

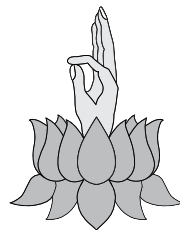
# Life *of* The Buddha In Gandhara Art

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# LIFE OF THE BUDDHA IN GANDHARA ART

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## **Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero**

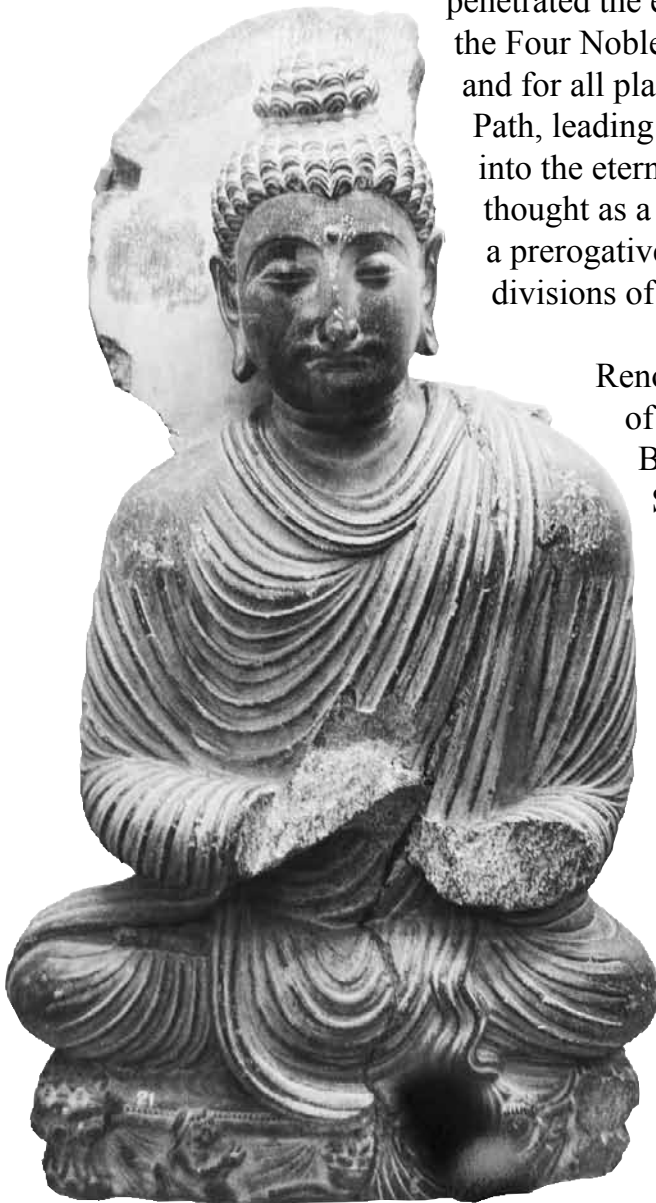
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# The Supremely Enlightened Buddha

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-Sambuddhassa  
Honour to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One.*

**S**iddhata Gautama, who came to be called the Buddha (Enlightened One) and was the founder of the Buddhist religion, was born about 623 B.C. and passed away at the age of eighty (543 B.C.).

Two-thousand five-hundred and fifty years after His Great Demise, the Supremely Enlightened Buddha is, without any doubt, the greatest human being who adorned mankind. With unparalleled transcendental wisdom, He penetrated the enigma of human destiny, and threshed it into the Four Noble Truths, ensuring their validity for all time and for all places. He illuminated the Noble Eight-Fold Path, leading humanity out of the morass of suffering, into the eternal bliss of Nibbana. Upholding liberal thought as a universal human right, He made “moksha”, a prerogative of all men and women, transcending divisions of race, caste and creed.

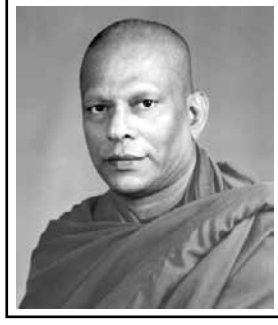


Renouncing the luxuries and untold privileges of royal birth, Prince Siddhattha, as the Buddha was known prior to His realization of Supreme Enlightenment, began His spiritual quest for Truth. In a gruelling ordeal of self-mortification, Ascetic Siddhattha spent six years of excruciating privation. Eschewing that extreme as futile, He took the Middle Path. Under the sheltering Bodhi Tree, He realized Enlightenment, overcoming the forces of evil.

In His 45-year Dispensation, He taught mankind the Supreme reality of life. As a spiritual communicator par excellence, He enabled a vast variety of human beings – ranging from paupers to princes – from murderers to monarchs – to perceive what life exactly is.

The Buddha's Supreme Words echo down the corridors of time, transforming ordinary men and women into spiritual heroes – in all places, and at all times.

### Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero



Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero Chief Monk, Chief Administrator of the Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, attains the Venerable age of 65, on the 27th November 2006.

The child who eventually grew-up into Ven. Sarada Maha Thero was born on the 27th of November 1941, in the village of Weragoda in the south of Sri Lanka. The wholesome backdrop of his childhood was formed by his family, in which Buddhist virtues were held in high esteem. His parents in their devotion saw to it, that, the child was ordained at the tender age of 12. As a novice monk, he evolved in knowledge and wisdom under the guidance of his spiritual tutor Ven. Pandit Yatalamatte Vajiragnana Nayaka Thero, Chief Prelate of Galu Korale. At 22, the young monk received his higher ordination. The Venerable monk earned his first degree from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura in 1964.

In his preparatory phase for his life's mission of spreading the sacred Word of the Buddha world-wide, he spent four years teaching at several institutions. His mission proper began in 1969 in Malaysia, where he came under the benevolent spiritual influence of Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thero. After a decade of service to the devotees of Malaysia, he came over to Singapore and founded the Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, supported by a handful of dedicated devotees distinguished by their life-long loyalty. Singapore is the venue where his initial efforts to proclaim the message of the Buddha to global audiences had their beginning. His publications, relating to various aspects of Buddhist thoughts, in a variety of languages, have passed the 300th mark. With an unerring awareness of the preferences of the readers of our time, he brought into being the Illustration - intensive publications. His magnum opus is "The Treasury of Truth" – the English translation of Dhammapada. The day after its ceremonial launch, the SBMC premises were inundated by over 2000 telephone calls-an unprecedented publishing phenomenon in Singapore.

His works appear in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Cambodian, Bhasa Indonesia and in Sinhala. He has a reputation not only as a pioneering publisher of Buddhist works. He is the Founder – President of Japan-Sri Lanka Buddhist Centre. Today, he is reputed world-wide as an outstanding Buddhist missionary monk, whose works have been distributed in millions of copies—mostly free. Currently, Ven. W. Sarada Maha Thero is actively involved in the publication of Illustrated Jataka Tales.

The present publication of Ven. Sarada Maha Thero is actually a visualization of the life of the Buddha he made after the delightful experiences he enjoyed at the Gandhara week the Pakistan Government generously offered to him a few months ago. His revisiting of the vivid memories of the acts of the Gotama Buddha some twenty five centuries ago brings to the reader a refreshing technique of Buddhanussati meditation.



## Introduction

A holy tour of Pakistan is, in reality, a sacred voyage into the history of Buddhism. Symbols depicting the glory of Buddhist culture are carefully safeguarded in many museums and galleries in Pakistan.

Over and above objects displayed in museums, the remains of prominent Buddhist sites of the far past, are meticulously protected under state patronage. Buddhists everywhere in the world should be grateful to the Government of Pakistan, for its concern to look after this noble legacy with such keen commitment.

All those who esteem higher human values, will invariably appreciate this effort irrespective of one's race, caste or creed.

The world famous statue depicting Ascetic Siddhartha practicing severe austerities is found in the Museum of Lahore, Pakistan. There is perhaps hardly any other piece of religious sculpture that can move viewers as this sculpture can. The renowned site, where the Golden Age of Buddhist art and sculpture flourished from the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. to the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. is Gandhara.

Once famous center of Buddhist activities, Taxila existed in its neighbourhood. Its extensive ruins speak eloquently about the astonishing presence of this ancient seat of learning. The cells, where scholars resided and studied, can still be seen though the vagaries of time and weather have reduced these to a dilapidated condition.

The tradition of Gandhara Art is the birth place of many strands of Buddhist art and sculpture. Historically, it is in the Gandhara tradition that the Buddha came to be represented first as a person. Prior to this, the Supremely Enlightened Buddha was symbolized in art and sculpture either through foot-prints or through a stylized Bodhi Tree. The personal representations of the Buddha originated probably through the inspiration derived from the Hellenistic tradition. In numerous bas reliefs and friezes, phases of the Buddha's life are elaborately depicted.

We had the good fortune to view a relic-casket, which has not been opened yet. This casket is quite likely to hold some highly significant relics. Pakistan is undoubtedly the site of extensive Buddhist relics, making it an important place for Holy Buddhist pilgrimage.

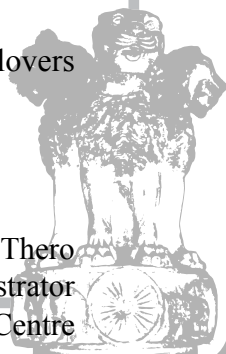
My grateful thanks are due to a whole host of individuals and institutions, for the assistance extended to me, in my effort to compile this book. Foremost among them is the Government of Pakistan, whose invitation enabled me to visit all these sacred sites. The state officials were always ready to extend us their patronage, in whatever way needed.

I must record my gratitude to Professor Chandima Wijayabandara for assisting me with the text of this book. The graphic presence of this publication has been determined by a group headed by Daya Samarasingha. Mr. Sita Woon Chee and Ms Ang Lian Swee (Sita), must invariably be remembered for their sustained interest in this publication. I express my grateful thanks to all those too numerous to mention individually.

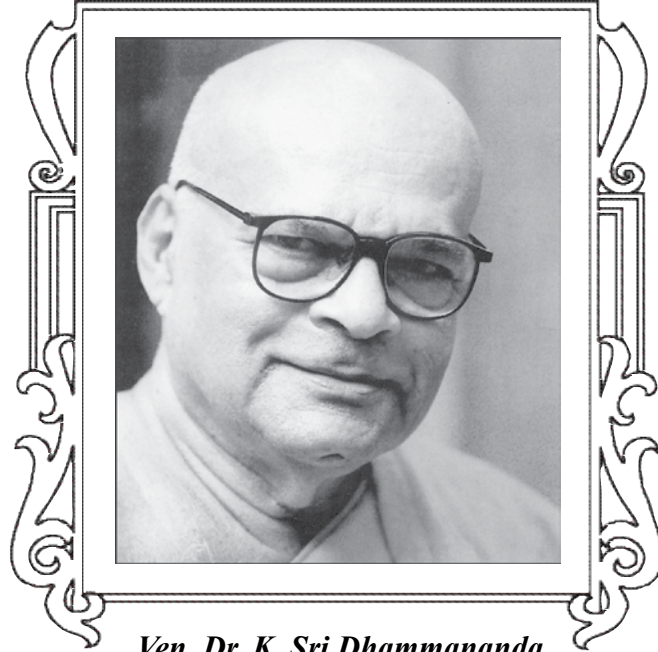
I have no doubt whatsoever that the present work will encourage dedicated Buddhists and lovers of art and culture to visit these sites of exquisite cultural value.

May all beings be happy and well.

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero  
Chief Monk /Chief Administrator  
The Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre



# The Gift of Dhamma excels all Gifts



*Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda  
Nayaka Maha Thero*

*This book “Life of the Buddha in Gandhara Art”  
is sponsored  
with great devotion and dedication to the ever-lasting memory of the  
late Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thero, Chief Prelate,  
by  
Mr. William Chua Geok Eng.*

*May the merit of sponsoring this work bring about prosperity,  
good health and happiness to all members of the family of  
Mr. William Chua Geok Eng.*

*Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero*

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Buddhism was the first spiritual force, known to us in history, which drew close together such a large number of races separated by most difficult barriers of distance, by difference of language and custom, by various degrees and divergent types of civilization. It had its motive power, neither in international commerce, nor in empire building, nor in a scientific curiosity, nor in a migrative impulse to occupy fresh territory. It was a purely disinterested effort to help mankind forward to its final goal.

Rabindranath Tagore ( 1861 - 1941 )  
Indian poet and educationalist,  
Winner of the Nobel Prize





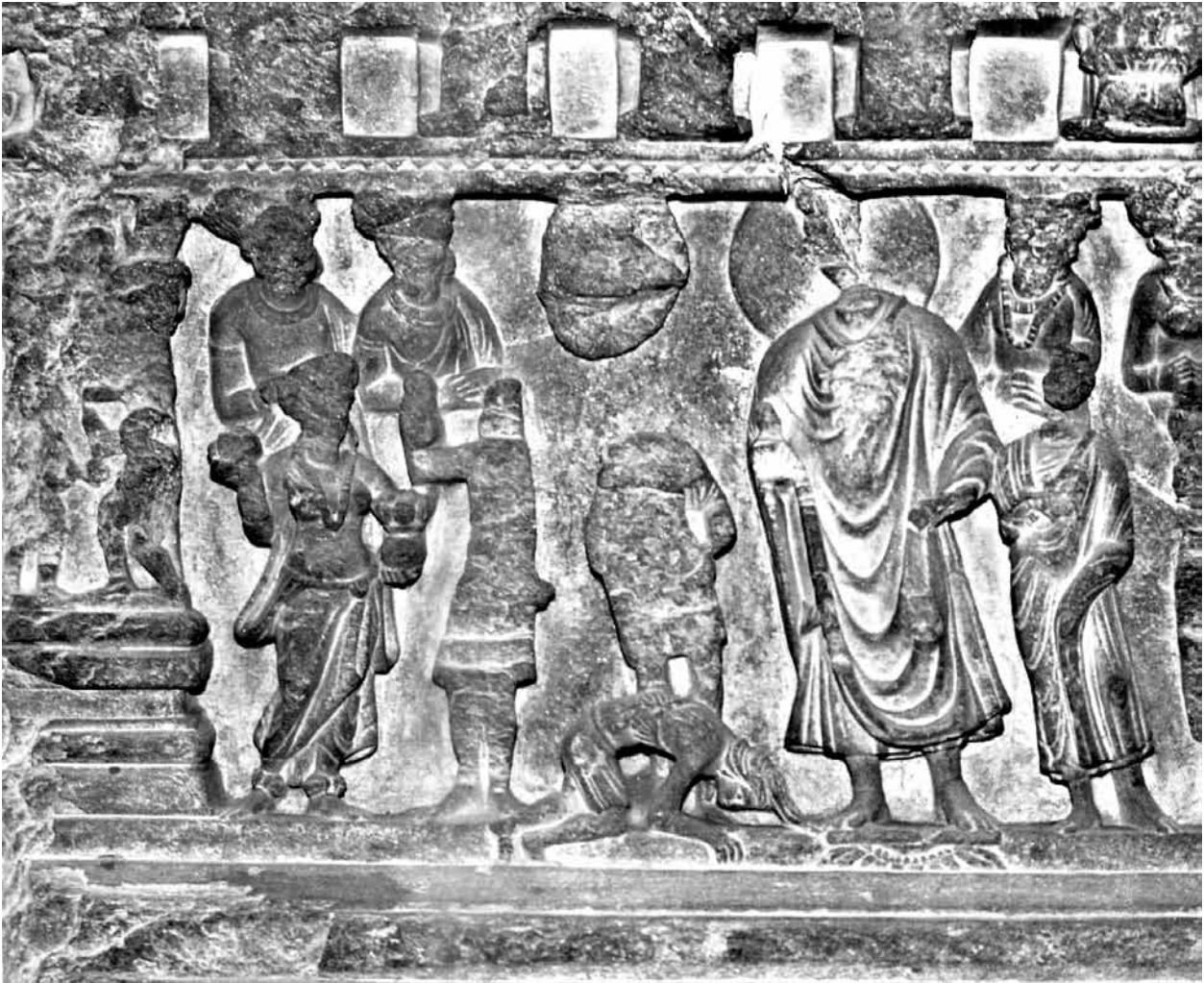
*Part One*

# Life *of* The Buddha



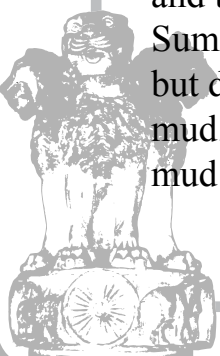


## Beginning of a Bodhisatta Career



*Sumedha making Himself a Human Bridge for the Buddha to Walk On*

Some 84,000 innumerable aeons ago, the Buddha Gotama was born as a young man called Sumedha in a city called Ramagrama. During that time the people in the city were preparing to welcome the Buddha Deepankara who was visiting their city with his retinue of Sangha. The road was to be leveled and to be covered with sand. While everyone was busy with road work, Sumedha asked whether he could also do something. They gave him a small but difficult spot of the road to be filled with sand as that place was full of mud. Young Sumedha worked very hard but he could not completely cover mud with white sand before the Buddha arrived.

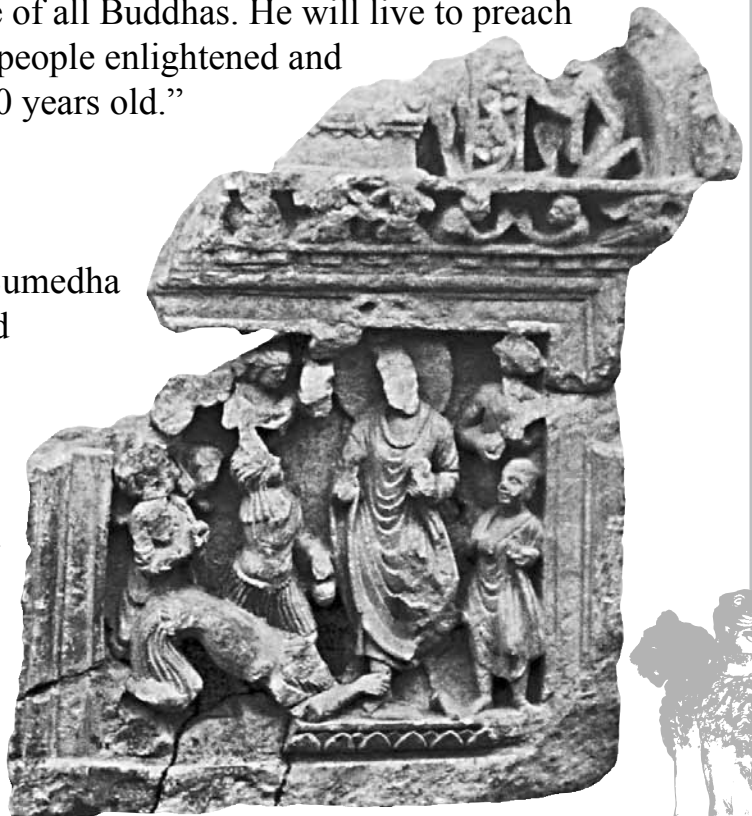




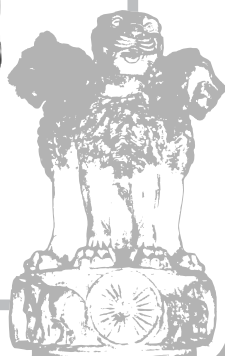
*The Buddha Deepankara's Prediction*

**H**e did not like the idea of the Buddha having to step on mud and therefore when the Buddha arrived at the spot he made himself a human bridge lying on the muddy road requesting the Buddha to walk on his back so the Buddha's feet may not get smeared with mud. The Buddha did not step on his back but looking at him kindly, addressed the people who gathered there and predicted: "The young person here requesting me to walk on his back will himself become a Samma Sambuddha one day. He will be born some 84000 incalculable aeons later in a city called Kapilavatthu and come to be known as Siddhatta Gotama. His father will be King Suddhodana and the mother will be Mahamaya. The day his wife, Yasodhara, will give birth to Rahula, his son; he will renounce the world, as is the practice of all Buddhas. He will live to preach Dhamma for 45 years making many people enlightened and attain Parinibbana when he will be 80 years old."

**H**aving heard the prediction, Sumedha became extremely happy and resolved "I will become enlightened myself and enlighten others. I will make myself free from life-death continuum and help others also to become free. I will cross over the samsara and help others also to cross."



*The Buddha Deepankara's Prediction*







*Five Buddhas of this Blessed Kalpa (aeon)*

From that day onwards Sumedha practiced ten Paramitas (perfections) in order to become a Samma Sambuddha. The Buddhists preserve stories of 550 births in which he, as a Buddha-aspirant, continued to perfect himself on the path to

enlightenment. One of such stories is called Vessantara Jataka, which, in fact, was his last human birth as a Buddha- aspirant or a Bodhisatta. He practiced perfection of generosity at that life. He even gave his royal elephant away which made citizens



*Vessantara Jataka*

angry. He had to abdicate and

become an ascetic. At the forest he even went to the extreme of giving his wife and children away. According to the story, King of gods Sakka came to their assistance and got them back.

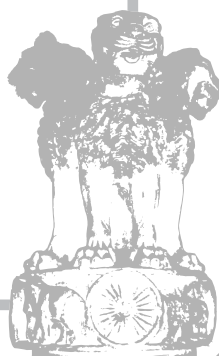






*Bodhisatta in Tusita Heaven*

When he had perfected all ten paramitas, and matured enough to attain Buddhahood, he had his last heavenly birth at Tusita heaven (deva loka). After many years of celestial happiness, the gods in that heaven, knowing the time was ripe, respectfully requested the Bodhisatta to be born in the human world. Then the Bodhisatta investigated for suitable time, country, clan, parents and mother's life stretch. He realized the time was really ripe for him as in this blessed aeon three Buddhas have already appeared and this was the time for him to appear as the fourth Buddha. The fifth one, the Bodhisatta Maitreya, will attain Buddhahood only after Gotama Buddha's dispensation is over. Having made all these observations, the Bodhisatta decided to be born in Jambudeepa (India), in the Sakya clan, in the family of King Suddhodana. Queen Mahamaya had only 10 months and seven days to live and it was ideal because in a womb a bodhisatta conceives no other being should conceive.



