

## THE BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS

### Invitation of Gods

*As per the legends, after strenuous efforts of many life cycles to achieve the Buddha hood, Siddhartha had been born as a God in 5<sup>th</sup> heaven called 'Thusitha'. He had been invited by other Gods to be born in human realm to the benefit of many and to be a unique being as Buddha.*



## Dream



*There was a King named Suddhodana of the aristocratic "Sakya" clan and his queen was Mahamaya. Mahamaya's had seen a dream before she was pregnant. The four main Gods who protect the earth had taken her to the Himalaya's mountain range. The fairies were around the queen while a white small elephant appeared from the clouds and entered in to her body. When she waked up, she reported this dream to her husband, the King Sudhodana.*

*He consulted the astrologers and the prediction was that the queen is going to give a birth to a special person who will rule the world, or be a person to find a solution for the human misery.*



## Birth of Siddhartha

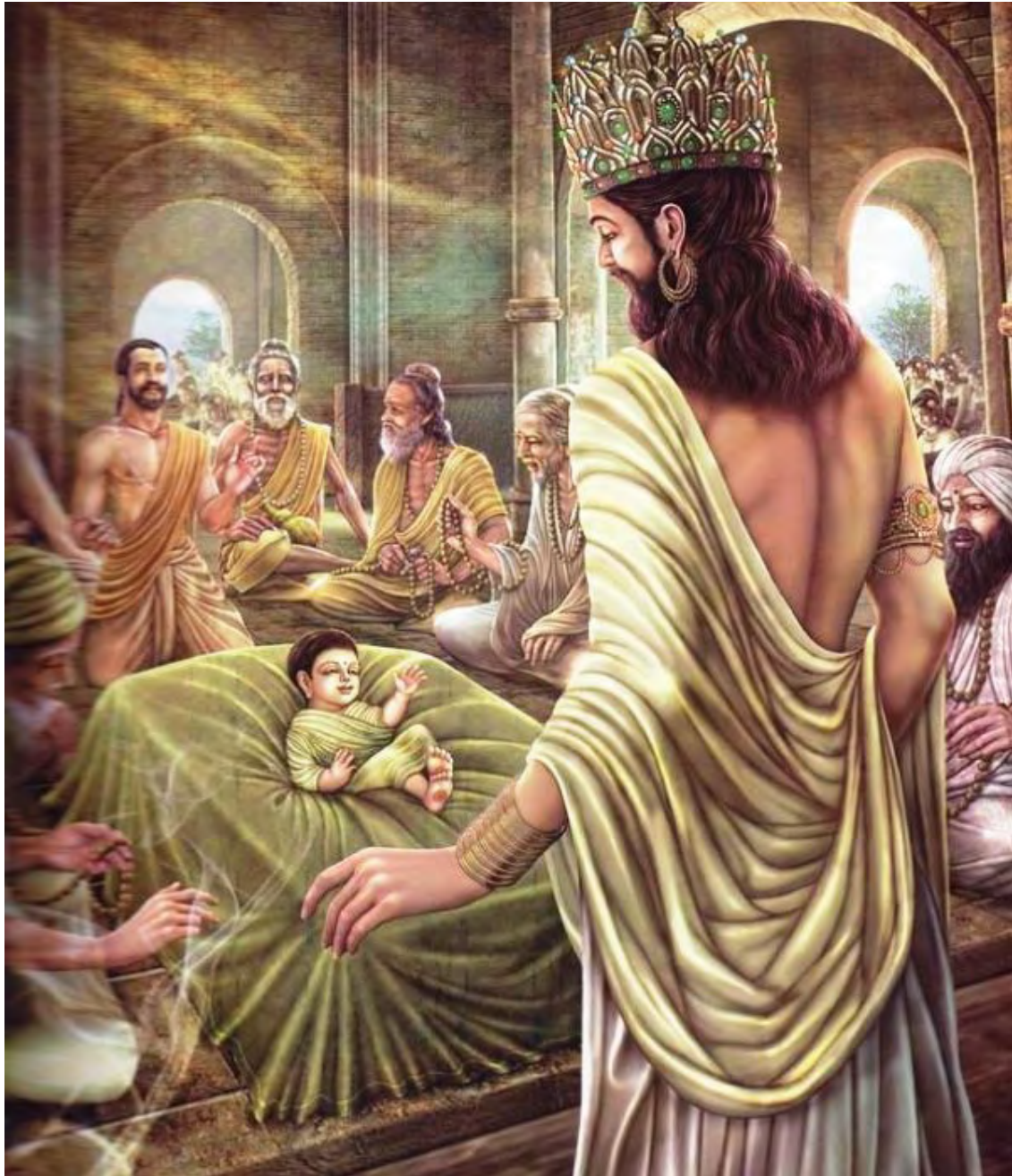
*Just coming closer to Mahamaya's delivery, she wanted to visit her parents in 'Devdaha nuwara' in an adjacent country. Her father also was a king. On the way to her home, she started having the delivery pains. The royal chariot stopped near to a park called 'Lumbini' (Indian border of present Nepal) and Siddhartha (Buddha's name before he attains the Buddha hood.) had born in it. According to the legends, he started walking seven steps and the flowers emerged from the earth to accept him while Gods greeted him with heavenly flowers.*

*He said, "I will be the greatest, wisest and be the leader on earth".*

*Sadly the queen died seven days after the Sidhartha's birth and had re-born in the 'Thusitha' heaven.*

*One day of that heaven is equal to 1000 years in human world. The prince had been taken care of the King Sudhodana's second wife 'Prajapathi'. She also had been called as 'Maha Prajapathi Gotami'.*

## **The naming ceremony**



*On the fifth day after the prince's birth he was named as Siddhartha which means 'wish fulfilled'. His family name was 'Gotama'.*

*In accordance with the ancient Indian custom, one hundred and eight learned Brahmins were invited to predict about Siddhartha's life. Amongst them there were eight distinguished learned men.*

*Examining the characteristic marks of the child, seven of them raised two fingers each, indicative of two possibilities. They said he would be either become universal monarch or a Buddha.*

*But the youngest, who exalted others in wisdom, noticing the hair on the forehead turned to the right, raised only one finger to say he would definitely retire from the world to become a Buddha.*

*The teacher of King Suddhodana 'Asitha' also had arrived to see the little prince. He was a highly venerated and intelligent person having knowledge of deep meditation methods and reached higher spiritual attainments. He was particularly pleased to hear the happy news and visited the palace to see the royal babe. The king, who felt honoured by his unexpected visit carried the child up to him in order to make the child pay him due reverence. But to the surprise of all, the child's legs turned and rested on the matted locks of ascetic.*

*Instantly, the ascetic rose from his seat and saluted foreseeing with his super normal vision the child's future greatness.*



*Great ascetic saluted the child with a smile at first and then was sad.*

*When enquiring his questionable behaviour, he declared that the prince would eventually become a Buddha, an enlighten one and that was the reason he smiled.*

*He would be died when the prince become a Buddha and would not be live long to benefit by the superior wisdom of the enlighten one owing to his prior death and rebirth in a formless plane; that's why he became sad.*

*Seeing the highly venerated priest Asitha saluting the prince, King Suddhodana too saluted him.*

## **Ploughing festival**

*A very remarkable incident took place in his childhood. It was an unprecedented spiritual experience which, later during his search after truth, served as a key to his enlightenment.*

*To promote agriculture, the king arranged for a ploughing festival; both nobles and commoners decked in their best attire to participated in the ceremony.*

*On the appointed day, the King, appointed by his courtiers, went to the field, taking with him the young prince together with the nurses.*

*The child sat under a rose apple tree was watched by the nurses while the King participated in the ploughing festival. When the festival is at its highest of gaiety the nurses too moved away from the prince's presence to catch a glimpse of the festival.*

*He had been sitting watching his father, the king, carrying out the ritual of the spring ploughing. His attention had been caught by the flocks of birds.*

*They were eagerly scratching in newly turned soil for worms and insects. Driven by hunger, ever present in nature, exited by the sight of their living prey, birds of all kinds were quarrelling. It was a common enough sight, and one that carries no special meaning for most people.*

*But to young Siddhartha, it had been a troubling experience. So indeed it should be to anyone who believes in an overruling power, a Creator whose chief attribute is Love. He thought there is something sad and wrong here.*

*He was thoughtful and compared about the whole sequence to the happy ploughing festival.*

*He had a feeling of the suffering nature of the life. He had realized the realistic life veiled by various illusions which also deceives the mankind with illusionary pleasures.*



*In striking contrast to the mirth and merriment of the festival it was calm and quite under the Rose Apple tree. All the conditions were conducive to quite meditation being there.*

*The pensive child young in years but old in wisdom, sat cross-legged concentrated on the breath pattern where the exhalations and the inhalations.*

*This practice gained the one-pointed ness of mind called 'Samadhi' and he thus developed the first 'Jhana' (Ecstasy).*

*The child's nurses suddenly realizing their duty hastened to the child and were amazed to see him cross legged plunged in deep meditation. The king hearing of it, hurried to the spot and seeing the child is in meditative posture, saluted him, saying; "This, dear child, is my second obeisance"*

*The king's mind haunted with the predictions which the learned Brahmins uttered. Spiritual advancement of his son would not have been very pleased to King because he wanted his son to be a powerful leader.*

*Though his mother died when he was small, the King made the arrangement to make him comfortable as well as attempted to avoid showing Siddhartha any miseries in the life. King Suddhodana made him special three palaces with all luxuries.*

*Beggars, monks, patients or even dead bodies were restricted around or near those castles.*

## **Warfare skills**

*He was a cheerful child and never was sad. Siddhartha was a very kind boy and he especially kind to poor animals. Once his cousin 'Devadatta' shot an arrow to a bird then it was fallen to the ground.*

*By seeing wounded bird falling down from sky, Siddhartha ran towards the bird to catch and did not let his cousin to kill it. The cousin quarrelled and demanded to get the bird; but Siddhartha said the bird is own by the person whom have given the life to it; but not to the one whom have wanted taken its life.*

*This quarrel gone up to the royal court and verdict had been given as; owner of the bird is Siddhartha. His father eventually had realized Siddhartha is a very clever but very sensitive person then again became cautious and contemplated the predictions at naming ceremony.*

*King Suddhodana never wanted to direct his child in to the spiritual path but always expected him to be the next ruler of the kingdom.*

*To make Sidhartha's life turning in to more of mundane life, King Suddhodana made further arrangement to find a suitable bride for him among the high class families.*

*Having been heard of his luxurious life, the noble families were reluctant to choose Siddhartha as a son in law. They were worried about Siddhartha's ability of safe guard the kingdom when he becomes the ruler of it.*

*Because the noble families wanted to have a king as a brave warrior to safe guard the kingdom in a case of warfare but Siddhartha's reputation was entirely different from their expectations.*

*The future king should be a warrior as per the Sakyan customs. Therefore they have demanded Siddhartha at least to display his warfare skills.*

*Siddhartha taken this challenge and noble families had been invited at palace with their pretty daughters to see young prince's skills.*

