.

# mindfulness as a STUDENT

- Aggie Lawer -



I had never really come across the term **‘Mindfulness’** until the day I joined the UNIBUDS Winter Retreat this year because I grew up in a Catholic environment and I had never reinforced myself to learn the Dhamma in the past. I often come across the word ‘awareness’ which basically has the same definition as mindfulness, yet never had I realised that being mindful of our thoughts, emotions, speeches, and actions could affect our daily lives in such a great extent.

***“...pain will eventually end...nothing in life is permanent.”***

Basically, the understanding of mindfulness lies on the awareness of the present moment; not dwelling in the past nor dreaming about the future. We all know that the past; even a second ago, has already gone while the future has not yet come. Often we find the future might not turn out to be like what we have expected and in fact, dealing with past and future would only make us lose focus on the present.

I figured out that a lot of times in life, I get too immersed in my own thoughts and feelings about the past and future.

Thinking about the past - *“What if I had done that instead of this?”* - or worrying about the future - *“Will I be able to do this, what will people think about me?”* - makes me forget the things which really matter right here and right now - the things which are right in front of me. It does not always mean that we have to be indifferent across our past and future. Contemplating on the past may serve as the ground rule for us to live better in the present. By being mindful of the present, it helps us to accomplish the things we would like to achieve in the future.

Mindfulness can be applied consistently by directing our mind to one specific thing at a time. For example, when we are singing in front of many audiences, we practise mindfulness by fully-concentrating on how the melody flows, instead of thinking whether we will look good or absurd on stage. Practising mindfulness is essentially similar to learning the Dhamma - it seems easy to understand yet hard to apply.

***“... open our mind...  
accept things as  
they are...”***

## mindfulness as a student

As a student, I particularly practise mindfulness to help myself in my studies. Before I get to know about mindfulness, I was unable to direct my attention to the present moment during my lectures. I would think about the next lectures, the next activities I should do after the lecture or sometimes wander back to the events occurred yesterday. Lack of mindfulness like this merely brings bad impact on my studies as I could not concentrate on the lecture and eventually lost track of what to be learnt.

As I understand better about mindfulness now, I try directing my attention solely to the lectures I attend and focusing on what the lecturer is saying. This helps me a lot in my studies as it trains my concentration, allows me to think critically in my studies because I am able to pay full attention to what the lecturers say, and at the same time, I attain a sense of achievement through mindfulness.

***“...encounter, see,  
accept, and then  
let go.”***

Besides that, I often find myself caught up in worries when I'm facing the exams – worrying if I will be able to perform well or worrying on my exam results – which often mislead me. It is good to understand that this kind of thoughts and worries merely makes us lose our energy and at the same time brings suffering. From here, we notice that everything we feel in reality originates from the mind. It is our minds which choose to either dwell in or let

go of worries and focus on the present state.

***“...being mindful of...  
thoughts, emotions,  
speeches & actions...  
affects our daily  
lives...”***

When negative feeling arises, we can try to apply mindfulness by directing our attention to the feeling itself, observing why, with whom and what we are angry of, and most importantly accepting the feeling. When we observe our feelings appropriately, it prevents us from blaming others for the problems we face. We eventually realise that most of these problems arise from our own misled mind. By doing this, we will see our anger slowly ceases and the problems disappear.



We can also apply the practice of mindfulness in learning the Dhamma. For instances, through the understanding of the '**Four Noble Truths**' which mentions that "All beings are subject to Dukkha, Dukkha arises from desire and craving, Dukkha can be overcome by the elimination of desire and craving, and there is a way out of Dukkha which is the '**Noble Eightfold Path**'. The '**Four Noble Truths**' helps us to

understand that suffering originates from our attachment; what we choose to cling to. However, suffering can be eliminated to gradually attain *Nibbana* (enlightenment) through the '**Noble Eightfold Path**' where one of its practices is '**Right Mindfulness**'.

All of us may agree that mindfulness is not easy to be practised as our mind tends to wander naturally. Only through consistent practice, we can implement mindfulness truly in our life. So, what are the benefits of practising mindfulness in daily life? When we understand how our mind works, how attachment takes place, and where emotions come from, we will be able to find true happiness and peace in our life. This is because, we will be able to see and accept the good and bad events that occur in our life as they are and give good interpretations toward it.

***“....worries merely  
make us lose energy  
and bring suffering.”***

Sometimes, we may find ourselves living a meaningless life, but with mindfulness practice, we can see that this feeling actually arises from the judgments and expectations controlled by our mind. If we try to open our mind to accept things as they are, we will find it easier to live with gratitude. In addition, mindfulness also helps us to control and manage stressful situations better. We will feel calm when we encounter difficulties or frustrations. When we are mindful of the sufferings we encounter, our mind will see, accept, and then let go.