## The Birth



*The Dream of Queen Mahamaya*

It was the full-moon day of Asalha month in the year 624 B.C.E. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan were then called Jambudipa (the land of Rose-apple trees). There was a provincial kingdom, at the foot of the Himalayas, called Kapilavatthu, which was ruled by a king called Suddhodana.

Mahamaya, the queen of King Suddhodana, had a

dream in that moonlit beautiful night. She dreamt that she had a bath in the legendary divine pond Anotatta and was resting in a golden mansion, full of sweet aroma. There were beautiful celestial nymphs attending to her. Suddenly there appeared a sweet little white elephant carrying a white lotus in its cute little trunk. It made three circles round her couch, and suddenly, it entered her womb!



*The Dream of Queen Mahamaya*







*Interpretation of the Dream*

**N**ext morning, when Queen Mahamaya related the dream to King Siddhodana, he consulted some learned Brahmins who were dream interpreters. “Congratulations, your majesty!” they exclaimed; “You are going to be a father to an exceptionally lucky prince. If the prince remains a layman, he will be a universal monarch. If he renounces the world, he will be an enlightened one, a Buddha.” The King and the Queen were delighted to hear the good news.

**T**he Buddhist scripture describes that the Buddha-to-be descended from heaven where he was waiting, finding the correct time for him to be born in the human world.

India by that time, in fact, was philosophically mature and ready for a Buddha. People were sensitive to suffering and there were many religions and speculative philosophies offered by Brahmins and Sramanas of all kinds of backgrounds.

*Bodhisatta in Tusita Heaven*





*Birth of Prince Siddhartha*

So the King and the Queen took utmost care to protect the baby-to-be born and arranged everything for the delivery. It is said however, unlike normal babies, the Bodhisattas (the Buddha-to-be) spend ten months in the womb and the present Bodhisatta was no exception. One day, while the Queen was on her way to her parental palace in Devadaha city, she expressed her desire to spend sometime in the beautiful pleasure garden called 'Lumbini'. While enjoying the beautiful flowers and sweet songs of birds there, she suddenly felt delivery pain. The attending women, having no suitable shelter nearby, immediately arranged a covered place under a big Sala tree full of fragrant flowers. The Queen gave birth to a beautiful baby while holding on to a branch of the tree. People of Kapilavatthu were absolutely happy and jubilant. The Queen had to postpone the journey to Devadaha and return to the palace. Every one there was celebrating the birth of the new prince.



*Birth of Prince Siddhartha*





## LIFE OF THE BUDDHA



The prince was, in fact, the first child of the king. The belief was that a king must have a son from the chief queen to inherit the father's kingdom. Sixteen small states in India were envious of each other. In addition, every kingdom had a dream of a universal monarch to appear from their own land to unify the divided India. The people and the King of Kapilavasthu were no exception.



*(1) After the Birth of Prince Siddhartha*

*(2) After the Birth of Prince Siddhartha*

*(3) Bathing of the New-born Baby*



### *History and Archeology*

*The Emperor Asoka in his twentieth regnal year visited the Lumbini Park and erected an inscribed pillar to commemorate the birth of the Buddha there. The inscription runs like this:*

*In the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his consecration, King Devanampiya Piyadassi personally visited this place, as the Sakyamuni was born here. A stone bearing figure was constructed, and a stone pillar was set up to show that the Buddha was born here. The village Lumbini was exempted from religious cesses and rendered liable to pay only 1/8 share of income.*



*After the Birth of Prince Siddhartha*

the king wanted to have the prince bow his head to the ascetic. However, when the king lowered the baby prince towards the ascetic a strange thing happened. The feet of the prince miraculously touched the head of the ascetic. Everybody around got alarmed but Asita, the ascetic, to the amazement of the people, rose up from his seat and said to the king, “Do not try to make the prince bow to me, instead, allow me to worship his feet”. So saying, he worshiped the prince and took the baby in his arms. King Suddhodana, in his excitement, bowed down at the baby prince. It goes as the first occasion the father of Bodhisatta Siddhartha paid respect to his son clasping his hands.

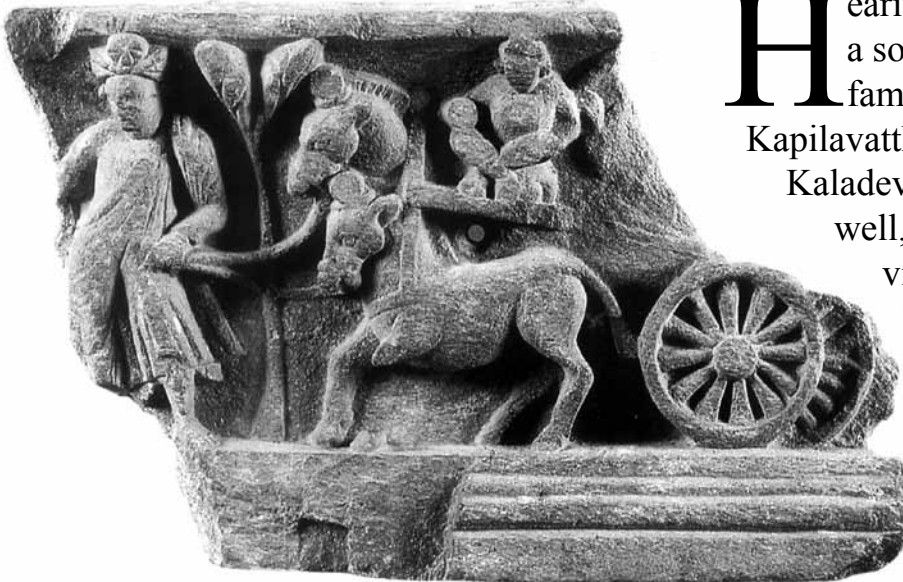
Asita, who witnessed this extraordinary happening, kept contemplating for a while and smiled happily, but after a little later, he appeared as if he was grieved and his eyes getting wet with tears.



*Queen Mahamaya Returning to the Palace with the New-born Prince*







Hearing the good news that a son was born to the royal family of Kapilavatthu, Ascetic Asita Kaladevala, who knew the king well, thought of visiting the palace to bless the baby. When he arrived at the palace,

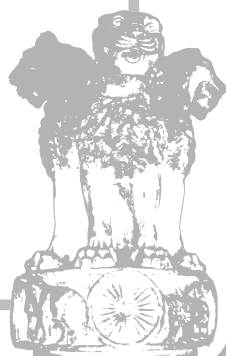
*Queen Mahamaya Returning to the Palace with the New-born Prince*

Puzzled, the King asked, “Do your kindness see any danger or misfortune to the prince?” Asita, explaining the reasons for showing mixed feelings, said, “Nothing of the sort will happen, your Majesty. The prince will become an Enlightened Being and achieve the greatest of spiritual heights. He will bring happiness and joy to the suffering world, setting the wheel of Dhamma in motion. Thinking of that I smiled first. But, unfortunately for me, I will not live so long as to see how he will attain such holy heights of being revered by men and gods. Hence, my eyes watered in self-pity. Looking at the fortunate features of the baby, I am sure you will notice yourself that he is an exceedingly fortunate baby who will only have good things on his path.”

Leaving the palace, Asita addressed his attendant Nalaka, and said; “You, Nalaka, will live to see this prince attaining enlightenment and teach gods and men. I wish you become a pupil of him, practice his teachings to become a pure and perfect being.” So advising, he made Nalaka to live near Benaris and keep on announcing the news that a Buddha will appear soon on earth to help people end their suffering.



*Reading the Horoscope*



## Childhood



*Reading the Horoscope and Naming-Ceremony*

The youngest among the eight, namely, Kondanna, however, raised only one finger and predicted:

“The prince will definitely renounce the world and become enlightened!”

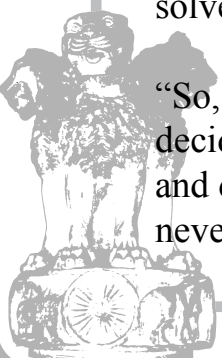
Then, after some deliberation, everyone agreed to name the prince as “Siddhartha” meaning “Attained of beneficial things” or “Wish fulfilled”.

Yet, King Suddhodana was not happy with the prediction that his son will renounce the world. All he was interested was to see him, at least, as the King of the Sakyans. So, he asked Kondanna:

“What will be the reason that my son will renounce the world instead of ascending to throne?”

“He will be moved strongly by old age, sickness and death. When he sees people old and feeble he will realize he will also one day get old. The same way he will think of sickness and death. When he will see men who renounce the world to solve these problems he will get attracted to ascetic life.” Kondanna explained.

“So, those are the four things that I should keep my son away from” the King decided. He ordered the “four signs” to be banned from the vicinity of the prince and decided he would provide all possible comforts to him so the prince would never have to think of suffering and get frustrated with life.





**A**fter five days of ceremony, it was time to give the newborn prince a name. The King summoned 108 learned Brahmins to the naming ceremony. Having offered them milk-rice, as was the custom in India, the King then requested them to observe the baby for physical signs that they could forecast his future. Eight Brahmins, highly skilled in the reading of physical signs, studied the baby prince, and seven out of the eight, raising two fingers, predicted:

“The prince will become a universal monarch if he remains a householder. But he will become an enlightened saint (a Buddha) if he renounces the world.”

Queen Mahamaya, however, succumbed to weakness after childbirth and passed away on the seventh day after the birth of Prince Siddhartha. Maha Pajapati Gotami, the sister of Mahamaya, who was also married to King Suddhodana, took over the duty of looking after the Prince. She nursed the baby with all possible care, as if he was her own child.

**O**ne day, while the Prince was still young, he happened to accompany his father to the ploughing ceremony of the Sakyans. The society then was mainly agricultural and the King, being himself a member of Ksatriya class, had to initiate ploughing. When the ceremony started with all ritual and pomp, everyone surrounded the field watching how the king, with his golden plough, ceremonially did the first turning of the soil to start the procedure. The prince, practically forgotten by the attendants, found himself alone and got into a meditating mood. When he was seen in that trance-mood, sitting cross-legged and eyes shut, the attendants were amazed and the king was informed of the miracle. Running to the place in excitement, King Suddhodana paid his salutation clasping his hands and, saying, “My wonderful son, this is the second time I bow down to salute you.”



*First Meditation at the Ploughing Festival*



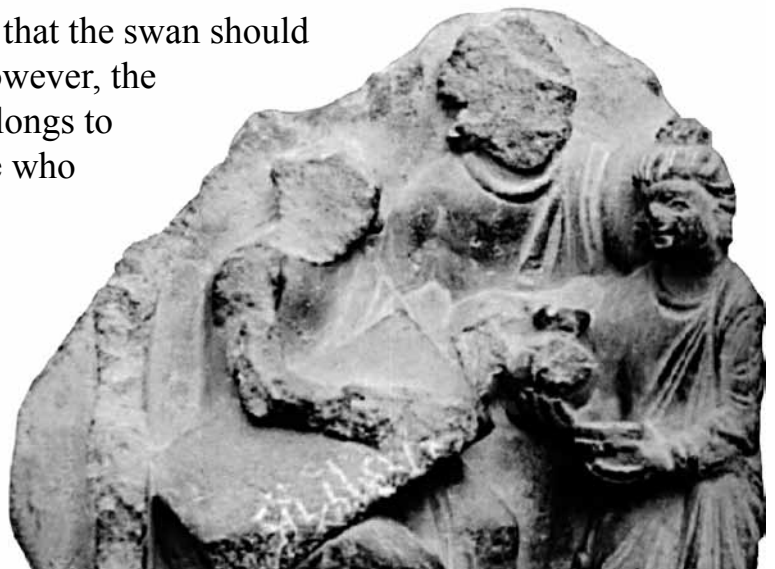
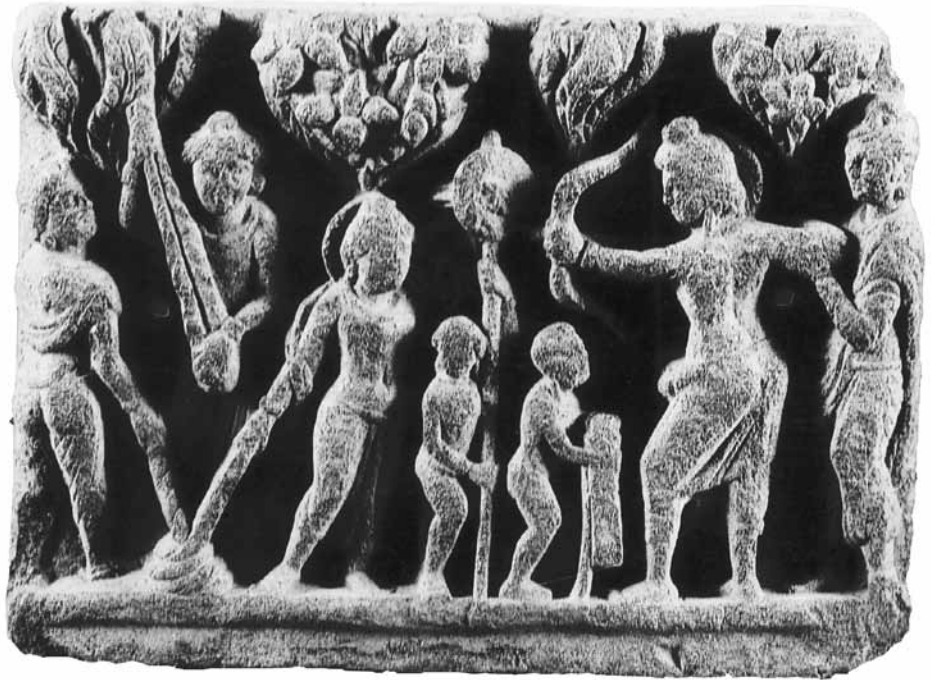
## LIFE OF THE BUDDHA



*Prince Going to a Teacher*

King Suddhodana took special care not to expose the prince to the sufferings of the world. Therefore, instead of sending him out for learning, a reputed teacher called Sabbamitta, was called to the palace to teach him. It is said that in no time the Prince became well versed in all the arts and crafts a royal youth was supposed to master at that time.

It is reported that Prince Siddhartha was a very kind child who did not hurt even an animal. There is a story that reveals how one day he had to argue with Devadatta, his playmate and future brother-in-law, to save the life of a swan. Devadatta had shot the swan but the Prince caught it, treated it with medicine, and saved its life. Devadatta demanded that the swan should be given to him since he shot it. However, the Prince maintained that the swan belongs to the one who saved it, not to the one who wanted to kill it.



*(2) The Prince Learns Arts and Various other Skills*

*(3) The Prince Learn*





## Young Siddhartha

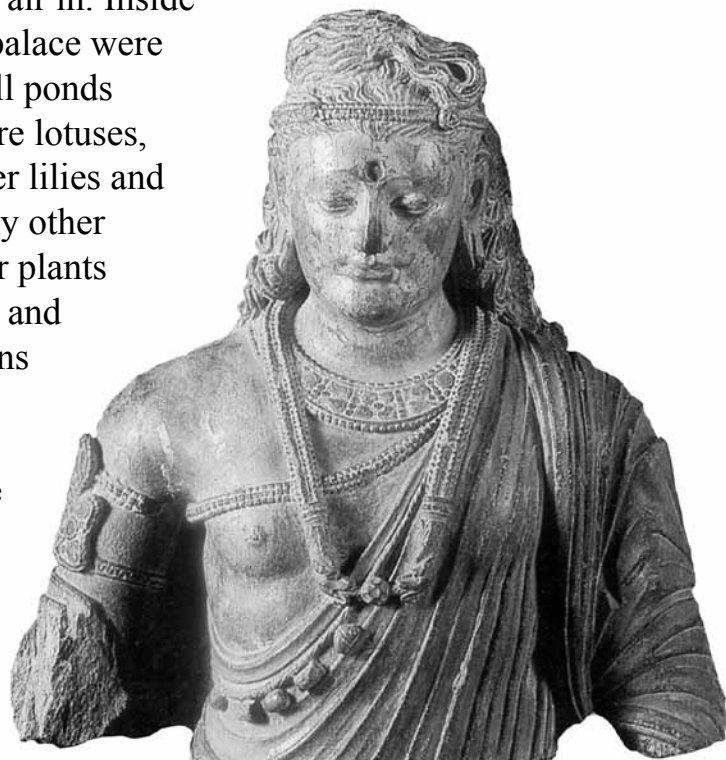


King Suddhodana was determined to see his son ruling entire India as a universal monarch rather than seeing him as a famous philosopher saint or a Buddha, as the sooth sayers predicted. In addition, he knew the only way to keep him at the palace was to prevent him from understanding the sufferings of life. So, in addition to all precautions to keep the “four-signs” away from his sight, he arranged all the luxuries and sensual pleasures for him in the inner-city itself.

**T**here were three palaces for him to live the three seasons. A palace called “Ramya” was built for him to live in the winter season. The nine-storied palace was made with heating facilities and air-proof windows. All kinds of warm clothes and blankets were provided. The palace called “Suramya” was purpose-built for the Prince to spend the summer. That five-storied building was well spaced for air to circulate. Wide windows brought cool air in. Inside the palace were small ponds where lotuses, water lilies and many other water plants

were growing. Mini waterfalls and mechanically operated fountains kept the atmosphere cool. The third palace, namely “Subha”, was for the prince to spend the rainy season.

*Young Prince*



It was built to keep the rain out but to keep inside pleasantly mild. Some rooms were warmer than others were, and some were cooler for the Prince to choose according to his moods. Walls of all three palaces were rich with beautiful paintings to match and enhance the feelings of the season. The prince had all the luxuries provided for him in these highly comfortable palaces, various entertainers, including beautiful girls to sing, dance and to keep him happy, surrounded him. He could go to the parks, ride horses, and take part in various sports activities. Therefore, Prince Siddhartha had a very enjoyable life and had nothing to worry about.



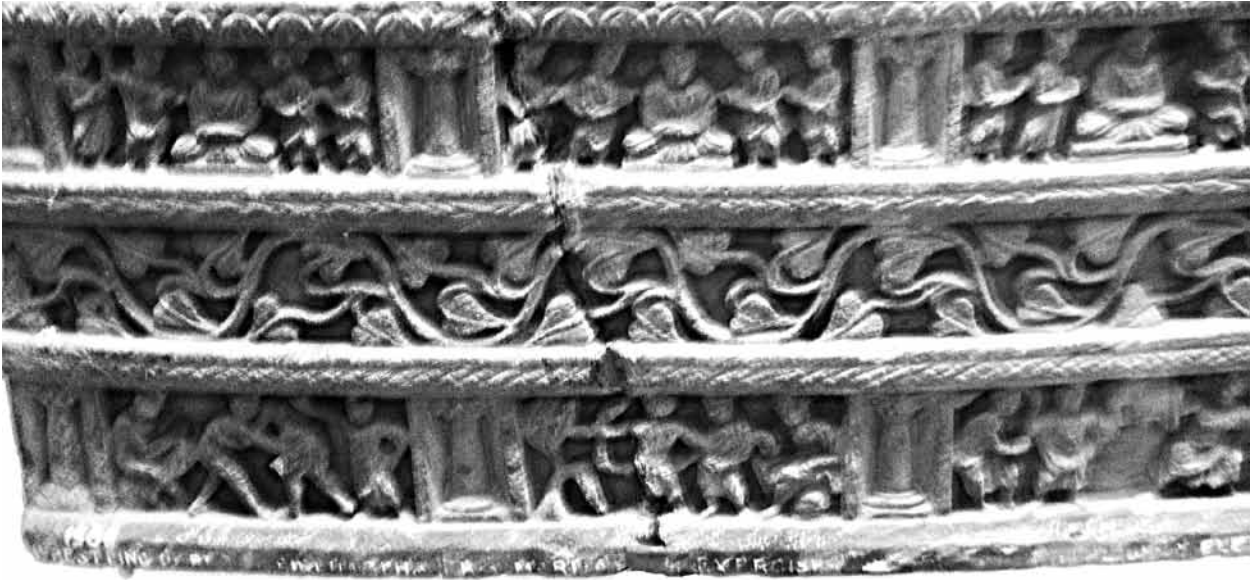
*Luxurious Life in the Palace*



*Display of Skills*







*Display of Skills*

When the Prince was sixteen years old, King Suddhodana wanted to find a suitable princess for him to marry. When he announced his desire to the befitting royal families they refused to respond, saying, “Siddhartha, although a very handsome prince, has had no proper education.” Even though the Prince was not sent to a traditional Brahmin school where royalists were educated,



*Marriage Ceremony*

King Suddhodana had got him the necessary royal education by employing a private teacher at the palace itself. His intention was to prevent him getting to know the vicissitudes outside the palace. However, to dispel the doubts of the royal families, the Prince arranged a date for them to come and observe his learning. After the display of skills, everyone in the gathering was pleased with his abilities. They all agreed to send their daughters of his age to a ceremony of choice where the Prince can choose his future queen.





