Dharma Greetings,

For Buddhist monks of the Theravada tradition the day after the full moon of July marks the beginning of the three months Rains Retreat (Vassa) during which time they stop travelling and resolve to stay in the one place. Traditionally it is also a time when both Buddhist laypeople and monks make a special effort to develop the spiritual path.

It has often been said that the path is one of beginning to know oneself, training oneself and finally liberating the mind from all delusion. Most of us today are quite well educated and very knowledgeable about many different things but we are usually quite unaware of ourselves - who we are. Through one's volitional actions (kamma) we shape our lives and, as everything in the universe is interrelated and interdependent, we also effect everything else around us. The Buddha said that driven by desire we create the "world", but are we aware of what we are doing, why we do it and, most importantly, who it is that is doing it? So many people go through life at such a frantic pace trying to achieve something or get somewhere that they rarely stop to look at themselves and reflect on what kind of world they are creating.

Hence the first step of the path is to learn to stop or at least slow down and begin to look at oneself. Reflecting on ourselves we begin to notice what we are doing and see all of the various personality traits, habits and tendencies which we call "self". Instead of finding one "self" we find many "selves" corresponding to the various characteristics of our personality ranging from the very high and noble to the gross and ugly. However to be able to do this one needs to develop the ability to stop and look at one's mind; to turn the attention inwards and with complete honesty observe what is there. This may sound easy to do but most people can not do it through lack of awareness and the fear of seeing some of the nasty, ugly things within oneself. People tend to think and talk a lot about themselves, explain, analyse, diagnose, justify and so on but this is only scratching the surface of their being and usually the "dust" stirred up by their thinking tends to obscure things all the more.

What is needed is to look at oneself with a clear, calm and quiet mind. One teacher has expressed it very well - "There is one quality of mind which is the basis and foundation of spiritual discovery, and that quality of mind is called 'bare
2.

attention'. Bare attention means observing things as they are, without choosing, without comparing, without evaluating ... Naturally unless one is well-established in the right understanding that all aspects of this so called 'self' are impermanent and impersonal, then it is difficult to really look in this way because of the tendency to consider what one sees as being very real and very personal. So to make a special effort to develop the spiritual path means to develop these two qualities of awareness and right understanding. Awareness provides one with the ability to reflect, to see and to learn while right understanding enables one to have a correct perspective on what is seen.

A simple life style based on morality and generosity is helpful in developing awareness. This is why one is encouraged to give up some of the unnecessary comforts and sources of distractions and instead devote the extra time and energy to meditation and doing what is skillful.

The quality of wisdom or right understanding is nurtured in many ways but receiving guidance and regular teaching from those who are actually devoting their lives to applying and living the Dhamma is most valuable. The Buddha has taught that associating with the wise and finding the occasion to listen to the Dhamma teaching is one of the highest blessings. In view of this it seems appropriate to include the following talk given by Ven. Ajahn Sumedho as it gives us an insight into the right attitude and approach to the practise of introspection.

May you be well and progress towards peace.

Jagaro Bhikkhu.

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"AN APPROACH TO PRACTISE"

Our meditation is taking the time to stand back and observe. It is not to annihilate habits because we don't want them, but taking time to observe them so that we know what they are...and if they are good habits we may as well keep them...if they are bad habits we may as well let them go. If you don't know what they are, if you think they are you, then to think of annihilating your bad habits sounds like you're going to annihilate yourself. Some people get very frightened when they think of
letting go of their bad habits, even though they suffer from them. It's like some man carrying a huge, heavy burden and he says - "Venerable Sumedho, I'm really exhausted, really shattered". And I say - "Well look! You're carrying this burden all the time". But he's been carrying it for so long that he can't remember when he didn't have it. So that when I say - "Why don't you let go of that burden?" he says "If I let go of this burden I might just disappear. I might not exist at all!" The burden is something one has become used to and even though it's heavy and miserable it's still what you know. It gives you a sense of security to have a burden to hold onto. And it's a risk because not remembering what it's like to be without a burden, there's a tremendous fear of letting go of it. You might just disappear, nothing left. So finally, when you start reflecting on the burden, on the tension it causes you, on all the mental conditions that go on in regard to it, you begin to have a little more confidence in letting go of it ... and one day you actually let go of it. Then you know what it's like to be without a burden.

