



Taste of the Dhamma

Monthly Newsletter of Bhavana Society

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2600 Anniversary of Enlightenment

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of
Enlightenment



The Very Word of
the Buddha
(A Picture of
Enlightenment)



What
Happened
Under
the
Bodhi-tree?



How to Become
Happy



News
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Bhavanâ

About 2,600 years ago in the year 588 BC, on the banks of the Neranjâlâ River at the place called Gaya in India, the ascetic Siddhartha stood, holding a bowl of milk-rice offered him by Sujâta, daughter of the chief-tain of the village, Senâni. Contemplative and gazing at the current of the river, he made a decision and then sat under a tree. Mindfully, he ate 49 mouthfuls of milk-rice.

Then, with a firm determination in his mind, he put the bowl on the water. "If I am able to attain enlightenment tonight may this bowl float upstream!" Remarkably, the bowl headed upstream. He crossed the river and sat in the shade of a Bodhi tree. He resolved to himself: " I will never rise from this seat without attaining Buddhahood!" He sat cross-legged and began to practice mindfulness of breathing. It was the eve of the Vesak (May) full moon day. He was well prepared, his faculties de-



ized the real nature of all things in the world and became the Buddha of our era. On this special day he realized:

- 1.The four establishments of mindfulness.
- 2.The four right efforts
3. The four roads to power
- 4.The five spiritual faculties
- 5.The five mental powers
- 6.The seven Enlightenment factors
7. The Noble Eightfold Path.

This is the Dhamma he taught for 45 years. Let us all strive to experience these teachings and to live happily and peacefully.

These quotations are from the discourses of the Buddha

"Blessed is the birth of the Buddhas; blessed is the enunciation of the sacred Teaching; blessed is the harmony in the Order, and blessed is the spiritual pursuit of the united seekers of Truth"
(Dh.194.)

To See a Buddha

"Hard to be born a man; hard is the life of mortals. Hard is it to gain the opportunity of hearing the sublime Dhamma, and hard to encounter is the arising of the Buddha."

Dhammapada 182.

Faith in Dhamma

"Bhikkhus, in this Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear, open, evident, and rags torn away, and those who have sufficient faith in me, sufficient love for me, are all headed for heaven."

-M.N. Sutta N0.22-



Enlightenment

Who Slanders the Buddha

"Monks, these two slander the Tathagata. Which two? He who explains what was not said or spoken by the Tathagata as said or spoken by the Tathagata. And he who explains what was said or spoken by the Tathagata as not said or spoken by the Tathagata. These are two who slander the Tathagata."

(A.N. 2.23. Abhasita Sutta)

Investigation on Tathagata

"Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu who is an inquirer, not knowing how to gauge another's mind, should make an investigation of the Tathagata in order to find out whether or not he is fully enlightened."

(M.N. Sutta N0.47)

What Happened Under the Bodhi Tree?

"When my father, the Sakyan, was occupied, while I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. Could that be the path to enlightenment?" Then, following on that memory, came the realization: "That is indeed the path to enlightenment."

- Buddha -

On that special day of Vesak in the month of May, 2600 years ago, what really happened to Siddhartha Gotama under the Bodhi Tree should be understood clearly. First, we have to understand that he was a genius, not just an ordinary person. He took even the tiniest things into serious consideration and pondered upon them deeply in order to understand their true nature, as it really is (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*).

Logically, he reasoned, according to the Ariyapariyesana Sutta, how could he, being subject to birth, growth, ageing, affliction, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, ever gain lasting happiness by being attached to another who also is subject to birth, growth, ageing, affliction, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair? Since his childhood he had been investigating the Dhamma. Birth, growth, ageing, affliction, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are the intrinsic nature of all impermanent

things. This is the nature of the established law of truth. Searching, investigating and thinking, and then pondering over and over again to find if there were anything to contradict this established law of truth, he found nothing that could contradict it. This was his continuous meditation. Can you think of anything else that a genius would need to attain full enlightenment? Even just this alone was sufficient for such a one as Siddhartha Gotama Bodhisatta to attain full enlightenment.

