

# GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THERAVADA BUDDHISM

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA  
AND DHAMMA

BASIC DIVISION



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Printer & Publisher : Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association  
No 70, D. S. Senanayake Mawatha,  
Colombo 08, Sri Lanka.  
Tel - 2695786, 2682398, 2698083  
Fax - 2682397  
Email – [ymbacolombo@sltnet.lk](mailto:ymbacolombo@sltnet.lk)  
Website – [www.colomboymba.org](http://www.colomboymba.org)

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**COLOMBO YOUNG MEN'S BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION

I am privileged to issue a Message of Felicitation on the publication of this Basic Book of the series of text books titled "Guide to the study of Theravada Buddhism" by the Colombo YMBA this being the Eighth Edition within a period of Fourteen years. This series of text books was primarily intended to cater to the needs of students preparing to sit the English medium Dhamma examinations conducted by the Colombo YMBA both locally and internationally. We have observed with delight that these text books have been appreciatively received and fruitfully consulted not only by our target groups of students, but also by private schools and others who are engaged in the pursuit of Dhamma studies.

Propagation of Buddha Dhamma and facilitating the study of Buddha Dhamma by the growing generations of students are integral objectives of the Colombo YMBA. We are convinced that a proper grounding in the principles of Buddha Dhamma in the growing generation is a necessary pre-requisite for promoting the growth of a "Righteous Society". We are actively engaged in this task.

We are indeed happy to observe the progressive increase in the number of students facing our examinations both in Sri Lanka and overseas. We urge that the Buddhist Temples, Buddhist Organizations, Dhamma Schools and their voluntary teachers maintain their enthusiasm and dedication towards this noble endeavor, a meritorious "Dhamma Dana".

May the Blessings of the Noble Triple Gem be with all.

**Maddumage Ariyaratne**

Acting President

Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association.

July 2019

## PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH EDITION

Notwithstanding the rapid replacement of the conventional modes of assimilating knowledge by modern technological devices, books still remain as the principal sources of reference for ordinary students and seekers of information. Consequently, a responsibility lies on the organizations providing education and conducting examinations to supply students and others who are interested with suitable study material in the form of publications.

The Colombo YMBA has been promoting the study of Buddhism amongst students both in Sri Lanka and overseas in Sinhala as well as in English for over a century. With the increase in the numbers of candidates sitting the English medium Dhamma Examinations conducted by the Colombo YMBA, a demand for suitable text books to cover the relevant Examination syllabuses was keenly felt. In order to meet this demand the Colombo YMBA commenced producing a series of text books titled "Guide to the Study of Theravada Buddhism" in six parts in 2004, and completed the series in 2013.

With the rapid increase in demand, these text books have run into many editions and we are now presenting to the students and others interested, this Eighth Edition within Fourteen years.

We appreciate the enthusiastic patronage extended to our publications by the Dhamma Schools, other educational institutions and their teachers. We wish them success in their worthy endeavors.

I greatly appreciate the services of the Writers of the texts and the staff of the Colombo YMBA for their unstinted support and co-operation in all matters connected with this publication.

May the Blessings of the Noble Triple Gem be with all.

**Nalin J. Abeysekere**  
Secretary, Dhamma Examinations.

July 2019

## FROM THE AUTHOR

To be invited to add to the mass of writings, targeting child and youth readership on the Greatest and Wisest human Being yet born to this world is not only a challenging task but an enviable task. It was also a very pleasurable task. It was almost as if whatever skills, the others imagined the writer to own were being tapped for a highly supreme cause.

The writing involved is so sacred and profound, yet the writer herself, so insignificant which state explains the insertion of the adapted lines from "Light of Asia" by Edwin Arnold. But even that "apology" is not at all sufficient.

It may be evident to the advanced reader that a historical approach to the personage of the Buddha has been attempted to a great extent. Hence the innovative insertion of the chapter on "India, the land of the Buddha". Yet the typical Buddhist lore has not been overlooked, which may not appeal to the more sophisticated reader but as part and parcel of Buddhist literature the inclusion has been effected.

A novice in purely religious writings, except for a few articles that have appeared in journals as the Dinamina Vesak Annual, Cultural Ministry publications and daily newspapers, the writer is indebted to the following;

Mr. U.B. Herath, Superintendent of Examinations of the Colombo YMBA who made the request on behalf of the YMBA Mr. P. Wattedgama, Mr. N. Mutukumarana and Mr. P. Mahanama for help in editing and proof – reading.

**Padma Edirisinghe**  
388 A, Talawatugoda Road,  
Sri Jayawardenapura.

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**LIFE  
OF  
THE BUDDHA**



# 1

## **INDIA – THE LAND OF THE BUDDHA**

India is respected all over the world today as the Land of the Buddha. Lord Buddha, as Prince Siddhartha, was born and bred in India or Jambudeepa as it was known in ancient times. Jambu or Damba is that beautiful scarlet coloured little fruit known also as rose apple and it is very pleasant to think that such a big country may have been named after this little fruit. After the birth of the Bodhisatva (prince Siddhartha) this country further came to be known as the land of the Buddha. Today, India considers the Buddha as her greatest son.

It is useful to learn some facts about this vast country especially its conditions as it was at the time of Lord Buddha's birth. India is a country with a very long history. Today, it is a Republic and before that, was a British colony. But, in very ancient days it was a very prosperous country with many kingdoms. It had its own kings and queens and ministers and massive palaces.

Of course it had many kings, may be too many, that led to many wars and disunity later. Some two thousand and six hundred plus years ago, at the time Prince Siddhartha was born this country, due to its size, was divided into many kingdoms. North India alone had sixteen kingdoms. Two thousand and six hundred years ago! Amazing, isn't it? Such a long long time back!

## **THE FOUR KINGDOMS IN THE NORTH**

As we are dealing with the life of the Buddha in this book, we will limit ourselves to four kingdoms in North India. One is the kingdom of Kosala where the Buddha was born and bred and the other three, the kingdoms around it where the Buddha travelled often preaching the Dhamma or the Doctrine. The kings of these kingdoms helped the Blessed One much in developing His own kingdom of Dhamma that had no land.

Look at a map of India in your atlas. To the North of India, you will see a huge ring of mountains rise. That is the great Himalayan range. Hundreds of rivers flow down from it while huge trees provide shade and shelter to thousands of strange animals and birds living within their forests. During some seasons, as in countries of Europe, snow caps the mountain tops.

How pleasant is the fact that prince Siddhartha was born in such a lovely setting of nature, as seen in picture post cards. It was in the kingdom of Kosala that He was born.

## **THE KINGDOMS AROUND THE KOSALA KINGDOM**

Close by were three other kingdoms, by name Magadha, Vamsa and Avanthi. Their capitals are also important enough to know since it was in these capitals where people gathered most that the Buddha preached often. Magadha's capital was Rajagaha where resided the Magadha king, Bimbisara later succeeded by his son, Ajasatta.

Southward of Magadha was the kingdom of Vamsa with its capital at Kosambi (Kosamba). King Udena ruled here. Further South was the kingdom of Avanthi with its capital at Ujjeni (Udeni) ruled by king Pajjotha. These kings were usually related

to each other by marriage though that did not prevent them from fighting with each other now and then. All these kings lived in the life time of the Buddha, hence their names appear often in Buddhist literature.

## **KINGDOM OF KOSALA**

Kosala had as its capital Savatthi, a very prosperous and crowded city. Many events in the Buddha's life took place in and around this city because His father, a king of the Sakya clan and of Solar or Sun Race, was a provincial king of the Kosala kingdom ruling from Kapilavasthu. Since these kingdoms were very large they were broken up into provinces and the rulers of these too were called kings.

Thus Suddhodana, father of Prince Siddhartha too was a king of a province that had its own capital. Its name was Kapilavasthu named after Kapila, a sage who had resided there earlier. The whole area was beautiful to behold, for it included the Himalayan mountain slopes which today are in Nepal. Nepal as a separate country did not exist in the Buddha's time. The river Ganga flowed to the Ocean across it. River Ganga ! Around its waters the Buddha travelled on foot hundreds of miles preaching His noble doctrine. Sometimes he travelled alone, sometimes with his monks, all in yellow robes. And always they walked on foot, so that they could meet the poor and simple folk to listen to their problems and advise them.

As the son of a king, the Buddha could have owned chariots and horse-drawn carriages but He preferred to walk. At night, He and His disciples, if they were not offered proper shelter, slept in open spaces with the sky as the roof. It was the life of the wanderer that He and His Bhikkhus led. They cooked no meals

and fed on what was given to them by people. At night they avoided food. Their main aim was to help and advise the needy and the distressed. It was a glorious sight to see rows and rows of yellow-robed monks trailing behind the Buddha along the shores of the Ganga, looking so calm and serene.

As they walked thus they made the river's waters glow yellow and gold. People chanted "Sadhu", "Sadhu". On they walked, across all the four kingdoms of Kosala, Magadha, Vatsa and Avanthi. Sometimes they walked away from these to distant places and lands helping people and talking to them and advising them. They never asked anything in return but they needed food to survive. In their hands were bowls in which devout people placed food. Food was accepted from anyone, be they of high birth or of very low birth. The Buddha did not believe in the difference between high and low families.

He preached that a person becomes high or low by his or her own acts alone. All this happened in a time phase around 2500-2600 years ago in the sub-continent of India.

Before Prince Siddhartha was born, there were many preachers in India who formed many cults, sometimes also called religions. The Nigantas and the Jains had their own cults. Some worshipped huge trees, some, the Sun, the Moon, the Sky and even the Rain. Even today there are many different religious beliefs and cults in the world.

But, what the Buddha preached in India so long ago was entirely a new religion. The many castes and creeds that bogged people in misery and disunity, He ignored and opposed. He saw how humans suffered, and studied the cause of suffering. And till human life lasted, He wished the humans to lead pure and correct lives avoiding evil doings. He himself was no God; nor did He claim godly origin. He was just a human born of a mother

and a father, just like you and me. In the next chapter we will learn more about the Buddha's parents and the royal family to which He belonged.

### Exercises:

1. Read the following statements. Mark ✓ if they are correct and x if they are wrong.
  - a. Prince Siddhartha was born and bred in North India. ( )
  - b. India is today divided into sixteen kingdoms. ( )
  - c. The Buddha rode in a chariot to preach the Dhamma. ( )
  - d. Buddhism is and was the only religion in the world. ( )
  - e. Jambudeepa and Dambadiva are two other names for India. ( )
  
2. Match the following and make sentences.
  - a. Bodhisatva means (a) the kingdom of Magadha
  - b. Kapilavasthu was the city of (b) to meet the poor and needy Sakyans?
  - c. The Buddha and His Disciples Walked on foot (c) where Prince Siddhartha grew up
  - d. Bimbisara who helped the Buddha ruled (d) He who is to become the Buddha
  
3. Write five sentences on "India - the Land of the Buddha" (Do not write the same sentences as given in the lesson).
  
4. Find a map of India, trace it and try to mark the area the Buddha lived and moved about, using facts given in the lesson. Mark and underline five places in the area you may think are connected to the Buddha's life. The names on the atlas may be different but not very different to those given in the lesson.

## 2

# **THE ROYAL FAMILY OF KAPILAVASTHU**

Already you know that king Suddhodana was the father of prince Siddhartha. You also know that king Suddhodana was a provincial king in the kingdom of Kosala. Its king was Pasenadi.

