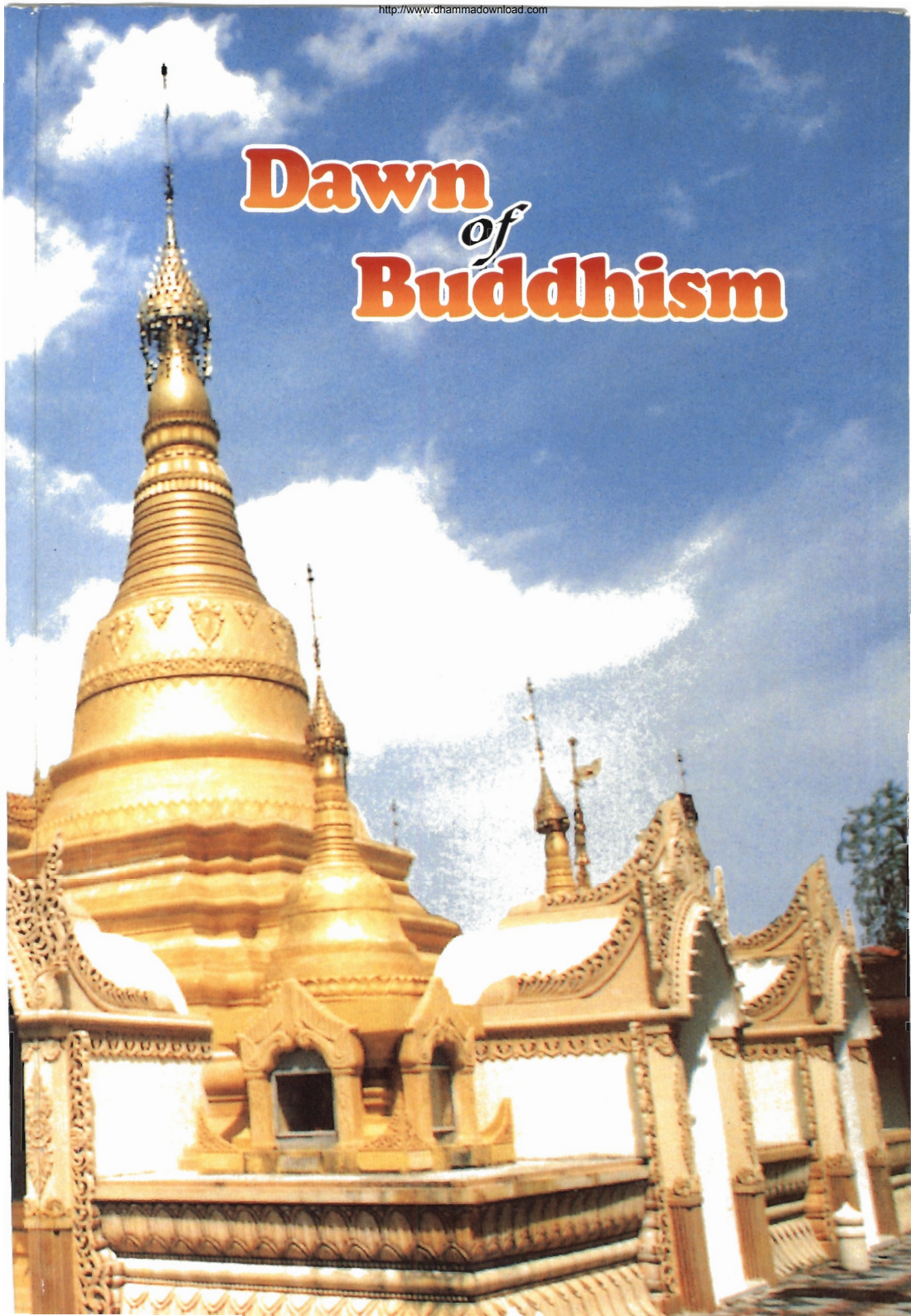


Dawn *of* Buddhism





Dawn of Buddhism

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
Preface	1
Predawn Era	3
The Birth of a Boddhisatta	10
His Childhood	14
The Great Renunciation	20
His Struggle for Enlightenment	28
His Seven Weeks of Fasting	30
The Buddha expounded His Dharma	33
The Original Missionary Monks	37
The Royal Invitation	43
The Buddha's Parinibbāna - The Final Release from Birth and Death	50
The Supporters of the Buddha's Mission	53
The Dhamma	60
How to become a Buddhist	63
The Singalovāda Sutta	70
The Four Factors of Endowments	73
The Saṅgha	76
Venerable Sāriputta	76
Venerable Moggalāna	78
Venerable Kassapa	79
Venerable Ananda	80
Venerable Aṅgulimāla	80
Venerable Bhikkhuni Khema Therī	83
Venerable Bhikkhuni Uppalavaṇṇa Therī	85
Venerable Bhikkhuni Mahāpajāpati Gotamī Therī	86
Venerable Bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā Therī	90
Venerable Bhikkhuni Paṭācārā Therī	91
Outstanding and Distinguished Arahants	94
The Great Buddhist Councils	99
Acknowledgement	105

PREFACE

“Dawn of Buddhism” is yet another important milestone for the Buddhist literature published, for it contains unusual useful facts. The information incorporated is to make the book delightful to the research students and Dhamma practitioners. However the sole aim of this book is to disseminate the Buddha’s teachings lucidly and harmoniously.

Dawn of Buddhism, as the name implies, presents the budding of Buddhism, when everything is fresh and new, yearning for growth and maturity. So are the many final endings in this book displayed in this manner, leaving the end-destinations for the readers to discover for themselves in earnest quest. This is partly planned to synchronize with the book theme and partly to invoke the sense of research adventure, without losing the thrill of self-reliance; an important facet in the Teachings of the Buddha.

Originally, it was intended to cover only from birth to enlightenment of the Buddha, touching on the earlier chapters of Buddhist episode. However, when the storey-line fabric was woven, it inadvertently spilt over onto the later part, making the picture complete, even though somewhat superficially.

The fervent wish to share Buddhist knowledge is the salient feature of this publication. Therefore, the seldom printed facts about the right-and-left flanking great disciples of the Buddha, are listed therein. So also are the “specialist” disciples, males and females; mentioned in this book too.

Finally I hope that all readers and scholars will find this book an appreciative literature to treasure. As in all things, the occurrence of error and omission in printed literature, makes it an authentic human endeavour, even after a stringent proof-reading and many repeated checkings. In this matter I sincerely apologise for any short-coming found in this book.

If, by the concerted effort and co-operation culminating in the success of this publication should earn merit, may it be shared with all our readers.

May all beings be well and happy.

.....

Ven. U Paññā Vamsa

Chief Monk,

Dhammikārāma Burmese Buddhist Temple,

Penang Malaysia.

NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMĀ-SAMBUDDHASSA

**“HOMAGE TO THE EXALTED ONE, FREED FROM ALL
BONDAGES AND FULLY ENLIGHTENED”**

Predawn Era

The Dawn of Buddhism was sparked off in the deep past covering a period of four Asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons ago. There was even an actual pre-dawn era to signal the germination of the Buddha Aspiration. Viewing the glory of the Buddha is a very traumatic experience and may involve the arousing of the Buddhist Righteous Wish (Dhamma Canda) and the very great inspiration to become a Buddha Supreme. This happened to our Gotama Buddha who, in the Buddhist history, began practising the Act of Wishing (Mano Paṇidhāna) by thought, to become a Buddha. Gotama did this in the presence of the numerous Supremely Enlightened Buddhas whom he met in the journey of the cycle of birth and death (Saṃsāra). This would ensure that he was firmly and mentally resolute to become a Buddha.

Then he practised the Act of Wishing by verbal expression (Vacī Paṇidhāna), to become a Buddha in the presence of the very many Supremely Enlightened Buddhas whom he met during his journey in Saṃsāra (the cycle of birth and death). This would ensure that he was firmly rooted in speech and not to deviate from his aspiration to become a Buddha.

The mental and verbal Acts of his wish could be only completed when the bodily (physical) expression (Kāya Paṇidhāna) to become Buddha was duly performed. This he did upon meeting the Dipaṅkara Buddha in the “Sāra Manda Kappa” which means “ a Five-Buddha aeon” when he made the “Kāya Paṇidhāna” act by offering his body to the Dipaṅkara Buddha as a bridge to walk across the muddy hole along the Buddha’s path.

Although it is extremely difficult to become a Supreme Enlightened Buddha, it should be everyone’s aim to become enlightened.

At that moment of declaring and practising the “Kāya Paṇḍhāna” (the physical manifestation to become a Buddha) before a living Supreme Buddha, He became a confirmed Bodhisatta or a future Buddha, possessing the following inherent factors:-

1. He must be born as a human being.
2. He must be of the male sex
3. He must be qualified to attain Arahantship and be prepared to renounce that in favour of becoming a Bodhisatta instead. This is a Crucial Qualification to be a qualified Bodhisatta.
4. He must aspire in the presence of a Supreme Buddha. It would be futile to aspire before a Pacceka Buddha or an Arahant.
5. He must have had renounced everything (all his worldly possessions) and be a hermit or a recluse during the dispensation of a Buddha.
6. He must have the Supernormal Powers (such as Divine Eyes, Divine Ear, etc., etc.), together with the full jhanic ecstasy.
7. He must be so selfless as to even sacrifice his life for the Buddha and the Ariyan Noble Truth.
8. He must also have the enduring fortitude and energy to uphold and practise the Bodhisatta ideals (Pāramitas) until successfully and completely accomplished.

So our Gotama Buddha as the Sumedha Pandit was repleted with the above eight requisite qualifications to walk the path of the Buddha-to-be, then received the universal declaration from Dipaṅkara Buddha that in future, Sumedha would definitely become a Buddha himself. This unique declaration made Sumedha the hermit, an officially qualified Bodhisatta. Thus ended the pre-Dawn Buddhism of Gotama Buddha.



Sumedha (wise man) giving away all his fortunes to become an ascetic in the forest.

Dawn of Buddhism

Long, long ago, measuring in many millions of years, there was an ancient royal city named Amaravati, a place of great splendour. People living there were very happy, prosperous and enjoyed long life.

Among the richest in Amaravati, was a family who had an only son, named Sumedha who was endowed with profound prudence.

At the age of sixteen, young Sumedha was very learned and talented. His parents died when he was young and so the vast family inheritance was put in the care of an appointed treasurer. When he came of age, the treasurer handed over all his family inheritance and showed him the vast extent of his properties.

At that juncture, he realized within himself: "My parents and their forebears were unable to take even a single coin along with them when they died, but I should find a way to take along with me all the inheritance in my possession! So I am giving away all my entire possession to the welfare and benefit of all!" He threw open the doors of his thousands of warehouses containing silver, gold, diamonds and other treasures to the public who could take away anything they wanted. He freed his serfs and made them very rich.

After giving away all his wealth, he went forth to the Himalaya mountains and became an ascetic in the forest there. He earnestly practised estatic meditation and attained supernatural powers within seven days. He soon became a well-known and respected powerful ascetic.

It was when the people of Rammavati were busily preparing to welcome the Dipaṅkara Buddha for alms-giving, that the ascetic Sumedha also participated in the joyous event.

Among the welcoming crowd, there was a young lady named Sumitta who was also an eager participant. When she saw the ascetic, she was so happy and delighted. She had with her eight lotus blooms of which she gave five to the ascetic, leaving three in her hand for offering to the Dīpañkara Buddha.

Having offered the flowers, the ascetic made a wish with the firm resolution to become a Buddha in future and the lady also made a wish that she would always accompany the ascetic until he fulfilled his quest.

At this juncture, the Dīpañkara Buddha foretold that the ascetic Sumedha would become a Buddha in four Asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons when He was passing over the body of ascetic Sumedha, being offered as a bridge over a muddy hole on the road.

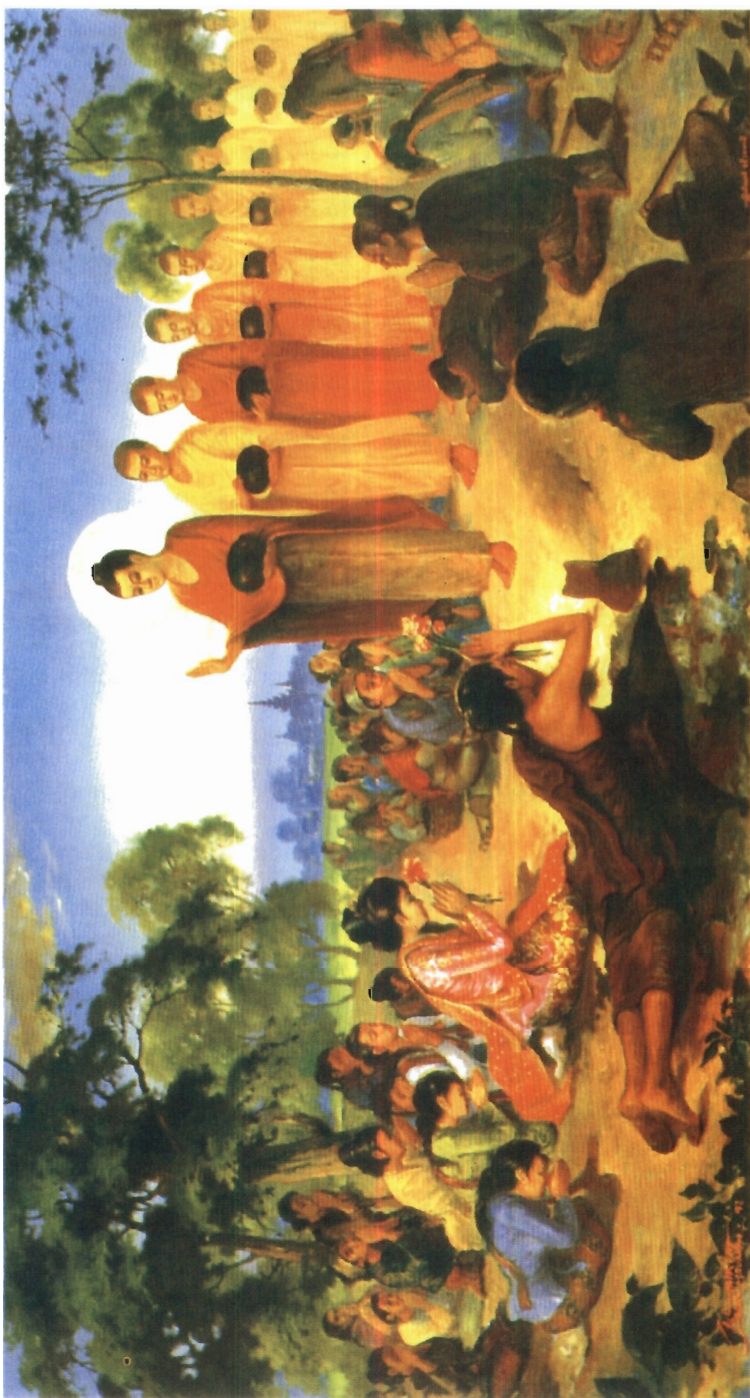
The Life of a Bodhisatta

Since he became a Bodhisatta, he set about fulfilling the three grades of the Ten Perfections, the Five Sacrifices and the Three Modes of Conduct in every life, whether in the human world or in heavens and elsewhere. His epic Bodhisatta journey which began straight away from the Buddha Dīpañkara was to last four Asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons. During his life as a practising Bodhisatta from the time he met the Dīpañkara Buddha until he became a Sammā Sambuddha, he met the following Buddhas during his journey:-

1. DĪPAÑKARA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Ascetic Sumedha
2. KONDAÑÑA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Raja or King
3. MANGALA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
4. SUMANA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was King
5. REVATA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
6. SOBHITA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
7. ANOMADASSĪ - when Bodhisatta was Devil King
8. PADUMA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Bodhisatta Lion
9. NĀRADA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was an ascetic

10. PADUMUTTARA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
11. SUMEDHA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
12. SUJĀTA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise rich man
13. PIYADASSĪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
14. ATTHADASSĪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was an ascetic
15. DHAMMADASSĪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Heavenly King
16. SIDDHATTHA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
17. TISSA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was wise man
18. PHUSSA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Raja or King
19. VIPASSĪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Raja or King
20. SIKHĪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Raja or King
21. VESSABHŪ BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Bhikkhu (monk)
22. KAKUSSANDHA BUDDHA when Bodhisatta was Bhikkhu (monk)
23. KOṆĀGAMAṆA BUDDHA when Bodhisatta was wise rich man
24. KASSAPA BUDDHA - when Bodhisatta was Bhikkhu (monk)

Whereupon he repeated his affirmation to become a Buddha just like them. They too repeated their declaration that he was a confirmed Bodhisatta to become a Sammā Sambuddha in due course. His Bodhisatta journey in the cycle of birth and death began with ascetic Sumedha and finally ended with his life as King Vessantara. Thus he had completed Bodhisatta-ship fulfilling the Perfections, Sacrifices and Mode of Conduct as he was duty bound to do so.



Asetic Samedha receiving his first Sure Prediction of becoming a future Buddha from the Dipankara Buddha.

The Birth of a Buddha

Thereafter he was born in Tusita Heaven, as a deity named Setaketu, enjoying a contented and blissful life. He was also known as Santussita deva the name derived from the divine abode he was staying in.

Nearing the end of his divine lifespan, all the divine beings from the ten thousand universes cordially requested him saying: “Dear Bodhisatta deva it is the right time for you to become a Buddha in the human world, for the welfare and benefit of all beings!”

