



The History of
**Gotama
Buddha**



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Contents are derived from the book *Aspiring to Be like the Lord Buddha* written by Upasika Tawin Watiragoon

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Preface

“Why are we here? What is the purpose of life?” Many people may have these questions in their minds and some may have been trying to find answers to these questions. Others have no idea how best to live their lives and they are going about it through trial and error.

The study of the life history of such important personages as the Lord Buddha can be a shortcut to help put one on the correct life-path because the Lord Buddha started out as an ordinary person just like us. But unlike us, He was able to learn from life's events such as birth, aging, sickness, and death and knew that these events are accompanied by pain and suffering. He wanted to know how He could once and for all put an end to such pain and suffering. As a result, He had spent countless lifetimes searching for the way until He found it eventually in the final lifetime.

Records of the Lord Buddha's life history in stone tablets, in the Tipitaka, and in other archaeological findings confirm the places where the Lord Buddha was born, attained Self-Enlightenment, gave the first Dhamma lecture, and attained Complete Nibbana. These evidences attest to the fact that the Lord Buddha existed and He was the former Prince Siddhattha of Kapilavastu.

It can be said that Prince Siddhattha is replete with extraordinary corporeal and mental endowments, material wealth, position, retinue of attendants, etc. He has spent the first part of His life in the comfort and luxury of three different castles, built specifically for each of the three seasons. He is so brilliant that He can complete the study of all eighteen branches of the arts within just seven days. And yet, He willingly gives everything up in order to go in search of the way to put an end to suffering. After He found it, He has the infinite compassion to teach it to everyone in the world so that they too can put an end to suffering.

The Lord Buddha's insight is not gained from listening or thinking but from having practiced meditation until He can attain Self-Enlightenment which brings about the sublime truth about nature and life. He knows how to live life correctly and how to solve every problem in life in an ingenious manner. His self-enlightened knowledge is perfect knowledge. His every word is true. He can explain everything in terms of its cause and effect. His teachings are clear and penetrating like "turning what was upside down right side up; opening what was closed; giving directions to a person who has lost his way; a beacon in the dark, which allows a person to see everything clearly such that he will not run into things." Therefore, whoever practices the Lord Buddha's Teachings is following the correct life-path. This enables his life to proceed smoothly and he can reach his life-goals quickly and safely.

The Lord Buddha's Teachings are about the reality of life and as such they have to be personally experienced. His Teachings are for everyone regardless of his race or creed. Therefore, everyone has the same opportunity to learn about the reality of life from Him.

The History of Gotama Buddha allows the reader to learn about His life starting from His birth all the way to His attainment of Complete Nibbana. The reader will also learn about many applicable life principles which will help him to live life correctly, successfully and happily. Ultimately, the Lord Buddha's Teachings can lead one to put an end to suffering, extinguish all defilements, and attain true and eternal bliss.



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*The Birth of the One
Who Can Truly Put an End to Suffering*





Chapter 1

The Birth of the One Who Can Truly Put an End to Suffering

Our Lord Gotama Buddha was once just an ordinary person who had undergone rebirth in the different realms of existence as dictated by his accumulated Kamma. In one existence 20 Asankheyya Kappas and an additional 100,000 Kappas ago, he was a poor man living with his mother, and earning a living by selling what he could find in the forest including firewood to the people in town. (Kappa means an Earth Age; Asankheyya is the number 10^{140})

One day, as he was resting at the harbor after having sold all of the firewood, he saw the crew leaving the ship to go home.

They appeared to be earning more money than him so he went inside the ship to ask for a job from the shipowner on condition that he could bring his mother along. The shipowner agreed to hire him.

While the ship was sailing in the sea, it was wrecked by a violent storm. The new crew member told his mother to hang on to his shoulders as he hung on to a board and tried to swim ashore. Meanwhile, he saw how his shipmates were disappearing into the water one by one. He felt keenly his own suffering and that of his shipmates. It became evident to him then all the forms of suffering experienced by human beings and all the living beings. It was the kind of suffering associated with earning a living, sickness, losing a loved one, etc.

At that moment, he felt inspired to help his fellow beings and all living beings to put an end to suffering. Although he had no idea how to do it, he was willing to try and find the way nonetheless. A person having such a noble inspiration is called a Bodhisatta.

For a total of seven Asankheyya Kappas in which he had undergone countless rebirths, he tried on his own through trial and error to accumulate different kinds of good deeds. He had accumulated merit under 125,000 Buddhas before he felt bold and courageous enough to tell every Buddha he met afterward about his aspiration to become a Buddha sometime in the future.

It took him nine additional Asankheyya Kappas to pursue all ten Perfections to the fullest extent. It means that if he wishes to be emancipated from the round of rebirth by practicing according to the teachings of any Buddha he meets, he will be able to attain Arahatsip and Nibbana instantly.

But due to his incomparable compassion and the desire to help liberate living beings trapped inside the round of rebirth, he refused to attain Arahatsip.

Therefore, he had to continue pursuing Perfections for four more Asankheyya Kappas and an additional 100,000 Kappas before he could teach a whole host of living beings to attain the Path and Fruit of Nibbana. (A Kappa or an Earth Age covers the time it takes for the galaxy to be destroyed, reformed, and destroyed again. One Kappa contains 256 Antarakappas.)

Before his final rebirth, he had been a male celestial being called Santatusita dwelling in the celestial realm of Tusita. All the celestial beings came to ask him to cease to be from the Tusita Realm in order to be reborn on earth into a royal family. A Bodhisatta, who has pursued Perfections to the fullest extent, can choose to be reborn into any family regarded as the noblest at the time.

If at the time of his rebirth, people deem a Brahmin family to be the noblest, the Lord Buddha will be reborn in a Brahmin family.

At the time of our Lord Gotama Buddha, people deemed the royal family to be the noblest. Therefore, He chose to be reborn into the House of Sakya of the city of Kapilavastu in the kingdom of Sakka.

The History of the House of Sakya

The first king of the House of Sakya was called King Okakakaraj. He had four sons and five daughters with his wife, who was his own sister. After his wife died, he had a new wife and a new son. The king made the mistake of granting his new wife a wish in that whatever she asked from him would be granted. So she asked that her son be made the next king.

King Okakakaraj told his nine sons and daughters to go and build their own city. The eldest daughter later married the king of the city of Devadaha and founded the House of Koliya.

The other four brothers and four sisters married each other and built their city in the Sakka Forest located in the Himavanta region. It had been the dwelling of the Yogi called Kapila, so they named the city after the Yogi, Kapilavastu. They founded the House of Sakya.



Prince Siddhattha's Birth

Many Sakya kings had ruled Kapilavastu until the time of King Suddhodana. He married Queen Sirimahamaya (his paternal aunt's daughter), and she gave birth to Prince Siddhattha (Our Lord Buddha).

On the night that our Bodhisatta ceased to be from the Tusita Realm to be conceived in his mother's womb, Queen Sirimahamaya had a dream. In the dream, she went to the celestial forest of Himavanta. A white elephant came down from the mountain-top. He held out his trunk which carried a white lotus that exuded a lovely, sweet smell. He gave the special lotus to the queen and circumambulated her thrice before departing. The court astrologer predicted that the queen would give birth to a great son. King Suddhodana was overjoyed and made sure that the queen was well attended to.

Our Bodhisatta sat in a half-lotus position in his mother's womb at all times. He did not lie in the fetus position like other fetuses, nor was he tainted by biological matters. Moreover, his mother could see him clearly.

Near the time of birth, it was the customary practice of the time for a woman to return to her birthplace to have her baby. Queen Sirimahamaya asked the king for permission to return home. Half-way there at the Lumbini Forest, she felt a birth pang. When the time came, she stood holding on to a Sal branch while giving birth to her son.

During birth, the Bodhisatta's body was completely clean, and devoid of any body fluids. He was first received in the air by celestial beings. Condensation of moisture in the air produced hot and cold water which mixed together to give warm water and fell down to bathe the infant Bodhisatta. He took seven steps on his own and each step was cushioned by a lotus flower. Having taken seven steps, he stood still and boldly proclaimed, "Aggohamasami lokassa", I am the foremost person on earth; I am the most sublime person on earth.

It was then near noontime on Friday, the full-moon day of the sixth moon (Visakha), in the year of the dog, eighty years before the Buddhist Era.

These miraculous events are not uncommon for a Bodhisatta who has pursued Perfections to the fullest extent. He is capable of extraordinary things such as the ability to walk right after birth. The celestial beings who have kept watch over him make sure that warm water appears out of the air so that he can be bathed. Even an ordinary person who regularly accumulates merit is likely to meet with surprising and amazing events. And upon investigating them by employing the supernatural powers resulting from meditative attainments, one finds that a person, who regularly accumulates merit, is protected and helped by a particular type of celestial beings. These celestial beings belong to the Celestial Realm and can scarcely accumulate merit as such. But when they watch over a merit-minded person, they can earn merit by rejoicing in the person's merit accumulation.

Our Bodhisatta's body was perfect and possessed the 32 physical features of the Perfect Man. One Brahmanism text gives details on how to predict a person's future based on his physical attributes. According to this text, a person possessing the 32 physical features of the Perfect Man will grow up to become a Universal Monarch having sovereignty over a huge territory bordered by the four oceans if he remains a householder. But if he takes up the religious life, he will attain Self-Enlightenment and become the Lord Buddha.



Predicting the Infant Prince's Future

At the hillside of the Himavanta Mountain dwelled a Yogi by the name of Asita or Kaladevila. He was well acquainted with the Sakya royal family. When he heard about the auspicious birth of the prince, he went immediately to the palace to see the infant. Having seen the infant prince's Perfect Man features, he knelt down to bow low with his head against the prince's feet. He made his prediction based on the Brahmin text as he smiled and cried. He cried because he felt sorry that he was already very old and would not live long enough to listen to the infant prince's Dhamma lectures after he attained Self-Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

The different royal families saw the way their esteemed Yogi paid homage to the infant prince and heard his prediction; they could not help but feel so joyful that each family gave a son to be the infant prince's attendant. King Suddhodana made sure that the prince was well looked after.

Five days after the prince was born, King Suddhodana held a meeting of the royal families on both sides, the high-ranking court officials, and 108 Brahmins well-versed in the Vedas in order to name the infant prince.

It was unanimously agreed that the prince should be given the name "Siddhattha", which means wish-fulfillment. In those days, a person was usually referred to by his family name. Therefore, the prince was called Prince Gotama. Out of the 108 Brahmins, eight were experts in making predictions and all except for the youngest Brahmin Kondanna predicted that the prince's life could turn out in two ways. However, Kondanna said the prince would definitely take up the religious life.

Seven days after the infant prince was born, Queen Sirimamaya passed away. This is a common occurrence for the mother of every Lord Buddha, for she is reborn for the specific purpose of giving birth to the Lord Buddha alone.

King Suddhodana put the infant Prince Siddhattha under the care of Queen Pajapadigotami, the prince's maternal aunt and stepmother. The queen took very good care of the prince even after she had had her own children, namely, Prince Nanda and Princess Rupananda.

Prince Siddhattha's Childhood

Prince Siddhattha was a gentle child. He was loving and kind to every living being. On one occasion after he could walk and run, he was taken to the royal park. There, he found a bird shot by an arrow. He took the bird back to the palace to nurse it. He wanted to release the bird after it was well again; however, his cousin Prince Devadat came for the bird claiming he was the one who had shot it. The case was brought before the ministers and they declared Prince Siddhattha the winner of the case based on the rule that life belongs to the person who gives it and not to the person who destroys it.

Since it had been predicted earlier that the prince's life could turn out in two ways, King Suddhodana preferred his son to be a Universal Monarch to taking up the religious life. Therefore, he took great care to provide the prince with all the creature comforts. When the prince was seven years old, the king had three large ponds dug for the prince's swimming pleasure. In the ponds were grown different kinds of beautiful lotuses. His clothes were made



of the finest fabrics from the kingdom of Kasi. His meals were sumptuous. Everything used by him had to be of the finest quality. He had a retinue of attendants to entertain him and tend to his every need.

Due to the Perfections which had been pursued to the fullest extent, Prince Siddhattha had an extraordinarily high level of intelligence compared to the children of his age. On one occasion, King Suddhodana went to a particular place to preside over the Planting Ceremony accompanied by Prince Siddhattha. Prince Siddhattha's nursemaids arranged a place for him to rest under the Java Plum tree and left him alone there to go and watch the Planting Ceremony.



The Power of Meditation

Prince Siddhattha looked around him but was not at all entertained by what he saw. He only saw that it was hard for the farmers and the water buffaloes to till the land under the hot sun. He saw that it was difficult to earn a living. He looked up into the air and saw how a hawk had to catch small birds for its food and how small birds had to catch insects for their food. He looked into the water and saw how a big fish was catching a small fish. He saw that the world was filled with cruelty where killing and violence were happening all the time.

Having the uncommon wisdom to penetrate these things, the prince felt saddened. Suddenly, his mind came to a standstill and

he achieved mental one-pointedness. He could do this without being taught because he had been an expert in meditation practice all throughout his previous existences.

At the time, five Yogis were flying by but they were prevented from flying further. Upon looking downward, they saw the Perfect Man sitting in meditation as he was immersed in the First Jhana. They saw how his perfect body just glowed. They paid homage to the prince and sang his praises before continuing with their flight.

The power of the prince's meditative attainments caused the sunrays to bend in such a way that even though it was already afternoon, the shadow of the Java Plum remained in the same position while the shadow of nearby trees had already moved with the sun. By remaining in the same position, the Java Plum tree continued to provide the prince with a cool shade.

His nursemaids had by now returned to the prince. They were amazed to see our Bodhisatta sitting absolutely still, and the shadow of the Java Plum tree remaining in the same position. They reported the miraculous happening to the king. In awe, the king paid homage to his son for the second time.



Completing All 18 Branches of the Arts in Just Seven Days

When Prince Siddhattha reached the proper age, King Suddhodana had him study under the most famous and learnt teacher of the time, Vishavamitra. The Prince studied the arts, linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, political science, astrology, strategy, fine arts, etc. Whatever the teacher had to teach, the prince could learn it all quickly until the teacher had nothing left to teach him.

The prince was equipped with superior intelligence. He was also loving and kind to everyone; and he was well loved by his friends and relatives.

The Ultimate Worldly Happiness

When Prince Siddhattha was 16 years old, his father had three beautiful castles built for him, one for each season. Each castle was built to suit each season so that the prince would be comfortable regardless of the season.

King Suddhodana wanted his son to marry, and he arranged gifts for the prince to give out to the princesses of different royal families who were invited to come to the palace. He told his trusted officials to observe which princess the prince favored.

All the princesses who stood in front of the prince were equally beautiful and graceful. They felt nervous and shy but the prince did not care to look at any of them. He duly gave the gift to each of the princesses until all the gifts were gone. It was then that Princess Yasodhara (Bimba), the daughter of King Suppabuddha (Queen Sirimahamaya's elder brother) and Queen Kaniṭṭha (King Suddhodana's younger sister) arrived. Princess Yasodhara was extremely lovely, and she was blessed with the five physical attributes of feminine beauty. Unlike other princesses, she was not at all nervous or shy. When she asked for a gift, Prince Siddhattha looked up and saw that all the gifts had already been given away. He removed his breastchain which was more valuable than the gift given to each princess earlier and gave it to Princess Yasodhara.



The incident was reported to King Suddhodana and the king asked Princess Yasodhara to be Prince Siddhattha's bride.

Princess Yasodhara's family thought it appropriate to organize a contest where all the princes of different royal families who also wished to marry the princess came to display their abilities.

It turned out that Prince Siddhattha won every contest. For example, he could lift an ancient arrow so heavy that it took a thousand men to lift. He could lift it as easily as a woman lifting a roller gin. The sound he made with the arrow resounded all over the city of Kapilavastu. Amazingly, he shot an arrow which cut the tail-hair of a yak in two while the yak was standing at a distance of 16 kilometers away.

Both royal families decided to to arrange the marriage between Prince Siddhattha and Princess Yasodhara while they were just 16 years old.

Princess Yasodhara (Bimba) was one of the people and things that came into being on the same day that Prince Siddhattha was born. These included Princess Yasodhara, Venerable Ananda, Kaludayi the court minister, Channa the royal page, Kanthaka the royal steed, the Bodhi Tree, and the four treasure troves.



The Four Celestial Messengers

The prince and the princess had lived together happily until the prince was 29 years old. One day, he went to the royal park with his page Channa and saw for the first time what it was like in the real world.

What he saw then was called the four celestial messengers and they included an old person, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk. The old person had gray hair, his body was bent over, he had almost no energy left in him and he had difficulty walking. He had to lean on a walking stick; even then his body trembled with the effort.

The sick person was moaning in pain. His face was twisted. The pain was such that he could not lie still but had to thrash his body around on the ground.

The dead person was lying absolutely still. He was surrounded by grieving relatives. They carried his body on a litter to the funeral pyre to be cremated before it began to decompose.

The monk was calm and composed as he sat in meditation searching for the way to find peace and end all suffering.

Upon seeing the first three celestial messengers, Prince Siddhattha felt saddened by the images of suffering inherent in every life. Suffering was everybody's lot in life. Therefore, he should not allow himself to be lulled by the false happiness of the material world any longer. He should go in search of the way to end suffering so that he could help his fellow beings.

Upon seeing the fourth celestial messenger, which was the calm and composed monk with a joyful countenance, the prince liked what he saw very much.

He exclaimed, "Sadhu Kho Pabbajja". It means entering the monkhood is a good thing. He decided then and there that he had to take up the religious life.



The Fetters of Life

As the prince was thinking about becoming a monk, his father had a messenger bring him the news that Princess Yasodhara had just given birth to a baby boy.

Prince Siddhattha immediately felt a deep love for his son, the kind of love he had not yet experienced before. At the same time, he felt a deep and heavy concern so much so that he had to exclaim,

“Bandhanan jatan rahu lan jatan”, which means a fetter has appeared. As a result, the newborn infant was called “Rahulan”.

On his way back to the palace, he passed by a window whereby one of his relatives “Kisagotami” was standing, she exclaimed upon seeing the prince,



“The parents of Prince Siddhattha will be happy; their suffering will end. Whoever is the prince’s wife, she will be happy and her suffering will end.” (In those days the word used for ending suffering was Nibbana.)

The word “Nibbana” means extinguishment. Upon hearing this word, the prince felt moved because he was already thinking about Nibbana or the end of suffering. He removed his breast chain and had one of his pages bring it to Kisagotami to thank her for her words. It reminded him once again how he had to go in search of the way to end suffering, which could not be gained by physical beauty, loving-kindness and compassion. There had to be a profound method which could lead to the end of aging, sickness, death, and other forms of suffering.



Entering the Monkhood

In considering the monkhood, Prince Siddhattha realized that if he asked for his father's permission, he would never obtain it. Moreover, all of his relatives would try to prevent him from leaving as well. He knew that if he wanted to become a monk, he had to leave the palace at night. On that very night, he told his page Channa to get his steed Kanthaka ready for him.

He then went to say goodbye to his wife and son. They were both fast asleep. He felt such a deep love for his son that he wanted to hold him but he was afraid he would wake both mother and baby.

He looked upon his son's little face and thought how his beloved son would have to encounter so many forms of suffering in life just like everyone else; he felt deeply saddened by the thought. As he turned around, he saw the ladies-in-waiting falling asleep in strange postures. Some were snoring loudly. Some had their mouths open and their saliva was trickling down the corner of their mouths. Some were indecently exposed. To him, they looked no different from corpses.

Prince Siddhattha felt as though he was standing inside a graveyard with corpses strewn about. Such was the condition of someone fast asleep, hence, devoid of mindfulness. He thought how all the people in the world are devoid of mindfulness even when they are completely awake. All of them experience the suffering of life, and yet, no one thinks about finding the way to end it. They live from one day to the next, grow old and die. Their entire life is wasted. Their lives are not unlike those of animals. They live merely to earn a living and gain some temporal and fleeting pleasures.

The Great Search

Prince Siddhattha was determined to go in search of the way to end suffering. And once he found it, he would not keep it to himself but would share it with other people. If he were to remain and raise his son, one day the boy would ascend the throne but he

would still grow old, get sick, and die. Moreover, he had to take on the responsibility of looking after his subjects.

But if he left then, his son would be alright given that he had his mother and all the loving relatives to care for him. If he did not succeed in finding the way to end suffering, his son would still be able to ascend the throne. But if he did succeed, humanity would benefit from his effort. Being a Dhamma king who can help people to end suffering is far superior to being a king who cannot really help end the suffering of his subjects.

Having thus made his decision, Prince Siddhattha turned away, left the castle and went to where Channa was waiting for him with his steed Kanthaka. This steed was born on the same day as the prince. It was a beautiful white horse. Its head was jet black. It was very strong and it understood human language and human gestures.

When the prince approached his steed, he stroked its back with loving-kindness. The steed was glad to be ridden by the prince and whinneyed loudly.

The prince mounted the steed and headed for the city gate followed closely by Channa.



Enemy of Good Deeds

That was the full-moon night of the 8th lunar month. The moon was shining brightly in the cloudless sky lighting up the sky and the ground. The air was clear and a light breeze was blowing.

As the prince rode past the city-gate, there appeared to be music in the air and a voice saying, “Stop, prince! Don’t enter the monkhood just yet, for in seven days, the Precious Wheel will appear for you and you will become a mighty Universal Monarch.”

When asked who the voice belonged to, it answered, “Vasavattimara”. The prince answered, “I know all about the Precious Wheel and the Universal Monarch. But they mean nothing to me

now, for I aspire to Buddhahood. I desire the great and profound knowledge that can end suffering. Leave me now!”

Vasavattimara did leave. Vasavattimara was a wrong-viewed celestial being who dwells in the sixth celestial realm. He was of the belief that rebirth in the States of Happiness is entirely satisfactory; hence, there is no need to remove one’s self from the round of rebirth.

The prince arrived at the bank of the Anoma River, which bordered Kapilavastu, Savatthi, and Vesali. There was a large earth mound on its bank and the water was clear. The prince went across the river to the other side where the beach was filled with white sands which glittered in the moonlight. The prince removed his jewels. Using his right hand to hold the dagger and the left hand to hold his top knot, he cut it off. As soon as he did that, the end of each of his remaining hair curled to the right and laid flat against his head never to regrow again.

Sacrificing Everything for Life’s Ultimate Goal

The fact that he had cut off his hair was the sign that he would never return to his former life in the palace again. In those days, adherents of Brahmanism believed in letting one’s hair grow long and arranging it upward into a top-knot. Anyone who cut off his top-knot or shaved his head would be treated with contempt because he would be regarded as a rogue or a heretic.



At the moment that Prince Siddhattha's top-knot was cut off, a Brahma being received it with a platter and gave the prince a saffron robe and an alms-bowl. The prince removed his royal attire and put on the saffron robe. He told Channa to bring his attire and his steed Kanthaka back to Kapilavastu. He consoled Channa and the steed because they were wont to leave him and he urged them to return to the city. (The saffron robe is worn by a monk. It is a piece of cloth that had been soaked in the water that contained the dark-yellow bark of the Khanukh tree which has an astringent taste.)