## **SAKYA CLAN**

King Suddhodana belonged to the Sakya clan. Sakya is said to mean clever or able. The Sakya clan had as its ancestor king Okkaka, also called Iksvaku. His children and grand children ruled for a long time from the city of Kapilavasthu. Actually it had earlier been an independent kingdom later turned into a provincial kingdom.

You must remember that India was a very rich country then and even provincial kings had several large palaces and enjoyed many comforts. They owned slaves, carriages and wore rich silks and brocades and lived and ate and rode in princely style.

## **FROM OKKAKA TO SUDDHODANA**

Then succeeded to this throne at Kapilavasthu, a king directly coming down the Okkaka line. He was king Sinhabhanu who had five sons. Their names were Suddhodana, Sukhodana, Dhotodana, Amitodana and Mitodana. Naturally the eldest

son Suddhodana inherited the throne. King Anjana of Koliya Dynasty who ruled at Devadaha had two sons by the names of Dandapani and Suppabaddha and two daughters named Maha Maya and Prajapathi. King Suddhodana of Kapilavasthu married Maha Maya, daughter of king Anjana.

## **MARRIAGE OF SUDDHODANA AND MAHA MAYA**

King Suddhodana married the elder daughter, Maha Maya. You may wonder why only the name of the younger daughter is mentioned other than that of Maha Maya. This is because seven days after the prince was born to king Suddhodana and his queen, Maha Maya passed away and was born in heaven. Maha Prajapathi Gothami was brought to the palace to look after the infant. She may have become the king's new queen.

## **WHO WAS THIS BABY PRINCE?**

Who was this baby prince? Who was this infant? He was named Siddhartha (One whose aims will be achieved) and was later to become the world's greatest thinker and philosopher. Around Him, as He grew up, He found a suffering world full of disease and death and distress. Why? Why? Why? He asked Himself this question, as He grew up and observed the world about Him with His keen intelligence. He put the question to teachers and preachers of the day but none could give an answer. Brahmins ruled the society. Animals were killed and offered to unseen gods. People were divided into castes and creeds. Some were considered very high. Some, very low and even 'Untouchable', not fit to touch.

The Prince observed all this and found it all to be unjust and later under the Bo tree, He found the answer to all that troubled Him. That was His moment of Enlightenment, His moment of achieving Buddhahood. We must devote the next chapter to the

mode of the birth of this very king Prince who was to leave the riches and comforts of a palace, to help mankind. He was also to leave behind the silks and brocades and jewels of a royal prince to wrap around Him a coarse yellow robe, in which He walked hundreds of miles.

### **Exercises**

1. Make ten questions for your friends to which following are the answers;

Okkaka  
River Ganges or Ganga  
Kosala  
Maha Maya  
Suppabaddha  
Devdaha  
Pasenadi  
Suddhodana  
Amitodana  
Sakya clan

#### **Example:**

#### **Question:**

Who brought up prince Siddhartha after queen Maha Maya passed away?

#### **Answer:**

Maha Prajapathi Gothami.



### 3

## **BIRTH OF PRINCE SIDDHARTHA**

In the last lesson we learnt that king Suddhodana married princess Maha Maya. Soon a great event was to take place in world history. What was it? The arrival into the world of a baby who was later to become the Enlightened One, the Buddha. The mother was queen Maha Maya. Just before this baby was conceived in the mother's womb, the queen had a strange dream.

What was this dream? Four Devas or gods had carried her to the pond Anothatta hidden in the Himalaya mountains rising above the Kapilavasthu kingdom. There, they had bathed her and dressed her in the silks of heaven. Then, a white elephant had appeared from nowhere with a white lotus in its trunk. It had (Circled) around her thrice.

Next morning the queen informed the king, of this strangedream. The king consulted wise men who told him that a great being had been conceived within his queen. The king was very happy and had ordered celebrations. Food and clothing were given away to the poor and needy.

### **IN THE LUMBINI PARK**

In the East, It is a custom for mothers to go to the abodes of their parents, especially when they give birth to the first born. So, queen Maha Maya too desired to go back to her parents when

she got pregnant. The king gave his consent. A gaily decorated palanquin was provided and maids and servants too were provided. So, one fine day the queen set out for her parents' home in this palanquin trailed by a procession. Between her father's city and Kapilavasthu was a park known as the Lumbini Park, full of Sal trees on which pretty fragrant flowers of pink, yellow and white hues bloomed in thousands. Today, Lumbini Park is in the kingdom of Nepal, very close to the boundary between Nepal and India.

The queen wished to rest there for some time. Soon she developed signs of delivering her baby. A curtain was drawn around a Sal tree. And soon was heard a baby's birth. What a beautiful setting it was for a baby to be born! At this time all Sal flowers were in full bloom. Birds trilled on the twigs and butterflies of all colours flitted from tree to tree. Twittering squirrels peeped curiously from the boughs heavy with the white, yellow and pink tinted flowers. A distance away, the Himalayas rose to the heavens.

The little baby was no ordinary baby. He was the son of the country's king and what is more, soothsayers had predicted that he would one day rule the world. Celebrations began again. Lumbini today is world famous as the place where the Bodhisatva was born. Thousands flock to the Lumbini shrine every day to pay their homage.

## **BEAUTIFUL BUDDHIST LITERATURE AROUND THE BIRTH**

It was a very powerful birth. Birth of the mighty Emperor of the world of Dhamma! Naturally it was hailed in Buddhist literature by beautiful episodes. Buddhist literature tells us that the very earth shook and that gods in heaven cried out, Sadhu!



Birth of Prince Siddartha (Kelaniya Vihara Murals)

Sadhu! It was truly a joyous event for the whole world. A being who would care for the sufferings of the whole of humanity, who would one day give up a life of ease and luxury to help all men and women, had been born.

Two thousand plus years later, when bells in our temples ring and men and women in white, cry out Sadhu! Sadhu! under a large moon shining in the sky, remember it is this baby who developed into the Great Master we are remembering.

The baby had taken seven steps after birth and a lotus had bloomed at each step. So there were seven lotuses around him. Then he went on to make the famed announcement which is also called Udana or Expression of Joy which runs as follows;

*"Aggohamasmi lokassa"* which means

"I am the master of this world"

He had next chanted,

*"Aya mantima jati, natthidani punabbhavo"* which means

"This is my last birth. I will not be born again."

You may be wondering what this other language is. It is the language of Pali. For a student of Buddhism it is very useful to know Pali. It is very close to the Magadhi language spoken in the Magadha kingdom.

## **CALCULATING TIME**

The birth of the Prince took place about 2629 years back on Vesak Full Moon day. (This is according to our great chronicle the Maha Vamsa). According to present usage, the year of birth is around 624 BC. What is this BC which we have mentioned earlier too? It means before the birth of Christ. Jesus Christ was the founder of Christianity which became the religion of Europe.

Europe became very powerful in the world after the 16th Century and other countries imitated what they did. They began to count years as "before and after the birth of Christ", and now the whole world does so, since it makes matters easy. When the whole world uses one system of calculating time, you can understand that it makes matters very easy when dealing internationally. But as a Buddhist child, you must always remember the Buddhist years and Buddhist months with their sacred and beautiful names as Vesak, Poson, Esala and Nikini.

BC means the years before the birth of Christ and AD means the years after his birth. Sometimes CE (Current Era) is used in place of AD. It is also useful to know what a century means. It means 100 years. So, 2600 years mean 26 centuries. The year we live in today is 2015 AD (official year) and Buddhist year 2559 (The rough calculation is made by adding 544 years to 2015 as the Buddha was born 624 years before the Christ and beginning of the Buddha years is reckoned from the Mahaparinirvana when He passed away at the age of 80 years).

## **SAGE ASITHA VISITS THE INFANT**

Now let us get back to the birth of the Bodhisatva. There lived a very wise sage at this time. His name was Asitha. Some say he had even divine powers. He felt that a great being has been born and so he visited the baby in the palace. By this time mother Maha Maya had returned to Kapilavasthu with the child without going to Devadaha, her home town. On seeing the thirty two especial marks on the infant's body and also other marks, sage Asitha's feelings were confirmed.

He worshipped the little baby and the king, the father followed him.

## **Exercises**

1. Make ten separate sentences by using the following proper nouns. (Use facts in the lessons but do not repeat the same sentences given in the lesson).

Maha Maya, Siddhartha, Suddhodana, Lord Buddha, Sal,  
Lumbini, Asitha, India, Nepal, Kapilavasthu.

## **INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD OF PRINCE SIDDHARTHA**

Naming ceremony of a child is very important in India. As the prince was the son of a king, this ceremony was held on a grand scale on the fifth day of his life. Eight very wise Brahmins were called in to choose a name and also prophesy his future. Seven of them predicted that the prince will be a king of kings if he leads a lay life or a householder's life. But if he gives up his lay life, they said he would become the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

But one among them, the youngest by name, Kondanna, said firmly that the prince would not lead a lay life but would end up as the Buddha. Then they decided on his name which was to be Siddhartha, one whose wishes will be achieved.

Came the seventh day and a sad thing happened. The mother of the prince, queen Maha Maya passed away and went to heaven. Queen Prajapathi Gothami became the prince's foster mother. The prince grew up in much comfort. His education began. Many skills and various kinds of knowledges were acquired by him. But the kindness in him began to surface at a very early age.



Ploughing Ceremony (Kelaniya Vihara Murals)



## PLOUGHING CEREMONY

The ploughing ceremony needs special mention in the narration of his childhood. This is another ceremony held in India very grandly. The king acts as the main farmer and uses a golden plough. The ministers use silver ploughs. They plough only for a short time and then watch in a relaxed mood, the work going on. The farmers have now taken over. (It is the same as now, as what happens at official functions).

The prince now, rather grown up in years, was taken to the threshing field. He had thirty two maids to attend on him! Maids too were the same as now. Remember the rose apple or jambu trees of India? After keeping the prince under one such rose apple tree they began going about laughing, talking and bustling about on this matter and that. The prince calmly went on watching the ceremony.

The future Buddha or Bodhisatva saw, nothing but distress and sadness. Sad were the eyes of the oxen who dragged the ploughs and sad were the eyes of the farmers who walked in the mud after the oxen. They were both tired and weary of the work. And in the ploughed field were hundreds of insects, trodden and killed. Hundreds of eggs of these creatures were being broken. Watching all these, Siddhartha got into his first spell of meditation. On Concentration on Breath. The maids now remembering the prince, came rushing back to the tree, to see him seated cross-legged and meditating. They considered it a miracle and informed the king.

He came there and worshipped his own son. First time he did so was on sage Asitha's visit.

## **Exercises :**

1. Draw the picture of the ploughing ceremony and the prince watching it.
2. Write five tragic or sad things the prince noticed while watching the ploughing that was going on.
3. Answer following questions.
  - a. Why were the eyes of the oxen sad?
  - b. Why were the eyes of the farmers sad?
  - c. Why were the king and ministers so happy?
  - d. Would any child have noticed what Siddhartha noticed?
  - e. What do you think made the prince notice the sad things?

## YOUTH OF PRINCE SIDDHARTHA

King Suddhodana was not much different from other fathers. He liked his only son to lead a life of comfort. Many soothsayers had told him that the child would be the wisest human in the world. At the naming ceremony the sage Asitha had predicted that Prince Siddhartha will end up as a great teacher.