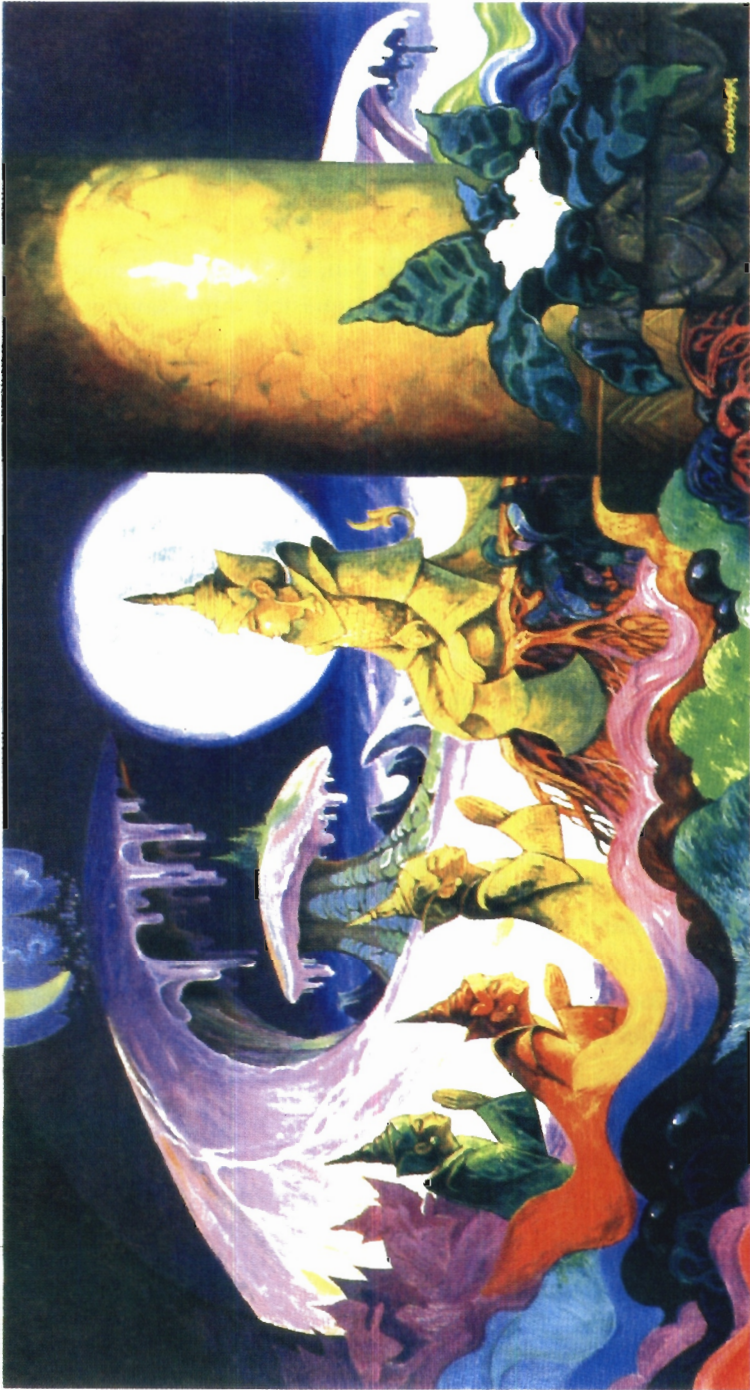
First he reviewed the Five Great Observations and thereafter he consented to their request.

From Tusita heaven, he passed away and was duly conceived in the womb of Queen Mahā Māyā, the Chief Consort of King Suddhodana.

On an auspicious night Queen Mahā Māyā had a strange dream, in which a white elephant carrying a white lotus in its trunk, circum-ambulating her, keeping to the right side, entered into her womb through the right side. Thereafter she became pregnant on Thursday Asalha Full moon day in the year 67 Mahā Era. When it was nearly childbirth time, and in accordance with the ancient custom, accompanied by a large retinue, she proceeded to return to her royal parents’ home in Devadaha. However during the long journey, she took a rest in Lumbini Park which was between Devadaha and Kapilavatthu on the border of Nepal. In the garden, while holding a branch of a fully bloom sal tree, the baby Prince was born, that was on a Friday the Fullmoon Day of Visākha (May) in 623 B.C. in 68 Mahā Era.

On the day of his birth the baby Prince uttered,

1. “Aggo hamasmi lokassa” which means “Chief am I in this world”
2. “Jettho hamasmi lokassa” which means “Greatest am I in this world”
3. “Settho hamasmi lokassa” which means “Most Exalted am I in this world”



The Devas (Gods) imploring the Bodhisatta, a Santussita-deva in Tusita heaven to be reborn on earth.

Pointing to the North, he said “This is the Northern Quarter!” and he walked towards the North stepping on seven lotus flowers that sprouted out from the ground. This took place in the midst of many wonderful miracles, happening all over, causing great rejoicing in heavens and on earth as a natural expression of their heartfelt delight in the glory of the Queen and her royal baby. After the unique birth of the baby Prince in Lumbini Park, the Queen was no longer traditionally obliged to proceed to Devadaha. She returned to Kapilavatthu in great triumph and rejoicing, accompanied by an even greater supporting retinue of both countries.

The great royal Sage named Asita, also known as Kala Devila, came to the palace to see the baby Prince. The King brought the child to pay him due respect, but instead, the Prince’s feet turned and rested on the matted locks of the Sage. At once, the great Sage quickly rose from his seat and saluted him with joined hands because he knew that the baby Prince would become a Buddha. The royal father, although surprised, also did the same salutation for the first time, to his son.

The next moment however the Sage smiled, because he knew the Prince would become a Buddha and thereafter after the Sage wept bitterly as he would not be able to see the Buddha. The Sage then explained everything to allay the anxious and concerned King.

On the fifth day of the Prince’s birth, the King invited one hundred and eight learned brahmins to choose a suitable and auspicious name for the Prince. Finally the name Siddhattha Gotama was chosen and agreed upon. “Siddhattha” means wish-fulfilled whilst “Gotama” was his family name. Furthermore, an elite team of eight highly distinguished brahmins was specially selected to predict the future of the Prince.

Of them, seven raised two fingers to signify that the Prince would either become a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. However, the youngest Brahman Koṇḍañña raised only one finger and confidently affirmed that the Prince would surely become a Buddha.



The marvellous birth of infant Siddhata as a Bodhisatta prince who pointing to the North, walked seven steps on lotuses.

On the seventh day after the birth of the Prince, Queen Mahā Māyā passed away and was reborn in Tusita Heaven, as a Santusita deva; and there upon, her sister Mahā Pajāpati Gotamī, became the foster mother. She brought up the Prince with her utmost care and love. She herself had two children; one son named Nanda and one daughter named Rūpa Nandā.

His Childhood

The Prince was very happy as a royal child. He received an early and complete education, being specially trained in academic skills. As a son of the warrior race, he was honed in skills of archery and the art of war-fare. Although a Prince of the warrior race, he was kind and gentle to everyone, including animals.

At the young age of sixteen, as was the ancient custom then in vogue, he was married to his beautiful cousin Princess Yasodharā, the daughter of King Suppabuddha and Queen Pamitā who was the sister of King Suddhodana. Princess Yasodharā had a brother named Devadatta.

Among those who were of the same age as Prince Siddhattha were:- Princess Yasodharā (Badda Kaccana); Ananda, son of King Amitodana; Kaludayi, a minister; Channa, also another minister; the Bodhi tree; horse Kanthaka and the appearance of four Jars of Gold at the palace.

Eighty thousand royal relatives headed by King Suddhodana assembled at the grand coronation of Prince Siddhattha and Princess Yasodharā as the future King and Queen. They were duly annoyed as rightful heirs to the Throne with absolute rights to sovereignty

Prince Siddhattha and Princess Yasodharā lived a very happy married life because they were compatible and agreed with each other in every way.

They lived in three beautiful palaces named Ramma, Suramma and Subha respectively for the three seasons namely Winter, Summer and Rainy Season.



The royal marriage of Prince Siddhata and Princess Yasodhara celebrated with great splendour at the Golden Palace.



The Four Great Signs of the old, the sick, the dead and a serene mendicant monk, made Prince Siddhattha ponder about the unsatisfactoriness in life and renunciation.

Although he was enjoying worldly pleasure, the Prince was also concerned with the bare realities of life. This often made him think about the dissatisfactions in life. Curious about the life outside the palace, the Prince wanted to visit the royal park.

So preparations with great care were taken by his royal father to make the journey pleasant and enjoyable so that the Prince could forget about suffering and the negative side of life.

When everything was ready, the Prince went to visit the royal park with his charioteer Channa. During the journey he saw a very old decrepit man and being upset he returned to the palace, pondering deeply about life he never knew before; on the next journey he saw a sick and groaning man, again upset, he returned to the palace; on the third day he saw a corpse and still upset, he returned to the palace. Finally he saw a serene mendicant monk on his fourth journey and being very pleased, proceeded on to enjoy his successful visit to the park.

Later on and still in the park he was told about the birth of his son, at which he exclaimed that a fetter had been born (Rahu jato) and this prompted the royal grandfather to name his new-born grandson "Rahula".

Going home from the royal park the Prince heard lady Kisā Gotamī singing an admiring hymn from her window when she saw him passing by:-

The meaning of which is as follows :

Peaceful is the mother

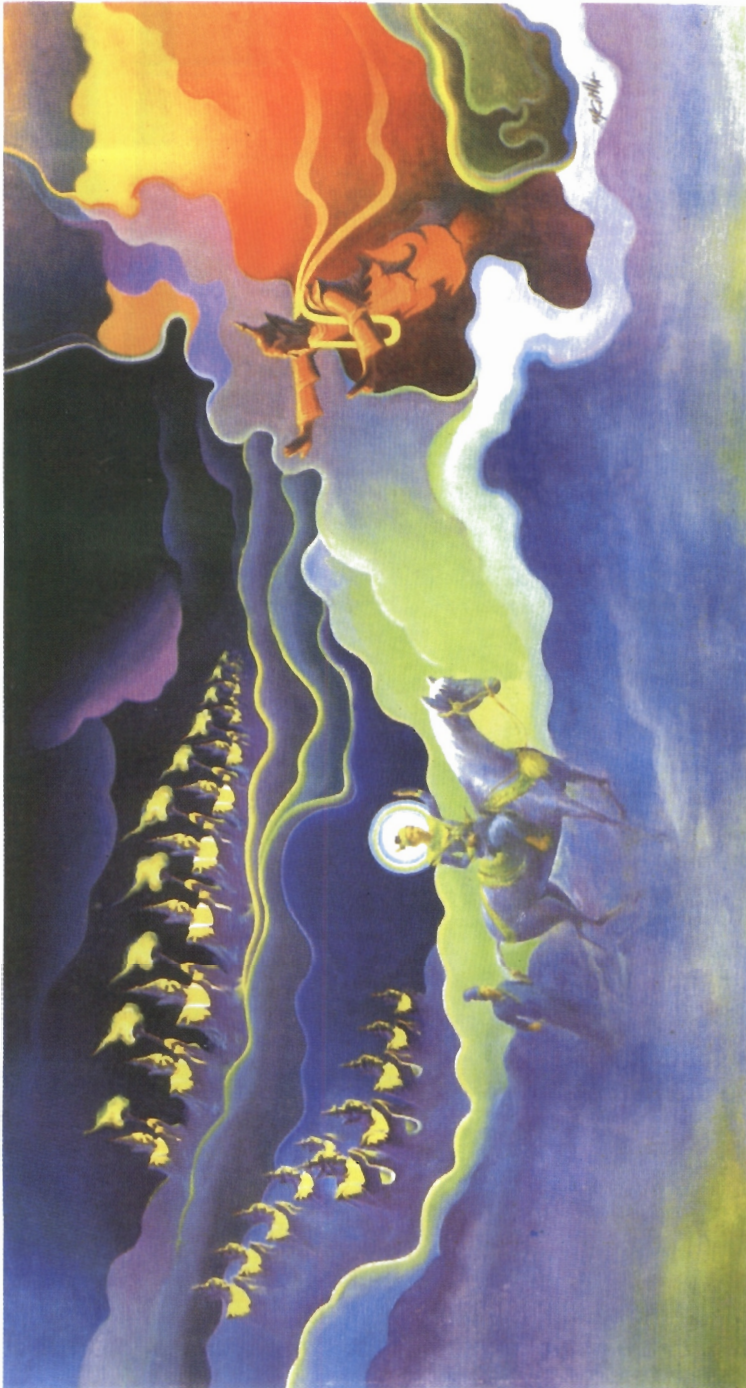
Peaceful is the father

Peaceful is the wife

Who has such a husband as he.

As an appreciation of the deep meaning verse to urge him in his search for Peace, the Prince presented her through someone his necklace which prompted her to believe that the Prince had fallen in love with her.

Back home in the palace, the Prince was much agitated and filled with a great urgency to renounce. He made up his mind to renounce that very night.



Prince Siddhattha going forth in his renunciation of the worldly life.



The Prince Siddhattha's Great Renunciation in search of Truth and Peace.

The Great Renunciation

That night the Prince woke up at midnight and saw the musicians lying in disarray, looking like so many corpses. He became disgusted and quickly went away from that place and ordered Channa, his charioteer to saddle his favourite horse, Kanthaka for the epic journey of renunciation. On the way out, he peeped into the bedroom to see Princess Yasodhara and baby Rahula in deep sleep. Casting aside the paternal sentiment to kiss the child, he quickly proceeded to the waiting stallion and Channa. Riding on the horse, he was met by Māra (evil one) who abortively attempted to stop his great renunciation at the city gate.

The Bodhisatta Prince ignored Marā and rode far into the night until he reached and crossed over the river Anoma. Getting down from his stallion, he took off all his royal jewellery and princely garments. He then cut off his hair with his sword and threw them up into the air. Sakkadevarājā the King of heaven, took the Bodhisatta's hair and enshrined them in the Cūḷāmaṇi ceti in Tāvātimsa Heaven. Next the Bodhisatta Prince donned the monk's yellow robes and took the other requisites given by his former friend Ghaṭikāra Mahā Brahmā who took back the Siddhattha's princely clothes and enshrined them in the Dussa Ceti in the Brahma loka. This meant that the Prince had become a penniless wandering ascetic with no fixed abode but wandered from place to place, living under trees, in shrubs or at the foot of trees and inside caves. As such he was also dependent on alms food given as charity. He was also called a Bodhisatta.

Bodhisatta means a wisdom being. It is also the name given to one who is trying to become a Buddha. In this way the Bodhisatta Prince was living a simple life alone, spending his time in search of Truth and Peace by avidly practising meditation.

The ascetic Prince then told Channa to take his royal jewellery back to King Suddhodana. Channa offered thrice to renounce with the Prince but was firmly refused permission. So he sadly carried on as ordered, walking away slowly from the Bodhisatta Prince as the stallion Kanthaka had died out of grief and was reborn in Tavatimsa Heaven.

After his ordination, he spent seven days in the Anupiya Mango Grove near the Anoma river enjoying the bliss of renunciation and solitude. On the eighth day he went for alms-round in the city of Rajagaha.

At the sight of the noble figure of the Bodhisatta Prince going for alms-round, the people and King Bimbisara were greatly amazed. Curious the King ordered his courtiers to enquire who he was. After the alms-round, he went to have his food at Pandava rock. On looking, he was upset at the first sight of the mixed almsfood and was unable to immediately start eating. However after consoling himself, he eventually ate the food.

Upon learning about the renunciation of the Bodhisatta Prince, King Bimbisara offered him his Kingdom. But the Bodhisatta Prince refused stating that he was intent on Buddha-hood. The king was very pleased to hear his lofty ideal and invited him to visit his Kingdom first after his enlightenment.

The search for Truth and Peace

In his search for supreme truth, the Bodhisatta Prince sought learning the Truth from a well-known ascetic Ālāra Kālāma, who taught him up to the seventh estatic meditation attainment. As this could not bring about the Ultimate Truth he was looking for, he left his ascetic teacher and went to another. The next ascetic teacher Udaka Rāmaputta, though more famous and well-known, was only able to teach him the eighth and final estatic meditation attainment but not the Noble Ultimate Truth.

As he was still not satisfied with this highest worldly meditation attainment, he again left his second ascetic teacher. He then decided to seek out the Ultimate Truth alone all by himself.



King Bimbisara offering his kingdom to the future Buddha, who refused as He desired not for worldly enjoyment.

Though he was disappointed he was not discouraged. He had already made up his mind to do this and chose a beautiful quiet spot, in the Uruvela forest. At this juncture, the five monks, Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma and Assaji attended on him. Kondañña was the youngest amongst the eight specially chosen Brahmins to predict the future of baby Prince Siddhattha. The other four monks were the sons of the fellow Brahmin colleagues of Kondañña. The Bodhisatta had to struggle for six futile years before he could attain Buddha-hood.

During the severe extreme ascetic practise, his body was reduced to almost a skeleton. At that juncture, Māra (the Evil One) approached and urged him to give up his struggle and to go on living, performing meritorious actions. He said to the Bodhisatta Prince that by doing so he would become a Universal Monarch in seven days. Nevertheless he was told off by the Bodhisatta Prince, who identified Māra's army as of Ten Defilements/Passions. Sad and disappointed at his own failure, Māra left dejectedly.

As the Bodhisatta realised the futility of self-mortification (extreme austerities) to attain enlightenment, he gave up total fasting and ate some food. Whereupon the five attendant monks left him, thinking that the Bodhisatta Prince had given up struggling. Being of iron-will, he was happy to be alone.



The Bodhisatta spent six years practising austerities for the realisation of Truth and the attainment of Enlightenment.



Sujata offering milk rice to the Bodhisatta prince



The throwing of the alms bowl by the Bodhisatta prince into the river Neranjara



Mara (Evil One) and his army failed to prevent the Bodhisatta from attaining Enlightenment and finally also failed to capture the Golden Throne as well.

His Struggle for Enlightenment

One day when he was seated under a banyan tree, a generous lady named Sujātā, offered him some milk rice. After the meal he threw his almsbowl into the river and made a solemn resolve that the almsbowl would float upstream if he would succeed in his quest for enlightenment. The almsbowl floated upstream for a distance and sank into the nāga world, rested as the fourth on the stack of almsbowl belonging to the three previous Buddhas. The milk rice made him feel strong and he left for Buddha Gaya. On the way he met a grass-cutter, Sothiya by name who gave him eight bundles of grass which the Bodhisatta used to make his meditation seat in his struggle for enlightenment. He made a firm resolution not to rise from his seat until he had gained Buddha-hood. At that time he was seated under the famous Bodhi Tree in Buddha Gaya and firmly resolved that “Though my skin, my nerve, my bone and my life blood dried up yet I would not leave my seat until I had attained enlightenment.”

