

Taste of the Dhamma

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

Volume 3

No. 6

Summer

July 22, 2014



The Very Word
of the Buddha

2



In the Summer of Life

During summer we all work hard, mainly out of doors. It is the hot season. Everybody should work hard to earn something for the seasons to come. The ages between 40 to 60 may be considered the Summer of life. Especially in the Summer of life, let's work hard and do more and more good things, not only for the seasons to come but for the benefit and happiness of this life and the next. We all need two kinds of wealth: material and spiritual. Whatever material things we accumulate, one day we'll leave behind. Then we can't take with us even a penny. Because they are not mine. What is really mine is karma and its results. Karma is my heir, relative and refuge.

Battle Field
(Part II)

3-5

120 year-old
man Kisses
the Buddha's
Feet

6-7

Bhavana
News
8

The Very Word of the Buddha

Quotations from the Discourses of the Buddha

Do not dig up your own root

"One digs up one's own root
Here in this very world
if one kills, lies, steals,
goes to another's spouse, or
gives oneself up to drink and
intoxicants."

(Dhammapada 246-247)

Sorrow Springs

**"One who has sons sorrows
over sons,
One with cattle sorrows over
cattle.
Acquisitions truly are a
man's sorrow;
Without acquisitions one does
not sorrow."**

(S.N. 1.4. 8.8)

Pollution

"Bhikkhu, bhikkhu! Do not
pollute yourself. It is inevitable,
bhikkhu, that flies will pursue
and attack one who has polluted
himself and been tainted by a
stench."

("Longing, bhikkhu, is what is meant by
'pollution.' Ill will is the 'stench.' Bad
unwholesome thoughts are the 'flies.' It
is inevitable that flies will pursue and
attack one who has polluted himself and
been tainted by a stench.")

(A.N 3.128)

Buddha

*"Who knows about his former lives,
Sees heaven and states of deprivation,
And has arrived at birth's destruction,
A sage who knows by direct knowledge
Who knows his mind is purified,
Entirely freed from every lust,
Who has abandoned birth and death,
Who is complete in the holy life
Who has transcended everything
One such as this is called a Buddha"*

(MN. 91 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 (part II)

With deep dedications, diligence, mindfulness and wisdom can we fight this battle and live in peace. So, the Buddha says:

"Arouse your energy, strive on!

Exert yourself in the Buddha's Teaching.

Sweep away the army of Death

As an elephant does a hut of reeds."

(Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi.)

Our battleground is in our minds. Our enemies are within us. Look what happens to your mind when you want to give something to somebody whom you don't like very much. Look what happens to you when you try to do anything good like practicing certain moral principles. How much you have to fight with your enemies within you, in your head, in your mind. When you are in a good mood your mind encourages you to do good and be good all the time. "Go ahead do it; it is good for you." But when your mind changes your subconscious mind tells you, "Don't do anything called good. There is nothing good or evil. Thinking makes it so. Don't waste your time, money, and energy. Spend your valuable time in front of the tube. There are more attractive programs there. You should enjoy your life. You have one life. You are not going to have a second chance. You are young. Your senses are fresh. This is the time for you to enjoy. You should enjoy when you can. You don't become younger every day. Enjoy now! Don't wait till tomorrow. Don't die without enjoying. You may die tomorrow." These thoughts are your enemies,

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

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



Monastics who got together at Bhavana Seema for Uposatha before their three months Rains Retreat this year

not your friends. They encourage you to do harmful things. They lead you to your downfall. When you see the glimpse of danger from these thoughts, an urge arises in you to fight against them. This is a big fight.

Even the Buddha Had to Fight a Decisive Battle:

When Siddhartha Gotama Bodhisatta was leaving home he had to fight against these enemies. He did not start his fight after he had left home. He had to fight even before he left home. Leaving home was very difficult for him because of his parents, wife, newly born son, his future throne, his country and wealth – these got in his way. Even though parents, wife, newly born son, his future throne, his country and wealth were sources of pleasure in an ordinary sense, all of them were impediments or obstacles for him who had the urge to liberate from suffering. Attempting to induce temptation in his mind, Mara said; “You should not be foolish. You have all these possessions and wealth. Use them; stay home and do many meritorious deeds while enjoying life.” Siddhartha Gotama snubbed Māra saying, “I don’t need an iota of merit. Go and ask those who need merits!”