Other wise men said that if the prince wishes to rule, he will end up as a very powerful king, a Chakravarthi, king of kings but if he does not want to rule, he will become the Buddha.

Now Prince Siddhartha was king Suddhodana's only child and son, by his chief queen. Naturally the king wanted this son to inherit his throne. He also liked the idea of his son becoming a king of kings. After all, Suddhodana was only a provincial king.

If Siddhartha becomes king of kings he will be above all kings of the vast country of India. What father would not like such a glorious future for his only son?

He consulted the wise men again, especially young Kondanna who had predicted that the prince was sure to end up as the Buddha. The wise men had already told him that the sorrows and troubles of this world would make the prince disgusted. He would then search for a way of helping people to overcome all sorrows and troubles.

Kondanna told him that the prince would see Four Foresigns; **old age, sickness, death** and an **ascetic** and then that his mind would be made up and that he would take to robes. The father conceived a plan. He would see that his son would not see the sad and troubled side of life. He should not see death and sickness and old age. Suddhodana surrounded his son with all comforts. Three palaces were built for him to spend the three seasons.

As he grew into a youth, pretty damsels were brought into the palace to sing and dance and keep him company. He was also given a very good education and was skilled in many arts and feats including archery. Vast knowledge was acquired by him as he got educated by royal teachers.

## **PRINCE BEGINS SEEING SORROW**

But, however much his father tried to prevent him from seeing sorrow and distress the intelligent youth saw them. On his rounds around the city, on horseback or in his royal carriage he saw acute poverty. Just like today the rich people in North India were very rich and even kept slaves, while the poor were very poor and bogged in misery. Sometimes, little children were among the distressed.

Thus the sad side of the world began to reveal itself to the intelligent youth very gradually. He began to brood over it all. Inside the palace everything was fine, as the king, his father had arranged. Musicians played their flutes, damsels danced, plenty of meat and fish and fruits were heaped on massive dining tables. Not a single sick or old nor dying human was inside the grand palace or palaces. Beautiful women and handsome men walked about smartly, dressed in shining silks. But outside, the world was just miserable.

## **THE STORY OF THE SWAN**

He had friends, good and bad, kind and cruel. A certain episode would show how different he was from the unkind friends like prince Devadatta who was also his cousin. One day, he was in the woods with this cousin of his, who had his bows and arrows. Prince Siddhartha though he was skilled in archery never hurt a living being. Suddenly Devadatta injured and brought down a flying swan with his arrow.

Siddhartha ran to the bird, gently pulled out the arrow, and stroked the bird lovingly with the juice of wild leaves. The injured bird now revived and flapped its wings. Devadatta claimed the bird but Siddhartha fearing for its life refused to give the bird. The story goes that they went to the wise men to have the ownership solved.

The wise men gave this decision.

**"The swan belongs to the one who saved its life, not to the one who tried to kill it."**

## **DEVADATTA TURNS ENEMY**

The enmity Devadatta developed towards the prince is said to have begun that day and was to last throughout the Buddha's life. But the prince's fame as a just and kind youth and a lover of all life, a human's or an animal's or a bird's life, spread all over North India.

## **PRINCE SIDDARTHA'S LESSONS FROM NATURE**

A keen observer of the nature around him, the prince noticed that not only humans are often cruel to each other, but that even birds and animals are so. He had once watched a lizard picking up ants with its tongue and eating them. Then a snake

had killed this lizard and swallowed it. But the snake was soon lifted up by a hawk who tore apart the snake and ate it ! What a cruel cycle !

### **Exercises**

1. If you are a good artist draw two scenes, a) The first depicting Prince Siddhartha stroking the swan while an angry Devadatta looks on, b) The court room scene.
2. If you are a good writer, write 'The dialogue between Siddhartha and Devadatta on the injured swan.'
3. If you think you are neither, answer the following question, "Why cannot I write?" and go back and do it. And even attempt the drawing.
4. Write an account of an instance of cruelty you have seen, among humans or animals. Limit it to 30 words.

## 6

### **PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S MARRIAGE FOLLOWED BY SEEING MORE SORROW**

To complete the prince's ties to lay life the king now began seeking a bride for him. Finally Yasodhara, the daughter of a Sakyan chief was selected as his bride, at a ceremony called Svayamvara.

She was very beautiful, kind and understanding. She was also a cousin of the prince. As was the custom then in Indian palaces, many other beautiful princesses too were living in the royal court. Thus all worldly comfort and luxury were provided.

But however much his father tried to direct his son to the pleasures of life, he was not successful. On the prince's rounds around the city, on horseback or in his royal carriage, he saw not only the Four Fore-signs that Kondanna mentioned but acute poverty.

Just like today, the people of India then were very rich and poor people, and very poor. Lepers, beggars with sore wounds and the disabled and neglected old men and women walked in plenty outside the city limits. Often he saw men and women crying over a miserable incident.

In and around the palaces his father had built for him, the palaces of Ramya, Suramya and Subha, everything was very fine. His father saw to that. Within the beautiful palaces day in and day out musicians played their flutes and lovely maidens danced. On massive gleaming tables, fruits and various kinds of food were heaped. No sick nor old or dying person could be seen anywhere. Poverty and misery and hunger, he had seen outside the city, in plenty, but nothing of that sort was visible here. The difference made the prince begin thinking more and more.

Extremely intelligent as the Prince was, he had seen this sorrow and suffering in snatches from his childhood, beginning from the ploughing field. Human sorrow and distress and sickness, as mentioned he had caught glimpses of, on his city rounds.

But one day, as Kondanna predicted, he saw the Four Foresigns that would lead to his renunciation of worldly life, within a short spell of time. An **old man**, a **sick man**, a **dead body** and a **robed recluse** who wished to get away from all this agony by leading a holy life - the Prince saw all these four figures. This is not unnatural for even we see such different people together, very often. But according to some sources it was the gods who presented the Fore-signs to hasten the renunciation.

Whatever the background, it made the Prince brood more and more on what he saw.



## Exercises

1. What are the four Fore-signs that Kondanna mentioned?
  - a. ....
  - b. ....
  - c. ....
  - d. ....
  
2. Mark a ✓ or a x against these statements
  - a. King Suddhodana prepared his son for Buddhahood. ( )
  - b. Social conditions inside the city of Kapilavasthu and outside were very different. ( )
  - c. Marriage to Yasodhara made Siddhartha a very happy prince. ( )
  - d. Beyond all that outward happiness, there was much sorrow in the outside world. ( )
  - e. It is quite in order for some people to enjoy and others to suffer. ( )

## **KISA GOTHAMI'S NIBBUTHA WORDS**

Women were a group much scorned and ignored by Brahmins during the days of the Bodhisatva prince by name Siddhartha. When he became the Buddha He changed this attitude and even admitted them to the Sasana as Bhikkunis. In the glorious days of His Buddhahood many women as Sujatha and Vishaka played well-known roles. In this lesson we will learn about a woman who played a role in the Prince's life just before his Great Renunciation or 'Maha Abinikkamana'.

The young woman was none other than Kisa Gothami, a daughter of one of those nobles who served king Suddhodana. She lived in a grand palace of the city. The prince himself had been in the pleasure park of the city and He was in a very happy mood. On that day, after days of brooding on the misery of humans and a way to solve it all He had seen an ascetic, calmly ambling along the road. He had given up lay life. He was in deep thought as he walked. His sight was pleasing. Yes. He would be like that monk. Whole day He spent in the park planning His future. Then news came that a son was born to Him.

The news did not change His plans. The radiance on His face, a result of His decision, could be seen by anyone. Kisa Gothami, the princess relaxing on the balcony of her palace, saw it, as the prince rode back to His own palace.

And she exulted thus;

*"Nibbuta nuna sa mata  
Nibbuta nuna so pita  
Nibbuta nuna sa nari  
Yasaayamidi so pati"*

Translated, it means;

"Happy indeed is the mother  
Happy indeed is the father  
Happy indeed is the wife  
Who has a husband like this"

The Prince heard the lines and He was much pleased with the word "Nibbutha."

After He reached the palace, He sent Kisa Gothami, a veryvaluable necklace.

The Nibbutha words uttered by Kisa Gothami are famous inBuddhist literature.

### **Exercises :**

1. Draw a scene of Kisa Gothami up on the balcony and prince Siddhartha riding by on His horse. Write five sentences on this scene.
2. What were the three exultations of Kisa Gothami that came to beknown as Nibbutha Pada ?

## 8

# **PRINCE SIDDHARTHA LEAVES THE PALACE – THE GREAT RENUNCIATION**

The event of Prince Siddhartha leaving the palace is called the ‘Great Renunciation’. Renunciation is too big a word. A simpler word is "Giving up". Who gave up? Prince Siddhartha gave up. What did he give up? Many things. To sum up it all, he gave up all the comforts of a princely life to help suffering mankind.

This story of the ‘Great Renunciation’ is one of the most touching stories ever told in the world. It happened on the very night a baby was born to princess Yasodhara. As the baby prince was the next heir to the throne grand festivities were held in Kapilavasthu that continued late into the night. Within the royal palace dancing and singing and playing of flutes continued till midnight.

### **Prince makes up his mind**

But one human in the palace remained unhappy. That was Prince Siddhartha. Across the merry scenes around him, he could see in the world beyond, men and women crying, some sick, some old and haggard, some dying. Corpses were being carried. Then a robed man walked through it all, serene, calm,

meditating. The prince made up his mind. He would be like that ascetic. He would give up all this. Night was advancing towards midnight. Siddhartha now peeped in to the court yard. The dancing damsels now tired slept all over in ugly postures and snoring. He walked to the chamber of Yasodhara. She was sleeping on the royal couch clasping the little baby. His heart beat rapidly. No. If he watched too much he could change his mind. The babe could be a fetter, an obstacle, a *Rahulo*.

### **Now or Never**

In fact the Prince on hearing the news of his son's birth had declared, "*Rahulo Jatho bandhanam jatham*" which means, "an obstacle has been created, a bond made." Later the son was actually named Rahula. Now or Never, thought the prince if he was to achieve his goal. His mind firmly made up, he softly woke up his most faithful attendant, Channa and requested him to saddle his favourite horse, Kanthaka. He wanted to go on a long journey, the prince said. Channa did not ask any questions.

Into the moon-lit night Siddhartha and Channa set out and rode fast. Finally they came to the river Anoma and crossed it. Here he ordered the horse to stop. Then Siddhartha cut his long hair with his own sword, removed his jewellery and princely silks and gave them to Channa to be given to his father. Then he wore the orange robe of an ascetic and bade Channa to get back with Kanthaka. His home now would be the great wide world, with the sky as the roof.

### **On the bank of Anoma**

A solitary figure now stood on the banks of Anoma, that flowed down the snow-capped Himalayas. He, who had hundreds around him, as the son of a reigning king, was now alone with only the moon above and the flowing river keeping him company. He who had partaken of the most luxury food had besides him only a begging bowl. He who had worn the most glittering garments was now clothed in a coarse yellow and

orange robe. A loving wife and a new born son, too he had left behind. But he was happy since he had taken the first step towards the Buddhahood, in order not only to teach people to lead a more moral life but finally to end all human suffering.