But we're quite fond of some of our burdens. If we could just let go of the bad side of it, the "old age, sickness and death" side of it and keep the "youth, beauty and refinement" side of it, then we could make sure that we could get rid of that which we don't like and keep that which we like. But as you reflect more deeply you begin to see that what you like and what you dislike depend on each other. You can't like something all the time, liking is very relative. Just like eating ice-cream. You know, when you haven't had any ice-cream for a long time, you think, "Oh, I could eat buckets of it!" Now if someone says - "Well, here's buckets of it" - after eaten one bucket you can hardly face another. You get sick of it. Too much pleasure makes us sick. If we have too much of that then we have to take a lot of time to sleep. Too much romance, adventure and excitement just wears you out. You get so caught in it, so pulled along by it, you have no way to resist or let go of it. So meditation is taking the time to watch and let go of things, to relax.

The mind is like a mirror, it will reflect anything that passes by. A beautiful mirror will reflect that which is beautiful and that which is ugly, clean or dirty. It doesn't select, does it? But whatever is reflected doesn't damage the mirror, the mirror remains alright no matter what it's reflecting. The same with the mind. Our minds are alright no matter what is reflected in
them, but where we get confused is when we identify with the reflections and make judgements thinking "I must be a terrible person to have such a reflection. Certainly such a thing would never be in a good person's mind". But if we know that it's only a reflection then we don't have to break the mirror, do we? We can wait till it goes, or get rid of it or whatever. Reflections are impermanent conditions, they come, go and change, they are not the mind itself. In meditation we make that clear by constantly remembering our thoughts and feelings, views and opinions to be like reflections. Sometimes they're very good and it's right to act on them. Sometimes they're not good at all so we refrain from acting. So if an inner voice says "Go and help that poor person who doesn't have anything to eat" we go and make a nice meal and give it to them. But if the voice says "Go and kill that old lady" we refrain from that. We can do good with our physical actions and speech and refrain from evil, but all of us are going to be faced with both good and evil reflections going through our mind.

Ideally most of us, I assume, would like to be very good, but then sometimes we find the opposites of those things arising in situations, wanting to be cruel and mean and then we start feeling very guilty. But through meditation we reflect on this and when we feel mean, petty, selfish and jealous we understand that these are just conditions, they're like reflections. Don't worry about them, just recognise them as reflections in the mirror and not as personal failings. Just be one who knows, one who recognises these conditions. Don't make anything difficult out of them.

Our intention, on the conventional level of living as a human being in society, whatever our position may be, is to do good and refrain from doing evil. This is our vehicle, our guideline. Sometimes we may not want to do good and sometimes we may want to do evil, but this is our guideline, what we reflect on. Now I don't know about you, but if I deliberately told a lie today, then when I come here and sit I feel a sense of guilt arising in my mind. In meditation you can't get away with anything. If I tell lies I find when I meditate that the results are guilt, remorse. So when I see that I think - "I'm not going to tell lies anymore, it's too painful". I'm not refraining from lying because I'm afraid that in the next life I'll go to hell, but I refrain from lying because I see the suffering in it directly. This is wisdom, insight knowledge.

Observe what the result of your life is. What brings joy into
our lives? A lot of people really live joyless existences, they're drudges to the most sterile emotions. Wealthy people sometimes totally lack joy. So what brings joy to our lives? What makes us happy? From my own experience, what bring joy into my mind is giving. If I'm just living my life for my own benefit I become joyless. I found this out through meditation. The first few years of my monastic life were very selfish years. I was just out to get enlightened for me, I was really only concerned about myself. In Thailand people are very generous to monks, they did everything for me. There were nice monasteries to live in, food everyday and robes were provided and I kept taking and taking and practising to get enlightened, not wanting to be bothered giving anything back - even feeling annoyed if they asked me to do anything.

I remember one time I was practising very diligently off alone in the forest. I had a lot of concentration at the time, the mind was really calm. And I was sitting out on the verandah of my little hut feeling this tremendous love. I held my arms out and let all the mosquitoes bite my arms. A great sense of joy came over me while giving to those mosquitoes. And then I saw some people coming to talk to me so I thought "Ugghh!" and hid in the forest behind my hut so I wouldn't have to talk to them. I was afraid they'd destroy all the happiness and love I felt.

The more I wanted in life and just took from everything and everybody, and meditated solely for my own benefit, the more I began to feel a tremendous sterility. I became very dull and there was a total lack of joy in my practice. I thought - Is this Nirvana? Kind of a dull, grey state. The Zen books always said it isn't very much, certainly not worth it - and then it became clear how much suffering I was making by wanting to preserve my private life, my meditation, without ever having to give anything to anybody else. After that I started trying to help others and I began to experience a lot of joy.