The Bodhisatta vanquished Māra and his hosts before the sunset. During the first watch of the night (6.00 p.m. to 10 p.m.) he gained the knowledge by which he was able to remember past lives. (Pubbe Nivasānussati Ñāna) He next obtained the power to see earthly or heavenly events, near or far and the death and rebirth of all beings. (Dibba Cakkhu Ñāna or Sutupupāta Ñāna) in the second watch (10 p.m. to 2 a.m.). In the third watch (2.00 a.m to 6.00 a.m) he gained knowledge by which he could destroy all defilements (passions) (Āsavakkhaya Ñāna), understood the Four Noble Truths and became a Sammā Sambuddha by himself. (*Four Noble Truths will be explained in greater detail in the Dhamma Section).

Ascetic Siddhattha attained Supreme Enlightenment

The Bodhisatta attained Supreme Enlightenment on Wednesday, at the beginning of sunset and moon rise on the Fullmoon Day of Vesākha month (May) in 93 Māha Era, 588 BC at the age of thirty-five. After His enlightenment, He was called Buddha Gotama (Buddha inspiration will be explained later in the Dhamma section.)



Prince Siddhattha attained Supreme Enlightenment and became the Buddha.

Soon after enlightenment, the Buddha uttered a paean of joy,
Udana in Pali:

“Anekajāti saṃsāraṃ, saṅdhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ.
Gahakāraṃ gavesanto, dukkha jāti punappunaṃ.
Gahakāraṃ diṭṭho’ si, puna gehaṃ na kahāsi.
Sabbā te phasukā bhaggā, gahakūtaṃ visankhataṃ.
Visaṃkhāragataṃ cittaṃ tanhānaṃ khayam-ajjhagā!”

His first Paean of Joy

“Thro’ many a birth in Samsara wandered I,
Seeking, but not finding, the builder of this house.
Sorrowful is repeated birth.
O house-builder! Thou art seen.
Thou shalt build no house again.
All thy rafters are broken, thy ridgepole is shattered.
The mind attains the unconditioned.
Achieved is the end of craving!”

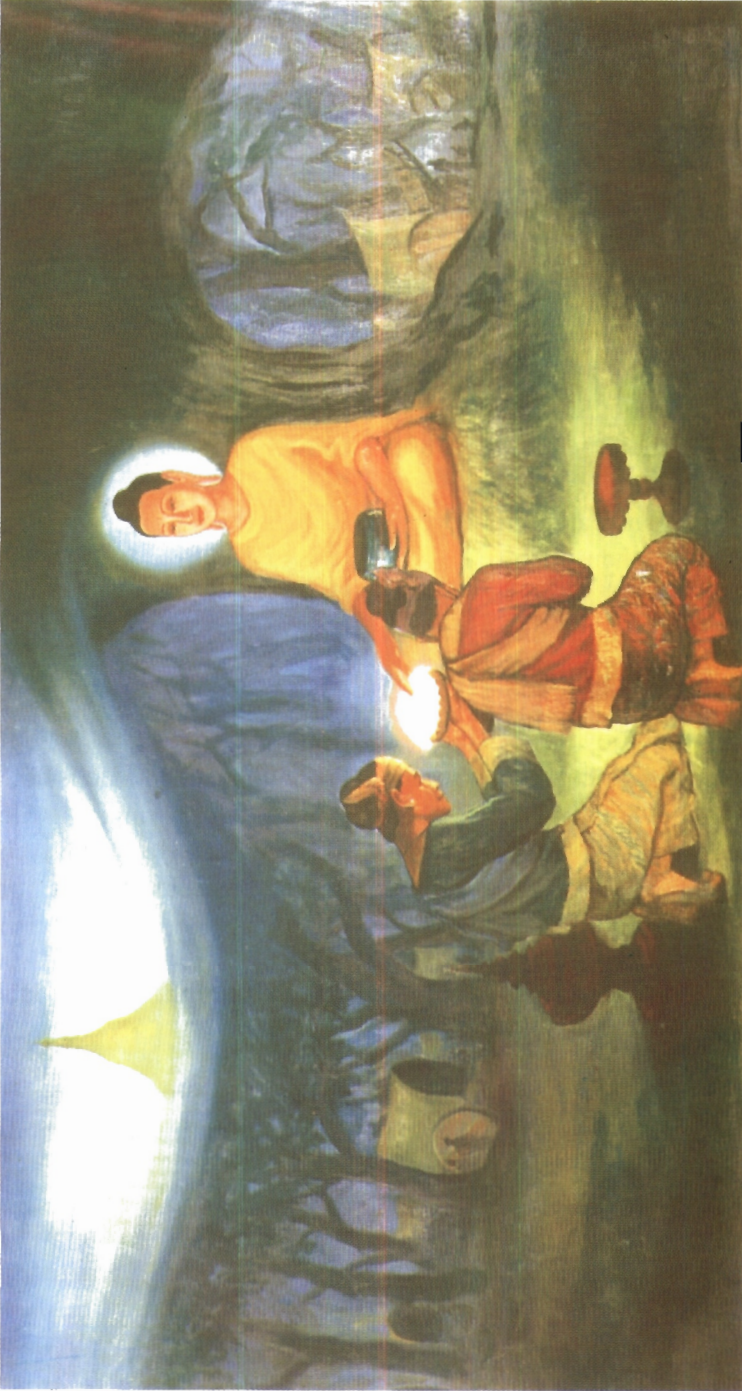
In His first paean of joy, He exclaimed that He had seen the “builder” of His house (aggregates) and so by attaining the enlightenment, He is able to see the “builder” of His house and put an end to His craving; thus He was no longer subject to rebirth. After the Enlightenment, He spent seven weeks fasting as well as experiencing the various aspect of Emancipation.

Seven weeks fasting practised by the Buddha after His Enlightenment

In the first week He sat under the Bodhi Tree enjoying the bliss of Emancipation and reviewed the Wheel of Life (Dependent Origination) in its dual order.

The Buddha spent the second week, standing and gazing with motionless eyes at the Bodhi Tree and the Throne as a mark of gratitude.

In the third week, He mindfully walked up and down the jewelled promenade (Ratana Caṅkamana).



Tapussa and Bhallika (two merchant brothers) who offered their provision, received eight strands of hair from the Buddha as sacred object of veneration.

When the fourth week came, the Buddha sat in the jewelled chamber and contemplated on the Higher Dhamma (Abhidhamma) in the neighbourhood of Buddhagāyā.

In the fifth week, He sat in meditation under the Ajapāla banyan tree and was unsuccessfully tempted by Māra's three daughters, Taṇhā, Aratī and Rāgā after their father's failed attempt.

The Buddha spent the sixth week under the Mucalinda Tree in deep contemplation. There arose a heavy rain storm and the serpent King Mucalinda who ruled in the lake underneath, sheltered the Buddha with the seven coils of its body and opened its hood as a protective umbrella over Him. In the end when the storm abated, the serpent King transformed itself into a youth, paid obeisance and straight away returned to its abode.

In the seventh and final week the Buddha sat under the Rājayatana tree enjoying the bliss of Nibbāna and so completed the forty-nine days of ariyan fasting.

Breaking of Fast

On the fiftieth day, the two merchants name Tapussa and Bhallika offered honey and food made from flour to the Buddha. The Buddha accepted the food in an alms bowl donated by the Four Great Guardian Gods.

After the dāna (almsfood) they took the Two Fold Refuge in the Buddha and Dhamma (Dwe Vācika Saraṇa), as there was no saṅgha in existence yet. They became the first Upasakas (male disciples) of the Buddha.

They also requested the Buddha for something to worship. So the compassionate Buddha touched His head with His right hand and gave them some hair as relic to worship. They took them home to Pokkharavatī in the state of Okkala and put them in the golden casket for enshrinement in a Pagoda.

Preaching of the Dhamma

At this juncture the Buddha thought how deep His Dhamma was and how difficult it would be for the people to understand and practise. Coincidentally Brahma Sahampatti appeared before Him and invited Him to preach the Dhamma, as there were some people who could understand the Dhamma.

With His Divine Eye, He surveyed and saw that indeed there were people who could understand the Dhamma. He first thought of His first ascetic teacher Āḷāra Kālāma but he had died a week ago. He then thought of His second ascetic teacher Udaka Rāmaputta but he just died the day before. Finally He thought of the group of five monks who had attended on Him. He found that they were staying in the Deer Park at Isipatana, Benarasi.

Out of compassion the Buddha went to see them in the Park. On the way, He met the wandering ascetic Upaka who asked the Buddha who His teacher was. The Buddha replied that He had no teacher (for his attainment of Buddhahood). Āḷāra Kālāma and Udaka Rāmaputta were the ascetic teachers before He became a Buddha.

The five monks, on seeing the distant approaching Buddha, agreed at first not to pay Him due respect. However as He drew near, they could not resist from giving Him the due respect. In any case they did not address the Buddha correctly and properly because they did not know that the Ascetic Siddhattha whom they had been serving before, had attained Buddhahood.

The Buddha then told them not to address Him thus for three times. Finally He successfully convinced them of His attainment and they sat patiently to hear the Dhamma.

The Buddha then preached the Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta – the Discourse on Turning In Motion the Wheel of Truth, on the Fullmoon Day of Asaḷha (July) Saturday in the year Māha Era 103. Among the five monks listening were also numerous devas (celestial beings) and Brahmas (higher celestial beings) as well as other beings.



The Buddha preached His first sermon to the five monks at the Deer Park in Varanasi.

As expounded in the said Sutta, the Buddha advised the monks to give up two extremes – the enjoyment of sensual pleasures and the tormenting of the body (self-indulgence and self-mortification), respectively. Though not everyone would have to give up pleasure, those who had renounced the world should do so.

The Buddha asked the five monks to give up the two extremes because as a Prince then He had enjoyed self-indulgence (sensual pleasures) and as an ascetic, he had tormented his body (self-mortification). In the former He found it to be base and vulgar while in the latter He found it to be pathetic. Though people were found to be easily moved by and readily believed in self-mortification, yet it produced no purity.

The Buddha found the Middle Path (Majjhima Paṭipadā) of avoiding the two extremes. Majjhima Paṭipadā means the Noble Eight Fold Path which is for one to practise accordingly, leading to Nibbana.

At the end of the Discourse, Kondaṇṇa understood the Dhamma and attained enlightenment as Sotāpanna, the first stage of Sainthood. It is also called a Stream-Winner, as he had seen Nibbana for the first time. When he attained Sotāpanna, the Devas and Brahmas rejoiced and a very bright light appeared in the world. The other four monks also became Stream-Winners (Sotāpannas) later. The group of five monks later attained Arahantship after listening to the Anattalakkhana-Sutta, the Discourse on No-Soul. An Arahant means a Worthy One, free from all bondage.



The Buddha's exhortation to His first sixty Arahant disciple monks, "Let not the two of you take the same path to preach the Dhamma for the welfare and happiness of all!"

The Original Missionary Monks

The sixth disciple was Yasa, son of a rich man. Disgusted with the world he ran away from home at night and met the Buddha, listened to His Dhamma and became an Arahat. Searching for his son Yasa, the father too met the Buddha and listening to His Dhamma became the first male follower (Upasaka) who took the Three-fold Refuges. Likewise Yasa's mother and wife also became the first two female followers (Upasikas) who sought the three-fold refuges. The three lay disciples attained Sotapanna (first stage of ariya hood) after listening to the Buddha's dhamma.

Meanwhile Yasa's fifty-four staunch friends, after hearing the Buddha's Dhamma also became Arahats. Vimala, Subāhu, Punnaji and Gavaṇṇapati were the four closest and dearest of Yasa's friends who attained Arahats first. They made up the total of sixty Arahats existing in the World then. With these Sixty Arahants, the Buddha told them to "go forth, O Bhikkhus, one in each direction, Preach ye the Dhamma, for the good of many, for the welfare and happiness of many, proclaim ye the holy blameless life for the good of the world". After that the Buddha set out on foot alone to preach His new-found Dhamma.

On the way He met the Thirty Bhadda Vaggi royal brothers who were having a picnic. As one of them was unmarried he engaged a courtesan who stole their gold and jewellery, creating an uproar. This made them hunt for the lady thief and consequently meet the Buddha. After hearing the Dhamma from the Buddha, they became ariyans in the first three stages of Sainthood (Sotāpanna to Anāgāmi).



The Buddha subduing the dragon king at the dwelling of ascetic kassapa.



The Buddha subsequently visited Rajagaha city where King Bimbisara came to pay homage to the Buddha and His disciples.

The Buddha then proceeded to Rājagaha and met the famous three Kassapa Ascetic brothers, who lived by the bank of a river. They were very avid and successful Fire-worshippers. After the Buddha passed a night in the eldest Kassapa brother's temple and defeating the residential nāga (dragon), he was convinced of the Buddha's powers and became His disciple. This led to the conversion of his two younger Kassapas, also fire-worshippers down stream. As they had five hundred, three hundred and two hundred disciples respectively who also became Buddhist monks, they made up a total of one thousand bhikkhus headed by the Kassapa brothers and all became Arahants after hearing the Buddha preached the Maha Narada Kassapa Jataka.

With these new found disciples the Buddha proceeded towards the kingdom of King Bimbisāra, whom He had promised to visit first after His Enlightenment when He was Bodhisatta Ascetic earlier on. King Bimbisara together with one hundred and twenty thousand in his retinue, met the Buddha.

King Bimbisāra after hearing the story of Māhā Narada Kassapa Jātaka from the Buddha, attained the first stage of sainthood (Sotāpanna). Among his retinue, one hundred and ten thousand attained Sotāpanna Sainthood whilst the remaining ten thousand became Buddhists. He was very happy and expressing joy he told the Buddha that his five life-long wishes had been fulfilled. They were as follows :-

1. Wish to be a King
2. Wish that a holy man (homage-worthy one) visit his Kingdom
3. Wish to pay respect and honour to that holy man
4. Wish to hear the Ariyan Dhamma (Noble Truth)
5. Wish to attain the Ariyan Dhamma (through realization)

He then invited the Buddha and His disciples to the royal dāna (alms giving). After that he offered his royal park Veluvana (Bamboo) grove to the Buddha and His monks. It was also a very suitable occasion for the Buddha to preach the Tirokutta Sutta.

TIROKUTTA SUTTA

After the donation of Veluvana Bamboo Grove Temple to Buddha, that night King Bimbisara heard frightful, fearsome and horrible demons screaming and shouting outside the palace. After consulting the Buddha, he was told that the Throne and Kingdom were not in danger but those were his previous relatives in deprived state and who wanted the sharing of his merits. So as advised, the King duly performed alms giving and shared merits to his relatives whom the Buddha revealed them in their pitiful states.

That became the starting of sharing of merits by reciting “Idam No Ñatinam̃ Hotu Sukhitā Hontu Ñatayo!” meaning “May our relatives share in the merits we have accrued and may they be well and happy!”

The Buddha’s First Two Chief Disciples

The Buddha’s first two Chief Disciples were Venerable Sariputta (also known as Upatissa) and Venerable Moggalana (also known as Kolita). Both of them were from rich and prominent Brahman families. Fed up with worldly pleasure, both of them who were staunch friends, went out in search of Peace.

(1) Sariputta was the son of Lady Rūpasāri (mostly called Sāri) , who was the very fortunate mother of seven Arahants, namely:-

Arahant sons:

1. Sāriputta
2. Upasena
3. Cunda
4. Revata

Arahant daughters:

1. Cālā
2. Sisucālā
3. Upacālā

(2) Moggalana was the son of a Brahman lady named Moggali

At first both of them went to study under a well-known ascetic named Sanjaya. Soon both were dissatisfied with his instructions, left him and went their separate ways back to their own homes. Before doing so however, they promised they would keep each other informed of any opportunity to attain peace.



The Buddha performing the Twin Miracles in order to subdue the erroneous pride of His older royal relatives.

Venerable Sāriputta inevitably met and admired the Venerable Asaji who preached to him the Dhamma. On hearing the first two lines of the Dhamma verse, Sāriputta became a Sotāpanna. He repeated the Dhamma to Moggalāna who also became a Sotāpanna. When both of them went to see the Buddha, they became Arahants after hearing the Buddha preached the Dhamma. Then they requested the Buddha to ordain them as monks. Later the Buddha declared and made Venerable Sāriputta His First Chief Disciple and Venerable Moggalāna his Second Chief Disciple in the presence of the first assembly of one thousand two hundred and fifty (1,250) Ehi-Bhikkhu monks. Then the Buddha instructed the monks to observe the Ovada Pātimokkha (Discipline).

The Royal Invitation

His royal father King Suddhodana sent nine invitations to invite the Buddha to return home and visit His birth place but were all unsuccessful. When the royal messengers met the Buddha, they heard His dhamma and attained Arahantship. They were so happy and elated that they forgot their royal mission and became monks. Only Kaludayi succeeded in inviting the Buddha. After his successful invitation, Kaludayi, a former playmate of the Buddha who was born on the same day as Buddha, also became a Bhikkhu.

Upon the invitation of His father King Suddhodana, the Buddha proceeded to Kapilavatthu. As He also preached Dhamma on the way, it took the Buddha two months to reach Kapilavatthu.

On arriving at Kapilavatthu, the elderly royal Sakyan relatives, in keeping with their traditions, sent their younger ones to picnic away in the country side, expecting the Buddha to pay them the due respect. However the Buddha knew the real situation and performed the twin miracle. The twin miracle was the issuing of fire and water from His body simultaneously. This wonderful and spectacular feat captured and subdued their pride. His royal father, seeing this wonder, saluted Him, saying that it was his third respect. Finally the elderly Sakyan relatives paid their respect to the Buddha.



Young Prince Rahula prompted by his mother to ask for his inheritance, left behind by the Buddha after His renunciation.

The next day with bowl in hand, He went from house to house seeking alms in the streets of Kapilavattu. The King rushed up to Him and asked why He was disgracing him thus. The Buddha replied that it was the tradition of Buddhas. On hearing this the King became a sotāpanna. Later he became a Sakadāgāmi, He attained Anāgāmi when he heard the Dhammapāla Jātaka. On his death bed he became an Arahant.

When the Buddha entered the palace for the King's dana, many Sakyan ladies came to pay respects except Princess Yasodhara.

She thought that if she had any virtues the Buddha would go to see her. Then she would pay Him utmost respect.

So the Compassionate Buddha accompanied by a host of retinue led by the King and Pajāpati Gotami, went to see her. Yasodharā then clasped the Buddha's ankles and worshipped Him as she liked. Meanwhile the King announced her sterling virtues to all present.