*Marriage Ceremony*

The day that the royal princesses were all gathered, and the Prince had the opportunity of being introduced to them, the beautiful daughter of King Suppabuddha of the Koliya clan, won his heart. Her name was Bhaddakaccana. She was also known as Yasodhara, Bimba and Rahulamata. Both royal families were very delighted and made them united in marriage at a grand festive wedding. A harem of thousands of pretty princesses was also arranged to keep the Prince happy. The Prince and the Princess had a very happy married life for thirteen years.

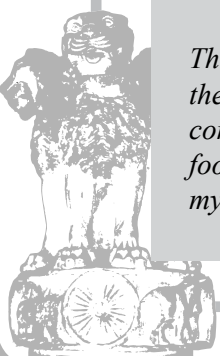
Among the friends that the Prince had were Nanda, Vatsa, Kaludayi, Ananda, and his brother-in-law, Devadatta.

### *Autobiography*

*I was delicate, excessively delicate. In my father's dwelling three lotus ponds were made purposely for me. Blue lotuses bloomed in one, red in another, and white in another. I used no sandalwood that was not of Kasi. My turban, tunic, dress and cloak, were all from Kasi.*

*Night and day, a white parasol was held over me so that I might not be touched by heat or cold, dust, leaves or dew.*

*There were three palaces built for me – one for the cold season, one for the hot season, and one for the rainy season. During the four rainy months, I lived in the palace for the rainy season without ever coming down from it, entertained all the while by female musicians. Just as, in the houses of others, food from the husks of rice together with sour gruel is given to the slaves and workmen, even so, in my father's dwelling, food with rice and meat was given to the slaves and workmen.*





## Renunciation

The life in the palace was nothing but sensual pleasures and enjoyment. In the narrow confines of the palace, Prince Siddhartha only saw the rosy side of life. However, it was not possible, in spite of all the restrictions of his father, to conceal the appalling truth of real life from the Prince.



One day, on his visit to the pleasure park, he encountered four things that his father had prevented him from seeing. What is traditionally described as “four sights”, they were:- 1) a very old man so feeble and decrepit that he was walking carrying a walking stick; 2) a sick person suffering from unbearable pain; 3) a dead body of a man taken to be buried; and, 4) a hermit who had renounced the pleasures of the world in search of emancipation. Of these unusual sights, he obtained all information from his charioteer and got alarmed of the destiny of human beings. He realized that all pleasurable things are transitory and therefore continuous attachment to them was futile. The fourth sight gave him some hope. He was pleased that there was a path to seek deeper meanings of life rather than following useless temporary pleasures.

### Autobiography

*Why do I, being subject to birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and impurities, thus search after things of like nature? How if I, who am subject to things of such nature, realize their disadvantages and seek after the unattained, unsurpassed, perfect security which is Nibbana.*

*Cramped and confined is household life, a den of dust, but the life of the homeless one is as the open air of heaven! Hard is it for him who bides at home to live out as it should be lived the holy life in all perfection, in all its purity.*



**R**eflecting on the new exposure, he spent the day at the garden and when he was to return, a messenger broke good news to him.

“Princess Yasodhara gave birth to a son.”

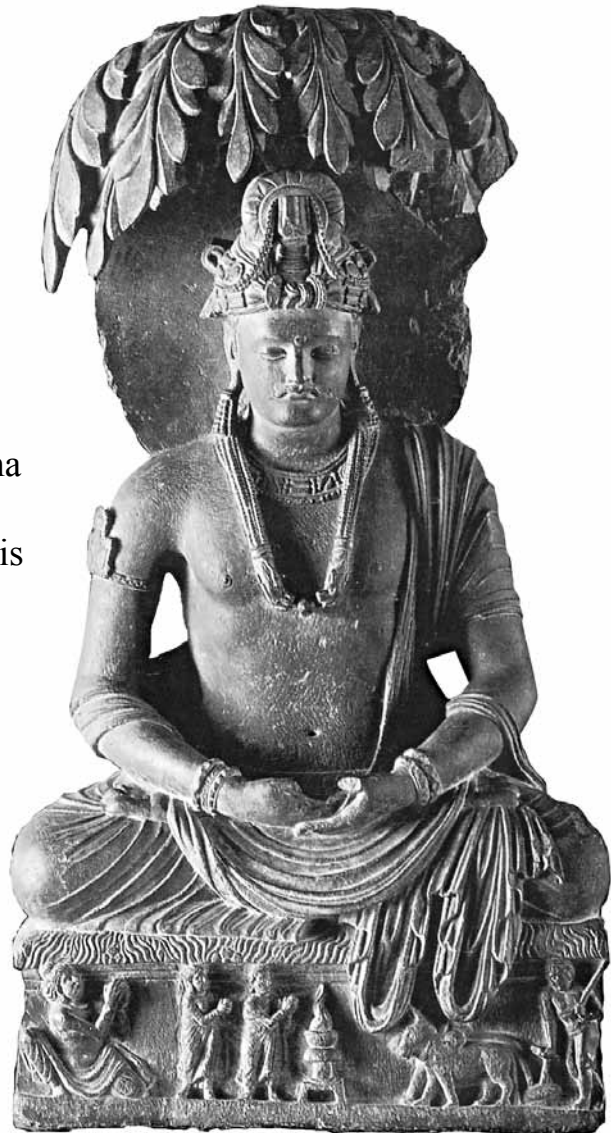
This would have been a delightful and exciting message to him if not for the changes that had taken place in his mind. He found as if he was suddenly bound to the family making it rather difficult to renounce the world in search of deeper truths. The words that came to his mouth spontaneously were “Rahula is born. A bond established!”

The messenger informed King Suddhodana everything that transpired. The King was definitely puzzled, yet he chose to name his grandson “Rahula”, picking up from the words of Prince Siddhartha.

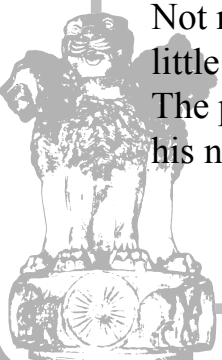
On the way back from the park, Prince Siddhartha had another encounter. A princess called Kisagotami was looking down at the street from her window and saw the handsome Prince. In admiration, she could not resist the thought of writing a small sweet poem and sending it to him. She wrote:

Happy indeed is the mother  
 Happy indeed is the father  
                     Who has a son like this.  
 Happy indeed is the woman  
                     Who has a husband like this!

Not ready, though, for romance like this, the prince found deeper message in the little poem. He wanted to make not just a family but also the entire world happy. The poor sufferers of samsara he can make happy. Therefore, the Prince sent her his necklace as a token of his admiration of the poem.



*Young Prince Practicing Meditation*



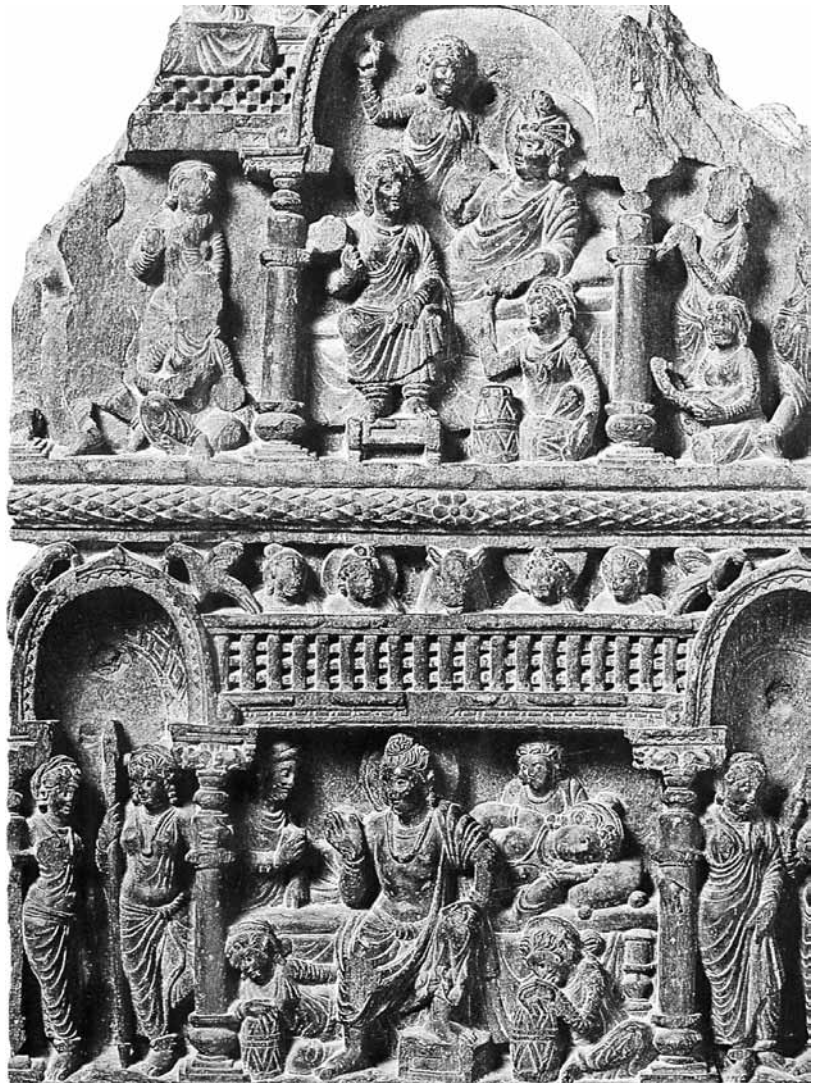


**A**fter that long and eventful day, the Prince wanted to reflect over the new things he encountered. So not directly visiting his wife and the new-born child he spent some hours in seclusion planning his future as a seeker of deep truths rather than pursuing worldly pleasures which no longer gave him any lasting satisfaction.

That night, as usual, beautiful dancing girls, singers and musicians all came to entertain the Prince. As the Prince was no longer interested in any such enjoyment, he remained indifferent to all their performances. His mind was set on the real problems that people encounter rather than the lighter side of life. How short are youth, health and life? How can we forget that all happiness will only last for a short time and when old age and sickness attack us, every body has to suffer inevitably. While thinking of such things he fell asleep in the hall itself. When the girls noticed that the Prince had fallen asleep, they stopped performance and lay down. Tired and frustrated they were also sleeping very soon.

**A**t midnight, the prince opened his eyes to see the dancing girls snoring, with open mouths and their clothes

loose and untidy. Some were very ugly to look at as they were emitting saliva from either side of mouth, their make-up dissolved and faded. Neatly styled hair now loosened and looking untidy, they were very unpleasant sight. How meaningless, empty and elusive are the things that we chase after, thinking they are beautiful and joyful? The Prince found everything no more pleasing and satisfying.

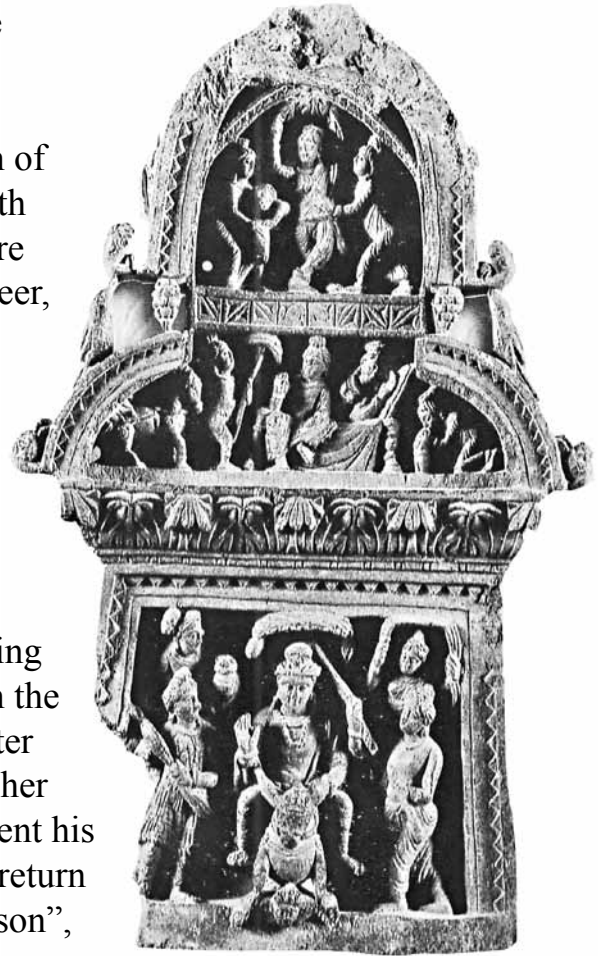


*Renunciation*



Prince Siddhartha then thought that time was up for him to leave the palace to become an ascetic. He must launch the great search to find a solution for the problem of samsara that he himself and all his family, with many millions of people all over the world, are burdened with. He called Channa, the charioteer, his close companion from childhood, and asked: “Channa, we have to make a long journey. Prepare my horse Kanthaka.”

Meanwhile, Prince Siddhartha wanted to have a last look at his wife and the new-born Prince Rahula before leaving the palace. He went to the room where Yasodhara was sleeping with the baby on her side, having her hand on the baby. Prince Siddhartha wanted to have a better look of the baby, but, thinking that removing her hand will awake Yasodhara and she will prevent his renunciation, he stepped back slowly. “I will return one day to see my son, as an Enlightened person”, he thought.



*Renunciation*

Channa had the horse ready. Riding the horse, both of them silently left the palace premises and got out of the city. They crossed the river Anoma and reached the bank. The moon was brightly shining on the white sand, as it was Asalha full-moon night. Prince Siddhartha addressed Channa:

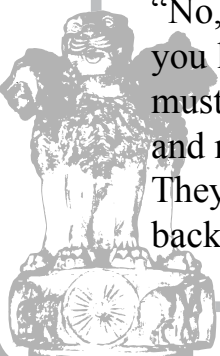
“Channa, take my lay clothes and other ornaments with the horse and inform my father that I am no longer a layman. I am renouncing lay life to search for an answer to the problems of life.”

“I will ordain myself too, and I will follow you in your search,” said Channa.

“No, Channa, the time will come for you later. However, for now, you must go back and report to my father and my wife that I have become an ascetic. They have to know it and it is your duty to inform them. Please take Kanthaka back, too.”



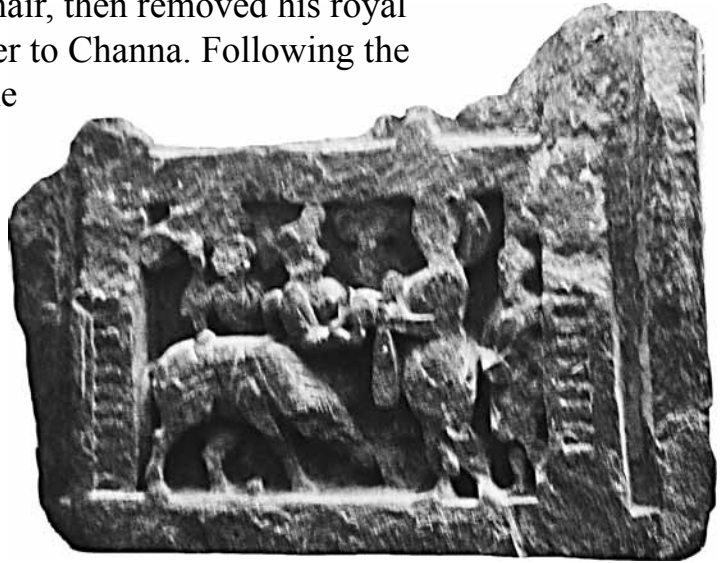
*Channa, Bodhisatta and Kanthaka*





Telling so, the Prince cut his hair, then removed his royal clothes and handed them over to Channa. Following the tradition of the ascetics of the day, he preferred discarded soiled clothes in the cemetery.

Channa, though feeling with tremendous sadness, had to turn back to take Kanthaka and the princely clothes to King Suddhodana, and inform the royal family that Prince Siddhartha had renounced lay-life and become a mendicant. Kanthaka, however, felt that his master was not coming back with them and would not mount him again. He could not bear the pain of not being able to see his kind master any more. It is reported that Kanthaka died on the spot having a “heart-burst”. Therefore, Channa had to walk back alone to report what happened.



*Channa and Kanthaka's Farewell*

## *Autobiography*

*Fear is born from arming oneself.  
Just see how many people fight,  
I'll tell you about the dreadful fear,  
That caused me to shake all over.*

*Seeing creatures flopping around,  
Like fishes in shallow water,  
So hostile to one another!  
Seeing this, I became afraid.*

*Seeing people locked in conflict,  
I became completely distraught,  
But then I discerned here a thorn,  
Hard to see - lodged deep in the heart.*

*It's only when pierced by this thorn,  
That one runs in all directions,  
So if that thorn is taken out,  
One does not run, and settles down.*

*Sutta Nipata vs.935-939*



*Change of Lay Clothes*

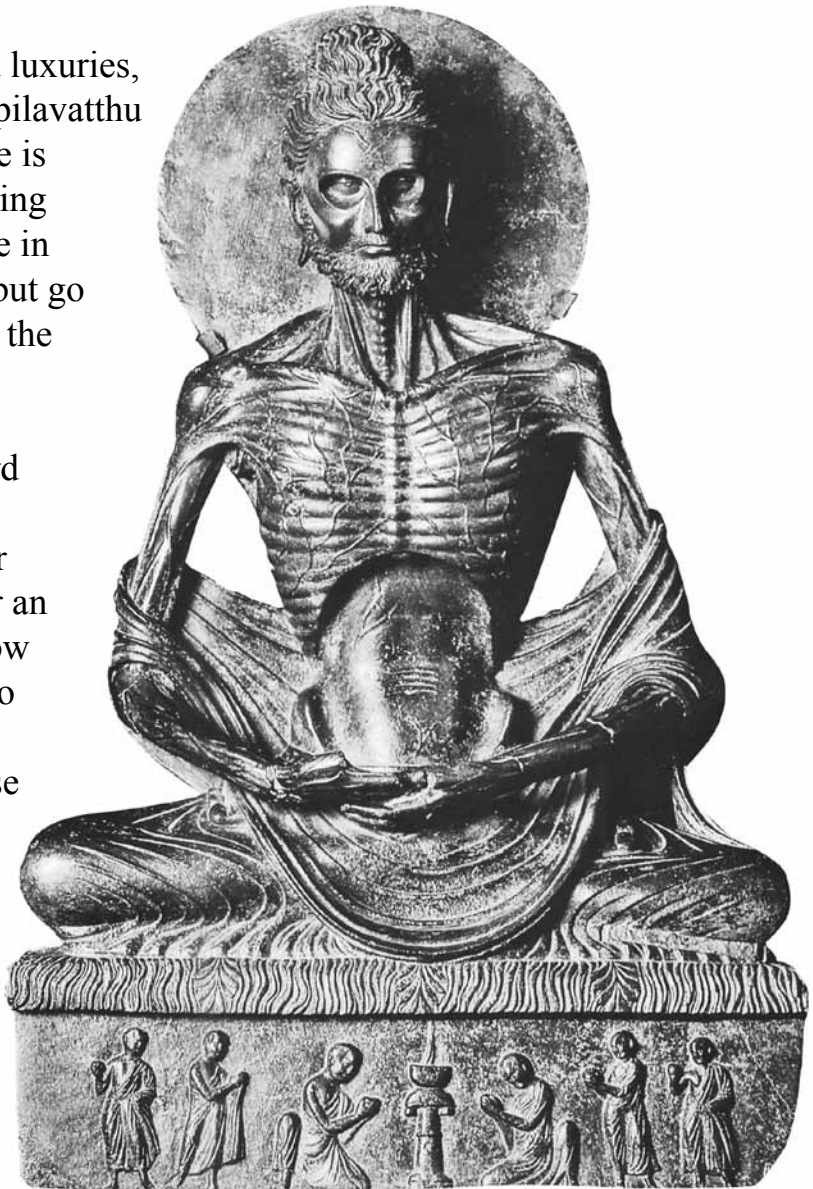


## Ascetic Life

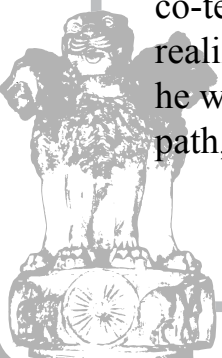
“I have given up all wealth and luxuries, disappointing my people in Kapilavatthu only because I find all existence is suffering. I am in search of lasting peace for all people everywhere in the world. I will not turn back but go ahead with my search,” replied the Bodhisatta.

“Of course, I have already heard of predictions made by learned Brahmins that you would either become a universal monarch or an Enlightened one, a Buddha. Now that you have chosen the path to Buddhahood, you will achieve your sacred achievement. Please remember to visit my country first when you have achieved Buddhahood.”

Assuring that he would not forget to visit Bimbisara after the Enlightenment, the Bodhisatta then went to Vesali where a famous ascetic, called Alara Kalama, pupils meditation. Alara Kalama welcomed him and accepted him as a follower. In no time, the Bodhisatta completed the course of practice and achieved seventh jhana called *Akincannayatana*. The teacher respected him as an equal and offered a co-teacher position to instruct trainee pupils. However, very soon, the Bodhisatta realized that particular Samadhi was not the end to life-death-life continuum that he was looking for. He realized that the teacher could no longer help him in the path, and therefore, decided to look for another teacher.



*Austere Practices* was teaching many



**T**hough he renounced the world hoping to find a way out from suffering, Siddhartha was not well focused on how to achieve his goal. He had, therefore, no alternative other than to seek for guidance from those who are already on the path and/or follow trial-and-error method. Firm, however, in his determination to find release, not just for himself, but also for all suffering creatures that undergo sickness, old age, death and many other unpleasant experiences, he left Anoma riverbank and reached the mango park called Anupiya. Enjoying the esthetically pleasant and soothing environment, he spent seven days there and on the eighth day, reached Rajagaha city.