**Exercises :**

1. Name 3 things that the prince gave up.
2. Before leaving the palace what two of the following scenes passed before the prince's eyes?
  - a. Soldiers in battle.
  - b. A king in a royal court.
  - c. Men and women weeping over a dead body.
  - d. An ascetic going around preaching to people.
3. *"Rahulo jato bandhanan jatam"*
  - a. What does Rahulo mean?
  - b. Why did the prince utter these words?

## THE EVENTS FOLLOWING THE RENUNCIATION

There were no newspapers or television in those ancient times. Yet the news that the king's 29 year old son had fled from the palace at midnight to become an ascetic, spread far and wide. He came to be called the ascetic Gauthama. Gauthama was family name. We too will call him that and also use the word, Bodhisatva, or the aspirant to Buddhahood.

The Bodhisatva was very fond of trees and groves. So in the early years of his monkhood or asceticism he took shelter for one whole week in a mango grove called Anupiya. After that he began walking towards Rajagaha, capital of Magadha kingdom ruled by king Bimbisara. In his hands he held the alms of bowl where people placed food. The people along the way began to wonder on this strange figure, so comely and handsome of majestic bearing, yet so serene and holy. Who can be he? Who can he be? They asked each other.

### **The Bodhisatva meets king Bimbisara?**

Soon news of the visitor to the city reached the ears of the king and he hastened to see him. At this time the Bodhisatva was having his alms up on the Panadara mountain rising above

Rajagaha. The king went up to him and much impressed inquired about his lineage upon which ascetic Gauthama revealed his true identity. On learning that the robed youth was none other than a son of a king, Bimbisara felt much sad about the rough life he was leading. To induce him to give up his monkhood the king promised him many comforts. According to some books even half of his kingdom was offered. But the Bodhisatva declined all the offers and insisted the determination of the Bodhisatva, then wished him success and requested that after attaining the Buddhahood, he should first visit Rajagaha and make him a disciple by teaching the new doctrine.

### **Meeting the ascetics**

The story of the Bodhisatva's attempt to gain Buddhahood touches one's heart, almost as the tale of his renunciation. There was no one to teach him the way. He had to find the path himself. He tried various ways and came into contact with various people all, ascetics like him. These ascetics, all roaming in orange robes female ascetics too. One of these ascetics whom the Bodhisatva met after he began his travels away from Rajagaha was Alara Kalama who had 300 pupils. The future Buddha studied all what Alara Kalama knew mastering the knowledge imparted, but yet he was not satisfied. Much more, he felt, had to be learnt to find the path to Nibbana.

He travelled further and now got into the company of Uddaka Ramaputra who had a following of 700. But even the knowledge got from him did not fulfill Bodhisatva's standards. It must also be mentioned that these ascetics were all very happy that a youthful son of a king had joined them and always welcomed him.

The Bodhisatva wandered further looking for guides and finally passing through the kingdom of Magadha, he came into a lush landscape full of groves, shady trees, streams and fords.



It was the most fitting place for recluses and was named Uruvela Janapada famous in Buddhist literature.

### **In the village of Senani**

Here in the village of Senani he met ascetic Kondanna and his group themselves wandering, searching for a way out of the endless stream of life. Remember Kondanna, who had predicted that the prince would definitely end up as the Buddha? He now with four other wise men, named Bhaddiya, Wappa, Mahanama and Assaji had taken to robes. Now ascetic Gauthama began keeping company with this group and jointly began exploring ways and means of ending human suffering. This group had already begun experimenting with leading an austere or hard life.

Ascetic Gauthama was extremely intelligent and knew now that he had to work it out himself. He had two courses open for him, one KamaSukhallikanu Yogaya (the path of satisfying all sensual pleasures), AththaKilamathanu Yogaya (the path of torturing oneself by difficult ascetic practices). The first path, he knew, would not help at all for he had already lived that life. He thought of experimenting with the second method and his five friends fell in with the plan.

### **Exercises :**

Fill in blanks, with answers selected from list given in a jumble form.

The ..... having renounced worldly comforts began travelling across the kingdom of North..... He tried to learn the path to the Buddhahood from many ..... Then roaming all over. Foremost among them were..... and ..... But none of them were of much ..... the Bodhisatva then proceeded

towards the city of ....., capital of ..... King..... visited him on ..... mountain. The king made a request to him which was ..... Now the Bodhisatva went on to ..... Janapada, a beautiful area. He met his former ..... friends ..... on these wanderings. Now began his period of .....

Answers in jumbled form,

1. Five
2. Austerity
3. To give up robes
4. Uruvela
5. Rajagaha
6. Panadara
7. Bimbisara
8. help
9. Uddaka Ramaputtra
10. Bodhisatva
11. India
12. Alara Kalama
13. Ascetics
14. Magadha
15. ....

## THE SIX YEAR PERIOD OF AUSTERITY AND WHAT FOLLOWED

If the tale of Prince Siddartha's renunciation is touching, no less touching is the Bodhisatva's six year period of Austerity. Here was a person who had slept on softest of beds and partaken of the most tasty delicacies. Chariots were there for him to go about and maids in hundreds to wait on him.

But he, on his own free will, had taken to a rough life on the highway. Sometimes he lived alone in forests. To Brahmin Janussoni he had once described this life. "Life in the forest at first was frightening..... Then a deer would rustle through the leaves." But the acute period of his suffering began with the group mentioned in the earlier lesson. They practised controlled breathing, acute starvation. The Bodhisatva suffered most due to his earlier life as a prince. The bones on his body began to jut out through the skin, and his fair skin grew dark. The eyes became sunken. News spread that the prince turned monk was dying. His relatives in Kapilavastu lamented. King Suddhodana and princess Yasodhara and queen Prajapathi wept. Even gods in heaven cried.

### **Bodhisatva gives up austerity**

But the Bodhisatva would not give up. Finally he fainted and then realizing the folly of starving himself, began taking

solid food. He felt now that a weak body could lead to a weak mind. The Five ascetics, in disgust at ascetic Gauthama's reversion to comforts of life wended their way to Isipathana in Benares, leaving him alone. The most harrowing years of his life, six years of austerity or Dushkara Kriya were over. He was now 35 years of age.

## **SUJATHA BESTOWS ALMS ON THE BODHISATVA**

The Bodhisatva had broken his fast or spell of starvation in Uruvela by accepting goat's milk from a lad. There lived in the village of Senani in this same area of Uruvela, a chief's daughter named Sujatha. She had the habit of worshipping a tree deity. Though she never saw him, she was of the opinion that he was up on the banyan tree near her house and she always placed food under that tree. The Bodhisatva now walking across this area saw the shady banyan tree and sat under it cross-legged.

Sujatha had on this day prepared milk rice for her tree god and the maid went ahead to clean up the place. She saw a handsome human cloaked in a robe sitting under the tree and ran excited to her mistress crying, "Oh ! Lady ! The god today has come down from the tree."

Sujatha herself came running now and seeing ascetic Gauthama thought that the deity had got down from the tree. Much pleased, she placed the bowl of milk rice before him which he partook of. It was the first good meal he had enjoyed after he adopted the Middle Path.

Sujatha became a fervent devotee of the Buddha later. That many women like Sujatha and Kisa Gothami are mentioned at length in the Buddha's life could be a way of giving women, a prominent place. In the Indian society that Siddhartha was born to, women had been looked down upon especially by Brahmins.

That evening Gauthama, the ascetic sat under the tree which in India is called the peepal tree. It actually came to be called the Bodhi or the Bo tree after Gauthama attained the Buddhahood under it. So it was under this tree that the most revered Bodhisatva determined to attain the Buddhahood by next morning. The last method he had practised, that of leading a very austere life or Dushkara life too had failed. He got immersed in thought.

### **At Gaya**

A bright moon, the Vesak or Vaisakha moon, shone on him, as he sat there cross-legged, determined to achieve his goal. The site was Gaya, today known as Bodhgaya or Buddhagaya, to which thousands of devotees flock today to pay homage. He was now 35 years of age. Six years of the prime of his life had been spent in forests, on the high ways under the fierce rays of the sun and in the company of various ascetics in caves and makeshift resting places. And all this suffering for the welfare of humanity. On Poya nights when the Full Moon shines in all its glory, try to think that it shines to radiate the memory of that Great Master, so selfless and compassionate and wise.

### **Exercise:**

1. Give the explanations in English for the terms, KamaSukhallikanu Yoga and AththaKilamathanu Yoga.
2. Fill in blanks of the following passage.  
The tree under which the Buddha gained Enlightenment on .....Poyaday is known as Sri .....  
The area is today known as Bodh.....  
or Buddha .....
3. Compose the dialogue between Sujatha and her maid, on "The tree god."
4. How old was Bodhisatva when he left the palace? How old was He, when He became The Buddha?

## 11

# THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE BUDDHA

As mentioned in the last lesson, after partaking of Sujatha's milk-rice the Bodhisatva sat under the peepal tree or Bo tree as it came to be called later. He was determined to meditate since he felt that was the best course. Besides, he was used to it. Remember how during the ploughing ceremony, even as a child he meditated on Concentration on Breath and reached the first Jhana. His father, the king had handled the golden plough just for show. So had the chiefs handled their silver ploughs for a brief period. But the lot of the poor men was always miserable. But the poor man and the rich man, the poor woman and the rich woman were all subject to disease, decay, old age and death. Ascetic Gauthama began to meditate more and more intensely developing the Jhanas.

## WHAT THE BUDDHA BEGAN TO SEE

Soon he began to see clearly, Dukkha (the existence of Suffering), Samudaya (origin of Suffering). Nirodha (ending of Suffering) and Magga (path leading to ending of Suffering). Those were the Four Noble Truths he realized. Now as he went on contemplating the three elements that spoil the mind, *Raga* (desire), *Dosa* (hatred), and *Moha* (ignorance) left him.

In the last watch of the night as the Vaisakha Full Moon gazed on him from above, the future Buddha realized that the path to the ceasing of suffering was the Noble Eight-fold Path that comprised, **right vision, right thought, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration**. And with the advancement of this state of mind, the Bodhisatva achieved Enlightenment.

## **Emergence of the Buddha**

The Supreme Teacher had emerged. The founder of the great religion of Buddhism based on Compassion (kindness) had made His presence. The very earth trembled and the gods above in the high heavens chanted, "Sadhu! Sadhu! A great being has emerged!"

And books tell us that the power generated within the Buddha was so strong after all that meditation, that six colours began to emanate from his body. These are known as Buddha Rashmi (Budu Ras) and the colours are **blue, yellow, red, white, orange** and a **mixture of these five**. You can see these colours in the Buddhist flag, which is also known as the Shadwarna flag, the flag of six colours. The Buddhist flag was designed in the 1880 s, due to the interest taken by Colonel Olcott and Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda thera and several Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka.

What you can understand from the above facts is that Enlightenment of the Buddha was no easy task, especially as He had no guide and had to do much experimenting, as present scientists do. But Buddhist texts tell us that prince Siddhartha going on to become the Buddha was an event ordained across the vast passing of time. Aeons of time ago in the time of the Buddha Deepankara, the Gauthama Buddha was a youth named Sumedha. He later became a hermit and on seeing the Deepankara Buddha had expressed a wish to be like Him, and serve mankind. The Deepankara Buddha saw that the hermit was very well qualified and is said to have given the first Niyata Vivarana (affirmation of the Buddhahood).