At this juncture the Buddha expounded Canda Kinnari Jātaka to illustrate her fidelity and virtues then, as well as in other previous lives.

Later she entered the Order and became an Arahant when she was a Bhikkhuni.

Nanda, the step-brother of the Buddha, was under royal consecration and its due ceremonies were ordered by the King. It was also attended by the Buddha. The ceremonies were:-

1. preparing the hair style for the Crown Prince,
2. consecration of the Crown Prince,
3. the coronation of the Crown Prince,
4. the wedding of the Crown Prince, and
5. the presentation of the whole exclusive Royal umbrella

which took place on the third day of the Buddha's visit. However later after the dāna, when he followed the Buddha back to Nijodhārāma Monastery carrying the almsbowl of the Buddha, whereupon he was ordained as a Bhikkhu.



The Buddha preaching the Abhidhamma (Higher Doctrine) to His former mother, now a Deva and others in Tavatimsa Heaven.

On the seventh day of the Buddha's visit, Prince Rahula who was prompted by his mother to ask for his inheritance, was instead ordained as a novice monk at the young age of seven. This ordination which had the seven supramundane treasures was the more appropriate and beneficial inheritance the Buddha gave instead. In due course he became an Arahant. King Suddhodana became upset at the ordination of his only grandson and requested the Buddha to establish a radical rule that anyone who had obtained the consent of his parent or guardian, should only be ordained as a monk.

The Buddha then left Kapilavatthu for Rājagaha but on the way He stopped at the Anupiya Mango Grove. In the meanwhile, the King called on the Śakyan royal households to present a Prince each for ordination to become monks. He managed to rally in groups of a thousand Sakyan Princes and sent them to the Buddha for ordination.

Pajāpati Gotami was also rejoicing the homecoming of the Buddha and offered Him a set of hand-woven monk's robes. After the death of King Suddhodana, she and some other Sakyan ladies took a leading part in requesting the Buddha to establish the Order of Nuns, several times but failed. Upon the intervention and initiative of Ānanda's appeal, the Buddha later gave His consent. Thereupon Pajāpati Gotami and some other royal Sakyan ladies joined the Nuns Order and became Arahants.

On the seventh year of His enlightenment, the Buddha went to Tavatimsa Heaven to preach the abhidhamma (Higher Philosophical Truth) to His deva mother and also to observe the Vassana (Rains Retreat) for three months there. Many celestials, including a very large retinue headed by His deva mother, greatly benefited by attaining the various stages of Sainthood.

After His Abhidhamma lectures, the Buddha visited the human world at lake Anottata in the Himalaya Mountain, where the Venerable Sariputta waited to receive the daily account of His lectures. Later the Venerable Sariputta would expound the same doctrine to his disciples, thereby spreading the Abhidhamma teaching of the Buddha.

Devadatta was the cousin and brother-in-law of the Buddha. He joined the Order and was ordained as a monk. At first, he practised accordingly and attained supernatural powers. Out of the egoistic eagerness to improve, he made several requests to the Buddha. They were inevitably turned down as not practical nor conducive to the monks' harmonious fraternity. Annoyed and upset, he turned against the Buddha and became the greatest enemy. He even tried to kill the Buddha by hurling a huge rock at Him from a hill-top. After his death Devadatta was reborn in Hell, due to his past evil deeds.

Suffering for a very long time in hell and after being purged of his evilness, he would be reborn again with ample chances of doing good.

Then gradually he would improve. Finally in the remote future (with the passing of many great aeons) he would become a Pacceka Buddha by the name of Atthisara.

The Offering of Ambapali Mango Grove by Ambapali the Courtesan

In His last Vassa (Rains Retreat), at the age of eighty years the Buddha stayed at Ambapali Mango Grove. Ambapali was overjoyed at the news and quickly went to her Mango Grove to see and invite the Buddha, His Disciples and His five hundred newly ordained young monks for the next day charity lunch (Dāna). The Buddha who had earlier cautioned His newly ordained young monks about unrestrained senses because of beautiful and attractive sight (Ambapali's beauty) accepted her lunch invitation in silence.

After paying obeisance to the Buddha she left her Mango Grove. On the outskirts of her park she met the Lacchavi Princes who were coming to visit and pay obeisance to the Buddha. As their splendid carriages met in grinding exchanges, they struck up a conversation, whereupon the Lacchavi Princes were suspiciously surprised to learn that the Buddha had accepted her lunch dāna. So they offered her a hundred thousand in money for the privilege dāna. She replied saying she would not give up even if they were to offer her their kingdom in exchange. They then continued their separate journeys.



Mahaparinibbana - The Buddha's final passing away for the attainment of the Ultimate Deliverance; and Dona, the Brahman distributing the Buddha's relics thereafter.

On arrival the Lacchavi Princes paid respect to the Buddha and later invited Him to lunch but the Buddha refused saying He had already accepted Ambapali's lunch dāna. At the Dana and after listening to the Dhamma, she donated her Mango Grove to the Buddha who accepted and stayed there during his last (forty-fifth) Vassa (Rains Retreat)

After becoming a Buddhist she turned over a new leaf and lived a devout life full of faith and devotion.

The Buddha's Parinibbāna – The Final Release from birth and death of the Buddha

The Buddha's last advice was "Strive on with diligence." In Pali language, it should read as, "Handa dāni, bhikkhave, āmantayāmi vo, Vayadhammā sankharā, Appamadena saṃpādeṭha."

"Now, bhikkhus, I say this as my last exhortation. Decay is inherent in all compounded things. Hence, strive on with mindfulness and diligence to complete the task."

As an encouragement to all those who want to practise the Dhamma and honour the Buddha best, the Buddha himself said that "anyone who practises His Teaching best will be the one who honours Him best!"

Cunda the smith gave the Buddha the last meal. It is considered as the most auspicious to offer the first meal just before becoming a Buddha and the last meal before a Buddha passes away.

Even though he was occasionally asked to appoint a successor, the Buddha himself advised His disciples to regard His Teaching as their teacher.

When the end was near and the hour had come, the Buddha requested everyone present to be firm in their resolutions in the matter of practising the Dhamma. He then passed away by attaining Jhānas in their various stages progressively and was without sorrow. This took place on Tuesday Wesak Fullmoon Day of May, Mahā Era 139 in His 80th year 543 B.C. Parinibbāna means the Final Release from birth and death of the Buddha. Attaining Parinibbāna means the attainment of the Unconditional existence.

The Buddha's Ministry which lasted for forty-five years was the most successful and longest in any religious history. His compassionate personality, the greatness of the Dhamma and His dexterity in choosing His method of dissemination all contributed to His great success.

He had great supporters like King Kosala, King Bimbisāra, Anāthapindika, Visākhā, and Ajatasattu to name a few. He too had great opponents in Devadatta, His own cousin, King Suppabuddha His father-in-law and leaders of other sectarians who gave Him a lot of problems but He duly solved them with great compassion and patience.

As Buddhists, we can still see the Buddha if we can see (realize) the Dhamma.

His sacred body was cremated three months after His death. After the cremation, His relics amounting to eight jars were distributed among His distinguished followers. Three months after the Buddha's Great Demise, the distinguished disciples and followers decided to rehearse and purify the Dhamma.

So accordingly, arrangements were made to set up the First Buddhist Council held in the Satta panni Gūha at Rājagaha under the royal patronage of King Ajātasattu.

Arahant Mahā Kassapa was the president of the First Buddhist Council. Arahant Upāli was chosen to recite the Vinaya (Disciplinary rules) whilst Arahant Ānanda was chosen to rehearse the Dhamma. The aim of Buddhist Council was to purify the Dhamma and ensure the pristine purity of the Tipitaka, the entire Teachings of the Buddha.

The Tipitaka means the Three Baskets (of Buddha's Teachings) which exists in its purity, even today. The Tipitaka was committed to writing in about 80 B.C. on ola palm leaves in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). The Tipitaka is eleven times the size of the Bible.

During His forty-five years of active Dhamma duta work, He stayed at the following places after enlightenment:-

Rains Retreat in Years

1. Deer Park, Holy Isipatana at Benares.
2. Veluvana monastery (Bamboo Grove).
3. Veluvana monastery (Bamboo Grove).
4. Veluvana monastery (Bamboo Grove).
5. At Kuṭṭāgāra Sāla (Hall), Vesali.
6. Mankula rock.
7. Tavatimsa Heaven
8. Bhesa-kala-vana at Samsumara-giri (city).
9. Kosambi, at Ghositārama (monastery).
10. Parileyyaka forest.
11. In a Brahmin village called Nālaka.
12. Veranja city, under a Naleru (nimb) tree.
13. Cāliya rock.
14. Jetavana monastery.
15. Kapilavatthu, at Nigrodhā rama (monastery)
16. Ālavaka city, at Mahāvana, near Ālavi
17. Veluvana monastery at Rājagaha
18. Cāliya rock.
19. Cāliya rock.
20. Veluvana monastery at Rājagaha
- 21-39. Jetavana monastery
- 40-44. Pubbarama monastery in Savatthi
- 45th and last year at Veluva village near Vesālī

Supporters of the Buddha's Mission

Among the many prominent supporters, the following are outstanding:-

1. King Bimbisāra donated the Bamboo Grove (Veluvana Monastery)
2. Ānatha Piṇḍika donated the Jetavana Monastery
3. Visakhā donated the Pubbarama Monastery
4. King Kosala Pasenadi performed the unique Alms-giving
5. King Ajattasatu – royal patron of First Buddhist Council
6. King Kalasoka – royal patron of Second Buddhist Council
7. Emperor Asoka – royal patron of Third Buddhist Council, propagating Buddhist Missionary to 9 places and constructed many nationwide Buddhist Monuments (including the famous Rock Edicts).

1. King Bimbisārā

King Bimbisāra was the friend of King Suddhodana and whose kingdom the Bodhisatta Prince (Siddhattha) went on almsround. He was a religious king and a very staunch supporter of Buddhism. When he heard the Buddha preached the Dhamma he became a Sotāpanna. He told the Buddha that his five wishes which he had cherished life-long until then had been fulfilled. With great joy and devotion he donated his royal park together with the famous Veluvana monastery also known as the Bamboo Grove. The Buddha spent five Rains Retreat (Vassana) in this monastery.

King Bimbisāra spent his last days in a royal prison because of the misled rebellious and unfilial son Prince Ajātasattu. After his death he was reborn in the Heaven of the Four Guardian Gods. (Catumaharajika Devaloka) as he had a host of friends waiting for him there.

2. Ānatha Pindika

Ānatha Pindika, the feeder of the helpless, was a millionaire in Savatthi and Sudatta was his family name. He met the Buddha when visiting his brother-in-law who was staying in Rājagaha. With untold joy he learned that the Buddha was living in a nearby park. In his intense desire to meet the Buddha, he woke up very early and proceeded towards His residence passing through a cemetery. So great was his faith in the Buddha that a light emanated from him. Guided by this and also by an unseen being, he reached Sitavana where the Buddha was strolling up and down anticipating his visit. Summoned by the Buddha who used his family name, he went up to Him, paid his respects and sat down to one side. He then heard the Buddha's preaching and became a Sotāpanna.

Returning home to Sāvatti he bought a park belonging to Prince Jeta by covering the whole area with gold coins and built the famous Jetavana Monastery. In this monastery the Buddha spent nineteen Rains Retreat where He expounded many sermons, much to the delight of the numerous monks, devotees and deities who attained various stages of sainthood in the Ariyan Truth.

Puññalakkhana was his wife and he had three virtuous daughters named Mahā Subhaddā, Cula Subbhadā and Sumana. The eldest was a Sotāpanna whilst the youngest was a Sakadāgāmi. His only son Kāla was not a devout Buddhist at first but through the skilful guidance of his father he later attained Sotāpanna.

Ānatha Piṇḍika passed away after hearing a discourse from the Venerable Sāriputta, the First Chief Male Disciple of the Buddha. After death he was reborn in Tusita Heaven but came back that very night to visit the Buddha, extolling the virtues of the Venerable Sāriputta and also expressing his pleasure on seeing the Buddha and His disciples residing at his monastery. Thereat the Buddha preached to Anatha Pindika the Mirror of Dhamma Dhammādāsa (Dhamma Ādāsa) which states that Ariya Disciples have:-

1. Unshakable Confidence and knowledge of the Nine Virtues of the Buddha
2. Unshakable Confidence and knowledge of the Six virtues of the Dhamma
3. Unshakable Confidence and knowledge of the Nine virtues of the Sangha
4. Ariya Disciples are endowed with untainted moral precepts
5. Noble Morality/Concentration (Ariya Sila/Samadhi), which is
 - i) free from craving
 - ii) praised by the wise
 - iii) free from misconception
 - iv) having developed concentration
 - v) praised by the Ariyas

3. Visakha

The Lady Visākha was not only distinguished but also a very touching person, filled with tender care. She was the daughter of a millionaire father Dhanañjaya and Sumana was her mother. Her beloved grandfather was also a millionaire named Mendaka.

When the Buddha visited her birthplace in Savatthi, she was only seven years old. Young as she was, she was spiritually very advanced and attained Sotāpanna (the first stage Noble Sainthood) on hearing only for the first time the Buddha preached Dhamma. She lived a very happy home life and enjoyed the many luxurious amenities in her wealthy family who was very pious and dedicated to the Triple Gem (the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.)

Though endowed with all the angelic charms and great feminine beauty, Visākhā had masculine strength, talented worldly wisdom and gifted insight.

She was married to a non-Buddhist, named Puññavaḍḍhana, the son of a millionaire called Migāra. On her wedding day, a very large dowry and other precious jewellery were given to her. On entering her husband's home city she wore a very special and exquisite cloak (Mahā porurha). This rare and very expensive cloak was not only bedecked with special sparkling gems but also very heavy, so that only a very strong lady of masculine strength can wear it as an ordinary attire. On the eve of her wedding she was duly advised by her father on and about the domestic life she had to face in her father-in-law's house.

Through her tact and integrity, she eventually converted her husband's household into a very happy Buddhist home. Her callous father-in-law was the first to attain Sotāpanna, making him reverse whatever bias and antagonism he had against Buddhism. He embraced Buddhism and thereafter Visakhā was left free to continue her Buddhist activities as she liked.

Prompted by the Buddha she built the Pubbarāma (monastery) in a place, east of Savatthi and donated this to the Buddha who spent six Rains Retreat (Vassana). Throughout her life she remained a devout and dedicated female supporter of the Buddha and His disciples.

As a renowned lady, close to the Buddha, she was the centre of Buddhist activities and was even deputed by the Buddha to solve disputes which arose among the Bhikkhunis (nuns). Some rules were promulgated for the Sangha at her suggestion.

She was an immaculate and distinguished lady personified by her flawless conduct, noble manners, pleasant speech, caring for and reverential to elders and compassionate towards the less fortunate ones. With her impeccable and kind hospitality, she captured the hearts of all who knew her. Such a lady was Visākhā who left behind fond memories in the hearts of many people in her time and the future generation.

4. King Kosala Pasenadi

King Kosala Pasenadi, or simply King Kosala as he was more popularly known, was one of the royal supporters of the Buddha. As a close devotee he was a frequent royal visitor but he was usually portrayed as a jovial and carefree fat king, fond of good food and enjoyed easy life. Therefore a stringent religious life, struggling to attain higher spiritual levels was not his cup of tea.

Fortunately for him, his slow-thinking devotional character was ideally compensated by his sharp and quick-witted Chief Consort, Queen Mallika who managed most of his affairs and problems. It was because of his super-intelligent Queen that he was able to perform the once in the life-time unique Alms giving, which could take place only once in the lifetime of a Buddha. This was indeed a rare honour and in the Gotama Buddha sasana was King Kosala Pasenadi, whom some believed to be a Bodhisatta (future Buddha-to be).

5. King Ajātasattu

The father-killing Prince was the son of King Bimbisāra, a righteous and noble King who donated his pleasure grove, the Veluvana, to the Buddha and His disciples. King Ajātasattu killed his father through the wrongful association with and advice of Devadatta, the arch-enemy of the Buddha.

After the regrettable episode, King Ajātasattu became a very devoted and pious Buddhist. This caused the Buddha to remark that if he had not killed his father, he would surely be enlightened in the ariyanhood. Therefore his committing patricide had completely blocked the noble entry into the Ariyan Stream, ever to helplessly suffer accordingly in the ocean of endless becoming.

Intrinsically King Ajātasattu was a pious and dedicated devotee. When duly informed of the Sangha's intention he immediately organized and set up the facility for the First Buddhist Council, of which he became the royal patron, to be held at the Satapanni Guha (Cave) in Rajagaha.

6. King Kalasoka

In the tenth year of King Kalasoka's reign and one hundred years after the demise of the Buddha the second Buddhist council was held at Vesali. The highlight of this council was the Ten Unlawful Points claimed by many shameless Bhikkhus of the Vajji clan to be not unlawful. These ten unlawful points would be described in greater details in the Sangha section on Buddhist Councils.

Upon hearing this, the Venerable Yasa approached the Venerable Revata who pronounced all of them as unlawful. When questioned, the most senior Arahant Venerable Sabbakāmi who was at least one hundred forty years old, also pronounced them as being unlawful.

After this the Venerable Revata chose seven hundred distinguished Arahants to hold a Council to purify and protect the Dhamma. Thus the second Buddhist Council, in which King Kalasoka was the royal patron, lasted for seven months. It was held in 238 Mahā Era (B.C. 443).

7. Emperor Asoka

Among the royal supporters of Buddhism Emperor Asoka was (and still is) the most outstanding, a rare distinction without a comparison. He was not born a Buddhist and was only converted to and convinced by a mere serene, dignified-looking twelve year old novice Nigrodha who preached the Buddha words, "Heedfulness is the path to Deathless. Heedlessness is the path to death. The heedful do not die, the heedless are like unto dead." While seated, he spoke from the Emperor's throne. Although little was spoken the impact was tremendously great because it changed the great Emperor's life and national and international destiny. After his embracing of Buddhism there were many changes in his life. From Candāsoka which means Asoka the Wicked, his name inevitably became Dhammasoka-Asoka the Righteous, Devanampiya- Dear to the Gods, Piyadassi – Pleasant to Behold, and so on.