It was the day for commencing normal work after the festival of planets for the people in the city. Many people were on the streets and even the King was observing busy people running here and there.

At lunchtime, the Bodhisatta started his alms round as the custom for mendicants of the day. King Bimbisara saw him from the window and was impressed with his handsome and majestic look. “This cannot be someone from an ordinary family; he looks extra-ordinary and blissful.” He sent some men from the palace staff to find out where this mendicant was going. They found out that the Bodhisatta proceeded to Pandava rock after collecting some food from the city people. The King, then, went there to find out all about the visiting mendicant that he had developed a curiosity in.

“Venerable Sir, You are still too young to live the life of an ascetic. Come, we will share the Kingdom of Magadha, and enjoy lay life together!” Saying this, King Bimbisara offered the Bodhisatta to rule his kingdom together.

## Autobiography

*Then I went to Alara Kalama and asked him, “Dear Kalama, is it in this way that you declare that you enter upon and abide in this Dhamma by realizing for yourself with direct knowledge?” – “That is the way, friend.” – “It is in this way, friend, that I also enter upon and abide in this Dhamma by realizing for myself with direct knowledge” – “It is gain for us, friend, it is a great gain for us that we have such a venerable one for our companion in the holy life. ... So you know the Dhamma that I know and I know the Dhamma that you know. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come, let us now lead this community together.”*

*Thus, Alara Kalama, my teacher, placed me, his pupil, on an equal footing with himself and awarded me the highest honour. But it occurred to me: This Dhamma does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana, but only to reappearance in the base of nothingness. Not being satisfied with that Dhamma I left it and went away.*

M.I.165

Then the Bodhisatta left Vesali and, crossing river Mahi in Magadha, entered a province governed by a ruler called Eleyyaka. There lived a well-revered teacher called Uddaka Ramaputta, known for his higher meditative attainments. The Bodhisatta joined his group and started practicing his discipline, which resulted in his achievement of the Samadhi called *Nevasanna nasannayatana*. When he reported it to the teacher, he was pleased and offered him the post of co-instructor





to his pupils calling him, “Now you are my equal in attainments.” However, it did not take much time for the Bodhisatta to realize that this attainment is also not what he was looking for. It was still within the life-death-life continuum and will only result in rebirth in fine higher heaven of that name i.e., *Nevasanna nasannayatana*. Therefore, he decided to leave the place.

### *Autobiography*

*Then I went to Uddaka Ramaputta and asked him, “Dear Uddaka Ramaputta, is it in this way that you declare that you enter upon and abide in this Dhamma by realizing for yourself with direct knowledge?” - “That is the way, friend.” - “It is in this way, friend, that I also enter upon and abide in this Dhamma by realizing for myself with direct knowledge.” - “It is gain for us, friend, it is a great gain for us that we have such a venerable one for our companion in the holy life. ... So you know the Dhamma that I know and I know the Dhamma that you know. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come, let us now lead this community together!”*

*Thus, Uddaka Ramaputta, my teacher, placed me, his pupil, on an equal footing with himself and awarded me the highest honour. However, it occurred to me: This Dhamma does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana, but only to reappearance in the base of nothingness. Not being satisfied with that Dhamma I left it and went away.*

*M.I.167*

mind was strong and determined. However, eventually he was convinced that this type of torturing his body would not at all be of any use. He is reported to have thought:

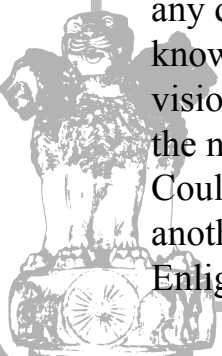
“Whatever recluses or Brahmins in the past have experienced painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, this is the utmost, and there is none beyond this. Moreover, whatever recluses and

the Brahmins in the future will experience painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, this is the utmost, and there is none beyond this. And whatever recluses and Brahmins at present experience painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, this is the

utmost, there is none beyond this. However, by this racking practice of austerities I have not attained any superhuman states, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. Could there be another path to Enlightenment?”



*Five Companion Ascetics*

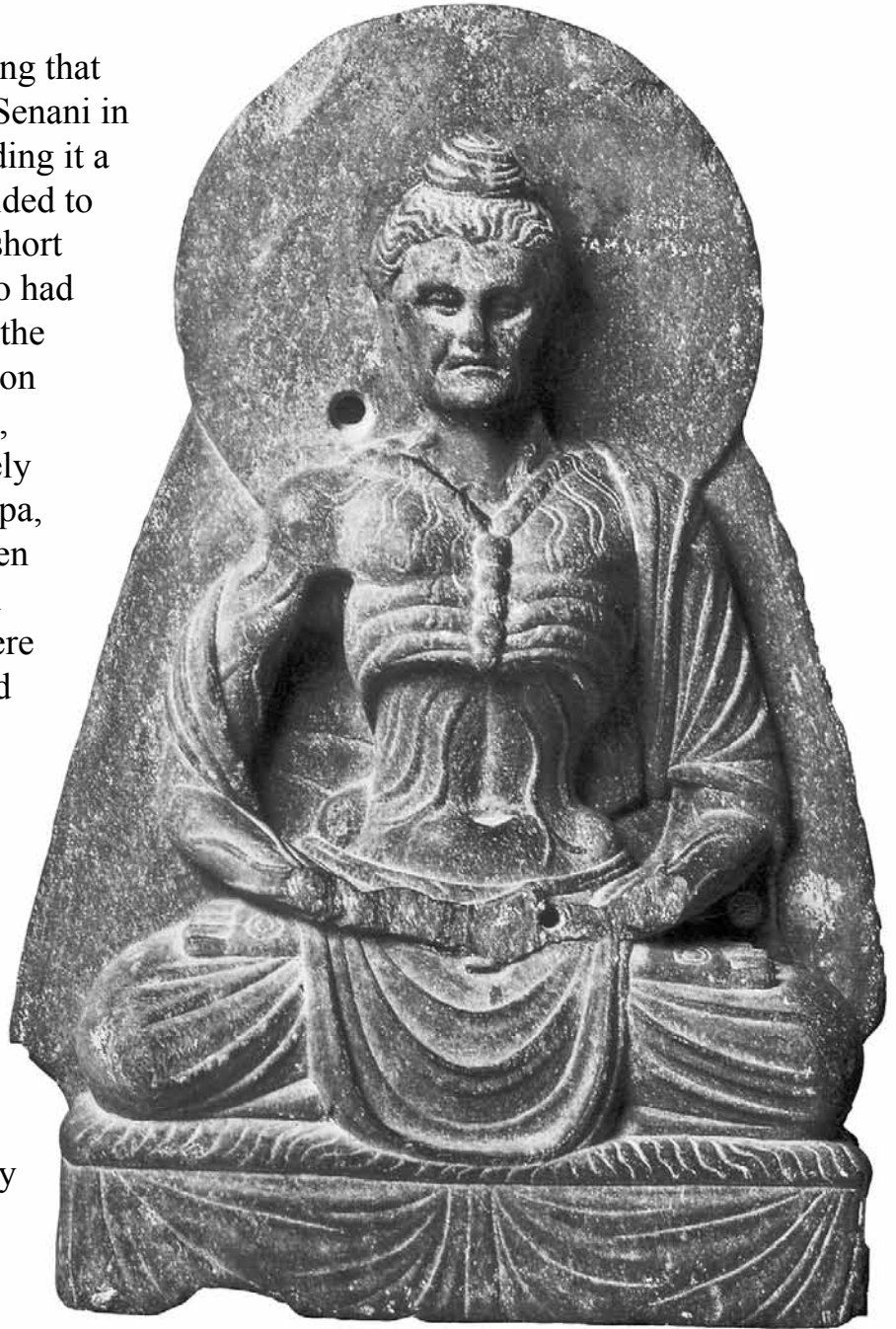


There was no other teacher he could turn to for guidance. Uddaka Ramaputta's achievement was the highest known at that time. The only option, then, was to find out by himself what was there for him to attain beyond that Samadhi which would really solve the problems of suffering beings.

Then the Bodhisatta, leaving that place, went to the village Senani in Uruvela province and, finding it a suitable environment, decided to take residence there. In a short time, the five ascetics, who had ordained themselves after the naming ceremony prediction of his becoming a Buddha, found him. The five, namely Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama, and Assaji, then started accompanying him and looking after him. There was a beautiful river called Neranjara and either side of it had shading trees blooming with flowers. There were rocks for them to sit and meditate. Accompanied by five companions the Bodhisatta continued ascetic practices hoping to attain wisdom deeper than the teachers of the day did offer.

The accepted belief among the ascetics of

the day was that it was by austere practices one could eradicate defilements of the mind. Taking it for granted, the Bodhisatta increased the severity of his ascetic practices, day by day. He increasingly reduced his food intake and totally stopped going for alms. For sometime, he ate only the fruits and leaves and then limited that, too, to what have fallen near him. His extreme penance even involved dangerous practices like trying to survive without breathing. He was physically extremely weak, though his



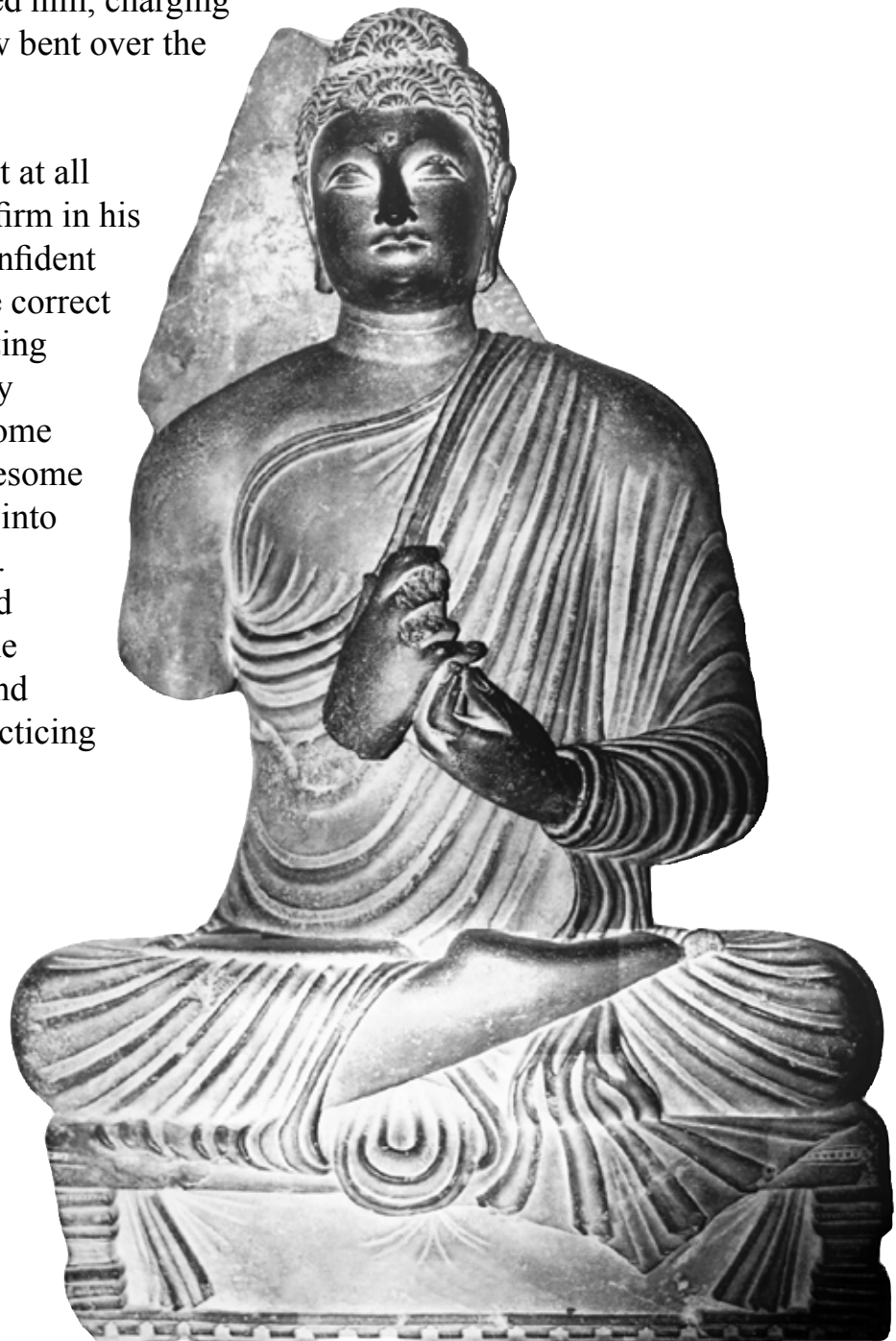
*Austere Practices*





**W**hile thinking of an alternative path, the technique of anapana sati that he practiced as a child and surprised everybody at the ploughing festival, came to his mind. He tried to meditate in that way but it was not very successful since he was very weak physically. Realizing that with an emaciated weak body he would not be able to develop a pure and strong mind, the Bodhisatta gave up self-mortification completely, and started taking solid food gradually. The people in the village Seneni were happy to see him coming for alms again but the five companions, who never thought that it was possible to attain any spiritual height by any means other than severe penance, were not happy. They, including Kondanna, who was so sure of Siddhartha's renunciation at the naming ceremony, thought that he was admitting failure and reverting to normal living. Therefore, they deserted him, charging that "Siddhartha is now bent over the luxuries."

The Bodhisatta was not at all disappointed, but was firm in his determination, very confident that he was now on the correct path. He started analyzing his own mind, carefully discriminating wholesome thoughts from unwholesome thoughts, and entering into raptures when stressed. Balancing, calming and developing his mind, he was approaching the end of the sixth year of practicing penance.





## The Enlightenment

It was the morning of Wesak full-moon day, in the year 598 B C. Lady Sujata of Senani was preparing for her annual milk-rice offering to the holy banyan tree, where she believed a powerful deity was residing. She started this practice many years back when her request for a son was believed to have been granted by the deity. While making milk-rice for the offering, she sent her maid Punna to clean sweep around the tree. She saw the Bodhisatta Siddhartha sitting cross-legged in the shade of the tree and, amazed at the impressively handsome figure, she ran back to inform Sujatha that she witnessed the deity appearing in the shade of the tree. Elated with happiness, Sujatha, wasting no time, carried her milk-rice in a golden bowl to where the banyan tree was, hoping to see the deity with her own eyes. She witnessed the Bodhisatta still sitting in the shade of the tree and was delighted, taking him as her deity. She offered the milk-rice to the hands of the Bodhisatta, and said, “As my wish had come true let your wish also come true.” She left the golden bowl to the Bodhisatta and went back sizzling with joy.

After consuming the milk-rice offered by Sujatha, the Bodhisatta went to the riverbank and, floating the golden bowl in the river, wished: “I want to attain Enlightenment today itself. If my wish will be fulfilled let the bowl float upstream.” And, to his delight, the bowl went upstream and sunk in the middle of the river. Encouraged by that miracle, the Bodhisatta spent the afternoon in the Sala (Canon Ball) tree garden nearby, refreshing the samadhis attained during his stay with Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta.



*Sitting in the Shade of the Bodhi Tree*



In the evening the Bodhisatta was walking towards to the Pipal tree (now the Bodhi tree) when a grass cutter Sotthiya saw him. Thinking that the Bodhisatta needed something to sit on, the grass cutter offered him eight bunches of grass. The Bodhisatta prepared a seat in the shade of the tree and sat facing east. While sitting on it he made a firm resolution that he would not get up from the seat without attaining Enlightenment even if does amount to drying out of all his blood and flesh, leaving only bones and sinews.

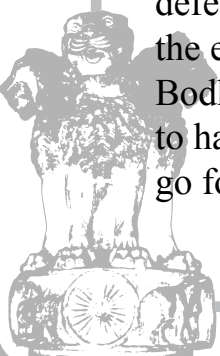


*Brahmin Offering a Pile of Grass for Sitting*

The inner struggle the Bodhisatta launched to totally eradicate deep rooted desires of sensuality, survival, and annihilation (*kama tanha*, *bhava tanha* and *vibhava tanha*) and also ill-will, delusion, etc., is described as the “war against death” (death being personified as *maro papima* Death-Lord, the Evil One). The Ten-fold army of Death is given as:- 1) Lust, 2) Hatred, 3) Thirst and hunger, 4) Craving, 5) Indolence, 6) Cowardice, 7) Doubt, 8) Ingratitude and stubbornness, 9) Profit, eulogy, honour, cheap popularity, 10) Boasting and contempt of others. Overpowering all evil, defeating “Mara” with the entire retinue, the Bodhisatta is reported to have affirmed: “...I go forward to battle.



*Four Brahmas Offering Four Bowls*





**M**ara shall not drive me from my position. That army of yours, which the world, together with gods, conquers not, by my wisdom I go to destroy as I would an unbaked bowl with a stone. Controlling my thoughts, and with mindfulness well established, I shall wonder from country to country, training many a disciple. Diligent, intent, and practicing my Teachings, they, disregarding you, will go where, having gone, they grieve not."



*Daughters of Mara Trying to Tempt the Buddha*



*Mara the Evil One  
Challenging the Buddha*



*Mara the Evil One Challenging the Buddha*

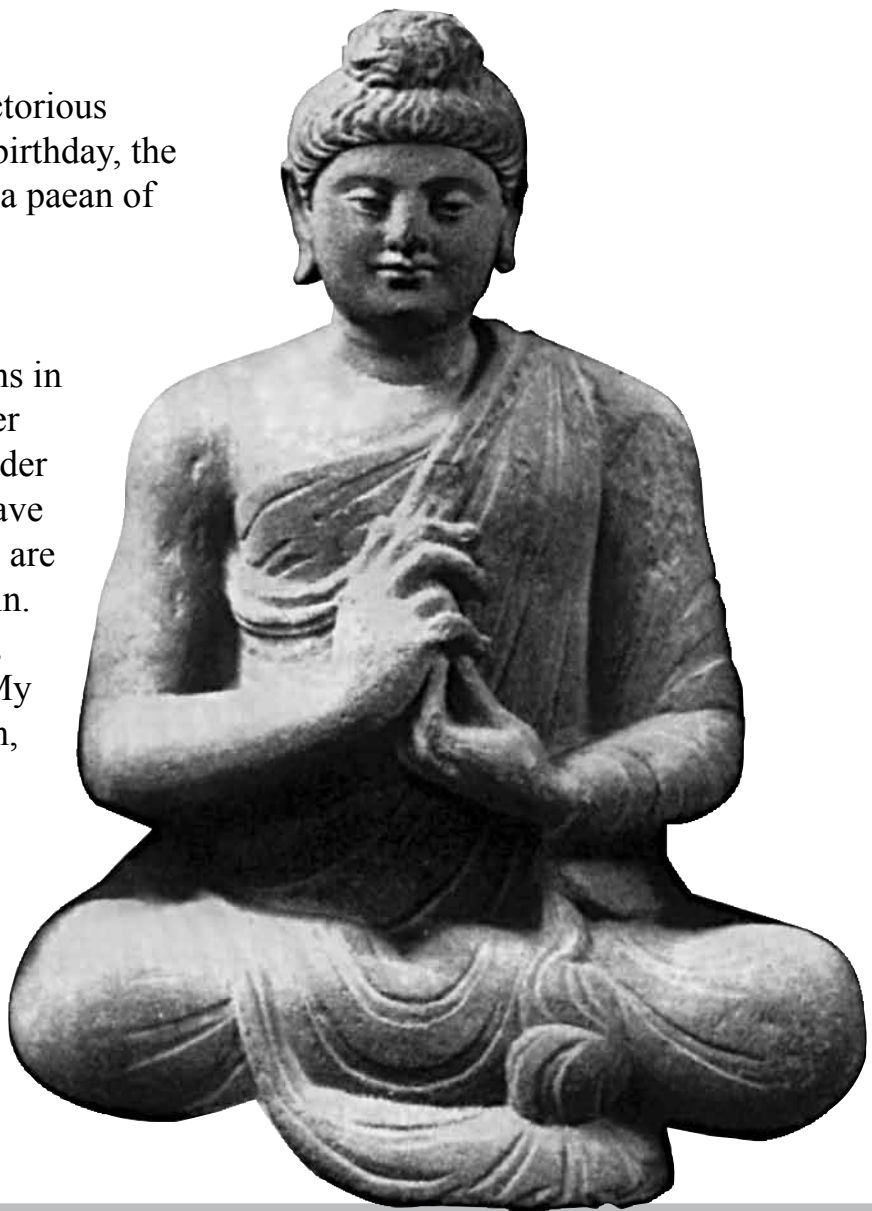




**W**ith his thoughts tranquillized, purified and cleansed, free from all impurities, the Bodhisatta developed the knowledge called Reminiscence of Past Lives (*Pubbenivasanussati nana*) in the first watch of the night. In the second watch of the night, he developed the knowledge called the Perception of Disappearance and Reappearance of Beings (*Cutupapata nana*). Crowning up all that, in the last watch of the night he developed the knowledge of Cessation of all Cankers (*Asavakkhaya nana*). This, in fact, was the point that he realized in accordance with the fact, the Four-fold Truth, i.e., Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Release from Suffering, and the Way to the Release from Suffering. He realized that he was released from the cycle of continuation (*Samsara*) on his own effort without any guidance or inspiration from any kind of supernatural agency; He was now an Enlightened person, a Buddha.

**S**itting in the same victorious posture, on His 35<sup>th</sup> birthday, the new Buddha uttered a paean of joy:

Repeated birth is suffering.  
I was, therefore, many births in  
the continuum, chasing after  
fruitlessly, to catch the builder  
of this house. Now that I have  
found out, you, the builder, are  
not making new house again.  
All your rafters are broken;  
hub of the roof shattered. My  
mind is fixed on dissolution,  
and I have mastered the  
cessation of lust.”