Channa took the prince's attire and reluctantly led Kanthaka away and across the river. Both man and horse wept for having to be parted from the beloved prince. For a man like Channa, he

could bear the pain of separation but for a horse like Kanthaka, it could not. When it looked back and saw its master standing alone on the other bank, his heart broke and he died right then and there. The steed's death doubled Channa's sorrow. Now both his master and the trusted wise steed were both gone; and he would never see them again. He buried the steed and walked back to the city alone with tears streaming down his face.

Channa brought the news back to King Suddhodana. Everyone was grief-stricken. And yet, King Suddhodana did not wish to have the prince brought back to the city knowing that he had already cut off his top-knot. It meant that the prince had already made up his mind. Moreover, he was then in another city and another kingdom. It would be very difficult to find him. He could only hope for the prince's return. And if not, at least he would hear some good news sometime in the future.







A Simple but Great Life





Chapter 2

A Simple but Great Life

Prince Siddhattha stayed for seven days in a sub-district where mangos were plentiful. It was called Anupiyaambavana, and it was located in the countryside of Malla. From there, he went into the kingdom of Magadha and headed for its capital city, Rajagarh.

Magadha was a powerful and prosperous kingdom, and it was ruled by King Bimbisara. He was about the same age as Prince Siddhattha.

On the first morning, Prince Siddhattha walked bare-footed into the city to beg for alms. The city inhabitants were amazed to

see him and it was rumored all over the city that a man handsome beyond ordinary men was now in their city. They wondered if the person was a Deva, a Phya Naga, a Garuda or a Gandabba in the guise of a man. Some people brought him food. Others watched him. The rumor spread to the palace and it eventually reached King Bimbisara's ears. So he sent his own spy to investigate the situation. If the person was a celestial being, he would fly back to his celestial abode after having received alms. If he was a Phya Naga, he would disappear into the ground. But if he is a human being, he would sit down to eat the food given to him.

After the Perfect Man received enough food, he went to find a quiet place in order to have his meal. He saw the different kinds of food, their different colors, odors, and qualities all in the same bowl. It looked repugnant to him, since he had been used to the finest quality food all of his life. He became so nauseous that he felt as though all of his innards would rush out of his mouth. He had to quell his disgust and thought instead about his monkhood. He told himself that food, whatever quality it may be, its sole purpose is to sustain him. Every kind of food, once eaten is no longer lovely. In the end, it is emptied from the body as waste. Having successfully dealt with his initial disgust, he calmly ate the food.

The spy reported what he saw back to King Bimbisara. The king had heard of the Perfect Man before and how it had been reputed that his beauty was beyond compare. The king went to

see Prince Siddhattha immediately. Once the king found out all that he had wanted to know, he invited the prince to stay and rule Magadha with him.

The Perfect Man declined the invitation and explained that he is in search of the means to end suffering, which is Buddhahood. King Bimbisara rejoices in the prince's noble aspiration and asks that the prince returns to teach him once he has attained Self-Enlightenment.

Meeting the Two Most Famous Teachers

In the kingdom of Magadha, there were many religious leaders but the two most famous ones were the Yogi Alara Kalamagotra and the Yogi Udaka Ramaputra. Both of them had their residences outside of Rajagarh.

Prince Siddhattha went to study under both teachers until they had nothing left to teach him. He had learnt to practice meditation until he could attain the eighth level of meditative absorption. That is, he knew how to bring his mind to come to a complete standstill and as a result, he could attain all eight levels of meditative absorptions from the coarse levels to the refined levels. Both teachers praised the prince for his meditative prowess which was equal to their own and they invited the prince to remain with them as a teacher.



The Perfect Man knew that such meditative attainments could not lead to the end of suffering because the mind was still plagued by defilements. He knew that Jhana attainments were not stable and they could deteriorate anytime. He decided to leave both teachers and trekked toward the countryside of Magadha until he arrived at the sub-district of Uruvelasenaniham. He saw that the ground was level and the water in the Neranjara River was clean and clear. It was a lovely area fringed by a lush forest. There were villages nearby where he could go and beg for alms. He felt the area to be conducive to his ascetic practices.

Uruvelasenaniham means the sand village or the village of lovely sands. In the past, it used to be the residence of members of a particular religious sect. And they had a rule that if someone had an evil thought whether it was known to anyone or not, he

had to make a public confession by using the designated vessel to carry the sands from the riverbank and dumped them on the designated site.

Practicing Self-Mortification

Having practiced meditation under both Yogis and still not being able to achieve his goal, the prince decided to try self-mortification which was popular among the ascetics at the time.

He had tried different methods of self-mortification. Meanwhile, a group of five ascetics called the Pancavaggiya were there to attend to him. The head of this group of ascetics was the Brahmin Kondanna, who once predicted that the prince would take up the religious life. The rest of the group was made up of the sons of the other Brahmins who were also there to predict the prince's future when he was just a few days old.

During the first phase, Prince Siddhattha clenched his teeth together (by pressing his upper teeth hard against his lower teeth), and pressed the roof of his mouth with his tongue. The longer he practiced it, the more pain and suffering he experienced. Perspiration poured out of his armpits. Despite extreme physical discomfort, he was able to keep his mind calm and his mindfulness intact. After a time, he understood that it was not the practice which could lead to Self-Enlightenment.



During the Second Phase, Prince Siddhattha attempted to restrict his breaths. When air could not easily pass through his nostrils and his mouth, the pressure inside his air passage way built up to the point where he could hear a loud noise in his ears. His head would ache, and his stomach would rumble. His body became extremely hot and painful. Still, his mindfulness was intact and he realized that the practice could not lead him to Self-Enlightenment.

During the third phase, Prince Siddhattha chose an extreme form of self-mortification. He gradually decreased his food intake until eventually he ate nothing at all. His body dried up. His complexion turned sallow. His bones were jutting out. When he touched his body, his body hair simply fell off because the roots of his hair had dried up. He had no energy and could hardly stand straight. People who had known him commented on the sad

state of his corporeality. Despite extreme pain and suffering, his mindfulness was still intact and he realized that the practice could not lead him to Self-Enlightenment.

The Analogy of Sense-Desire

Prince Siddhattha began to consider the fact that whoever still craves sense-desire physically and mentally cannot attain Enlightenment. The situation can be compared to attempting to light a fresh log which is still immersed in water.

Whoever can abandon sense-desire physically but not so mentally cannot attain Enlightenment. The situation can be compared to attempting to light a fresh log which is lying on dry ground.

Whoever can abandon sense-desire physically and mentally should be able to attain Enlightenment after a certain amount of practice. The situation can be compared to attempting to light a dry log which is lying on dry ground.

(In ancient times, there were no matches. Fire was started by rubbing two dry sticks together until they were hot and kapok or cotton was used to catch the spark.)

Prince Siddhattha considered himself as someone who has abandoned sense-desire physically and mentally. In practicing

self-mortification, no one can outdo him. His effort has been so fervent that he once fell unconscious and had to be revived by the goat-milk fed him by a goatheard. Even then, he still cannot achieve his goal. Therefore, he knows that there has to be a better way.

Upon listening to the music made by the three-stringed harp, it occurred to him that if the string is strung too tight, the sound it makes will be too shrill, hence, painful to the ears. If it is played too hard, it will break. On the other hand, if the string is strung too loosely, the sound it makes will be hoarse and unpleasant.

But if the string is strung with just the right amount of tautness, the sound it makes will be lovely.

He thought that his practice of self-mortification is too extreme physically and mentally not unlike the string that has been strung too tightly. It runs the risk of being broken. He also thought that people in the secular world are dominated by sense-desire physically and mentally not unlike the string that has been strung too loosely.

Therefore, the middle way both physically and mentally is just right and can lead to success. Having thus considered the situation, Prince Siddhattha decided to beg for alms and stopped starving his body.



Choosing a Different Method of Practice

The Pancavaggiya thought that the prince no longer had the will to continue with his search for the way to end suffering. Therefore, they left him to go and live in the Deer Park.

With food intake, the prince's body and complexion returned to their original state. He thought that the body has to follow the middle way. It must not be in pain; nor must it indulge in sensual pleasures. Likewise, the mind must also walk the middle way in that it must focus on the center of the body, not above it or below it, not to the left, not to the right, not to the front or back of it. The mind has to be kept at the center of the body where it belongs and let it move inward endlessly. The prince knew that he has to practice meditation according to the Middle Way.

And that was how he attained Self-Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

This rarest event happened on the 15th day of the 6th waxing moon, 45 years before the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana. In that morning, the Perfect Man was sitting still under the Bunyan tree at the bank of the Neranjara River. He kept his mind at the center of his body and let it move inward until he could attain the Jhanas. His complexion was radiant. His countenance was glorious. He was completely alone, free from the attendance of the Pancavaggiya, free in body and mind.

Mrs. Sujada was the daughter of a wealthy man who was also the head of the village. She used to pray to the wood nymph dwelling at the Bunyan tree for a wealthy husband equal to her in status and for their firstborn to be a boy. Now that her wishes had been fulfilled, she intended to prepare the most special rice pudding made from the milk of well-fed cows as an offering to the wood nymph. (The special rice pudding is a dessert cooked in milk, honey, and other ingredients. It was a very special dish in those days.)

When she and her maids brought the rice pudding, which had been formed into 49 lumps and placed on a gold platter to the Bunyan Tree, they saw the Perfect Man sitting in meditation. His physical form was glorious beyond that of an ordinary man. They



mistook him for the wood nymph waiting for their offering. Mrs. Sujada then made the offering of the special rice pudding as well as the gold platter and returned home feeling overjoyed.

A Good Omen

The Perfect Man took the platter of rice pudding to the riverbank. He bathed in the river before consuming all the rice pudding. Afterward, he made a resolute wish, “If I can attain Self-Enlightenment and become the Buddha, let this gold platter float against the current.”

As soon as the Perfect Man placed the gold tray in the water, it floated against the current for a distance of 40 meters before sinking in an area which was the abode of “Kala”, a Phya Naga.

The Phya Naga heard the noise made by the gold platter touching the other gold platters which belonged to the three previous Buddhas (Their names are the Lord Kakusandha Buddha, the Lord Konagamana Buddha, and the Lord Kassapa Buddha). Normally, this Phya Naga king is asleep and will be awakened only by the sound of the gold platters touching each other. This time, when he heard the noise, he woke up and murmured, “Yesterday, one Buddha happened. Today, another Buddha is happening.” He got up to pay his respect and returned to his slumber.

The fact that Prince Siddhattha aspired to Buddhahood and chose the religious life can be compared to the gold platter floating against the current. The Phya Naga king being asleep can be compared to humanity’s absence of mindfulness, being asleep in defilements, and can hardly care if the Buddha happens or not.

Having witnessed the miraculous event, the Perfect Man sat practicing meditation in the Sal forest all day long. When evening approached, he went to the Assatho tree. The local people called it the Peep Pun tree. It is a large, shady tree with lush, heart-shaped leaves with tapered and sharp tips.

While he was walking to the tree, a Brahmin called Sotthiya saw him and felt moved to give him eight bunches of the freshly cut grass.

Prince Siddhattha arranged the eight bunches of grass into a seat under the Assatho Tree. (Every tree under which the Lord Buddha attains Self-Enlightenment is called the Bodhi Tree) He sat facing east in a half-lotus position with his back toward the tree trunk. It was a full-moon night. He vowed that if he cannot attain Self-Enlightenment and become the Buddha, he will not rise from the seat even if his flesh and blood should dry up leaving only skin, tendons, and bones.

His Body Is Still, His Mind Is Steadfast

With his body still and his mind steadfast, the Perfect Man focuses his mind on the center of his body and let it move inward going through the center of the center until he attains supernormal insight.

As his mind moves inward and becomes increasingly purer, the Refined Human Body or the astral body, which is not visible to the physical eyes, appears and he sees it with his supernormal insight.

As his mind becomes as pure as the Celestial Being's mind, the Celestial Being appears.

As his mind becomes as pure as the Form Brahma Being's mind, the Form Brahma Being appears.

As his mind becomes as pure as the Non-Form Brahma Being's mind, the Non-Form Brahma Being appears.

As his mind moves deeper inward, it becomes so clean and so pure that with his supernormal insight, he can see the Buddha Image with a lotus bud on His crown. The Buddha Image has the physical attributes of the Perfect Man, clearer than crystal, perfect in every way. This Buddha Image is called Dhammakaya.



The Greatest Victory

Right then and there, Phya Mara came. Recalling the Perfections which have been pursued to the fullest extent all throughout his previous countless lifetimes, the Perfect Man deploys all thirty Perfections as the most deadly weapon against Phya Mara and his army causing them to retreat in defeat.

Finally, when it is not yet dusk, the Perfect Man is able to extinguish all defilements such that he can never be dominated by Phya Mara again.



The Happening of the Lord Buddha

As the Perfect Man's mind becomes purer and purer still, he sees with his supernormal insight the increasingly glorious forms of more Dhammakayas from the Sotapanna Dhammakaya to the Arahat Dhammakaya.

At the approach of the first watch, he gains the first part of the Threefold Knowledge called "Pubbenivasanussatinana". It is the ability to recall one's countless past existences.

At the approach of the second watch, he gains the second part of the Threefold Knowledge called "Dibbacakkhunana". He can see the birth and death of different living beings. He sees everything that happened in the past, everything that hap-

pens in the present, and everything that will happen in the future. This part of the Threefold Knowledge is called “Cutupapatanana”

In the final watch, he gains the last part of the Threefold Knowledge called “Asavakkhayanana”, which causes the extinguishment of all defilements. He is able to penetrate all the Dhamma Knowledge. He has penetrated the truth about reality.

Our Bodhisatta attains Self-Enlightenment and becomes the Lord Buddha at dawn. Being pure and devoid of defilements, He is called “Araham”. Having attained Self-Enlightenment, He is called “Sammāsambuddho”. The Lord Buddha has most often been referred to by these names.

Immersing in the Bliss of Emancipation

In the first week after attaining Self-Enlightenment, the Lord Buddha sat immersed in the Bliss of Emancipation considering the Law of Causation under the Bodhi Tree.

In the second week, the Lord Buddha sat immersed in the Bliss of Emancipation under the Banyan tree. During this period, the three daughters of Vasavattimara, the head of wrong-viewed celestial beings dwelling in the highest celestial realm who did not want anyone to end sense-desire, had volunteered to lure the Lord Buddha back into the trap of defilements but they failed in their effort.

A Brahmin, who habitually intimidated others by hissing “Huh! Huh!” saw the Lord Buddha and asked what characteristics a Brahmin should possess. The Lord Buddha answered, “A person is a Brahmin because he does not commit evil deeds. A Brahmin is not dominated by defilements. He does not intimidate others by hissing “Huh! Huh!” His mind is not dominated by defilements. He possesses self-restraint. He has completed the study of the Vedas. He has practiced chastity. And he is devoid of defilements. Such a person is called a Brahmin.”

In the third week, the Lord Buddha sat immersed in the Bliss of Emancipation under the Indian oak tree. He exclaimed joyfully,

“Peace and tranquility is the happiness of the person who can see the Truth. He enjoys being in a quiet place. He sees things for what they are in reality. He does not exploit other living beings. He is devoid of sense-desire. He is happy. The absence of Asamimana (the belief that I am me and you are you) brings utter happiness.”

During this period, the Lord Buddha did not think about teaching anyone. For seven days, a cold breeze blew and the rain came. A Phya Naga called Mucalinda came out of the water and wound his long body around the Lord Buddha seven times. He spread his hood above the Lord Buddha’s head to protect Him from the rain and the cold wind for seven days. Once the rain and the wind stopped, he transformed himself into a young man and came to stand in front of the Lord Buddha while He made the remark as stated above.

In the fourth week, the Lord Buddha sat immersed in the Bliss of Emancipation under the milkey tree. The four sovereigns of the Catumaharajika Realm brought a stone alms-bowl for the Lord Buddha. Two caravan merchants called Tapussa and Bhallika saw the Lord Buddha sitting under the milkey tree and felt moved to offer Him some dried rice powder and some dried rice balls.



The First Two Male Lay Devotees

The Lord Buddha ate the food offered to Him by the two merchants. Afterward, they pledged to take the Lord Buddha and the Dhamma as their refuge. They are the first two Buddhist lay devotees in this Buddha Eon. Before they took their leave, they asked the Lord Buddha for a memento. The Lord Buddha ran His right hand over His head, and eight of His hair the color of emerald or green mussel stuck to His hand and He gave them to the merchants to their utter delight.

During the two following weeks, sometimes the Lord Buddha did walking meditation. Sometimes He sat contemplating the Higher Doctrine.

In the last week, the Lord Buddha returned to the Banyan tree. He realized that the Truth, which is mental knowledge, as attained through the process of Self-Enlightenment can only be seen by supernormal insight. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to attain for the general public, since they are still immersed in sensual pleasures. As a result, he felt inclined not to teach it to anyone.

The Four Types of Lotus

But due to His boundless compassion and the wish to help living beings put an end to suffering, the Lord Buddha employed His supernormal insight to investigate the situation. He saw that there exist some individuals who possess a low level of defilements, since they have been accumulating merit and pursuing Perfections all throughout their previous existences. He then compared human beings to the different lotus buds. A lotus bud which rises above the water will certainly bloom as soon as the sun shines on it. A lotus bud at the water surface will bloom in the morrow. A lotus bud below the water surface will bloom sometime in the future. But a lotus bud eaten by turtles and fish will never bloom.

Individuals who can learn the Truth (the Dhamma) are like the lotus buds that have the opportunity to bloom. Those who cannot are like the lotus buds that have been eaten by turtles and fish. At this point, the king of the Brahma Realm, Sahampati, came to ask the Lord Buddha to teach the Dhamma. The Lord Buddha thought



first about His two Yogi teachers and knew from His supernormal insight that both of them had already passed away. He then considered whom He should go and teach next. He knew from His supernormal insight that He should go and teach the Dhamma to the Pancavaggiya ascetics, since they are like the lotus buds above the water and are ready to bloom once the sun shines on them. Moreover, they had attended to Him during the time period that He was practicing self-mortification.

The following morning was the 15th day of the 8th waxing moon (the month of Asalha), the Lord Buddha left the Banyan tree and trekked toward the city of Vanasri. On the bank of the Gaya River at the border of the sub-district where He attained Self-Enlightenment, He met an ascetic by the name of Upaka. Upaka saw the Lord

Buddha's glorious presence complete with the six-colored light emanated from His personage: the blue color of butterfly pea; the yellow color of orpiment; the red color of the rising sun; the white color of silver; the red-orange color of cockscomb; and the shiny luster of crystal. He was amazed at what he saw and he asked the Lord Buddha who His master was. The Lord Buddha said that He has attained Self-Enlightenment; therefore, He has no master. However, Upaka could not understand the meaning of Self-Enlightenment. He shook his head, stuck his tongue out and left. In those days, sticking one's tongue out was a way of paying respect and was not an insulting gesture as it is today.

The Lord Buddha trekked past different places until He arrived at the Deer Park in Vanasri where the Pancavaggiya ascetics were living.

The Pancavaggiya ascetics saw the Lord Buddha coming from a distance because of the glorious brightness of His personage. They had no idea about His Self-Enlightenment but thought that since the Lord Buddha no longer practiced self-mortification, they would not welcome Him. They would not get up to greet Him. They would not take His alms-bowl and His robe. And they would merely prepare a seat for Him.

But once the Lord Buddha approached, all five of them forgot their previous agreement. They got up to greet Him, took His

alms-bowl and robe as they used to do in the past. However, they still addressed Him using an inappropriate term of “Avuso”, which means a younger person or a junior person.

The Lord Buddha forbade them and told them how He had already attained Self-Enlightenment. The ascetics did not believe Him and said, “Avuso Gotama, you once practiced self-mortification to the fullest extent and still could not achieve meditative attainments. Now that you have stopped, how could you have achieved any meditative attainments at all?

The Lord Buddha asked them if He has ever said anything that is not true in all the time that they had been together. This caused the five ascetics to become interested in what the Lord Buddha had to say but He told them to wait until the morrow.



The First Dhamma Lecture

It was on the 15th day of the 8th waxing moon that the Lord Buddha gave the first Dhamma lecture. He began by saying, “The two extremes that a monk should avoid are self-indulgence and self-mortification. Self-indulgence has to do with the attachment to sensual pleasures. It is lowly and it causes a person to have to set up a household which is a waste of effort. It is the concern of those possessing a high level of defilements. It is not sublime or useful. At the other extreme, self-mortification brings about suffering; and it is completely useless.

To practice the Middle Way means that one practices neither self-indulgence nor self-mortification. To succeed, one must practice



in just the right way, the way that I have done. Self-Enlightenment gives rise to penetrating insight, cessation, penetrating knowledge which extinguishes craving and all the fetters, and leads one to Nibbana. Enlightenment can be attained by practicing the Middle Way.

The Middle Way comprises eight components which can be summarized as Sila (morality), Samadhi (concentration), and Panna (insight). It means having right understanding about morality, having right view, having a good verbal conduct, having a good physical conduct, earning right livelihood, having right effort, right thought, and right mindfulness.

The Four Noble Truths

Having successfully practiced the Middle Way, one will gain penetrating knowledge about the Four Noble Truths, which include:

1. Suffering: The different forms of suffering include birth, aging, sickness, death, melancholy, grief, longing, frustration, encountering what one hates, being parted from what one loves, not getting what one wants, etc.

2. The Cause of Suffering: Craving is the cause of suffering. There are three forms of craving: Craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and craving for self-annihilation.

3. The Cessation of Suffering: It is the state where suffering has been extinguished, where no trace of craving remains, where there is liberation.

4. The Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering: It is the Noble Eightfold Path as mentioned earlier. The Noble Eightfold Path is the practice which leads to the penetrating knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. To attain the Four Noble Truths, one must ...

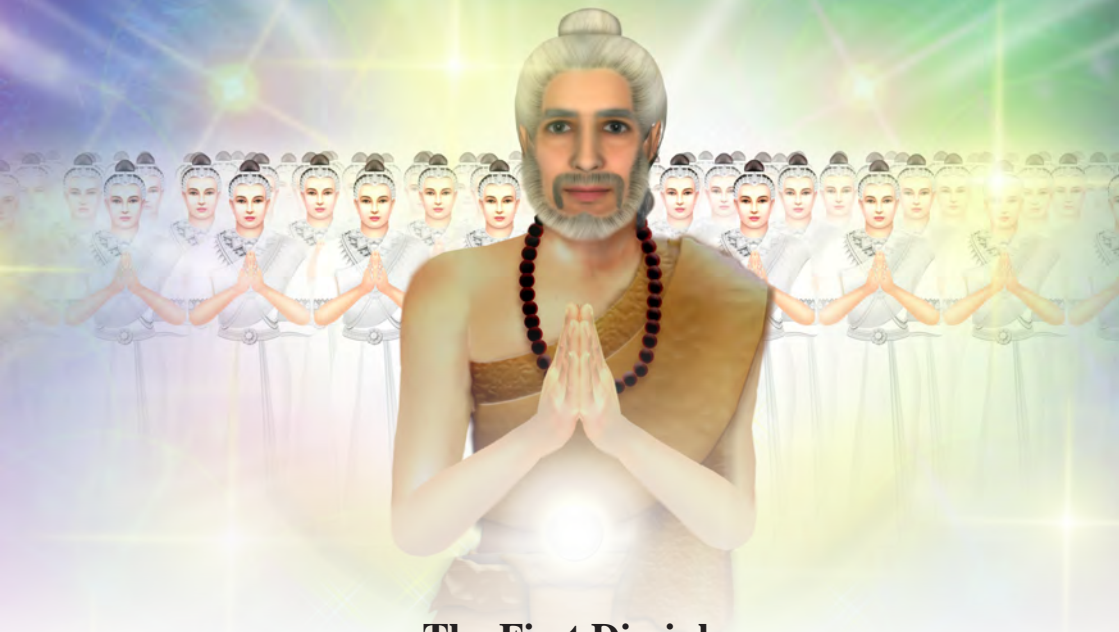
1. Penetrate suffering through supernormal insight
2. Abandon craving, the cause of suffering

3. Penetrate the cessation of suffering

(see or penetrate Nibbana)

4. Practice the Noble Eightfold Path, the path leading to the cessation of suffering

The Lord Buddha affirmed that He has attained Self-Enlightenment and is therefore beyond compare. His emancipation is real and absolute. His round of rebirth is no more.