Joy is a way of giving out to others without asking anything in return. It's its own reward, because being able to give freely and lovingly is joyous, it gladdens the mind.

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We feel honoured indeed to welcome Venerable Brahmavamso to our Vihara in Perth from Thailand. Ven. Brahmavamso arrived just before Vesākha and since his arrival has been a tremendous help and inspiration to us all. May his stay in Australia be a long and happy one.

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Once a group of people came to ask Ven. Ajahn Chah about the next life, they wanted to know whether when a person dies one is reborn or not. This question is one which is commonly asked in philosophical circles and following are the questions and his replies.

Q: "Ven. Ajahn Chah, is there really a next life"?
A.C.: "If I tell you will you believe me"?
Q: "Yes, I'll believe you".
A.C.: "Well, if you believe me then you are stupid!"
Q: "When a person dies is that person reborn?"
A.C.: "Will you believe me? If you believe me is that being clever or stupid? Many people come and ask me about this. I ask them the same as I asked you - 'If I tell you will you believe me?' If you believe me that is foolish. Why is that? Because there is no substantial proof that one can bring forward to show, your belief is based on what other people say, whatever they say you believe it. You don't know through your own wisdom, you just stay stupid. Now, if I tell you that when a person dies they are reborn, or that there is a future life, you'll probably ask me - 'If there is, can you take me for a look?' That's how it would be, there is no settlement of the matter, it just causes a lot of arguments and contention.

Now, if you ask me if there is another life, I'll ask you - 'Is there a tomorrow?' If there is can you take me to look at it? Even though there is a tomorrow you can't take me there. If there is a today there must be a tomorrow but it's not a thing one can hold and look at. Actually the Buddha did not want us to look that far. There is no need to doubt about the next life or whether a person who dies is reborn or not. That is not our business. Our business is to know about ourselves in the present, we should know whether we have suffering, if there is suffering, why? This is what we have to know, this is our real
business. The Buddha taught us to take the present as the cause for everything, the present is the cause for the future, that is, when today passes, tomorrow becomes today. So we say that the future, tomorrow, comes to be because of today. Now the past comes from the present, too. When today has passed we call it yesterday. Today is the cause that connects the past and the future. That is why the Buddha had us contemplate all the causes of the present time, that is enough. If we make good actions in the present the future will be good too. The past, which is today after it's passed, is good too. And the most important thing is that we get rid of suffering in the present, the future will take care of itself.

In the time of the Buddha a brahmin conceived this doubt about where a person who has died goes to. Is he reborn or not? He went to see the Buddha and asked - 'When a person dies is that person reborn? If you can answer I will ordain as a monk under you, but if you can't answer or refuse to answer I will not ordain'. The Buddha answered - 'What business is it of mine if you ordain or not? Whether you ordain or not is your business, not mine. Brahmin, to whatever extent you still have the notion that there is a person who is born or dies, or that there is a person who dies and is reborn or not reborn, as long as you think like that you have to endure pain and suffering for many aeons. The right thing, brahmin, is to pull out your own arrow'.

The Buddha said that in truth there is no person who is born or dies. The brahmin could not understand. Not until you study and understand Annicā (the unstable, non-permanent, transient, nature of all things in Saṁsāra) - Anattā (the false view that there is a permanent presiding (Self) entity in the five Khandhas in oneself and others) - and Dukkha (the unsatisfactory, unfulfilling nature of everything in Saṁsāra) and penetrate it will you be able to understand the Buddha's words.

The Buddha taught like this. He did not teach to believe whether a person who dies is reborn or whether there is a future life or not. That's not the way. It's not a matter of believing or not believing. So when you asked me whether there is a future life, I asked whether you would believe me. If you believe - is that foolish of clever? Do you understand? Take that for your homework and think about it."

... translated from the original Thai by Ven. Puriso Bhikkhu.
ACTIVITIES FOR JULY AND AUGUST 1983

EVERY EVENING DURING JULY AND AUGUST (EXCEPT FRIDAYS)

7.30-8.30 pm Sitting meditation with time for any questions and answers after 8.30 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT DURING JULY AND AUGUST

7.30-8.30 pm Sitting meditation
Followed at 8.30 pm with a special talk on Buddhist by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro.

J U L Y

The Eight Precept Observance Days for July are as follows: 2nd, 9th, 17th and 24th (Full Moon Day - Asalha Puja).

SUNDAY 3rd JULY

3.00 pm Dhamma School for children.