**Exercises :**

1. Fill in blanks ;

*Dukkha* means .....

*Samudaya* means .....

*Nirodha* means .....

*Magga* means .....

2. What are the three elements that left Buddha's mind as Enlightenment was achieved?
3. Write a sentence on each of the following topics – the Buddha Deepankara, Niyatha Vivarana, Hermit Sumedha, Noble Eight-Fold Path.
4. a. Name two persons involved with designing of the Buddhist Flag.
- b. In which country was The Buddhist Flag designed?



## 12

### THE SEVEN WEEKS AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT

The Buddha knew that He had to teach others the Truth He had discovered, if He was to help them. But He was in no hurry about it. With His power of seeing into the future, He knew that He had a long life ahead, to wander, to teach, to preach. So, He put first things first before He actually began His wanderings and sermons.

The first week He spent in complete peace, His purpose achieved. Did He go away after that? No, the Buddhas are always grateful. So Gauthama Buddha had to express His gratitude to the tree that gave Him shelter to attain the Buddhahood. So He spent the second week gazing at the Bodhi.

Third week, He walked across a golden bridge mainly to convince the Devas in heaven of His new status. Fourth week, the Buddha had gone on to let His mind dwell on Abhidhamma or Higher Doctrine. Fifth week shows that even after the prince became the Buddha, vile forces of the Mara, the Evil One tried to work against Him.

#### **Mara's tactics**

These forces were in the form of three beautiful dancing girls, Thanha, Raga and Rathee, daughters of Mara, the Evil one. But the Buddha kept His eyes downcast and would not even look at them. This scene is a popular one on Vesak pandals.

## **Cobras and trees**

The Buddha was fond of all living beings including animals. Remember how as a prince he saved the life of a swan. These non-human living beings too were fond of Him. During the Sixth week, the Buddha sat under a tree called the Muchalinda tree. A torrent of rain began to pour down. A cobra lived in this tree who was also known as Muchalinda cobra. According to Buddhist literature it had extended its hood above the Buddha to save Him from the rain. Some ascribe supernatural powers to this cobra. What are super natural powers? They are powers above natural powers. Even today some own them.

The seventh week he spent under a tree called the Rajayatana tree. You can see how fond the Buddha was of trees. He had once said that trees provide protection to all living beings and even to the man who cuts them. Seven weeks ! Fifty days !

Then on their way to a nearby city two merchants saw Him and pleased at His sight, offered Him, rice cake and honey. They also became His first two lay disciples. The Buddha on their request gave them a tuft of His hair, *Kesha dhatu*, which they enshrined in a pagoda.

Though India claims Tapassu and Bhalluka to be Indian merchants, Burma or Myanmar claims them to be Burmese merchants. So you can see how the Buddha was gaining in popularity. Even His disciples were becoming popular.

## **Exercises :**

1. Following events connected to the Seven weeks after Enlightenment are jumbled up. List them in proper order.
  - a. The appearance of the dancing girls.
  - b. Meditating on Abhidhamma.
  - c. Reflecting peacefully.
  - d. Gazing at the Bodhi tree in gratitude.
  - e. Sitting under the Rajayatana tree.
  - f. Cobra Muchalinda protects the Buddha from rain.
  - g. Walking across a golden bridge.
  
2. Underline the correct group of words from a, b, or c "The lay disciples of the Buddha" mean, (a) Those who wore robes and took to the life of monks, (b) Those who did not become monks, yet remained followers of the Buddha, (c) Disciples who trade.
  
3. Write two sentences on Tapassu and Bhalluka.

## 13

### **THE BUDDHA PREACHES HIS FIRST SERMON**

At first the Buddha seems to have been wondering whether the average man and woman would be able to understand His teachings. But He knew that His mission was to teach them how to be good, kind to others and to lead moral lives. So He set out from Bodhgaya to the city of Benares, a very popular city then. Even today it exists by the same name, with even a railway station. But, alas, there are very few Buddhists there. Even in the whole of the Indian sub-continent, Buddhists are very few today. Even the land that got carved into the kingdom of Nepal where the Buddha as a prince was actually born in Lumbini park, today is a Hindu state. Today Sri Lanka is much more a Buddhist country than India and Nepal. Our kings, being very wise felt that Buddhism would be a very good moral guide for the people and gave it their full assistance. So Buddhism flourished here while in India, Hinduism which is a collection of many beliefs and cults replaced Buddhism.

We will get back to the Buddha wending His way from Bodhi Gaya to Benares. No royal chariots for Him. No galloping horses. He travelled on foot, like an ordinary man. This way He knew, He could meet many many people. Why did the Buddha choose Benares to go to? Remember the five friends of ascetic Gauthama who left him when they learnt that Gauthama



Mula Gandha Kuti Vihara Put up by  
Anagarika Dharmapala

had given up the rough life? They by name Kondanna, Wappa, Mahanama, Assaji and Bhaddiya, the Buddha knew were at the Deer Park (Migadaya) at Benares. Saranath is another name for this place. He wished to preach to these five ascetics first.

## **WHAT HAPPENED AT DEER PARK**

After walking about a 100 miles the Buddha reached the Deer Park and met his former friends. At first they were surprised to see Him. Further, they were not friendly to Him too. After all He had slipped back into a life of comfort when they were leading an austere life. But little by little they began to see a great change in their friend. There was a radiance about Him, as if He had found something very important. He looked very happy too. Then they questioned Him to which He replied that He had found out the Truth or the Four Noble Truths.

These Four Noble Truths or the Chaturarya Satya, that would lead to a state of deathlessness, He preached to them. That was the Buddha's first sermon, delivered at Isipathana Deer Park in Saranath, Benares on The Full Moon Day of Esala. The sermon is the famous DhammaChakkaPavatthanaSutta.

Deer park is a very revered place today, commemorated by the famous DhammaChakka Vihara and the Mula Gandha Kuti Vihara put up by Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka, under the leadership of Anagarika Dharmapala.

## **Exercises :**

1. Are these sentences right or wrong? Tick ✓ or x against each sentence.
  - a. India and Nepal today are majorly Buddhist countries.
  - b. Sri Lanka today is majorly a Buddhist country.
  - c. Hinduism was first preached by the Buddha.
  - d. The five ascetics headed by the Kondanna were the Buddha's first monk-disciples.
  - e. The Buddha's first sermon expounded the Four Noble Truths.
  
2. Write three sentences on the Deer Park.

## THE BUDDHA SENDS OUT SIXTY MONKS TO SPREAD HIS TEACHINGS

*"Charatha bhikkave charikam  
bahujana hithaya bahujana sukhaya"*

"Oh! Monks! Wander forth for the good of many (people), for the welfare of many (people).

What the Buddha had discovered with much effort, He felt, was of no use if it did not spread. Further the more the number of people who became good, kind and moral, the better the world would be. But it was impossible to preach to everyone alone by himself. Further as a human He too would pass away some day and must build up a set of followers to carry on His work after that. So, He had to develop a Sasana, a body of monks who would carry on His teachings. So very methodically the Buddha set about establishing such a body. That was the beginning of the Sangha institution, our third 'Refuge'.

### **The Sasana expands**

Already the Buddha had five monks in the Sasana as related in the last lesson. The Buddha was one day in the Deer park when a rich Young man named Yasa visited Him. The Buddha preached to him, and Yasa. became a monk. Yasa's father came looking for his son, met the Buddha and was very pleased. He invited the Buddha and His six monks to an almsgiving at this grand



house. There were 54 friends of Yasa at this house. The Buddha preached a sermon here and all these 54 joined the Sasana. The Buddha trained all these monks very well. Now there were sixty monks the Buddha had the needful number to preach His doctrine. According to learned men, this was the first planned religious mission in the world. It shows how methodically the Buddha planned His work.

"Go, ye monks, He told them, for the betterment of man. Preach them in a wise and appealing manner the path to lead more moral lives. Two, do not take the same path".

That way He wanted each monk to go by himself along a different path and seek followers. So one can imagine how far and how well the doctrine or the Dhamma spread. Sixty monks going in different directions, meeting people, talking to them, advising them and teaching them to be better humans! Sixth Century BC was indeed a great epoch in world history.

And how far away in Time! About Two thousand and six hundred years back! Just multiply that by 365 days!

### **Exercises :**

1. Fill in blanks with the correct word.
  - a. The Buddhist year begins from (birth, passing away) of the Buddha.
  - b. The term we use for passing away of the Buddha is (Parinirvana, Nirvana).
  - c. Yasa is the (first, sixth) lay member to join the Buddha sasana.
  - d. The clergy of Buddhism is known as the (Sangha, Dhamma).
2. Write four instructions that the Buddha gave to the 60 monks. How does walking help a preacher to perform his tasks better? Pick the best answer (a) It prevents him from sleeping (b) it exercises his body (c) It leads to contact with the ordinary man and woman.

## THE TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES

King Bimbisara, ruler of Magadha, that was next to the little kingdom of Kapilavastu had been the first to invite the Buddha to his state. Actually the invitation was made even before the Enlightenment. So it was Rajagaha (today known as Rajagir), capital of Magadha to which the Buddha proceeded from Isipathana through Uruvela and Gaya (Bodhi Gaya). At Rajagaha he lodged in the Sweet Creeper Grove.

King Bimbisara came down with a large retinue and paid homage. The king thought of a more suitable place for the Thathagatha to stay and gifted the Bamboo Grove, or Veluvana gardens. The famous Veluvanaramaya was built here later. The practice of offering spacious gardens in quiet landscapes fit for meditation, to the Buddha Sasana thus started with king Bimbisara's gift. The gift was made ceremonially with the ritual of pouring clean water from golden bowl or Ran Kendiya.

### **The sons of Saree and Moggalee**

Meanwhile the Buddha's fame spread far and wide and many young men entered the Sasana. Near Rajagaha were two villages. The headmen of these two villages were Upatissa and Kolitha. They were friends too. Both had sons, and they were named after their mothers, Saree and Moggalee. Upatissa's wife's

name was Saree and the son was named Sariputta. Kolitha's wife was Moggalee and the son was named Moggalana. Very often they were known by their father's name as happens today too. Thus they were called Kolitha ad Upatissa. At this time there seems to have been a habit in North India for young men to grow restless and seek better lives. Prince Siddhartha too did that. The Jain ascetics too did it before Him. Now Kolitha and Upatissa too decided to do it, an idea that came to them while watching a drama called Giragga Samajja.

### **Meeting with Assaji**

They went to several teachers but they were of no help. One day Assaji therā was going on his alms round or Pindapatha when Upatissa saw him. Pleased with monk Assaji's appearance he asked him what faith he followed and what teacher he followed. Assaji gave the essence of Buddhism briefly requesting him to meet the Buddha, the Great teacher at Rajagaha for more details. Upatissa went home a happy youth and informed Kolitha. Next day they met the Buddha and listening to Him understood the dhamma in a short time due to their intelligence.

The Buddha ordained them in the Sasana under the names Sariputta and Moggalana. They were soon to become the Buddha's two chief disciples.