The First Disciple

While the Lord Buddha was giving His first Dhamma lecture, the ascetic Kondanna allowed his mind to follow the Lord Buddha's teaching until it came to a standstill on the Middle Way inside his mind. His meditative attainments allowed him to see the Truth with his supernormal insight. In other words, he had attained the Eye of Truth. And he realized that ...

"Whatever comes into existence naturally will cease to exist naturally." This is the level of supernormal insight attained by a Sotapanna, the first stage of Ariyahood. The Lord Buddha's supernormal insight let him know that Kondanna had attained the Truth and He exclaimed, "Annasi vatabho kondanno", which means Kondanna can now know my teaching.

As a result of this exclamation, Kondanna was later called Annakondanna.

The Dhamma Wheel Began to Turn

This first Dhamma lecture is called the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta; and it caused the Dhamma Wheel to begin turning. When a Universal Monarch wants to extend his territory, he will drive his Precious Wheel and mobilize his army to bring prosperity to his kingdom.

When the Lord Buddha wants to propagate His Teachings, He mobilizes the Dhamma Wheel to bring living beings out of suffering.

The Lord Buddha's first Dhamma lecture caused miraculous events to happen in certain parts of the galaxy, namely, in the Human Realm, in the Celestial Realm, and in the Brahma Realm. There were earthquakes. There was a display of brilliant light in the same way as the time of the Lord Buddha's birth and Self-Enlightenment. The sound of celestial music was in the air. Blind and deaf people became normal for a time. Hell-fire was temporarily extinguished.



Being Ordained by the Lord Buddha

Once Annakondanna saw the Truth (the Dhamma) and all of his doubts were dispelled, he wished to practice more of the Lord Buddha's teachings. So he asked to be ordained. The Lord Buddha approved and said,

"Come and be a Bhikkhu. The Truth which I have already taught is sublime. Live the Holy Life in order to put an end to suffering." So Annakondanna became the first Bhikkhu or the first Buddhist monk in this Buddha Eon. Having heard more Dhamma lectures from the Lord Buddha, the other four ascetics also attained the Eye of Truth as a Sotapanna. They then asked to be ordained.

The Happening of Arahats

Five days later, all five Buddhist monks' faith, endeavor, mindfulness, concentration, and insight grew to such an extent that they were close to attaining Arahatship. Therefore, the Lord Buddha gave them a Dhamma lecture called the Anattalakhana Sutta where they were told to consider the fact that one's body and mind lack true selfhood and cannot be controlled by anyone because ...

1. They are vacant in that they are made up of different components. Individual entity does not exist. There is no you and there is no me. Everything is a matter of convention. A house or a car is made up of different components and are called by convention a house or a car. When it is taken apart, it is no longer a house or a car. Likewise, one's body and mind exist because they are made up of different components. And when they are taken apart, they no longer exist.

2. They have no owner. They cannot be owned.

3. They are not under anyone's command. They are not what one wants them to be.

4. They cannot exist on their own because they are compounded things.

5. Their nature is contrary to true selfhood.



The Lord Buddha separates body and mind into five aggregates, namely, corporeality (1) and four mental factors (4).

1. Corporeality includes the entire body.
2. Feeling as in feeling happy, feeling unhappy, feeling neither happy nor unhappy
3. Perception as in recognition
4. Mental formations as in good thought, evil thought, neutral thought
5. Consciousness as in sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Sight occurs when the eyes see something. Sound occurs when the ears hear something. Smell occurs when the nose smells

something. Taste occurs when the tongue tastes something. Touch occurs when the body comes into contact with the heat, the cold, or an object.

If these five aggregates possess true selfhood, they should be able to exist on their own and their owner must be able to command them to be this way or that way. But since the five aggregates lack true selfhood, they cannot be controlled, and they are not what one wishes them to be.

At the end of the lecture, the Lord Buddha asked, “Are the five aggregates permanent or impermanent?”

The Pancavaggiga monks answered, “Impermanent, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha said, “If something is impermanent, is it unhappy or happy?”

The Pancavaggiya monks answered “It is unhappy, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha said, “When a thing is impermanent, unhappy, changeable, should one hold that the thing belongs to one, the thing is one’s self, the thing is one’s identity?”

The monks answered, “One should not, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha explained further that one should not form an attachment to the five aggregates because corporeality,

feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, be they in the past, present or future; be they crude or refined, ugly or beautiful, near or far, they are nothing more than corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. One should see them correctly with one's supernormal insight that they do not belong to one, that they are not one's self, that they are not one's identity.

And when equipped with right understanding, one should grow tired of corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

When one grows tired of them, one no longer desires them.

When one no longer desires them, one's mind will be free from attachment.

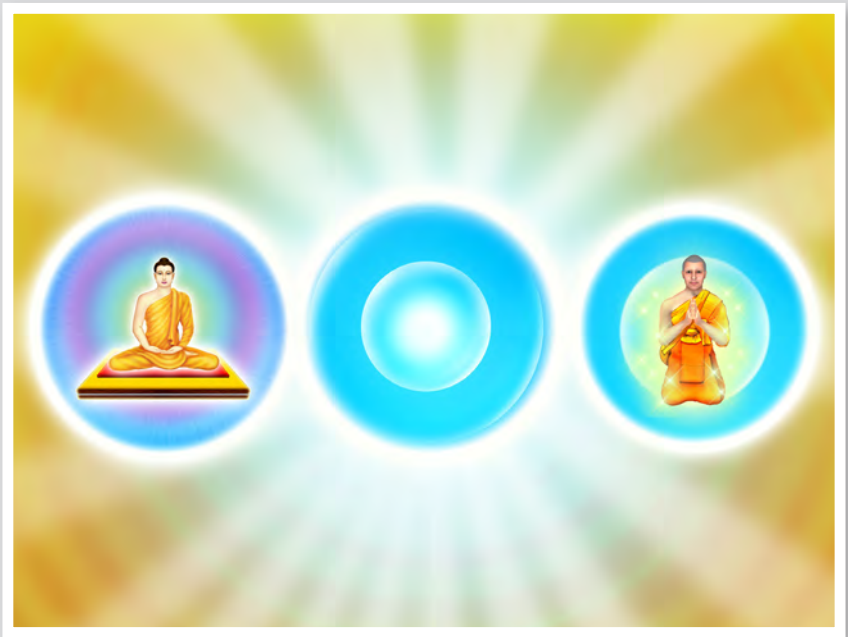
When one's mind is free from attachment, supernormal insight will appear to let one know that one has been emancipated.

When supernormal insight appears and lets one know that one has been emancipated, one realizes that rebirth is no more. One's Holy Life has been lived. The task that one should perform has now been performed. A greater task that one should perform does not exist.

While the Lord Buddha was teaching the Anattalakkhana Sutta, the Pancavaggiya Bhikkhus let their minds proceed inward along the middle way. They saw the Truth through the power of their supernormal insight until their minds were emancipated from defilements and freed from attachment. As a result, they were able to attain Arahatsip.

At the time, there happened altogether six Arahats on earth.







Teaching the Truth about Life





Chapter 3

Teaching the Truth about Life

At a place not too far from where the Lord Buddha was staying lived a young man named Yasa. He was the son of a millionaire of the city of Vanasri. He was the owner of three mansions, one for each of the three seasons. There were female musicians to play music for him inside the mansion. One evening, Yasa went to bed early, so the female musicians stopped playing music and fell asleep on the floor.

Yasa woke up in the middle of the night and saw how his mansion was still lit up. He saw the female musicians sleeping in strange positions with their musical instruments strewn about

them. Some of the women's hair was disheveled. Some were drooling. Some were muttering in their sleep. Some were snoring loudly. They were indecently exposed and their arms and legs were all over each other. They looked more like corpses in the graveyard.

The image struck a certain chord in him and he exclaimed, "It is chaotic here. It is disagreeable here." Yasa felt that he had to leave the mansion, so he put on his shoes and started walking toward the Deer Park. It was almost dawn at the time and the Lord Buddha was doing walking meditation out in the open. He heard Yasa's repeated words, "It is chaotic here. It is disagreeable here." So He said,

"It is not chaotic here. It is not disagreeable here. Come over and sit down and I will give you a Dhamma lecture."

Anupubbikatha

Yasa liked what he heard and hurried to bow low at the Lord Buddha's feet. He sat down, ready to listen. The Lord Buddha gave Yasa a Dhamma lecture called Anupubbikatha. This lecture proceeds in the order of increasing difficulty to gradually cleanse the listener's mind before he is ready to listen to a higher truths which are the Four Noble Truths. Anupubbikatha is the teaching about:



1. Dana: It is about alms-giving performed for the removal of one's greed and miserliness, the crude forms of defilements.

2. Sila: It is about physical and verbal restraint for the purpose of putting an end to unwholesomeness.

3. The Celestial Realm: It is the realm of desirable sensual pleasures, which can be gained through Dana practice and Sila practice.

4. The Harm of Sense-Desire: The kind of happiness derived from sense-desire does not last and is changeable. It is fraught with frustration. Happiness in the Celestial Realm involves sense-desire but lasts only for a time. It is not the kind of happiness that can last forever.

5. The Fruit of Abandoning Sense-Desire: Being in the monkhood allows one to accumulate good deeds more readily than being a householder because it is a life free from worries about other people's lives.

Being a wise man, Yasa was able to penetrate the content of the Anupubbikatha. He was like a cloth that had been thoroughly washed. Upon listening to the Dhamma lecture on the Four Noble Truths, Yasa attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. He was then like a clean cloth which was ready to take on dyes.

The Consequences of Listening to Dhamma Lectures

In the morning when Yasa's family learnt that he had disappeared, his father, the millionaire, came to look for him in the Deer Park. He saw Yasa's shoes which had been taken off outside a building, so he went inside but he could not see Yasa because the Lord Buddha had employed the Buddha-Power to conceal Yasa from his father.

The Lord Buddha gave Yasa's father the same Dhamma lectures that He had given to Yasa earlier. At the end of the lectures, Yasa's father attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. Upon hearing the same Dhamma lectures again, Yasa attained Arahantship. The millionaire praised the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures and declared himself a lay devotee by taking the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha as his refuge. He is the first lay person to take refuge in the Triple Gem.

It was then that the Lord Buddha allowed him to see his son. The millionaire asked his son to come home with him, for his mother



was worried to death about him. The Lord Buddha said, “Yasa is now an Arahant and should not return to the householder’s life.”

The millionaire was glad and said that it was his son’s sublime fortune. He invited the Lord Buddha and the Arahant, Yasa, to receive food at his house that morning. He then hurried home to make preparations for the food-offering.

After the millionaire left, Yasa asked to be ordained and the Lord Buddha approved by saying, “Come and be a Bhikkhu. The Truth, I have already taught you. Let you now live the Holy Life.”

In the case of Yasa, the Lord Buddha did not say live the Holy Life and put an end to suffering because Yasa had already attained Arahantship before entering the monkhood.

The First Two Buddhist Female Lay Devotees

On that same morning, the Lord Buddha went to the millionaire's house accompanied by Venerable Yasa. After the meal, the Lord Buddha gave Dhamma lectures on Anupubbikatha and the Four Noble Truths to Venerable Yasa's mother and former wife. As a result, both of them attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. They praised the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures and declared themselves as lay devotees who took the Triple Gem as their refuge. They became the first two Buddhist female lay devotees in this Buddha Eon. (A Buddha Eon is the time period between the happening of one Buddha and the happening of another Buddha.)

Venerable Yasa had had many friends before he entered the monkhood; four of them were also sons of millionaires. Their names were Vimala, Subahu, Punnaaji, and Gavampati. They heard about Venerable Yasa's ordination and wanted to come and visit him. Venerable Yasa brought them to see the Lord Buddha. He gave them Dhamma lectures, at the end of which they attained Arahatsip and were ordained by the Lord Buddha. At the time, there were eleven Arahats on earth.

Venerable Yasa's fifty friends from the countryside also heard about his ordination and wanted to come and visit him. They also ended up attaining Arahatsip. So the number of Arahats at the time increased to sixty-one.



Dhamma Lectures Should Be Lovely in the Beginning, in the Middle, and in the End

The Lord Buddha saw that there were then sufficient number of Arahats so He said to them,

“Monks, all of you have now been emancipated from all fetters. It is now time for all of you to go out separately in different directions and propagate the Dhamma. You are to give Dhamma lectures that are lovely and beneficial in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. Let the content of your lecture be perfect. Human beings who possess a low level of defilements will not have the opportunity to attain the Path and Fruit of Nibbana if they do not hear your Dhamma lectures. Let all of you benefit the masses to the fullest extent. I too will go to teach in the sub-district of Uruvelasenaniḡam (where Prince Siddhattha practiced self-mortification).

All sixty Arahats went their separate ways to teach and propagate the Lord Buddha's Teachings. Men in different places became believers and wished to enter the monkhood. But they had to be brought to the Lord Buddha so that they could be ordained by Him.

Tisaranagamanupasampada (Being Ordained by an Arahata)

The Lord Buddha ordained these men but He realized the hardship encountered by them in their travels. Therefore, He allowed the Arahats to ordain the men by first shaving off their hair and mustache. The ordinand then put on the dyed robe and took the following vow,

"I take the Lord Buddha as my refuge. I take the Dhamma as my refuge. I take the Sangha as my refuge ..." This is called ordination by taking the Threefold Refuge or Tisaranagamanupasampada.

At the Sub-District of Uruvela

Having stayed in Vanasri for a time, the Lord Buddha trekked to the sub-district of Uruvelaseniganam. Along the way, He took a rest in a cotton plantation and met a group of thirty young men who were close friends. They called themselves the "Bhaddavaggiya". They were visiting the area with their wives. Among



them was one unmarried man, so he hired a prostitute to be his temporary wife. When the men were not watching, this prostitute stole the bag containing their jewelry and fled the scene.

These people were looking for the prostitute when they ran into the Lord Buddha. They asked Him if He saw the woman.

The Lord Buddha said to them, “Should you be looking for the prostitute or should you be looking for yourselves?”

The Bhaddavaggiya were wise men and they answered rightly, “We should be looking for ourselves, Lord.”

The Lord Buddha then gave them Dhamma lectures on the Anupubbikatha and the Four Noble Truths, after which all thirty men were able to attain Arahatship. After ordination, they were sent out to propagate His Teachings.

The Three Fire-Worshipping Brothers

The Lord Buddha continued on His way to Uruvela where three brothers who were fire-worshipping ascetics were living with their 1,000 followers. They had their respective ashrams along the bank of the Neranjara River. The eldest brother, Uruvelakassapa, built his ashram nearest to the water source and was the first one the Lord Buddha went to see. The Lord Buddha had to employ different methods to let Uruvelakassapa see the folly of thinking himself above others as well as the folly of his practice.

When the Lord Buddha first met Uruvelakassapa, He asked him if He could stay at the fire-worshipping hall. Uruvelakassapa felt annoyed that the Lord Buddha should ask to stay at such a sacred site and warned Him that a venomous Phya Naga was living there. When the Lord Buddha entered the hall, the Phya Naga was angry and spewed forth poisonous fumes. The Lord Buddha entered the Tejokasina Jhana (focusing His mind steadily on the image of fire) and caused His body to be like fire in order to counteract the Phya Naga's poisonous fumes. His body took on the bright red color of fire and it looked as if it could burn the fire-worshipping hall to cinders.

The fire-worshipping ascetics saw the bright red color of fire and thought that the Lord Buddha had to have been killed by the Phya Naga. In the morning, they went inside the hall to



look around. They saw the Phya Naga in the transformed form of a small snake curling itself around inside the Lord Buddha's alms-bowl. The Lord Buddha said to them, "This Naga has been quelled by my power." Though surprised by what they saw, their arrogance remained intact.

Due to these ascetics' uncommon stubbornness, the Lord Buddha had to display many different forms of supernatural powers through the course of many days in order to bring them to their senses.

At one point, it had been raining heavily and continuously for several days; and the entire area was badly flooded especially where the Lord Buddha was staying. The fire-worshipping ascetics believed the Lord Buddha to have been drowned already, so they went in a boat to where He had been staying. Upon their

arrival, they saw the Lord Buddha doing walking meditation on dry ground and there was a solid wall of water all around Him. Having witnessed such Buddha-Power, they came to the realization that they were not Arahats after all. They bowed low at the Lord Buddha's feet and asked to become His disciples.

(To create such a miracle, one must achieve elevated meditative attainments and focus one's mind steadily on water before making the resolute wish for the water to form a solid wall around one.)

The ascetics cut off their top-knots and lowered them along with their headgears and all the implements used in worshipping fire into the river in preparation for ordination. Afterward, the Lord Buddha ordained them.

Nadikassapa, the younger brother and his followers who lived further down the river saw all the things floating down the river and rushed to where Uruvelakassapa and his followers were living. They ended up being ordained by the Lord Buddha.

The youngest brother, Gayakassapa and his followers who lived further down the river from Nadikassapa saw the same things in the river. They rushed to the ashrams of Gayakassapa's brothers and they too ended up being ordained by the Lord Buddha.

Giving a Dhamma Lecture Based on the Audience's Preference

Having stayed in Uruvela for a suitable time, the Lord Buddha went with His new disciples to the sub-district of Gayasisa. There, the Lord Buddha gave them a Dhamma lecture called “the Adittapariyaya Sutta” based on the former fire-worshippers’ preference for fire.

“Monks, the following things are hot. When eyes meet corporeality, it gives rise to consciousness causing one to feel happy, unhappy, neither happy nor unhappy.”

When ears and sound meet, when nose and smell meet, when tongue and taste meet, when something hot, cold, soft, hard and body meet, when different thoughts and mind meet,

the meeting of these things gives rise to heat as a result of feeling. Feeling gives rise to greed, anger, and ignorance.

In addition, one experiences the heat of suffering caused by birth, aging, sickness, death, tears, sadness, and frustration.

The fire of defilements (greed, anger, and ignorance) and the fire of suffering as described earlier represent what is hot. When you can see the reality of these things, you should grow tired of everything from eyes meeting corporeality to the arising of feeling as well as the rest of the sense-faculties meeting their corresponding stimuli.

When one grows tired, satisfaction and love will end.

When satisfaction and love end, so will attachment.

When the mind no longer holds on to attachment there will arise the supernormal insight, which allows one to know that one has finally been liberated.

When supernormal insight arises, one knows that one's defilements have been extinguished. Rebirth has come to an end. The Holy Life has been lived. The task which has taken countless lifetimes to complete is now completed. A greater task does not exist.

At the end of the Adittapariyaya Sutta, the mind of every monk was emancipated from defilements and all forms of attachment. And all of the monks attained the Path and Fruit of Nibbana as Arahats.

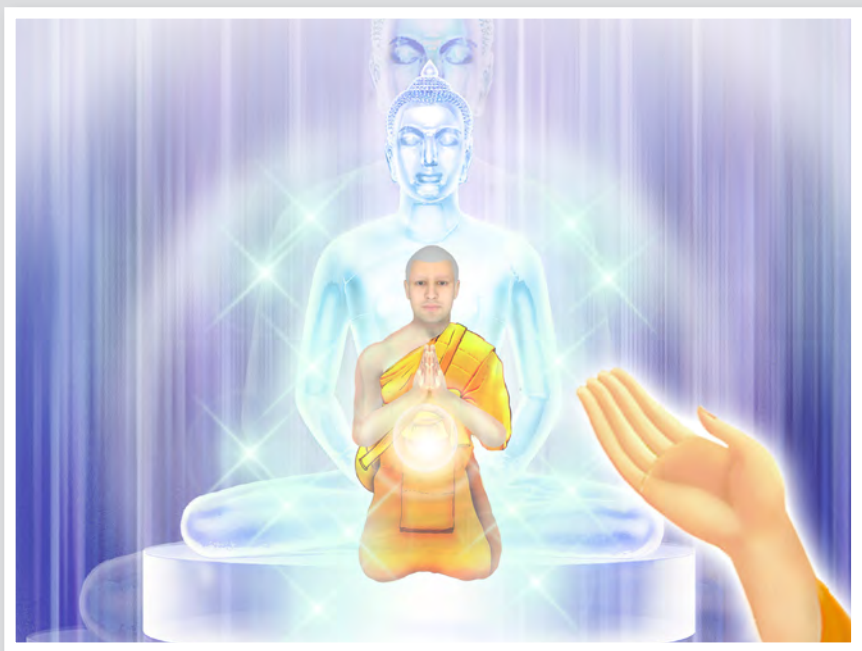






*Fulfilling a Promise and Appointing
Chief Disciples*





Chapter 4

Fulfilling a Promise and Appointing Chief Disciples

Once the Lord Buddha had gained a sufficient number of Arahats to do the work of propagating His Teachings, He wanted to fulfill the promise given earlier to King Bimbisara of the kingdom of Magadha. So He trekked with His Perfected Disciples to the city of Rajagarh, the capital city of Magadha.

By then the rumors about the Lord Buddha had spread to different kingdoms. It was rumored that a new religion had been founded by Venerable Gotama, the former prince of the Sakya House who left the throne to become self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha. It was also rumored that He was on His way to Rajagarh along with 1,000 Perfected Disciples. And they were now staying

at the Palm Grove. It was rumored that the Lord Buddha and His disciples were all Arahats, hence, emancipated from defilements. The people of Rajagarh had looked forward to seeing them. And when the time came, they went in droves to see the Lord Buddha and His Perfected Disciples. Meanwhile, King Bimbisara had heard the great news and went with his attendants to the Palm Grove as well.

When everyone arrived, they saw the three esteemed fire-worshipping brothers as well as their followers and some began to wonder who the leader among them was. As a result, some people paid homage to the Lord Buddha, some to the former fire-worshipping ascetics, and some did not pay homage to anyone.



The Reason for Their Conversion

The Lord Buddha knew that the people did not truly believe in Him and would not pay attention to His Dhamma lecture just yet. Therefore, He asked Venerable Uruvelakassapa the reason for his conversion.

Venerable Uruvelakassapa said that his former belief is nonsensical and useless. And it is not the way to put an end to suffering. Fire-worship when performed for the sake of corporeality, sound, smell, taste or even women, the result will be sense-desire, one form of defilements. And the sense-desire resulting from such fire-worship causes the mind to become gloomy and impure.

But now, I have found the way of peace given to me by the Lord Buddha. I am now free from defilements, which are the causes of

all suffering. I am now free from worry. I am now free from the Sense Sphere. This way of peace is unchangeable; it is lasting. One cannot be taught to believe using mere words. Lasting peace must be personally experienced with one's mind.