Besides the erecting of thousands of rock edicts to immortalize and propagate Buddha's teachings, the great emperor also set up many thousands of health and educational institutions for public use. Although a Buddhist, he gave the same facilities to others saying " All sects (religions) deserve reverence for some reason or another. By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect and at the same time does service to the sects of other people."

An exemplary behavior of a great and mighty person, not found today. He had everyone's welfare in his heart and was a father to all. In brief he was an ideal Emperor who ruled perfectly in accordance with the Buddhist teachings.

The third Buddhist Council was held at Asokarama (now Patna) in the year 374 Mahā Era two hundred and thirty-six years after the demise of the Buddha. It lasted for nine months and one thousand Arahants participated.

The Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa was the presiding Thera. The Venerables Majjhantika and Mahadeva recited the Vinaya and the Dhamma respectively. Emperor Asoka was the royal Patron in this august assembly.

As stated briefly, these seven magnificent people made distinctive contribution and in their own way were the ideal supporters dedicated to Buddha and Buddhism. This made what Buddhism is today, simply practical and pristinely pure. Nothing more can be asked for!

The Dhamma

After His enlightenment the Buddha pondered on how profound His Dhamma was and how difficult it would be for the people to understand. Coincidentally Brahma Sahampati from the higher celestial plane appeared in front and invited Him to preach the Dhamma (true idea of the upliftment) for the benefit of the world.

The Buddha agreed to do this after surveying with His divine eye and found that there were some who could understand His teachings. Thereupon Brahma Sahampati paid obeisance to the Buddha, keeping to His right side, walking a short distance, he straightaway disappeared, returning to the world of Brahmās.

Then the Buddha immediately thought of His first mundane ascetic teacher Ālāra Kālāma but understood that he had died a week ago. Next He thought of His second mundane ascetic teacher Udaka Rāmaputta but unfortunately this teacher too had just died the day before. Finally the Buddha thought of the five monks who had previously attended on Him and found that they were staying in the Deer Park at Isipatana in Benares.

Out of compassion the Buddha went to see them. Even though they were reluctant to pay Him due homage at first, the Buddha eventually managed to influence them. When they were convinced and ready to hear the Dhamma, the Buddha preached the first sermon. This epic historical event was of paramount importance because the expounding of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta meant the setting in motion the Turning Wheel of the LAW (TRUTH) which no Brahma (higher god), no Deva (god/deity) and no Mara (evil one) could hinder or stop, signifying that the Buddha would preach His Dhamma non-stop throughout His life.

Briefly stated, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta is the avoidance of the two extremes. One is the over-indulgence of Sensual Pleasures; which is base, vulgar, ignoble, while the other is the constant Self-Mortification which is painful, ignoble and profitless. The Sutta explains the Four Noble Truths which are:-

1. Suffering
 2. Cause of Suffering
 3. End of Suffering; and
 4. The Way to the End of Suffering
- (which is better known as the Noble Eight fold Path)

At the end of the preaching, Kondañña was the first among the five monks to attain the First Stage of Sainthood (Sotāpanna) amidst the thunderous applause of the multitude of the heavenly beings, joyously lighting up Isipatana specially and the whole world generally. Later Kondañña and the other four monks became Arahants who were included in the Buddha's first sixty missionary monks to spread the Dhamma with His exhortation, "Go forth, O Bhikkhus, for the good of the many. for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and benefit of gods and men!"

The first missionary monks to propagate the Dhamma could only be said to be fully established with the ordination of the rich man-Yasa and his fifty-four friends as monks. This additional monks made a total of sixty Arahant monks excluding the Buddha himself. Led by the Buddha, they made up the world's first missionary monks, sent out one in each different direction to propagate the Buddha's new found Dhamma, to deliver peace and truth to the world. The Buddha Himself alone, also went in another direction to preach the Dhamma.

From then onwards, the Buddha went on from place to place to preach the Dhamma which He also taught to His monks, especially the Chief Disciples and eighty Great Disciples, who were specially endowed with Dhamma talents.

By the end of the Buddha's life-long active Dhamma dissemination, His entire Teachings, better known as the Ti-pitaka, were classified. The Tipitaka which means the Three Baskets were made up as follows:-

The Vinaya (Basket of the Bhikkhus' and Bhikkhunis' Discipline/Regulations)

The Vinaya consisted of five books listed below:-

1. Pārājika Pāḷi (Major Offences)]
2. Pācittiya Pāḷi (Minor Offences)] Vibhanga
3. Mahāvagga Pāḷi (Greater Section)]
4. Culavagga Pāḷi (Smaller Section)] Khandhaka
5. Parivāra Pāḷi (Epitome of the Vinaya)

The Dhamma (Basket of Discourses/Lectures)

The Dhamma was classified into Five Collections as shown below:-

- (1) Dīgha Nikāya - Collection of Long Discourses
- (2) Majjhima Nikāya - Collection of Middle-Length Discourses
- (3) Saṃyutta Nikāya - Collection of Kindred Sayings
- (4) Anguttara Nikāya - Collection of Numerically classified Discourses
- (5) Kuddaka Nikāya - Collection of Miscellaneous Discourses and sub-divided into eighteen books:-

- (1) Kuddaka Pāṭha - Shorter Text
- (2) Dhammapada - Way of Truth
- (3) Udāna - Paeans of Joy
- (4) Iti Vuttaka - “Thus said” Discourses
- (5) Sutta Nipāta - Collected Discourses
- (6) Vimāna Vatthu - Stories of Celestial Mansions
- (7) Peta Vatthu - Stories of Hungry Ghost/Petas
- (8) Thera Gāthā - Psalms of the Brethren
- (9) Therī Gāthā - Psalms of the Sisters
- (10) Jātaka - Birth Stories
- (11) Niddesa - Expositions
- (12) Patisambhida Magga - Analytical Knowledge
- (13) Apādāna - Lives of Arahants
- (14) Buddhavaṃsa - The History of Buddhas
- (15) Cariya Pitaka - Modes of Conduct
- (16) Netti - Guide to the Teaching
- (17) Petakopadesa - Instruction in accordance with Dhamma
- (18) Milinda Pañhā - Questions of King Milinda

It should be noted that all suttas/discourses beginning with “Evaṃ me sutāṃ - Thus have I heard” were uttered by the Venerable Ānanda Thera.

The Abhidhamma (Basket of Profound Philosophy)

The Abhidhamma was classified and made up of seven books as shown in the following:-

- (1) Dhamma Sangani - Classification of Dhammas
 - (2) Vibhanga - Book of Division
 - (3) Kathāvatthu - Points of Controversy *
 - (4) Puggala Paññatti - Description of Individuals
 - (5) Dhatukathā - Discussion with reference to Elements
 - (6) Yamaka - Book of Pairs
 - (7) Paṭṭhāna - Book of Relations
- (*This Book was actually compiled by the Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa at the Third Buddhist Council.)

All these Thirty-four books are collectively termed “The Tipitaka” (Three Baskets). The Vinaya Pitaka (Basket of Discipline) generally deals with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Buddha as and when the occasion arose for the discipline of future Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis (Monks and Nuns).

At the beginning of the Sāsana (Buddhism), the Vinaya (rules and regulations) did not exist as they were not required because those who came for ordination were very pure and holy. All of them received the “Ehi Bhikkhu” “Come Monk” magic ordinations.

The Sutta Pitaka (Basket of Discourses) consist of many Discourses delivered by the Buddha on numerous occasions as and when the need arose. However, some of the Discourses were also delivered by His disciples; like Sāriputta, Moggalāna, Ānanda and so on, are also included therein.

The Abhidhamma Pitaka (Basket of the Ultimate Doctrine) contains the profound philosophy of the Buddha’s Teachings. Until about the year 80 BC, the Buddha’s Teachings in the Three Baskets were orally transmitted from generation to generation by the Arahant monks to their disciples who in turn transmitted their knowledge to their disciples and so forth. However it should be stated here that these holy and pure-minded Buddha’s disciples were unique custodians who were totally and personally committed to uphold the pristine purity of the Buddha words. Therefore the future Buddhists could still enjoy the profound meaning of the Buddha’s Teachings in its originality.

Even today Buddhism still exists in utter simplicity and meaningful in its very nature.

How to become a Buddhist

One becomes a Buddhist by taking the Three Refuges. The Three Refuges are the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Tisarana is the Pali (language) term for the Three Refuges. The Buddha is the All-Knowing One. One seeks refuge in the Buddha because He taught us the way to end all sufferings. This means the Buddha is our greatest Teacher.

The Dhamma is the Doctrine taught by the Buddha. One seeks refuge in the Dhamma because it is the only path to end all sufferings.

The Sangha is the Holy Order (of Monks) founded by the Buddha. One seeks refuge in the Sangha because they are the holy Disciples who have understood the Dhamma.

Having understood the Three Refuges, the Buddhist is then prepared and ready to recite the Pali language formula to pay homage to the Buddha, to take the Three Refuges and also undertake to observe the Five Precepts. This can be done individually at home or among the Devotees in the monastery. The simple recitation is as follows:-

Namakkara

“Namo Tassa Bhavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa!” (Tikkhattum – to recite Three times)

Tisarana

Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Dutiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Tatiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Panca Sila

Panapitapa Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samadiyami
Adinnadana Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samadiyami

Kamesu Micchacara Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samadiyami
Musavada Veramani Sikkhāpadam Samadiyami
Sura Meraya Majja Pamadatthana Veramani Sikkhāpadam
Samadiyami

Imani Panca Sikkhāpadani Samadiyami (Tikkhattum – to recite Three times)

Its meaning in English from the beginning is:-

Paying Homage to the Buddha

“Homage to Him, the Holy One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One!” (Three Times)

The Three Refuges

To the Buddha I go for refuge/I take refuge in the Buddha
To the Dhamma I go for refuge/I take refuge in the Dhamma
To the Sangha I go for refuge/I take refuge in the Sangha

Secondly to the Buddha I go for refuge
Secondly to the Dhamma I go for refuge
Secondly to the Sangha I go for refuge

Thirdly to the Buddha I go for refuge
Thirdly to the Dhamma I go for refuge
Thirdly to the Sangha I go for refuge

The Five Precepts

I undertake the precept to abstain from killing
I undertake the precept to abstain from stealing
I undertake the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct
I undertake the precept to abstain from telling lies
I undertake the precept to abstain from taking intoxicants

These five precepts I undertake to observe. (Three Times)

Before reciting the Three Refuges, we recite “Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa!” thrice as a mark of respect to the Buddha. “Namo Buddhāya!” is the shorter form and is sometimes used as an alternative and it means “Homage or Honour to the Buddha!”

Anyone who believes in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha can become a Buddhist. The name given to a Buddhist in Pali language is “Upasaka” for males and “Upasika” for females. This Buddhist name is also given to one who associates with the Triple Gem or the Three Refuges.

A Buddhist has to observe the Five Precepts. The Pali word for precept is “Sikkhāpada” which means discipline or good behavior.

The first of the Five Precepts is to refrain from killing

Out of pity one does not kill and by being such, one can become kind and compassionate

The second of the Five Precepts is to refrain from stealing

No one has the right to take other’s things without being given and by being such, one can become honest

The third of the Five Precepts is to refrain from sexual misconduct

Out of religious purity and conviction one does not commit Sexual Misconduct and as such, one can become pure and good

The fourth of the Five Precepts is to refrain from telling lies

Out of self-respect one does not tell lies and as such, one can become honest and trustworthy.

The last and fifth of the Five Precepts is to refrain from taking Intoxicants

Avoiding indecent and shameful behavior, one does not take intoxicants and so can become an alert and mindful person.

Therefore as such, if one observes and practises the Five Precepts sincerely, one can become a very good and trustworthy Buddhist.

As Buddhists, we do not worship statues and trees but we pay respect to the Buddha image for what it stands for. By paying homage to the Bodhi tree we pay respect to Buddhahood. Any devoted Buddhist can think of the Buddha and recite His virtues. Before the Buddha image, a Buddhist can offer incense, flowers, candles and fruits out of devotion and honour to Him. At the termination of the devotional service we usually exclaim “Sadhu” which means “excellent rejoicing”.

The best way to respect and honour the Buddha is to follow His advice which is as follows in the Pali language:-

Sabba pāpassa akaranam̐
Kusalassa upasampadā
Sacitta pariyodāpanam̐
Etaṃ Buddhāna Sāsanaṃ

which means :-

Not to do evil
Only to do good, and
To purify one's mind
Thus is the advice of all the Buddhas

When one follows and practises the Buddha's advice then one can have the noble and pure mind which leads to enlightenment. But if one follows the evil and performs unwholesome activities then one will experience suffering and sorrow. The Pali word for evil is "Pāpa" and for unwholesome is "Akusala"- both of these defile the mind. The ten kinds of unwholesome actions are as follows :-

- a) caused by deeds:-
 1. Killing
 2. Stealing; and
 3. Adultery (Sexual Misconduct)
- b) caused by speech:-
 4. Lying
 5. Slandering
 6. Harsh or abusive words, and
 7. Frivolous words or idle Gossip
- c) caused by thoughts:
 8. Covetousness
 9. Ill-will, and
 10. Wrong View/Delusion

Thus they make up the total of ten unwholesome or demeritorious actions enumerated in Buddhism. Knowing this, one should make every endeavour to avoid them, so as to be free from sorrow and suffering which are the outcome of performing the unwholesome actions. There are also the Ten Wholesome Actions which are opposite to the Ten Unwholesome Actions.

Antidotal to the Ten unwholesome actions are the Ten Beneficial Actions; also known as the Ten Meritorious Actions which are as follows:-

- 1) Dāna means Charity or Generosity
- 2) Sīla means Morality
- 3) Bhāvana means Meditation or Concentration of the Mind;
- 4) Apacayana means Reverence or Respecting the respectables (usually the elders)
- 5) Veyyāvacca means Service or Volunteer to help
- 6) Pattidāna means Sharing of merits
- 7) Pattānumodana means Rejoicing or Gladness in other's merits
- 8) Dhammasavana means Hearing or studying the Doctrine
- 9) Dhammadesana means Expounding or propagating the Doctrine
- 10) Ditthijjukamma means Straightening of one's own views

The Pali word for good is “Kusala” which also means wholesome. Another Pali word, “Puñña” means merit which is included in the good deeds as well. In Buddhism that which cleanses the mind is good. There are three kinds of merit:-

- 1) Dāna means generous giving or charity which helps to eradicate selfishness and greed.
- 2) Sīla means morality or virtuous conduct which helps to eradicate ill-will or hatred
- 3) Bhāvana means meditation or development of mental culture which helps to eradicate ignorance or wrong view

Children can also be taught to perform charity to the poor and the needy as well as to the respectable ones worthy of honour such as parents, elders and virtuous ones.

Children can also be taught to observe the precepts thereby practising morality.

Children can also be taught to practise certain meditation, suitable to them, like meditating on Loving-kindness (Metta) and Compassion (Karuna). The children should practise Loving-kindness and Compassion respectively by repeating every morning and night,

“May all beings be well and happy!”

“May all beings be free from sufferings!”

In another form, “May all beings be free from sufferings!

In another form, “Creatures all beneath the sun
Two feet, four feet, more or none
How I love you one and all!”

Yet another verse to recite is, “All ye creatures that have birth
Breathe and move upon the earth
Happy be ye one and all
Never into mischief fall”

At this juncture, for those who like to keep a very strict disciplinary practise to augment their normal precepts observance, there are thirteen ascetic practises (Dhutangas) enumerated as follows:-

- 1) wearing robes made of rag cloths from the rubbish heap
- 2) wearing only three robes
- 3) living on food received by going on almsround
- 4) begging food straight from house to house
- 5) eating only once a day at one sitting
- 6) eating from one vessel
- 7) refusing (eating) of food in excess of the regulations
- 8) dwelling in the woods
- 9) dwelling at the root of a tree
- 10) dwelling in the open air
- 11) dwelling in or near a cemetery
- 12) not altering the mat or bed when it has been spread out for sleeping on
- 13) sleeping in a sitting position

With avid practise of the above thirteen ascetic vows, they would acquire the peace and bliss as their very own.

Although the Buddha apparently catered only for the monks there were however several Discourses He preached for the guidance of family duties and social obligations to the people living at home. The Singalovāda Sutta is perhaps the most popular and outstanding, featuring ideal home advice given by the Buddha to a young man named Singāla.

Singalovāda Sutta

The Singalovāda Sutta highlights the specific duties the various people have to perform.

The Five Kinds of Family Duty for Sons and Daughters

- 1) Sons and daughters must attend caringly to their parents so as to provide them with all the requisites in life.
- 2) They must carry out the family affairs, such as the business matters of their parents.
- 3) They must maintain their parents' properties, their parents' clan name, their parents' religious duties, to try and straighten their parents' religious view if they have a wrong view. They must also maintain the good name of their parents and their lineage.
- 4) They must obey their parents and make themselves worthy of the parents' heritage.
- 5) On their parents' death they should do good deeds in dedication to them and share the merits with them.

Five Kinds of Family Duty for Parents

- 1) Parents must prevent their sons and daughters from misconduct.
- 2) They must show their sons and daughters the way to good conduct.
- 3) They must make their sons and daughters learn the arts and sciences.
- 4) They must give them in marriage to suitable persons.
- 5) They must give them their inheritance at the proper time.

Five Kinds of Student's Duty for a Pupil

- 1) He must stand up and welcome his teacher when he sees the teacher coming.
- 2) He must attend and wait upon his teacher.
- 3) He must obey the words of the teacher with confidence and devotion.
- 4) He must serve his teacher and supply his needs
- 5) He must learn carefully and respectfully what is taught or instructed by his teacher.

Five Kinds of Teacher's Duty for a Teacher

- 1) A teacher must teach his pupils good behaviour.
- 2) He must impart knowledge to him in such a manner that the pupil may thoroughly grasp the subject.
- 3) He must train his pupil without any discrimination.
- 4) He must speak well of his pupil's virtues and attainments to his friends.
- 5) He must prevent his pupils from danger.

Five Kinds of Duty for a Husband

- 1) A husband must be kind to and adore his wife
- 2) He must not treat his wife in an insolent manner.
- 3) He must not engage in sexual misconduct with other women.
- 4) He must give her control and authority over domestic matter.
- 5) He must provide his wife with garments and ornaments.