### **Exercises :**

1. Fill the latter part of these sentences.
  - a. The habit of gifting gardens to the Sasana began with .....
  - b. At this time young men in North India had a habit of .....
  - c. The idea to seek a better life came to Kolitha and Upatissa while .....
  - d. Monk Assaji told Upatissa .....
  - e. The Dhamma was understood by the two youths in a short time due to .....

**THE  
DHAMMA  
SECTION**

# 1

## THE THREE REFUGES

*“Buddham Saranam Gachchami  
Dhammam Saranam Gachchami  
Sangham Saranam Gachchami”*

How often we, Buddhists, hear this chant! How often do we say it! In the temples, in our homes, over the radio, on the television sets we hear it so very regularly. It is indeed a blessed chant and translated into English it runs thus;

I take refuge (shelter) in the Buddha  
I take refuge (shelter) in the Dhamma  
I take refuge (shelter) in the Sangha

Refuge means shelter. We take shelter from rain, from the hot rays of the sun and from wind and storms in various ways. In the same way, we take shelter from the ups and downs of our daily lives under the three noble refuges of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. They protect us, in return for the faith we place in them. These chants which precede our observing Pancha Sila or the Five precepts, can also mean,

I follow the Buddha  
I follow the Dhamma  
I follow the Sangha

Let us go on to give a detailed account of these Three Refuges that every Buddhist follows.

## THE BUDDHA

The Buddha here means the last Buddha to appear on our earth, that is Gautama Buddha. In the section dealing with His life, a long account is given of Him. Pali is the major language of Buddhism and according to this language the Buddha means "to know." So the Buddha is "One, full of knowledge." So it is important for you, as students to know that Buddhism is a religion that places the highest attention on knowledge and wisdom.

The Buddha is also full of Wisdom (*Maha Pragna*) and kindness (*Maha Karuna*). His kindness spread over good humans as well as evil doers.

You are all familiar with "*Itipi so*" gatha Venerating the Great Master we usually recite. But, have you wondered on its meaning and on the fact that next to the Pancha Sila we recite it very often? This is because this stanza describes the many qualities of the Buddha. "*Itipi so*" Bhagava means "Such indeed is the Blessed One."

Then it goes on to describe these qualities, which are,

- *Arahan* – worthy of offering.
- *Sammāsambuddho* – who has discovered all things correctly.
- *Vijjācharana sampanno* – is possessed of knowledge and right conduct.
- *Sugatho* – who has gone to blissful state.
- *Loka Vidu* – Possessed of knowledge of the world.

- *Anuttarao purisadhammasarathi* –Who can discipline any one.
- *Devamanussanam satta* – who can lead gods, and men.
- *Buddho* – Full of knowledge.
- *Bhagava* – blessed with fortune.

## **The Dhamma**

This can be translated as the Doctrine or the Buddhist doctrine or simply the whole of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha valued it as Himself for He said, "He who sees the Dhamma sees Me" He said, that He as a human would pass away and his body will decompose but the Dhamma would stand.

During the Buddha's time the art of writing was not spread, hence His teachings were carried orally, that is, from mouth to mouth after being committed to memory by monks. Some called Bhanakas were assigned to this task.

After the passing away of the Buddha, therā Maha Kassapa put the Dhamma and the Vinaya firmly in order at the First Buddhist Council held at Sattapattini Cave near the city of the Rajagaha. Most of the Buddha's teachings here were got from Thera Ananda who was closest to the Buddha during his life time. There is an interesting story why this was done. After the Buddha's Parinirvana (Passing away) when others were sad, a monk named Subaddha, had expressed happiness that they were now free of the rigid Vinaya that the Buddha preached ! So you can see that even among the Sangha that there were "bad eggs", as at present. The mere putting on of robes does not make a perfect Buddha-Putra. Our little island has the honour of committing this Dhamma to writing. This important event took place at Alu Vihara off Matale in Sri Lanka, about 2000 years ago.

There is another stanza that follows the recital of *itipi so* gatha. It begins as "*Svakkhato*" This stanza lists the features of the Dhamma which are given below.

- *Swakkatho* – Well preached (by the Buddha)
- *Sanditthikko* – to be understood by oneself, here and now
- *Akaliko* – Of instant results not delayed in time
- *Ehi passiko* – Can be examined
- *Opanaiko* – opening doors to Nibbana
- *Paccattam Veditabbo Vinnuhi* – to be known and experienced by each person who is wise.

Dhamma includes Abhidhamma, the higher Dhamma. The Dhamma and the Vinaya have been compiled into three baskets or Pitakas, the Vinaya pitaka, the Sutta pitaka and the Abidhamma pitaka.

## **The Sangha**

Sangha, the third refuge, consists of the robed followers of the Buddha, those who have given up family life for the cause of Buddhism. It was established very early in Buddha's life with only five monks. These five then increased to sixty to whom the Buddha entrusted the spread of the Dhamma. Soon, whole of North India was a blaze of yellow robes, with even princesses taking to robes.

Even women joined the Sangha, under the leadership of Maha Prajapathi Gothami. Remember after little prince Siddartha's mother's passing away it was she who brought up the prince.

After the recital of the two earlier stanzas we recite a stanza beginning with "*Supatipanno*". This stanza gives the features of Sangha. They are given below.



- *Supatipanno* – orderly and disciplined
- *Ujupatipanno* – Upright
- *Nayapatipannayo* – of wise conduct
- *Samichipatipanno* – dutiful

Then it gives the names of the different kinds of Sangha.

Chattari purisa yugani attapurisa puggala – Four pairs of *Sotapatti*, *sakadagami Anagami* and *Arahat* (each stage depending on the distance to Nirvana).

They are all;

- *Ahuneyyo* – worthy of offering
- *Pahuneyyo* – worthy of treating
- *Dhakkineyyo* – worthy of gifts
- *Anjalikaraneyyo* – worthy of respect (by clasped hands)
- *Anuttaram Punnachhettam lokassa*  
– incomparable field of merit of the world

## **Rathana Sutta**

There is a Sutta that gives more details about the Three Refuges or the Thirratne or Thunuruwan. This is the Ratana Sutta. The Buddha recited it in the city of Vesali to dispel famine and disease and fear of non-humans.

## Exercises

1. Following terms that describe qualities of the Buddha are mis-matched. Match them correctly;  
*Arahath* - One who can lead gods.  
yakkas and men  
*Devamanussanam Sattha* - Worthy of offering  
*Buddha* - Blessed  
*Bhagava* - Full of knowledge
2. *Maha Pragna, Maha Karuna* – Who possessed these? Give the English terms of each.
3. Write the stanza that gives the qualities of the Dhamma. Choose four of these and give the English terms.
4. Refer to the stanza dealing with the great qualities of the Sangha. List four qualities and explain them using one sentence for each.
5. Who were the first five members of the Sangha?
6. Why did the Buddha send away the first 60 monks to distant places?
7. Why did He ask each to go his own separate way?
8. Who played the most active part in establishing the Bhikkuni (Female Sangha) Sasana?

## 2

# THE GREAT QUALITIES OF THE THREE REFUGES

Below are the three oft-recited Pali stanzas that serve as salutations to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The previous lesson has also referred to them.

## SALUTATION TO THE BUDDHA

*Itipi so bhagava araham sammāsambuddho vijjācharana  
sampanno sugātho lokavidu anuttaro purisadhamma sarāthi  
sāttha devamanussanam buddho bhagavāthi.*

Translated it means,

Such indeed is the Blessed One. Worthy of offering, all-knowing, full of knowledge and virtues, beyond the world of sensual pleasures, knower of the worlds, great guide, trainer of people, teacher of gods and humans, Enlightened and blessed with fortune.

## SALUTATION TO THE DHAMMA

*Swakkātho bhagāhavata dhammo sandittiko akaliko  
ehi passiko opānaiko paccattam vedittabbo vinnuhithi*

Translated it means,

The doctrine of the Buddha is well-expressed, to be seen here and now, not delayed in time, inviting to be approached and seen, capable of being entered into, to be known by the wise (each by himself).

## SALUTATION TO THE SANGHA

*Supatipanno bhagavatho savakasangho ujupatipanno  
bhagavatho savakasangho nayapatipanno bhagavatho  
savakasangho samichi patipanno bhagavatho savaka  
sangho yadidam chattari purisa yugani attapurisa puggala  
esabhadgavatho savakasangho ahuneiiyo pahuneiiyo dhakkineiiyo  
anjalikaraneiiyo anuttaram punnakettam lokassa ti.*

Translated it means,

The Sangha is of good conduct, of upright conduct, of wise and dutiful conduct, composed of 8 types of persons, consisting of 4 pairs, worthy of offering, worthy of treating, worthy of gifts and reverence, and is a big blessing of merit to mankind.

### **Exercises;**

1. Give the English translations of the following Pali terms;  
*Sammāsambuddho,*  
*Anuttaro purisa dhamma sarathi,*  
*swakkhato,*  
*ehipassiko,*  
*supatipanno,*  
*anjalikaraneiiyo*
2. Pick out six more terms connected to the three refuges, give the English translation and classify them into the three groups.

Example ;

*Opanaiko*            leading to Nibbana            Dhamma

Pali term            English translation            Group

.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

3. Take each stanza that salutes the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, make five blanks in each, and make an exercise for your friends to fill in each blank with the missing word.

An example is given from the first line of *Itipi so Gatha*, "*Itipi so bhagava araham sammāsambuddho*  
..... *sugatho*

Missing word – *vijjācharanasampanno*.

### 3

## DASA PUNYA KRIYA

Dasa punya kriya are the ten Meritorious Deeds. Let us learn what they are since indulging in them makes many, happy. It will finally make you too happy.

1. **Dana** – Dana or act of giving. This heads the list since it rids the giver of greed and hate and breeds in that person, kindness and sympathy.

The receiver is very happy, as happy as the giver. The giver gets happiness in this life and the next. But the giver must not give with the idea of benefits to himself or to herself but with the idea of making the receiver happy and contented.

Then the merit is more.

The more virtuous the receiver, the greater the merit. So gifts to the Buddha accrue highest merits. Yet, the more needy the receiver, more the merit. And it all depends on your chethana or intention too. You must always give away ridding yourself of greed and hate and selfishness.

2. **Sila** – Keeping away from evils done through body and speech which leads to right speech, right conduct and right livelihood.

Four kinds of sila or morality are listed as Bhikku Sila, Bhikkuni Sila, Samanera Sila and Gahattha Sila.

Morality of bhikkunis and bhikkus is also known as *Adhi Sila* and also *Pati makkha Sila*. This is a special moral code set for bhikkus and bhikkunis once they cease to become samaneras and samaneris at the age of 20 years. *Samanera Sila* is obtained by taking the three refuges and ten precepts.

*Gahattha Sila* – Sila of the ordinary person like you and me. Known as the householder or the lay person. The lay person is expected to take the three refuges and observe the five precepts or *Pancha Sila*.

This is also called the *Nitya Sila* of the householder. Ten precepts or Dasa Sila can be observed by a lay person on Poya days and any fitting day.