### Letting Go

I would like to share my experience to convey the real context of *letting go*. On the first day of the new term, I suffered from a terrible toothache. The pain was unbearable that I could not eat, sleep, sing, or focus on my study properly. When suffering comes, negative thoughts would naturally appear in our mind.

*Why do I have to suffer this right at the start of the semester and not during the break? What if I cannot sleep soundly tonight? If I don't have a good rest, how am I going to concentrate on my studies tomorrow? What if I have to spend substantial amount of money for the treatment? What if the pain gets worse tomorrow?*

***“Mindfulness...  
directing our mind to  
one specific thing at a  
time.”***

I kept rewinding these negative thoughts in my mind and simultaneously felt angry because the pain hindered me from performing my daily tasks. Instead of focusing on and accepting the pain, I made it seem as if it will affect my entire life.

At that point of time, I suddenly remembered one of the stories I read in the '**Opening the door of your heart**' written by **Ajahn Brahm**. In this story, he encourages us to 'welcome' the pain and allow it to be because by doing that, the pain would go. Most of the time, we thought that by telling ourselves to ignore the pain, we had al-

ready let go, yet the pain did not disappear. Pain itself is a combination of objective and subjective components. Literally, the real pain refers to the physical sensations that we feel. However, pain can be subjective when we convince ourselves that this physical pain will be the source of our further suffering.

Most of the time, we put so much weight on how the pain affects us that the pain we feel may be much worse than the actual pain itself. If we are able to avoid our subjective views toward this pain through right application of mindfulness, believe it or not, we shall help ourselves to reduce the pain. *Ajahn Brahm* teaches us that we have to welcome the pain and say,



*"Pain, the door of my heart is open to you. Whatever you do to me, come in."* We have to be willing to allow the pain to continue as long as it wants; even for the rest of our life, and even allow it to get worse. Stop trying to control the pain, give the pain freedom. Whether it stays or goes, it does not make any difference. This is the true *letting go*. Only by then, the pain will disappear.

Therefore, I tried to implement the understanding of *letting go* taught by *Ajahn Brahm* in his book. Instead of thinking about how the toothache

would affect other aspects of my life, I directed my mind to solely feel the pain. I started to think that this pain will eventually end, as nothing in life is permanent. This too shall pass and what I can do now is just to accept the pain. Finally, I was able to "enjoy" the pain and let it go. Surprisingly, the pain disappeared within 5 days without affecting my daily routines.

***"...everything we feel  
in reality originates  
from the mind."***

From this experience, I realised that when we do not understand mindfulness in our life, we create a so-called snowball effect where everything around us just does not seem to be right. Practising mindfulness is about attempting to treat the events in our life as mutually exclusive. We do not let one event affect other events which in the turn make our life worse.

Let me end this article with a quote that always reminds me to be mindful and to take care of today.

*Each morning when I open my eyes I say to myself: I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, TODAY, and I'm going to be happy in it. - Groucho Marx*

May all beings be well and happy.

# Walking My Dogs



- *Ming De Teh* -

I have 2 dogs. The first one is brown, weighs ~25kg and stands at the level of my knee when on all fours. Her name is Milo, just like the malt drink. The other dog is black with a tinge of gold speckled around her fur, she weighs ~20kg and is just slightly smaller than Milo. Her name is Kopi, it is a common term for coffee as spoken improperly by people in the southeast Asia region. My family picked them from the streets, so we had no idea what breed or temperament to expect.

I find that it is a privilege to keep pets, it is a chance for me to do something for them at the same time for me to learn from them. Sometimes animals can teach us more about ourselves than we can with introspect.

***“...doubt arises...we  
waste our time...  
going around in cir-  
cles...”***

Every other day, I would help my mum walk the dogs around our neighbour-

hood. For Milo and Kopi, it is usually a treat, because they can finally go outside the house and see/feel/smell something different. This is where interesting observations begin. Milo is the alpha-dog, she is the dominant one, she does what she likes, goes where she wants, but the only problem is... she can't make up her mind. Seeing Milo out on a walk is like seeing our monkey mind at work. Going up the slope, she will go to the first patch of grass outside of our compound; it's her habit, or her territorial right, one or the other, she will go to that spot habitually, predictably. Once she reaches the top of the slope, she will want to go to all possible spots.

***“...we react and  
hurt other people in  
the process.”***

She will:

run to the left and find a patch of grass;

mark her spot while trying to go to the next spot;

on her way there, she will diverge and go across the road;

get distracted by the passerby;

bark at the dog in the opposite house;

then run to the tree and sniff;  
mark another spot;  
sees a lizard in the tree;  
chase the lizard but smell the left over  
chicken bone in the garbage;  
try to eat the bone and get smacked  
by me;  
get upset but runs to the next tree;  
then comes the ultimate – the cross-  
road.

Will it be the left, or the right? Or will it  
be both? Or none?

This is truly difficult. Milo goes toward  
the left, then as she walks about 10m,  
she backtracks and goes to the right.  
On some days, she goes ahead to the  
left or right straight away, on some,  
she changes her mind 10-20m into  
that path, and on some, she just turns  
around and heads for home.