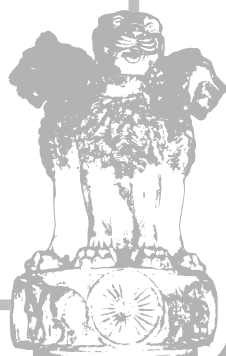


## The First Few Weeks and The First Disciples

**H**aving eradicated all impurities, without leaving even a trace, the Buddha enjoyed the purity and calm of the mind during the first week without going anywhere. The entire seven days were spent contemplating on Dependant Origination, in ascending and descending order, at the end of the first week, rising from His contemplation, He looked at the tree that sheltered Him during His inner struggle against all evil. To show His gratitude to the tree He kept on granting a kind graceful gaze for an entire week, setting an example to His future followers on being grateful even to inanimate things that help us in many ways. In the third week He engaged Himself in walking meditation from where He kept on gazing the Bodhi tree to the spot that He had his victorious seat ( Devoted Buddhists today call it “Diamond Seat” – *Vajrasana* ). The fourth week was devoted to contemplating on higher concepts, which are now presented in Abhidhamma Pitaka (one of the three segments of the Buddhist Scripture). It is said that He was sitting in a jewel-house created by deities for Him to spend the week.



*Tapassu Bhalluka Becoming First Devotees*



In the fifth week, leaving the Bodhi, the Buddha went to the shade of a banyan tree known as Ajapala, and spent another seven days of solitude enjoying the happiness of Liberation. On the seventh day a Brahmin, who was arrogant in nature and known for expressing his contempt of people with utterances like *hum hum* (off, off), happened to pass the place and asked the Buddha:

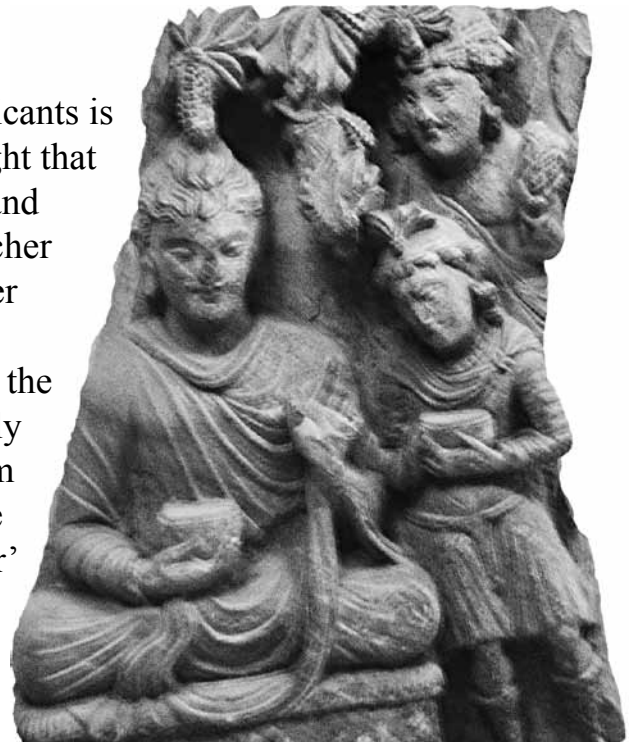
“Do you know, what makes a Brahmin? What are the characteristics of Brahmin?”



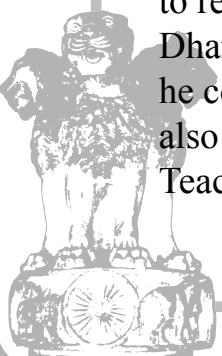
*Five Ascetics and the Buddha*

“Well, a Brahmin is a person who is free from evil, devoid of arrogance, and bereft of defilements. He guards his mind from impurities and leads a quality life. He is possessed of higher wisdom and not attached to anything in the world. A person of these qualities has the right to a claim of being a Brahmin” the Buddha replied.

The normal practice among the mendicants is to have a teacher. The Buddha thought that He should also follow the tradition and be an example to everyone by having a teacher to respect. “It is a pleasure to have a teacher to respect. Whom should I consider as my teacher?” He wondered. Then it occurred to the Buddha that there was no one else spiritually or intellectually advanced than Him for Him to respect as His teacher. “I should have the Dhamma that I have realized as my Teacher” he concluded. In fact, previous Buddhas also had their Dhamma appointed as their Teachers.



*An Offering Scene*





**T**here was a tree called Mucalinda nearby, and the Buddha chose the shade of it to spend another week of solitary joy. However, no soon than He sat under the tree, a very heavy pouring rain started with accompanying thunder and storm. The serpent (naga) Lord, called Muchalinda, who had his abode there, immediately came to protect the Master by coiling around and covering the Buddha's head with his hood. The rain continued for a week and Mucalinda did not move out and gave shelter to the Buddha.



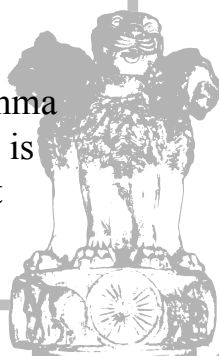
*Dhammacakkappavattana,  
the Buddha's First Sermon*



*An Offering Scene*

**A**t the end of the week, when the rainstorm was over Muchalinda, the Naga Lord, appeared before the Buddha, assuming a form of a young human being. To Muchalinda who was paying homage to him, the Buddha said the following:

“Solitude generates happiness to the content person who has realized the Dhamma he has learned. Happy is non-violence and restraint towards all beings. Happy is the detachment in the world and subjugation of all sensual desires. The highest happiness is the checking of the conceit of Self (egoism).”



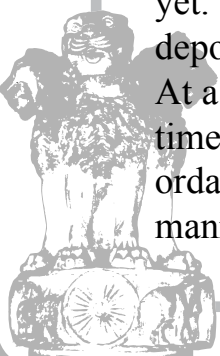


*Buddha Delivering a Sermon*

Having spent the sixth week like that, the Buddha moved towards another tree in the vicinity. It was called Rajayatana. At the end of the week that He

spent at Rajayatana, two merchants, Tapassu and Bhallika, by name, coming from Ukkala, saw the Buddha. The two brothers, who were taking some merchandise in 500 carts, offered some food made of rice pops with honey.

Having instructed on good moral living, they accepted the Buddha as their Teacher, and expressed their willingness to have the Buddha and His Dhamma as their refuge. This being the first time anyone accepted the Buddha in that manner their names are recorded in the history of the Sasana as the first Upasakas who found refuge in two "Refuges". The Sangha, the third refuge, had not being founded yet. They obtained some hair from the Buddha as a memento, which was later, deposited either in Shwedagon Pagoda in Burma or Girihandu Seya in Sri Lanka. At a later day, they reported to have visited the Buddha again at Rajagaha. At that time, Tapassu attained Sotapatti phala and remained a lay-man, while Bhallika ordained and became an arahanta. Having spent the first seven weeks in this manner, the Buddha then went back to where the Ajapala banyan tree was.





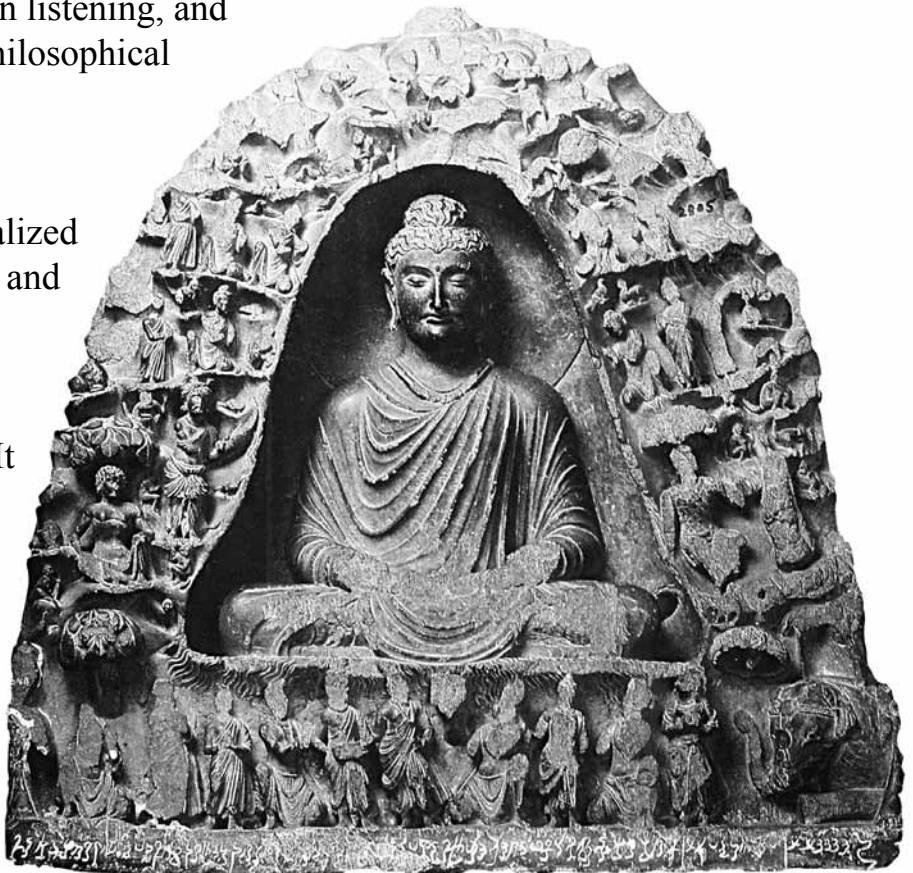
## Missionary Life Begins

Having experienced the joy of release and purity of mind for seven weeks the time had come for the Buddha to share His newly achieved wisdom with the suffering beings of the world that He always wanted to help. The following thoughts, however, arose in His mind when He was thinking of the nature of the possible audience mainly consisting of ordinary people who are generally not interested in listening, and understanding of deep philosophical truths.

“The Dhamma I have realized is indeed profound, deep and difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, and subtle and to be understood by the wise. It is not attainable by pure reason. These people, however, are attached to sensual pleasures, enjoying them and exited by them. For such crowds wallowed in lust, it will be difficult to see this intricate Doctrines of Dependent Origination and Nibbana

– the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the release. If I were to teach these difficult-to-comprehend things, they may not understand me. That will make me weary and tired.”

“With difficulty I have comprehended the Dhamma. Now it seems that there is no use of proclaiming it. Those who are led by lust and hatred do not easily understand this Teaching. Lust-ridden and shrouded in darkness, they do not see the Dhamma that goes against the stream, which is abstruse, profound, difficult to comprehend and subtle.”



*Buddha Delivering a Sermon*



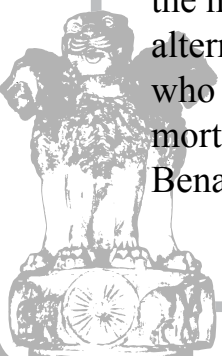


Then, with further insight, the Buddha was convinced that there actually are some people in the world who are ready for a teaching that would make them realize the real nature of things. “There are beings who have little dust in their eyes. They would fall away not getting the opportunity of hearing Dhamma. People are misled with teachings taught out by impure, corrupt fellows.” On His scanning of the people who were plunged in grief and sorrow, overcome by birth and decay, the Buddha saw the world as a lotus pond. Some lotuses remain deep in the water, thrive under water. Some others, grown in the water, have come to the level of the surface, and ready to bloom. The same way, there are people who are intelligent enough to turn their ears to the correct teachings and get the benefit out of them.

Having decided to proclaim the Dhamma for the benefit of men and gods, the Buddha reflected on people who should be His first listeners. It occurred to Him that it was nothing but right to share His Teaching first with Alara Kalama, His former guru in spiritual search. “He will understand this profound Teaching if I were to teach him first,” the Buddha thought. Then He came to know with His divine eye (*dibba chakku*) that he had expired one week back. Next, He thought of Uddaka Ramaputta as the suitable listener, but found out he had, unfortunately, died the night before. As the third alternative, He thought of the Five Ascetics, who kept company and attended to His needs during the time He practiced self-mortification. They were still practicing as a group, at Isipatana Deer Park near Benaris. Therefore, He decided to visit them and teach His Dhamma.



*An Offering Scene*



**O**n His way to Benaris, He met an Ajivaka called Upaka. Attracted by the radiant complexion and pleasant looks of the Buddha he approached the Buddha and asked:

“Friend, you look very pleasant and your eyes bright. Your features are attractive and skin is radiant and clean. Who is your teacher? Or, on account of whom have you renounced lay life?”

“I have overcome everything; detached from everything. Knowing the true nature of everything, I have destroyed craving and absorbed in freedom. As I have realized everything myself, who shall I point at as my teacher? I have no teacher or any one equal to Me anywhere in the world of gods and men. Presently, I am the only Arahant in the world, the Buddha Supreme, the Teacher par excellence, cooled and liberated. I am going to the city of Kasi to set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion. In this world of blindness I will beat the drum of immortality,” said the Buddha.

“Then, friend, you claim to be Ananta Jina, Conqueror-the Limitless.”

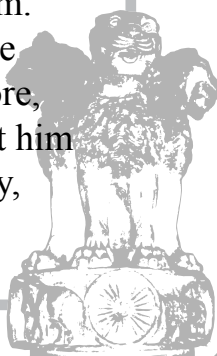
“In fact, the Conquerors are like me; who have destructed the defilements. Upaka, I have destroyed all defilements. Therefore I am a ‘Jina’ a Conqueror.”

“Well, it might be so.”

Curtly making that remark, Upaka took a by-road and went nodding his head.

It, of course, was a rebuff, but, not perturbed, he continued His journey towards Benares.

Seeing the Buddha approaching, the five ascetics, who were in Migadaya of Isipatana, had a discussion among themselves regarding the way to receive Him. Healthy and pleasant look of the Buddha gave them the wrong message that He had given up the effort to attain Buddhahood and reverted to easy life. Therefore, they decided not to extend Him the usual gestures of respect. “Let us not greet him with reverence and wait upon. We will not take his robes and the bowl, we may, however, prepare a seat so he may sit if he likes to,” they agreed.



**H**owever, when the Buddha was getting closer to them, they could not keep to their agreement. One walked to Him and respectfully took His robes and the alms bowl. Another escorted Him to the seat and yet another brought water for Him to wash His feet. Yet, when they were all sat and settled, they started addressing Him “*Avuso*” meaning “friend”. One only calls “*Avuso*” to his equal or a junior. Then the Buddha said:

“It is not proper for you, Monks, to address ‘**Tathagata**’ by name or call him ‘*avuso*’. Tathagata is fully Enlightened. Listen to me; allow me, as I have attained Deathlessness (*Amata*), to instruct you in Dhamma. If you do as I instruct, you will also, in no time, attain, by your own wisdom and in this very life, the supreme goal of noble faring for which sons of noble families give up secular life and join mendicancy.”

Then the five ascetics retorted asking:

“How is it possible for you, friend Gotama, to attain such supreme heights, having reverted back to luxurious life as you did fail to attain the super normal knowledge worthy of nobles even by practicing painful austerities?”

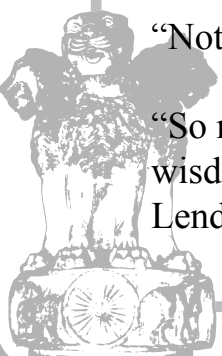


**T**he Buddha tried to convince them that He had not reverted back to the luxuries of life or gave up His search of wisdom. Instead, He had found what He was striving for, and had become *Tathagata* (Thus-gone). They refused to accept His claim. Having failed to convince the adamant ascetics three times, the Buddha addressed them and asked:

“Have I, monks, ever spoken to you like this? Do you remember any occasion that I have made a claim like this?”

“Not at all. You never spoke like this before.”

“So monks, today I make the genuine claim that I have attained the supreme wisdom that sons of noble families renounce the world and become mendicants for. Lend me your ears. I will instruct you in Dhamma.”





**T**hen the five ascetics were fully convinced of the Buddha's achievement. Very pleased and interested, all five of them gave undivided attention to what

the Buddha had to teach them. Then the Buddha delivered His first ever Sermon to his fellow farers who cared for Him during the difficult times of His struggle to attain Enlightenment. The Sermon is recorded in the Vinaya text *Mahavaggapali*, and respectfully recited as '*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*' everywhere in the Buddhist world. It explains how futile it is to practice extremes, and the way to attain Four-fold Truths. At the end of the Sermon, Kondanna attained the first stage of the Path, the Sotapannahood. As he was the first ever disciple to attain any stage of sanctification in the Buddha's missionary career, he is called Anna Kondanna (Kondanna, the attainer).

Over the next two days, the Buddha divided the five ascetics into two groups. The group of two went on alms-search the first day during which time the Buddha instructed the remaining two. On the next day, the group of three went out for bringing alms while the Buddha instructed the group of two. Having been instructed this way they all attained Sotapannahood and were ready for further instruction.

The Buddha then addressed all five of them together and delivered *Anatta lakkhana Sutta*. On the hearing of that Sermon, which explains soullessness, all the five ascetics attained Arahamthood.

**T**hat was an eventful rainy season in Benaris for the Buddha and the five monks. One morning, when the Buddha was in walking meditation, there came Yasa the young son of a millionaire, "Lay life is troublesome; oppressive and distressful is lay life." Noticing him, the Buddha addressed him and said "Here is a trouble-free life; neither oppressive, nor distressful. Come and sit here. I will teach you how to live a life of freedom." Yasa entered the monastery, removing his sandals and leaving them at the door. Having listened to the Buddha's Sermon, he attained the first stage of sainthood, Sotapatti.



*Dhammacakkappavattana, the Buddha's First Sermon*

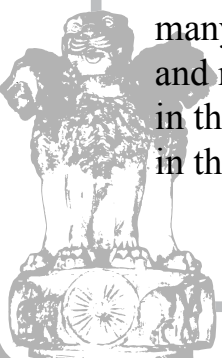


**M**eanwhile, his father deployed many men to find where his son had gone, and he walked in the direction of the monastery. From the sandals left outside he came to know that Yasa had entered the monastery and asked from the Buddha about him. Assuring him that he could see his son soon, the Buddha delivered a Sermon to him. He attained Sotapatti and became a lay follower of the Buddha by taking refuge in the Three Jewels, i.e., Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. In fact, he was the first follower who took refuge in the Three Jewels. His son, who was listening to the Sermon in camera, attained Arahathood, the final stage of sainthood, and obtained ordination as a Buddhist monk.

The news that Yasa, the son of Banares Setthi, ordained as a follower of the Buddha, spread very fast. Four young friends of Yasa, namely, Vimala, Subahu, Punjabi, and Gavampathi, came to visit him and joined the Buddhist Sangha. This was followed by fifty more young men of wealthy families. As a result, the number of Arahant monks shot up to sixty. The Buddha, then addressing sixty Arahants, instructed thus:



“Monks, I am free from all bonds, both divine and human. You, too, are monks, free from all bonds, both divine and human. Go forth, Monks, for the good of many; for the welfare and happiness of many; for the benefit and happiness of gods and men. Let two do not take the same route. Preach the Dhamma that is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, excellent in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter. Proclaim the holy life perfect and pure.”





Having said these words He sent all sixty arahants on the mission of teaching Dhamma. The Buddha then set off to Uruvela.

**O**n His way to Uruvela, the Buddha had a rest for a while, in a wayside forest. There He met a group of young friends called Bhaddavaggiya Kumaras (gang of good princes). They had come to the forest with their wives to enjoy a day out. One of those princes who had no wife had brought an escort girl. While others were having bath she ran away with their valuables. The group was hunting for her all over the forest when they met the Buddha resting there. Informing the Buddha what had happened they ask Him whether He saw any woman passing by. The Buddha questioned back:

“Tell me, what is wiser, the search for a runaway woman or search for one’s own self?”

“Venerable Sir, it is definitely wiser to find out oneself rather than looking for a runaway woman,” they replied.

“Then why do not you sit here? I will teach you how to search for ones own self.”



*Buddha with Brahmins*

**T**hen all of them sat around the Buddha and listened to the Sermon. At the end of it, everyone attained to one of the first three stages of emancipation, depending on the maturity of each, and they all wanted to be ordained. The Buddha acceded to the request. Having sent them on the mission of spreading the good Teaching, the Buddha proceeded to His destination, Uruvela.

At Uruvela, the Buddha encountered three brothers known as Kassapas, who had become ascetics. Having achieved mundane jhanic (dhyana) abilities of performing miracles, they were instructing 500, 300, and 200 pupils respectively. The Buddha managed to convince them that their achievements, which were still mundane, did not help them to eradicate defilements in their minds. Having converted them and made them all achieve Arahant hood, the Buddha thought of visiting King Bimbisara of Rajagaha to keep His promise to visit him after the Enlightenment.



## From Rajagaha to Kapilavatthu

**K**ing Bimbisara came to know that his friend Prince Siddhattha had attained Enlightenment and was on the way to Rajagaha city with one thousand monks, including the three Kassapa brothers. “I must go to receive Him as He is coming to visit me as promised,” he thought. The King arranged to receive him at the Palm Garden, some distance away from the Rajagaha city. Many thousands of people went there to witness their king receiving the newly Enlightened saint. Having heard the news, a Licchavi king, called Mahali, also came to the palm garden to see the Buddha. It is reported that the Brahmin Sirivaddha, Brahmin Vaccha, Samiddhi the Millionaire, and Visakha the Millionaire, were among the well-known people present in the crowd. After the Buddha delivered a Sermon, many became His followers.