Five Kinds of Duty for a Wife

- 1) A wife must arrange chores of the household well and run it smoothly.
- 2) She must distribute gifts fairly between her relatives and her husband's relatives.
- 3) She must not engage in sexual misconduct with other men.
- 4) She must keep and maintain all things orderly that are handed over by her husband.
- 5) She must be skillful and diligent in all her house works.

Five Kinds of Fraternal Duty for a Good Friend

- 1) A man must give his friends all necessary things as much as possible.
- 2) He must use affectionate words towards them.
- 3) He must do his best for the benefit of his friends.
- 4) He must think of them as himself.
- 5) He must be true to his words and promises.

Five Kinds of Obligation for a Beneficiary

- 1) A beneficiary should protect his friend when his friend is inebriated.
- 2) He should guard over his friend's properties when he is inebriated.
- 3) He should be a refuge for his friend when the latter is in trouble.
- 4) He should not desert his friend when and who is in distress.
- 5) He should help his descendants.

Five Kinds of Duty for a Master (or an Employer)

- 1) A master should make his employees work in accordance with their capability and strength.
- 2) He must provide his employees with food and pay them sufficiently.
- 3) He must give them medical treatment when they are ill and sick.
- 4) On receiving delicious food, he must share it with his employees.
- 5) He must allow them to work at appointed times and let them enjoy leisure at other times for rest and relaxation.

Five Kinds of Duty for a Servant

- 1) A servant must be awake from sleep before his master.
- 2) He must sleep after his master.
- 3) He must take only what is given to him by his master.
- 4) He must try his best in his work for his master.
- 5) He must always speak of the virtues of his master.

Five Kinds of Duty for Devotees

- 1) A devotee must minister to the religious teachers with affection in action.
- 2) He must minister to the religious teachers with affection in speech.
- 3) He must show them affection in thought, wishing them well at all times.
- 4) He must always keep his house open to the religious teachers.
- 5) He must provide them with material requisites.

Six Kinds of Duty for religious Teacher

- 1) A religious teacher must restrain his devotees from doing evil deeds.
- 2) He must exhort them to do good deeds.
- 3) He must protect them with loving-kindness.
- 4) He must preach to them what they have never heard before.
- 5) He must explain to them what they have already heard.
- 6) He must show them the way to the realm of devas.

Six Kinds of Duty for a Leader

- 1) He must be more industrious than others.
- 2) He must be vigilant in order to lead others.
- 3) He must be kind to his subordinates.
- 4) He must forbear and forgive others.
- 5) He must be considerate and reasonable in whatever he does.

The Four Factors of Endowments (Sampada)

Once, during the Buddha's time, a young Koliyan named Dighajanu (which means Long Knee) said to the Buddha (who was dwelling at Koliya market town), that as worldlings, living together with their families, they suffered the use of perfumes and unguents and took delight in various ornaments, like jewellery, gold and silver. He humbly requested the Buddha to deliver a discourse, pointing to a way whereby the ordinary people could gain wealth and happiness in their present lives, as well as in the future. Thereat the Buddha expounded a discourse on "Sampada" which means the qualities which one must possess so as to gain wealth and happiness.

This "Sampada" contained the four capabilities as enumerated in the following passages:-

1. **Uṭṭhānasampada** : active and diligent exertion in any business undertaking.
2. **Ārakkhasampada** : the ability to manage wisely what one has earned.
3. **Kalyāṇamitta sampada** : the ability to associate with a wide circle of good friends.
4. **Samajivīta sampada** : the ability to live within one's means, i.e. sampada not spending more than what one has earned by lawful means.

The further detail explanations are appended as follows :-

1. **Uṭṭhānasampada** : In the world everyone has to make a living by finding any suitable means of livelihood. Only a down and out person should be a vagrant without working in any occupation. A vagrant (begger) is despised as a social pest and is outlawed in many countries. One must be skilful, diligent and wise in making decisions and in the administration of the business one is undertaking. These three qualities : skill, diligence and wisdom make up the endowment Uṭṭhānasampada.
2. **Ārakkhasampada** : The wealth and properties, that one has acquired accordingly by active and diligent exertion in business undertaking, must be managed wisely and protected from five kinds of danger, namely floods, conflagrations, bad rulers, thieves and robbers as well as from bad sons and daughters who are unworthy heirs. The wise management and protection of the wealth and properties that one has acquired justly is called the endowment. Ārakkhasampada.

3. **Kalyāṇamittasāṃpada** : One must associate with good friends possessing the good qualities such as conviction and morality. One must also associate with those who have achieved success in their business. Only when one associates with such good companions can one emulate them and strive to achieve the good qualities that they possess in order to attain good morality, conviction, business management, etc. This is called the endowment of Kalyāṇamittasāṃpada.
4. **Samajivita-sāṃpada** : One must keep a systematic account reflecting the income, the expenditure, the receipts and payments. One should divide the net income into four portions. A person should use two portions for family consumption, another portion for saving, and the remaining portion for investment. The ability to live within one's means and not spending more than what one has earned by lawful means is called the endowment Samajivitasāṃpada.

With the expounding of the Four Endowments (Sāṃpada) by the Buddha for the prosperity and happiness of the householders now and the future, the chapter on Dhamma in brief for this book comes to an end.

The Achievement of Enlightenment

All beings can achieve enlightenment, but each according to his path travelled and taken by the individual himself. In the context of the journey undertaken, the fellow pilgrims make their own arrangements in accordance with the Ten Guidelines (Dasa Paramittas). It is better known as the Ten Perfections which are not only reserved for the Bodhisattas (Wisdom beings) aspiring only to become a Buddha but also for the others striving for enlightenment as well.

How do Bodhisattas come about? It is when a person has performed enough wholesome deeds to inspire the desire to be enlightened. Having come to this level, he will then decide on the path to follow as shown below in descending order:-

- a) Sammā-sambodhi
- b) Pacceka-bodhi
- c) Sāvaka-bodhi

Aspirants desiring to become enlightened by becoming a Sammasambuddha have the longest and most difficult journey to Nibbana. From the very start as an officially proclaimed bodhisatta, they already choose their path to follow according to their intrinsic nature. There are three types of Bodhisattas as listed below:-

- a) the wisdom type
- b) the faith type
- c) the energy type

The wisdom type bodhisatta takes about four asankheyyas (Incalculable Aeon) and one hundred thousand aeons (Kalpas) to attain Buddhahood.

The faith type bodhisatta takes about eight asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons to attain Buddhahood.

The energy type bodhisatta takes about sixteen asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons to attain Buddhahood.

In the wisdom type bodhisatta, wisdom is utilized to augment his Bodhisatta practise to obtain rapid attainment but his faith is weak.

In the faith type bodhisatta, faith is utilized to augment his bodhisatta practise to enhance his speedy attainment but his wisdom is medium.

In the energetic type bodhisatta, energy is utilized to boost his slow attainment but his wisdom is weak.

The Pacceka Buddha takes two asankheyyas and one hundred thousand aeons to achieve the attainment of Pacceka Buddha.

The Chief Disciple takes 1 asankheyya and one hundred thousand aeons to achieve attainment.

The Great Disciples take thousand of aeons to achieve attainment.

The ordinary Disciples take unspecified great number of aeons to achieve attainment according to their practise.

The ordinary Disciples set their own time frame, practising for an appropriate number of aeons and accordingly reach and achieve attainment in due course.

The Sangha

The complete Buddhist way of life consists of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. The word “Sangha” also means the “Community of Monks”. Since the Buddha’s preaching of the first sermon “Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta” at Isipatana in the Deerpark at Benares and the establishment of the five Bhikkhus (monks) who became the first official Sangha, the growth of the monks never had stopped. Instead it spread from country to country and became the worthy custodian of the Buddha’s teachings, the Dhamma.

In general, the Buddha’s disciples (the Sangha) are classified in three groups. The first group is the Chief Disciples (males and females) and the second is the Great Disciples, both these groups are found during the Buddha’s days in great numbers although eighty were especially mentioned. The third is the group of ordinary disciples who now spread all over the world, carrying their religious duties in various ways to spread the Buddha’s teachings.

Outstanding amongst the Buddha’s disciples are the two Chief Male Disciples

1. Venerable Sāriputta
2. Venerable Moggalāna

and the two Chief Female Disciples

1. Venerable Khema
2. Venerable Uppalavanna

They had not only developed inner access into the Dhamma but also had special potency of their own in the field of profound wisdom and awesome mental feats.

Venerable Sāriputta

Venerable Sāriputta was born in the village of Nālaka near the city of Rājagaha and was known as Upatissa. Venerable Sāriputta was the eldest of the seven siblings all of whom attained Arahantship and the most fortunate lady Rupasāri was their mother.

His childhood friend was Kolita who later became the Venerable Moggalāna. At first both of them went to study under the same famous ascetic Sanjaya who failed to satisfy them with his teaching. So both left their ascetic teacher and went their separate ways after mutual promise to keep each other informed of new opportunity to attain peace and the highest truth.

As time went by Venerable Sāriputta inevitably met and admired the Venerable Assaji who preached to him the Dhamma. On hearing the first two lines of the Dhamma verse, Sāriputta became a Sotāpanna. The two lines of Dhamma were “All things are produced by causation. The Buddha has explained the causes and the Way to eradicate them. This is His Teaching”. Quickly he went to repeat the Dhamma to Moggalāna who also became a Sotāpanna (stream winner).

After meeting the Buddha and listening to His Dhamma, Sāriputta became an Arahant. Two weeks later, he was declared by the Buddha himself as the First Chief Male Disciple at the august assembly of Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, Upasakas and Upasikas (Buddhist four-fold assembly). He was also known as the General of the Dhamma (Dhamma-senapati) On any important occasion, Venerable Sāriputta would be the right-sided First Chief Disciple, attending to the Dhamma needs of the Buddha. However, when he was not with the Buddha, he would be teaching Dhamma and training the monks under his care.

As a filial and grateful son, he went home, with the permission of the Buddha, to establish his Brahman mother in Buddhism. He also succeeded in helping his Brahman mother to attain Sotāpanna, the first stage of Ariyan sanctity.

After the conversion of his beloved mother Brahman lady Sāri to be a firm believer in Buddhism as an ariyan, the Venerable Sāriputta passed away and attained parinibbāna in his home village of Nālaka in the vicinity of Rājagaha.

Obviously the Venerable Sāriputta went back to his native village Nālaka for the benefit of his mother and established her in the Ariyan path; whilst there, he attained parinibbāna six months before the Buddha.

His brother, Venerable Cunda solemnly brought back a bowlful of his relics to the Buddha who praised His First Chief Male Disciple and had them enshrined in a cetiya.

Venerable Moggalāna

Venerable Moggalāna, was also born in a village next to Nālaka and in his childhood was known as Kolita. His childhood friend was Upatissa who later became the Venerable Sāriputta. As they were both searching for the highest truth, they went to the same famous ascetic Sanjaya. After some time they left him because he could not meet their quest to end their search for the highest truth. However before parting ways, they promised to inform each other of any opportunity to end their search for the highest truth. Soon after he was confronted by Venerable Sāriputta who recited to him a four-line Dhamma stanza. He attained Sotāpanna and that was the beginning of the end of his search for the highest fruit as he had entered the Ariyan Stream leading to the end of birth and death (Samsara).

He then met the Buddha, heard the Dhamma, and became an Arahant, the Holy or Worthy One, like his compatriot the Venerable Sāriputta, never more to suffer birth and death (Saṃsāra) again. A short while later he was summoned together with Venerable Sāriputta, in a four-fold assembly and declared the Second Chief Disciple. He was also designated as “the Disciple Foremost in Psychic Powers.”

On all important occasions, like Venerable Sāriputta, he would be the left-sided Chief Disciple, attending to the Buddha’s psychic needs as and when instructed.

However when on his own, he would be teaching Dhamma or training the monks under his charge. Sometimes he would be sojourning the heavens viewing the celestial mansions as he journeyed on, enquiring about their previous merits done. Likewise he would visit hells, saw the evil doers’ sufferings and returned to give a true account to his student monks and devotees. This made the sectarians very jealous and furious. They hated the Venerable Moggalāna so much that they planned and plotted his death, by hiring assassins to murder him. So he was attacked repeatedly until his body was smashed up.

As the Venerable Moggalāna was about to pass away, by his superb psychic powers, gathering the pieces of his battered body, he then flew to the presence of the Lord Buddha who was preaching Dhamma at that time. He went to the Buddha to pay his farewell respect and to ask for permission to attain parinibbāna. When these were done, the Venerable Moggalāna attained parinibbāna.

Fifteen days after the demise of the Venerable Sāriputta, the Second Chief Disciple Venerable Mahā Moggalāna passed away at Kāsasila Stone Slab in Mount Isigiri at Rājagaha. Just like in the case of Venerable Sāriputta, the Buddha spoke in praise of Venerable Mahā Moggalāna and also instructed that his relics be collected and enshrined in a cetiya at the gate of Veluvana Monastery of which he was instrumental in its construction as requested specifically by the generous Lady Visākkhā – donor of the monastery. This cetiya would be a suitable memorial for people to remember and pay homage.

Venerable Mahā Kassapa

The Venerable Mahā Kassapa was the third Chief disciple after the two chief Male Disciples namely Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Moggalāna. Among the Bhikkhus whose skill, steadfastness and dedication to achieve moral discipline, the Venerable Mahā Kassapa ranked foremost.

He was born in the village of Mahā Tittha, situated on the outskirts of Magadha province and was given the name of Pippali Manava. When his parents tried to get him married, he refused. Upon the repeated matrimonial persuasions, he had a statue of a very beautiful lady made and told them that he would marry only if such a lady could be found. As destiny would have it, such a lady was found by the name of Bhadda and so he had to marry her, making his parents very happy. However through mutual agreement, the marriage did not consummate and after his parents died, both of them agreed to renounce the world, each going their separate ways.

He received his ordination from the Buddha and was the only Bhikkhu to exchange his new robe for the Buddha's old robe. Well-known as the "Disciple Foremost in Ascetic Practises", he used the "Dhutangas" to obtain purification.

Upon hearing an adverse remark by an elderly Bhikkhu at the Buddha's funeral, he initiated and later presided over the First Great Buddhist Council, at which all the Buddha's Teachings were systematically compiled. This took place three months after the Mahāparinibbāna (Great Demise) of the Buddha and was attended by five hundred senior-most Arahants, including the new just-attained Arahant Ānanda.

Venerable Ānanda

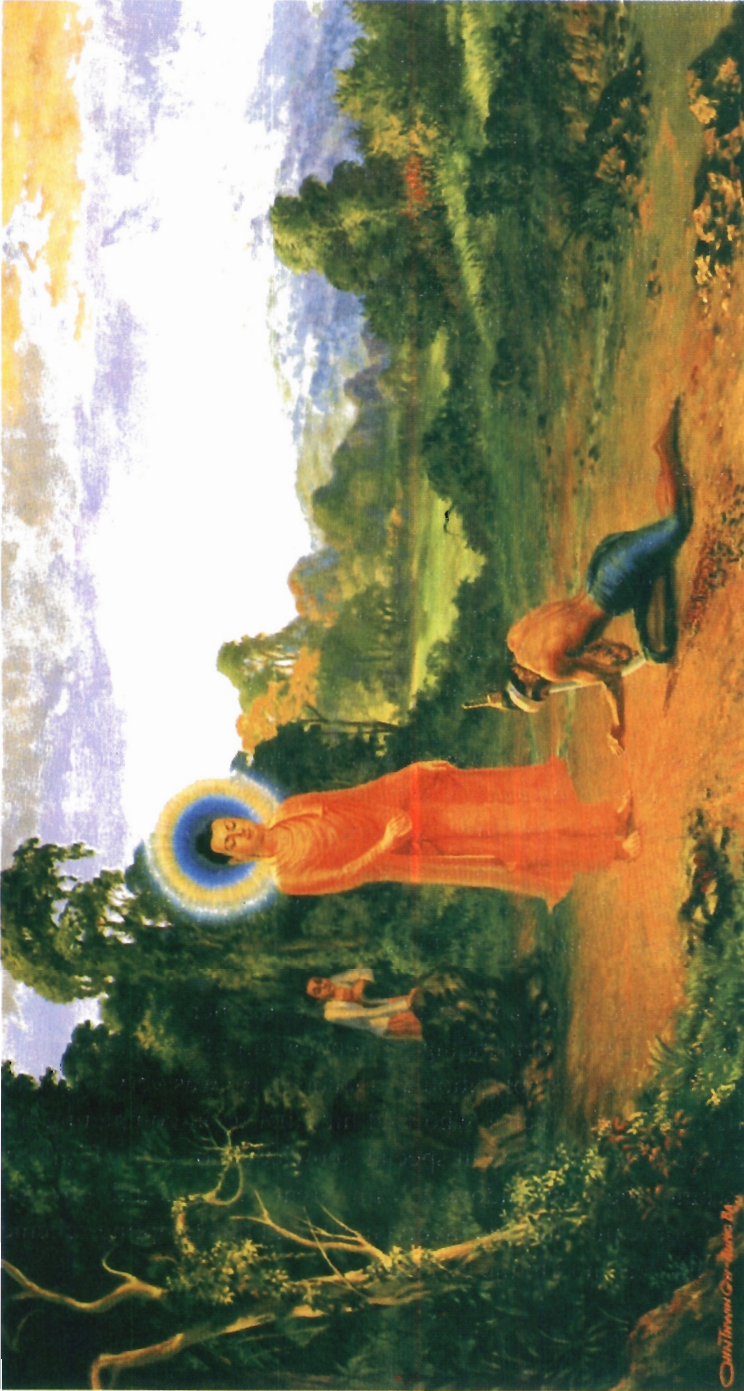
Venerable Ānanda who was the cousin of the Buddha, joined the Order and became a Sotāpanna. He became the Treasurer of the Dhamma because he was endowed with a unique retentive memory. As he was also a prince and was very conversant with royal courtesies, he was the favourite attendant of the Buddha. He was always very soft-spoken and attentive to the Buddha, he served the Buddha very efficiently and always acted as very useful go-between for laity especially the ladies. He attained Arahathship only after the death of the Buddha. At the Buddhist Council, he was chosen to rehearse the Dhamma. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Order of Nuns.