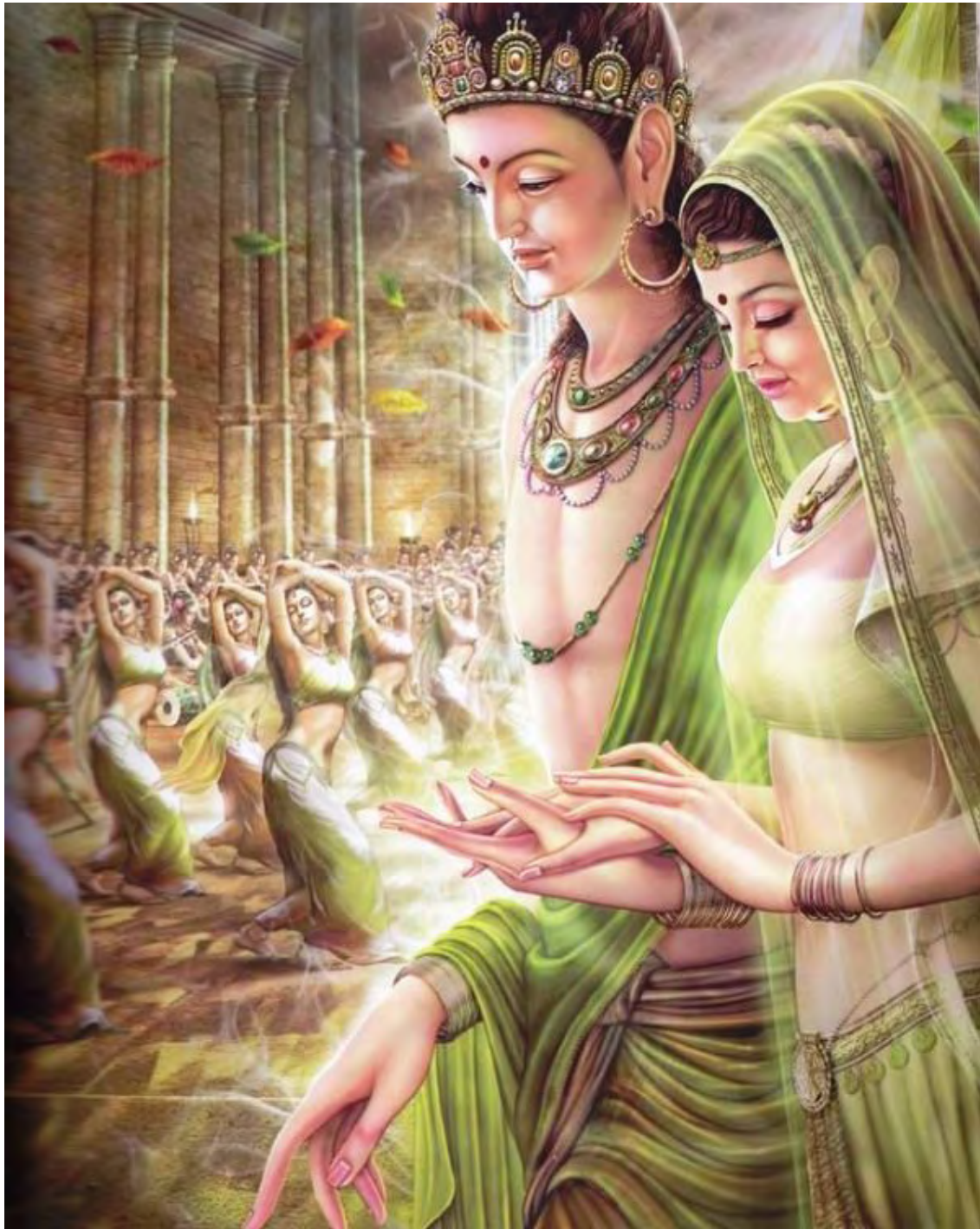
*However, being a son of the warrior race, he was specially trained in the art of warfare and eventually he had shown his skills in a highly commendable way.*

*The noble families highly impressed about his weaponry skills then willing to join him in to their families. According to the royal customs, they have agreed Siddhartha to choose a bride from the royal and noble families.*



## Royal wedding

*When he became 16 years, he married to the same aged, his beautiful cousin princess called 'Yasodhara'. It was by exhibiting his military prowess that he won her hand. She had been the prettiest girl in India according to the legends. They had a life compare to a fairytale till they became 29 years. They loved each other very much however Yasodhara have realized her husband is a special character.*

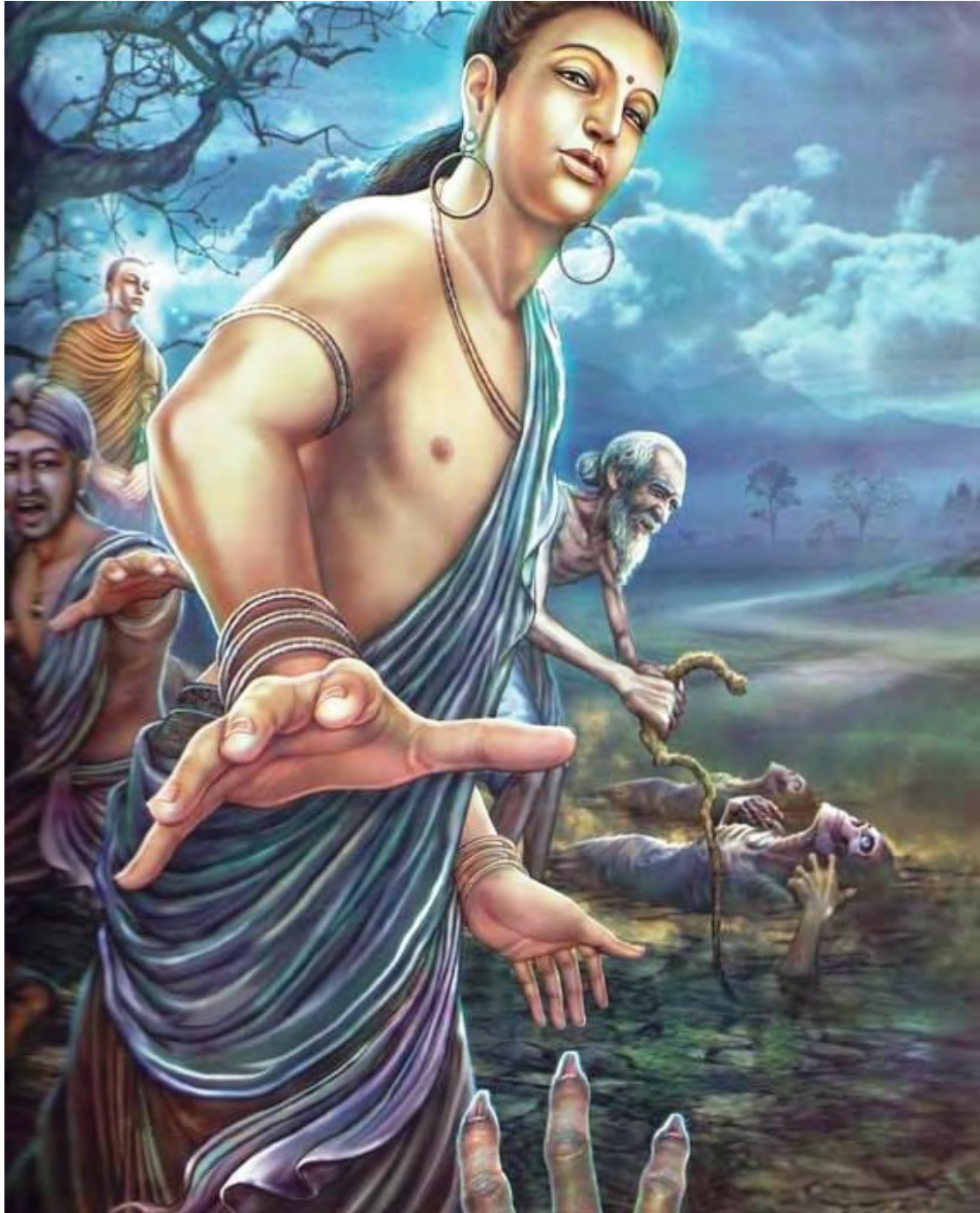


*The people in King Suddhodana's kingdom were rejoiced celebrating the royal wedding.*



*King Suddhodana observed the new life of Siddhartha and became delighted thinking that the mutual attraction of young couple would keep them together and never depart each other from their royal luxuries. He was wrong.*

*Some scenes later seen in various occasions made him to think the reality of the life. It was when he was visiting out of the kingdom without his father's awareness. His mind was agitated and in full of thoughts regards with particular four scenes. That was an old man, a sick person, a corpse, a monk.*



*It was a glorious day when he went out of the palace to see the world. He came in direct contact with the stark realities of life. Within the narrow confines of the palace he saw only the Rosy side of the life. The dark side, common lot of man kind, was purposely veiled from him.*

*He asked his charioteer, ' would all become old? Yes Sir, all become old and feeble' the answer was. Enquiring the scene of a patient for first time, he again asked his charioteer, ' would all become old? Yes Sir, all are subjected to become sick' the answer was.*

*Enquiring the scene of a dead body at first time, He asked his charioteer, ' would, all the people will die? Yes Sir, all will die one day' the answer was.*

*Siddhartha then asked looking at the monk, 'Why this poor man in yellow robes but why he seems happy in his life? 'Sir, he had been renounced the worldly pleasures and looking forward to find the final emancipation. Disturbed Siddhartha was relieved looking at the calm priest who was gone out of the family life to find the truth.*

*There were many such people in ancient India followed different methods to find the real meaning of life. The Prince was greatly changed by these four scenes and he understood the changing nature of the life. He had realized that he too would eventually get old, fall ill and dies one day. Then he thought of leaving the world in search of truth and peace.*

*The day he decided to leave the palace, he received a message as a son born to him. Was he glad to hear the news? He was not. Contrary to the expectation, he was not overjoyed and he regarded his first and only son as a fetter! He said, "Rahu jato!" (A bond has arisen!) Having heard what Sidhartha uttered, the King Suddhodana named his grandson as Rahula. The palace life was no longer a congenial place to prince Siddhartha. Neither his charming young wife Yasodhara nor his lovable infant son could deter him from altering the decision he had taken to renounce the world.*

*Realizing the worthlessness of sensual pleasures, and appreciating the value of renunciation in which the wise seek delight, he had decided to leave the palace in search of truth and eternal piece. He was destined to play an infinitely more important and beneficial role than dutiful husband and a father, or even as a king of kings.*

*The allurements of the palace were no more cherished objects of delight to him because his mind was deeply agitated by the four scenes.*

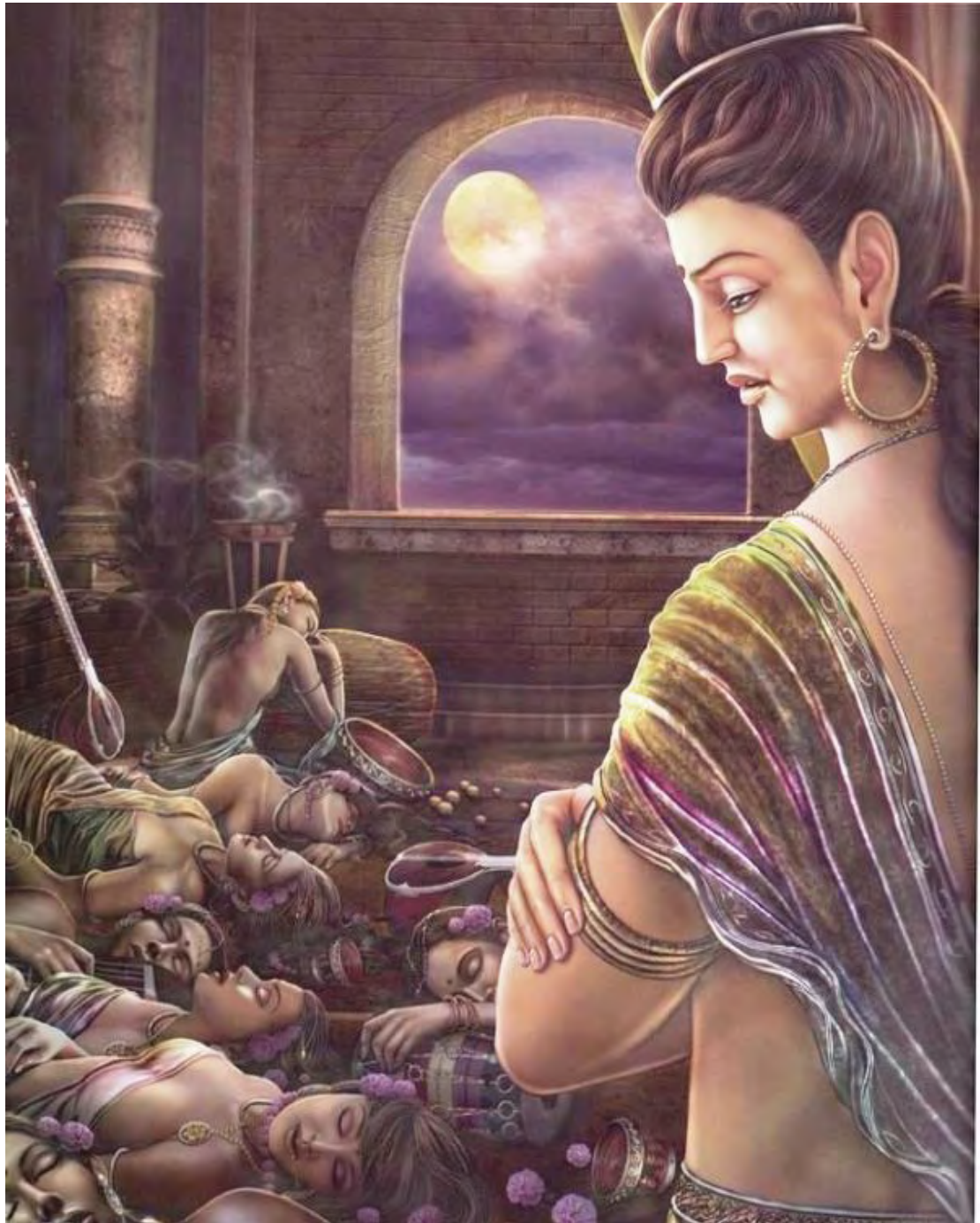


*Time was ripe to depart.*

*He ordered his favourite charioteer Channa to saddle the horse.*

*For the last time, he went to the suite of apartments occupied by the princess at mid night. On the way to the Yasodhara's apartment, his frustration about the palace life had been increased observing the sleeping dancers.*