3. ***Bhavana*** – meditation indulged in to gain a tranquil mind and wisdom.
4. ***Apachayana*** – respecting those who deserve to be respected into this category fall the three refuges of The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, parents and teachers. Mangala sutta calls it *pujacha pujaneeanayanam*.
5. ***Veyyavacca*** – rendering service to sick, old and weak. Keeping home, school and temple tidy too come under this.
6. ***Pattiddana*** – conferring merit on the dead, devas and all beings wishing them happiness.
7. ***Pattanumodana*** – rejoicing in others' good deeds. It can be done even without the knowledge of the doer.
8. ***Dhammasavana*** – listening to the dhamma with the ideas of practising morality (*sila*), concentration (*samadhi*) and insight (*panna*)
9. ***Dhamma desana*** – preaching the Dhamma with the honest intention of helping listeners and not for any fame or money.
10. ***Ditthiju kamma*** – this as opposed to *Michchadhitti* (forming wrong opinions) includes Right Understanding of the Four noble Truths and freedom from incorrect views.

## Exercises :

1. Why does Dana top the list of Punyakriya? Give answer in one sentence.
2. What are the four kinds of Sila?

Write a sentence on each describing them.

3. Following are mis-matched. Match them correctly.

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| a. Bhavana leads to   | Apacayana                  |
| b. What is implied by Pujacha Poojaniyanam in Mangala Sutta is the Punya kriya of | a pure mind                |
| c. Tending to the sick comes under  | mental happiness           |
| d. Patiddana is   | Pattanumodana              |
| e. Rejoicing in good deeds by others is   | a tranquil mind            |
| f. Dhamma should be listened with   | is opposed to Micchaditthi |
| g. Dhamma deshana should have   | conferring merit on others |
| h. Ditthijukamma or forming correct views   | Veyyavacha                 |



## 4

# DANA

Have you ever wondered on the joy a needy person feels when that person is gifted with something he or she wanted much? Dana is the term used in Buddhist literature for this kind of gift. It also means charity or generosity. And it has to be connected to kindness, for unless a person is kind he or she cannot give.

In fact Dana occupies first place in the virtues of Buddhism. Dana can be in various forms – as giving food, clothes, shelter, money (not to monks), giving of knowledge, advising etc. It is the perfections (Paramitha) and first in the list of meritorious deeds (*Dasa Punya kriya*). It is also first in Dasa Raja Dhamma, the list of deeds of good kings (and queens). Mangala Sutta describes it as one of the essential features of a Sappurisha, a Virtuous one.

The three main types of Dana are;

- Amisa dana
- Abhaya dana
- Dhamma dana

### **Amisa dana**

Amisa dana means giving *Catu paccaya* or material things needed by clergy (bhikkus) and lay persons. These include food,

clothing, medicine and shelter and money to householders. The Buddha too can be given Amisa dana by offering flowers, incense and light (*aloka pooja*). Even shramadana, gift of labour comes under Amisa dana.

### **Abaya dana**

This is the act of helping others to preserve their lives. Say, you see a man leading a calf to be butchered and you offer money and buy the animal and free it. That is Abhaya dana. Even acts done to prolong another's life come under this. Don't you think that donation of blood to the sick can come under Abhaya dana or even putting up a hospital to treat people free? Freeing a bird from a cage too is a meritorious deed and can come under this dana.

### **Dhamma dana**

This is helping another spiritually. This gift is considered the highest. Here is the Pali stanza that tells so, *Sabbadanam dhammadanam jinati-sabbarasam dhammaraso jinati*. Translated it means, The gift of dhamma surpasses all gifts. The flavour of Dhamma surpasses all delights. Preaching the dhamma, writing books on the Dhamma, conducting Dhamma classes and assisting in various ways to spread the Dhamma too come under Dhamma dana.

As Amisa dana is the most often indulged in and is given to lay persons and clergy alike and even to the Buddha's memory, let us go into some details. Here is the stanza that deals with it.

*Annam panam vaththam yanam – mala gandha vilepana  
Seyyavasatha padipeya – daanavathu ime dasa*

Translated it runs as follows, food, drinks, clothing, vehicles, flowers, perfumes, items needed for sitting and sleeping, houses and resting places, items for producing light (*aloka*) – all these ten items come under *Danavattu*.

Other than above the gift of labour to help people, even the gift of one's intelligence and knowledge to plan things to help people, can come under Amisa dana.

By performing any of the above Dana a person gains much. He or she gets rid of selfishness and greed and gets into the habit of giving more and more to the needy and to the respected as the Buddha and the Sangha. One's *Ayu* (life span), *Vanna* (beauty) *Sukha* (happiness), *Bala* (strength) and *Panna* (wisdom) are also said to improve after acts of Dana.

### **Exercises :**

1. Dana as a virtue comes first in three of the areas mentioned within brackets. Underline them. (*danavattu*, *paramitha*, *dhamma*, *punyakriya*, *dasarajadhamma*)
2. Fill in blanks.  
Dana is one of the blessings mentioned in the .....Sutta and one of the most essential features of a .....
3. Under what type of Dana do the following acts fall?
  - a. Visiting the sick in hospital with food.
  - b. Distributing dhamma booklets to a crowd.
  - c. Help in translating a good Dhamma book in English to another language.
  - d. Starting a Sunday Dhamma school in a slum area.
  - e. Funding a project to supply electricity to a remote temple.
  - f. Saving a child caught in the Sunami.

4. a. What five qualities of a person are said to improve by the act of Dana?
- b. Yet, what intention is better?
  - i. To improve these five qualities of oneself.
  - ii. To actually help the person in need?

## 5

### SILA

Our elders often speak very respectfully of a 'Seelawantha' man or a 'Seelawantha' woman. Seelawantha means "to be highly moral". Sila means Morality and this too comes high up in Buddhist virtues.

In the lesson on "**Dasa Punya Kriya**" the different kinds of Sila as *Bhikkhu Sila*, *Bhikkhuni Sila* , *Samanera Sila* and *Gahatta Sila* have been given. *Gahatta Sila* or the Sila practised by lay people includes Pancha Sila.

We recite them in our homes, in our schools, in our temples. But it is useless just reciting them. The Buddha expected us to practise them. We will be good Buddhists only if we do so and it will lead us to good lives in this world and the next if we do so. But remember these are only precepts that one must take on to follow willingly. The Buddha never set rules or commandments which, one is forced to follow. If you break them you just punish yourself. And in some cases even the law, the law of the land and not Buddhist law, punishes you.

Now let us take the five precepts one by one.

### *Panathipatha Veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami*

What does it mean? Simply, "I undertake to avoid taking another's life". See what importance the Buddha placed on Life, be it that of a human's or an animal's. To every living being, the most precious thing is his or her Life.

### *Adinnadana Veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami*

It means, "I undertake not to take away what is not given" which more simply means "I undertake not to steal". What moral undertaking it is! Count the number in prisons, simply because they have not kept to this undertaking. So the Pancha Sila is a very good guide for this life too.

### *Kamesu Micchacara Veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami*

This means, "I undertake not to enjoy wrong sensual pleasures". Note the word "wrong". Some regard Buddhism as a religion against sensual pleasures. This is not so. The Buddha simply wished men and women not to indulge in wrong sensual pleasures.

### *Musavada Veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami*

Very easy to understand. Simply, "I undertake to avoid lying". Telling falsehoods would make you known as a dishonest person and speaking the truth will always safeguard you.

### *Surameraya Majjapamadatthana Veramani Sikkhapadam Samadiyami*

Again simply means, "I undertake to avoid taking liquor and drugs that cloud the mind". What a valuable undertaking it is! In these days when people are dying of drugs and over use

of liquor this precept safeguards one's life. And for a student, a non-confused mind is very necessary. Liquor and drugs confuse minds.

So each precept is extremely important. Following the Five Precepts in one's daily life will make your life not only safe and healthy but will make you respected by every one. And of course there is the other world, waiting to receive the good and the bad, in different areas.

Do you know that the observance of the Five Precepts itself is a *Prathipatti Puja*, Since following these precepts makes a person such a blessing to society. He is lovable, kind and so considerate to others.

Break the Five Precepts and one becomes such a nuisance and a terror to society. When you see a drunkard on the road, you try to avoid him. But when you see someone walking calmly on the road, with a smiling face you do not try to avoid that person. Murderers, thieves, liars, sex criminals and drunkards usually end up behind prison bars for they have broken the Five Precepts. Yet breaking the Five Precepts does not come under the crime list direct. But you are intelligent enough to see how it happens.

There is also the Sila observed by lay people on Full Moon days or on special days. Here the aim is to devote a full day for a religious life. Eight precepts are practised on these days. A detailed account of this Sila has been given in the lesson on *Dasa Punya Kriya*.

There is also the *Samanera Sila* and the *Adhi sila* for Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. This is the Sila observed after the age of 20 years when a Samanera or Samaneri is entitled to Full Ordination.

Four kinds of Sila fall under *Adhi Sila*. *Patimokha Samvara Sila* (227 rules of the Vinayapitaka), *Indriya sanvara sila* (control of the senses), *Ajeeva parishuddha Sila* (Morality regarding purity of livelihood) and *Paccaya sannissita Sila* (morality regarding the necessities of life).

**Exercises :**

1. Make a chart on the categories of Sila.
2. List the main precepts of two of these categories.
3. Imagine that a pen friend living in a foreign country named Cora Smith writes to you and asks for information on the Pancha Sila in Buddhism, saying it is needed for a school assignment. Write a letter explaining to her the Five Precepts as simply as you can.



## 6

### **TEN UNWHOLESOME OR EVIL ACTS (DASA AKUSALA KARMA) AND THE TEN WHOLESOME ACTS (DASA KUSALA KRIYA)**

According to Buddhism there are ten unwholesome acts or evil acts. These acts become so when done intentionally. They are done with the ideas of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). They are also done through three "doors" which are,

- Body (*kaya*)
- Speech (*vaca*)
- Thought (*mano*)

The 3 names for the kamma done through the above doors are

- *Kaya Akusala Kamma*
- *Vachi Akusala Kamma*
- *ManoAkusala Kamma*

Under *Kaya Akusala Kamma* fall the following;

- *Panatipata* (Killing)
- *Adinnadana* (Stealing)
- *Kama miccacara* (Sensual misconduct)

Under *Vachi Akusala Kamma* fall the following;

- *Musa vada* (telling lies)
- *Pisuna vacha* (tale carrying etc.)
- *Pharusa vacha* (abusing harsh words)
- *Sampappalapa* (useless talk)

Under *Mano Akusala* fall the following,

- *Abhijja* (Desire to own others' things)
- *Vyapada* (hoping that bad would happen to others)
- *Miccaditthi* (wrong views)

So all these Akusala or evils acts add upto ten, and you must bear in mind to avoid them. In fact the ten Kusala acts or good acts need no repeating. Refrain from the bad acts and you naturally are set to do the good or Kusala acts or acts of merit.

These acts again come under the following;

- *Kaya Kusala Kamma* (refraining from or avoiding killing, stealing and sensual misconduct).
- *Vachi Kusala Kamma* (refraining from or avoiding lying, tale carrying, abusing and idle talk).
- *Mano Kusala Kamma* (refraining from or avoiding greed. Ill-will and wrong views).

**Exercises :**

Can you fill this chart? Try.

Ten Akusala Acts

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

The ten Akusala or Unwholesome Acts are divided into following three groups.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Under each group following Akusal Acts are listed.

Kaya	Vachi	Mano
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
	4.	

