

Taste of the Dhamma

Quarterly Newsletter of the Bhavana Society
First Theravada Forest Monastery in the USA

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Spring

April 22, 2014



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of the Buddha

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Spring has sprung

Another Spring has sprung with many different colors of buds and sprouts, the singing of birds, together with a nice cool breeze. We can all enjoy this Spring with happy minds. How many Springs have we passed? Springs come and go. Summers come and go. Falls come and go. Winters come and go. What happens to us? Are we also not like these four seasons? How many millions of humans came to this world? Where are they now? They all came and they all went as they came. Did they take with them what they greedily attached to here, anything? No, nothing; nobody can take anything. Only what we've done, good or bad. That's it.

The Very Word of the Buddha

Quotations from the Discourses of the Buddha

Just

“ He who does not judge others arbitrarily, but passes judgment impartially according to truth, that sagacious man is a guardian of law and is called just.”

(Dhammapada- 257)

True Victory

“The fool thinks victory is won
When, by speech, he bellows harshly;
But for one who understands,
Patient endurance is the true victory.”

(S.N. 1.3.3 sutta)

Dhamma of the Buddha

“Monks, this Dhamma taught by me is unrefuted, undefiled, irreproachable and uncensured by wise ascetics and brahmins. And what is the Dhamma taught by me that is unrefuted, undefiled, irreproachable, and uncensured by wise ascetics and brahmins?

1. These are the six elements,
2. the six bases for contact,
3. the eighteen mental examinations and
4. the four noble truths.”

Goal of the Holy life

“This holy life, bhikkhus, does not have gain, honor, and renown for its benefit, or the attainment of virtue for its benefit, or the attainment of concentration for its benefit, or knowledge and vision for its benefit.
But it is this unshakeable deliverance of mind that is the goal of this holy life, its heartwood, and its end.”

M.N. 29 Mahasaropama Sutta)

If you have any question on the Dhamma (Buddhism) or meditation, write to: mybuddhistqforyou@gmail.com. We are more than happy to give you an answer based on Dhamma.

Battle Field

Victory gives birth to hate;
The defeated sleep in anguish.
Giving up both victory and defeat,
Those who have attained peace sleep happily.¹

(Dhp. 201, Translated by Gil Fronsdal)

Any battle we fight with people for countless reasons—politics, economics, ideologies, religions, injustice, social issues, and so on—ends up with the same result. While enjoying the triumph the victor causes hatred in the defeated mind and makes him sleep in anguish. Thinking of how to protect what he gained the victor also develops anxiety.

In addition to fights with human beings we fight several other battles. Some of them we fight consciously. Some other battles we fight unconsciously. Living the life that we have brought into this world is endowed with all kinds of battles. Since our birth we are constantly fighting to live. Food, insects, animals, climate, economics, politics, territories, ideologies, science and technology, religions, injustice, rivalries, not getting what we want, getting what we don't want, living with people we don't like, separating from people and places that we like, contagious diseases of all kinds, pollution, reckless drivers, drunk drivers, old age, death and many more are involved in the battles that we fight just in order to live.

Whether we are sitting, standing, walking, lying down or whenever we are awake we are fighting these battles. How can we end this fight and have peace? The Buddha shows us the way to fight this apparently unending battle. Here, the Buddha uses battlefield language. Desire enforces our fight. Ignorance supports and reinforces it. We are fighting for maintaining the pleasantness of our eyes, ears, noses, tongues, bodies and minds. We are fighting for achieving their respective sensory objects. We are fighting for satisfying craving that arises from our current experiences, memories of the past, and future projections. Also we fight for rejection of unpleasant senses and their respective objects that constantly arise in our minds, bothering and troubling us. While fighting with them, new fronts are

Dhamma Activities at Bhavana Society

Daily

5:00 - 6:30 am: Meditation, Puja

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.: Meditation

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.: Puja, Meditation

Saturday

9:00 - 10:00 am: Residents &
visiting practitioners clean up
around the monastery.

3 - 4 p.m.: Pali Class

4 - 5 p.m.: Sutta Discussion class

Sunday

9:30 - 10:30am: Meditation

Pre-Full Moon and New Moon Days

A special schedule:

5:00 am - 11:00 pm Meditation,
Dhamma Talks, Dhamma
discussions; Uposatha recitals for
monks

If you need our
schedule to join with us to
practice, e-mail us

<Seela22bhavana@ gmail.com



Mindfulness Retreat at Bhavana, March 2014

opened with tiredness and boredom among them.