*The dancers were fallen asleep early at the palace arena since the Prince Siddhartha was not visited to see their performances on the day. He had seen the pretty dancers were like withered flowers.*



*At the Princess's chamber he slowly opened the door, and stood at the threshold. Sidhartha seen Yasodhara was keeping her child at her bosom. He did not kiss the child or Yasodhara but he gazed at them who were fast asleep.*



*He loved them very much. He loved them deeply as he loved all. Why did he want to leave those dear ones?*

*Because, he had pitied them and all others. It was not that he loved them less, but he loved humanity more.*

*Without even informing his beloved wife or father, he left the palace at mid-night with his charioteer Channa.*



*It was a full moon day.*

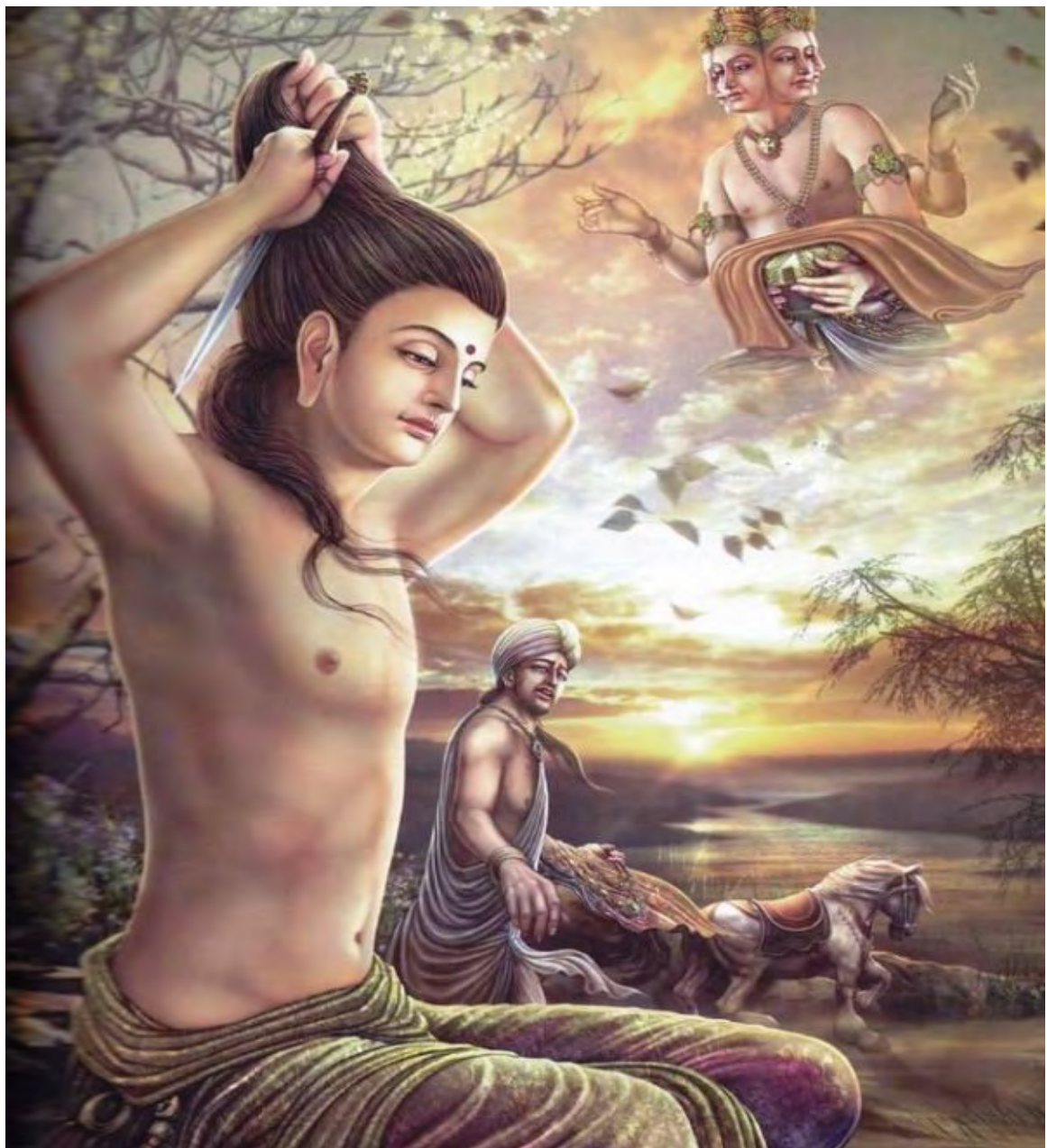
*Leaving all behind, he stole away with a light heart from the palace at mid night and rode in to the dark. Thus did he renounce the world.*

*It was not the renunciation of a poor man who had nothing to leave behind.*

*It was the renunciation of a prince in the full bloom of youth and in the plenitude of wealth and prosperity - A renunciation unparalleled in history.*

*The Prince removed his garments and handed them over to Channa and said, "Friend Channa, take these garments and the horse, and go home. I shall be a monk myself. Channa also want to join him but Prince Siddhattha did not allow him to do so.*

*With his sword he shaved his head and beard, and wearing yellow robes, he became a monk. He had handed over his garments and ornaments to Channa with instructions to return to the palace.*



*Now he is no more a Prince who will be the future king but a poor monk.*

*Why he cuts his hair? It is a symbol of leaving the home life and entered in to the monk hood to find the happiness in the life. Also it considered supporting a person to reduce the proud ness since hair is one part in the body under control compare to any part in the body. The removal of changing the hair symbolized the changing of the mind.*

*He ordered Channa, his charioteer to leave.*

*He started the solitary life and thereafter he had no fixed abode. He was living in caves or at the foot of trees and he had known by another name called Bodhisatta. The meaning of Bodhisatta is 'a wisdom-being'. It is the name given to one who is trying to become a Buddha.*

*He supported and lived on alms given by the charitable. Alone he was leading a pure simple life seeking Truth and Peace.*



*With a bowl in hand, eyes cast down; he went from door to door, in the streets of the town called Rajagaha seeking alms. He had contemplated the various stages of the life and its transient nature.*

*The people and the king 'Bimbisara' were amazed at the sight of such a noble figure seeking alms in the city. The king's ordered the people to go and see who he was. When seeing the alms given by people to Siddhartha. (now Bodhisatwa or also called as Gotama) Looking at the mixed food in alms which he received he felt that his bowels gushed out to the mouth. He had never seen such food in the palace. But managed eat the same and advised himself not to bother again.*

*When the messenger reported this matter to the king, king hurried to the scene and asked who is this noble man and found that he is the prince of the adjacent kingdom. The king was very pleased and offered him a part of his kingdom. But Bodhisatwa had refused and said that he was intent only on Buddhahood. The king was again very pleased to hear his lofty object and said him to visit his kingdom first after his Buddhahood.*

*He enquired from various learned people the real meaning of the life. He went at first to a well-known ascetic named Alara Kalama and studied his doctrine. After learning about his system, he was not pleased with his system though he was able to reach the spiritual stage same as Alara.*

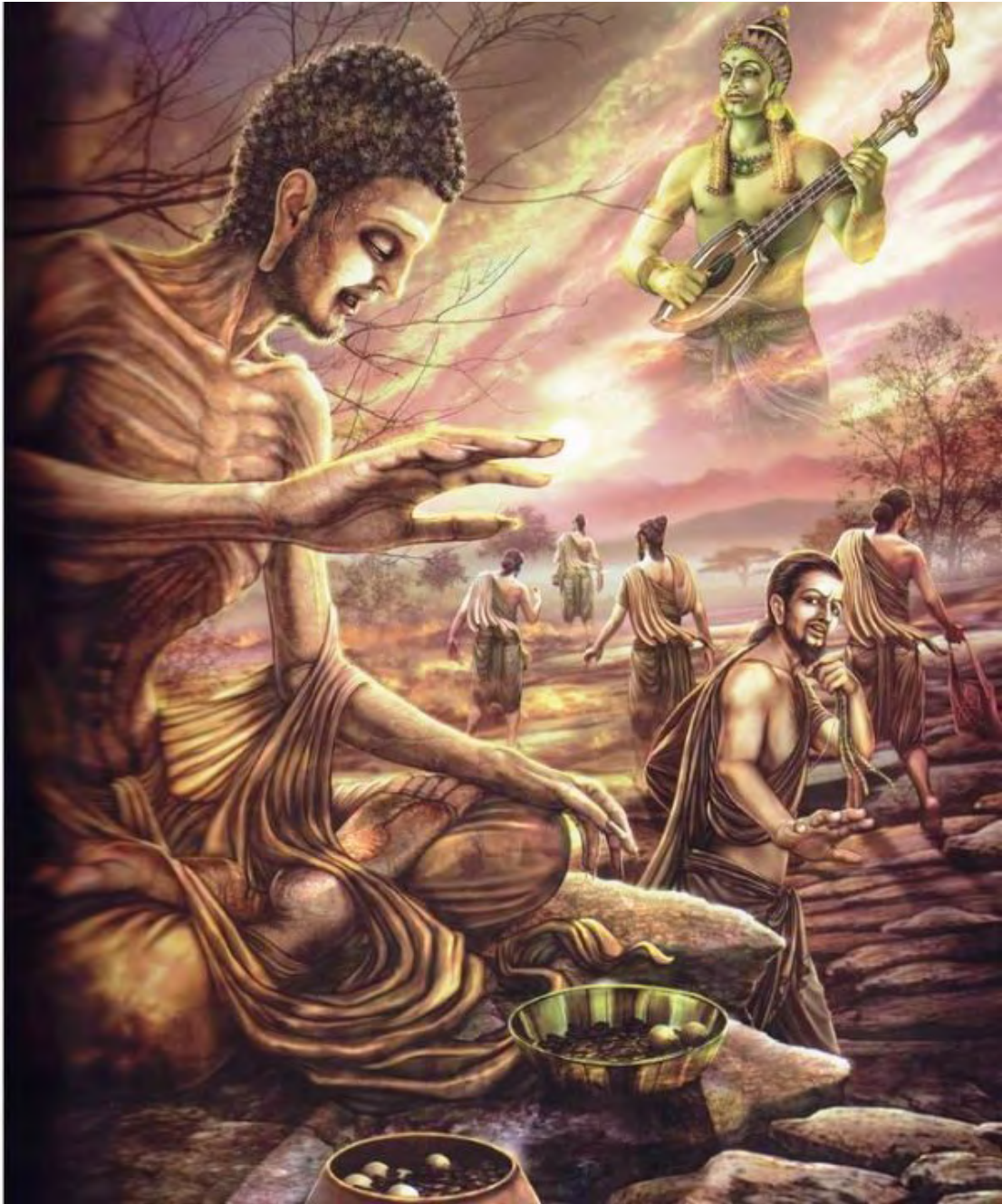
*He went to another famous ascetic named Uddaka Ramaputta. Uddaka Ramaputta was one spiritual stage above the earlier teacher. He was not pleased with the system of his second teacher too.*

*Both the teachers explained about the concentration of the mind and to reach a certain level of happiness via the meditation techniques however Bodhisatwa not satisfied about the achievement.*

*Why he was not satisfied with their systems? Because, he was seeking Nibbana, the end of all suffering.*

*He was not discouraged though he met with disappointment. He made up his mind to find out the truth for himself. He realised that there are no teachers in the world above the spiritual level of the last teacher as well as himself now.*

*He had then thought of practising austerities. There were five other ascetics to help him.*