Venerable Uruvelakassapa then got up from his seat to bow low at the Lord Buddha's feet before proclaiming that the Lord Buddha was their religious leader.

His action dispelled any doubt in the people's minds and everyone including the court officials was then ready to listen to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures.

The Lord Buddha gave the Dhamma lectures on the Anupubbikatha and the Four Noble Truths. Of the 120,000 people present, 110,000 including King Bimbisara attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. The rest took the Triple Gem as their refuge.

King Bimbisara's Five Wishes

King Bimbisara went to bow low at the Lord Buddha's feet and declared himself a lay devotee. He invited the Lord Buddha and His Perfected Disciples to have a meal at the palace the next morning. He told the Lord Buddha about the five wishes he had had before ascending the throne. These included:

1. The wish to be the king of Magadha
2. The wish for an Arahat, a self-enlightened personage to visit his kingdom
3. The wish to sit near that Arahat
4. The wish to be taught the Truth by that Arahat.
5. The wish to have a broad and deep understanding of the Arahat's teachings.

In those days, many people in King Bimbisara's kingdom proclaimed themselves Arahats and religious leaders. But the king could not be certain if they were truly Arahats. But having listened to the Lord Buddha's lecture and having attained the Eye of Truth himself, he had no doubt who the Lord Buddha was. He felt that his five wishes had finally been fulfilled.



The First Buddhist Temple

The next day, the Lord Buddha and His 1,003 Perfected Disciples went to the palace for a meal. After the meal, King Bimbisara expressed his wish to offer the Bamboo Grove to the Lord Buddha and His disciples. King Bimbisara felt the Palm Grove to be too far away. As a result, the Bamboo Grove became the first Buddhist temple in this Buddha Eon.

Dedication of Merit

Having offered food and the Bamboo Grove to the Lord Buddha and His disciples, King Bimbisara did not dedicate any merit earned to his departed relatives.

King Bimbisara's relatives from a previous existence had committed a misdeed by stealing the monks' food 92 Kappas ago during the time of the Lord Phussa Buddha. As a result, they had been reborn as Petas living in the Peta Realm. For an entire Buddha-Eon, these Petas did not receive any dedicated merit; and they had been suffering horrifically from starvation. That night, they shrieked loudly and shrilly because they wanted King Bimbisara to dedicate merit to them.

The next morning, King Bimbisara asked the Lord Buddha about what he had heard in the night, the Lord Buddha told him about his Peta relatives. The king then made an offering of food and robes to the Lord Buddha and His Perfected Disciples. Afterward, he dedicated the merit earned to his former relatives by saying, "Idan me natinan hotu": May the merit earned be received by my relatives and siblings. This phrase is still being used today.



The Two Chief Disciples

While the Lord Buddha was staying in the Bamboo Grove, two young men who had been close friends were going around entertaining themselves with plays and the like. One was called Upatissa, the son of Sari or Sariputra. The other was called Kolita, the son of Moggalli or Moggallana. After a while, they felt that their lives lacked substance so they decided to take up the religious life by ordaining under the religious mendicant, Sanjaya. They did not attain the Truth as they had hoped and they promised each other that whoever attained the Truth first would tell the other about it.

One morning, Venerable Assaji, one of the Pancavaggiya Arahats went on his alms-round in the city of Rajagarh. The

mendicant Sariputra saw him and was impressed by the Arahāt's deportment and composure so unlike the ascetics of other religious beliefs. He wanted to know who Venerable Assaji's religious leader was and he kept following the Arahāt until he had been offered food and was sitting down to have his meal. Sariputra went to attend to the Arahāt and after the meal he said to the Arahāt, "Venerable Sir, your complexion glows so. Who is your religious leader?"

Venerable Assaji answered, "Behold, young man, the great monk who is the son of the Sakya House is my religious leader. I am happy with His Teachings."

Sariputra asked, "What did he teach?"

Venerable Assaji saw that the young man was an ascetic of another religious faith and felt it pointless to teach him anything so he said, "I've just entered the monkhood and cannot give you a profound Dhamma lecture. Can I just give you a brief summary of one?"

The young man answered, "Of course. You can give me a short lecture or a long one. It's up to you, Venerable Sir."

Venerable Assaji said, "Whatever has a cause, the Most Exalted One shows me what that cause is and how to end it. This is what my Master teaches."

Given his extraordinary intelligence, the young man understood immediately that everything has a cause and once the cause is removed, everything will disappear. It must mean that the religious leader of this monk knows how to extinguish the cause of suffering.

Having contemplated these few words, supernormal insight appeared and the young man attained the Eye of Truth. He realized that whatever comes into existence naturally will cease to exist naturally. Sariputra became a believer and wanted to know where the religious leader was staying at the time.

When the young man learnt from Venerable Assaji that He was staying at the Bamboo Grove, he told Venerable Assaji that he would go to see the religious leader later with his friend. Sariputra returned to the ashram and told Moggallana about all that had transpired.

Upon hearing just the one sentence, Moggallana, like Sariputra, also attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. They went with their 500 followers to bid farewell to Sanjaya, the religious mendicant. They invited Sanjaya to go with them. Sanjaya was very sorry to see them leave because these two disciples had made quite a name for him. However hard they tried to convince him, Sanjaya remained unmoved because he refused to become anyone's disciple. He told them that there are stupid people and intelligent people in this world but the number of stupid people is greater.

Therefore, let the intelligent ones go to Venerable Gotama and let the stupid ones come to him. During the travel, half of Sariputra and Moggallana's followers decided to return to Sanjaya. Having met the Lord Buddha, they asked to be ordained. The Lord Buddha ordained them via Ehibhikkhuupasampada. This method of ordination can be employed by the Lord Buddha alone, and it is the method used for an ordinand who has already pursued Perfections to the fullest extent. For such a person, a monk's requisites will miraculously appear for them during the ordination ceremony.

How to Remove Sleepiness during Meditation Practice

Venerable Moggallana practiced meditation for seven days to no avail because he felt sleepy the entire time. The Lord Buddha then told him the ways to remove sleepiness.

1. If you are visualizing something and it still makes you sleepy, visualize it more earnestly.

2. If you are visualizing something and you still feel sleepy, focus your mind on the teaching you just heard.

3. If you have already focused your mind on the teaching and still feel sleepy, recite the teaching and elaborate on it.

4. If you recite the teaching and still feel sleepy, probe both your ears and stroke your head with your palm.

5. If you still feel sleepy, stand up, wet your eyelids and look all around you.

6. If that does not work, visualize a bright light. Let there be daylight alone. Let there be no nighttime. Let your mind be free and open. Let it not be cloaked by anything.

7. If that does not work, do walking meditation. Restrain the sense-faculties and keep the mind inside the center of your body.



8. If that does not work, lie down on your right side with your legs together and one foot above the other. Be mindful of when you want to wake up. As soon as you are awake, get right up and tell yourself that you will not derive happiness from sleeping, from lying down, from falling asleep.

How to Prevent the Mind from Wandering

Then the Lord Buddha teaches Venerable Moggallana how to prevent his mind from wandering as follows.

1. When entering someone's house, you must not think yourself important but to think that each house is filled with things that people must do. People have their work to do and they may

not have the time to pay adequate attention to you. You should not become indignant and think that something is wrong or that the people in the house are not happy with you. That way of thinking will make your mind wander. Once your mind wanders, you will not be able to practice meditation.

2. When you must speak to someone, you should not talk about things that may lead to an argument because an argument causes a person to say too much. When a person has too much to say, his thought will wander and he will not be able to practice meditation.

3. You should not spend time with other people because it will cause your mind to lose its peace. A monk should seek a quiet place where no one passes by.

Venerable Moggallana Attained Arahatsip

Venerable Moggallana asked the Lord Buddha for an abbreviated version of how to practice in order to extinguish craving and attachment and attain the highest fruit of the Holy Life, the life far more sublime than those of celestial beings and human beings.

The Lord Buddha answered, "Form no attachment to things."

Once there is no attachment, one will attain the most elevated insight and know the Truth.

Once the Truth is known, one knows to distinguish one thing from another.

Once the Truth is known, when feeling arises be it unhappiness, happiness, neither happiness nor unhappiness, one will see the changeability of all kinds of feeling. One considers feeling with one's supernormal insight and one becomes tired of it. One considers with one's supernormal insight how it should be extinguished. One considers with one's supernormal insight how one should completely give up feeling.

Having thus considered, one no longer forms an attachment to anything in the world. Without attachment, one is not startled by fear. One is imperturbable. One can extinguish one's defilements. Once defilements have been extinguished, one realizes that rebirth is finished. The Holy Life has been lived. Life's task has been completed. And nothing more has to be done.

Venerable Moggallana practiced everything as taught by the Lord Buddha and he attained Arahatsip on that very day.

Venerable Sariputra Attained Arahathship

Venerable Sariputra practiced meditation for half-a-month and still could not attain Arahathship. On that day, a wandering religious mendicant called Dighanakha Aggivessanagotra came to see the Lord Buddha. Venerable Sariputra was standing behind the Lord Buddha fanning Him inside the Sukarakhata Cave on the Vultures' Peak. Dighanakha told the Lord Buddha that he was right in being dissatisfied with all things. The Lord Buddha said to him, "If that is so, it means that you must also be dissatisfied with your own opinions." Then the Lord Buddha gave him a Dhamma lecture.

Some groups of ascetics are of the opinion that people should like everything. Others are of the opinion that people should not like anything at all. Still other groups are of the opinion that people should like certain things and not like certain things.

Actually, these three opinions are incorrect. The first group places an emphasis on love. The second group places an emphasis on hatred. The third group places an emphasis on love for certain things and hatred for certain things. These different opinions can cause endless disputes among them. Ongoing disputes bring about vindictiveness. And vindictiveness brings about violence.

A person, who understands that all three opinions are incorrect, will not form a new opinion. One should not form an attachment

to anything because this body of ours comprises the four elements (earth, water, wind, fire). It is born of our parents, grown from the food we eat, filled with malodor that must be masked by scented things, must be scrubbed clean, and must finally disintegrate. Such is the case with every life.

We should consider the fact that this body is impermanent. It brings about suffering, it is difficult to endure, it aches constantly, it is easily injured, it exists with difficulty, it deteriorates all the time, it is emptiness, and it lacks true selfhood.

Having thus considered, one will be able to abandon love, lust, and sense-desire.

There are three kinds of feeling: happiness, unhappiness, neither happiness nor unhappiness. Feeling is impermanent. It is made up. Once it arises, it must deteriorate. It fades and comes to an end as it does naturally.

When a wise person hears this teaching and considers it, he will grow tired of all three kinds of feeling. Once one grows tired of them, one will release love, lust, and craving. Feeling arises, fades, and ends as it must naturally.

When a wise person hears this teaching and considers it, he will grow tired of all three kinds of feeling. Once one grows tired of them, one will release love, lust, and craving. One's mind

becomes free from attachment. Once attachment is released, supernormal insight appears; and it lets one know that one has been emancipated.

One knows that rebirth is no more. One's Holy Life has been lived. Life's duty has been performed. Other works, which must be performed in order to bear greater fruit, do not exist. The monk who has thus been emancipated will not argue with anyone. He may speak as he must in this world of convention but he forms no attachment to what he says or hears.



The Same Dhamma Lecture, Different Levels of Attainment

Venerable Sariputra listened to the Dhamma lecture from beginning to end. His mind was kept on the Middle Way. He penetrated the importance of abandoning attachment with his supernormal insight. Having thus considered, his mind became free of defilements and attachment and he was able to attain Arahatsip.

At the same time, Dighakhana attained the Fruit of Sotapanna. He praised the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lecture by saying that the Lord Buddha's lecture is lovely, clear, and easy to understand. It is like turning something upside down right side up. It is like

opening what has been closed. It is like giving directions to someone who has lost his way. It is like a lamp that allows people to see in the dark. Dighakhana then pledged himself a lay devotee.

Sometime later, the Lord Buddha appointed Venerable Moggallana as His Chief Disciple on the left who was foremost in supernatural powers and Venerable Sariputra as His Chief Disciple on the right who was foremost in wisdom. Both these chief disciples were instrumental in propagating the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

After Buddhism had gained a strong foothold in the kingdom of Magadha, the Lord Buddha went to teach the Dhamma in other kingdoms. He had gained a large number of followers. Some ordained as a Bhikkhu. Some ordained as a Bhikkhuni. Some became a male lay devotee and some became a female lay devotee. These members of the Four Buddhist Communities have been instrumental in the propagation of the Lord Buddha's Teachings.







The Great Meeting of the Lord Buddha's Perfected Disciples





Chapter 5

The Great Meeting of the Lord Buddha's Perfected Disciples

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha went to teach the people of Magadha. Meanwhile, a young man called Pipaphali of the Kassapa family became tired of the householder's life and took up the religious life as a wandering ascetic. He saw the Lord Buddha resting under the banyan tree and wanted to become His disciple. The Lord Buddha ordained him and gave him three advices as follows.

1. Be respectful to all the monks. Be respectful to those who have been long in the monkhood, those who have not been long in the monkhood, and those who have just entered the monkhood.

2. Pay attention to wholesome teachings and consider the content of those teachings.

3. Never lose your mindfulness. Keep it inside your body. Make it a habit to consider the reality of your body.

Having been ordained by the Lord Buddha, Venerable Mahakassapa (formerly called Pipaphali) considered what the Lord Buddha had taught him and endeavored to practice meditation accordingly. On the eighth day after entering the monkhood, he attained Arahatsip.

Soon afterward, the Lord Buddha met in the city of Rajagarh the son of a court advisor, a citizen of the city of Ujjeni. His name was Kaccayana, and he was also ordained by the Lord Buddha.

Ovadapatimokkha

The Master Plan for Propagating Buddhism

On the full-moon day of the third lunar month, 1,250 Perfected Disciples, all of whom were Arahats and ordained by the Lord Buddha, came at the same time without prior arrangement to see the Lord Buddha. The fact that these four extraordinary factors came together at this meeting gave it the name: “The Great Assembly of Disciples” marked by the union of four factors.



The Lord Buddha knew it to be a fitting occasion to teach them the Ovadapatimokkha (the Principal Teaching). Every Lord Buddha teaches the same Principal Teaching to Their Perfected Disciples. This teaching contains the Buddhist Ideal, the Principles of Buddhism, and the method of propagating Buddhism. It comprises thirteen parts as follows.

1. Abstain from all unwholesome deeds.
2. Perform only good deeds and to the fullest extent.
3. Make the mind bright and clear.
4. Cultivate patience and self-restraint.
5. Nibbana is the Ultimate Truth.

6. A person who harms others cannot be called an ascetic.
7. A person who exploits others cannot be called a Buddhist monk.
8. A Buddhist monk must never practice abusive speech.
9. A Buddhist monk must never abuse anyone physically.
10. A Buddhist monk must practice self-restraint according to the Patimokkha (the monastic disciplinary code).
11. A Buddhist monk must exercise moderation in terms of food consumption.
12. A Buddhist monk must sit and lie down in a quiet place.
13. A Buddhist monk must practice higher mental discipline.

The day the Ovadapatimokkha lecture was given for the first time was later called Magha Puja Day. Every two weeks, the Lord Buddha and His Perfected Disciples would review the content of this teaching for all the monks on the Buddhist Holy Day. This practice was later canceled and replaced by the chanting of the Patimokkha, which is still being practiced today.



The Giving of a Monastery – An Excellent Form of Alms-Giving

The Bamboo Grove given to the Buddhist monks along with its existing buildings was under the care of park officers when the monks went somewhere else because it was not a true monastery.

When the monks trekked to different places, they stayed in the forest, under a tree, in the mountain, on a cliffside, in a cave, in a cemetery, in the bush, out in the open, on a haystack, etc.

Sometime later, a millionaire called Rajagahaka asked the Lord Buddha for permission to construct sixty buildings for the monks. On that occasion, the Lord Buddha allowed the monks to stay in five different kinds of shelter. These include:

1. Vihara: a building with two wings and a roof
2. A shelter having just one wall.
3. A castle having several stories and a pointed roof
4. A building with a flat roof
5. An arched space such as a cave

The Lord Buddha praised the millionaire for offering an excellent gift, for the monastery would provide shelter for the Buddhist monks coming from all four cardinal points. It would protect them from cold air, hot air, ferocious animals, reptiles, mosquitoes, strong winds, and strong sunrays. It would be a place where they could relax, rest, and practice meditation.

When a Buddhist monk arrived at the monastery, the millionaire would have the opportunity to offer him food, rice, robes, and shelter. Buddhist monks could then give Dhamma lectures to the millionaire and the people to alleviate their suffering. When a person hears the teaching and practices it, he has the opportunity to attain the Eye of Truth, extinguish defilements, and attain complete Nibbana. The giving of a monastery is praised by every Lord Buddha for being an excellent gift.

King Bimbisara is the first person to offer a monastery to the Buddhist monks and the first person to dedicate the merit earned to his departed relatives. The Lord Buddha rejoiced in his merit by saying, “Adasi me akasi me...” which means that when we think

of the kindness of our departed loved ones, we should dedicate the merit earned to them. We should not shed too many tears because tears cannot benefit the departed person. Wherever he is reborn, he will be there for a very long time.

Therefore, the alms we offer to the Buddhist monks can benefit our departed loved ones for a very long time. We are benefiting them as well as the monks. It is for these reasons that alms-offering is a great source of merit.

The Lord Buddha advised us to dedicate merit to celestial beings instead of making them a sacrificial offering as being practiced since ancient times. Dedication of the merit earned promotes gratitude and allows the family to prosper. Therefore, the Lord Buddha allows us to practice it.

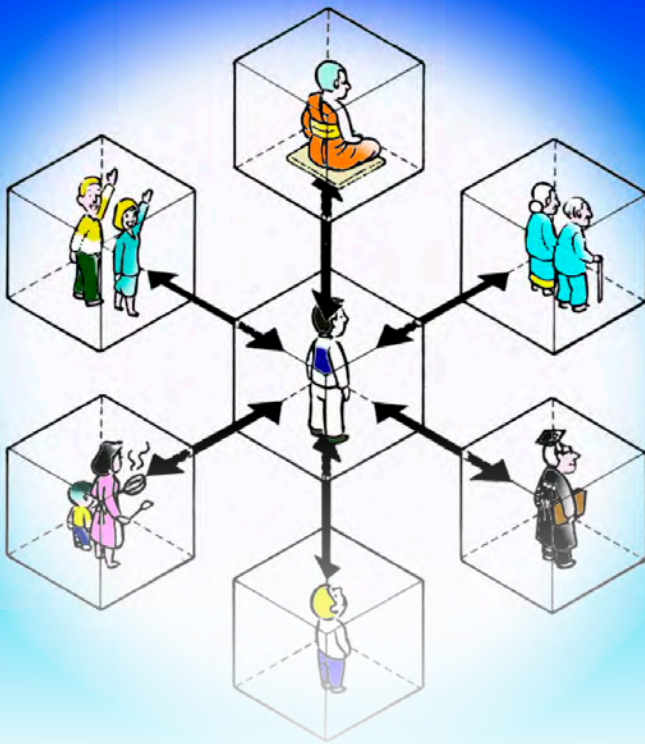


Being Ordained by the Sangha

Later, the Lord Buddha allowed eligible men to be ordained by the Sangha (four or more monks). On one occasion, an old and poor Brahmin called Radha wanted to enter the monkhood but no one wanted to ordain him. The Lord Buddha asked the monks if anyone could recall the Brahmin's good deeds. Venerable Sariputra said that Radha once put a ladleful of cooked rice in his alms-bowl. Therefore, the Lord Buddha allowed Venerable Sariputra to ordain Radha. Ever since then, the Lord Buddha allowed eligible men to be ordained by the Sangha. In a city or town, at least ten monks must be present. In faraway places, at least five monks are required. During the ordination ceremony, one monk announces once in the presence of other monks that a

man is about to be ordained. This is followed by the same monk making the same announcement thrice. If the monks present in the ceremony unanimously agree, the man is considered ordained; if not, he cannot be ordained. This method of ordination is called, Natticatutathakammaupasampada. It is an ordination method where the representative of the monks makes the announcement four times and the ordinand must be vouched for by one of the monks called the Preceptor.

Initially, a monk could perform an ordination ceremony. But once Natticatutathakammaupasampada had been put in place, other methods of ordination were no longer in use. In other words, the Lord Buddha has given the Sangha the authority to ordain a suitable ordinand.



Applying the Lord Buddha's Teachings in Our Daily Life

In teaching the Dhamma, the Lord Buddha did not only emphasize the teachings on the supramundane state for the sake of putting an end to the round of rebirth, but He also gave many excellent teachings concerning the householder's life.

On one occasion while the Lord Buddha was making His alms-round in the city of Rajagarh, he came upon a millionaire's son called Singalaka. This man was paying homage to the six directions (the four cardinal points, the direction above, and the direction below). He was wearing a wet robe, and his hair was wet.

The Lord Buddha asked him what he was doing. The man answered that he is following the order given by his father just before he died. The Lord Buddha said that He has a different teaching concerning the Six Directions.

The Lord Buddha subsequently taught the young man about the Six Directions as follows.

- The east is the direction in front of us and includes our parents.
- The west is behind us and includes our children and spouse.
- The direction below us includes our subordinates and servants.
- The south is to our right and includes our teachers.
- The north is to our left and includes our friends and government officials.
- The direction above us includes righteous monks and ascetics.

To receive benefits from paying homage to the Six Directions, one must first abstain from the Four Kinds of Evil Deeds, the Four Causes of Partiality and the Six Causes of Ruin.

The Four Kinds of Evil Deeds include killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying.

The Four Causes of Partiality include love, hatred, stupidity, and fear.

The Six Causes of Ruin include alcohol consumption, going out carousing at night, indulging in different forms of entertainment, gambling, keeping bad company, and laziness.

Once one can abstain from these things, one will meet with prosperity and one can then pay homage to the Six Directions.

At the front are one's parents and there are five things that one must do for them.

1. Take good care of them.
2. Do their work for them.
3. Perpetuate the family's good name.
4. Conduct oneself in such a way as to be worthy of the family fortune.
5. Make merit and dedicate it to them after they die.

There are five things parents must do for their children.

1. Forbid them to commit evil deeds.
2. Encourage them to perform good deeds.
3. Give them a good education.
4. Find a good life partner for them.
5. Let them inherit the family fortune when the time is right.

To the right are one's teachers, and there are five things a student must do for his teachers.

1. Get up to welcome them.
2. Wait on them.
3. Be obedient to them.
4. Attend to them.
5. Learn from them with respect.

There are five things a teacher must do for his students in return.

1. Give them good advice.
2. Teach them good things.
3. Teach them everything he knows.
4. Praise them in front of others.
5. Protect them from harm.



The direction behind is a person's wife and there are five things he must do for her.

1. Honor her.
2. Do not insult her.
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Give her authority over the household.
5. Give her clothes and jewelry.

There are five things a wife must do for her husband.

1. Be a good housewife.
2. Treat the household staff well.
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Keep the husband's material wealth safe.
5. Be hard-working.

To the left are one's friends and there are five things one must do for them.

1. Be generous.
2. Practice endearing speech.
3. Help them with their errands.
4. Be consistent.
5. Be sincere.

There are five things a friend must do in return.

1. Keep him safe when he is reckless.
2. Safeguard his possessions.
3. Be there for him in times of trouble.
4. Be there for him in the face of danger.
5. Respect his relatives.