Venerable Angulimāla

Angulimāla was born in the kingdom of Kosala where his father was the royal astrologer and chaplain to King Pasenadi. His mother was Mantani who gave birth to him at twelve midnight, with all the weapons in the city set a-blazing brightly, indicating an unmistakably evil omen. This was especially so when he was born under the bandits' constellation.

However the baby Angulimāla was known as Ahimsaka – meaning the “Harmless One” in his boyhood. When he came of age he was sent to Takkasila for an education befitting the young student from a respectable family. He soon became an excellent pupil, loved and trusted by his teacher but was greatly envied by his fellow students who consistently poisoned his teacher's mind against him..

Eventually they succeeded and thereupon the teacher plotted a vile scheme to destroy him by demanding an honorarium of a thousand right index fingers. This was his obligation as a student. He was very reluctant but was coerced by his teacher who told him that upon completing his mission, he would be instructed in special knowledge to wash off all his evils and would then be endowed with great supernatural powers. Ahimsaka did not realize that his involvement with this tempting scheme would eventually lead him to the evil path.



The Buddha overcoming a cruel man, Angulimala who cut off the right index finger of passing travellers.

Thus the gentle Ahimsaka became the heartless bandit, merciless and relentless on killing. He was determined to complete his mission as soon as possible. He spared no one that happened to cross his path, whether it was men, women, or the aged; even the infants were brutally killed and their right fore-fingers cut off. Soon he became the cruel notorious murderer Angulimāla who wore the “garland of fingers” of his victims.

For years Angulimāla terrorized the countryside and in the forest Jalini where he stayed. The people were so frightened and angry that they went yelling at the King’s palace, demanding for the notorious bandit Angulimāla to be captured and killed in order to protect the people. So the King at last led an army of soldiers to capture Angulimāla dead or alive.

For the great love of her son, mother Mantani started out for the great Jālini forest to find Angulimāla. When Angulimāla saw her, he was blindly excited and rushed after her to cut off her finger and to complete his mission of the thousandth finger. At this juncture the Buddha who was of great compassion came to the rescue and appeared walking leisurely in front of Angulimāla. Immediately Angulimāla rushed after him instead to fulfill his mission but was baffled because even by running furiously fast, he could not catch up with the gently walking Buddha. Exhausted and frustrated he stopped running.

Thereupon he shouted for the Buddha to stop but the Buddha replied that He had stopped, only Angulimāla was still running! Still more baffled he shouted to the Buddha that He was lying because He was still walking! Then the Buddha turned around and told him that He, the Buddha, had stopped doing evil, gave up running after pleasures, stopped unwholesome thoughts! Saying so He expounded to Angulimāla the Dhamma. After hearing the sermon, Angulimāla was jolted into reality and immediately changed for the better, joined the monkhood and followed the Buddha back to the monastery.

When King Pasenadi met Angulimāla at the Jetavana Monastery, he pardoned Angulimāla as he was then a monk. However his life as a monk was not an easy one because everyone still hated him and bore vengeance in their heart. Some, still frightened of him, would throw sticks and stones that struck him, made him bleed. Sometimes things that were not thrown at him would somehow come to hit him. So everyday he would come back bruised and injured from his almsround.

The compassionate Buddha knew and saw his plight, advised him to be patient and practised diligently. He followed the Buddha's advice and before long attained Arahantship. Gradually all came to love and respect him in the end.

Once he saw a lady in travail, suffering from the pains of childbirth and he went back to the Buddha reporting the pitiful incident. The compassionate Buddha taught him a brief short verse to ease her suffering. So he went back and sitting behind a screen he recited what the Buddha had taught him:-

“yato’ham bhagini ariyaya jatiya jato,
nabhijanami sancicca panam jivita voropeta;
tena saccena sotthi te hotu sotthi gabbhassa.”

The meaning of which is :-

“Since my birth in the Ariyan race, I have not taken any life nor cause any suffering to anyone”.

“By this Truth sister, may you be well and happy. May your baby be well and happy!”.

This made the maternity event a happy and painless one for the mother and her child.

And so the Venerable Angulimāla was able to live a happy Ariyan life thereafter.

Bhikkhuni Khema Theri

Just as Venerable Sariputta was appointed the First Chief Male Disciple, the Venerable Bhikkhuni Khema Theri was appointed the First Chief Female Disciple.

Her story began when she was the captivating beautiful Queen of King Bimbisara who was a staunch supporter of the Buddha. Being pious and wise King Bimbisara had become a Stream-winner. He was well aware of his consorts' vanity and infatuation of her own beauty that had prevented her from going to listen when the Buddha preached Dhamma. Her husband King Bimbisara however, was very eager for her to overcome the infatuation and fear of the Buddha's criticism of her. So the king devised a clever strategy to arouse her curiosity to visit the beautiful Bamboo Grove park and its monastery of great splendour. To achieve this King Bimbisara commanded his court entertainers to perform theatrical plays and compose songs about the fantasies of the royal park.

That was what happened precisely when Queen Khema, inspired by the play, decided to go and see the Bamboo Grove for herself. As she approached the grove, she saw the Buddha preaching the Dhamma. Aware that she was nearby, the Buddha created an apparition of a heavenly beautiful lady fanning Him with a palm leaf fan. When Khema saw the apparition, she was captivated. She was so impressed by the angelic loveliness of the apparition that the pride of her own beauty vanished instantly. As she was so entranced, the Buddha caused the young lady to age gradually until she was very old, decrepit and ugly who finally collapsed and died. Continuing to look, Queen Khema saw the rotting corpse decaying further until it was full of flies, worm-infested, maggots eating, as well as stripping the corpse until only a heap of bones was left. Khema was horrified. Realising how foolish she was, she immediately changed her attitude and realized the true nature of the decaying body in the youthful and the young; as guided by the Buddha, Queen Khema became a Stream-winner. This means she had crossed the stream of craving, having destroyed doubts, wrong views and clinging to wrongful rites and ceremonies. Queen Khema knew that she was then safe from miserable births in the lower existences and was happy with the human and divine life thereafter.

The Buddha, who was guiding her, knew of this and quickly helped her further on by making her realise the transitoriness of all formations (things). She readily understood and realised Arahantship.

Then the Buddha called King Bimbisara and told him that Queen Khema had attained Arahantship. She had to be ordained or to pass away into Nibbana. King Bimbisara readily agreed for her to be ordained as a Bhikkhuni. Well-respected for her penetrative insight and wisdom Arahant Khema Theri could not ever again be tempted by sense pleasures, not even by Mara who was disguised as a handsome celestial youth.

The Buddha declared her to be the wisest of His ordained female disciple and made her the leader of the Bhikkhuni Sangha.

Bhikkhuni Uppalavanna Theri

Like the story of Khema Theri, the First Chief Female Disciple, Uppalavanna was born in Savatthi to a prosperous banker and his wife. They named her “Uppalavanna” because the colour of her skin resembles the hue of the blue lotus flower. Upon her coming of age, her father received many marriage proposals from suitors both rich and poor, from all over the land. He was at a loss of what to do and to choose a suitable husband to wed his only beautiful daughter. Not wishing to offend any suitors or their families, he continued to procrastinate. Finding no solution to the problem, he then called his daughter to him and explained his dilemma to her. He further asked her if she would be willing to forsake marriage and be ordained as a Bhikkhuni.

Uppalavanna was destined to achieve Arahantship in this life, so she readily agreed to renounce the world. One day it was her turn to sweep the Uposatha hall. She took a lamp there and set about doing her task. When she had finished her work, she sat down to meditate. Fixing her eyes on the lamp, she took the flame as an object for the fire kasina meditation. She kept up her vigil on this exercise until she attained all the jhanas and then went on to attain Arahantship.

With this attainment also came the profound knowledge of the Dhamma, the powers of intuition as well as the great psychic powers. Soon after, the Buddha appointed her His Second Chief Female Disciple, declaring her to be foremost in these powers, among the Bhikkhunis.

There were also some episodes in her life to promote a better understanding on the dangers of sensual desire. In this connection, she used to recite a verse whereby the mother and her daughter, who loved the same man, treated each other as rival enemies, vying for the love of that man. This composition of verses reminded people about the dangers of craving for sensual pleasures.

In another incident Uppalavanna was dwelling alone in the forest hut. The childhood infatuated cousin hid inside her hut and waited for her to return at dusk. He then raped her while she was sleeping and ran out of the forest to escape. His mortal sin however only allowed him just a few steps from the hut before he was swallowed up by a fierce flame that shot up from the bowels of the earth. He was wrapped up by the flame and sucked into Avici Hell.

Mara in a separate incident, tried to tempt and seduce Uppalavanna Theri but was thoroughly rebuked and sent packing back empty handed, dejected and disappointed. Arahant Uppalavanna Theri declared to Mara that since her mind was pure, having self-control, possessing the six higher knowledges and had abandoned all craving for sense pleasures, she could no longer be enticed by sensuality --- earthly or divine.

The Buddha said that if anyone were to look up to someone as an exemplar of holy life, they should regard Theri Khema and Theri Uppalavanna as such.

Bhikkhuni Mahapajapati Gotami Arahant Theri

The inspirational story about Bhikkhuni Mahapajapati Gotami started long ago during the time of Buddha Padumuttara. On an occasion when she was listening to a discourse by the Buddha, she happened to witness a Bhikkhuni being honoured as the foremost among the Bhikkhunis, who was enlightened earliest. She aspired to the same distinction in a future existence. After making extraordinary offerings to the Buddha, she made the same wish before the Buddha, who predicted that her aspiration would be fulfilled during Gotama Buddha's time. For the rest of her life she spent her time doing many meritorious deeds. After her death, she enjoyed only human and divine life in between the appearance of Buddhas.

So during this world cycle, she was born into a Sakyan royal family and was known by the name of Mahapajapati Gotami, the younger daughter of King Mahasuppabuddha of Devadaha. She was the younger sister to Princess Mahamaya. Distinguished court astrologers, using physiogamy and palmistry on the two sisters predicted that the sons born to them would become a Universal Monarch. When the two sisters came of age, they were both betrothed to King Suddhodana and were taken to Kapilavatthu where the Princess Mahamaya was made the Queen Consort. She gave birth to Prince Siddhattha, the Buddha-to-be but she passed away on the seventh day of the baby's birth. So her younger sister, Mahapajapati Gotami became the foster mother in spite of herself giving birth to baby Nanda only five days ago. However she loved and cared more about her nephew Prince Siddhattha than her own son Prince Nanda, whom she sent to be milk-fed by the other nurses. This left her free to dote on Prince Siddhattha with full care, love and undivided attention, until he grew up strong and healthy.

Her strong material devotion to the Prince Siddhatha until he matured and finally left the palace for his great renunciation, was indeed unique.

In the royal household, there were three persons who had special affinity for the ascetic Siddhattha since his renunciation and who eventually succeeded in attaining Buddhahood, sitting under the Bodhi tree in Buddhagaya. One was the royal father, King Suddhodana; two, the Princess Yasodhara and three, the Queen Mahapajapati Gotami, the foster-mother; all of them eagerly waited for the return of the Buddha to Kapilavatthu. When the Buddha did so, King Suddhodana gave his son, now a Buddha, a magnificent royal welcome reciprocated by the Buddha's preaching, greatly benefitting the royal father who initially attained from Sotapanna and finally Arahantship on his deathbed. Princess Yasodhara was granted her wish when the Buddha, accompanied by His disciples and the royal entourage including King Suddhodana, visited her in her personal chamber and allowed her to pay homage and worship Him as she liked. Queen Mahapajapati Gotami offered to the Buddha her own hand-sown robe. Much to the delight of the Queen, the Buddha accepted her gift.

When King Suddhodana attained Arahantship and passed away into parinibbana, Queen Mahapajapati Gotami felt that she must become a Bhikkhuni. There were five hundred Sakyan who were queen consorts who also wanted to become Bhikkhunis, like what she was thinking of. So Queen Gotami became their leader, approached the Buddha and requested Him to let them, including Princess Yasodhara be ordained as Bhikkhunis. The Buddha refused and turned down their requests several times. Out of sheer frustration and unable to gain any spiritual solace, Mahapajapati Gotami and the five hundred Sakyan ladies shaved their heads, wearing yellow robes, marched up to the Buddha and again requested Him to allow them to be ordained as Bhikkhunis. The Buddha still refused them the permission.

Out of desperation and at wits end, they approached the Venerable Ananda who succeeded in securing the much-awaited permission. They were the only Bhikkhunis who were ordained upon the acceptance of the eight great rules of the nuns and were ordained by a group of Bhikkhus. Needless to say, the new Bhikkhunis practised very diligently and soon attained Arahantship, living in serenity as well as spiritual solace for the rest of their lives.

As a Bhikkhuni, Mahapajapati Gotami practised very earnestly and attained Arahantship with supernormal powers. From then onwards, she enjoyed the homeless life, living harmoniously with the other five hundred ariyan Sakyan ladies, till their ripe old age. One day she happened to review her life-span and found it to have reached the end. She was then one hundred and twenty years old. She then quickly sought the Buddha and His great disciples to obtain their permission to attain parinibbana (the final demise). The Buddha asked her to show her spiritual powers, which she deftly did to the awesome admiration of the audience consisting of the Sangha and the lay people. The five hundred Arahant Sakyan Theris also did their stunning feats of spiritual power as instructed by the Buddha who likewise gave them permission to attain parinibbana. So they all went back to their Bhikkhuni's monastery and did what they had to do.

Mahapajapati Gotami went into meditation. Going through all the jhana stages and finally stopping at the fourth jhana; released herself by entering into parinibbana.

Her funeral, together with those of the five hundred Arahant Theris was very orderly and very dignified as well as grand because it was attended by the Buddha Himself. Even the Gods and Deities attended the funeral procession showering down heavenly blooms, a spectacular miracle never seen before.

So ended the great life of the Arahant Theri Mahapajapati Gotami who gave such a grand inspiration for the ladies in search of spiritual solace and profound happiness.



Maha Pajapati Gotami requesting for permission from the Buddha to establish the Order of Nuns (Bhikkhuni Sasana).

Bhikkhuni Dhammadinna Theri

In family life Dhammadinna was married to a man named Visakha and were devoted to each other, enjoying a happy and comfortable life in Rajagaha, One day Visakha decided to hear the Buddha preaching the Dhamma and was very impressed by what he had heard. So he returned every day to listen to the Dhamma and soon after he became a Non-Returner (Anagami), the third stage of Buddhist Sainthood. This meant he had cut off all attachment to sense pleasure as well as eradicated his ill-will and thus shattering his bondage of repeated birth in Samsara.

While going home one day, he resolved to give up home life and become a Bhikkhu. Upon reaching home, he explained to his wife Dhammadinna, of his noble intention, then he handed over all his worldly wealth to her. His shocked but quick-witted wife then asked for permission to become a Bhikkhuni (Buddhist nun) instead; as she too had realized the worthlessness of worldly wealth. Visakha gladly consented and prepared suitable offerings for the Sangha. He escorted his wife to the Bhikkhunis' residence, offered the gifts, after which presented her for ordination.

Once ordained, Dhammadinna yearned to retreat to the forest to practise meditation in solitude. After obtaining permission she left Rajagaha and joined some like minded Bhikkhunis at the forest hermitage. After acquainted with the new surroundings, she practised meditation intensively and because of her previous-life perfections, she soon attained Arahantship and uttered her triumphant paean of joy at her noble attainment.

Her noble victory had given her great insight and profound skill in explaining the Dhamma to others. Convinced that she had no further reasons to be there, she decided to return to Rajagaha where she could use her new Dhamma expertise to help and benefit others.

Her former husband Visakha, wanted to know why she had decided to return to Rajagaha. Knowing that it was rude to ask her outrightly, Visakha chose to test her Dhamma knowledge instead. So after paying his respects, he questioned her at length about the Dhamma, the path and its fruits and she answered him clearly and accurately. Finally he questioned her about Arahantship but Dhammadinna did not answer, instead she sent him to see the Buddha.

On meeting the Buddha, the layman Visakha related the whole dialogue with Dhammadinna in detail. After hearing his account of the dialogue the Buddha praised Arahant Theri Dhammadinna saying that He would have answered in the same way. Such was the Buddha's high regard for her as the Dhamma expositor and she was ranked as the most competent Dhamma teacher amongst all the other Bhikkhunis.

Bhikkhuni Patacara Theri

Patacara Theri was born in Savatthi to a rich family of doting parents. She grew up a very beautiful daughter, closely guarded by her caring parents who built her a seven storied mansion fortified by a heavy guard around it for her safety. Nevertheless, unknown to anyone she fell in love with her servant. With no intention of marrying the suitor chosen by her parents, she quickly connive a plan with the help of that servant to escape from her heavily guarded luxurious home to start a new life with him. She succeeded in the guise of a servant in rags fetching water and was able to fool the guards. The lovers met at the city gates and cloped to a distant village where they settled down as husband and wife.

He became a farmer to start a family. She soon became pregnant and asked her husband to bring her back to her parents' home for childbirth. The husband was scared of her parents because of their unsanctioned elopement. Anyway, unable to bear anymore procrastination she went by herself in her husband's absence. The husband later gave chase and found her by the wayside where she had given birth. With no purpose of proceeding further, they returned to their farmhouse.

All was well, until she became pregnant again and when it was due birth time she again wanted to return to her parents' home. Repeated postponement again forced her to return to her parents' home with her small son. Again the husband gave chase and found them along the country road, in a heavy rainstorm. She gave birth and told her husband to find them shelter. He ran off to do this but in doing so, was bitten by a poisonous snake and died instantly.

Patacara had to take care of her small son and her new born son as well as to brave the rainstorm, in the absence of her husband. In the morning the rainstorm abated, but still there was no sign of her husband. Unable to wait any longer, she took her two sons and went in search of their father. Eventually she found the swollen contorted body and blamed herself bitterly for his death. Tearfully she went away towards her home in Savatthi. On the way she had to cross a small river which became a raging torrent because of the previous night's rainstorm. She told the small boy to wait for her while she crossed the raging river with the new born baby and placed him on a leaf at the other bank. She then came back for the small boy but half-way in the river a big hungry bird swooped down and carried off the new-born baby. The mother Patacara frantically waved her arms to drive the bird away but to no avail. Meanwhile the small boy mistook the arms of his mother to be a signal for him to go to her. Unable to reach her in mid-stream he fell into the raging river and was drowned. In great anguish she wandered miserably on to Savatthi, hoping for consolation and solace from her parents.