Tradition tells us that he practiced self-mortification for six years. We can divide this six-year-period between the time he left the palace and the time he attained full enlightenment into three parts.

I. The period between the time he left home and the time he met his two teachers.

II. The period between the time he started self-mortification and the ending of it.

He divided his thoughts into two types: unwholesome thoughts and wholesome thoughts.



III. The period he began to take food again to gain sufficient strength and attained enlightenment.

After giving up self-mortification, he certainly had been meditating. The *Dvedhā Vitakka Sutta* and the *Mahā Sacca Sutta* give good accounts of what he practiced during this period. He cultivated thoughts of renunciation to overcome craving.

He divided his thoughts into two types: unwholesome thoughts and wholesome thoughts. The unwholesome thoughts were thoughts of greed, thoughts of hatred and thoughts of cruelty. Those thoughts that were wholesome thoughts were ones of renunciation, of loving friendliness and of compassion.

When a thought of sensual desire arose in him he thought: 'This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to

affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbāna.' When he thought this way, any thoughts of sensual desire subsided in him. This is the way that he learned to abandon them, remove them, and do away with them. When thoughts of ill will or cruelty arose in him he used the same technique to overcome them.

Knowing that sense desire was absent from his mind, he remained diligent, ardent, and resolute. He remained mindful and whenever any unwholesome thought attempted to sneak into his mind he used his mindfulness to push it away.

As he stayed with mindfulness, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of renunciation arose in him. Then he understood that the thought of renunciation had arisen in him. He knew that the thought of renunciation would not lead to his own affliction, or to others' affliction, or to the affliction of both.

“Bhikkhus, he who is an inquirer, not knowing how to gauge another’s mind, should make an investigation of the Tathagata, in order to find out whether or not he is fully enlightened”
 - Middle Length sayings of the Buddha, Samyutta No.47

He saw that it aids wisdom, does not cause difficulties, and leads to Nibbāna. He developed it and later said: “Tireless energy was aroused in me and unremitting mindfulness was established, my body was tranquil and untroubled, my mind concentrated and unified.” He practiced both serenity and insight and later on revealed: “When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, I directed it to knowledge of the recollection of past lives. I recollected my manifold past lives ... I directed it to knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings... I directed it to knowledge of the destruction of the taints. I directly knew as it actually is: ‘This is suffering’; ‘This is the origin of suffering’; ‘This is the cessation of suffering’; ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering’. In the way he realized: ‘These are the taints’; ‘This is the

origin of the taints’; ‘This is the cessation of the taints’; ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of the taints.’ When I knew and saw thus, my mind was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it was liberated there came the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ I directly knew: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’”

Before attaining enlightenment, he had practiced the four foundations of mindfulness; the four roads to power (*Iddhipāda*); the four right efforts (*Cattāro sammāpadhānā*); the five spiritual faculties (*Pañcindriya*); the five kinds of spiritual strength (*Pañcabala*); the seven factors of enlightenment (*Sattabojjhaṅga*) ;and the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariyo Atthaṅgiko maggo*). Thus, he perfected all 37 factors of enlightenment before he sat under the Bodhi tree and consolidated them through mindfulness and concentration and finally attained full enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in the Full moon night of Vesak. All this could not have happened in one night. 🌸

How to Become Happy

By Bhikkhu T. Seelananda

Everyone wants to be happy. Not only human beings, but all other beings wish to be happy. What this means, then, is that happiness is always conditioned by unhappiness. Where there is happiness there is unhappiness, too.

If one can understand oneself properly and correctly, one can be happy all the time. There are three ways to be happy.

1. Sharing and caring.
2. Refraining and restraining.
3. Meditating.

Some people think that when they hoard many things they will be happy. But they do not know that whenever they hoard things there arises the notion of 'I' 'my' or 'mine'. As a result, you start to cling to things, to attach to things, and become a greedy or stingy person. The way to be happy is not in hoarding things but in sharing and giving things to others. Giving, sharing or offering is not that easy. It is said that giving is like a battle. You have to fight with your defilements, as we are

so often dominated by greed, hatred and delusion. Giving is something we may practice when we refrain from taking that which is not given to us. This has been recommended by the wise ones from ancient times. This is appreciated by almost all religious masters using different terms, such as charity and generosity. "Charity begins at home" goes the saying. But how many of us give and become happy?