### Struggle for the enlightenment

*In the ancient days in India, great importance was attached to rites, rituals, penances and sacrifices. Siddhartha too had chosen a place called Uruwela to test such systems. It was a beautiful quite spot for his meditation. Five monks attended on him.*

*The Bodhisatta had struggled to gain Buddhahood for six long years with a super human struggle practising all forms of severest austerity. He underwent much suffering.*

*He practised many forms of severe austerity. He tormented his body so much so that his delicate body was reduced to almost a skeleton.*

*His body became weak and ugly. His golden-coloured skin turned pale. His blood dried up. His eyes were sunk. He was almost on the verge of death.*

*At this stage Mara, the evil one, approached him. Mara reciting following in the presence of Gotama "A thousand part of you belong to death; to life there remains but one, you are lean. Near to you is death. Live, O good Sir, life is better. Living you could perform merit."*

*Then the Bodhisatta's replied; "O Evil one, kinsman of the heedless! you have come for your own sake. I need no merit. I care not for life. I am intent of Buddhahood." He had realized that the Mara's army consisted of ten kinds of passions. Mara was not succeeded in tempting the Bodhisatta and went away disappointed.*

*The Bodhisatta had changed his mind after long painful six years and realized as his penances useless. He realized that enlightenment could not be gained with such an utterly exhausted body. Physical fitness was essential for spiritual progress.*

*He started a new path as gave up extremes. This is the middle path. No luxuries, no penances. He thinks that he could not gain Buddhahood with a weak body and thought that he wanted strength to gain Buddhahood. So he gave up fasting and ate some food. He conceived this idea of adopting 'the middle path' which later became one of the salient factors of his teaching.*

*He recalled how when his father was engaged in ploughing, he sat in a cool shade of Rose Apple tree, absorbed in the contemplation of his own breadth, which resulted in the attainment of the first 'Jhana' (Ecstasy), Thereupon he thought: "Well, this is the path to enlightenment".*

*The five monks who attended on him not pleased at this change of method and were disappointed. They left him alone saying that ascetic Gotama became luxurious, had ceased from striving. They were thought that whatever truth the ascetic Gotama would comprehend, that would he impart to them, felt disappointed at this unexpected change of method. They had left him and went to the area called 'Isipatana'.*

*At a crucial time when help was most welcome his companions deserted him leaving him alone.*

*He was not discouraged by it as he had an iron-will. He was happy that he was alone. Alone, in sylvan solitudes, great men often realize deep truths and solve intricate problems.*

## **Dawn of truth**



*One day as he was seated and meditating under a banyan tree, a generous lady named Sujata offered him some milk rice. He now was god looking and regain his handsome golden colour figure. She thought the person sitting under the tree may be some kind of a god. She was expecting a son and having the expectation in mind, she offered the alms.*

*These foods give him the strength and he felt strong and made a firm resolve not to rise from his seat until he gained Buddhahood. He sat under the later famous Bodhi tree at Buddha Gaya.*

*It is called the Bodhi tree because the Bodhisatta gained Buddhahood under that tree. By developing the Jahnas (Ecstasies) he gained perfect one pointedness of the mind. His mind now was like a polished mirror where everything is reflected in its true nature.*

*Thus with thoughts tranquillized, purified, cleansed, free from lust and impurity, alert, steady and unshakable, he directed his mind to the reminiscence of past births. In the first watch of the night, he gained and, mastered the knowledge by which he was able to remember past lives.*

*He recalled his past life, then the previous then up to fifty lives, then hundred, then thousand, then hundred thousand, . . . then the dissolution of many world cycles, then the dissolution of many universes . . . Thus he recalled the mode and details of his varied lots in his former births.*

*Dispelling thus the ignorance with regard to past, he directed his purified mind to the perception of the disappearing and reappearing of beings. He perceived the beings disappearing from one state of existence and reappearing in another.*

*He beheld the base and the noble, the beautiful and ugly, the happy and miserable, all passing to their deeds. In the middle watch, he obtained and mastered the Divine Eye by which he was able to see the death and rebirth of beings.*

*He had seen numerous people, creatures, Gods, Brahmas born, live and dying and then the never ending cycle continuing subjective to the actions they have done in past. He knew that these individuals, by evil deeds, words and thoughts, by being misbelievers after their dissolution of their bodies and after death, had been born in sorrowful states.*

*He knew that these good individuals, by good deeds, words and thoughts, by being right believers after their dissolution of their bodies and after death, had been born in happy celestial states.*

*Thus with the clairvoyant supernormal vision he beheld the disappearing and the reappearing of beings. Dispelling thus the ignorance with regard to the future, he directed his purified mind to the elimination of Samsaric machinery where all beings roam.*

*He realized according with fact: "this is sorrow, the arising of sorrow, path leading to the cession of sorrow. This was the third knowledge that he realized in the last watch of the night.*

*Ignorance was dispelled, and wisdom arose, darkness vanquished, and light arose.*



*In the last watch he destroyed all passions, understood the Four Noble Truths, the Noble which was the suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the End of Suffering, and the Nirvana.*

*Nirvana is the path leading to the Ending of Suffering; and Ascetic Siddhartha became a Samma Sambuddha. It means fully enlightened or Awakened One.*



*The Bodhisatta gain his Enlightenment on (Vesak) Full moon day of May and He became a Buddha in his 35 th year .Then he named after His Enlightenment as the Buddha Gotama.*

*Siddhartha seated as thinking, "May my flesh and bones should wither and decay, I would not rise from this seat until Enlightenment had been gained"*

*No human eye witnessed that act of supreme decision. No human voice was heard to acclaim him in the moment of victory. No human hands were folded to pay homage when he rose at last, the Conqueror of death. He had strenuously worked for the attainment of Liberation not for himself alone, but for all others who were able to profit by it.*

## **The Evil one's appearance**



*Mara, in other word is a God of sensual desire who corresponds to the Greek Eros. He is known to Buddhism as the personification of suffering and death.*

*His sensual desire and his intense will to prevent other beings from gaining their release from suffering in physical entities like the earth, or heaven.*

*He had appeared against Buddha with his all might army and challenged the Buddha that; under what authority the Buddha can sit under the Bodhi tree to gain Buddha hood.*

*Buddha dismissed him saying that the Mara can not avoid his will power and the earth will be the further evidence of him being the enlighten one. As per the legends, Buddha touched the earth by his finger to show the evidence to the Evil one; then the earth shook. Mara went away with much grief.*

*It is to note that anyone can become a Buddha depends on his will power and Buddhas are not considered as prophets as believed in other religions. They are not conveying any messages from a god. Prince Siddhartha was not born as a Buddha. He became a Buddha by his own efforts. The Pali term for the 'Budh' is 'to awake'.*

## After the Enlightenment



*How did the Buddha live soon after the Enlightenment?*

*The Buddha fasted for seven weeks. He did not feel hungry because he was enjoying the Nirvanic bliss. He spends the first week by sitting under the Bodhi Tree enjoying the Bliss of Freedom. On the seventh day he mediated on the "Wheel of Life"*

*He had then spent the second week stood at a certain distance gazing at the Bodhi tree with motionless eyes. He did so as a mark of gratitude to the tree. The Bodhi tree was helpful to the Buddha giving him shelter during His struggle for Buddhahood.*

*This was the first lesson the Buddha taught to the world which is Gratitude.*

*He had spent the third week walked up and down a jewelled promenade. This is done to eliminate doubts of Gods who thought the Buddha still did not attain to the Buddha hood.*

*He had spent the fourth week sitting in a chamber; He mediated on the Higher Dhamma (Abhidhamma). The fifth week he sat under a banyan tree called Ajapala.*

*The three daughters of Mara, the evil one came to tempt Him. They were Tanha, Rati and Raga and could they not be passions because, this had happened after the Enlightenment.*

*They have made a vein attempt to tempt Buddha by their charms.*



*He had then spent the sixth week under the Mucalinda tree and during this week it rained heavily and a serpent king sheltered Him.*

*He came out of his abode, and coiling himself from around the body of Buddha seven times, remained keeping his large hood over the head of Buddha so to avoid rain.*

*This incident would have been a poetic expression of an incident where a powerful person belongs to the Serpent tribe given the shelter to Buddha in the rainy sixth week.*



*The 50<sup>th</sup> day two merchants named Tapassu and Bhalluka offered him dried floor and honey. They sought refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma. They seek refuge by reciting Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami. (I become a follower of Buddha and I become a follower of Doctrine.)*

*They didn't seek refuge in the Sangha (monks) because there was no Sangha then. They want anything from the Buddha for the worship. The Buddha touched His head and gave them some hair relic. They enshrined now in the Shvedagon Pagoda in Rangoon at Burma.*



## After the enlightenment

*With His Divine Eye; he looked and saw that there were people who could understand the Dhamma. He had seen that the whole universe with all beings equal to a pond of lotus. Some bloomed and out of the water while some remained immersed in the water and not even come out of the water.*

*This is taken as a simile where the people having enough wisdom to gain by his doctrine or not.*



*Taking the whole universe as a pond of Lotuses, he saw the beings with little and much dust in their eyes, with keen and intellect, with good and bad characteristics, beings that are easy and difficult to be taught.*

*The Buddha thought of teaching the Dhamma first to Alara Kalama who was His first teacher. But, He understood that he died a week ago. He thought of Uddaka Ramaputta who was His second teacher. But he had also died the evening before. Ultimately, the Buddha thought of the five monks who attended of Him. 'Kondanna' was the youngest and the cleverest of the eight Brahmins who were summoned by King Suddhodana to name the Siddhartha, the infant prince. The other four were sons of those older Brahmins. All these five retired to the forest as ascetics in anticipation of Siddhartha while he was endeavouring to attain Buddhahood. They had left him when Ascetic Siddhartha dismissed the austerities.*

*With his supernormal vision he perceived that they were staying at Isipatana, in Benares.*

*Out of compassion for their wellbeing, the Buddha started walking to Benares. The five monks think seeing the Buddha from afar as not to give Him due respect as He had given up striving.*

*They remarked:*

*"Friends, this ascetic Gotama is coming. He is luxurious. He has given up striving and has turned into a life of abundance. He should not be greeted and waited upon. His bowl and robe should not be taken. Nevertheless a seat should be prepared. If he wishes, let him sit down.*

*However, when the Buddha drew near, his august personality was such that they could not refrain from giving Him due respect.*

*They addressed the Buddha; "Avuso Gotama" means they addressed him as the same status of them. The Buddha advised them not to call Him thus as He was a Buddha but they did not believe His word.*

*They did not believe Him though the Buddha said so for the second and third time.*

*The Buddha asked them: "Do you know, O Bhikkhus, (monks) that I ever spoke to you thus before?" A Buddha will never utter a lie. When a person becomes a Bodhisatta, he also will never utter a lie though may attend other sins. Bodhisatta is a person who will definitely become a Buddha later. The Buddha was able to convince them and they got ready to hear the Dhamma (doctrine). The intellectual five monks who were closely associated with the Buddha for six years were the only human beings that were present to hear the sermon.*

*Books state that many invisible beings such as Devas (Gods) and Brahmas also took advantage of the golden opportunity of listening to the sermon. They were the existence of realms other than this world, inhabited by beings with subtle bodies invisible to the physical eye of humans.*

## THE FIRST SERMON



*It was on the (Asalha) July fullmoon day at the Deer Park in Isipatana, near Benares.*

*The name of the Buddha's first sermon was 'Dhammacakka Sutta' and it means the establishment of wisdom, or the Wheel of Truth. The Buddha was started the sermon by advising the monks to give up the two extremes.*

*Those two extremes were the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, and the tormenting of the body. (self indulgence and Self-mortification.)*

*Should all give up pleasures? No, this advice was given to those who had given up the world.*

*The Buddha said about tormenting of the body because people believed in useless penances to gain purity. Earlier these five monks believed in these penances and had a great faith in them. Even the Buddha also had gone to these extremes.*

*As a prince, he enjoyed sensual pleasures. As an ascetic he practiced many penances.*

*The path discovered by the Buddha later was the Middle Path. (The Buddha taught the way to Nibbana (Nirvana) to those who need it and it was not forced. "Come and see," advises the Buddha-Compiler)*

*The Buddha had given up these extremes because they were not profitable. The Middle Path is also described as the Noble Eightfold path explained below and it leads to Nirvana.*