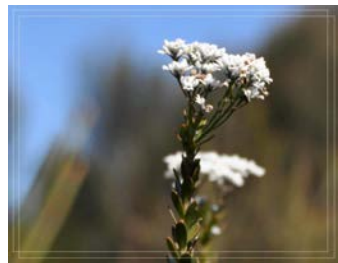
***“...spend some time  
knowing ourselves,  
...being aware of our  
state of being at this  
moment...”***

Our minds are often like how Milo  
goes for a walk, a lot of doubt arises  
and we waste our time going around in  
circles. In addition, we don't realize  
most of our time is spent jumping  
around. On top of being scattered, we  
get distracted, be it the dog or the liz-

ard or the chicken bone. Would it not  
be easier to just decide and go in one  
direction, and truly enjoy the journey of  
that path? Of course it would take wis-  
dom to choose the best path, but in  
either path, we experience it to the  
fullest and not dwell in either the past  
or dream of the future that we miss out  
all the experiences happening now.  
Sometimes, it's not even about choos-  
ing the right path, but being aware that  
there is a struggle in making that  
choice.

***“We don't spend  
enough time to ob-  
serve our mind...”***

Friends and family often say we spoilt  
our Milo - not training her enough. It  
may well be true, but it all takes time. It  
took us 8 years or so to understand  
Milo's temperament sufficiently to pre-  
dict her reaction and response to dif-  
ferent situations. Although we've kept  
Milo since she was a little pup, Milo  
may still bite us on rare occasions. But  
what were the circumstances? We had  
to observe, observe and observe even



more. We learnt that Milo has a lot of  
fear in her. Whenever someone ap-  
proaches, she does not rush to greet,  
but she barks and hides her tail, a sign  
of fear. When we give her something  
to eat, she gives Kopi a cold stare be-

cause she is afraid of losing that food to her competitor. When we introduce

### ***Enjoy the journey of the path***

something new to the house, be it a table, chair, another dog, a bird, a tortoise, she is very reserved, and keeps observing it, but will eventually bite it – fear of losing her territory.

Milo's reactions are like our watered-down reactions. As humans, we sometimes think a lot more, try to rationalise and practise inhibition. Milo has less of it, she simply acts out her first reaction – a lot of bandaging for us. Our minds have built up habitual tendencies and we often run on auto-pilot mode, reacting instead of thinking. When we encounter something, especially when we are stressed or busy, we have less capacity to think, but we react, and we often hurt other people in the process. I snap at people when I get asked questions when I am tired. I don't like sharing when I can't rest enough. Sounds like Milo?

### ***“...decide and go in one direction...”***

Kopi on the other hand, is different. She starts out a little frazzled when Milo runs around, but soon comes to her own pace. She gives every spot, every tree, every scent that she is interested in her full attention. When she sniffs, she takes her time, and I think she investigates. She looks energetic and interested. Although sometimes she is so engrossed she is not aware of the oncoming car that we have to

yank her leash to keep her safe.

At the end of the walk, Milo is often exhausted, she pants a lot and takes a while to recover. Kopi is often more composed, relaxed and just a little bit puffed. However, both of them get just as excited when it's dinner time or snack time.



Our minds get into habits that respond in an automatic fashion. We do not normally spend enough time to observe our mind and our natural habits. This results in us reacting rather than understanding then responding. I think it is advisable to spend some time knowing ourselves, being aware of our state of being at this moment, are we tense? Are we relaxed? Are we tired? And what about our state of mind? It is only after we are aware and more comfortable with ourselves can we practise letting go and being more at ease.

Will you pounce around like Milo? Or take your time with the world like Kopi?

May all beings be well and happy.  
Sadhu.



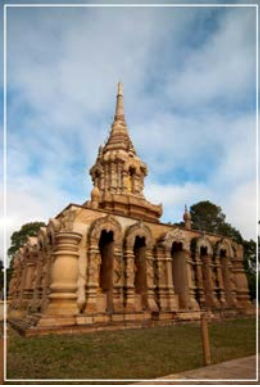
# Winter Retreat

## 2011

*Wei Chen Seah would like to share his invaluable experience at Sunnataram Forest Monastery.*



My curiosity of monastic life leads me to **UNIBUDS Winter Retreat 2011**.



Throughout the retreat there were exercises such as tai-chi, meditation, and yoga that were done to strengthen our concentration and mental well being. I would like to think of those three days

as a mental workout where one battles his/her inner demons (Mara) together with an instructor (Phra Mana) who has a great sense of humour and a very appealing way of spreading the Dhamma.

Also, I was truly humbled by the way the monks at Sunnataram Forest Monastery live. All the monuments and artefacts there were created and made by the monks and some kind volunteers. They play a huge part in manual labour like cleaning the bunks we stayed in, chopping woods for use in the fireplace to keep us warm in the meditation areas, and moving and arranging rocks (trust me they were heavy) around to beautify the gardens. This shows the dedication, hard

work, compassion, and mindfulness these monks have put into their daily lives. They have set an example worth following.