On the outskirts of the city, she enquired about her family and was told that they were dead. Their home was destroyed by lightning during the rainstorm the night before. She was told to look at the pall of smoke rising from the totally burnt building which was her parents' home. She was completely overcome by grief. Mad with grief and distraught with all the tragedies, Patacara wandered naked, raving and wailing around the streets of Savatthi. No one helped or comforted her. Some even mocked and taunted her, calling her names.

Eventually she wandered into Jetavana Monastery where the Buddha was preaching Dhamma. When she wandered near enough, the Compassionate Buddha, knowing the history of her previous lives, approached her, brushing aside the people's intention to drive her away. He called her to Him, consoling her with gentle words and restoring back her senses. Becoming aware of her nakedness, she felt ashamed and crouched down on the ground. She was thrown a cloak to cover herself. She got up, came close to the Buddha, worshipped Him and implored Him to help her. She related to the Buddha the tragic loss of her whole family and property. The Buddha knew that she had been suffering this sorrow repeatedly and told her in verse that the tears she had shed in grief were more than the waters of all the oceans combined. There was no shelter or refuge to be found in the sons, daughters, father or mother, nor any kinsfolk for they were subject to death. Knowing this, let the wise man (or in this case-her) cultivate the way leading to Nibbana.

Hearing this she became calm and serene in her mind and attained Sotapanna, the Stream-winner. She then requested to be ordained and became a Bhikkhuni. Once, when she was washing her feet, she watched the bubbles run along the soil and burst as soon as they were formed, while the water ran only a little way on but was also soaked up by the soil. As she was intently observing this phenomenon the Buddha projected an image of Himself and told Patācara Therī that living a hundred years and not seeing the rise and fall, yet better indeed, was a single day's life of one, who saw the rise and fall. Upon hearing the Buddha's words, Patācara Therī became an Arahant. Then she became known as "Patita Carita" meaning "happy demeanor".

Outstanding and Distinguished Arahants

During the Buddha's time, the outstanding and distinguished disciples were accordingly awarded the titles suitable to their achieved status. Listed below are the mentioned titles declared by the Buddha on each individual disciple.

(1) Forty-one Arahant-Theras and their respective highest titles of etadagga:-

Mahatheras	etadagga titles awarded for
1. Koṇḍañña	being senior-most Mahathera
2. Sāriputta	possessing great wisdom
3. Moggallāna	possessing great supernormal power
4. Mahā Kassapa	keeping austere practises
5. Anuruddha	possessing the Divine Eye
6. Bhaddiya	being chief of the clan
7. Lakundaka Bhaddiya	possessing sweet voice
8. Pindola Bharadvāja	giving bold speeches
9. Puṇṇa	giving sermons as a preacher
10. Kaccayana	elaborating the Buddha's teaching
11. Cula Panthaka	creating mental images
12. Maha Panthaka	winning Arahantship after emerging from Rupa-Jhana
13. Subhuti	living a pure life and being worthy of offerings
14. Khadiravaniya Revata	living a forest-life
15. Kaṅkharevata	being absorbed in Jhana
16. Sona Kolivisa	being energetic
17. Sona Kutikanna	giving eloquent speeches
18. Sivali	receiving abundant gifts
19. Vakkali	having extreme confidence in the Buddha
20. Rahula	taking the threefold Training
21. Ratthapāla	adopting ascetic life through conviction
22. Kunda Dhana	drawing lots ahead of others
23. Vangisa	possessing poetical wits
24. Upasena	being held in high esteem by followers

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 25. Dabba | arranging accommodations for bhikkhus |
| 26. Pilindavaccha | being adored by Devas |
| 27. Bahiya Daruciriya | possessing quick penetrative knowledge |
| 28. Kumara Kassapa | employing imagery in sermons |
| 29. Maha Kotthita | possessing the fourfold Analytical Knowledge |
| 30. Ananda | possessing learning, good memory, intelligence, diligence and service to the Buddha |
| 31. Uruvela Kassapa | having large crowds of followers |
| 32. Kaludayi | making the Buddha's kinsmen dear to the Buddha |
| 33. Bakula | enjoying perfect health |
| 34. Sobhita | possessing the power to recollect past existences |
| 35. Upali | bearing the Vinaya |
| 36. Nandaka | giving advice to bhikkhunis |
| 37. Nanda | guarding the sense-faculties |
| 38. Maha Kappina | giving advice to bhikkhus |
| 39. Sagata | meditating on the element of heat |
| 40. Radha | inspired by the Buddha to amplify the Dhamma |
| 41. Mogharaja | wearing robes made from rags |

Forty Arahant-Theras flanking the Buddha on His right.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sariputta (Chief Disciple) | 21. Anuruddha |
| 2. Annasi Kondanna | 22. Kankharevata |
| 3. Vappa | 23. Ananda |
| 4. Bhaddiya | 24. Nandaka |
| 5. Mahanama | 25. Bhagu |
| 6. Assaji | 26. Nandiya |
| 7. Nalaka | 27. Kimila |
| 8. Yasa | 28. Bhaddiya |
| 9. Vimala | 29. Rahula |
| 10. Subahu | 30. Sivali |
| 11. Punjabi | 31. Upali |
| 12. Gavampati | 32. Dabba |
| 13. Uruvela Kassapa | 33. Upasena |
| 14. Nadi Kassapa | 34. Khadiravaniya Revata |
| 15. Gaya Kassapa | 35. Maha Punna |
| 16. Maha Kassapa | 36. Cula Punna |
| 17. Maha Kaccayana | 37. Sona Kutikanna |
| 18. Maha Kothhita | 38. Sona Kolivisa |
| 19. Maha Kappina | 39. Radha |
| 20. Maha Cunda | 40. Subhuti |

Forty Arahant-Theras flanking the Buddha on His left.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Moggalana (Chief Disciple) | 21. Bakula |
| 2. Angulimala | 22. Kunda Dhana |
| 3. Vakkali | 23. Bahiya Daruciriya |
| 4. Kaludayi | 24. Yasoja |
| 5. Maha Udayi | 25. Ajita |
| 6. Pilindavaccha | 26. Tissa Metteyya |
| 7. Sobhita | 27. Punnaka |
| 8. Kumara Kassapa | 28. Mettagu |
| 9. Ratthapala | 29. Dhotaka |
| 10. Vangisa | 30. Upasiva |
| 11. Sabhiya | 31. Nanda |
| 12. Sela | 32. Hemaka |
| 13. Upavana | 33. Todeyya |
| 14. Meghiya | 34. Kappa |
| 15. Sagata | 35. Jatukanni |
| 16. Nagita | 36. Bhadravudha |
| 17. Lakundaka Bhaddiya | 37. Udaya |
| 18. Pindola Bharadvaja | 38. Posala |
| 19. Maha Panthaka | 39. Pingiya |
| 20. Cula Panthaka | 40. Mogharaja |

(2) The Arahant Theri Bhikkhunis and their respective highest titles of Etadagga

Arahant Theri Bhikkhunis	Etadagga titles awarded for
1. Mahapajapati Gotami	being senior- most Bhikkhuni
2. Khema Theri	possessing great wisdom
3. Uppalavanna Theri	possessing great supernormal power
4. Patacara Theri	bearing the Vinaya discipline
5. Dhammadinna Theri	giving sermons as a preacher
6. Nanda Theri	being absorbed in the Jhana
7. Sona Theri or Bahuputtika	being energetic
8. Sakula Theri	possessing the Divine Eye
9. Kundhala kesa Theri	possessing quick penetrative knowledge
10. Bhaddaka pilani Theri	possessing the power to recollect the past existence
11. Bhadda kaccana Theri or Yasodara	possessing great wisdom and supernormal power
12. Kisa gotami Theri	wearing robes made from rag
13. Singalaka matu Theri	having highest confidence in the triple gem

(3) UPASAKA-LAYMEN

UPASAKA-LAYMEN	Etadagga titles awarded for-
1. Tapussa and Bhallika, Two brothers	first to take refuge
2. Anathapindhika rich man	giving with great generosity
3. Rich man Citta	the best preacher in giving sermons
4. Hattha alavaka Gentle man	having the four types of bestowment; namely charity, pleasing sweet words, giving necessary assistance and treating others equally
5. Mahanama Sakyan King	giving generously medicine, food with the excellent taste, and so on
6. Rich man named Ugga	practising excellent generosity
7. Rich man Uggata	serving the community of Sangha without discrimination
8. The rich man Surambattha	entirely believing in the Buddha's dispensation
9. Physician Jivaka	having extreme confidence in the Buddha
10. Rich man Nakula pitu	friendly discussion with the Buddha

(4) UPASIKA-LAYWOMEN Etadagga titles awarded for -

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Sujata Rich woman | first to take refuge |
| 2. Visakha Donor of the monastery | donating generously and regularly |
| 3-4. Khujjuttara and Samavati | possessing general knowledge and living with the practise of loving kindness |
| 5. Uttara nandamata | being absorbed in the JHANA |
| 6. Suppavasa (koliya) Sakyani princess | donating an excellent thing |
| 7. Suppiya | rendering service to sick persons |
| 8. Katiyani | entirely believing in the Buddha's teaching |
| 9. Nakula matu | friendly conversation with the Buddha |
| 10. Kali-kuraraghara | attainment of Ariyahood by hearing |

(5) THE RICHEST MEN

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1. Jotika | being rich after performance of wholesome acts in his life. |
| 2. Mendhaka | being rich after performance of wholesome acts in his life. |
| 3. Jatila | being rich after performance of wholesome acts in his life. |
| 4. Kalavaliya | being rich after performance of wholesome acts in his life. |

The Great Buddhist Councils

The Sanghayana

Since the Great Demise of the Buddha, signifying the cessation of His personal generation and propagation of Dhamma, the Buddhist monks (the Sangha) took it upon themselves to appropriately convene great Councils to rehearse the Teachings of the Buddha to restore it to its pristine purity. This was done with the aim of making the Teachings of the Buddha last long and beneficially useful to the future generations of Buddhists and scholars.

The First Great Buddhist Council

The First Great Buddhist Council was convened just three months after the Great Demise of the Buddha. An immoral Bhikkhu named Subhadda who had joined the Sangha (monkhood) in his old age, made derogatory remarks to the effect that monks were now free to do as they like. That prompted the Venerable Kassapa, the third chief Disciple of the Buddha, to convene a Council of leading Arahants to protect and fortify the Sassana (Buddha's teaching). When consulted, the other senior Arahants unanimously agreed to the suggestion,

King Ajatasattu was informed and by a royal decree, all the arrangements were made for the Sangha to assemble at the entrance to the Satta panni Cave in Rajagaha. Five hundred seats were arranged in the spacious hall, but only four hundred and ninety-nine distinguished Arahants were present for the Convocation. As anticipated Venerable Ananda who was then only a Sotapanna (Stream winner) attained Arahantship, appeared just in time on the scene by his psychic powers to occupy the vacant seat.

In this August Assembly and first inaugural Sangha Council held three months after the Great Demise of the Buddha, the Venerable Kassapa was the presiding Arahant. The Venerable Upali was chosen to rehearse the Vinaya whilst the Venerable Ananda recited the Dhamma (including the Abhi-Dhamma). This first ever majestic Rehearsal lasted seven months, held in the eighth year reign of King Ajatasattu, in his capital city of Rajagaha.

The Tipitaka

In accordance with order of priority, the Vinaya was rehearsed first. It comprised five books incorporated in three parts:-

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Part I | (Major Offences)
(Minor Offences) Vibhanga |
| Part II | (Greater Sections)
(Smaller Sections) Khanda |
| Part III | Epitome of the Vinaya |

Next to be rehearsed was the Dhamma Pitaka which consisted of five main collections comprising:-

1. the collection of Long Discourses
2. the collection of Middle Length Discourses
3. the collection of Kindred Sayings
4. the collection of Numerical Discourses
5. the Smaller collection of Discourses comprising the further sub-division of sixteen books (for details please refer to the Dhamma Chapter of this book)

In accordance with tradition, the Abhidhamma was rehearsed by all the Arahants present in the Sangha Council and consisted the following seven books:-

1. the Classification of Dhammas
2. the Books of Divisions
3. the Points of Controversy
4. the Description of Individuals
5. the Discussion with reference to the Elements
6. the Book on Pairs
7. the Book on Relations

So ended the First Great Buddhist Council convened by the most distinguished Arahants for the sake of posterity, under the royal patronage of King Ajatasattu, in the year five hundred and forty-three (543) B.C.

The Second Great Buddhist Council

The Second Council at Vesali was held in the tenth year of King Kalasoka's reign, one hundred years after the great Demise of the Buddha. Just as the First Council was held for a reason, so also this Second Council was convened as a result of the Ten Unlawful Points being construed as Not Unlawful by the many shameless Bhikkhus of the Vajji clan. The ten Unlawful Points were as appended below:-

1. it is fit to use salt in horns, etc., etc., in order to season unsalted foods;
2. it is fit to eat food so long as the sun's shadow has not passed the meridian by more than two fingers' breath;
3. it is fit for a Bhikkhu who has already finished his meal, to eat another meal without going through the due Vinaya rite if he intends to enter a village;
4. it is fit to perform the Uposatha ceremony in separate buildings in the case of a large Sima (Jurisdiction);
5. it is fit to perform any Vinaya ceremony first and then take the consent of the absent Bhikkhus
6. it is fit to conform to the practise of teachers and preceptors;
7. it is fit for a Bhikkhu who has finished his meal to drink that milk which has changed its original state but has not yet become curd, without getting the due Vinaya rite done;
8. it is fit to drink unfermented palm-wine;
9. it is fit to use mats without fringes;
10. it is fit to accept gold and silver

The Venerable Yasa, hearing of these heretical teachings vowed, even at the cost of his life, to nip them in the bud. He succeeded. The Venerable Revata, when questioned about them, also declared that they were all unlawful.

Finally in the presence of eight distinguished Arahants who had assembled at Valukarama in Vesali, in 100 B.E. (443 B.C.) the Venerable Sabbakami, the most senior Arahant, being one hundred and twenty years from his Upasampada, when questioned by Venerable Revata, adjudged that they were all unlawful according to the Vinaya.

The Venerable Revata then chose seven hundred distinguished Arahants to hold a Council in order to safeguard the Dhamma. This Second Council lasted eight months. King Kalasoka was the Royal Patron. The Venerable Sabbakami was the presiding Thera (being the most senior).

Amongst the august assembly, Arahants Sabbakami, Salha, Revata, Khujjasobhita, Yasa, Sambhuta and Sanavasika, were all pupils of the Venerable Ananda, while Arahants Vasabhadhamika and Sumana, pupils of the Venerable Anuruddha, had the good fortune to live in the Buddha's own time.

The Third Great Buddhist Council

After the conversion of King Asoka, the wicked King, to Emperor Dhammasoka, the King of Righteousness, he became a very staunch Buddhist ruler. Under his royal patronage, Buddhism flourished and became widespread throughout the world. The Sangha grew in importance and greatly increased in numbers.

Tempted by worldly gain, many undesirables of the alien sects joined the Order and polluted the Sassana by their corrupt practises and heretical views. When the senior-most Arahant Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa became aware of the pollution of the (Sangha) Order, he refrained from performing the Uposatha Ceremony with the Sangha for seven years. He was living in seclusion on the banks of Ahoganga.

During this time, the Emperor Dhammasoka pondered about a doubt he had regarding a thoughtless act done by an irresponsible minister. The King was told that Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa would be able to clear his doubt. So the King invited him but he would not come. Failing twice, the emperor sent a third invitation to come and protect the Sassana. Then the Venerable Thera accepted the invitation. Upon arriving at Pataliputra the Emperor received him with due honour and gave him residence in his Asokarama monastery.

The Emperor stayed there with the Venerable Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa for seven days and avidly studied the Dhamma under him.

The Bhikkhus were tested with regard to their views and the undesirables were expelled from the Noble Order. The remaining pure Bhikkhus performed the Uposatha for the first time after a lapse of seven years.

After this, the Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa took the opportunity to convene the Third Buddhist Council in order to protect the Dhamma and the Sassana.

One thousand Arahants were chosen to participate in this great Council which took place at Asokarama, Pataliputra (Patna) in the eighteenth year of Emperor Dhammasoka's reign. This was (in 308 B.C.) about two hundred and thirty-six years after the Parinibbana of the Buddha. The Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa was the presiding Thera and it was he who was responsible for the composition of the Kathavatthu – Pakarana, one of the seven books of the Abhidhamma, at this august Assembly.

The Fourth Great Buddhist Council

The Fourth Great Buddhist Council was held in the year BE 450/BC 94 in Aloka Cave in Malaya village in Ceylon (present Sri Lanka). The royal patron was King Vatta Gamani. The presiding thero was Venerable Maha Rakkhita. The Ti-pitaka was committed to writing on palm leaves on that auspicious occasion. Five hundred senior monks took part and it lasted for one year.

The Fifth Great Buddhist Council

The Fifth Great Buddhist Council was held in the year BE2415/AD1871 in the city of Ratana-pun at Mandalay. The Venerable Bhaddanta Jāgarā Bhivamsa was the presiding Thera in the big assembly of two thousand four hundred monks. The Council decided to preserve the Tipitaka written on marble slabs as the ones previously written on ola palm leaves in Ceylon would not last. The heavy task took seven years six months and fourteen days using seven hundred and twenty-nine slabs. The Council lasted five months and three days to complete. Its royal patron was King Mingdon.

The Sixth Great Buddhist Council

The latest and Sixth Great Buddhist Council was held in the year BE 2498/AD 1954 on Vesakha Fullmoon Day at Maha Pasana Cave in Rangoon (present Yangon). Nyaung yang Sayadaw, Venerable Revata (Abhidhajamaharatthaguru) presided over it; the Mahasi Sayadaw, Venerable Sobhana (Aggamahapandita) and the Mingun Sayadaw, Venerable Vicittasarabhivamsa (Tipitakadhara Dhammabhandhagarika) and others took the leading roles in that Council. There was a total of 2,500 monks who took part, including monks from the five Theravada countries.

The Government of Burma was the host. It lasted eight months.

All donations received
for this publication
will be utilised for
the welfare
and
educational projects
of the
Dhamma Sunday School