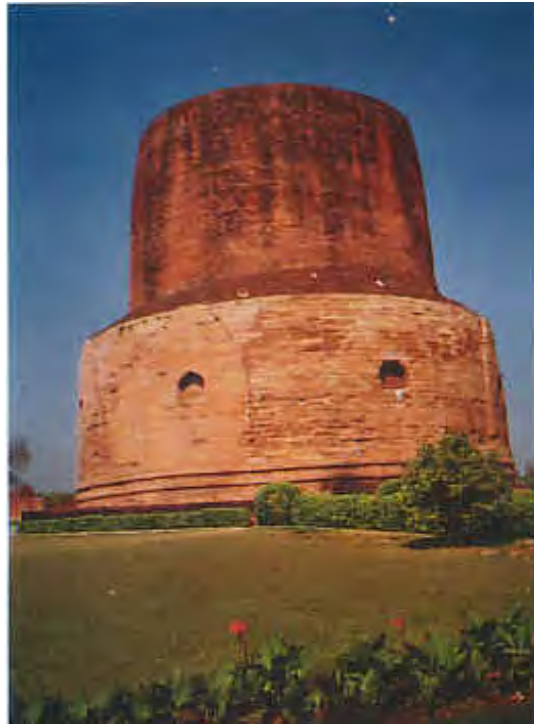
*Right Understanding (Samma Ditthi)  
Right Thought (Samma Samkappa).  
Right Speech (Samma Vaca) ,  
Right Action (Samma Kammanta)  
Right Livelihood (Samma Ajiva)  
Right Effort (Samma Vayama),  
Right Mindfulness (Samma Sati)  
Right Concentration (Samma Samadhi)*

*The Buddha had also taught in His first discourse the Four Noble Truths. They are Sorrow, its Cause, its End, and the Way to its End. The Buddha says that He was an Enlightened One only after He understood these Four Noble Truths.*

*At the end of the discourse Kondanna understood the Dhamma and became a Sotapanna which means the first stage of Sainthood. It means a Stream-winner, one who has seen Nibbana for the first time.*

*Later the other four monks also became Sotapanna and they became Arahts after hearing the Anattalakkhana sutta. (Another advanced disclosure)*

*The deer park where the Buddha preached his first sermon is now called Sarnath. It lay forgotten ... until a British amateur archaeologist excavated the site in the nineteenth century.*



*He found stupas and a pillar originally erected by emperor Ashoka in the third century BC. The biggest stupa, called Dhamekh, was on the site where the Buddha supposedly gave his first sermon, sitting with the five Brahmins from Kapilavastu. Later archaeologists discovered the shrine where the Buddha apparently had sheltered from the rains; they also found monasteries, which seemed to have been destroyed by a great fire.*

## **Buddhism in brief**

*The Heavens are time and space related physical entities which the person would temporally enjoy the blissful life in it. Buddha did not invent the Four Noble Truths but discovered it since it was hidden before his Enlightenment. These Truths existed and will be exist irrespective of any persons or a Buddha's presence. When the time pass, the same Truths will be hidden till the next Buddha discover it again.*

*This will be taken place when in the world where the right passage of the peak time born with the intellectual people.*

*Any other teachers are not Buddha's as they were not aware of the Four Noble Truths as well about the Anithya,(Change) Dukka(Sorrow) Anathma (Soullessness).*

*Only a Buddha would be able to discover them. Other religions will not lead a person to Nirvana, which is not time or space related entity as well as not a physical world.*

*According to Buddhism, following three factors has to be fulfilled to born a being. It is not an act of a third person but according to Somebody's own accumulated Karmas (Deeds what someone have done in numerous previous lives and also in this birth).*

- 1. The mother and the father come together.*
- 2. The mother should have the fertile period.*
- 3. The presence of the "being to be born" that is due to born for the particular parents.*

*The answer is not complete unless describe the third factor. Till a person eliminate all the bonds what he accumulated in life cycles in last birth which he or she attains to Nirvana, numerous desires and practices with he or she would exist and those desires will govern he or she in the life cycles. According to such Karmas, the birth and his act have an influence.*

*For a being to be born, somewhere a being must die. Birth and death are only two phases of the same process. Birth precedes death, and in other hand death precedes birth. The rising of the Sun in one place means the setting of the Sun in another place.*

*Buddhism is more scientific than modern science. Like science, Buddhism is based on verifiable cause-and-effect relationships. But unlike science, Buddhism challenges with thoroughness every belief.*

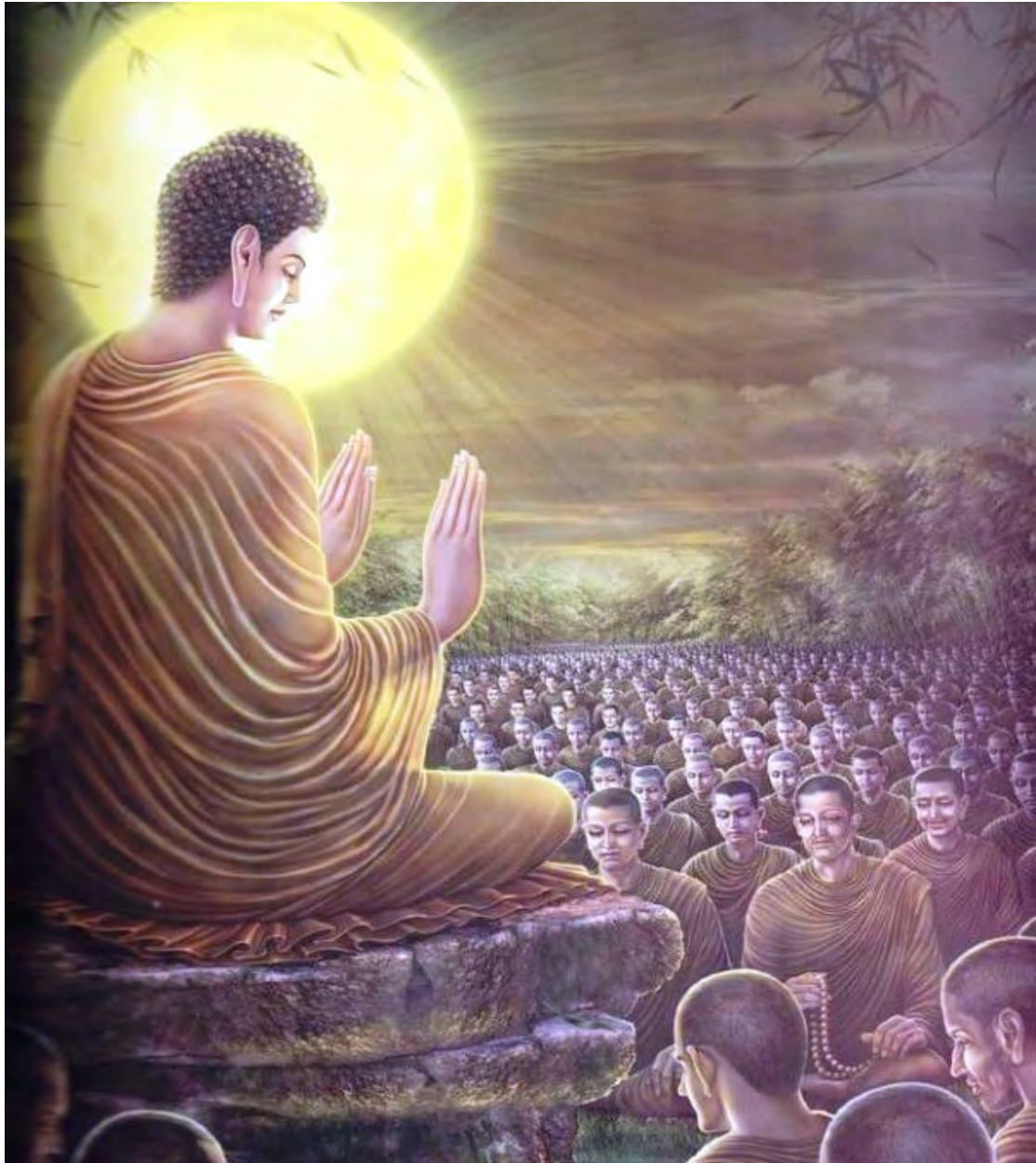
*The famous Kalama Sutta of Buddhism states that one cannot believe fully in "what one is taught, tradition, hearsay, scripture, logic, inference, appearance, agreement with established opinion, the seeming competence of a teacher, or even in one's own teacher". How many scientists are as rigorous in their thinking as this?*

## **THE BUDDHA'S MINISTRY**

*The Buddha's ministry last for Forty-five years and his ministry was the most successful and longest of all the religious teachers. The causes for his success were his noble personality, the greatness of the Dhamma and the methods used to teach the Dhamma.*

*From his thirty fifth year, the year of his enlightenment, till his death in his 80<sup>th</sup> year, he served humanity both by example and precept. Throughout the year he wandered from place to place, some times alone, sometimes accompanied by his disciples, expounding the Dhrama (Doctrine) to the people.*

*During rainy season from July to November, he lived in retirement in a temple, but advising numerous monks as well as lay followers.*



*He had many supporters like Kings as Kosala, Bimbisara, as well rich persons like Anathapindika and Visakha. Also He had opponents. Devadatta. His own cousin and pupil were His chief opponents.*

*Devadatta was the younger brother of Yashodara who was Buddha's former wife. He had been an enemy to the Buddha in numerous earlier lives.*

## THE FIRST TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES

*The Buddha's two chief disciples were Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana.*

*They realised the vanity of worldly pleasures and wanted to seek Peace and they had heard the doctrine via Assaji who was one of the first five monks converted first by Buddha.*

*Assaji had preached on the law of cause and effect as "Of things that proceed from a cause. Their cause that Tathagata has told, and also their cessation: Thus teaches the Great Ascetic Gautama."*

*Sariputta was able to understand the Dhamma on hearing the first two lines, he became a Sotapanna. (First stage of Nirvana) When Sariputta went and repeated the verse to Moggallana, he also became a Sotapanna. They went to see the Buddha later after hearing the Dhamma from Him, they attained Arhatship. (Nirvana)*

*The Buddha made Arahant Sariputta His first chief disciple, and Arahant Moggallana His second chief disciple.*

## THE BUDDHA VISITS HIS BIRTHPLACE

*News that the Buddha was residing at Rajagaha and was preaching his Dhamma reached the ears of the aged King Suddhodana, and his anxiety to see his enlightened son grew stronger and stronger. Nine times, he sent nine courtiers, each with large following to invite the Buddha. Contrary to his expectations, they all heard Dhamma, and attaining Arhanthship, entered the Sangha.*

*Finally, king dispatched another faithful courtier, Kaludai. He agreed to go as he was granted permission to enter Sangha.*