One of the few things that I have learned though this retreat about the Buddha is that the first few hundred years after his death, the only symbol used to represent him was the 'Bodhi Tree'. According to Phra Mana, this is so because the Buddha wanted people to remember his teachings and not him.

In the next few hundred years, symbols representing the Buddha in human form surfaced. Buddha images that look like Anglo, Chinese, and Indian appeared all over the world. This was a strategy for spreading the Dhamma to different parts of the world. Over time, the symbol of Buddha went from a Bodhi tree to a man flying on a lotus. I believe the reason for this is because magic and the supernatural is more easily remembered by people. Thus, these days many of us including myself, is lost in the fascination of the supernatural. However, through this winter retreat I learned the true meaning of Buddhism.

Finally, there are a few practices that I



benefit from this retreat. Sitting meditation helps me to overcome insomnia and energises me before I start my day. Staying mindful through moving meditation helps me to focus on tasks I am attempting.

For example, during a ski trip to Perisher I was at a new route which was meant for intermediate level skiers; I am a beginner in this sport. I did not know of the difficulty of this route until I found myself going down a much steeper slope than the other slopes that I have skied.

During this moment of realisation a sense of fear was experienced. My

body stiffened and breathing seemed to stop for a second. Next, the strangest thing happened where I was aware of all the emotions that were happening inside me. I focused on my breathing and fear disappeared as quickly as it came. I was able to manoeuvre my way down the route with a calm mind.

In conclusion, the Buddha was a man who gained enlightenment through diligence and perseverance. If he could do it I am pretty sure we can as well.

My quest for inner peace will continue. Hope to see some of you at **UNIBUDS Winter Retreat 2012.**





# SUNNATARAM FOREST MONASTERY





# Photography Workshop

*Mei Ling Teoh tells of her experience in learning how to view the world through lenses.*



Photography, like many other forms of art depends on the imagination of the artist. To extend one's imagination, it is helpful to first have some photography knowledge. However, photography is a very expensive hobby and the result: anything that relates to photography comes with a price.



The opportunity to learn came when UNIBUDS organised a photography workshop for all. Best of all, it is for *FREE*. The two-day workshop covers basic photography knowledge which introduces the participants

to the art of photography, outdoor photography which gives participants the opportunity to experiment with some photography equipments, and some basic *Photoshop* skills for post-processing.

The workshop has reminded and introduced me of/to some styles of photography

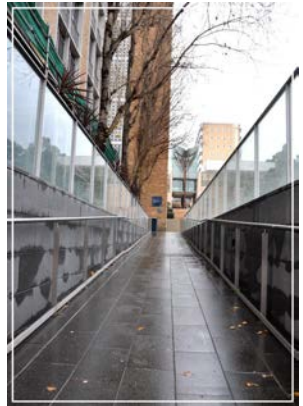
***“...the best pictures  
are captured with  
the eyes...”***

namely portrait, landscape, macro, street photography, just to name a few. Each photography style usually comes with its own famous photographers. For example,

Annie Leibovitz is the household name for portrait photography. Therefore, if one is interested in taking portrait photographs it is best to learn from the master herself by looking at her masterpieces which can easily be found on the internet.

Based on personal experience, I am sure many would just take their new ‘toy’ a.k.a. camera out and start snapping without reading the manual. Knowing the available functions in a camera which helps to maximise the potential of a camera regardless of whether it is a phone, compact or DSLR camera can enhance the photography experience as well. I think this workshop has helped many to find new functions on their camera which they had no idea that the functions ever existed.

I also learned that a lot of aspects are involved in capturing people's attention in a picture such as lighting, composition, angle which the object is taken, etc. There are many ways a photographer can tell his or her story but which is the most effective way? I guess it depends on the photographer's imagination. I believe it involves a



## photography workshop

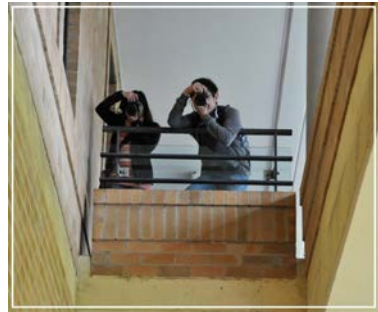


lot of practicing and experimental works.

I have always thought that a good photographer does not need to edit his/her works using commercial softwares at all. How wrong I was. There is always a need in touching up the photographs taken. Either it is cropping or adjusting the level, the end product of the editing can really improve the picture and tell a better story.