Causes for Downfall

=====

"The person who is possessed of much wealth, who has gold, and who has an abundance of food, but enjoys his delicacies all by himself — this is the cause of his downfall.

"The person who is addicted to women (given to a life of debauchery), is a drunkard, a gambler, and a squanderer of his earnings — this is the cause of his downfall.

"Whoever being affluent, does not support his mother and father who are old, and past their prime — this is the cause of his downfall."

(Sn.Parabhava Sutta)



10 day Jhana
Retreat was led by
Bhante G from July
11-20

Jivaka construction is not yet finished. Therefore, still we cannot provide accommodation for the practitioners as we did earlier. Need more funds and more help to finish it



Māra did not leave him alone. He followed him wherever he went. When Siddhartha Gotama Bodhisatta sat down on the grass seat under the Bodhi Tree, Māra sent his battalions. The Buddha named them as sensual pleasures, discontent, hunger and thirst, craving, sloth and torpor, fear, doubt, hypocrisy and obstinacy, gain, renown, honor, and whatever fame is falsely received, extolling himself and disparaging others. These are the formidable enemies that the Siddhartha Gotama fought with in the night he attained full enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. This was his decisive final battle.

Conquering external enemies is relatively easier than conquering internal enemies. That is why the Buddha said: "A person that conquers oneself is better than one that conquers a thousand times a thousand people in a battle field."

Our senses are always exposed to external sensory objects and sensory stimuli are so powerful that we forget ourselves and get carried away with external temptations. Fighting against temptations is the most challenging fight.

To be continued....

Mara and the Buddha

Mara:

"You are bound by Mara's snare Both celestial and human; You are bound by Mara's bondage: You won't escape me, ascetic!"

Buddha:

"I am freed from Mara's snare Both celestial and human; I am freed from Mara's bondage:

**You're defeated, End-maker!
[Mara]"**

(S.N.1.4.4)

Introducing a New Discourse of the Buddha

Who is a Brahmin

=====

*"Whoever does no ill
Through body, speech,
and mind,
And is restrained in
these three areas, I call a
brahmin.*

*"As a brahmin worships
a ritual fire,
One should respectfully
worship
Anyone from whom one
might learn
The Dharma of the Fully
Self-Awakened One.*

*"Not by matted hair,
not by clan,
Not by birth does one
become a brahmin.
The one in whom there is
truth and Dharma
Is the one who is pure, is
a brahmin."*

(Dh.391-393)

120 Years old man kisses the Buddha's Feet

By Bhante Seelananda

Brahmayu was a Brahmin in the time of the Buddha. He was old, aged, burdened with years, advanced in life, and had come to the last stage. He was in his one hundred and twentieth year. He was a Master of the Three Vedas with their vocabularies, liturgy, phonology, and etymology, and the histories, skilled in philology and grammar. He was fully versed in natural philosophy and in the marks of a Great Man. One day, Brahmayu heard of the Buddha's good reputation as: "The Buddha is indeed accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of the worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed... He teaches the Dhamma that is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and he reveals a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure."

At that time, there was one of his students named Uttara who was also a master of the Three Vedas and the same qualities of his teacher. So, Brahmayu asked his student Uttara to go and find out whether the reputation about this teacher was true or not and whether the Buddha had the 32 marks in his body. Then, travelling by stages he went to see the Buddha and after exchanging greetings sat at his side, looking for the 32 marks of the Buddha. He finally saw all the 32 marks and being so glad to meet such a personality decided to observe further the Buddha's behavior. From then he followed the Buddha for seven months like a shadow to find a mistake, a defect of the Buddha. He observed all the Buddha's actions. Basically, he observed when the Buddha was walking, standing, entering indoors, sitting indoors, receiving water for his bowl, receiving foods and drinks, eating, drinking, washing his bowl, sitting in silence after eating, giving blessings after eating, going to the monastery in silence, in the monastery teaching the Dhamma to an audience. But eventually he found naught of mistake or unmindful action. At last being disappointed he came to his teacher Brahmayu and reported what he witnessed [Buddha's virtues] throughout the seven months by following the Buddha as a shadow.