SUNDAY 24th JULY - ASALHA PUJA DAY

Asalha Day celebrates the day on which the Lord Buddha preached His first sermon known as "The Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana-sutta" (or Setting Rolling The Wheel Of Truth). This Sutta summarises the whole Teaching of the Buddha and explains in detail the Four Noble Truths. It was preached to the five ascetics who had previously been his attendants. We are told that through hearing this discourse one of the five, Kondanna by name, had a direct insight into the Dhamma and thus became the first of the Noble Disciples.

The programme for this special day appears on page 10.

MONDAY 25th JULY - THE BEGINNING OF VASSA OR THE RAINS RETREAT.

SATURDAY 30th JULY

7.30 pm An Old-Fashioned Barn Dance organised by the social committee of the Society to raise funds for the Vihara. The venue is Royal Commonwealth Society Hall, 183 Roberts Rd, Subiaco. This is a social event with lots of fun and can be enjoyed by all the family. A delicious supper will be served and soft drinks will be on sale. If you would like to attend please see members of the committee for tickets.
The Eight Precept Observance Days for August are as follows: 1st, 8th, 16th, 23rd (Full Moon) and 31st.

**SUNDAY 7th AUGUST**

3.00 pm Dhamma School for children.

**FRIDAY 12th, SATURDAY 13th and SUNDAY 14th AUGUST**

A weekend meditation retreat to be held again at the Mt Helena Theosophical Centre, Bunning Road, Mt Helena. Everyone is encouraged to attend and more details of this retreat appear on page 11.

**SATURDAY 20th AUGUST**

3.00-4.30 pm - *An Introduction to Buddhist Meditation* - a graduated four weeks course for beginners conducted by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro. During these four weeks students will be gradually introduced to the various aspects of the Buddha's Teaching and meditation beginning with right posture, right attitude and the actual meditation techniques for calming the mind and developing insight. The sitting meditation times will be short and the session will close with discussion and tea will be served.

**SATURDAY 27th AUGUST**

3.00-4.30 pm Second week of *An Introduction to Buddhist Meditation* course.

Pali Chanting books and tapes featuring both Morning and Evening Chanting are now available at the Buddhist Centre.

These books and tapes are for free distribution but a donation towards the cost of printing the books and reproducing the tapes would be appreciated.

During the Rains Retreat period Evening Chanting will be chanted every evening directly after the sitting meditation session.
Asalha Puja
Sunday 24th July

"SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF TRUTH"

The programme for Asalha Puja Day is as follows:

9.30 am
Gathering at the Vihara.
Taking the Three Refuges and Eight Precepts for those wishing to keep the Asalha Observance Day. A short discourse.
Offering of dana to the Bhikkhus. Laypeople will then share a meal.

2.00 - 4.00 pm
Group meditation at the Vihara followed by tea.

7.00 pm
Beginning of evening's ceremony.
Taking the Three Refuges and Five Precepts. Chanting and Puja with offerings of flowers, candles and incense.
A Dhamma talk by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro.
Close.
The Bhikkhus will practice meditation all through the night and those laypeople who would like to join them are welcomed to do so.
Weekend Meditation Retreat
August 13th & 14th

The Buddhist Society of W.A. will be conducting another weekend meditation retreat from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th August. The retreat will be held at the Mt Helena Theosophical Centre, Bunning Road, Mt Helena and begins on Friday 12th at around 7.00 pm and finishes around 4.30 pm Sunday afternoon.

Anyone who would like to join the retreat is most welcome and should write their names in the appropriate space on the poster located near the back entrance of the Vihara. The cost of the course is only $20.00 per person and covers accommodation and food. The Teaching is of course free.

"An Introduction To Buddhist Meditation"
A 4 Weeks Course Beginning
Sat. August 20th

This is a unique opportunity to learn the fundamental teachings of the Buddha and to make a start to learn the basics of Buddhist meditation.

Classes of 1½ hours duration will be conducted by Ven. Ajahn Jagaro and will run for a four week period. The first class begins on Saturday August 20th - then August 27th, September 3rd and 10th. Classes begin at 3.00 p.m. and close 4.30 p.m.

These classes are structured for beginners so emphasis is upon correct posture, right attitude and motivation and will teach the actual techniques of meditation to calm the mind and to develop insight. Actual sitting times will be short.

This short course is open to all members and friends and there is no charge. Registration should be made either by ringing the Vihara or writing your name in the appropriate space on the poster near the back entrance of the Vihara.