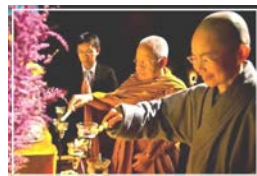
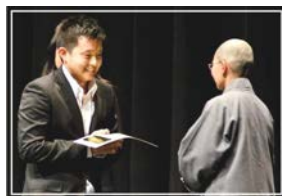
My photography journey has its up and down. Taking good pictures has always been stressing me up that I spend time thinking which setting to use. Whenever the picture turns out to be bad on the spot, I will try my best to think of ways to get it right. It makes me miss the best moment of the event. Hence, I would rather just snap a picture or two of an event and the rest of the time, I can enjoy the special moments through my eyes and not the camera lens. Sometimes, I would leave my camera at home and use my phone instead.



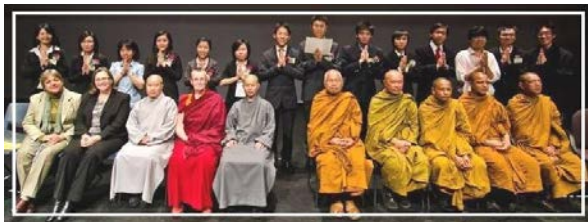
I have learned that best pictures are captured with the eyes and pictures captured by the lens are just memories which remind us of how beautiful the event was.

The photography workshop has indeed broadened my photography knowledge and skills. I would like to thank the workshop organiser, Hong Gee and the workshop coordinator Shanty Joeng for this learning and sharing opportunity.









# BodhiNite 2011



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

Date: 24th September 2011

Time: 2pm

Venue: The Lodge, Squarehouse

The positions and brief job descriptions are as follow:

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## **PRESIDENT**

- Acts as the spokesperson of UNIBUDS
- Chairs meetings
- Coordinates the Executive Committee (EXCO) members
- Responsible for day-to-day operation of UNIBUDS
- Ensures that all duties delegated to others are carried out
- Liaises with Honorary Secretary regarding aspects of Agenda and minutes
- Liaises with Honorary Treasurer regarding financial matter

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## **EXTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT**

- Assists the President
- The Acting President in the absence of the President
- Books rooms for functions

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## **INTERNAL VICE PRESIDENT**

- Attends to the welfare of the members
- Enhances buddy system
- Updates members with UNIBUDS activities

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## **HONORARY SECRETARY**

- Liaises with external correspondence
- Records agenda and minutes of official EXCO meetings
- Collects reports of activities
- Collects mails (from pigeon hole in Religious Centre)
- Keeps custody of all documents, forms, records, and files of UNIBUDS
- Makes records of all UNIBUDS activities for the year

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## **HONORARY TREASURER**

- Handles all financial matters
- Presents up-to-date financial position of UNIBUDS during meetings

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## **GENERAL SECRETARY**

- Maintains UNIBUDS Library (including books & audio-visual materials on Buddhism)
- Updates membership list
- Coordinates librarians

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## **ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR**

- Organises and coordinates weekend sports activities
- Organises and coordinates Dhamma-related social activities such as monasteries visits



## ENGLISH & CHINESE DHAMMA TALK COORDINATORS

- Organises and coordinates weekly Dhamma Talks
- Arranging speakers for the talks

## MEDITATION SESSION COORDINATOR

- Organises and promotes regular Buddhist Meditation sessions in the University
- Provides reference and information in regards to Buddhist Meditation practices

## SACCA EDITOR

- Coordinates Sacca editorial team
- Promotes better communication among UNIBUDS members through newsletters (E.g. informs members about the past and upcoming activities)
- Promotes Buddhism within the University and among the public

## ANNUAL MAGAZINE EDITOR

- Coordinates Annual Magazine editorial team
- Promotes Buddhism within the University and among the public
- Records the activities of UNIBUDS for the year

cut

### **AGM 2011/12 NOMINATION FORM**

*All candidates standing for the election of the Executive Committee shall be duly proposed and seconded by ordinary members of UNIBUDS present at AGM<sup>1</sup>. Nominations for the top 5 positions (President, External Vice President, Internal Vice President, Honorary Secretary, and Honorary Treasurer) must be submitted and received AT LEAST 2 DAYS before the AGM. Nominations for the other 11 positions are also accepted before the AGM or may be called out on the day of the AGM.*

*If you would like to stand for any of the above positions but is unsure of the duties involved, please feel free to talk to any of the EXCO members.*

<sup>1</sup> Ordinary members are current students of UNSW, and are current members of UNIBUDS.