Brahmayu, the Brahmin, having heard of such great virtues of Our Buddha rose from his seat, and after arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, extended his hands in reverence towards the Buddha and uttered "*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa*" three times, which means, 'Homage to the Blessed One, the worthy One, the fully Enlightened One'.

Introducing a New Discourse of the Buddha

Real Refuge!

=====

*"People threatened by
fear go to many refuges:
To mountains, forests,
parks, trees, and shrines.
None of these is a secure
refuge; none is
a supreme refuge.
Not by going to such a
refuge
Is one released from all
suffering.*

*But when someone going
for refuge
To the Buddha,
Dhamma, and Sangha
Sees, with right insight,
The Four Noble Truths:
Suffering, the arising of
suffering, the overcoming
of suffering, and the
Eightfold Path Leading
to the ending of suffering,
then this is the secure
refuge:
This is the supreme
refuge.
By going to such a refuge
One is released from all
suffering."
(Dhammapada
188-192)*

He further said, "Perhaps sometime or other we might meet Master Gotama. Perhaps we might have some conversation with him."

After this, one day this 120-year-old brahmin Brahmayu heard that Our Buddha had visited Brahmayu's own village. Then he went to see the Buddha and addressed him in verses and saw the 32 marks of a great man in the Buddha. He became elated. The Buddha also replied to him in verses. The Buddha said:

"What must be known is directly known,
What must be developed has been developed,
What must be abandoned has been abandoned,
Therefore, brahmin, I am a Buddha.
For welfare in this very life
And happiness in lives to come,
Since leave is given you, please ask
Whatever you aspire to know."

Then, he asked about how does one become a brahmin? How does one attain to knowledge? How has one the triple knowledge? How does one become a holy scholar? How does one become an arahant? How does one attain completeness? How is one a silent sage? And how can one be called a Buddha? Thereafter, Our Buddha answered all these questions and finally, being elated with the right answers given by the Buddha, Brahmayu rose from his seat and after arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, prostrated himself with his head at the Buddha's feet and he covered the Buddha's feet with kisses and caressed them with his hands, pronouncing his name: " I am the brahmin Brahmayu, Master Gotama, I am the brahmin Brahmayu, Master Gotama."

All those who were in the assembly wondered and marveled and they all said, "It is wonderful, sirs, it is marvelous, what a great power and great might the recluse Gotama has, for the well-known and famous brahmin Brahmayu to make such a display of humility." Then the Buddha said to the brahmin. " Enough, brahmin, arise; sit down in your own seat since your mind has confidence in me." The Buddha gave him progressive instruction and finally he gained spotless immaculate vision of the Dhamma. He saw the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, fathomed the Dhamma and became a stream enterer. Eventually, he invited the Buddha and his disciples for the following day's meal in his house and offered alms not only for one day but also for seven days consecutively. That was how he gained confirmed confidence in the Triple Gem.

(From Sutta No.91, -Brahmayu - Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha)

Bhavana Rains Retreat will end Oct. 8 and Kathina will be on Oct. 12

Bhavana Society

Forest Monastery &
Retreat Center

97 Meditation Trail
High View WV 26808

Phone: 304-856-3241

Fax: 304-856-2111

info@bhavanasociety.org

www.bhavanasociety.org

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



News at Bhavana

"Awareness of Death Retreat" was full this time with youngsters and successfully concluded from May 26 - June 1. Bhante Seelananda led this retreat with the support of all Bhavana community.

A 10 day Jhana Retreat was conducted by Bhante G from July 11 to 20. For this retreat there were more than 70 people for registration. Unfortunately because of the reconstruction of the dormitory 'Jivaka' we could provide accommodation only for 35 persons. This was a very successful retreat.

Annual Three Months Rains Retreat Started on July 12

The annual rains Retreat (vassana) started on July 12 with the recitation of Monastic Code (Patimokkha) and the monastics' purification. We have six monks this year to observe the three months rains retreat, which paves the way for our annual Kathina Ceremony.

The invitation for the retreat was extended by a group of 7 families from MD. They are: Anuruddha, Bandula, Indika, Rohan, Tissa, Kumara and Sunil.

Progress of Jivaka Project

Jivaka was the old dormitory for male meditation practitioners who visit Bhavana Society. Now, it is being rebuilt. We express gratitude and appreciation for all the helping hands and contributions to this effort.