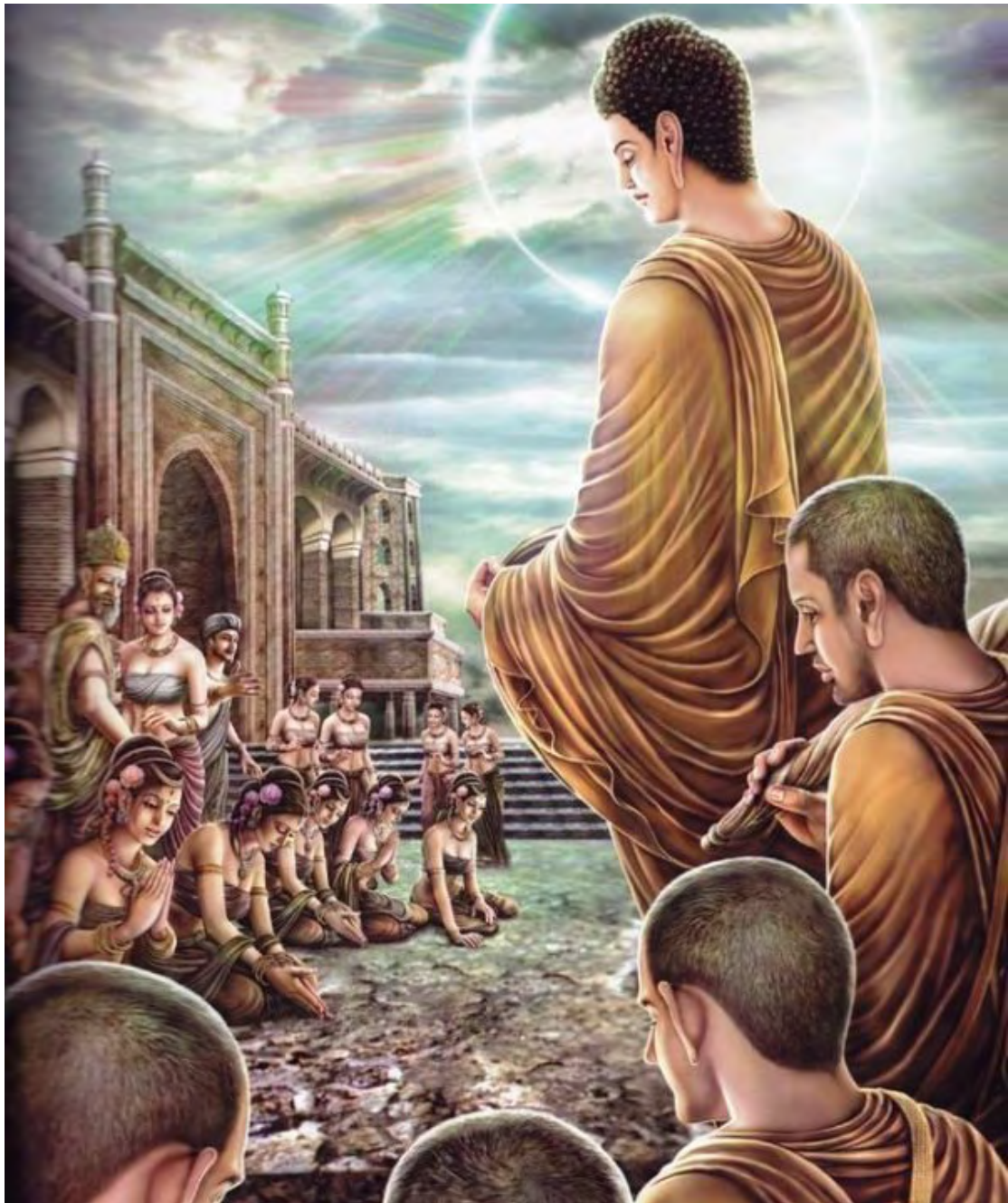
*With Kaludai's mediation, the Buddha had visit His birthplace as desired by His father King Suddhodana. When he reached the father's kingdom the elderly Sakyas did not give Him due respect as they were proud and put forward younger ones to salute Him. The Buddha had overcome their pride by rising into the sky and showing the "Twin Wonder" (Yamaka Patihariya)*

*The Twin Wonder is making the water and fire issue from the pores of His body at the same time. Only a Buddha can be able to perform such a task.*

*A person's body has trillions of pores and in the above task Buddha was able to concentrate each pore simultaneously on his body. Seeing this Wonder, the king as well other Sakyans saluted Him and shown the due respect.*

*The humbled relatives then took their seats, eager to listen to his teachings.*

*The next day, the Buddha and his thousands of followers had started begging alms along the roads in his father's kingdom. With bowl in hand He went from house to house seeking alms in the streets of Kapilawatthu.*



*On hearing this seemingly disgraceful conduct of the Buddha from his daughter-in-law, Yashodhara, the king greatly perturbed in mind, hurried to the scene and saluting him and said, "Son, why do you ruin me? I am overwhelmed with shame to see you begging alms. Is it proper for you, who used to travel in golden palanquins, to seek alms in this very city? Why do you put me in shame?"*

*The Buddha's reply was; "I am not putting you on shame, O great King! I am following the custom of my lineage," to the King's astonishment.*

*"But, dear son, is it the custom of my lineage to gain a livelihood by seeking alms? Surely, Lord, ours is the warrior lineage of Skyans, and not a single warrior has gone seeking alms."*

*"O great king, which is the custom of your royal lineage. But it is the custom of my Buddha lineage. Several thousands of Buddhas have lived by seeking alms."*

*Standing on the street, the Buddha then advised the king thus: "Be not heedless in standing at door for alms. Lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and in the next".*

*The king had then invited the Buddha and his followers for the alms next day at the palace.*

*The Buddha's previous wife Yasodhara did not appear among the people. She led an extremely happy and luxurious life. On the very day she gave birth to her only son, Rahula, her wise and contemplative husband, whom she loved with all her heart, resolved to renounce the world to seek deliverance from the ills of life.*

*She awoke everyday as usual to greet her beloved husband, but to her surprise, she found him missing. When she realized her ideal prince had left her and the new born babe, she was overcome with indescribable grief. Her dearest possession was lost for ever. The palace with all its allurements was a dungeon to her.*

*Though several Sakya princes sought her hand, she rejected all those proposals, and lived ever faithful to her husband. Hearing that her husband was leading a hermit's life, she removed all her jewellery and wore a plain yellow cloth. Throughout the six years during which the ascetic Gotama struggled for enlightenment, princess Yasodhara watched his actions closely.*

*When heard that the Buddha visited the palace, weeping Yashodhara, thought: "Surely if there is any virtue in me, the noble Lord Himself will come to see me. Then I will pay my respect." Buddha by his divine eye felt her mind and out of compassion the Buddha went to see her.*



*She clasped his ankles and placing her head on His feet and cried, respected Him as she liked till the tears wetted his feet. Buddha did not attempt to stop her and let her to weep as she likes. The King Suddhodana praised her and told the Buddha about her loyalty.*

*She later entered the order of nuns and became an Arahant.*

## Buddha and his step brother Nanda

*On the third day after the arrival of Buddha at his birth place Kapila vasthu, Prince Nanda his step brother, the son of Pajapati as celebrating three ceremonies as marriage, consecration and house warming ceremonies. While at this ceremony, Buddha visited the Nanda's palace. After the meal, the Buddha handed the bowl to the Prince Nanda and uttering a blessing, rose to go without taking the bowl.*

*The Prince followed him thinking that the Buddha would take the bowl from him at any movement but the Buddha would not take it and out of the reverence, Prince Nanda followed him.*

*Janapada Kalyani, to whom he was betrothed, hearing that the prince was following Buddha, with tears streaming her checks, and her hair half combed, said to him, "Return quickly, O noble lord! These affectionate words penetrated his heart and though he was deeply moved, he did not have courage to return the bowl to Buddha.*

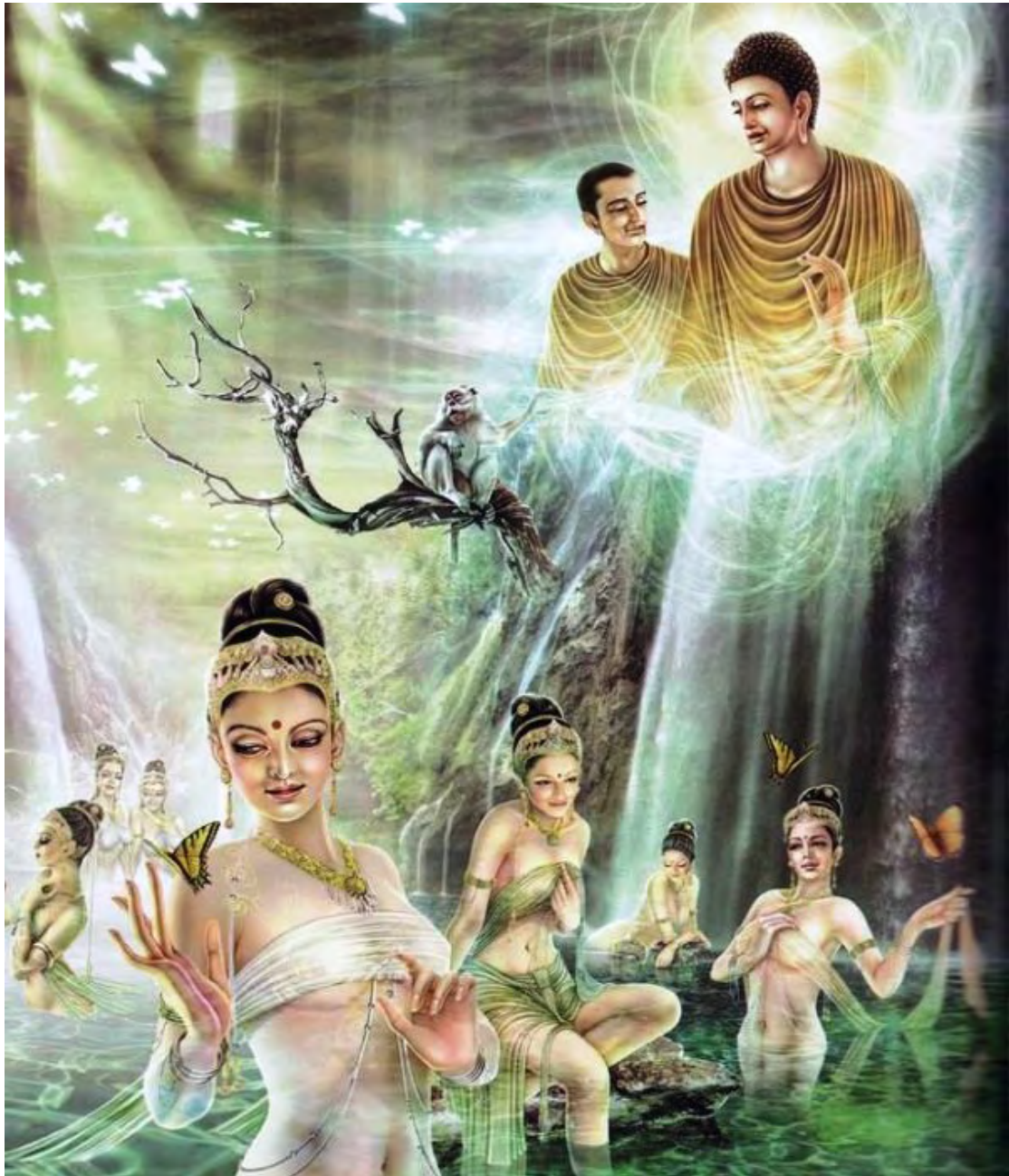
*On arrival, Buddha questioned Nanda, whether he would become a monk. So great was his reverence to Buddha and as an elder brother of his, reluctantly he agreed to be admitted in to the ministry.*

*But Nanda was not enjoyed any spiritual happiness and related his mental troubles of loosing luxurious life and said about his pretty wife to other monks. "Brethren, I am dissatisfied. I can not endure leading the religious life any longer. I intend to abandon the higher precepts and return to lower life". He was greatly depressed and constantly thinking about his bride. Hearing this, the Buddha questioned Nanda whether such reports were true. He admitted his weakness, and stated that he was worried about his bride.*

*Buddha had taken him to Thusitha heaven by using his psychic powers with the objective of showing him the celestial nymphs. It was to set him in to the correct path. On the way to the heaven, Nanda was shown a burnt monkey who had lost her ears, nose and tail in a fire, clinging to a burnt up log in a field.*

*Reaching heaven, the Buddha pointed him celestial nymphs and asked him, "Nanda, which do you regard as being the more beautiful and fair to look upon and handsome? Your wife or these nymphs?"*

*"Venerable Sir, janapada Kalyani is like the burnt monkey when compared to these celestial nymphs, who are infinitely more beautiful and fair"*



*"Cheer up Nanda, I guarantee that you will possess them if you persevere as I bid you"*

*"In that case, I shall take the greatest pleasure of living the holy life" said Venerable Nanda childishly.*

*Hearing that Venerable Nanda was living the holy life with the object of winning the celestial nymphs, the other monks ridiculed him calling him 'hireling'. Eventually, Venerable Nanda became ashamed of his motive, and striving diligently, attained Arhanthship.*

*He thereupon approached Buddha and said, "Venerable Sir, I release you from the promise that I win the celestial nymphs" The Buddha replied, "You ceased to cling to the things of the world, and your heart was released from the corruptions. At that movement, I was released from that promise".*

*Enjoying the bliss of emancipation, Nanda praised his teacher, "O excellent was the method of Master, whereby I was drawn out of the mire of re-birth and set on Nirvana.*

*Once the Buddha was at street on alms begging, his son Rahula seen him from the palace. Seeing the Buddha, the Prince Rahula advised by the mother as, 'Behold, son, that golden coloured ascetic, looking like Brahma, surrounded by twenty thousand ascetics! He is your father, and he had great treasures. Since his renunciation we do not see him. Go up to him and ask for your inheritance, and say 'Father, I am the prince and I will be the universal monarch. I am in need of wealth. Please give me the wealth, for the son is the owner of what belongs to the father.*