Each class will close with discussion time and tea.
Ms Lynne Jackson
Honorary Secretary
The Buddhist Society of Western Australia
4 Magnolia Street
NORTH PERTH WA 6006

Dear Madam,

INCOME TAX : THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY PERTH MEDITATION BUILDING FUND
THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY FOREST MONASTRY BUILDING FUND

With reference to your letter dated 19 April 1983 it has now been determined that the abovenamed funds are school building funds for the purposes of section 76(i)(a)(xv) of the income tax assessment act. Accordingly, gifts of $ 2.00 and upwards to the funds will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

It is to be noted that this approval is for funds established exclusively for providing money for the acquisition, construction or maintenance of school buildings and does not extend to items such as furniture, equipment or running expenses.

You will be advised whether the income of the Buddhist Society is exempt under section 25(e) of the Act in a separate letter.

Yours faithfully,

( R.A. GILL )
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF TAXATION.
Opposite is the official letter received from the Taxation Department declaring that the Vihara and Forest Monastery Funds have now been approved and that donations of $2.00 and over will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

These legal matters have been lengthy and time-consuming but could never have been completed without the help of Mr Douglas Solomon and we again express our sincere gratitude to him.

Monthly mortgage repayments of the Vihara are being well maintained due to the generosity of members who give each month and also to our monthly fund raising activities.

Over the last month the Bhikkhus and members have been earnestly searching for land to purchase for the Forest Monastery. We are looking for a good forested block preferably with water within one hours drive from central Perth. Donations however small are appreciated and below is a list of donors who have been extremely generous and donated towards the establishment of the Forest Monastery.

Disciples of Ven. Ajahn Chah (Bangkok) ... $24,000.00
Miss D. Watson (Perth) ... 10,000.00
Mr and Mrs Hansen (Victoria) ... 10,000.00
Thai Buddhist Community in Perth ... 1,500.00
Dr and Mrs de Tisserra (Perth) ... 1,000.00
Mr D. Brown (Perth) ... 1,000.00
Mr T. Delaney (Perth) ... 100.00
Mr R. McDonald (New South Wales) ... 100.00
Mr D. Lerslit (Victoria) ... 100.00
Proceeds from Fund Raising in Perth ... 5,000.00
Mr Ross Anderson (Perth) ... 1,000.00

Our sincere thank you to all who have donated so generously not only money but offered dana to the Bhikkhus, have helped with transport while looking for land, given up time to attend meetings, helped with the maintenance and painting of the Vihara (a special thankyou to Ross Anderson and John Ross), have worked hard to make the fund raising activities fun and profitable, answering letters, writing articles and attending to the everyday running of the Centre. To everyone thank you. May you all ever grow in health, happiness and the Good Dhamma.

"THE GIFT OF DHAMMA IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL"
A short story and the above photo showing Mrs Suparb and Suwaree Testoni offering dana to Ven. Brahmavamsa appeared in "The West Australian" on May 30th following the celebration of Vesakha at the Perth Vihara on Sunday 29th May. Around 70 people attended the mornings celebration and well over 100 in the evening. A very happy and spiritual uplifting day was enjoyed by all.
FOUR KINDS OF SAÑGAHAVATTHU - Qualities making for amicable association.

1. DĀNA - giving and sharing one's own things with other people with whom it is proper that one should share things.

2. PIYAVĀCĀ - talking together and discussing things with pleasant and mild speech.

3. ATTHACARIYĀ - doing things which are useful for others.

4. SAMĀNATTATĀ - being even-minded and without pride.

These four virtues always attract the hearts of other people.

A:II:32

FOUR DHAMMAS FOR LAY PEOPLE

1. SACCA - truth and honesty between people.

2. DAMA - knowing how to restrain one's own heart and mind.

3. KHANTI - putting up with adversity, having patience and humility.

4. CĀGA - renouncing and giving away one's own possessions to whom it is right and proper to give them.

A Fund-Raising

Old Fashioned

BARN DANCE

SATURDAY 30TH JULY, 1983

TIME: 7.30 p.m.

AT: ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY HALL
183 ROBERTS ROAD,
SUBIACO.

FEATURING THE POPULAR WOLFSBANE GROUP

A delicious supper provided.
Soft drinks on sale or B.Y.O.

$12.00 single and
$2.00 per child (under 14)

This is a social activity organised to raise funds for the Buddhist Society of Western Australia (Inc.)
THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

4 Magnolia Street,
North Perth, 6006
Western Australia.

tel: (09) 444 7013.

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Venerable Brahmavamso.

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