## THE BUDDHIST FESTIVALS OF VESAK, POSON AND ESALA

**Vesak, Poson and Esala!** These names may be familiar to you. Yes. These are names of Poya or Full Moon days. The months to which these Poya days belong also go by the same name. Thus, we have twelve beautiful Buddhist names for the 12 months. You are more familiar with names like January, February, March since they are in current use. These names were mostly derived from names of Roman and Greek gods and goddesses as Janus, Mars and Saturn.

The Buddhist months too run more or less parallel to the months that originated in Europe. Thus the months of **Duruthu, Nawam, Medin, Bak, Vesak, Poson, Esala, Nikini, Binara, Vap, Il,** and **Uduwap** are parallel to the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December.

We have already said that the Poya days go by the same names as the months. Out of these 12 Poyas, three are very important. These are the Vesak, Poson and Esala Poya days. Let us see why they are important.

**Vesak** is the most celebrated Poya among Buddhists. Why? Because the three major events connected to the Buddha's life,



A scene from the Kandy Perahera  
Asia's grandest religious pageant

that is the **Birth, Enlightenment** and **Passing away** of the Buddha took place On Vesak Full Moon day. It is hence called the thrice Blessed Day. Even the Passing away of the Buddha in the Sal groves of Kusinara is a blessed event as He entered the blissful state of Nirvana, after the Parinirvana.

Up above, the moon disc watched all these events and today after so many years and centuries, as people gather in temples to celebrate this great festival of Vesak, the moon again floats up shedding silvery rays.

Next comes the **Poson Poya**. It is also very important Poya as it is connected to the spread of Buddhism. King Asoka days prior to this Poya sent learned monks to carry the word of the Buddha to different states of India and adjoining countries. The states and countries that received Buddhist missions are Kashamir, Gandhara, Maheesa Mandala, Vanavasee, Aparanta, Maha Rastra, Yavana Desha, the Himalayas, Swarna Bhoomi and Sri Lanka. These missions arrived in these places on and around Poson Poya. Mahinda thera, son of king Asoka arrived in Sri Lanka exactly on Poson Poya day. The religion flourished much here and today this island is considered the centre of Theravada Buddhism.

Also very important is the **Esala Poya** day. On this Poya day took place;

- the conception of Prince Siddartha in queen Maha May's womb.
- the delivery of Buddha's first sermon at Migadaya in Isipathana, Benares.
- the holding of the first Buddhist council at Rajagaha.

In Sri Lanka, on Esala Poya day is held a grand pageant around the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. This sacred Relic

was brought to this country from India during king KitSiri Mevan's reign by Princess Hemamala and prince Dantha, and the first pageant had been held on an Esala Poya, It was the 4th Century AD. This Relic, so dear to Buddhists, is today deposited in the Dalada Maligawa of Kandy or MahaNuwara, hill capital of the island. A grand procession that carries the relic casket parades the streets of the city illuminating the Esala skies bordered by the high mountains of MahaNuwara. It is indeed a magnificent sight to behold, this festival of homage to the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Blessed One, complete with elephants, dancers, drummers, whip crackers, torch bearers and thousands of devotees crying, 'Sadhu! Sadhu!

### **Exercises :**

1. The Buddhist months and the months in current use given below are mis-matched. Write them in order.

Duruthu	-	December
Navam	-	November
Medin	-	October
Bak	-	April
Vesak	-	July
Poson	-	August
Esala	-	June
Nikini	-	January
Binara	-	February
Vap	-	March
Il	-	May
Uduwap	-	September

2. Complete these sentences by filling blanks.
- a. On Vesak Poya day, took place .....  
and ..... of the Buddha.
  - b. King Asoka of India sent the message of Buddhism, around  
..... Poya day.
  - c. ...., ....., ....., ....., ..... are among  
countries that received the messengers of Buddhism.
  - d. The first sermon of the Buddha was delivered on.....  
Poya day in ..... off the city of .....  
It is known as the ..... Sutta.
  - e. The most revered item of Sri Lanka Buddhists today is  
..... which was brought over by Prince  
..... and Princess .....  
from India. It is deposited in .....  
of Kandy or ..... The Esala Pageant  
is the grandest religious festival in the .....  
Continent.



## 8

### SALUTATION TO PARENTS

Respect for the elders is a very important practice required of Buddhist children and even children of other faiths. Among one's elders the most who deserve respect are one's parents. It is they who brought you into this world, fed you, saw to your needs and education and tried to make you a good son or daughter.

Mother, who carried you in her womb for nine months and then breast-fed you, turning her very blood to milk, is the dearest and closest. She loves you dearly and is always there to protect you and comfort you. Your father too is the same. The Buddha said that one's Buddha at home, is the Mother. So needless to say, even parents have to live up to these ideals.

No child likes his or her parents to be known as bad parents who follow ill-practices as drinking, killing animals for sale or pleasure, lying or indulging in deceitful and harmful trades.

Parents too hence must act in a manner worthy of this respect.

Buddhism, is especial in this homage to parents and even has two stanzas which children are expected to recite while worshipping their parents, before going to bed. This act also expresses gratitude and appreciation, for all what they have done for you during that day.

This is the stanza used to worship the mother;  
*"Dasa mase urekatva – posesi vuddhikaranam  
Ayudeegan vassa sathan – mathu padan nama mahan"*

Meaning – I worship the feet of my mother, who carried me in her womb for ten months and then nourished me. May she live long up to a century.

This is the stanza used to worship the father;  
*"Vuddhikaro alingithva – chumbitva piyaputtakam  
Rajamajjam supathitthan – pitu padam nama mahan"*

Meaning – I worship the feet of my father who showed me affection and helped me to become a good member of the society. May he be honoured in royal company.

Both your parents not only nourished you, but protected you from sickness and evil, and had you educated so that you could end up successfully in the world. But as time goes on they become old and feeble and infirm. Then you must return their services by looking after them. Death comes to them sooner than to you, and when you have looked after them well and fed them and clothed them in their old age, they will always bless you, as they pass away.

And your own children (you will have since you too will be parents in future) would follow your example and treat you well in your own old age which comes to any human being, just as death does.

### **Exercise:**

1. Imagine you are asked to make a speech at the school assembly on, "Why should we respect our parents?" Write a short speech limiting it to seven sentences.

## MANGALA SUTTA

King Bimbisara began the very admirable practice of gifting large gardens or parks for the Buddha and His disciples to meditate in peace under trees. In Savathi, the capital of Kosala, a very rich count named Anathapindika who became a great devotee of the Buddha followed this practice by gifting the Jetha Vana. He further went on to build a monastery there which was called the Jetavana monastery.

This became a favourite lodge of the Blessed one. One night as the midnight hours were advancing a glorious light illumined the Buddha's kuti or lodge. It was a Deva or God who was shedding that light.

He had come to ask from the Buddha a very important question which was as follows, "*Bahu deva manussa ca mangalani acintayum Akankamana sottanam bruhi mangala muttamam*"

Translated it means,

"Many gods and men, who wish to lead a good life, keep on asking what goes to make a good and blessed life. Pray, tell us the supreme blessings of a good life."

The answers given in the following stanzas have, for over 2500 years formed the moral and spiritual guide of good Buddhists. They have given keys to what composes a good family and goodsociety.

By memorizing it, you too will benefit much, but you must take care to put into practice what you have gathered. Mere memorizing is not enough.

Here are the Buddha's answers to the worthy question asked by the god. But first let us recite the Sutta from the beginning;

*Evam me sutam ekam samayan bhagava Savatthiyam viharati Jetavane Anathapindikassa arame athakho annatara devata abhikkantaya rattiya abhikkanta vanna kevala kappam Jetavanam obhasetva yena bhagava tenupasamkami upasamkamitva bhagavantam abhivadetva ekamantam atthasi ekamantam thitakho sa devata bhagavantam gathaya ajjhabhasi.*

Thus have I heard; on one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of Anathapindika at Jetavana in Savatthi. When the night was far spent, a certain deity illuminating the entire Jetavana, came to the presence of the Blessed one and drawing near, respectfully saluted and stood on one side. Standing thus he addressed the Blessed One in Verse;

*Bahu deva manussa ca mangalani acintayum  
Akankhamana sotthanam bruhi mangalamuttamam*

Many deities and men, yearning after good have pondered on these blessings. Pray, tell us the supreme blessings.

*Asevana ca balanam panditanam ca sevana  
Puja ca pujaniyanam etam managalamuttamam*

Keep away from fools, keep company with the wise and honour those worthy of honour. That is the supreme blessing.

*Patirupa desavaso ca pubbe ca katapunnata  
Atta samma panidhi ca etam managalamuttamam*

Live in a suitable area, have done meritorious acts in past births and be on the right track of living. That is the supreme blessing.

*Bahu saccam ca sippam ca Vinayo ca susikkhito  
Subhasita ca ya vaca etam managalamuttamam*

Be full of learning. Master crafts. Be disciplined and be of pleasant speech. That is the supreme blessing.

*Mata pitu upatthanam putta darassa sangaho  
Anakula ca kammanta etam mangalamuttamam*

Support your parents and family and follow good jobs. That is the supreme blessing.

*Danam ca Dhamma cariya ca Natakanam ca sangaho  
Anavajjani kammani etam mangalamuttamam*

Be generous, help relatives, be of rightful conduct. That is the supreme blessing.

*Arati virati papa majjapana ca sannamo  
Appamado ca dhammesu etam managalamuttamam*

Avoid evil actions and liquor. Be always virtuous. That is the supreme blessing.

*Garavo ca nivato ca santutthi ca katannuta  
Kalena dhamma savanam etam managalamuttamam*

Revere those fitting, be humble, be satisfied, be grateful, listen to dhamma. That is the supreme blessing.

*Khanti ca sovacassata samananan ca dassanam  
Kalena dhamma sakaccha etam mangalamuttamam*

Be patient, be obedient when necessary, be pleased with sight of holy men. Take part in dhamma discussions. That is the supreme blessing.

*Tapo ca brahmacariya ca ariyasaccana dassanam  
Nibbana sacchikiriya ca etam mangalamuttamam*

Control yourself, lead a pure life, percieve noble truths in order to attain nibbana. That is the supreme blessing.

*Phutthassa loka dhammehi cittam yassa na kampati  
Asokam virajam kheman etam mangalamuttamam*

Do not get carried away by gain, loss, honour, dishonour, praise, blame, happiness and sorrow (*laba, alaba, yasa, ayasa, ninda, pasansa, suka, dhukka*). Remain unflustered (undisturbed) under each of these conditions. That is the supreme blessing.

*Etadisani katvana sabbatthamaparajita  
Sabbattha sotthim gacchanthi tam tesam mangalamuttamam*

Fulfill matters as they come, do not accept defeat, move (live) happily. That is the supreme blessing.

Can you perceive the vast wisdom encased in the Mangala Sutta? This is why the Buddha is called the Greatest Teacher of Mankind. Repeating this Sutta daily will in itself be a blessing.!

Following what the Buddha advises through this Mangala Sutta will make your life blessed indeed. Mangala means, Blessed.

## **Exercises :**

1. Describe the background in which the Buddha recited the Mangala Sutta.
2. Imagine you have met a poor slum boy who wishes to lead a better life having got disgusted with his life as a little thief. Give him ten "keys" to a blessed life as given in the Mangala Sutta.
3. What are the eight conditions that should not flutter (disturb) you? Give both the Pali and the English terms.
4. Try to commit to memory this Sutta in full.

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