*Buddha with Brahmins*

King Bimbisara, elated with happiness, declared that it was a wish fulfillment for him to have the Buddha visited his country and be privileged to become the first king to listen to the Dhamma. He invited the Buddha for alms the next day, and after the offering, requested Him to accept his royal garden called Veluvana (the Bamboo Grove) as a dwelling place. The Buddha accepted the offer and moved in with the monks to the first-ever Buddhist monastery “Veluvanarama”.

**T**here lived a wandering ascetic called Sanjaya, near Rajagaha, with 250 followers. He had two brilliant pupils. They, Kolita and Upatissa by name, came from brahmin families and were disappointed with secular life and sensual pleasures. They, though had joined the group to get training under Sanjaya, were not very happy with his teachings and were looking for something better.



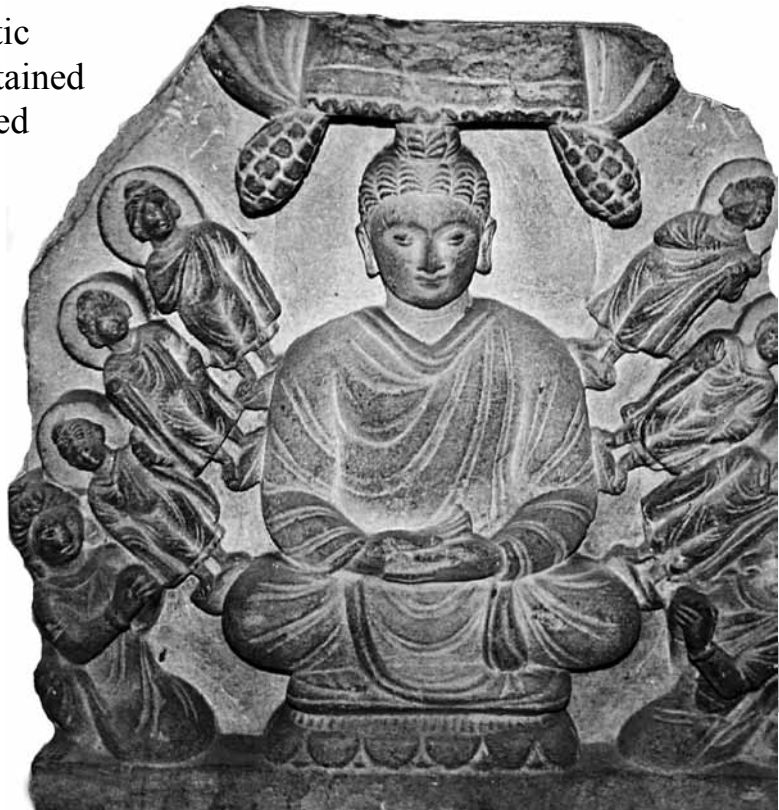


Every morning they would go out taking two different paths, meeting various teachers and compare their experiences in the evening. One day, Upatissa met the Buddhist monk, who was on his alms round, by accident, and ask him about his Teacher and the Teaching he had accepted. Revealing that he was a follower of the Buddha, Assaji therā uttered a Stanza (Gatha) summing up the Buddha's Teaching:

Of things that arise from a cause  
Their cause the Buddha revealed  
And also the cessation of them  
Thus teaches the Great Ascetic

The first two lines were sufficient for Upatissa to see the very depth of the Dhamma. Having attained first stage of Sainthood on the spot, he went back to Kolita and uttered the Stanza. No sooner than Upatissa completed uttering the fourth line, he too attained the first stage of Sainthood. Overwhelmingly happy over their success in finding the true Dhamma, they wanted to share it with their teacher. Nevertheless, to their dismay, the teacher refused to become a follower of another, saying that it would lower his status as a master. Many of his followers, however, volunteered to accompany Kolita and Upatissa when they set off to Veluvanarama to join the Buddha's Order. Both were admitted to the Order by the Buddha, and Upatissa came to be known as Sariputta while Kolita as Moggallāna. After their attainment of Arahant hood, the Buddha proclaimed them as the chief disciples (agga savaka) of Him.

The news that the ascetic Siddhattha, having attained Buddhhood, has visited Rajagaha city and lived in a monastery offered by king Bimbisara, was conveyed to King Suddhodana. Although it was not his dream to have his son become an enlightened saint, the king was anxious to see Him. He sent a group of courtiers to escort the Buddha back to Kapilavatthu. They visited the Buddha, listened to His Dhamma and, having attained Arahant hood, ordained themselves as monks.



*Miracle at Savatthi*



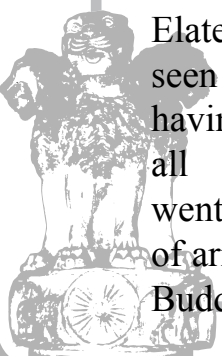
After ordination, they forgot about the mission that the King entrusted them. The king sent nine such missions, yet all nine groups, after attaining Arahathood, joined the Order and forgot the task that the king had sent them for. Finally, the king dispatched Kaludayi, a former playmate of the Buddha, giving him permission to enter the Order, to invite and accompany the Buddha to Kapilavatthu.

**K**aludayi visited the Buddha, listened to a Sermon, and attained arahanthood.

He, as like the previous messengers, joined the Order but did not forget his mission. When spring flowers were blooming, and the weather was fair and mild, he thought it was time to invite the Buddha to visit His native state. When he informed the Buddha about King Siddhodana's wish to see his Enlightened Son the Buddha agreed to visit Kapilavatthu.

**I**t took two months for the Buddha and the retinue of monks to arrive at Kapilavatthu since they chose to stop at various villages teaching people of the Dhamma. The Sakyans had made a monastery in the Banyan Tree Garden (which was known as Nigrodharama) for the Buddha and the many thousands of monks accompanying Him. However, the senior relations of the Buddha, who were known for their pride, refrained from paying homage to Him, thinking of the age.

When the Buddha noticed that only His younger relations paid respect to Him while the others remained sitting at the back of the crowd, it is reported, that He performed twin miracle (*yamaka patihariya*) of the Buddhas. Then the father king came forward and proclaiming, "My son, this is my third salutation to you," paid obeisance to the Buddha. All other senior relations, moved by this, came forward to pay their reverence. Then the Buddha delivered a Sermon which contained Vessantara Jataka, to all the Sakyans gathered there. Elated with happiness of having seen their prince returned back having attained Buddhahood, they all went home forgetting the duty of arranging for alms for the Buddha.





The following morning, the Buddha and the monks set forth in the streets of Kapilavatthu city for begging alms. King Suddhodana was shocked to hear that his son was begging for food in the streets. Feeling ridiculed and humiliated he hurried to the scene and asked his Enlightened Son:

“Son, you are ruining me with this disgraceful behavior. You are begging for food in the street where you used to travel in a golden palanquin. Why are you putting our royal lineage into this shame?”

“I am not putting you into shame, Great king! I am following the custom of my lineage.” The Buddha replied.

“But, in our Sakya clan no one has begged in the street for food. From the days of King Mahasammata, no one of our lineage has done a shameful thing like this. This is not the practice of Khattiyas,” the King retorted.

“Yes, King; it is not the practice of your lineage, I agree. However, I come from the Buddha lineage. Many thousands of previous Buddhas lived by alms-begging.” Having said that, the Buddha added: “Rise up. Be not heedless. Behave well and lead a righteous life. The righteous live happy both in this world and the next.”

The King was convinced, and having listened to the Buddha’s short Sermon, attained the first stage of sainthood – Sotapatti phala. The King then invited the Buddha to the palace, and there, the Buddha made a further exhortation to the King, which made the latter attain the second stage of sainthood – Sakadagami phala. On another day, the Buddha preached the king a Sermon, relating Dhammapala Jataka, and the King, having listened to the Sermon, attained Anagami phala. Five years later, the King, on his deathbed, listened to a Discourse from the Buddha Himself, and attained Arahathood. In seven days time, He attained Parinibbana as a lay arahant.



Many princes and princesses came and paid their obeisance to the Buddha at the palace, but Princess Yasodhara did not show herself up there. She, who took all pains of being deserted by the husband for many long years, and looked



after their child with utmost devotion, refusing proposals from her parents to remarry another prince, thought it was the duty of the Buddha to visit her if He believed in her devotion and piety. Understanding her stand, the Buddha visited her at her chambers. After she displayed her reverence, the King reported to the Buddha on how she spent her lonely years:

“Venerable sir, when my daughter heard that you had given up royal attire and started wearing yellow robes, she also began wearing yellow robes. When she was told that you were taking only one meal a day, she also did the same. When she heard that you had given up lofty couches; she lay on a low couch. When she heard that you had given up garlands and perfumes, she also gave them up. When her relatives offered to take her back to look after her, she did not care at all. So virtuous was my daughter”

Admiring her devotion, the Buddha related the Chandakinnara Jataka at that occasion.

**A**fter seven days of the Buddha’s arrival in Kapilavatthu, Princess Yasodhara happened to show the Buddha to her seven-year-old son, Rahula, telling the son that he could go to his father and ask for his inheritance. Rahula, in his innocence, went the Buddha and held His finger in affection and, feeling very happy said to the Buddha, “Happy, indeed, is your shadow to me, Venerable.” When young Rahula asked for his inheritance, the Buddha thought of making him inherit the most precious inheritance that He could give, and ordained Him as a novice under the tutelage of Sariputta.



The news that the Buddha ordained the young prince Rahula shocked King Siddhodana very much. He knew that everyone in the palace would very badly miss the little prince who was an apple of eye to everyone. He went to the Buddha and requested that He should never ordain any child without getting permission from the parents. The Buddha agreed to the request and instructed the monks accordingly.

**T**he marriage, consecration and house-warming ceremonies of Prince Nanda, the Buddha’s half brother (born to Pajapati Gotami), concurred the Buddha’s stay in Kapilavatthu. They held an alms-offering in the morning





the auspicious day. After the alms, the Buddha made Prince Nanda carry His alms bowl to the temple and when they reached there, He asked the prince whether He would join the Order. In respect to the Buddha, he said, rather unwillingly, he would. The Buddha ordained him but the young monk Nanda was not happy and failed to achieve any meditative progress. When asked by the Buddha the reason why he lagged behind, he confessed:

“I miss Janapada Kalyani. The time I carried your alms bowl, she came after, having tears in her eyes, and asked me to come back soon. I cannot forget that scene. I really miss her and cannot concentrate my mind and set for meditation.”

The Buddha then took him on a journey. On the way, he saw a she-monkey disfigured, burnt in a wild fire. The Buddha took him to see celestial beauties and asked:

“Who would you think more beautiful and attractive, your Janapada Kalyani or these celestial apsaras?”

“Compared to these, Venerable Sir, my Janapada Kalyani is like that burnt disfigured she-monkey” Nanda replied.

### *Ordination of Nanda*

“Would you like to have one of them as your consort?” the Buddha asked.

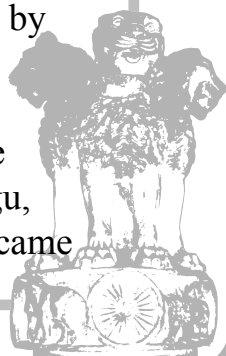
“If it is at all possible, Venerable Sir,” Nanda said shyly.

“Cheer up, Nanda. I guarantee that if you persevere in noble conduct, practice hard, and I may get one of them for you”.



**N**anda was happy and lived the monastic life without regrets, forgetting all about Janapada Kalyani. Having heard that Nanda was practicing to get an apsara, the monks in the monastery started calling him a “hireling”. Ashamed and humiliated, Nanda strived diligently, attained arahanthood very soon, and informed the Buddha that he no longer needed apsaras, or Janapada Kalyani. Later, Nanda was conferred with the title “greatest among the self-controlled”, by the Buddha.

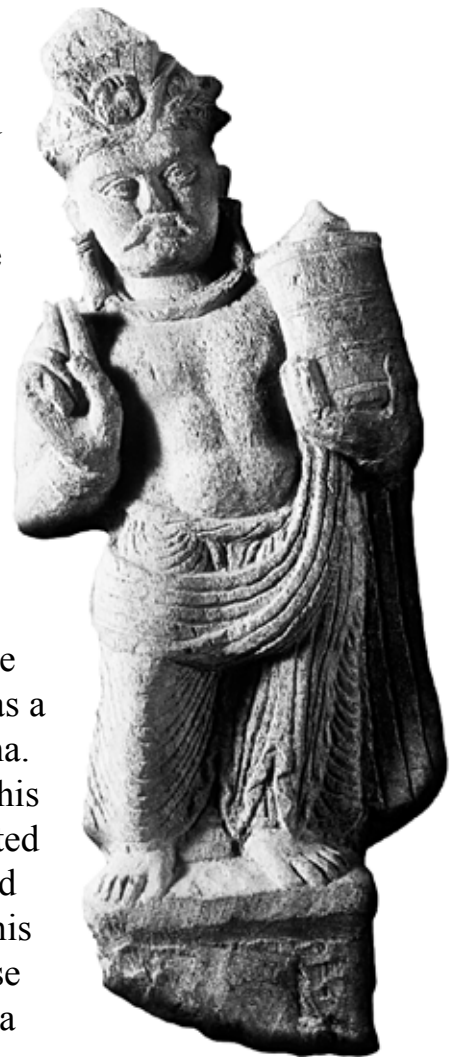
Having thus lived some time with his relatives, the Buddha went to Malla state and reached Anupiya Mango Grove. Six Sakya princes, namely, Ananda, Bhagu, Kimbila, Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, and Devadatta, with their hairdresser Upali, came there and joined the Order.



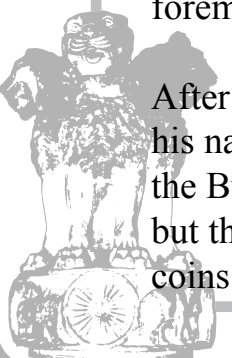
## Back to Rajagaha

From the Anupiya Mango Grove, the Buddha went back to Veluvanarama at Rajagaha where he spent the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rainy seasons. There He was invited by Licchavi kings to visit Vesali city which was troubled with three kinds of disasters, i.e., famine, plague, and haunting by evil spirits. He kindly accepted the invitation and visited Vesali city where He chanted Ratana Sutta to bless the city and its people. All three disasters were over with the Buddha's blessings and the people became very happy. After a fortnight of stay there, the Buddha came back to Rajagaha.

It was during His stay at Veluvana at Rajagaha that the Buddha first met the millionaire called Sudatta, who came to be known later as Anathapindika, owing to his generosity. He was a very pious and kind person and had heard that one day an enlightened saint will illuminate the world. , He came to know of the Buddha on a visit to his affluent brother-in-law, who was a state recognized millionaire and a devotee of the Buddha. He, in his excitement, had a sleepless night and started his journey to the monastery much before dawn. It is reported that the Buddha, sensing Sudatta's intense eagerness and piety, came out early in the morning and was awaiting his arrival. Having listened to the Buddha's initial Discourse given to him as a response to his salutary words, Sudatta (Anathapindika) attained Sotapatti stage. He, then, became a very close devotee of the Buddha and spent many millions of his wealth to promote the course of the Buddha's Teachings. In recognition of his contribution to the Sasana, he was, at a later time, honored by the Buddha with the title "the foremost alms-giver".



After the initial contact with Buddhism, Anathapindika went back to Savatthi, his native place, thinking of building a massive monastery for the Buddha and the Buddhist monks. He found Prince Jeta's park as an ideal site for a monastery but the prince claimed he would not depart with it even if one covers it with gold coins.



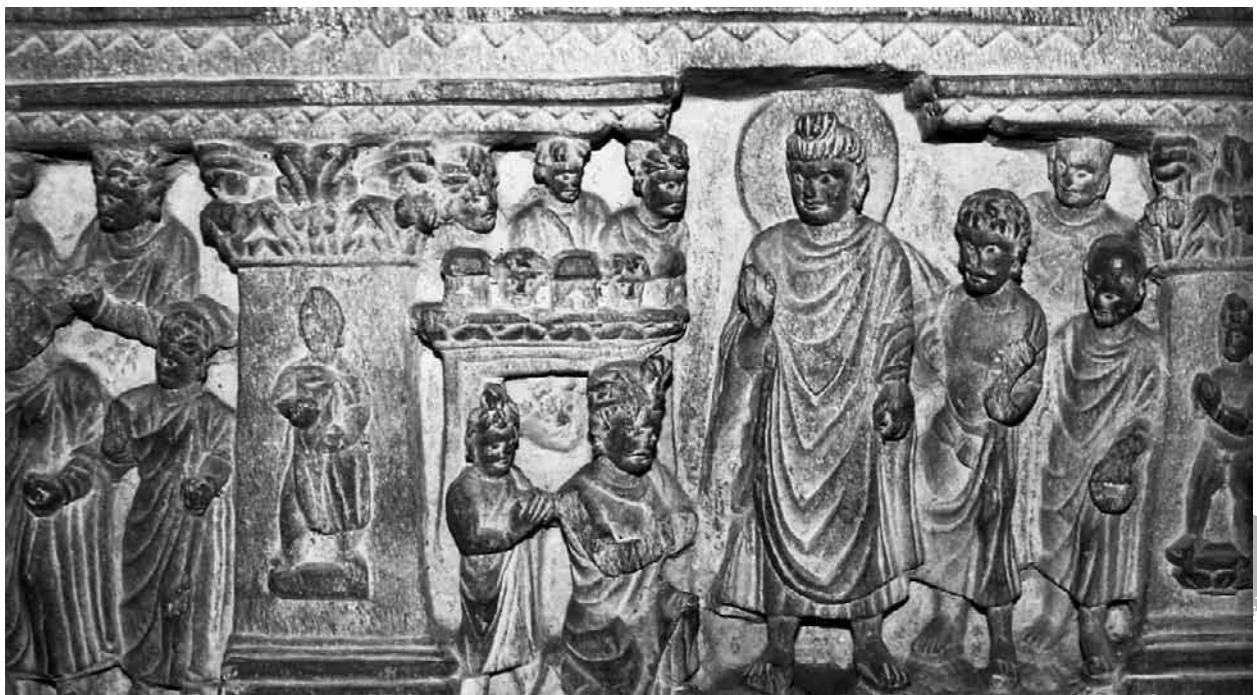


“If you claim that it is impossible for me to cover your land with gold coins I take it as your price for the land. If and when I fulfill that condition, therefore, your land is considered sold” said Anathapindika.

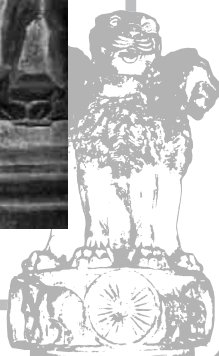
He immediately started covering Jeta’s park with gold coins. The prince watched this unusual act in amazement and before Anathapindika finished covering the entire land, stopped him and said:

“Alright, leave that small space and consider it as my contribution. You have the land.”

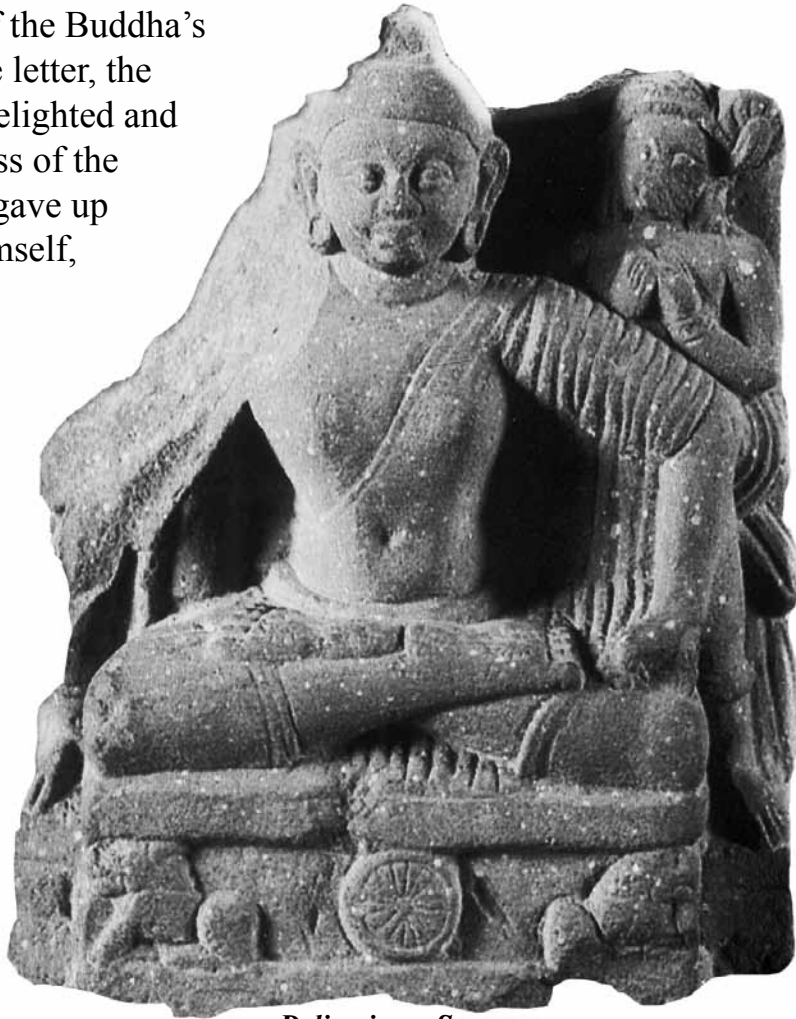
So the land was eventually changed hands. Having obtained the land thus, Anathapindika started the massive project of building the monastery complete with living quarters, toilets, spas, walking paths, alms halls, preaching halls and all amenities. When the construction of the temple was complete, he invited the Buddha to visit Savatthi, with monks, to accept it. He had arranged with many of his affluent friends to prepare suitable resting places for the Buddha and the accompanying monks at various stops along the way from Rajagaha to Savatthi. Therefore, the Buddha and the monks reached there without discomfort. When the Buddha arrived, the Setthi asked him how he should make the offering. “Offer it to the Sangha of four quarters who are present and not present,” the Buddha instructed. He did accordingly and named the monastery “Jetavanarama”. Having lived in the monastery teaching Dhamma to the many people there, the Buddha again set on His travels and came back to Veluvanarama at Rajagaha to spend the rainy season.