*He went up to the Buddha and asked for his inheritance. Rahula; the seven years little prince said: "O Ascetic, even your shadow is pleasing to me."*

*After the meal, Buddha left the palace and Rahula followed him saying, 'Give me my inheritance'. Nobody attempted to stop him. Nor did the Buddha prevent him from following him. Reaching the park where the Buddha stayed, the Buddha thought: He desires his father's wealth, but it goes with the world and is full of trouble. I shall give him the sevenfold noble wealth which I received at the foot of Bodhi tree. He called his chief disciple Venerable Sariuth to enter little Rahula to the monk hood.*

*King Suddhodana was deeply grieved to hear of the unexpected ordination of his beloved grandson then approached Buddha and, in humbly requesting him not to ordain anyone without prior consent of the parents. He uttered, "When the lord renounced the world it was a cause of great pain for me. It was so when Nanda (Buddha's step brother) renounced and especially so in case of Rahula. The Love of a father towards a son cuts through the skin, the flesh, the bone and the marrow. Grant, Lord, the request that the noble ones may not confer ordination on a son with out the permission of his parents.*

*The Buddha readily granted the request, and made it a vinaya (disciplinary) rule.*

*Rahula was admitted into the Order at seven and he became Arahath at later stage of his life.*

*How a young boy of seven years could lead the holy life is almost inconceivable. But Rahula, cultured, exceptionally obedient and well disciplined was very eager to accept instructions from his superiors.*



## Taming a murderer



*There was a ruthless murderer called 'Angulimala', who wore about his neck a garland of the fingers of his victims.*

*Surveyed the world with his divine eye of infinite compassion, the Buddha one morning saw this outlaw and He perceived that an atrocious crime was about to take place. To complete his garland the murderer needed one more finger; and Angulimala's mother was on her way to visit her son . . . .*

*Instantaneously, as a strong man reaches out his arm, the Buddha was upon the scene, for to one who was conquered life and death, space no longer exists. He stood before Angulimala, radiant and majestic, and halted his way. But one thought alone possessed the murderer's mind-he must obtain the last finger to make the garland to be thousand fingers.*

*He drew his sword and leaped towards the Buddha. He leaped. But the same distance remained between them. Calmly the Buddha surveyed him, but although the Buddha remained motionless, the distance between them was not decreased. Angulimala ran and cried out; "Stop Ascetic! Stand still! "*

*"I am still, Angulimala", the calm voiced replied. "It is you who are running". Panting and angered, the murderer desperately attempted to reach his objective, but no matter how fast he ran; the figure of Buddha remained motionless before him.*

*Exhausted and confused then, the murderer came to a halt, and as ever, the Buddha stood before him. Waves of tremendous force struck against the murderer, enveloped him and rendered him powerless, but he felt they were waves of compassion. Giving way to his weakness, he surrendered himself to light; it was more tender and comforting than anything he had ever known.*

*He fell on his knees and stretched out his arms towards that glorious light, towards that all-embracing compassion. And the heat and the anger of his heart were calmed.*

*"I am still Angulimala, for who he is still, goes; but he who goes is still."*

*In that moment Angulimala understood and said; "Aren't you the prince Siddhartha who left the palace to be a monk? "Aren't you the awakened one who had given the wisdom to the beings"*

*"I take refuge in you lord", "Lord, you have opened my eyes which have blinded with rage and anger"*

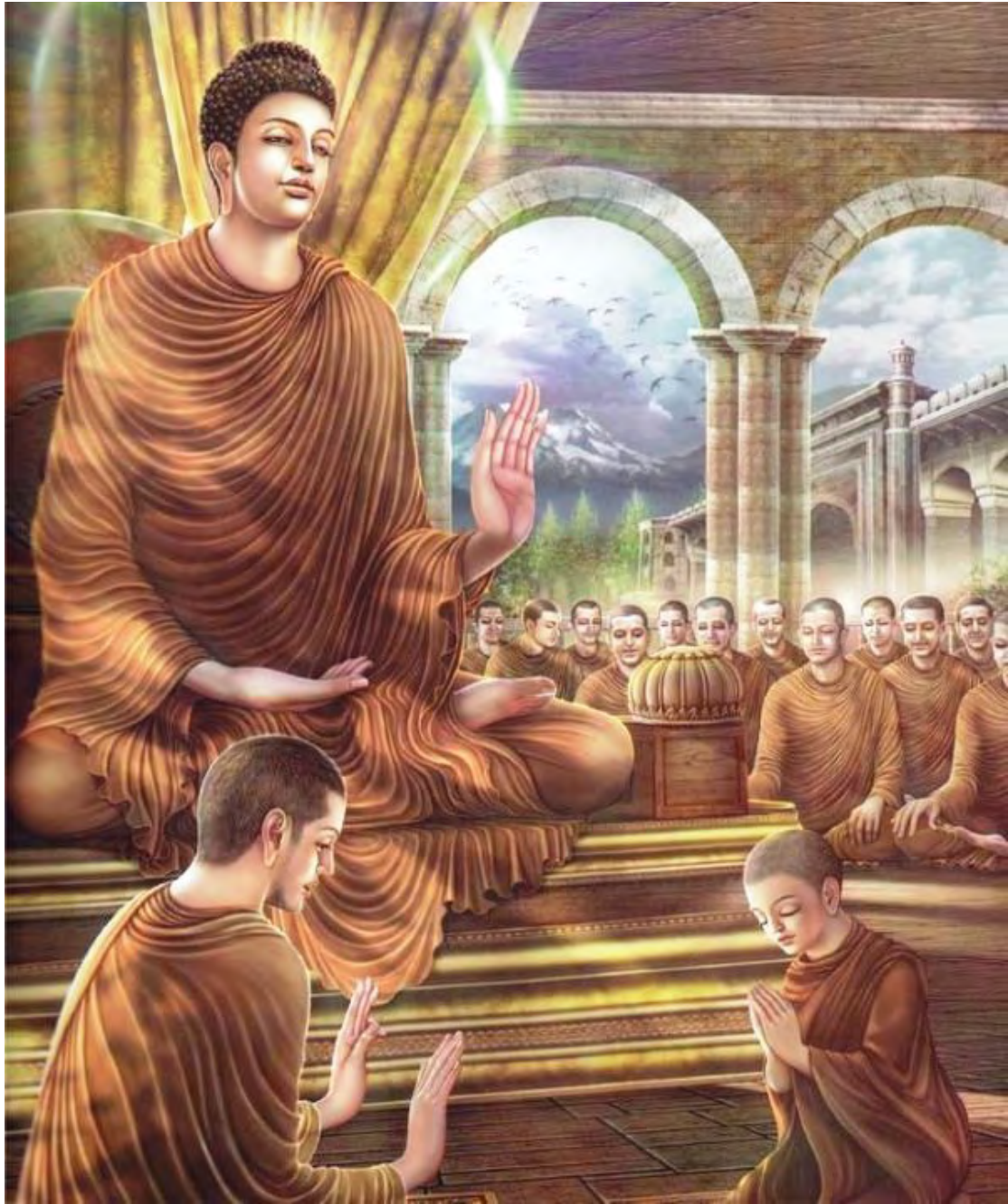
*So the former murderer thrown out the garland of fingers and his sword, took the yellow robe of a Buddhist monk and in no long time attained the Arhantship.*

*There are many ways a man may be brought to realize the truth. The Buddha was a master of them all. If the potentiality for understanding were present, the Buddha could awaken it, bring it to perfection. Where a demonstration of power was called for, he exercised power. Where wisdom was called for, he exercised verbal skill.*

## **Order of Nuns and state of women in Buddhism**

*Ananda who was a cousin of the Buddha had joined the order and called as the Treasurer of the Dhamma. He was also the favourite attendant of the Buddha. He had done a great service as he pleaded for the establishment of the Order of Nuns.*

*Hence including Maha Pajapati Gotami who is Buddha's step mother, Buddha's previous wife Yaosdhara was able to attain the Arhantship and was many other women.*



*Originally Maha Pajapati Gotami requested the Buddha to find the Order of Nuns and the two chief disciples in the Order of the Nuns had been Khema and Upplavanna were the two chief female disciples.*

*Therefore the Buddha had founded the first society for women and the Order of Nuns still exists.*

*Before the advent of Buddha, women in India were not held in high esteem. The Buddha did not humiliate the women, but only regarded them as feeble by nature.*

*He saw the innate good of both men and women and assigned them their due places in his teachings. Sex is no barrier for purification or service.*

*On one occasion, while the Buddha was conversing with King Kosala, a messenger came and informed the King that a daughter was born unto him. Hearing it, the King was displeased. But Buddha comforted him, saying:*

*"A women child, O lord of men, may prove even a better offspring than a male"*

## **BUDDHA'S SUPPORTERS**

*Kings and millionaires helped him. It is clear that neither wealth nor poverty need be an obstacle to be an ideal Buddhist. Anathapindika, the Buddha's best supporter was a millionaire, Kosala was a very powerful king while Upali who was a poor tailor. Upali later became an Arahat and recite the Vinaya (The discipline part of Dhamma)*

*His Royal Patrons were King Bimbisara, King Kosala, King Ajatasattu while his chief female supporter Visakha, a very generous and rich lady who offered the temple called Pubbarama.*

## **The ruins**

*The ruins of Pubbarama still to be seen in place called Sahet-Mahet in Pakistan.*

*The Ministry of Tourism in Pakistan also celebrated "Gandhara Week" from March 27 to April 1 2007 to promote the heritage of the Gandhara civilization and to highlight the collections exhibited in various museums in the country.*

*Gandhara is the one of the holiest places for followers of Buddhism and is the place from where the religion flourished across the globe. According to Prof Sehrai, an expert on the Buddhist art and architecture of South Asia, the first Buddha image of the world was created in Gandhara which was its greatest gift to the world of Buddhism.*

*The Gandhara art reached the climax due to the royal patronage of Emperor Kanishka and prosperity which Gandhara achieved from foreign trade and commerce on Silk roads which connected it with Central Asia, Western countries and South Asia.*

*The reasons for the decline of the art are attributed to the lack of royal patronage after the King Kanishka's death and the disconnection of Silk roads by the Sassanian rulers of Iran.*



*Aerial view of Dharamrajika stupa where the sound and light show portraying the ancient Buddhist culture was held.*

*One of the most significant characters in the history of Buddhism is King Asoka. He was succeeding his father after a bloody power struggle in 268 BC, found himself deeply disturbed by the carnage he caused while suppressing a revolt in the land of the Kalingas. The historian of repute, Sir H.G.Wells has recorded with his golden letters : <sup>3</sup>Amidst the tens of thousands of*

*columns of names of monarchs, the name of Ashoka shines, alone like star.*

*Meeting Nigrodha convinced Emperor Ashoka to devote himself to peace. On his orders, thousands of rock pillars were erected, bearing the words of the Buddha, in the brahmi script -- the first written evidence of Buddhism.*

*There is a story that tells about a poor young boy who, having nothing to give the Buddha as a gift, collected a handful of dust and innocently presented it.*