For all further enquiries please contact UNIBUDS at [unibuds@gmail.com](mailto:unibuds@gmail.com)



### **OFFICIAL NOMINATION FORM FOR THE UNIBUDS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (signature) would like to nominate  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (signature), an Ordinary / Associate  
 member, to the UNIBUDS Executive Committee position of: \_\_\_\_\_

This nomination has been seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

# CORNER OF OUR HEARTS

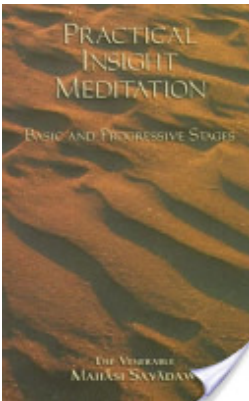
## Recommended Reads

Dear Unibuddies,

I'm the General Secretary for this term, Hans. This semester, the opening hours for UNIBUDS Library is from **Monday-Friday, 12-2pm**. The library could not be managed by myself alone. Thus, I sincerely ask for the help of members who are willing to sacrifice few hours of their time on weekly basis, to volunteer as librarian. If you're interested in helping us manage the library, contact **UNIBUDS: (02) 9385 6082** or **contact me: 0404 609 225**. Thank you so much!

With Metta,  
Hans Wibowo

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The book 'Practical Insight Meditation' by Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw discusses about the basic and progressive stages of practical insight meditation. Venerable introduces the book by discussing how everyone wants happiness, but failed to understand that it comes from the mindset, and not physical outlook or possessions. As a result, very few people are interested in learning to tame the mind by practising insight meditation.

To purify the mind, the four foundations of mindfulness are important. By contemplating the body, feelings, mind, and mind-objects, we can achieve the bliss a peaceful mind brings. The skills are taught in 2 parts in this book – basic and progressive stages.

Venerable wrote this book after attending an intense meditation session on the four foundations of mindfulness to share this knowledge with the readers. The Venerable stresses that the readers should not be contented with reading the theories of the book, but should systematically and consistently practise the meditation methods taught in the book.

# MEMBERS' CORNER

## *Happy Birthday to You!*

*UNIBUDS wishes everyone well and happy—All the best along the Dhamma journey.*

### JULY

Ervinda	Singgih Lie
Asanthi	Sovis
Yi Von	Ooi
Adeline	Lukmantara
Wan Chee	Chua

### AUGUST

Ming De	Teh
Melissa Jade	Katon
Sam	Varma
Dennis Wei Shen	Lim
Clement	Loh
Allen	Kha
Adeline	Sugianto
Erica Yen Chin	Long
Elsa Lok	Lo
Fang Yong	Yu
Lauren	Reynolds-Evans

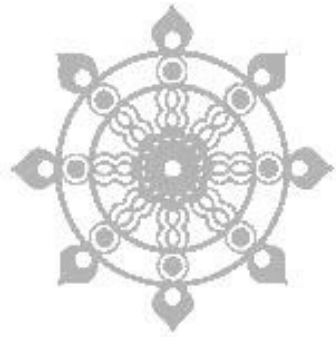
### SEPTEMBER

Foh Fan	Yong
Su Sian	Teh
Chyna Suet Ling	Kwek
Jane	Beh
Kai Yi	Giam
Xian Hui	Tan
Yee Shyn	Tai
Ian Xiang Yuan	Ch'ng
Chia Chean	Lim
Amy	Yang

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## SACCA

Sacca is a quarterly newsletter catered for free to the members of Unibuds. If you would like to obtain previous editions of Sacca, kindly drop by at Unibuds Library to get a free copy! There are also free distribution Dhamma books available at Unibuds Library! Come visit us today!



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## Next Edition

In the next edition of *Sacca*, we will touch on how Buddhism has changed our view of life in general—***Change. For the Better.*** If you have thoughts which you would like to share with our members or feedback regarding this issue of *Sacca*, please feel free to drop me an email at [clarissewy.chen@gmail.com](mailto:clarissewy.chen@gmail.com). I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you!

NOTE:

冬

六月2011

八月2011

sacca  
慧 命 社 季 刊

正念

*Mindfulness*

*where a bud can bloom in full*

*where a bud can bloom in full*



**unibuds**

UNSW BUDDHIST SOCIETY

# 目录

- 1 | 编辑有话说
- 2 | 不忘念
- 5 | 那是归于你的



2 0 1 1

## 活动介绍

9月24日

慧命社常年大会

请别错过！

如有兴趣者，请发电邮至 [unibuds@yahoo.com](mailto:unibuds@yahoo.com) 与  
我们联络或浏览我们的网。

# 慧命社季刊—冬

## 编辑有话说

亲爱的读者，

愿您们都平安、喜乐。

再一次感谢所有对这份季刊有所贡献的会员们！这期季刊我们想要探讨的主题是“正念”，但是正念是什么意思？在佛学中，正念又扮演了什么角色？您是否忽略了正念？

同时在这期的季刊我们记录了过去几个月慧命社所举办的活动，例如冬令营、摄影工作坊、以及菩提之夜2011！如果您错过了这些活动的话，敬请期待我们接下来所举办的活动吧！

接下来，慧命社一年一度的常年大会将在九月底举办，活动的详情可以在本期的季刊内找到。如果您有兴趣为慧命社

服务或者是您想见证和支持新一届慧命社执行委员的话，欢迎您来参加我们的常年大会！

下一期季刊的主题将会探讨佛教如何在我们的生活中，对我们的人生观起了什么影响。如果您对这个主题有所体会，或是您有什么亲身经验想要与慧命社会员们分享的话，欢迎您把所有的作品（文章、图片皆可）发送到