*Garahadinna and Sirigutta Encounter*



**K**ing Bimbisara of Magadha was a pen friend of King Pukkusati of Gandhara. The Magadha King wanted to share the blessing of having the Buddha Dhamma at his disposal with his friend in Gandhara. He wrote a long letter on a gold leaf to his friend containing salient points of the Buddha's Teachings. Having read the letter, the king of Gandhara was so delighted and convinced of the fruitfulness of the Buddhist practices that he gave up his throne and ordained himself, putting on yellow robes to follow the Buddha's way. On his way to Rajagaha, he met the Buddha at a potter's inn where the Buddha happened to transit on His return journeys to Veluvana from somewhere He had been to preach Dhamma. The Buddha taught him Dhamma at that night and he, after listening to the Discourse, attained Anagami phala, the third stage of sanctity.



*Delivering a Sermon*

Bimbisara had another friendly king named Tissa, in a far away state called Sovira. He wrote a letter containing a description of the Buddha's Teachings of causality and sent it to that king with an attachment of the life of the Buddha written on clothes. Having read the letter, he also decided to ordain himself, donning a yellow robe, in the name of the Buddha, and abdicated while his royal family and citizens were lamenting. He came to Rajagaha to listen to the Buddha and met Him at a place called Sappasondika Pabbhara (slope). After listening to the Dhamma, he attained Arahathood.





## Spread of the Dhamma & the Challenging Encounters

**A**fter the fourth rainy season at Veluvana of Rajagaha, the Buddha visited Kapilavatthu again. That time, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu and the Koliyans

of Devadaha were warming up for a war over the water of the Rohini River. Owing to a drought, the water in the river was diminishing rapidly, and the farmers of both cities needed water for agricultural purposes. When the people gathered at either banks of the river arguing and getting ready to attack each other, the Buddha went there and talked to them. He asked:

“Tell me, what is more valuable: water or life?”

“Venerable Sir, life is more valuable than water,” they replied.

“Why, then, are you trying to loose many lives for some water? You have to use what is available in peaceful manner and save lives.”

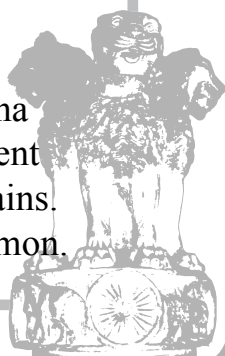
Advising them so, the Buddha told them four Jataka stories (Phandana, Daddabha, Latukika, and Vattaka) also. After the Discourse, 250 young men from each clan joined the Order of Sangha.

During this time, Queen Pajapati visited the Buddha and requested him to provide provision for women to join the order of Sangha.

The Buddha refused the request, and the queen left in frustration full, of years in her eyes.



The Buddha spent that rainy season in Kutagara Hall in Mahavana, near the Visala city. At the end of the season, he learned that his father King Suddhodana was seriously ill, and expecting to see his Enlightened son. He immediately went there with some monks and offered blessings so the king was relieved of all pains. Though the aged king was physically weak, he could follow the Buddha's Sermon.

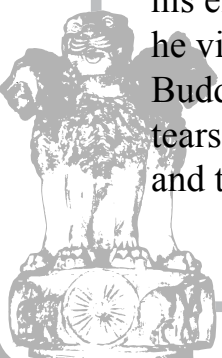


At the end, the King attained Arahathood. One week after that, the King Suddhodana realized Parinibbana. The Buddha instructed a cremation, worthy of an Arahant, be performed in honour of the King.

**A**fter the cremation of Suddhodana, the Buddha left for Vesali. Princess Yasodhara, having realized impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of mundane life, wanted to join the Order, and asked Pajapati Gotami how she could realize her aim. Mahapajapati knew that Yasodhara was not the right candidate and volunteered to make another attempt to get the door open for women in the Buddha's Sasana. She asked the wives of those 500 young men who joined the Order after the incident at the Rohini River (the struggle for water and the Buddha's intervention) also to join her. All of them, clad in yellow robes and having their heads shaven, went in procession to meet the Buddha. The Buddha refused the request first, but after Ananda's intervention, agreed to ordain the women on the condition that Mahapajapati Gotami agreed the eight acceptances (attha garu dhammas).

The Bhikkhuni Sasana, thus started, became strong and popular very soon. Many women joined the Order and attained Arahant hood. There is a collection of their paeans in Sutta Pitaka under the title "Theri Gatha". Princess Yasodhara also joined the Order at a later date and became an Arahant.

**T**he Buddha then went to Jetavanarama at Savatthi. Then Prasenajith Kosala, the King of Kosala, one of the very powerful kingdoms of India those days, visited Him. In fact, he was the king of the Savatthi city where Jetavanarama was, and therefore it was very advantageous for the spread of Buddhism that the powerful King came to the Buddha. The first discussion itself with the Buddha was sufficient for the King to develop a strong attraction for the Teachings of the Buddha. The King, who was of the same age with the Buddha, actually remained a faithful devotee and a very close friend of the Buddha until his death. It is reported that one day in his eightieth year, he visited the Buddha, prostrated before him, and said, stroking and kissing his feet, "I am eighty tears old and the venerable one is also eighty years old. I am a citizen of Kosala, and the venerable One is also one."





During His stay in Savatthi, the Buddha happened to learn that two Naga kings in Sri Lanka were ready to fight for a jeweled chair. The Buddha then, visited Sri Lanka and convinced them of the repercussions of war and the blessings of unity, illustrating His Sermon with several Jataka stories.

**T**he Buddha spent the sixth rainy season in Makula Pabbata, and returned to Rajagaha. The chief Setthi of Rajagaha had set an alms bowl made of sandalwood on top of a 90 feet tall bamboo pole, and proclaimed: “If any arahant in this land can take this bowl, let him take it”. Many non-Buddhist ascetics tried to obtain it from him explaining that although they were genuine arahants, they were reluctant to perform a miracle just to take a small thing like an alms bowl. However, the Setthi kept insisting that nothing short of a miracle will do for it. Then the Buddhist monk called Pindola Bharadvaja performed the miracle and took the bowl. Many common people were celebrating in jubilant mood but the Buddha thought it was unbecoming for the Buddhist monks to perform such miracles.

He declared it an offence if monks performed such miracles in future and ordered that the bowl should be broken into pieces and distributed among monks for medicinal purposes.

**H**aving learned that the Buddha had banned the monks to perform miracles the rival ascetics were very happy and even started challenging monks for such feats. Noticing those non-Buddhist ascetics and their followers ridiculed the Buddhist



*Miracle at Savatthi*

monks, King Bimbisara was worried and discussed the matter with the Buddha. The Buddha said that the prohibition did not apply for Him, like rules introduced by a king leaves provision for king to enjoy exemption, and therefore He could perform some miracles to dispel the doubts. It was agreed then the public should be informed that on the Asalha full-moon day the Buddha was performing miracles. The day arrived and there were many thousands of people thronged to see the miracle. To the joy of all who rallied, the Buddha performed the rare “Twin Miracle” (Yamaka Maha Pathariya), dispelling the doubts who had heard the charges of non-believers.



The next rainy season the Buddha spent in Tavatimsa heaven, preaching Abhidhamma to devas including his mother Mahamaya, now reborn in that heaven. Everyday the Buddha would provide a summary of what he taught at Tavatimsa to Ven. Sariputta. The pupils of Ven Sariputta then transmitted Abhidhamma to later generations. Having taught Abhidhamma for three months in Tavatimsa the Buddha returned to a place called Sankassa Dvara, and, having got the information from Moggallana, many thousands of people were awaiting His descend from heaven. The Buddha delivered an impressive Sermon which was followed by a discussion with Sariputta. Many monks and laymen attained Arahant hood and the monk called Ariya Metteyya offered the Buddha two robes and sat aside. Pointing at him, the Buddha addressed the crowd and introduced him as the next Buddha of this aeon. He will attain Buddhahood as the Metteyya Buddha, the Buddha predicted.

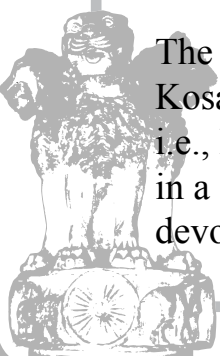
The Buddha spent the eighth rainy season in the Bhesakala Garden, near the Sumsumara city of Bhagga state. It was during His stay there that He visited Saccabhaddha Hill on the invitation of Saccabhadda, and left a footprint for him to respect. Then he came back to Jetavana.



*Descending from Heaven after Preaching Abhidhamma*

A naga king called Maniakkhika invited the Buddha to visit Sri Lanka again. Accepting the invitation the Buddha visited him at Kelaniya on the Vesakha Full-moon day of the eighth year of Enlightenment. God Sumana was among the crowd who listened to the Buddha's Sermon and, after the Sermon, he invited the Buddha to visit his abode on the Samantakuta (present Adam's Peak / Sri Pada). The Buddha gave him an impression of His foot on a piece of stone. Having visited a few other places in Sri Lanka, the Buddha returned to Savatthi.

The Buddha spent the ninth year after the Enlightenment at Ghositarama in Kosambi. During that time, the monks there divided themselves into two groups, i.e., Dhammadharas and Vinayadharas. This arose because of two monks engaging in a dispute over a minor vinaya rule. The dispute went too far and even the devotees got involved.





The Buddha wanted them to stop arguing and work as a united Sangha but they continued their arguments and were not willing to compromise. Failing His attempts, the Buddha went to Parileyya forest without informing anybody. There He spent the entire rainy season and was looked after by an elephant and a monkey. The people, however, came to know that the dispute among those monks was the reason why the Buddha left to the forest alone. Then they stopped providing food and other needs for those monks. The monks, discussing among themselves, decided to visit the Buddha as a group and ask for forgiveness. Then the Buddha returned to the city and after some time left for Savatthi.

The Buddha spent the eleventh rainy season at a Brahmin village called Ekanala. It was during His stay there that He, while passing the well-known Magadha fields, recommended that the monks should make their robes in the pattern of a paddy field divisions.



*Monkey Offering Honey to the Buddha at Parileyya forest*

The twelfth rainy season was one of near-starvation for the Buddha and His retinue. He was actually invited by a Brahmin called Udaya at Veranja village

to spend the rainy season there but, unfortunately, the Brahmin forgot all about it. The Buddha went there and found residence in a monastery near a huge margosa tree but there was no one to offer food, etc. The villagers were not interested in feeding religious practitioners because they were also undergoing difficulties since there was a drought followed by famine. Fortunately, there arrived a group of horse merchants to find shelter in the monastery. They had chickpeas to feed their horses, a portion of which they offered to the Buddha and His followers. They also had some honey and ghee, which the monks could mix with soaked chickpeas and prepare some food.



**H**aving so spent the rainy season, the Buddha kindly paid a visit to the Brahmin Udaya and only then, he was reminded of the invitation he made. Sorrow stricken and worried, he asked for forgiveness, confessing that too much of household work during the hard times made him forget all about it. Then he organized an almsgiving, after which the Buddha delivered a Sermon.

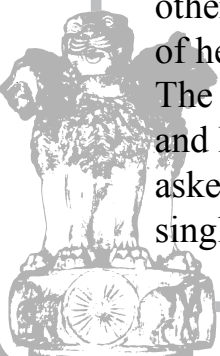
Then the Buddha spent some time in Benares. Kaccayana, the prime minister of King Chanda Pajjota of Avanti, being assigned the task of escorting the Buddha to Avanti, visited the latter. He, as a matter of fact, had accepted the task on the condition that he was to be granted permission to join the Order. So, first, he became a monk, attained Arahanthood, and then invited the Buddha to Avanti. The Buddha asked him to go there first and establish Sasana there, stating that He would visit when the time was ripe.

**T**hen the Buddha visited Vesali, and Kapilavatthu. To spend the thirteenth rainy season He went to a monastery on rock at Chalika. His fourteenth rainy season was spent at Jetavana of Savatthi.



It was during that time Rahula was higher ordained. Fifteenth rainy season He spent at Niggodharama at Kapilavatthu and came back again to Savatthi. Sixteenth and seventeenth rainy seasons He spent at Alavi and Rajagaha (Veluvanarama) respectively.

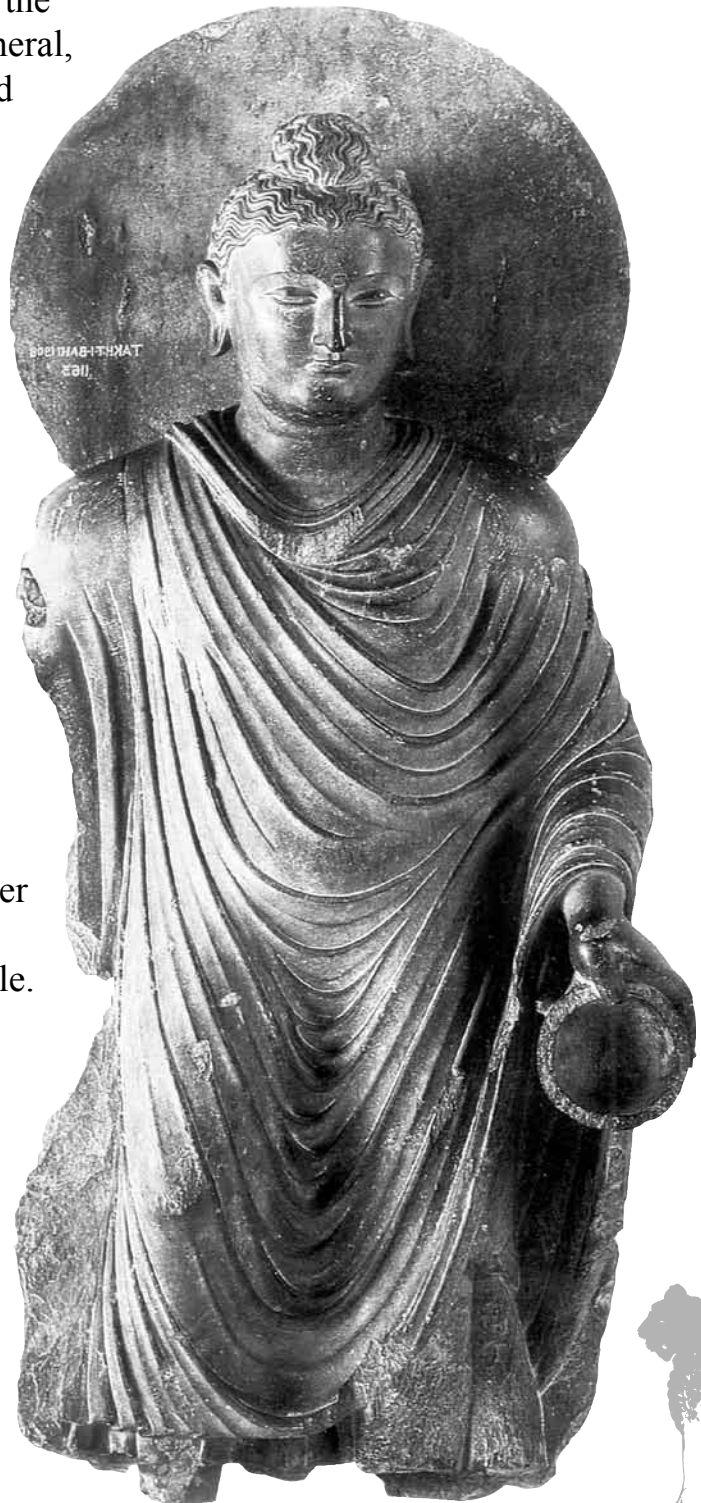
**T**here at Rajagaha lived a well-known prostitute called Sirima, a sister of the royal physician Jivaka. She suddenly died during the Buddha's stay there. The Buddha knew of a monk who had taken a fancy to her and suffering mentally thinking of her seductive beauty. In order to help that monk and many others who were her fans, the Buddha sent a message to the king that cremation of her body should not be done until He announced of a time and date. The Buddha announced that the cremation will take place only after seven days, and He would visit the cemetery. As planned, the Buddha arrived at the time and asked the king who was also present how much people paid to have her body for a single night.





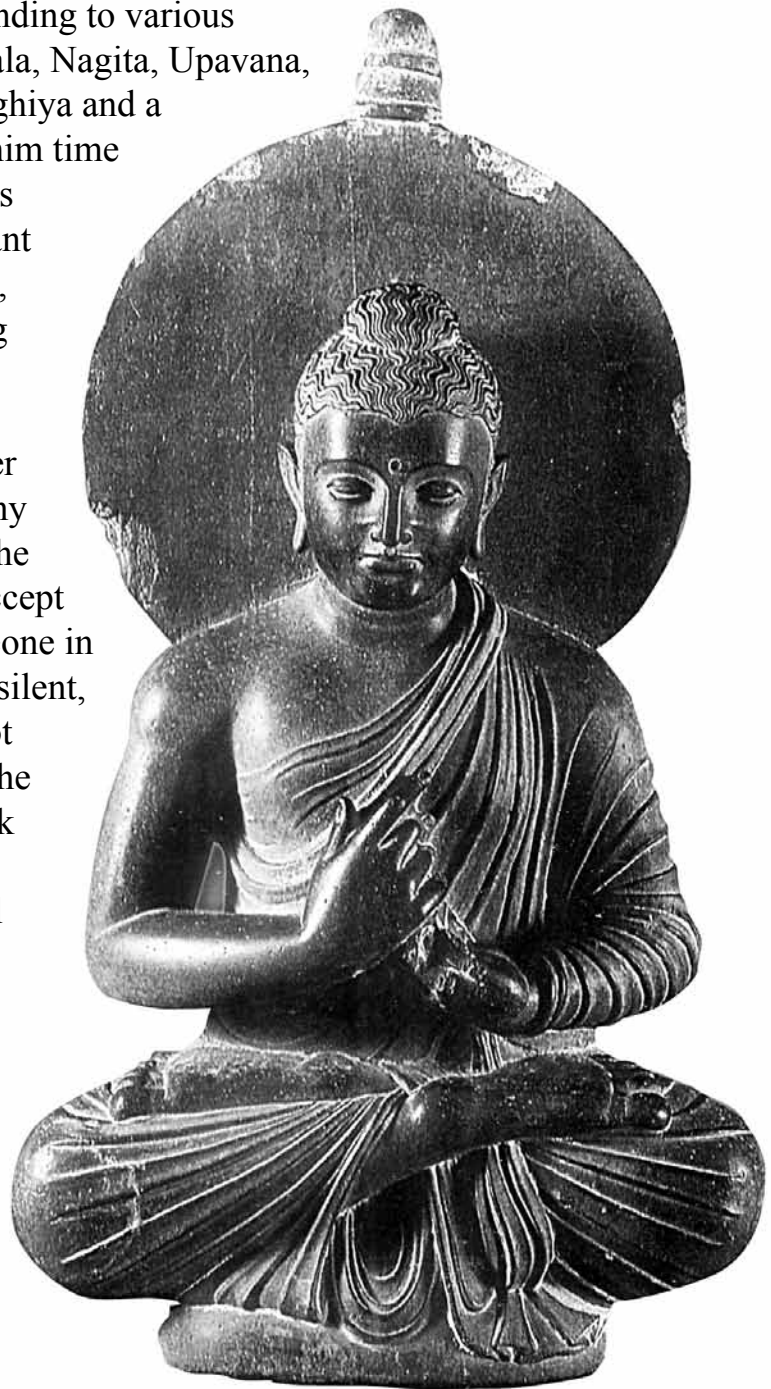
**W**hen the king answered that the cost for one night was one thousand in gold money, the Buddha made the king announce that one can have her body to keep for the same amount. When no one was interested, the king kept reducing the amount. Even when he said one could take it home free of charge people still remained disgusted, shrinking their noses to evade foul smell of the decomposing body. Then the Buddha delivered a Sermon focusing on the impurities of the body, and the foolishness of the pursuance of sensual pleasures. The monk, who was also present, as the Buddha had made him attend the funeral, realized the truth about the three-fold nature of conditioned things. After the funeral, the Buddha went to Savatthi and spent a few months there.

**T**he next two rainy seasons of the Buddha were spent in Chaliya Pabbata. Having spent His twentieth rainy season in Veluvanarama of Rajagaha, the Buddha went to Savatthi to spend the rest of rainy seasons mostly in Jetavanarama except the six seasons he spent at Pubbarama in the same city. This does not mean that He did not travel much. The other two seasons in the year the Buddha used to travel for the benefit of people. When the Buddha was in Savatthi, Anathapindika and Visaka were devotedly looking after him.



## The Last 24 years

**D**uring the first 20 years of His ministry, the Buddha had no permanent personal assistant to travel with Him and attending to various needs. The monks like Nagasamala, Nagita, Upavana, Sunakkhatta, Sagata, Radha, Meghiya and a novice called Cunda, were with him time to time. Now that the Buddha was 55 years old, the need of a constant companion was felt. The Buddha, one day, when He was addressing the assembly where many senior disciples were also present, indicated that one might volunteer to be His personal attendant. Many offered to be in the position but the Buddha was not very happy to accept them. It looked like He had someone in mind. Noticing that Ananda was silent, the monks ask him why he cannot accept the position. Ananda said he was waiting for the Buddha to ask him. Then the Buddha asked him whether he could be His personal attendant, Ananda replied that he was more than willing yet not without conditions. He requested eight conditions to be accepted and the Buddha happily granted them. The conditions comprised of four negatives and four positives.