The Buddha explained how we are to give, what is to be given and to whom to give so that one may be happy. His famous utterance on giving is: "Give to whomever you please, but offerings made to the virtuous brings you an abundance of fruits."

Caring and supporting one's parents is a great blessing. Why should we take care of our mother and father? Mainly, because they raised us up and taught us many things as we grew, being our real friends and pre-teachers.

"If the people are practicing diligently, persistently with mindfulness and clear comprehension, the world is not devoid of Arhants."

-Buddha-

*"Happiness, contentment, is the greatest wealth"
(Santutthi paramam dhanam)*

If we can take care of our parents, it is undoubtedly a meritorious and wholesome deed. Then, we may be more and more happy and gain more and more merits. "The doer of merit rejoices here and in the hereafter," said the Buddha.

Refraining from things is easier. But it is not enough. One should restrain oneself. Once, a carpenter went to the Buddha and said, that according to another teacher of the day, if one refrains from evil bodily actions, refrains from uttering evil speech, has no evil intention and refrains from unrighteous ways, he will be accomplished in what is wholesome, become perfected in what is wholesome or become an ascetic, invincible and achieving the supreme attainment. Then, quite sarcastically, the Buddha said, "Carpenter, I describe him not as accomplished in what is wholesome or perfected in what is wholesome or an ascetic, invincible attained to the supreme attainment, but as one who stands in the same category as the young tender infant lying prone."

This is because simply refraining is not enough. Restraining is necessary. The Buddha emphasized the significance of restraining. "Good is restraint over the eye; good is restraint over the ear; good is restraint over the nose; good is restraint over the tongue. Good is restraint in the body; good is restraint in speech; good is restraint in thought. Restraint everywhere is good. The practitioner who is restrained in every way is freed from all suffering."

The best medication is meditation, the Dhamma. "Of all the medicines in the world, manifold and various, there is none like the medicine of Dhamma; therefore, O monks, drink of this. Having drunk of this Dhamma medicine, you will be ageless and beyond death; having developed and seen the truth, you will be quenched, free from craving." This is why we have to understand the Dhamma and the technique of meditation to take it as our daily medicine. The cause of most of our ills lies with the mind. Let us all cultivate and develop mind and become happy.

"If anyone carrying around this body were to claim to be healthy even for a moment, what is that due to other than foolishness? Therefore, householder, you should train yourself thus: 'Even though I am afflicted in body, my mind will be unafflicted.'
(Buddha)

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consider
one
of the
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throughout
the year.



2600 Vesak Anniversary@Bhvana



Vesak Day, (May 15, 2011) was celebrated @ Bhavana for the commemoration of the Buddha's 2600 anniversary of enlightenment. The Pictures: Some of the devotees participated in this and how monks are being offered alms for lunch.

By 15th morning of this month, everything was ready for the commemoration of Vesak at Bhavana society under the guidance of the Abbot Bhante G.

Some people have arrived in early morning to offer dana (breakfast) for the monks while many others prepared meal for lunch. The first portion was offered in the name of the Buddha. And then



Next Mindfulness Retreat

June 10 to 12, 2011
(2 Nights)

Teacher: Bhante Dhammajiva

(This retreat is currently full)

the meal was offered to the monks and all participants.

Before lunch the vice Abbot, Bhante Seelananda, gave a brief talk and after lunch the Abbot Bhante G addressing the gathering emphasized the need of practicing mindfulness daily so as to make one's own island which is not over whelmed by the flood of defilements.

There were about 200 participants for this special event @ Bhavana. It was a successful event of this year, 2011. May all beings be free from suffering!



How Residents @ Bhavana practice together on Full moon and New Moon days until 2:00am.