The direction below is one's subordinates and there are five things one must do for them.

1. Assign them suitable work.
2. Give them food and pay them for their work.
3. Provide medical care for them when they are sick.
4. Give them exotic-tasting food.
5. Give them some time off.

There are five things a subordinate must do for his boss.

1. Start work early.
2. Stop work late.
3. Do not steal.
4. Work conscientiously.
5. Sing the boss's praises to others.



The direction above is the righteous monks and ascetics and there are five things one must do for them.

1. Treat them with loving-kindness.
2. Speak to them with loving-kindness.
3. Think of them with loving-kindness.
4. Welcome them into one's home.
5. Offer them alms.

There are six things a righteous monk must do in return.

1. Forbid the laity to perform evil deeds.
2. Encourage them to perform wholesome deeds.
3. Help them with kindness.

4. Teach them what they have not heard before.
5. Explain what they have already heard.
6. Teach them the way to the Celestial Realm.

At the end of the Dhamma lecture, the Lord Buddha said that anyone who pays homage to the Six Directions in these ways is protecting himself against any harm that may come from members of these Six Directions.

At the end of the Dhamma lecture, Singalaka became a believer and pledged himself a lay devotee. And he took the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha as his refuge for the rest of his life.







*Teaching His Father
and the People of Kapilavastu*





Chapter 6

Teaching His Father and the People of Kapilavastu

When the Lord Buddha was first propagating His Teachings, He spent most of His time in the Bamboo Grove in the kingdom of Magadha. Each time the Lord Buddha or His disciples went to teach in different places and different kingdoms, they would always return to the Bamboo Grove.

The news about the Lord Buddha's Teachings had spread far and wide, and finally it reached the city of Kapilavastu. King Sudhodana had waited six whole years for his son's news. When he heard that his son had attained Self-Enlightenment and became

the Lord Buddha, he was glad and immediately sent a group of high-ranking officers to invite the Lord Buddha to visit Kapilavastu.

But once these envoys heard the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures and practiced accordingly, they were able to attain Arahatsip. As a result, they were no longer concerned with secular matters; therefore, they did not ask the Lord Buddha to visit Kapilavastu. It could also be that they believed that the Lord Buddha would visit Kapilavastu when He deemed the time was right. This happened to all nine groups of envoys sent by King Suddhodana.

Finally, King Suddhodana sent the tenth group of high-ranking court officials. The leader of the envoys was the minister, Kaludayi, who was born on the same day as the Lord Buddha. He had asked King Suddhodana for permission to enter the monkhood before he left for his mission. Having listened to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures, he too was able to attain Arahatsip.

But he did not forget his mission and at the appropriate time, he invited the Lord Buddha to visit Kapilavastu. The Lord Buddha accepted King Suddhodana's invitation and left with a group of His disciples. It took two months for them to arrive in the city of Kapilavastu. The Lord Buddha and 20,000 monks stayed at a relative's park called Nigrodharam.

The Lord Buddha's relatives came to see Him. The younger members were seated in the front so that they could pay homage to the Lord Buddha. However, the older ones were sitting further back because they felt that they were older and should not have to pay homage to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha understood their arrogance. So He went up to stand in midair and dusted the heads of these older relatives with the dirt on His feet. Having been thus subdued, they paid homage to the Lord Buddha.

Right then a red rain called Pokakharavassa fell from the sky. The rain was especially refreshing. This wondrous rain will only wet those who wish to be wet. For those who do not, the raindrops simply roll off them like water rolling off the lotus leaf. The falling of red rain was the reason that the Lord Buddha told His relatives about the existence when He was Prince Vessantara because the same red rain fell when Prince Vessantara and the members of his family were finally reunited.

During the reunion, no one thought to invite the Lord Buddha and His disciples for a meal in the next morning. They assumed that He would have His meal at the palace as usual.

Going on an Almsround- A Monk's Daily Activity

In the morning, the Lord Buddha went with His disciples on an alms-round along the streets of Kapilavastu. The city residents were shocked to hear that the former Prince Siddhattha was begging for food. They all came to see the Lord Buddha for themselves and to offer food to Him and His disciples.

King Suddhodana heard about the alms-round and felt very disappointed and embarrassed. He hastened to invite the Lord Buddha to the palace and said that members of the royal household should not do such a thing as to beg for alms. The Lord Buddha told the king that He was following the example of every previous Buddha. He explained to the king that going on an alms-round is one of the monks' daily activities. Monks must practice righteousness. Whoever practices righteousness is happy here and now and will be happy in the hereafter.

Having heard just this short Dhamma lecture, King Suddhodana was able to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna. And he no longer forbade the Lord Buddha to go on an alms-round.

During His stay in Kapilavastu, the Lord Buddha went on an alms-round daily to allow the people of Kapilavastu to earn incomparable merit. Princess Yasodhara heard about the Lord



Buddha's visit but she was still feeling very hurt and very sad. She had felt terribly rejected and embarrassed for having been abandoned by her husband six years ago.

But having loved her husband so deeply, she could not help but steal a look at the Lord Buddha when He went on an alms-round. She pointed Him out to their son Rahula and said, "That is your father." Prince Rahula instantly felt a deep love for the Lord Buddha.

When the Lord Buddha thought it appropriate, He went in the company of a monk to Princess Yasodhara's castle. He told His disciple not to stop the princess from hugging His ankles because if he did, she would be grief-stricken to death literally.

The princess was emaciated, and her complexion was sallow. She rubbed her head against the Lord Buddha's feet and wept until she fainted.

The Lord Buddha comforted the princess by recounting the accounts of their countless lives together such as the existence when He was a Kinara and she was a Kinari (Kinara and Kinari are a type of male and female living beings dwelling in the celestial realm of Catumaharajika). And he praised her for her undying loyalty.

Princess Yasodhara's grief was finally assuaged to the point where she could pay rapturous attention to the Lord Buddha's teaching, at the end of which she was able to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna.

On the fifth day after arriving in Kapilavastu, there was a marriage ceremony between Prince Nanda, the Lord Buddha's stepbrother and Princess Janapadakalyani. Prince Nanda's mother was Queen Pajapatigotami, the Lord Buddha's aunt and stepmother. King Suddhodana invited the Lord Buddha to the ceremony. Having finished His meal, the Lord Buddha gave His alms-bowl to Prince Nanda signifying that he had to accompany the Lord Buddha back to His Perfumed Dwelling.

Princess Janapadakalyani heard that Prince Nanda was leaving the palace so she hastened to ask him to hurry back.

But however far they had walked, the Lord Buddha did not ask for His alms-bowl back. When they finally arrived at the Lord Buddha's Perfumed Dwelling outside of town, the Lord Buddha asked Prince Nanda, "Nanda, will you enter the monkhood?"

Ever since they were growing up together, Prince Nanda had always loved and respected the Lord Buddha. This time, it was no different. Out of deference to his elder stepbrother, he answered, "I will, Lord!"

The Lord Buddha had Prince Nanda ordained as a monk but Prince Nanda was unhappy with the monkhood. He kept thinking of his fiancé and wanting to disrobe, but out of deference to the Lord Buddha, he did not.



The First Buddhist Novice Monk

Not long after Prince Nanda entered the monkhood, Princess Yasodhara sent their son Rahula to ask for material wealth from the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha thought about the request and believed that Prince Rahula deserved noble wealth rather than material wealth. He told Venerable Sariputra to ordain the little prince so Prince Rahula became the first Buddhist novice monk in this Buddha Eon.

When King Suddhodana heard the news, he felt very bad that there would be no one to inherit the throne after him. He asked the Lord Buddha to grant him the wish that in the future whoever

wishes to enter the monkhood must first secure his parents' permission. The Lord Buddha granted him the wish and it has been a customary practice up to the present day.

Having stayed for a time in Kapilavastu, the Lord Buddha returned to the city of Rajagarh along with Venerable Nanda and the novice monk Rahula. At the time, several princes decided to enter the monkhood either by faith or by peer pressure.

The Millionaire Who Supported Buddhism

In the city of Rajagarh, a millionaire built a temple for the Lord Buddha and regularly offered alms to the Lord Buddha and His disciples. This millionaire had a brother-in-law called Anathapindika, who was a millionaire of the city of Savatthi in the kingdom of Kosala. His former name was Sudatta but he was given a new name which means “a poor person’s lumps of rice” because he had erected an almonry where he had given generously and regularly to the masses and the needy.

Anathapindika came often to visit the Rajagarh millionaire. During one visit, he saw the Rajagarh millionaire busily giving orders to the household staff to prepare alms for the Lord Buddha and His disciples. As a result, he did not spend time with Anathapindika the way he usually did and that surprised Anathapindika very much. Anathapindika wanted to know if they were preparing for an auspicious event, a wedding, a sacrificial offering, or a feast for King Bimbisara and his entourage.

The Rajagarh millionaire told him that he had invited the Lord Buddha and His disciples for a meal at his house in the morning.

Having heard the word “Buddha”, Anathapindika was so overwhelmed with joy that he had to ask his wife’s brother to repeat his words thrice. The word “Buddha” was a rarely heard word and he wanted to go and see the Lord Buddha that very



hour but the Rajagarh millionaire told him that nighttime was not a suitable time and he should wait to see the Lord Buddha in the morning.

Anathapindika could hardly wait to see the Lord Buddha. In fact, sleep eluded him that night, and he set out to see the Lord Buddha when it was still dark outside. Upon arrival, the Lord Buddha gave him a lecture on Anupubbikatha and another lecture on the Four Noble Truths. As a result, Anathapindika attained the Fruit of Sotapanna and pledged himself a lay devotee who took the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha as his refuge for the rest of his life.

Once the food-offering was over at the Rajagarh millionaire's house, Anathapindika invited the Lord Buddha and His disciples to come and stay in the city of Savatthi in the kingdom of Kosala. The Lord Buddha accepted his invitation.

The Reason Venerable Nanda Attained the Dhamma

The Lord Buddha's stepbrother, Venerable Nanda, also accompanied the Lord Buddha to the city of Savatthi but he was still dominated by the desire to disrobe so that he could return to his bride. The Lord Buddha employed the Buddha-Power to take Venerable Nanda with Him to the celestial realm of Tavatimsa. Along the way, He brought Venerable Nanda's attention to a female monkey that had narrowly escaped a forest fire and was sitting on a stump. Its ears were torn, part of its nose was missing, its skin was scorched, and its hair was burnt in places. It was a very pitiful sight.

In the celestial realm of Tavatimsa, the Lord Buddha pointed at the beautiful celestial ladies to Venerable Nanda. They were many times more beautiful than the most beautiful women on earth. Their soles were as red as the pigeon's feet. And He asked Venerable Nanda,

“Nanda, compared to these celestial ladies, what do you think of Princess Janapadakalyani now?”

Venerable Nanda answered,

“Compared to these celestial ladies, Janapadakalyani looks like that poor monkey, Lord.”

There is no end in regards to the body’s beauty. One sees this thing as being beautiful because one has not yet seen anything more beautiful. If one is attached to physical beauty, there will be no end to that attachment.

The Lord Buddha told Venerable Nanda that if he earnestly practices meditation, He will bring him a celestial lady.

Ever since then Venerable Nanda earnestly practiced meditation. Meanwhile, other monks heard about the deal the Lord Buddha had made with him and some were teasing him about it. Venerable Nanda felt very embarrassed because other monks practiced meditation for the purpose of extinguishing defilements. But he did it for the purpose of obtaining a celestial lady. Therefore, he decided to put all of his effort into practicing meditation and soon afterward, he was able to attain Arahatsip. As for the novice monk Rahula, he attained Arahatsip after he entered the monkhood.



Establishing Buddhism (The Two Important Buddhist Temples)

Buddhism flourished in the city of Savatthi in the kingdom of Kosala because there were a great number of believers there. Some important ones included King Pasendikosala, Queen Mallika, the millionaire Anathapindika, the great female lay devotee Visakha, etc. These individuals were instrumental to the propagation of Buddhism. Anathapindika bought land from Prince Jeta by covering the entire land except for the entrance with gold coins. Prince Jeta wanted to donate the land where the entrance would be on the condition that the temple was named after him. Therefore, the temple built by Anathapindika was called the Jetavan Temple. On the part of Visakha, on one occasion, she forgot a bag of the most

valuable jewelry in the temple but Venerable Ananda kept it safe for her. Seeing that the bag had already been touched by Venerable Ananda, she wished to donate the valuable jewelry to Buddhism. Therefore, she sold it and used the money to build another temple called the Pubbaram Temple.

Wherever the Lord Buddha went to teach the Dhamma, He would always return to the city of Rajagarh in the kingdom of Magadha.

And it was in Magadha that a terrible incident occurred. It was brought about by a monk by the name of Devadat. He was formerly Princess Yasodhara's brother or Prince Siddhattha's brother-in-law. He entered the monkhood at the same time as other princes when the Lord Buddha visited Kapilavastu. By nature, Prince Devadat was a mean person given to envy and jealousy. He did not enter the monkhood because he was a believer but did so because he did not want to be outdone by the princes who did enter the monkhood.

After he entered the monkhood, he did endeavor to practice the Lord Buddha's Teachings. But given his innate character, he could not attain any of the stages of Enlightenment in the same way that other princes could. He did however achieve the mundane Jhanas, a level of meditative attainments which allowed him to display certain supernatural powers but could not lead him to the extinguishment of defilements.

Wrong View – The Path of Evil

On one occasion, the Lord Buddha went to the city of Kosambi, the city residents came out to welcome Him. Each brought an offering for the Lord Buddha. Afterward, they went their separate ways to visit the different monks whom they esteemed. They were asking for Venerable Sariputra, Venerable Moggallana, Venerable Ananda, etc. But no one asked for Venerable Devadat.

This incident greatly annoyed Venerable Devadat because he craved the admiration and gains received by other monks. Therefore, he devised a plan to usurp the Lord Buddha thinking that all the admiration and gains would come to him then.

Venerable Devadat entered the Jhanas and transformed himself into a small child with seven venomous snakes winding around his body. He then flew to sit on the lap of the young Prince Ajatasattu, King Bimbisara's son. The little prince became very frightened, so Venerable Devadat transformed back to himself. He talked to the prince in such a way as to gain the prince's full confidence. The prince agreed to offer him 500 dishes of food a day. Venerable Devadat talked the prince into murdering his own father so that he could ascend the throne quickly. He himself would murder the Lord Buddha so that he could rule over the monastic community.

So Prince Ajatasattu went to see his father with the intention of murdering him with the hidden weapon, but he was found out. He confessed that he wanted to ascend the throne. So King Bimbisara allowed him to ascend the throne. Even so, Venerable Devadat continued to instigate the prince to murder his father before the people could ask him to reclaim the throne.

So, Prince Ajatasattu had his father put in a cell where he was meant to starve to death. Initially, he allowed Queen Vedehi, his mother to visit his father. She hid food for her husband inside her top-knot but after she was found out, she ground the food up and applied it on her skin so that her husband could lick the food off it. After her action was found out, Prince Ajatasattu forbade his mother to visit his father altogether.

From his cell, King Bimbisara could see Vultures' Peak where the Lord Buddha was staying. He worshipped the Lord Buddha by doing walking meditation in his cell and his heart overflowed with joy, and the joy could then sustain his body. Knowing this, Prince Ajatasattu ordered his barber to use a blade to slit the soles of his father's feet so that he could no longer do walking meditation. Finally King Bimbisara died. At the same time, a royal page came to inform Prince Ajatasattu that his wife had just given birth to a baby boy. Love for his infant son filled his heart and he suddenly understood how much his father had to have loved him. He told his page to release King Bimbisara only to be told that King Bimbisara had already died.

King Ajatasattu was so grief-stricken by the news that he fainted several times. Ever since then he no longer believed in Venerable Devadat.

On the part of Venerable Devadat, after Prince Ajatasattu became king, he had made many attempts on the Lord Buddha's life. In the first attempt, he hired sharp shooters to kill the Lord Buddha with arrow shots. But the Lord Buddha caused the archers to freeze in place as they got ready to shoot Him. The Lord Buddha gave them a Dhamma lecture, at the end of which every sharp shooter was able to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna.

Next, Venerable Devadat went up to Vultures' Peak in the morning and rolled a huge stone down the mountain in an attempt to kill the Lord Buddha when He was leaving for His alms-round. The large stone hit other stones on the way down and broke into shards. One of them hit the Lord Buddha's foot and bruised it.

Still, Venerable Devadat did not give up but asked for a ferocious elephant in rut called Nalagiri from King Ajatasattu and fed it alcohol until it became completely drunk. He then let the elephant out at the time that the Lord Buddha was going on His alms-round. Venerable Ananda, the Lord Buddha's cousin and personal assistant, immediately went to stand in front of the Lord Buddha in order to protect Him from the drunken elephant.

The Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda to get behind Him and He talked to the elephant. Nalagiri became sober instantly and it knelt down to pay homage to the Lord Buddha before calmly returning to the elephant enclosure.

The people in the city heard about Venerable Devadat's evil deeds and would no longer put food in his alms-bowl. At the same time, King Ajatasattu also cancelled the offering of 500 dishes of food daily to Venerable Devadat.

Deeds Which Yield the Gravest Consequences

Even then, Venerable Devadat refused to change his way but had the audacity to ask the Lord Buddha to acknowledge the five disciplinary rules of his own invention. When the Lord Buddha refused his request, he made insolent remarks against the Lord Buddha and accused Him of allowing the monks to become lax. The five disciplinary rules proposed by Venerable Devadat included:

1. A monk is not allowed to consume meat of any kind.
2. A monk must consume only the food he received from his alms-round; he is not allowed to accept invitation to have a meal at a lay person's house.
3. A monk must live in the forest, not in a shelter or a building offered to them by the laity.



4. A monk must use for his robe only the cloth which has been used to wrap a corpse.

5. A monk must use for medicine only that prepared from pickling the myrabolan wood fruit in urine.

The Lord Buddha thought these rules too stringent and will have a negative impact on the laity's faith. These rules make it more difficult for the laity to provide food for the monks. Moreover, some of the monks have come originally from a pampered background and if they have to live under such severe hardship, they can become ill before attaining any of the stages of Enlightenment. The Lord Buddha has, as it is, already decreed sufficient disciplinary rules in

regards to the correct consumption of the four requisites. Moreover, these added rules would not allow the laity adequate opportunities to earn merit.

Venerable Devadat used this incident as an excuse to incite divisiveness among the monks. He told the monks that if any could see the benefit of his proposed rules, they should join him in setting up a new and separate monastic order. At the time, 500 new and inexperienced monks joined up. This is the second time that Venerable Devadat committed deeds which yield the gravest consequences. The first time was when he caused the Lord Buddha's foot to sustain a contusion. This time it was inciting divisiveness among the monks.

The Lord Buddha wished to save these 500 misguided monks, so He told Venerable Sariputra and Venerable Moggallana to bring them back. When Venerable Sariputra arrived, Venerable Devadat misunderstood that Venerable Sariputra had come to join him. He asked Venerable Sariputra to teach his disciples while he had a rest. Venerable Devadat fell asleep. Meanwhile, Venerable Sariputra gave the 500 monks a Dhamma lecture, at the end of which all of them were able to attain Arahantship, and they were brought back to the Lord Buddha.

Venerable Devadat Repented

When Venerable Devadat woke up, Venerable Kokalika, a close disciple, made an insulting remark against him. This caused Venerable Devadat's illness to grow worse. He realized that his time of death was near. He also felt contrite for all of the grave misdeeds he had committed against the Lord Buddha. He told his remaining disciples to carry him in a litter to the Lord Buddha's presence.

The Lord Buddha heard the news and told His disciples that Devadat would not be able to reach Him in time.

Having been carried in a litter to the lotus pond near the Jetavan Temple, Venerable Devadat felt as if his body was on fire and he needed desperately to bathe in the pond. His disciples put his litter down. But as soon as his feet touched the ground, it opened up and he sank quickly up to his neck. He managed to use his chin to pay homage to the Lord Buddha before he was completely swallowed up by the ground.

The Lord Buddha said that Devadat has committed the gravest misdeeds and will receive punishment in the hell realm of Aveci Mahanaraka. However, 100,000 Kappas hence he will be born a Paccekabuddha called Atthisasara because he did use his chin bones to ask the Lord Buddha for forgiveness and because he has already pursued Perfections for two Asankheyya Kappas.

Presently, Venerable Devedat is a hell being living in Aveci. His body is 1,600 kilometers high. As he stands, his head from his ears up is buried inside a red hot iron sheet. His body from his ankles down is also buried inside a red hot iron sheet. Both his hands were nailed to the lid below with two nails each the size of a palm tree. He cannot move his body at all and it is constantly scorched by hot fire. He will be thus tortured in Aveci for an Antarakappa, which is an unimaginably long time.

King Ajatasattu's Repentance and Conversion to Buddhism

Having had no more contact with Venerable Devadat, King Ajatasattu repented his old ways and endeavored to be a righteous king. He asked the court physician, who was also the Lord Buddha's personal physician, to take him to see the Lord Buddha so that he could ask the Lord Buddha some questions. He wanted to know the benefits of monkhood (the Samannaphala Sutta) and how a monk should conduct himself. He also wanted to know what practices lead to the attainment of the different stages of Enlightenment. He wanted answers to these questions because he had committed patricide as a result of his association with Venerable Devadat. The Lord Buddha answered every one of King Ajatasattu's questions so clearly that he became a believer. However, he could not attain any of the different stages of Enlightenment because

he had committed the gravest misdeed of patricide. Still, he did sponsor the first Sangiti where the Lord Buddha's Teachings were rehearsed and categorized after the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana.

The enormous merit earned under Buddhism saves him from having to go to the hell realm of Aveci Mahanaraka. At his death, he was reborn a hell being in the satellite site of Aveci Mahanaraka called Lohakumbhi where hell beings are boiled inside a gargantuan metal pot lit constantly with hell fire. The boiling liquid causes the hell beings' bodies to sink very slowly. It takes 30,000 hell years before they sink to the bottom of the pot and another 30,000 hell years to very slowly rise up to the top of the pot. The lifespan of hell beings in this site is 60,000 hell years.

Two Asankheyya Kappas from now, King Ajatasattu would be reborn a Paccekabuddha called Vijitavi.







*Some Important Events Concerning
the Lord Buddha's Relatives*





Chapter

7

Some Important Events Concerning the Lord Buddha's Relatives

As mentioned earlier, the Lord Buddha's aunt and stepmother, Queen Pajapati had raised Him since He was just seven days old. Although she had had two children of her own, she still loved and cared for the Lord Buddha especially.

When Prince Siddhattha became self-enlightened as the Lord Buddha, the queen became a true devotee. She wanted to present a special gift made by her own hands to the Lord Buddha. So she grew a special kind of cotton in a special soil mixed with gold dust in order to produce cotton with a bright gold color. She spun the special cotton yarn and wove the special cotton fabric herself.

The final result was two pieces of cotton fabric, each seven meters long. She placed them in a gold casket and offered it to the Lord Buddha.

The Lord Buddha considered how so many people are devoted to Him and they often make a special offering to Him just like what His aunt is doing then.

If He does not remedy the situation by letting the people know how it is more important to make an offering to the Sangha as a whole, it will be difficult for His disciples to remain in the monkhood once He attains Complete Nibbana.