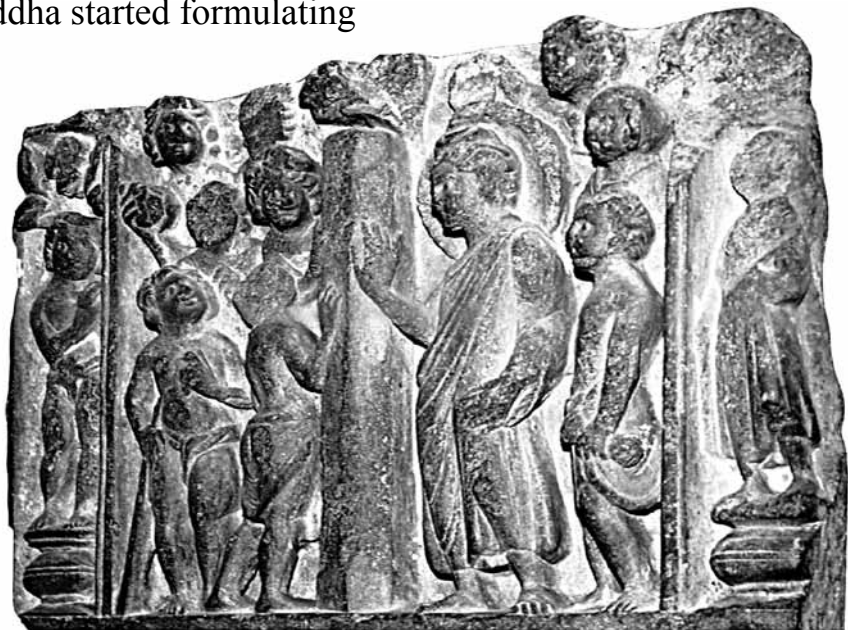
## *Eight conditions of Ananda Thera*

1. *The Buddha should not give quality robes offered to him to me.*
2. *I should not be given quality food offered to the Buddha.*
3. *I am not to be allowed to dwell in the same chamber with the Buddha.*
4. *Buddha should not accept invitations for me to accompany him.*
5. *I may accept invitations for the Buddha also.*
6. *I may be allowed to take visitors who come from distant places to the Buddha.*
7. *I may have the permission to approach the Buddha for consultation whenever a doubt arises in my mind.*
8. *The Buddha should repeat to me any Dhamma He teaches in my absence.*

It was in the 21<sup>st</sup> year that Visakha, who had already attained Sotapannahood when she was just nine year old, offered Pubbarama to the Buddha and the Sangha. By that time, she had been given in marriage to a millionaire in Savatthi. She had managed to get the entire family converted to Buddhism as well. One day, she visited Jetavana and forgot to collect her extremely expensive and prestigious ornament, called Mahalata Pilandhana, from the cloakroom where she would normally leave it before entering the sermon hall, for safekeeping. Thinking that it has automatically become a property of the Vihara she “bought” it herself for nine billion gold coins and spent that money to build a new Vihara. As it was in the east of the city, it was named Pubbarama, the Eastern Monastery.

It was from the 20<sup>th</sup> year the Buddha had to introduce Vinaya rules. During the first twenty years, the monks knew what was good to do and what was bad just by listening to normal Discourses. Every fortnight there was a recitation of “Ovada Patimokkha”, the Buddha’s formal reminding of what is expected of monkhood. However, in the twentieth year, the very first offence of misconduct was reported, and then the Buddha started formulating Vinaya rules.

By this time, the Buddha’s fame has been well established as a Founder of a religion, and people who were faithful wanted to worship Him in His absence, keeping some holy object to represent Him as the custom of India was.



*Devadatta Hires Assassins to Kill the Buddha*



As a beginning of this practice, Ananda Thero planted a seed from the Bodhi tree in the shelter of which the Buddha attained Enlightenment.

While the Buddha and His senior pupils became increasingly famous Devadatta became very much impatient because he was also expecting to become equally famous and respected. He had mastered the art of performing miracles but had not escalated himself in spiritual developments to achieve higher stages in the path. His mean expectations of becoming famous and powerful made him even requesting the Buddha to “retire” and give him leadership of the Sangha. Knowing his immature and mean ways the Buddha did not approve his motives of being in a higher pedestal to show himself off as a substitute for the Buddha. In order to win the hearts of ordinary people and monks of emotional tendencies he approached the Buddha with five proposals to be added to the disciplinary code of the monks.

He requested the Buddha made it compulsory for every monk to

1. live in forests whole life ,
2. live on alms-begging whole life ,
3. wear rag-robles (*pansukula civara*) whole life ,
4. live at the shelter of trees whole life , and
5. refrain from eating fish and meat whole life .

The Buddha had no objection for monks volunteering to practice them but He was not willing to make them compulsory, as He was fully aware of the fact that that would make life miserable for some monks. Moreover, those were not absolute necessities for spiritual achievements. By this time, Devadatta had already misled Prince Ajatasattu. He told Ajatasattu that he would kill the Buddha, become the leader of the Sangha, and suggested that the prince also could kill his father, and become the king. Devadatta first contracted a



*Taming of Dhanapala the Elephant*



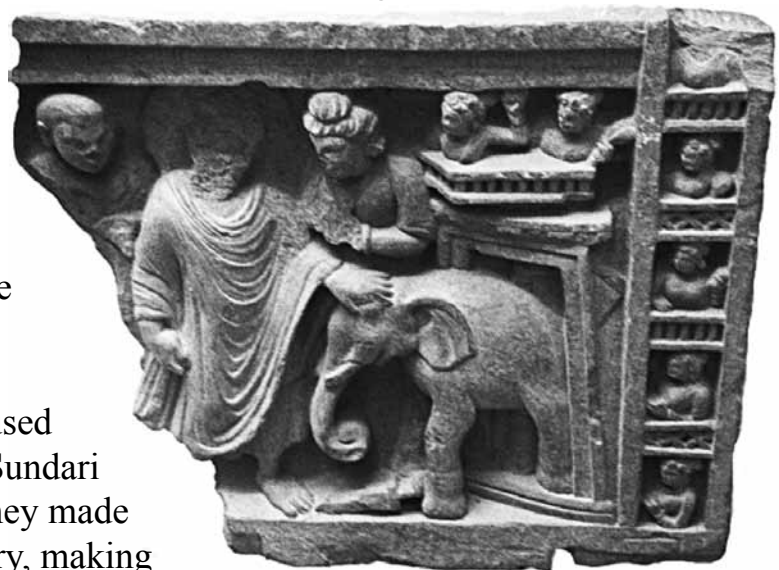


person to kill the Buddha by shooting with an arrow and arranged other people to kill him after the act completed to conceal the crime.

It was actually a four-chain murder plan, which involved sixteen hired criminals. The Buddha converted all sixteen criminals to good faith; hence, that plot to kill Him failed. His second attempt was to hurl a rock onto the Buddha when He was walking near Gijjhakuta. That also failed owing to another rock miraculously blocking the path of the stone. He, in desperation, attempted to murder the Buddha, sending a drunken ferocious elephant called Nalagiri. However, the beast became calm and even saluted the Buddha when He radiated *metta* to it (loving-kindness). Devadatta's attempts to assassinate the Buddha failed but the prince Ajatasattu slowly killed his father by making him starve and other means of torturing.

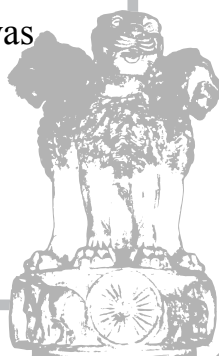
**W**hen the Buddha declined to make Devadatta's proposals compulsory practices for monks, he made it a big issue and caused a schism in the Order. He managed to take 500 gullible immature monks with him, but the two chief disciples of the Buddha went there and brought them back, having convinced them of their mistake. Devadatta, frustrated and angry, fell ill and died in pain. In fact, he regretted what he had done and wanted to see the Buddha before his death but was not fortunate enough to do so.

Not everything in the Buddha's missionary life was rosy. He encountered many enmities, defamations, and various coups d'état plotted to destroy Him by those who were not happy with his success. Once, Paribbajakas (a group of wandering ascetics) used a beautiful paribbajika called Sundari to defame the Buddha. First, they made her frequent Jetavana monastery, making people think that she was friendly with the Buddha. She even pretended as if she had spent the night at the monastery, and coming out in the morning.



*Taming  
of Dhanapala the Elephant*

**A**fter some time the Paribbajakas killed her and buried her body secretly near the wall of the monastery. They made everybody know that Sundari was missing, and went to the King and obtained a permission to find her body anywhere they suspected that it was buried. Claiming that she was a frequent visitor to the monastery during the last few weeks of her life, they combed the monastery premises and unearthed her body at the spot that they had buried it. They claimed that the Buddha and the monks were responsible for her death.

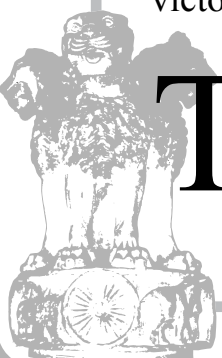
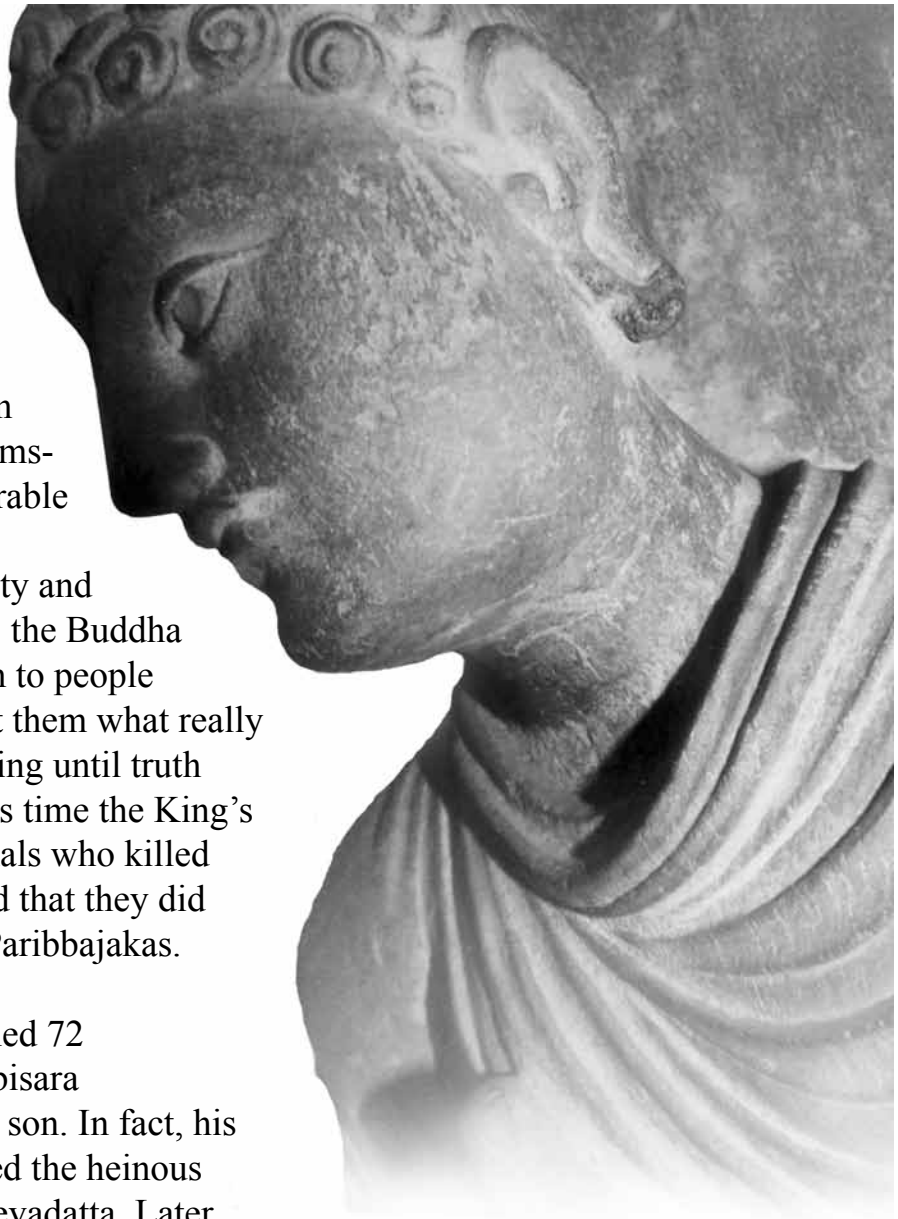


The news spread very fast and some gullible people, without making any effort to know what really happened, started abusing the monks when they went out in their alms-rounds. It was so unbearable that Ven. Ananda even suggested leaving the city and go elsewhere. However, the Buddha made the monks explain to people when they made jibes at them what really happened and kept waiting until truth emerged. In a few weeks time the King's guards found the criminals who killed Sundari. They confessed that they did for money paid by the Paribbajakas.

When the Buddha reached 72 years of age, King Bimbisara died as a prisoner of his son. In fact, his son Ajatasattu committed the heinous crime encouraged by Devadatta. Later, Ajatasattu repented his crime and became a follower of the Buddha. He offered protection and official support to the First Council.

The other main royal patron of the Buddha, King Prasenajith Kosala, died when the Buddha was 79 years old. On the day of his death, as his son Vidudhabha had dethroned him. He died on his way to visit King Ajatasattu for seeking asylum. Vidudhabha had a long-standing grudge against the Sakyas, and when he became the King of Kosala he revenged them by a massive genocide. However, even the victorious Vidudabha, had a watery grave on his way back from Kapilavatthu.

The Buddha spent His last rainy season in a place called Beluvagama. It was there that the Buddha decided that He would attain Parinibbana in ten months time.





## The Maha Parinibbana

**S**ariputta and Moggallana, the Buddha's two prominent disciples, attained parinibbana before the Buddha reached His eightieth birthday. Ven. Ananda, who learned that the Buddha had decided to attain parinibbana, requested Him to live longer; but the Buddha said Ananda was too late to make the request. The Buddha made many monks gather in the Kutagara hall at Vesali and instructed them, providing a summary of His Teachings. He added,

“Monks, let me address you; all conditioned things are transient. Strive with diligence. Tathagata will attain parinibbana before long. At the end of three months from now, the Tathagata will pass away.

Ripe is my age now. Short, is what is left of my life. I shall depart leaving you. I have, however, made my own refuge.

Be diligent, monks. Be mindful and virtuous. Guard your minds with well-directed thoughts. Anyone, who lives heedfully in this Dhamma and Vinaya, will reach the end of suffering, escaping the life-continuum.”

He then started traveling from place to place reminding His followers of what He had taught as good teaching.



**A**t Bhoganagara He said that after His passing away it is likely that some may come up with some teachings, hitherto not available, claiming that they had heard them from the Buddha Himself, or alternatively, from the Order of the Sangha, or perhaps from many senior monks. They may even claim to have received them from a monk of higher learning. Whatever source they may quote, the Buddha advised, the monks should not hurry to accept or reject. They should compare and contrast them with existing Discourses (Dhamma) and code of discipline (Vinaya). What does not go against them and tally, they should not

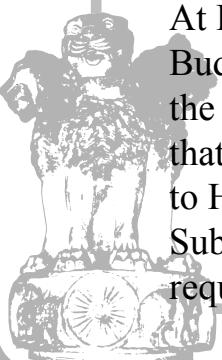


*Cunda's Offering of Last Meal*

hesitate to accept; but what goes against must be rejected saying, “This is not Dhamma; this is not Vinaya”. This technique is called “Great rejection technique (Mahapadesa).”

Then the Buddha proceeded to Pava. A blacksmith called Cunda offered alms to the Buddha and His retinue. He had prepared a special dish for the Buddha with Sukaramaddava, a kind of mushroom. After consuming that dish, the Buddha became ill with dysentery and severe stomach pain. Controlling His pain the Buddha continued to walk to Kusinara where He planned to parinibbanise. He became increasingly weak that He had to rest twenty five times on the way.

At Kusinara, a couch between two Sala (cannon ball) trees was provided for the Buddha to rest. At that time a wondering ascetic, namely Subhadda, knew that the Buddha had come there came to visit him. The monks in attendance thought that the Buddha was not fit to receive visitors and did not allow Subhadda to talk to Him. However, the Buddha asked him to be allowed and taught him Dhamma. Subhadda was very pleased and asked for ordination. Ven. Ananda ordained him, as requested by the Buddha. He was the last disciple of the Buddha.





**V**en. Ananda, who was the personal attendant and “treasurer of the Dhamma” to the Buddha, was feeling very sad. He had not attained Arahanthood so far. He got so emotional and started crying. The Buddha consoled him, saying:

“Ananda, do not feel sad. Do not weep. Have not I told you that every conditioned thing is impermanent? Have not I told you that we have to separate from everything that is dear to us? Ananda, you have a lot of merit accrued to you. You will free yourself from all defilements in no time.”

Having so advised Ananda, the Buddha a

“Ananda some of you may think that the dispensation is now left without a teacher. Not so, Ananda. Whatever Dhamma I have taught and whatever Vinaya I have instituted will be your Teacher hereafter.

However, Ananda, if the monks find it necessary, they may revise minor rules after my passing away.”



*Parinibbana of the Buddha*



Then the Buddha addressed the monks who were gathered there, and said:

“If any one of you has any doubt relating to the Buddha, His Teaching, the Order, the path, or the method, now is the time to ask Me about it. Have never to regret thinking ‘even when we were face to face with the Master, we could not ask Him about it’.”



*The Body of the Buddha in Casket*

The assembly was silent even when the Buddha made the same announcement for three times.

“It may be that some of you, even when you have something to ask, may not do so out of respect. In that case let you tell to a friend of yours who may let me know,” said the Buddha.

Even then the monks remained silent. Therefore, the Buddha was pleased and said that He really knew that the monks were fully focused of the Dhamma.

Then the Buddha uttered His last words:

**“Learn, Monks! All conditioned things are impermanent. Strive on with diligence!”**



*Parinibbana of the Buddha*

The Buddha then attained to all the Jhanas from the First Jhana to the highest, i.e., the Cessation of Perception and Sensations, and then came back to the First Jhana.

Then He again attended to all Jhanas up to the Forth Jhana, and then passed away.

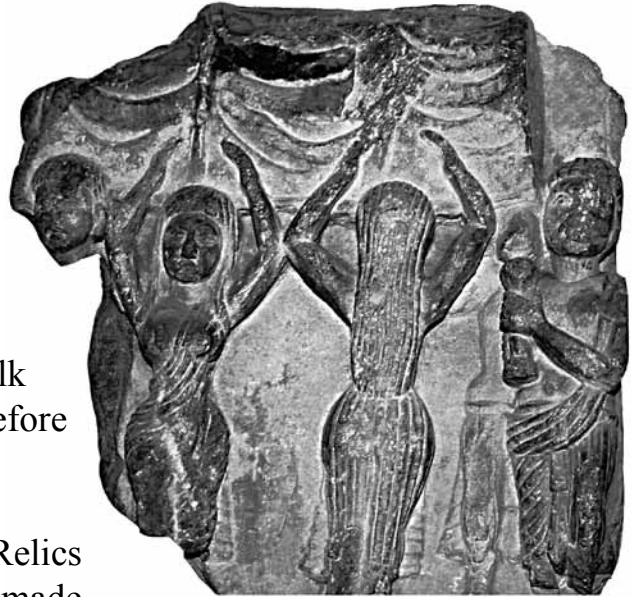




As the Buddha had instructed, the devotees cremated His body the way they would cremate a body of a Universal monarch. Usually, a universal king's body would be wrapped in fine cotton and expensive silk clothes and soaked in sandalwood oil before cremation.

The Buddha gave instructions that His Relics had to be enshrined in a stupa (pagoda) made at crossroads, so devotees could develop faith and offer flowers.

The merits so generated will enable devotees to be reborn in heaven after death. The devotees followed the instructions, and after the cremation the Relics were taken in procession to be enshrined. But every king who had come from eight provinces wanted to have the Relics to be taken to his country and make the stupa there.



*Funeral Procession*



*Cremation*



*Procession of Relics*





**A**t this tensed situation it was possible a war on the Relics would take place. Fortunately, a Brahmin called Drona made a statement. “Listen gentlemen, let me say just one sentence. Our Master was a peace-loving person, and therefore, let there be no quarrel over His Relics”. Every king agreed to that statement and requested the Brahmin to divide the Relics equally. The kings carried the Relics in reliquaries and made stupas in their respective countries.



*Sharing of the Relics*

**A**fter the Buddha's Parinibbana people wanted to have an object of worship in addition to stupas but they were not confident of making an image of the Buddha. So, first, they had a symbol, called Triratana, for worship. But, after a few centuries, at Gandhara, they created an image of the Buddha. Art critics believe the creation of the Gandhara Buddha image was closely influenced by Greco-Roman art traditions.





Transportation  
of Relics







Transportation  
of Relics





*Life Story in Summery in Relief*



*Reliquary of Kanishka*



*Triratana Symbol*







Stupa Model





*Future Buddha Maitreya*



*We had the good fortune to view a relic-casket, which has not been opened yet. This casket is quite likely to hold some highly significant relics.*