In pursuit of getting what we desire we fight and debate within ourselves and ask what have we achieved in the end. Eventually, we admit that we have limited means to fight for unlimited sensory objects and unlimited possibilities. We are limited by time and space. Sensory objects are unlimited in time and space. Our desire is insatiable. We are fighting to satisfy this insatiable desire with these limited senses and unlimited sensory objects. All efforts to make limited means and unlimited desire meet is as futile as trying to make parallel lines meet. We end up in frustration. The fight to satisfy this insatiable desire with limited means is what is called suffering.

After a long fight sometimes we achieve some of what we have wished for. As soon as we achieve our objectives we enjoy having them. In our minds new objects are fresh and fulfill our needs well. Then from the very first moment we start enjoying them those very objects begin to wear out. These objects may be the company of other persons, jobs, automobiles, houses, foods, drinks and so on. At the same time our enthusiasm in enjoying the pleasure of using them also dwindles down by degrees and strength. As usual, we always look for something new. We are never satisfied with what we have. This is a never-ending fight with everything we have in life. We end our lives without fulfilling all that we want.

Often we talk about addictions to alcohol, food, sex, power, gambling, sleep and so on. Also, we are addicted to indiscipline. On the one hand we have an urge to discipline ourselves and on the other hand we cannot control our unwholesome, obsessive compulsive and harmful habits. For instance, periodically we see the danger of unhealthy eating habits and we suffer from this habit. Then the urge to

*"As
an elephant
in the
battlefield
withstands
arrows shot
from bows all
around,
even so shall
I endure
abuse.
There are
many, indeed,
who lack
virtue."
(Dhp.320)*



change this compulsive eating habit arises in us. While suffering from this unhealthy habit we think of changing this habit and say to ourselves, "I will never eat this unhealthy food". When we are hungry and see the very same unhealthy food on a buffet table in a restaurant we forget our urge to change the unwholesome eating habit. Then there are those times we throw an irrational temper tantrum. Recovered from that embarrassing situation, an urge arises in us to control our temper. Next time a similar situation arises where we lose our temper again and we again forget our urge to control ourselves. While regretting our foolishness we think of controlling ourselves. Being unmindful we lose our temper again, and again we regret. This is a fight most of us never win.

The mind is fighting against the inner enemies that attempt to destroy our peace. We have seen some of the enemies that the mind has to fight constantly in order to gain some peace. Mind must fight against greed, anger, and impermanence in order to bring some peace. Mind must fight against all the enemies that make the mind unhappy.

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy,
Or haters, one to another,
Far worse is the harm
From one's own wrongly directed mind. (Dhp. 42)

Neither mother nor father,
Nor any other relative can do
one as much good
As one's own well-directed mind. (Dhp. 43)

- Translated by Gil Fronsdal.

>>To be Cont.

"A man oppresses another to the extent he can do so. When others oppress him, that oppressor becomes the oppressed.

So long as his wickedness has not brought forth the evil fruit, the fool believes his acts are well justified. But when the evil deed bears fruit he falls into grief.

One who destroys another will meet with one who destroys him.

One who defeats another will meet with one who defeats him.

One who abuses another will meet with one who abuses him.

One who insults another will meet with one who insults him.

*And when the cycle of action produces its effect that oppressor becomes the oppressed."
(Samyutta Nikaya 1)*

Introducing a New Discourse of the Buddha

Balanced Living

*“And what is
balanced living?
Here, a clansman
knows his income and
expenditures and leads a
balanced life, neither
too extravagant nor
too frugal, [aware]:
‘In this way my income
will exceed my
expenditures rather than
the reverse.’
Just as an appraiser or
his apprentice, holding
up a scale, knows:
‘By so much it has
dipped down, by so
much it has gone up,’
so a clansman knows his
income and expenditures
and leads a balanced life,
neither too extravagant
nor too frugal, [aware]:
‘In this way my income
will exceed my
expenditures rather
than the reverse.”*

A.N.8.54.4)

Indebtedness

By Bhante Seelananda

When I was very young my teachers taught me a saying. "Neither a lender nor a borrower be." This hit my mind badly. When I read the teachings of the Buddha I found that the Buddha has taught almost the same thing. The Buddha has imposed a rule for monks to refrain from giving higher ordination to indebted persons. Even today this is the practice of the Theravada tradition.

Today, we are going to study a discourse delivered by the Buddha on indebtedness. This is from the Numerical Discourses of the Buddha (Sutta 6.45). While the Buddha was dwelling at Savatthi, Jeta's Grove, this was delivered, addressing the monks. This is the conversation that took place between the Buddha and the monks:

Buddha: Monks, for one who partakes of sensuality is poverty suffering in the world?

Monks: Yes, Bhante.

Buddha: And a poor, destitute, penniless person gets into debt. For him who partakes of sensuality, is getting into debt suffering in the world?