[clarissey.chen@gmail.com](mailto:clarissey.chen@gmail.com)

陈玮莹

法轮季刊编辑



u n i b u d s  
U N S W B U D D H I S T S O C I E T Y

**联络我们**

**电话** (02) 9385 6082

**地址** Religious Centre, Room 311, 3rd Floor Squarehouse,  
University of New South Wales, Kensington NSW 2052.

**开放时间** 12-2pm Mon-Fri

**电邮** [unibuds@yahoo.com](mailto:unibuds@yahoo.com)

**网站** [www.unibuds.unsw.edu.au](http://www.unibuds.unsw.edu.au)

*where a bud can bloom in full*

# 不忘念

《佛垂涅槃略說教誡經》，又稱《佛遺教經》，談到不忘念（保持正念）對學習佛法，修持禪定，進而啟發智慧的重要。

以下開示摘錄自「<sup>上</sup>藏<sup>下</sup>慧法師之《佛垂涅槃略說教誡經講記》」。

經文云：「汝等比丘，求善知識，求善護助，無如不忘念。若有不忘念者，諸煩惱賊則不能入，是故汝等常當攝念在心。若失念者，則失諸功德。若念力堅強，雖入五欲賊中，不為所害。譬如著鎧入陣，則無所畏，是名不忘念。」

修行對一個人很重要。可是，佛說，我們要修行，求善知識的開導，或求善護助的幫忙，還不如自己能保持不忘念。這是叫我們不要讓念頭斷了，要好好的用功，不要有第二個念頭。我們學習觀察呼吸，把心安住在呼吸上不要忘失，這就叫不忘念。心若是跑來跑去，就叫忘念！



沒有第二個念頭就是有正念。把心安住在呼吸上，功夫修得好，察覺的能力就會生起來，這時，我們的心已經微細到可以觀察到身心的變化。覺察能力一生起，我們就能觀照到整個身心，也會更精進用功。所以說，求善知識，善護助，還不如自己好好用功，讓心平穩的安住在呼吸上，那時我們就自得法樂了！

「若有不忘念者，諸煩惱賊則不能入，是故汝等常當攝念在心。」如果我們能保持正念，念念不忘佛陀的教法，時刻將佛法明記在心，這樣的話，煩惱之賊就無法侵入。煩惱賊都是乘我們失去正念，忘記佛陀的話的時候，才侵入我們的心，使我們起惑造業。所以，我们要好好的看著自己的心，攝持正念，念念記著佛法，一刻也不讓我們的心散失。

如果我們的心能平穩安住，煩惱自然不會生起。煩惱不生，也就不會起貪瞋痴慢疑。為什麼會起貪念呢？這是因為根境相觸以後，我們生起一種順我們心意的感覺，因此染著，這就是我執！如果我們的心是平平穩穩的安放在呼吸上，那還會有跑到外境去呢？心不往外跑，又怎會起貪瞋痴慢疑呢？沒有貪瞋痴慢疑，煩惱自然就不能侵入！因此，很自然的，只要不忘念就不會有煩惱！不忘念能持續多久，煩惱就多久不能侵入我們。但是，假如我們出定以後不再修習不忘



念的話，那時就「失念」了！一失念，煩惱就隨之而來。這是因為我們還沒有斷除我執，還有貪瞋痴慢疑，修習不忘念只是把它們壓住，使其不生。但是，不生並不是斷除，只是暫時停止它產生而已。



「若失念者，則失諸功德。」如果失去正念，就會失去種種的功德。一旦失去正念，煩惱之賊就會侵襲我們，使我們愚癡無明，造作惡業，失去種種善法功德。

反之，如果我們的心能攝住，定很快就能成就。獲得定之後，靠著定的功夫觀察的智慧，我們就會獲得解脫的種種功德！順解脫的功德就會產生。無常，無我等智慧也會生起。假如我們失念，把正念都忘了，定就沒辦法成就。沒有定就沒有慧，沒有慧所有的功德就不能成就。因此“若失念者，則失諸功德。”

「若念力堅強，雖入五欲賊中，不為所害。」若念力堅強，念念能長久安住在呼吸上，五欲就沒辦法影響我們。

如果我們的念力堅強，時時有堅定的正念，知道甚麼是對的，甚麼是錯的，甚麼該做，甚麼不該做，甚麼是不該執著的，那麼，即使處於五欲之中，也不會為它所害。五欲即色、聲、香、味、觸五個外塵境界。我們常常在與五欲塵境相接觸時為它所轉，而往外奔馳，迷失自己。但是，如果我們有堅強的正念，那麼，當我們的五根與五欲塵境相接觸時，我們就會很機警的看著它，不為它所轉。這樣，我們也不會有貪染五欲的禍害了。