Therefore, the Lord Buddha refused the offering and told Queen Pajapati to offer it to another monk instead. But each monk kept passing the casket on to the next monk until it was in the hands of the last monk.

It so happened that this monk had just entered the monkhood that very day. Since there was not another monk to pass the casket to, he had to keep it. The queen felt very disappointed and she cried thinking that making an offering to a newly ordained monk would earn her a low level of merit.

The Lord Buddha knew her thought, so he picked up His alms-bowl and caused it to disappear into the air. He then told the venerable monks who possessed great supernatural powers

to fetch it for Him but it turned out that no one could do it. The monk, who had to keep the gold casket containing the special cotton fabric, stretched out his hands and made a resolute wish that if the Lord Buddha wanted him to have the alms-bowl, let it float to his hands and it did.

The Alms Offered to the Sangha Bear Enormous Fruit

The Lord Buddha kindly taught His aunt that the alms offered to the Sangha as a whole bear a greater fruit than the alms offered to an individual monk. He said that even a newly ordained monk like Ajita is an excellent merit-field despite the fact that he has not yet achieved any level of meditative attainments, but for the fact that he is observing the monks' Precepts.

Moreover, it is this monk Ajita who will become self-enlightened as the Lord Sriariyamaitreya Buddha in the next Buddha Eon at the time when the average human lifespan is 80,000 years.

The Lord Buddha's words filled Queen Pajapati with overwhelming joy.

Ever since then, the laity prefers to make an offering to the Sangha rather than to an individual monk, and this practice has made it possible for Buddhism to survive up to the present time.

If the laypeople prefer to make an offering of alms to a particular monk, once that monk dies, they will stop their alms-offering altogether. Without the four requisites, it would be difficult for the rest of the monks to survive and they will have to disrobe, hence, cutting short the lifespan of Buddhism.



Stopping His Relatives from Killing Each Other

Kapilavastu where King Suddhodana, the Lord Buddha's father lived and ruled was located to the north of the Rohini River whereas Devadaha, the place where the relatives of Queen Sirimahamaya, the Lord Buddha's mother lived, was located to the south of the same river. The people of both cities depended on the water of the river for agriculture.

At one point, the water level of the river was uncommonly low and the farmers to the north of the river began to fill their irrigation system with water such that the farmers to the south did not have enough water for their agriculture. The situation became so serious that the people and the royalties of both cities were ready to go into battle with each other.

The Lord Buddha knew about the situation and flew to the place where the two armies stood facing each other. He had the generals of both sides fetched and said to them,

“Why are you fighting each other?”

The generals answered, “Because of water, Most Exalted One.”

The Lord Buddha asked them, “Between water and human life, what is more important?”

“Human life, Most Exalted One.”

“If that is so, should you be exchanging human lives for water?”

Both sides of the Lord Buddha’s relatives decided not to fight each other. This incident is the reason for one of the Buddha Images where He holds out His hand to stop His relatives from doing battle against each other.

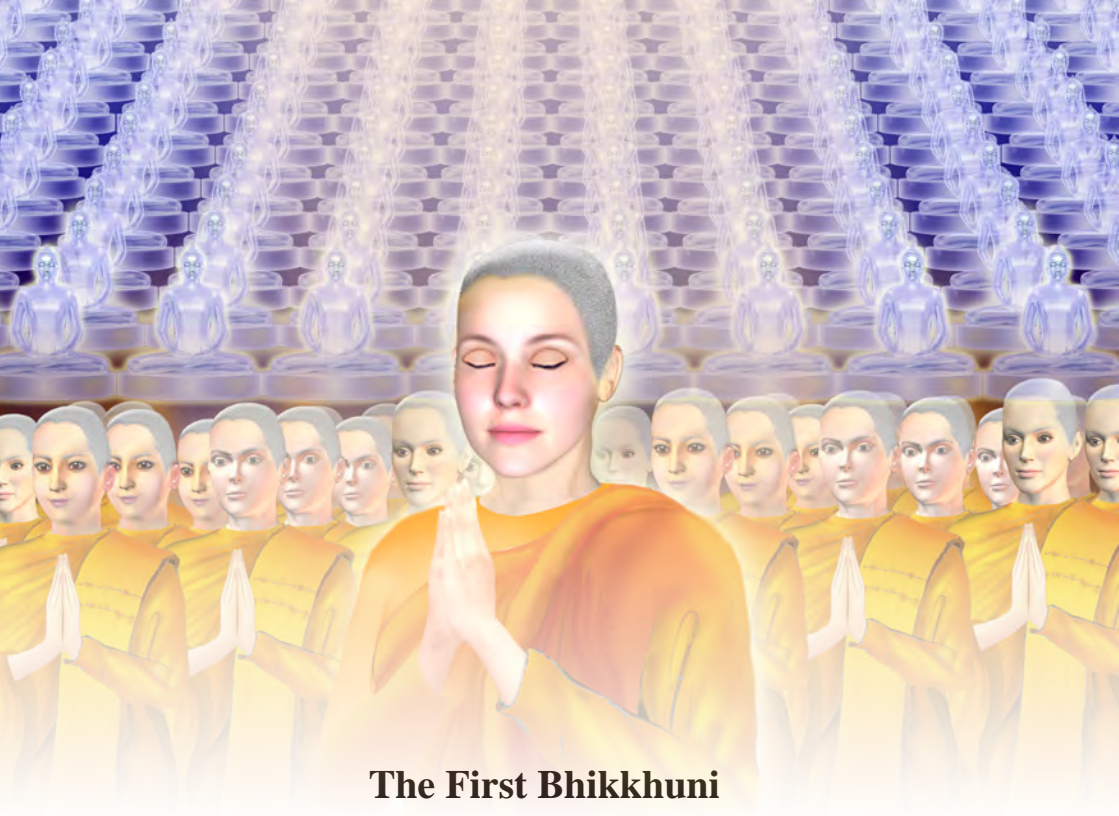
King Suddhodana Became Gravely Ill

While the Lord Buddha was staying in the Mahavan Forest near the city of Vesali in the kingdom of Vajji, He heard that King Suddhodana had fallen gravely ill as a result of his advanced age. The Lord Buddha immediately went to visit King Suddhodana and upon seeing his grave condition, the Lord Buddha said to him,

“Behold, king, the human life is very short and cannot last long. It is like lightning which appears momentarily.”

Having already attained the Fruit of Anagami, just these few words from the Lord Buddha enabled King Suddhodana to attain Arahatsip. And seven days later, he attained Complete Nibbana.

His cremation was attended by the Lord Buddha, His disciples, and King Suddhodana’s relatives.



The First Bhikkhuni

Soon after King Suddhodana attained Complete Nibbana, a close relative by the name of Mahanama was elected the next king of Kapilavastu. The Lord Buddha's aunt and stepmother, Queen Pajapati, wished to enter the monkhood. She made her wish known to the Lord Buddha thrice but He turned her down.

Queen Pajapati and her 500 attendants who also wished to enter the monkhood decided to shave their heads and put on the saffron robes. They then went to see the Lord Buddha and asked to be given permission to enter the monkhood for the fourth time. The Lord Buddha denied them permission.

The queen then went to ask Venerable Ananda to help talk to the Lord Buddha but thrice the Lord Buddha said no. Finally,

Venerable Ananda reminded the Lord Buddha how His aunt had raised Him since His mother's death. This time the Lord Buddha gave in and allowed His aunt to enter the monkhood on condition that she practiced the Garudhamma-8.

Garudhamma-8 means the eight strict rules which must be observed by a Bhikkhuni or a female monk for the rest of her life.

Queen Pajapatigotami accepted the Garudhamma-8 and ordained as the first Buddhist Bhikkhuni of this Buddha Eon. Soon afterward, her female relatives namely Princess Yasodhara, Princess Janapadakalyani, Princess Rohini, Princess Rupananda, etc., entered the monkhood as Bhikkhunis. All of them were able to attain Arahatsip.

There were several reasons why the Lord Buddha did not wish women to enter the monkhood. Women in the monkhood can cause the masses' faith in Buddhism to diminish, hence, shortening the lifespan of Buddhism. By nature, women are not steadfast. They can be temperamental, envious, nit-picking, etc., which makes it difficult for the community to live together in peace and harmony.

And indeed things did happen as the Lord Buddha had anticipated because the Lord Buddha had to decree 311 disciplinary rules for the Bhikkhunis whereas only 227 disciplinary rules were sufficient for the Bhikkhus.



The Foremost Female Arahats

Nonetheless, several female Arahats were recognized by the Lord Buddha as being foremost in different areas.

Queen Pajapatigotami was foremost in being an elder of long standing (being the first woman to ordain as a Bhikkhuni).

The female Arahata, Khema, was foremost in wisdom. She was also the Lord Buddha's Chief Female Disciple on the right. She had been the chief wife of King Bimbisara. And as such, she had been enamoured with her own beauty. But upon hearing the Lord Buddha's teaching on passion and how to remove it, she was able to attain Arahata-ship and was subsequently ordained as a Bhikkhuni.

The female Arahat, Upalavanna, was foremost in supernatural powers. She was also the Lord Buddha's Chief Female Disciple on the left. She had been the daughter of a millionaire of the city of Savatthi. Her complexion was as beautiful as a green lotus flower. So many men had come to ask for her hand in marriage that her father became worried so he asked her to enter the monkhood. She willingly agreed. At one point, it was her duty to light the candles in the Uposatha Hall. One night while she was lighting the candles, she gazed at the flame of the candle as the object of meditation. Her mind was brought to a complete standstill and she attained Arahatship.

The female Arahat, Patacara, was foremost in the Vinaya (the Disciplinary Rules). She had been the daughter of a millionaire. She had eloped with a male servant and they had two sons together. On the way home to see her parents, her husband and sons died suddenly. As she continued with her travel, she heard that the family home had fallen on her parents and her siblings, crushing all of them to death. Unbearable grief caused her to lose her sanity and she did not care that her robe had come undone. She walked and mumbled to herself until she arrived at the Jetavan Temple. The Lord Buddha spread loving-kindness toward her and said soothing words to her. She instantly regained her sanity and attained the Fruit of Sotapanna at the end of the Lord Buddha's lecture. Afterward, she ordained as a Bhikkhuni. One day while

she was fetching water to wash her feet with, she used water as her object of meditation and compared the amount of water that flowed down her feet at three different times to how some people died during childhood, some during adulthood, and some during old age. As a result, she was able to attain Arahatsip.

The female Arahats, Kisagotami, was foremost in wearing old robes. She had been the daughter of a poor family. A millionaire asked her to be his daughter-in-law because all of his material wealth had turned into charcoal and she was the only person who saw the charcoal as gold. The millionaire knew her to be a person replete with merit. Upon giving her all of the charcoal, it returned to its former state as gold and silver.

Sometime later, her son who was just a toddler died. She was so grief-stricken that she went to see the Lord Buddha to ask for a drug that would revive her son. The Lord Buddha told her to go and ask for some mustard seeds from the house in which no one had ever died. She could not find such a house and realized that everyone had to die. She returned to the Lord Buddha with her finding, and at the end of the Dhamma lecture, she attained Arahatsip and ordained as a Bhikkhuni.







*Certain Important Events
Concerning the Lord Buddha*





Chapter 8

Certain Important Events Concerning the Lord Buddha

In those days, there were many ascetics of different religious beliefs. Some liked to show off their supernatural powers in order to attract believers. Others tried to search for emancipation through such wrong means as self-mortification, wearing nothing to show that they had no attachment to their body, standing on one leg, clenching their fists so hard that their nails grew and pierced their palms, sitting on nails, opening their mouth while staring at the sun, etc. These methods are still being practiced today.

With the happening of the Lord Buddha, kings and their subjects in different kingdoms converted to Buddhism in greater and greater numbers. Ascetics of other religious beliefs became jealous of the Lord Buddha to the point of wanting to destroy Him any way they could.



The Lord Buddha Performed the Yamaka Miracle

While the Lord Buddha was staying in the city of Savatthi in the kingdom of Kosala, the heretical ascetics knew that the Lord Buddha would not perform miracles because He had forbidden His disciples to perform them. Therefore, they challenged the Lord Buddha to a duel. The Lord Buddha accepted the duel by saying that He did forbid His disciples to perform miracles but Himself He had not forbidden. The Lord Buddha intended to perform under a mango tree the Yamaka Miracle (performing miracles in pair), which no one had ever performed before. The Yamaka Miracle includes creating water and fire, etc.

The heretics knew that the Lord Buddha intended to perform the Yamaka Miracle under a mango tree so they had every mango tree cut down.

At the appointed date, a lay devotee brought some ripe mangoes as an offering to the Lord Buddha. Having eaten the fruit, He had the stone buried in the ground and used the water with which He washed His feet to water it. Suddenly, the mango tree grew to a height of 25 meters to the amazement of the masses.

The Lord Buddha began performing the Yamaka Miracle by creating two of Himself in different postures and creating a stream of water coming out of His upper body and a volume of flames

coming out of His lower body, etc. Having seen these miracles, the heretics knew that they had been completely defeated. They felt so embarrassed and knew that there was no way out for them except to throw themselves into the water. But the people who witnessed the miracles became believers.

Meeting and Teaching His Mother

Having propagated His teachings for seven years and after performing the Yamaka Miracle, the Lord Buddha thought of His mother. He saw how previous Buddhas also went to spend the Rains-Retreat in the celestial realm of Tavatimsa after performing the Yamaka Miracle.

He thought about going to teach His mother who had been reborn as a male celestial being living in the celestial realm of Tusita. But He went to the celestial realm of Tavatimsa instead in order to give celestial beings in the lower realms the opportunity to listen to His Dhamma lectures. The brightness of the upper levels of the Celestial Realm is very great. Moreover, they are inaccessible to celestial beings in the lower realms. But Tavatimsa is accessible to both the celestial beings of the upper realms and the celestial beings of the lower realms.

In the Tavatimsa Realm, the Lord Buddha sat under the pink shower tree on the celestial stone divan covered with the red celestial wool cloth.

Indra, the sovereign of the Tavatimsa Realm, made it known to all celestial beings about the Lord Buddha's visit so that they could come and listen to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures. Among the celestial beings present was the male celestial being Sirimahamaya, formerly the Lord Buddha's mother.

Teaching the Abhidhamma for the First Time

During that Rains-Retreat, the Lord Buddha taught the Abhidhamma (the Higher Doctrine), which enabled many celestial beings including Sirimahamaya to attain the Fruit of Sotapanna.

During the Rains-Retreat, the Lord Buddha went on an alms-round in another human world called Uttarakuru. He ate His meal in a pavilion in the celestial forest of Himavanta where Venerable Sariputra attended to Him. The Lord Buddha summarized the Dhamma lectures given to the celestial beings for Venerable Sariputra. Venerable Sariputra in turn taught it to the 500 monks under him. These 500 monks had once been reborn as bats living in the same cave as a certain monk during the time of the Lord Kassapa Buddha. This monk was in the habit of reciting the Abhidhamma and the bats were in the habit of listening to his voice as he recited the Abhidhamma.

As a result, these 500 monks were able to readily study and penetrate the Abhidhamma.



The Day the Lord Buddha Revealed the Different Realms of Existence

At the end of the Rains-Retreat, the Lord Buddha descended to earth from the Tavatimsa Realm. Indra employed his supernatural powers to create three different kinds of stairs starting from the top of the Sineru Mountain down to the city gate of Sangassa City on earth. In the middle, was the crystal stair for the Lord Buddha to walk down. On the right, was the gold stair for the celestial beings; and on the left was the silver stair for the Brahma King.

While the Lord Buddha was standing on the crystal stair, He opened the Celestial Realm and the Brahma Realm above and the Hell Realm below such that celestial beings, Brahma beings, human beings, and hell beings could see one another. And they could see the Lord Buddha walking down the crystal stair from the Celestial Realm. As a result, all of the living beings, who had witnessed this miraculous event, aspired to Buddhahood.

Ending the Dispute between the Two Groups of Monks in the City of Kosambi

Albeit the Lord Buddha's Buddha-Power, He had to allow certain things to happen according to each person's defilements. For example, He had to allow Venerable Devadat and King Suppabuddha to be swallowed up by the ground.

Another example had to do with the conflict between the two groups of monks in Kosambi. It began when one monk, who was the teacher of the group of monks well-versed in giving Dhamma lectures, used the toilet but left some water standing in the vessel instead of emptying it and turning it upside down. Another monk, who was the teacher of the group of monks well-versed in observing the disciplinary rules, saw it when he went to use the toilet next. So the second monk told the first monk that he had transgressed the disciplinary rules.

The first monk confessed that he had not known about that particular disciplinary rule before and now that he knew it, he would never transgress it again. The second monk assured the first monk that he had not transgressed the disciplinary rules, since he had not known about it beforehand. And they went their separate ways. However, the second monk could not help but relate the incident to the monks under him, who in turn made derogatory remarks to the group of monks under the first monk.

When the first monk heard about what had happened, he became very angry and both groups began to find fault with each other until heated arguments broke out causing divisiveness among the Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, male lay devotees, female lay devotees, and the general public all the way to the inhabitants of the Celestial Realm and the Brahma Realm.

The situation became known to the Lord Buddha so He sent His disciples to settle the dispute several times to no avail. Even the Lord Buddha could not settle the dispute because no one would listen to Him. Moreover, they told Him to stay out of it. These monks' stubbornness caused the Lord Buddha to go and spend time alone in the Relaiyaka Forest.

About the same time, one elephant felt the need to spend time alone and away from the herd. This elephant saw the Lord Buddha and felt moved to attend to Him. It used its trunk to hold a branch and sweep the Lord Buddha's shelter. It guarded the Lord Buddha at night against ferocious animals. In the morning, it fetched fruit for the Lord Buddha. It prepared the Lord Buddha's bathwater for the evening by using its trunk to draw water into a stone pool where the water could be heated by the hot sun all day long. At other times, it used a branch to push a stone that had been heated until it was hot into the water in order to heat it.

Right around the same time, one monkey felt the need to spend time alone and away from the troop. It saw how the elephant was attending to the Lord Buddha and wanted to emulate the elephant. So it broke up some honeycomb and offered it to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha accepted it but did not eat it. The monkey noticed that there were some larvae inside the honeycomb so it carefully removed them. It then offered the honeycomb to the Lord Buddha. This time, the Lord Buddha accepted it and ate it too. The monkey was so glad that it jumped up and down on the tree branch and accidentally fell to the ground. It died and was reborn in the celestial realm of Tavatimsa.

The Lord Buddha spent the entire Rains-Retreat in the forest. In Kosambi, the dispute spread so widely that the people became tired of it. They also realized how these monks were being disobedient to the Lord Buddha causing Him to spend time alone in the forest. Consequently, they had been deprived of the opportunity to see the Lord Buddha. They eventually became so annoyed with the monks that they stopped offering food to the monks altogether. When visited by hunger, their stubbornness began to wear off and they turned to each other for help. Both sides admitted that they had been wrong, but the laity refused to forgive them until they could produce the Lord Buddha.

The Kosambi monks entreated Venerable Ananda to see the Lord Buddha and ask for His forgiveness for them. Upon Venerable Ananda's

arrival, the elephant saw him from a distance and thought that he came to harm the Lord Buddha. It was getting ready to charge when the Lord Buddha forbade it. When it saw the respectful way Venerable Ananda treated the Lord Buddha, it wanted to be his friend. The Lord Buddha allowed the Kosambi monks to see Him giving the elephant the opportunity to fetch many fruits for the monks.

After the Lord Buddha accepted the Kosambi monks' apology, He had to leave the forest in order to continue teaching the Dhamma to the masses. The elephant followed Him but when they came near a village, the Lord Buddha told the elephant to return to the forest saying that it was dangerous for it to be near human beings. The elephant stood still to see the Lord Buddha off. When the Lord Buddha and the monks were out of sight, the elephant was so heart-broken that it died and was reborn in the Celestial Realm.



Foretelling the Time of His Passing

Ever since His attainment of Self-Enlightenment, the Lord Buddha had trekked everywhere to teach the Dhamma for a total period of 45 years until He was 80 years old. Buddhism had by then been well established in that the Four Buddhist Communities were strong and equipped with the ability to perpetuate the Lord Buddha's Teachings for the benefit of a great number of human beings and celestial beings for a long time.

The Lord Buddha went to spend his 45th Rains-Retreat in the village of Veluvagam of the city of Vesali. The monks were allowed to spend the Rains-Retreat in the places of their choosing.

During this Rains-Retreat, the Lord Buddha fell gravely ill and experienced much physical discomfort. The Lord Buddha dealt with it by meditating on the Four Paths of Accomplishment, which include will, effort, thoughtfulness, and investigation.

The Lord Buddha's personal assistant, Venerable Ananda, felt as though he too was experiencing physical discomfort. His mind was gloomy because he was very worried about the Lord Buddha's illness. But he did derive some comfort from not having heard any words of farewell from the Lord Buddha, which meant that He would not yet attain Complete Nibbana. When he saw that the the Lord Buddha felt better, he was filled with joy.

The Lord Buddha told him that His body was advanced in age like a decrepit vehicle being held together with bamboo. And in terms of His Teachings, there was nothing more He needed to teach, for all had already been said.

And then the Lord Buddha said something, which meant to remind Venerable Ananda to ask the Lord Buddha to live for an entire Kappa (an entire Earth Age) or longer (at the time, the average human lifespan was 100 years). The Lord Buddha talked about the virtue of meditating on the Four Paths of Accomplishment and how it has the power to cause the accomplished meditator to live for an entire Kappa or even longer. He repeated His words thrice to Venerable Ananda but Mara deliberately veiled the Lord Buddha's

remark such that Venerable Ananda could not understand what the Lord Buddha was saying and why He was saying it. So the Lord Buddha told him to leave His side for a while.

It was then that Mara appeared to remind the Lord Buddha that when He first attained Self-Enlightenment, He said that for as long as the Four Buddhist Communities: the Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, male lay devotees, and female lay devotees are still not learnt in the Dhamma and cannot give a profound Dhamma lecture; and for as long as His Teachings are not widely propagated to benefit a large number of celestial beings and human beings, He will not attain Complete Nibbana. But now that everything is in place, he wants the Lord Buddha to attain Complete Nibbana.

The Earth Quaked

The Lord Buddha told Mara that He will attain Complete Nibbana three months hence. Having foretold the time of His passing at the Pavala Cetiya in Vesali, the earth suddenly quaked and the loud sound of celestial drum was in the air to the amazement of Venerable Ananda. So he went to see the Lord Buddha to ask why the earth had quaked.

The Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda that there are eight reasons why the earth quakes.

1. It happens due to natural causes.
2. Someone possessing supernatural powers makes it happen.
3. The Bodhisatta ceases to be in the Tusita Realm and enters his mother's womb.
4. The Bodhisatta is born.
5. The Bodhisatta attains Self-Enlightenment and becomes the Lord Buddha.
6. The Lord Buddha gives the first Dhamma lecture.
7. The Lord Buddha determines the time of His passing.
8. The Lord Buddha attains Complete Nibbana.

This time the earth quaked because the Lord Buddha had foretold His time of passing. Venerable Ananda then asked the Lord Buddha to live for a Kappa for the benefits of celestial beings and human beings. The Lord Buddha told him not to say such a thing. Venerable Ananda repeated his request thrice saying that the Lord Buddha could expertly meditate on the Four Paths of Accomplishment and continue to live for as long as He wished.

The Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda that He has already been given three opportunities to ask Him but he did not. It is his own fault. And now that the Lord Buddha has already foretold the time of His passing, it cannot be undone.

The Lord Buddha also told Venerable Ananda that previously He had given him opportunities to ask him in 16 different sub-districts which included ten sub-districts in Rajagarh and six sub-districts in Vesali.

The Lord Buddha said to Venerable Ananda, “Behold, Ananda, I told you long before now that living beings are compounded things; hence, they must change and come to an end. Everyone must be separated from someone or something that one loves at one time or another. And no amount of crying or pining can change this fact.”

“Behold, Ananda, whatever the Tathagata has let go can never be retrieved even for the sake of His life.”

Teaching the Monks in the Mahavan Forest

After the conversation with Venerable Ananda, the Lord Buddha went to the pavilion in the Mahavan Forest. He told every monk in Vesali to come to Him because He has a message for them.

He told the monks that there is no need for them to wish Him to live for a very long time because He has already made clear to them His Teachings and how the earnest practice of His Teachings can lead to Enlightenment in this lifetime. The Dhamma that He has taught is Supramundane Knowledge which can bring about supernormal insight. And supernormal insight in turn can bring about liberation from the round of rebirth. Let all of the monks earnestly practice His Teachings for their own benefit. Any monk who has not yet attained the Path and Fruit of Nibbana should hasten to do so. They are not to be reckless. And they are not to grieve.

And once all the monks practice His Teachings more and more earnestly, Buddhism will be able to survive for a long time and will continue to benefit human beings and celestial beings alike.



The 37 Qualities Contributing to Enlightenment

These include the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Four Great Efforts, the Four Paths of Accomplishment, the Five Factors of Controlling Faculty, the Five Factors of Power, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Noble Eightfold Path.

These practices benefit both the monks and the laity whether or not the Lord Buddha is living.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness include mindfulness regarding the body, mindfulness regarding feeling, mindfulness regarding thought, and mindfulness regarding idea.

The Four Great Efforts include the effort to prevent all unwholesomeness, the effort to abandon all unwholesomeness,

the effort to develop wholesomeness, the effort to maintain wholesomeness.

The Four Paths of Accomplishment include will, effort, thoughtfulness, and investigation.

The Five Factors of Controlling Faculty include confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.

The Five Factors of Power are the same as the Five Factors of Controlling Faculty.

The Seven Factors of Enlightenment include:

1. Mindfulness
2. Truth-Investigation
3. Effort
4. Zest
5. Tranquility
6. Concentration
7. Equanimity

The Noble Eightfold Path is the practice which leads to the cessation of suffering. It comprises Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The Truth about Compounded Things

Afterward, the Lord Buddha taught His disciples about the importance of wholesomeness and heedfulness by saying,

“Behold, monks, I wish to remind all of you that whatever is made up of compounded things must undergo decay. Let all of you benefit yourself and others to the fullest extent by practicing heedfulness. I, the Tathagata, will attain Complete Nibbana three months hence.

Every person must die. He may be young, old, clever, rich or poor but in the end, he must die. Death awaits everyone. Our body is like a vessel made of clay; it may be large; it may be small; it may be baked; it may be unbaked but, it must fall apart in the end.

Likewise, every living being must fall apart in the end. I, the Tathagata, am now very old and there is little of life left in me. I must leave all of you. As for me, I have already been able to be a refuge unto myself.

Behold, monks, let you be heedful and mindful. Let you observe the Precepts immaculately. Let your good thought stand firm. Let you tend to your mind. Whoever is heedful and practices according to the Dhamma-Vinaya will be emancipated from the round of rebirth and his suffering will be no more.”

These are the words the Lord Buddha uses to remind His followers of the importance of heedfulness because death awaits all of us.

In the following morning, the Lord Buddha went on an alms-round in the city of Vesali. Upon leaving the city, the Lord Buddha turned Himself all the way around to look at the city and said,

“Behold, Ananda, I am now seeing the city of Vesali for the last time. I will not see it again. Ananda, let’s now travel on to the village of Bhandugam.”

The Four Noble Virtues (Ariyadhamma-4)

The Lord Buddha gave a Dhamma lecture in the village of Bhandugam on morality (Sila), concentration (Samadhi), insight (Panna), and emancipation (Vimutti).

“Behold, monks, it was because all of us could not penetrate the four noble virtues of morality, concentration, insight, and emancipation that all of us had to undergo endless rebirths. Stupidity and ignorance was the darkness that had prevented us from penetrating these Four Noble Virtues, thereby, causing us to suffer endlessly.

But now, all of us have penetrated these four noble virtues. The craving which causes rebirth has been extinguished. The craving, which chains us to the round of rebirth like a rope tied to a crow’s foot to prevent it from flying away, has been rendered powerless. I and all of you have already put an end to rebirth.”

The Lord Buddha elaborated further on the fruits of the Four Noble Virtues as follows.

“Morality is an important foundation for higher virtues in the same way that the ground is the place where everything is accomplished. When a person observes the Precepts immaculately, his concentration will develop. When concentration is well-developed, supernormal insight will be gained. Once supernormal insight

has been fully developed, the mind will be emancipated from all defilements and no longer plagued by sense-desire (in the forms of corporeality, sound, smell, taste, and touch), rebirth in different realms of existence, and ignorance (not knowing the truth about reality).

Once the mind is emancipated from all defilements, every form of suffering will also come to an end.

Morality, concentration, and insight are the three virtues which lead to emancipation. They form the core of the Dhamma-Vinaya. My disciples can achieve emancipation by undertaking this threefold training to the fullest extent.”



Mahapadesa-4: The Tools Used to Decide What Should and Should not Be Done

When the Lord Buddha arrived in the city of Bhoga, He gave a Dhamma lecture on Mahapadesa-4 to the monks. These are the tools which can be used to decide what constitutes the Dhamma (the Lord Buddha's Teachings) and what constitutes the Vinaya (the Disciplinary Rules as decreed by the Lord Buddha). The Lord Buddha told the monks that should any monk say that such is the Dhamma, such is the Vinaya, such is the Lord Buddha's Saying, etc., do not hasten to believe it or deny it but one should check it thoroughly against the Suttas (the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lectures) and the Vinaya.

If what is said is not in the Suttas or in the Vinaya, let it be understood that they are not the Tathagata's words. Let it be known that whoever says it has not heard it correctly or it has not been correctly memorized. But if what is said is in the Suttas or in the Vinaya, let it be understood that it is the Lord Buddha's teaching. And whoever says it has heard it correctly.

Mahapadesa-4: There are four ways to decide what should and should not be done.

1. Whatever is not prohibited by the Lord Buddha and it is not befitting a monk, it should not be done.

2. Whatever is not prohibited by the Lord Buddha but it is befitting a monk, it should be done.

3. Whatever is decreed to be inappropriate and it is not befitting a monk, it should not be done.

4. Whatever is decreed to be inappropriate but it is befitting a monk, it should be done.





*The Lord Buddha Was About to
Attain Complete Nibbana*





Chapter 9

The Lord Buddha Was About to Attain Complete Nibbana

The news of the Lord Buddha's impending death had spread and a large number of monks had come from different places to be with Him. The Lord Buddha went from the city of Bhoga to the city of Pava. There, He stayed in the mango grove which belonged to the goldsmith's son, Cunda.

Cunda heard the news and he immediately went to welcome the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha taught him about the Law of Kamma (Kamma and its consequences). He told Cunda to be true to wholesomeness and to boldly perform good deeds.

Cunda invited the Lord Buddha and His disciples for a meal at his house in the following morning.

His Last Meal

The following day was the 14th day of the 6th waxing moon. The Lord Buddha and a large number of His disciples went from the mango grove to Cunda's house.

Cunda made an offering of exquisite dishes including a dish called Sukaramaddava (it may contain the meat of a young pig or a kind of delicious mushroom which tastes like the meat of a young pig). The Lord Buddha accepted the dish and told Cunda to offer other dishes to the monks. He told Cunda to bury the rest of the Sukaramaddava and nobody was to eat it, since it was hard to digest. After the meal, the Lord Buddha gave Cunda a Dhamma lecture so that he could greatly rejoice in his earned merit.

Soon after the meal, the Lord Buddha fell gravely ill. The illness caused Him to pass bloody stool and experience great discomfort. But with supreme patience, He was able to endure it. He invited His disciples to trek on to Kusinara.

The Lord Buddha was exhausted during the trek, and He told one monk to place an outer robe on the ground to make a seat for Him. He then told Venerable Ananda to take His alms-bowl and fetch some water from the river for Him. Venerable Ananda said that the water level of the river was low at the time. Besides, 500 wagons had just gone across it. The water would be muddy, and



He should wait to have His drink of water at the next river, which was the Kakudhanadi River.

The Lord Buddha had to ask him thrice before Venerable Ananda realized that if the Lord Buddha said something, there had to be a reason for it. So he hastened to fetch some water for the Lord Buddha. Amazingly, when Venerable Ananda went near the river he saw that the water was clean and clear.

The Lord Buddha's Past Misdeed

The Law of Kamma is the strictest law. Even the Lord Buddha still has to reap the consequences of His past misdeeds. In this instance, it was a misdeed committed in the lifetime that the Lord Buddha was a merchant. In that existence, he was using a wagon to carry his goods to be sold in another town. The team of oxen was thirsty but the merchant would not allow them to drink the muddy water. He made the oxen pull the wagon for quite a distance before clean and clear water could be found. The oxen were parched by the time they finally had a drink. This Kamma caused Venerable Ananda to hesitate and the Lord Buddha had to suffer thirst.

Many incidents in the Lord Buddha's life were the ill consequences of His past misdeeds. These include being bruised at the foot by a shard (from having pushed his stepbrother to his death down a steep cliff in one previous existence); being falsely accused by the woman Cindamanvika of making her pregnant (from having falsely accused a Paccekabuddha in a previous existence); etc. These incidents attest to the potency of the Law of Kamma.



His Extraordinarily Radiant Complexion

As the Lord Buddha was quenching His thirst under the tree, the son of one of the Malla rulers called Pukkusa was leaving the city of Kusinara for the city of Pava. He was a disciple of the Yogi, Alara Kalamagotra. He saw the Lord Buddha and went to pay Him homage. The Lord Buddha gave him a Dhamma lecture on peaceful living.

At the end of the Dhamma lecture, Pukkusa became a believer. He made an offering of two pieces of the Singivanna cloth, an exquisite fabric the color of gold to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha gave one piece to Venerable Ananda. After Pukkusa left,

Venerable Ananda offered the cloth back to the Lord Buddha. The Lord Buddha wore one piece of the fabric and used the other piece as a cover.

Having worn the exquisite cloth, the Lord Buddha's complexion became extraordinarily radiant so much so that Venerable Ananda commented on it. The Lord Buddha explained that His complexion would become extraordinarily radiant under two circumstances. The first circumstance was the night when He was about to attain Self-Enlightenment. And the second circumstance is the night when He is about to attain Complete Nibbana. Indeed, He will attain Complete Nibbana that night between the two Sal trees in the Salavan Park of the Malla rulers of Kusinara.

The Fruit of Offering the Lord Buddha His Last Meal

The Lord Buddha invited the monks to go to the Kakudhanadi River to bathe and relax before trekking on to the Ambavan Park. The Lord Buddha wished to protect Cunda who had offered Him His last meal by saying:

Should anyone accuse Cunda of causing the Lord Buddha to attain Complete Nibbana as a result of the meal that he served Him, you are to tell him that the Lord Buddha has this to say. There are two meals that bear equal fruit and the fruit is greater than all the other meals offered to Him. The first meal was the one offered to Him right before His attainment of Self-Enlightenment. And the second meal was the one offered to Him before He attains Complete Nibbana as Cunda had done. The fruit of such incomparable merit includes longevity, youthfulness, happiness, position, rebirth in the Celestial Realm and authority.

Venerable Ananda was charged with the responsibility of relaying His message to others.

Lying Down for the Last Time

Then the Lord Buddha and a large number of His disciples went across the Hirannavati River to the city of Kusinara to stay in the large park outside the city called Salavan. It was a park filled with the Sal trees. These trees had large, lush leaves with hanging branches of white blossoms.

The Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda to prepare a bed for Him between the two Sal trees. He then laid down on His right side with His head toward the north and His legs together with one foot slightly above the other. With perfect mindfulness, the Lord Buddha lay down for the last time.

At that moment, both Sal trees instantly produced a profusion of white blooms which fell to the ground as homage paid to the Lord Buddha. Special celestial flowers fell from the air to cover the Lord Buddha's body infusing the air with their lovely scent. Celestial music reverberates around the area as the final homage paid to the Lord Buddha.



Practicing the Lord Buddha's Teachings

The Lord Buddha told the members of the Buddhist Communities congregated around Him about all the things that the celestial beings were doing to worship Him. He also said that for members of the Four Buddhist Communities, no amount of alms-giving can be compared to the practice of His Teachings.

About the Celestial Beings at the Sal Park

At the time, a monk called Upavana Thera was fanning the Lord Buddha but was told by the Lord Buddha to leave his post so as not to block His view. Venerable Ananda asked the Lord Buddha why He wanted the monk to leave his post. The Lord Buddha said that celestial beings from 10,000 universes are now packed in and around the Sal Park covering a length and width of 192 kilometers.

And the celestial beings are complaining that Venerable Upavana is blocking their view. They have come from a great distance in order to see the Lord Buddha for the last time because the happening of the Buddha is extremely rare. It is the reason the Lord Buddha told the monk to leave his post.

The Lord Buddha said that a whole host of celestial beings are packed on the ground and in the air and they are lamenting the fact that the Lord Buddha should attain Complete Nibbana so soon and how the eyes of the world are being lost.

The celestial beings, who had attained the Fruit of Anagami or Arahathship, were able to control their grief since they were devoid of lust. Still, they realized how all things are impermanent and it is impossible for living beings to expect anything to last.

The Four Holy Places of Buddhism

Venerable Ananda told the Lord Buddha that it used to be that after the Rains-Retreat, all the monks would come to see the Lord Buddha and each other. But after the Lord Buddha is gone, they will not be able to come to be with and see each other again.

The Lord Buddha said that there are four places that a person should go and see and these should be the places to rouse a sense of urgency.

1. The place where He was born.
2. The place where He attained Self-Enlightenment.
3. The place where He gave the first Dhamma lecture.
4. The place where He attained Complete Nibbana.

Members of the Four Buddhist Communities should go and see these four places for themselves. And they will know that the Lord Buddha was born, attained Self-Enlightenment, gave the first Dhamma lecture, and attained Complete Nibbana in such and such a place. Whoever does so will always be a believer of Buddhism, and after he dies, he will be reborn in the Celestial Realm.

How to Treat Women

Venerable Ananda then asked the Lord Buddha how women should be treated by a monk. The Lord Buddha said that if it is not necessary, it is best not to look at them. Venerable Ananda asked what if it is necessary to look at them, what should a monk do? The Lord Buddha said that if it is necessary to look at them, it is best not to speak to them. Venerable Ananda asked what if it is necessary to speak to them, what should a monk do?

The Lord Buddha said that a monk should only say what is useful by, for example, giving a Dhamma lecture. He must keep his mindfulness intact. He must not be influenced by lust or craving. He must not behave inappropriately physically and verbally. He must conduct himself appropriately.

How to Treat His Body

Venerable Ananda then asked the Lord Buddha how His body should be treated after He attains Complete Nibbana. The Lord Buddha answered that His disciples who are monks must not do anything with His body. They must practice His Teachings for their own benefit and the benefit of the general public. They must diligently extinguish defilements and unwholesomeness. They must be determined to live the Holy Life at all times.

Let the kings, Brahmins, and wealthy people who believe in Him worship His body.

Venerable Ananda asked how they should worship His body.

The Lord Buddha said that they should treat his body in the same way that the body of a Universal Monarch is treated. They are to enshroud His body with a white cloth, followed by a layer of cottonwool, and to repeat the process 500 times. They are to place the enshrouded body on an iron trough filled with oil. They are to cover the iron trough and place it on the funeral pyre made of scented wood. After the body has been cremated, they are to enshrine His remains in the stupa to be built at a major intersection.

When people come from the four cardinal points and see the stupa, they will want to worship at the stupa with such articles

of worship as neatly arranged flowers, perfume, scented powder thereby earning merit which will bear them great fruit for a very long time to come.

The Lord Buddha then talked about the four kinds of individuals whose bones should be enshrined in a stupa to be worshipped by the masses as follows.

1. The Lord Buddha
2. The Paccekabuddha
3. The Arahāt
4. The Universal Monarch

Whoever worships at the stupas where the bones of such personages are enshrined will earn incomparable merit and will be reborn in the Celestial Realm after he dies.



An Advice for Venerable Ananda

Venerable Ananda was formerly a prince of the Sakya House. He was the son of King Sukkodana, Prince Siddhattha's uncle. He entered the monkhood at the same time as the other princes of the Sakya House, namely, Prince Anuruddha, etc., when the Lord Buddha visited Kapilavastu for the first time. Venerable Ananda had been appointed the Lord Buddha's Personal Assistant and had been recognized as being foremost in several areas such as scholarliness, mindfulness, principles, and wisdom.

After entering the monkhood, he had followed the Lord Buddha everywhere and had performed his duty perfectly. As a result, he did not have as much time to practice meditation. He did, however, attain the Fruit of Sotapanna.

While the Lord Buddha was giving His instructions in regards to His body, Venerable Ananda felt such a deep sorrow that the first chance he had, he went into a building and closed the door. Holding on to the door lock, he put his face against the door panel and cried loudly lamenting the fact that he has not yet been able to attain Arahatsip. And now that his cousin and religious leader is about to attain Complete Nibbana, he will not be able to see His face again.

The Lord Buddha noticed that Venerable Ananda was not at His side and asked after him. He was told by the monks that Venerable Ananda had gone to do his crying in private. The Lord Buddha had Venerable Ananda summoned and said to him,

“Behold, Ananda, living beings that are made up of different components cannot last. All of them must come to an end. It is not possible to wish them to last and to not undergo decay.

Behold, Ananda, you have assisted me with your body, speech, and thought in such a loving and kind manner and in the manner second to none, incomparable, for such a long time. You have accumulated incomparable merit. Therefore, endeavor to practice meditation and you will soon be devoid of defilements and attain Arahatsip.”

The Foremost Personal Assistant

Then the Lord Buddha praised Venerable Ananda in front of all the monks. He said that Venerable Ananda has been an excellent assistant to Him.

“Behold, monks, of all the monks who were the personal assistants to all of the previous Buddhas, none was superior to Ananda. And all the monks who will be the personal assistants of all the future Buddhas, none will be superior to Ananda.”

Behold, monks, Ananda is a sage. He does everything wisely. He knows when it is the right time for the disciples to see the Tathagata. He knows when a Bhikkhu should see Him, when a Bhikkhuni should see Him, when a male lay devotee, a female lay devotee, a king, a minister, a court official or even a heretic’s disciple should see Him. Ananda knows very well and is very thorough in every respect.

Whenever members of the Four Buddhist Communities see Ananda, they are glad and if they have the opportunity to listen to his Dhamma lecture, they will admire his lecture and wish that the lecture will continue. Even when his lecture comes to an end, they still feel glad and want to hear more of it. Likewise, when a Universal Monarch has something to say to a king, a Brahmin, a wealthy person or a monk, everyone feels glad to listen to his words and wishes him to continue.



About the City of Kusinara

After Venerable Ananda had been praised by the Lord Buddha, he asked the Lord Buddha to attain Complete Nibbana in one of the great cities such as Campa, Rajagarh, Savatthi, Saketa, Kosambi, or Vanasri instead of Kusinara. The kings, Brahmins, wealthy men of those cities believe in the Lord Buddha and they can worship the Lord Buddha in a manner truly worthy of the foremost personage on earth. Kusinara is an inferior city by comparison.

But the Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda not to think of Kusinara as being a small, insignificant city, for it used to be the location of the city in which a Universal Monarch called Mahasudassana had lived and ruled over the four oceans. He

conquered his enemies by the power of virtue. He never had to resort to weapons and punishment. There were no enemies in his territory. No one ever thought of usurping him. He possessed the seven precious treasures. His metropolis, Kusavati, extended 192 kilometers from east to west and 84 kilometers from north to south. It was a prosperous city packed with people. Food was abundant. It was like a celestial city.

Inside Kusavati, ten different kinds of sound could be heard all day and all night long. It was the sound of elephants, horses, vehicles, drums, two-faced drums, harps, singing, bells, conch shells, and people calling each other to dine. The city was never quiet all day and all night long.

The Lord Buddha said that it is fitting for Him to attain Complete Nibbana in Kusinara. Afterward, He told Venerable Ananda to inform the Malla rulers that during the last watch of that very night, He will attain Complete Nibbana. He wants to give them the opportunity to see Him for the last time.

So Venerable Ananda went to the place where the Malla rulers were having a meeting and delivered the Lord Buddha's message.

The Malla rulers, their wives, children, and in-laws were grief-stricken by the news brought to them by Venerable Ananda.

They let their hair down and cried piteously lamenting the fact that the Lord Buddha, the eyes of the world, is attaining Complete Nibbana much too soon.

They set off to see the Lord Buddha immediately. But their number was great and Venerable Ananda knew that there would not be enough time for them to individually pay homage to the Lord Buddha. Therefore, he arranged them into family groups so that by the first watch that night, they had all paid homage to the Lord Buddha.

Subhadda – The Last Disciple

In the same night, a religious mendicant called Subhadda, who was living in Kusinara, heard that the Lord Buddha was to attain Complete Nibbana that very night. He had also heard before that the happening of the Buddha is extremely rare and that he should hasten to see Him so that he could ask Him his questions.

Upon arriving at the Sal Park, he asked Venerable Ananda for permission to see the Lord Buddha but Venerable Ananda said no. He repeated his request a few times.

The Lord Buddha heard Subhadda's request and told Venerable Ananda to allow Subhadda to see Him.



Subhadda asked the Lord Buddha, of the six masters of the six schools of thought, namely, Puranakassapa, Makkhaligosala, Ajitakesakambala, Pakuddhakaccayana, Sanjayavesatthaputra, and Niganthanataputra, who are now famous and have a large number of disciples, and regarded by the people as being good and sublime, have all of them attain Self-Enlightenment as claimed or just some of them?

The Lord Buddha said, “Behold, Subhadda, pay no attention to such matter but pay attention instead to what I have to teach you and endeavor to practice accordingly. Now listen, the Path is the practice which comprises five components and eight parts. When earnestly practiced, it will turn the practitioner into a sublime

person. Other religions do not have such a teaching; therefore, they do not have the Four Holy Personages, namely, Sotapanna, Sakidagami, Anagami, and Arahats.

Behold, Subhadda, whichever religion does not teach the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four Holy Personages cannot happen in that religion. My religion is the only one that teaches the Noble Eightfold Path; therefore, the Four Holy Personages happen only in this religion.

Behold, Subhadda, if my disciples continue to practice righteousness, the world will not be devoid of Arahats.

Behold, Subhadda, when I was 29 years old, I took up the religious life in order to search for wholesomeness. This was 51 years ago. Holy Personages who are emancipated from defilements do not exist in other religions. The Four Holy Personages exist only in this religion.

Behold, Subhadda, if the monks in this religion continue to practice righteousness, the world will not be devoid of Arahats.”