Monks: Yes, Bhante.

Buddha: And a poor, destitute, penniless person, having gotten into debt, owes interest payments. For one who partakes of sensuality, is interest payment suffering in the world?

Monks: Yes, Bhante.

Buddha: And when a poor, destitute, penniless person owing interest payments does not pay interest on time, they serve him notice. For one who partakes of sensuality, is being served notice suffering in the world?

Monks: Yes, Bhante.

Buddha: And when a poor, destitute, penniless person, being served notice, does not pay, they hound him. For one who partakes of sensuality, is being hounded suffering in the world?

Monks: Yes, Bhante.

Buddha: And when a poor, destitute, penniless person, being hounded, does not pay, he is put into bondage. For one who partakes of sensuality, is bondage suffering in the world?

Introducing a New Discourse of the Buddha

Dissipation of Wealth

“The wealth thus amassed has four sources of dissipation: womanizing, drunkenness, gambling, and bad friendship, bad companionship, bad comradeship. Just as if there were a large reservoir with four inlets and four outlets, and a man would close the inlets and open the outlets, and sufficient rain does not fall, one could expect the water in the reservoir to decrease rather than increase; so the wealth thus amassed has these four sources of dissipation.”

Monks: Yes Bhante.

Buddha: Thus, monks, poverty is suffering in the world for one who partakes of sensuality. Getting into debt is suffering. Interest payment is suffering. Being served notice is suffering. Being hounded is suffering. Bondage is suffering in the world for one who partakes of sensuality. In the same way, monks, whoever has no conviction with regard to skillful mental qualities, no sense of moral shame with regard to skillful mental qualities, no sense of moral dread with regard to skillful mental qualities, no persistence with regard to skillful mental qualities, no discernment with regard to skillful mental qualities is, in the Discipline of a Noble One, said to be poor, destitute, and penniless. He — poor, destitute, and penniless, having no conviction, no sense of moral shame, no sense of moral dread, no persistence, no discernment—engages in misconduct by way of the body, misconduct by way of speech, misconduct by way of the mind. For him, I tell you, this is getting into debt.

"For the purpose of concealing his bodily misconduct, he formulates evil desires: He desires, 'May they not know about me.' He resolves, 'May they not know about me.' He speaks, [thinking,] 'May they not know about me.' He makes an effort with his body, [thinking,] 'May they not know about me.' For the purpose of concealing his verbal misconduct... For the purpose of concealing his mental misconduct, he formulates evil desires: He desires, 'May they not know about me.' He resolves, 'May they not know about me.' He speaks, [thinking,] 'May they not know about me.' He makes an effort with his body, [thinking,] 'May they not know about me.' For him, I tell you, this is interest payment. And then his well-behaved companions in the holy life say about him, 'This venerable one acts in this way, behaves in this way.' For him, I tell you, this is being served notice. And then, when he has gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, he is beset with evil, unskillful thoughts accompanied by remorse. For him, I tell you, this is being hounded.

"He — poor, destitute, & penniless, having engaged in misconduct by way of the body, misconduct by way of speech, and misconduct by way of the mind — on the break-up of the body, after death, is bound by the bond of hell or the bond of the animal womb. And I can imagine no one other bond so tormenting, so painful, so obstructive to the unexcelled rest from bondage, as the bond of hell or the bond of the animal womb.”

Great indebtedness does not make men grateful, but vengeful; and if a little charity is not forgotten, it turns into a gnawing worm.

Friedrich Nietzsche



Bhavana Vesak Celebration will be on May 18,2014

Bhavana Society Forest Monastery & Retreat Center

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*See our schedule and join
one of the meditation
retreats offered
throughout
the year.*



News at Bhavana

This Winter hit Bhavana badly with about 3-4 feet of snow overall. Monks and residents worked together shoveling snow and keeping the fires burning, while engaged in their annual seclusion.

The first meditation retreat of the year, "Mindfulness," was successfully concluded by offering the eight lifetime precepts for eight people. Bhante Seelananda led this retreat under the guidance of Bhante G, from March 10 -16.

Two-day Special Retreat for Students

In April, a special meditation retreat was offered to students in the Contemplative Practices class of the University of Mary Washington.

New Address for Bhavana Society

Hampshire County has issued a new address for Bhavana Society.

Please use it whenever you write us :

**97 Meditation Trail,
High View, WV 26808
(USA)**

On April 4th, the old Jivaka building was demolished, to lay the ground for construction of a new men's dormitory. Anybody who wishes to help Bhavana with this project please contact the Bhavana office or the coordinator Upul: phone: 814-244-6394 email: upulobey@comcast.net).

May you all be well happy and peaceful!