如果在五欲賊中，財色名食睡中打滾的人，能保持正念不忘的話，他就不會胡作非為，而能如如不動！能保持正念什麼地方都可以去。事實上，如果我們正念不忘的話，我們也不會想去不應該去的地方；只有當心裡有賊，有貪染欲望的時候，我們才會去看不應該看的東西。所以，如果能保持不忘念，五欲就無法侵犯我們。

「譬如著鎧入陣，則無所畏。是名不忘念。」

雖然身處刀來劍往生命危險的地段，我們若能正念不忘的話，就能維護我們的慧命，沒有任何東西可以傷害到我們，什麼也不用害怕，那裡都可以去！這就是有正念，也就是不忘念。

假如沒有正念，修行就要看環境。有一位學生喜歡學戒律，因此到專門學戒的學院去。學院把環境都設計得適合學戒，因此，他在那邊沒有煩惱，不會感到痛苦。可是世間的環境怎麼可能都是一樣的呢？我們總要踏出去的！去到不同的地方，他就不習慣了，煩惱就來了！所以，這不是真正的持戒！

學戒的人應該要有一種持戒的精神，要能夠和環境搏鬥，不讓環境引誘我們，這樣才叫作持戒！在理想的環境，沒有東西引誘我們，我們怎麼學持戒呢？！西方極樂世界那有讓我們犯戒的機會呢？在那樣理想的環境之中，顯示不出我們持戒。我們要修學不忘念，即使到任何一個環境都不會起煩惱，不會感到不安。一個人有沒有修行就看他在任何環境之中是否都能自在。能夠把心控制到不忘念，呼吸時就觀呼吸，念佛是就念佛。這樣的保持不忘念，無論到那裡自然都會自在安樂！身處逆境要自在，順境中更要自在，心淨也要自在。這些都是修行的功夫。但是，要修到這種程度並不容易啊！

那麼，我們要用什麼方法把心念拴住呢？很簡單。譬如：上廁所時，心要清清楚楚，觀想自己在排除內心的貪瞋痴，藉這個機會將內心不良的東西都清除掉。我們不作這樣的觀想。上廁所時要保持正念，吃飯時也要保持正念，用心的一口一口吃，這樣就是修習正念。

很多人喜歡邊吃邊講，口沫橫飛的，這那裡是在吃飯呢？！這是不正念！沒有正念就不知道自己在做什么。睡覺時胡思亂想，走路時也胡思亂想，所以會撞電燈柱。如果能時時刻刻保持正念，把心集中在當下，即使掃地也可以修行！認真的把心安住在掃地，一下一下仔細的掃。所以修正念最好就是在日常生活中修，不論我們在做什麼都認認真真的觀照自己。做家務的時候就把心安住在家務上面，心不起煩惱，這就是修行，就是正念，也就是不忘念！

不忘念能產生一種保護的作用。打戰的時候，若我們有戰甲披身，刀槍不入，子彈也打不進去。同樣的，如果我們全副武裝，煩惱就進不來，這就是不忘念。大家應常常觀察呼吸，好好的用功，培養正念。唸「阿彌陀佛」也可以，隨著呼吸唸，「阿—彌—陀—佛」，假使覺得「阿彌陀佛」太長，就唸「佛—陀」、「佛—陀」也可以。

能夠不忘念的話，就接近得到禪定了。當我們能夠綿綿不斷關注所緣境的時候，進一步的我們就可以得到定。

## 那是归于你的

有一天，佛陀在竹林精舍的时候，忽有一个婆罗门愤怒恶言的冲进精舍来。

因为他同族的人，都出家到佛陀这里来，故使他大发嗔火。

佛陀默默地听他的无理胡骂之后，等他稍为安静时，向他说道：

“婆罗门呀！你的家偶尔也有访客吧！”

“当然有，瞿昙呀，何必问此！”

“婆罗门呀，那个时候，偶尔你也会款待客人吧？”

“瞿昙呀！那是当然的啊。”

“婆罗门呀，假如那个时候，访客不接受你的款待，那么，那些菜肴应该归

于谁呢？”

“要是他不吃的话，那些菜肴只好再归于我！”

佛陀以慈眼盯着他一会儿，然后说道：“婆罗门呀，你今天在我的面前说很

多坏话，但是我并不接受它，所以你的无理胡骂，那是归于你的！婆罗门呀，如

果我被漫骂，而再以恶语相向时，就有如主客一起用餐一样，因此我不接受这个

菜肴！”

然后佛陀为他说了以下的偈：

“对忿怒的人，以忿怒还牙，  
是一件不应该的事。

对忿怒的人，不以忿怒还牙的人，  
将可得到两个胜利：

知道他人的忿怒，

而以正念镇静自己的人，

不但能胜于自己，

也能胜于他人。”

这个婆罗门，就在佛陀门下出家，不久，成为阿罗汉。