The Rules for Ordaining Ascetics of Other Religious Persuasions

At the end of the Dhamma lecture, Subhadda became a believer and vowed to be a lay devotee. He also asked to be ordained a monk. Generally, for an ascetic of another religious persuasion, he has to undergo a training period of four months. After the four months are up and if he still wishes to be ordained, he can then enter the monkhood.

But in the case of Subhadda, the Lord Buddha made an exception knowing that his Perfections had been pursued to the fullest extent. The Lord Buddha had Venerable Ananda ordain Subhadda immediately.

After entering the monkhood, Subhadda hastened to seek a place of solitude in order to practice meditation as instructed by the Lord Buddha. He diligently practiced meditation and did walking meditation on the other side of the Sal Park until he attained the supernormal insight which caused him to be emancipated from defilements and attain Arahatsip. Afterward, he returned to pay homage to the Lord Buddha and to sit among the monks.



The Dhamma-Vinaya Is the Lord Buddha's Representative

The Lord Buddha said that after his passing, His disciples must not think that they no longer have a religious leader, for they are to regard the Dhamma and the Vinaya, which He has carefully taught and decreed as His representative.

The Rule for Addressing Each Other

The Lord Buddha told the monks to regard each other according to how long one has been in the monkhood. A monk who has been in the monkhood longer, hence, being more senior, is to call a monk who has not been as long in the monkhood by his first name and last name or to address him by using the word “Avuso”.

A monk is to address a more senior monk by using the word “Bhante” or “Ayasma”.

Brahma Punishment

The Lord Buddha said, “Behold, Ananda, after I am gone, if the Sangha wish, they can cancel some of the minor disciplinary rules.”

As regards to the monk Channa who had been stubborn and difficult to teach because he regarded himself as having been Prince Siddhattha’s trusted royal page. The Lord Buddha told Venerable Ananda that the monks are to exact what is termed “Brahma Punishment” as punishment for Venerable Channa’s disobedience. It meant that the Sangha was to allow Venerable Channa to say or do whatever he wanted. They were to ignore him altogether.

The Lord Buddha then said that whoever has any question about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, the Path or the mode of practices, let him ask the question now while the Lord Buddha is still with them.

The Lord Buddha repeated the question thrice but all the monks remained quiet.

Venerable Ananda said, “It is amazing, wondrous, and surprising that not a single monk here has a question or doubt about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, the Path, or the mode of practices.”

The Lord Buddha said that Venerable Ananda made the comment because he is devoted to Him. But He has already known with His supernormal insight that not a single monk there has a question about the Triple Gem, the Path, or the mode of practices. The reason is, of the 500 monks present, the lowest level of supernormal insight attained by them is the Fruit of Sotapanna. It means that none of them will ever be reborn in the state of loss and woe and all of them will be able to attain Enlightenment sometime in the future.



The Final Advice - Heedfulness

And then it was time for the Lord Buddha to give His final advice.

“Behold, monks, now I wish to remind all of you that it is normal for all compounded things to undergo deterioration and come to an end. Let all of you apply heedfulness in finishing the tasks that will benefit you and others.”

These were the Lord Buddha’s final words. It can be said that all of the teachings given by the Lord Buddha in 45 years can be summarized into just one word, “heedfulness”.

The Lord Buddha then entered the different Jhanas in preparation for attaining Complete Nibbana. These include the Four Form Jhanas, the Four Non-Form Jhanas, and the Cessation of Perception and Feeling.

At the time, Venerable Anuruddha who was foremost in the area of Celestial Eye employed it to follow the Lord Buddha's different stages of meditative absorptions. He saw with his Celestial Eye that the Lord Buddha had entered the stage of meditative absorptions where perception and feeling were extinguished and remained in that state for a while. The Lord Buddha then returned to the First Jhana and entered the higher and higher Jhanas until He reached the Fourth Jhana. Leaving the Fourth Jhana, He attained Complete Nibbana. It occurred during the last watch of the full-moon night in the sixth lunar month of Visakhapuranami.

In that instant, the earth heaved loudly causing one's hair to stand on end. The sound of celestial drums reverberated around the sky. It was the great commotion of the final moments.

All Compounded Things Are Impermanent

The Brahma King then made the remark, “All living beings on earth must leave their bodies behind to fill the earth. Even the Lord Buddha, who possesses incomparable virtue, who has attained Self-Enlightenment, who is omnipotent, has to leave His body behind and attain Complete Nibbana. This fact should serve to rouse a sense of urgency in us.”

Indra made the remark, “All compounded things are impermanent. They come to being naturally and undergo deterioration naturally. They happen and they end. They cannot last. The extinguishment of such compounded things as the five aggregates brings about true happiness because the suffering associated with birth, aging, and death has come to an end.”

Venerable Anuruddha made the remark,

“The Lord Buddha was steadfast and could not be perturbed by the Eight Worldly Conditions. His breathing has now stopped. He was not at all bothered by death. He experienced only the peace and tranquility of Nibbana. He has passed away in the manner impossible for ordinary beings. He endured suffering with perfect mindfulness. He has now attained Complete Nibbana. His five aggregates are no more, just like a bright torch that is suddenly extinguished.”

Venerable Ananda made the remark, “When the Lord Buddha attains Complete Nibbana, human beings and celestial beings alike can witness amazing events that bring one’s hair to stand on end.”

All of the above remarks serve to remind us that the body is ruled by the mind and it falls prey to aging, sickness, and death. No one can escape them, not even the omnipotent Buddha, the world’s foremost religious leader, the most sublime personage, the incomparable one. He had to leave His body behind and attain Complete Nibbana.

It behooves all of us to be mindful of the reality of life. And it should cause us to endeavor to practice heedfulness by accumulating wholesome deeds. The practice will lead us to the Celestial Realm and ultimately Nibbana. We can get there by the power of heedfulness.







*After the Lord Buddha's
Attainment of Complete Nibbana*





Chapter 10

After the Lord Buddha's Attainment of Complete Nibbana

After the Lord Buddha attained Complete Nibbana, it was still dark outside, Venerable Anuruddha and Venerable Ananda took turn giving Dhamma lectures to the Lord Buddha's disciples in an effort to comfort them.

When it was light, Venerable Ananda went to see the Malla rulers and told them to make preparations for the cremation of the Lord Buddha's body. The Malla rulers had the news announced to the people so that they could bring perfume, scented items, and fresh flowers to the ceremony which was to last for six days. And there would be music playing all throughout the six-day ceremony.

On the seventh day, the Malla rulers wanted to bring the Lord Buddha's body into the city through the southern gate and cremate it just outside the city. But they could not move the body however much they tried.

Venerable Anuruddha employed his Celestial Eye to check the situation. He found out that the celestial beings wanted the Lord Buddha's body moved into the city through the northern gate and out through the eastern gate so that the Lord Buddha's body could be cremated at the Makutabandhana Cetiya. When the Malla rulers agreed to do it, they could then move the Lord Buddha's body.

At the time, celestial beings caused a special kind of celestial flowers to fall all over the city of Kusinara until it was knee-deep. A mixture of earthly and celestial music filled the air. The Malla royalties followed the Lord Buddha's instructions perfectly in regards to the way to treat His body.

But when it was time to light the funeral pyre, the fire would not be lit. It was Venerable Anuruddha who informed the people that the celestial beings wished to give Venerable Mahakassapa the opportunity to pay homage to the Lord Buddha first.

Meanwhile, Venerable Mahakassapa was traveling quickly with 500 monks from the city of Pava. Along the way he passed an ascetic who was holding the special celestial flower, and asked

him for the news of the Lord Buddha. The ascetic told him that the Lord Buddha had already attained Complete Nibbana, and showed him the special celestial flower that he had picked up in Kusinara.

Upon hearing the sad news, the monks who were Arahats understood the reality of life but ordinary monks broke down and cried loudly.

In the group, there was a monk called Subhadda who entered the monkhood as an old man. He immediately made an inappropriate remark, “Stop crying. There is no reason to grieve the monk Gotama’s passing. When he was still living, he was always telling us not to do this but to do that. Now that he is gone, we no longer have anyone to tell us what to do and we can do whatever we want from now on.”

Venerable Mahakassapa wanted to punish the monk for having made the derogatory remark against the Lord Buddha but deemed that it was not the time to do it. He merely told the monk to stop saying such a thing, and hastened to reach the Makutabandhana Cetiya. Upon arrival, he paid homage to the Lord Buddha at the Lord Buddha’s feet and circumambulated the funeral pyre thrice.

Afterward, celestial beings lit the funeral pyre and caused it to burn certain parts of the Lord Buddha’s body, namely, skin, tendons, ligaments, and joints by turning them into oil. However, the



bones, head hair, body hair, nails, and teeth remained untouched along with the two innermost pieces of cloth used to enshroud the Lord Buddha's body.

Afterward, a stream of water flowed out of the air, and a fountain of water erupted from the Sal tree to put the fire at the funeral pyre out. The Malla rulers also doused the fire with different kinds of perfume. The Holy Relics were then enshrined in a building inside Kusinara. Soldiers holding bows and arrows stood guard over them during the seven days of worship and celebrations.

Division of the Holy Relics

When the news of the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana and the cremation of His body reached the different kingdoms, all the people who were devoted to the Lord Buddha such as King Ajatasattu of Rajagarh, the Licchavi rulers of Vesali, the Sakya king and the Lord Buddha's relatives in Ramagam, the Brahmin rulers of Vetathadipaka, and the Malla rulers of Pava sent envoys to ask for a share of the Holy Relics so that they could be enshrined in a stupa to be worshipped by the people. Each ruler sent envoys along with troops to Kusinara.

The Malla rulers were very possessive of the Holy Relics thinking that the Lord Buddha had traveled all the way to their kingdom to attain Complete Nibbana. So they refused to share the Holy Relics with anyone.

The Brahmin, Dona, who was respected by the Malla rulers, reminded them that the Lord Buddha praised patience and harmony but shunned violence and vindictiveness. Since the Lord Buddha had a great number of followers in different kingdoms, it was fitting to share the Holy Relics with these seven kingdoms through their envoys. Therefore, the Holy Relics should be divided into eight equal parts.

The Malla rulers and all the envoys approved of Dona's advice. Moreover, the Malla rulers knew that theirs was a small kingdom and could not hope to win should a battle be waged. After all, the Lord Buddha had seen fit not to attain Complete Nibbana in a large city with its powerful army for fear that other kingdoms would not be able to have a share of the Holy Relics.

Dona divided the Holy Relics into eight equal parts, he asked only for the gold measuring cup for himself. After the division of the Holy Relics was over, all the envoys and their troops returned to their separate kingdoms.

Later on, the Moriya rulers of Pipaphali sent envoys to ask for the Holy Ashes so that they could enshrine them in a stupa to be worshipped by the masses.

There were at the time ten stupas built for the purpose of enshrining the Holy Relics including that of the Brahmin Dona.



The First Sangiti

On the same day that Dona divided the Holy Relics, the monks held a meeting where Venerable Mahakassapa recounted the monk Subhaddha's derogatory remark against the Lord Buddha and the Vinaya. All the monks present at the meeting felt it deplorable that someone should have such a perverse view only seven days after the Lord Buddha's attainment of Complete Nibbana. If things are left alone, ill-willed men disguised as monks can easily pervert the Vinaya. And then what is not the Dhamma and what is not the Vinaya may prosper whereas what is the Dhamma and what is the Vinaya may disappear. Moreover, depraved individuals may try to destroy the Dhamma-Vinaya altogether. And when the number of

evil people increases, their influence will increase as well. At the same time, the number of good people practicing according to the Dhamma-Vinaya will decrease, and their influence will decrease as well.

Moreover, it was important for the monks to know that the Lord Buddha had told Venerable Ananda that the Dhamma-Vinaya would serve as His representative after His attainment of Complete Nibbana.

It was also told in the meeting that at the time when the Lord Buddha was visiting the countryside of Malla in Pava, the Malla rulers came to listen to the Lord Buddha's Dhamma lecture. After their departure, the monks were not yet sleepy so the Lord Buddha told Venerable Sariputra to give a Dhamma lecture to the monks in His place. On that occasion, Venerable Sariputra told the monks about Nigandhanataputra, the leader of Jainism, and how his death has brought about divisiveness among his disciples.

Buddhism should not happen that way. Therefore, it was important then to hold a Sangiti in order to settle questions of doctrine and to fix the text of the Scriptures. This way, the Lord Buddha's Teachings could continue to benefit the masses and the celestial beings for a very long time to come.

At the countryside of Malla, Venerable Sariputra also gave a Dhamma lecture to the monks about the ten different categories of the Lord Buddha's Teachings.

When the Dhamma lecture was over, the Lord Buddha praised Venerable Sariputra for his lecture and said that the categorization of His Teachings enables His disciples to learn the same teachings.

Venerable Ananda Attained Arahatsip

The monks at the meeting agreed that a Sangiti should be held by selecting three senior monks, namely, Venerable Mahakassapa, Venerable Upali, and Venerable Ananda, to chair it. And the Sangiti would be held in a cave near Rajagarh in the kingdom of Magadha. King Ajatasattu agreed to provide the four requisites to all the monks at the Sangiti throughout the period of three months until the Sangiti could be completed. Of the monks present at the Sangiti, 499 were Arahats with the exception of Venerable Ananda who hasn't attained Arahatsip.

In the meantime, Venerable Ananda was practicing meditation in earnest in order to attain Arahatsip before the Sangiti began. But his effort was far too intense, and he felt exhausted. He wanted to rest a bit before resuming his meditation practice. While he was

getting ready to lie down and he was in a half-sitting, half-lying down position, his mind began to relax and come to a complete standstill at the center of his body. He was then able to attain Arahatship complete with Analytical Knowledge. He displayed his supernatural powers by diving into the ground to appear in the middle of the meeting just before the Sangiti began. Therefore, all 500 monks present at the first Sangiti were Arahats.

It is during the first Sangiti that the Dhamma-Vinaya as taught and decreed by the Lord Buddha and as memorized by the Arahats is arranged into categories, questions of doctrine are settled and the text of the Scriptures is fixed so that it can be correctly memorized and passed down through the oral tradition until it is written down at a later date.







Conclusion



Conclusion

From the life history of the Lord Buddha, we can see that the Lord Gotama Buddha started out as an ordinary person but his continuous learning all throughout His countless existences allowed Him to be replete with everything desirable in His final existence.

As Prince Siddhattha, He is not attached to material wealth but on the contrary he feels bored with it. He would rather go in search of true and lasting happiness. All of us see birth, aging, sickness and death as natural occurrences but not so with Prince Siddhattha. He realizes that one day he too would age, get sick, and die, for such is the suffering inherent in every life and He wants to find the way to end it. Having seen a monk, He knows that it is the lifestyle conducive to the search for the way to end suffering. Therefore, he decides to take up the religious life as a monk.

The Lord Buddha is a true role model. He possesses endless willpower. His great self-sacrifice has enormously benefited humanity. For 45 years after His attainment of Self-Enlightenment, He has spent time teaching and helping living beings to find true happiness, put an end to suffering and the round of rebirth.

The Lord Buddha has been and will continue to be admired for a long time for His incomparable virtues, namely, insight, purity, and compassion.

Insight: The Lord Buddha possesses penetrating knowledge about the reality of all things and He has an ingenious way of teaching His enlightened knowledge to others depending on each person's innate character.

Purity: The Lord Buddha possesses a clean and pure mind; it is completely devoid of defilements. He is imperturbable. His mind remains clean and pure under all circumstances.

Compassion: The Lord Buddha has infinite compassion for all living beings. He teaches people to value the life of every living being. He teaches people to be loving and kind toward each other so that people can live together in peace and harmony.

The Lord Buddha's Teachings can be summarized into three main components as follows: 1) abstain from all things unwholesome; 2) perform all things wholesome; and 3) keep the mind clean. The Lord Buddha's enlightened knowledge cannot be gained by thinking or imagining but can only be gained through meditation practice. His Teachings are not limited by time or place. Whoever practices them earnestly and correctly will be able to attain Enlightenment in the same way that He has.

The Lord Buddha's Teachings and daily activities show that He is the "Greatest Teacher" who has truly and enormously benefited humanity.

Base (1) Nostril { Left nostril for women
Right nostril for men

Base (2) Bridge of nose { Left for women
Right for men

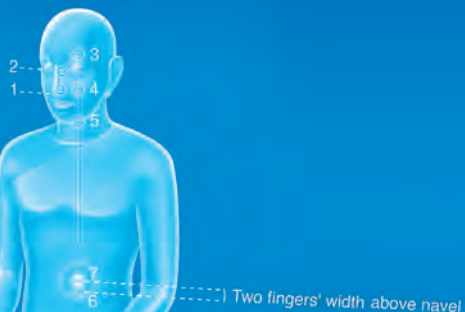
Base (3) Middle part of head

Base (4) Roof of mouth

Base (5) Throat

Base (7) Centre of gravity

Base (6) Navel



How to meditate Dhammakaya Meditation Tradition

The Dhammakaya meditation method was initiated in Thailand 60 years ago by the Great Master Phra Mongkolthepmuni, famously known as Luang Pu Wat Paknam. It is one of the most popular meditation techniques practiced by Buddhists and non-Buddhists around the world. The method is simple, easy, and effective. Everyone can learn how to do it and can achieve inner peace and happiness that you may never know existed.

“Dhammakaya” is a Pali word which means “Body of Enlightenment”. The term appears in many places in the Buddhist scriptures of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tibetan) schools. The uniqueness of the Dhammakaya meditation is that it teaches about the center of the body as the natural home of the human mind as well as the inner gateway to enlightenment. The stiller the mind is at its natural home, the deeper the happiness one experiences.

Dhammakaya meditation also has a moral impact on the mind. A person who meditates regularly will become gentler, kinder, and more peaceful.

Step-by-Step Instruction

1. The sitting posture, which has been found to be the most conducive for meditation, is the half-lotus position. Sit upright with your back straight, cross-legged with your right leg over the left

one. You can sit on a cushion or pillow to make your position more comfortable. Nothing should impede your breathing or circulation. Your hands should rest palms-up on your lap, and the tip of your right index finger should touch your left thumb. Feel as if you were one with the ground on which you sit. Feel that you could sit happily for as long as you like.

2. Softly close your eyes as if you were falling asleep. Relax every part of your body, beginning with the muscles in your face, then relax your face, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, trunk and legs. Make sure there are no signs of tension on your forehead or across your shoulders.

3. Close your eyes gently but not completely. Stop thinking about any worldly things. Feel as if you were sitting alone; around you is nothing and no one. Create a feeling of happiness and spaciousness in your mind.

Before starting, it is necessary to acquaint yourself with the various resting points or bases of the mind inside the body.

- The first base is at the rim of the nostril, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.

- The second base is at the corner of the eye, on the right side for men and on the left side for women.

- The third base is at the center of the head.

- The fourth base is at the roof of the mouth.

- The fifth base is at the upper center of the throat.

- The sixth base is at a point in the middle of your abdomen, the meeting point of an imaginary line between the navel through the back and the line between the two sides.

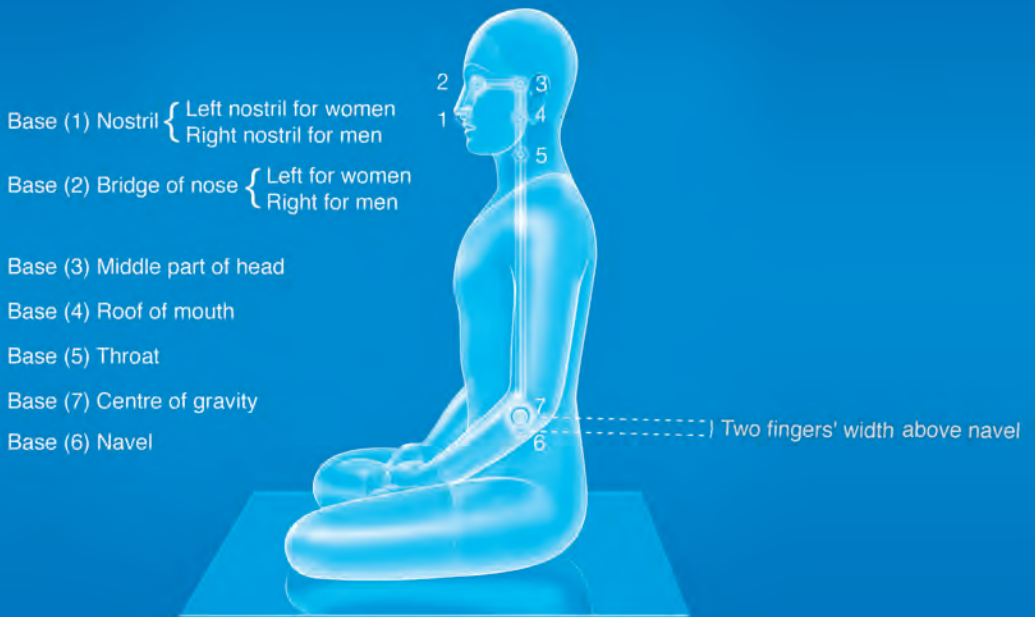
- The seventh base of the mind is two fingers' breadth above the navel. This base is the most important point in the body. It is the very center of the body and the point where the mind can come to a standstill.

4. Feel that your body is an empty space, without organs, muscles or tissues. Gently and contentedly rest your attention at a point near the seventh base of the mind at the center of the body. Whatever experience arises in the mind, simply observe without attempting to interfere with it. This way, your mind will become gradually purer and inner experience will unfold.

5. If you find that you cannot dissuade the mind from wandering, then your mind needs an inner object as a focus for attention. Gently imagine that a bright, clear, crystal sphere, about the size of the tip of your little finger, is located inside at the center of the body. Maybe, you cannot imagine anything, but later, you'll be able to see a crystal ball with increasing clarity. Allow your mind to come to rest at the center of the crystal ball. Use the subtlest of effort and you'll find that the crystal ball becomes brighter and clearer.

6. If you find that your mind still wanders from the crystal ball, you can bring the mind back to a standstill by repeating the mantra,

THE SEVEN BASES OF THE MIND



“Samma-arahang” silently, as if the sound of the mantra is coming from the center of the crystal ball. Repeat the mantra over and over again without counting.

7. Don't entertain thoughts in your mind. Don't analyze what's going on in the meditation. Allow the mind to come to a standstill. That is all that you need to do. If you find that you cannot imagine anything, repeat the mantra “Samma-arahang”, silently and continuously in the mind. If you are not sure about the location of the center of the body, just know that anywhere in the area of your abdomen will do. Don't be disappointed if you find your mind wandering. It is only natural for beginners. Make effort continuously, keep your mind bright, clear and pure, and in the end, you will achieve success.

8. Keep repeating the mantra. Eventually the sound of the mantra will fade away. At that point a new bright, clear, crystal sphere will arise of its own accord. This stage is called “pathama magga” (primary path). At this stage the shining crystal sphere is connected firmly to the mind, and is seated at the center of the body. You will experience a great happiness that you have never known before. With a perfectly still mind focused at the center of the crystal sphere, it will give way to a succession of increasingly purer transcendental inner bodies, until it reaches the “Body of Enlightenment” known as “Dhammakaya”. This is the highest meditative attainment which enables the practitioner to achieve super knowledge and supreme happiness.



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Many people have wondered,
“Why are we here? What is the
purpose of life?” The answers
can be found in the life history
of the greatest teacher of
the world – Gotama Buddha.



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