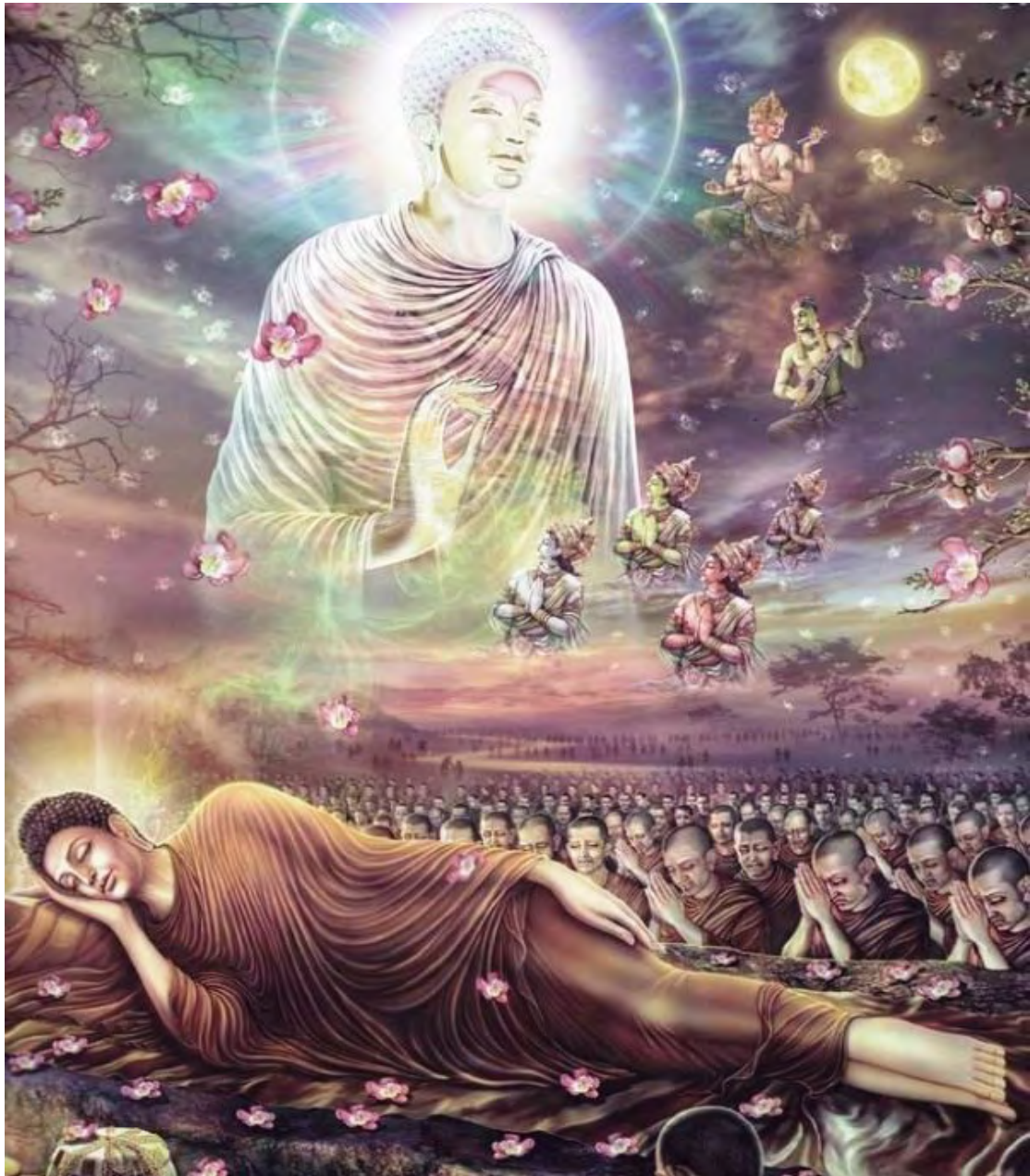
*The Buddha smiled and accepted it with the same graciousness he accepted the gifts of wealthy admirers. That boy, it is said, was reborn as the Emperor Ashoka.*

*Ashoka sent missionaries all over India and beyond. Some went as far as Egypt, Iran, Sri Lanka, Burma, Russia, China, Palestine, and Greece. St. Origen even mentions them as having reached Britain. The Greeks of one of the Alexandrian kingdoms of northern India adopted Buddhism, after their King Menandros (Pali: Milinda) was convinced by a monk named Nagasena -- the conversation immortalized in the Milinda Pañha. (Milinda questions)*

*A Kushan king of north India named Kanishka was also converted, and a council was held in Kashmir in about 100 AD. Greek Buddhists there recorded the Sutras on copper sheets which, unfortunately, was never recovered.*

## Buddha's demise

*The literature describes there were rains of flowers seen and divine scents felt on the day of Buddha's demise. He had born as a human and passed away as a human. The younger inexperienced monks cried when Buddha is in the death bed while the mature monks faced the reality of life and realized the transient nature of the life.*



*The Buddha's last advice was "Strive with diligence". He said with regard to the best form of worship was "He honours me best who practices my Teaching best", "He who sees the Dhamma sees me."*

*Looking at the weeping of younger monks, Buddha said: "Didn't I tell you that all are subjected to decay?"*

*Exactly three months before his demise, Buddha had told his close attendant Ananda that he will be died after three months. It has been reported the Earth had been shook on the same day due to this exposure.*

*Born a man, living as a mortal, by his own exertion he attained that supreme state of perfection called Buddha hood, and without keeping his enlightenment to himself, he proclaimed to the world that the latent possibilities and the invincible power of the human mind, instead of placing an unseen almighty god over man.*

*He had given the gift of wisdom to all which a subservient position in relation to such a conception of divine power, he demonstrated how man could attain the highest knowledge and supreme enlightenment by his own efforts.*

*The Buddha did not appoint a successor before He passed away as he had advised His disciples to regard His Teaching as their teacher. He had passed away in His 80<sup>th</sup> year on Wesak (May) full moon day. This was 543 years before Christ.*

*His sacred body was cremated seven days after His death and his relics were distributed among His distinguished followers. These relics still to be seen in many places. The Tooth Relic is to be seen at the Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka.*

*An important event taken place after the cremation as the First Council was held to recite the Dhamma and the Vinaya of the Buddha. Vinaya means the rules which the monks have to be followed.*

*This Council had held because in order that the Teaching of the Buddha may last long in all its purity. The Pali word for the whole Teaching of the Buddha is called as "Tipitaka", which means three books. This Tipitaka still exist in its purity and it is eleven times size bigger than Bible.*

*The Tipitaka first written in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) about 80 B.C.*

*What is the First Pitaka ? The first is the Vinaya Pitaka-The Basket of Discipline. What is the second Pitaka ? The Second is the Sutta Pitaka-The Basket of Discourse. What is the third Pitaka ? The Third is the Abidhamma Pitaka,- Basket of Ultimate Things-The advanced disclosures.*

*There are no hidden meanings of any of the verses in Tipitaka compare to some books on other religions where requires special interpretations as well as they may differ from the interpreter or the languages.*

## **Buddha's teaching in brief**

*One becomes a Buddhist by taking the Three Refuges. The Three Refuges are the Buddha, Dhamma (His doctrine) and Sangha (the Buddhist monks who are the Holy order founded by the Buddha). One seeks refuge in the Buddha because to end all suffering.*



*Any one can become a Buddhist who believes in the Buddha, the Dhamma (doctrine) and the Sangha (Learned Monks) can become a Buddhist. Believing in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha are different from the way of believing in God in other religions.*

*In Buddhism, there is the complete freedom to criticise any part of the doctrine and no toleration to encourage the blind faith. The Buddha was not encouraged the followers to believe anything without a reason on His doctrine. Believing in the master and the doctrine has to consider as a test which someone to analysis and then understand.*

*There are no rites to observe to be a Buddhist such as; visit a temple or worshipping the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha in a certain way such as praying specific times per a day or selecting a special day in a week. There would be only encouraging realising the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha merely by understanding of various levels in the Buddhist doctrine.*

*In Buddhism there is not, as in most other religions, an almighty God to be obeyed and feared.*

*Buddhism denies the existence of a supernormal power, conceived as an almighty being or a causeless force.*

*Buddhism can not be strictly called a religion, because it is neither a system of faith and worship, nor as defined controlled by a by an almighty God.*

*There are many places in Buddhist literature that the miracles happened when Buddha was present such as divine flowers fallen from sky, the Devas (Gods) appeared and saluted him, Buddha rose in to the air and went to preach the God's in heavens etc.*



*However, there is one clear miracle happened in the hearts of millions of people all around the world for last 2500 years as they became ardent followers of Buddha learning his peaceful doctrine.*

*Buddhism is famous for it's religious tolerance.*

## THE FIVE PRECEPTS

*Are there any commandments for a Buddhist to observe? There are no commandments but precepts to observe. The Pali word for precepts is Sikkhapada and it as follows.*

*What is the first precept?*

*The first precept is not to kill. I do not kill out of pity for others. Even a cockroach crawling loves its life.*

*What is the second precept?*

*The second precept is not to steal; I do not steal because I have no right to take what is not given.*

*What is the third precept?*

*The third precept is not to be unchaste, or not to be a bad child. I do not become unchaste because I do not wish to be a child of bad character.*

*What is the fourth precept?*

*The fourth is not to lie. I do not lie because nobody would then believe me. I become truthful and trustful.*

*What is the fifth precept?*

*The fifth precept is not to drink liquor or taking drugs. I do not drink because it leads to carelessness and loss of all senses. I become very careful and my senses become very clear.*

*How does one become a good Buddhist? By observing these five precepts well.*

## HOMAGE TO THE BUDDHA

*The Buddha himself regarded him as not a God. He is even greater than gods. Do you believe in a God-Creator? There is no reason to believe in a God-Creator. Do you worship images and trees?*

*A Buddhist does not worship images and trees. The common people are attracted by the devotional side of the Buddhism while the more intelligent people are fascinated by the philosophical and deeper teachings of Buddha.*

*Why do people then worship the image of the Buddha? Buddhists only pay the respect to what that image stands for. Therefore non Buddhist might get a wrong impression as Buddhism is confined to rites and ceremonies if he enters to a Buddhist temple.*

*Why do you worship the Bodhi tree? The Bodhi tree stands for Enlightenment.*

*By saluting the Bodhi Tree, we pay respect to Buddhahood. A Buddhist does not pray to the Buddha. When someone prays he becomes a prey. Petitioned prayers are denounced in Buddhism.*

*A person has to be brave enough to be a Buddhist since there is no third party who supports him. Buddha clearly said that "My religion on the base of Nirvana only can understand by the intelligent persons.*

*What do you say before the Buddha's image? We recite His virtues. What is the use of an image?*

*An image helps us to think of the Buddha easily. Can anyone think of the Buddha without an image?*

*An intelligent person can do so. Why do someone offer flowers and incense to the Buddha? This is an outward form of respect to the Buddha. When offering flowers a Buddhist thinks that as those flowers, fade all the beings also fade and die.*

*The best way to respect the Buddha is following his advices. What is the advice of all the Buddhas? "Sabba papaassa akaranam-Kusalassa upasampada, Sacitta pariyodapanam-Etam Buddhana sasanam"*

***What does that mean?***

*Not to do evil*

*To do good*

*To purify one's mind*

*This is the advice of all the Buddhas.*

***What is the Pali word for evil?***

*Papa or Akusala is the pali word for evil.*

***What is evil?***

*Evil is that which spoils our mind.*

***Why is anything evil?***

*Because it causes suffering to oneself and others.*

***What are the roots of evil?***

*The roots of evil are lust, hatred and ignorance.*

***How many kind of evil are there?***

*There are ten kinds of evil.*

***How are they caused?***

*They caused by deeds, words and thoughts.*

***How many kinds of evil are caused by deeds?***

*Three kinds of evil are caused by deeds.*

***What are they?***

*They are killing, stealing and misconduct.*

***How many kinds of evil are caused by words?***

*Four kinds of evil are caused by words?*

***What are they?***

*Lying, slandering, harsh speech, and vain talk.*

***How many kinds of evil are caused by thoughts?***

*Three kinds of evil are caused by thoughts.*

***Mention them.***

*Greediness, anger and wrong views.*

***What is the Pali word for good?***

*Kusala or Punna is the Pali word for good.*

***What is good?***

*That which cleanses one's mind is good.*

***Why is anything good?***

*Because, it gives happiness to oneself and others.*

***Is there another term for good?***

*Merit is another term for good.*

***How many kinds of merit are there?***

*There are three kinds of merit.*

***Mention them.***

*They are Dana (charitable giving or generosity), Sila (Sila is morality or virtuous) and Bhavna (meditation).*

***What do you give up by generosity?***

*Selfishness.*

***What do you give up by morality?***

*Ill-will or hatred.*

***What do you give up by meditation?***

*Ignorance.*

***Can children practice charitable giving?***

*Yes, by helping the needy and the poor, and by helping those who are worthy of honour.*

***Who are those worthy of honour?***

*They are parents, teachers, elders, and Holy Ones.*

***Can children practise morality?***

*Yes, by observing precepts.*

***Can children practice meditation?***

*Yes, they can practice some kinds of meditation.*

***What is the best meditation for children?***

*Loving-kindness.*

***How should some one practise loving-kindness. ?***

*By repeating every morning and night ten times-"May all beings be well and happy! "*

***Is there any other form?***

*"Creatures all beneath the sun,  
Two feet, four feet, more or none,  
How I love you everyone. "*

***Recite another verse,***

*"All ye creatures that have birth,  
Breath and move upon the earth;  
Happy be ye one and all,  
Never into mischief fall. "*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Guard Earnestness**

The ignorant, foolish folk indulge in heedlessness; but the Wise guard's earnestness as the great treasure.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mind your own business**

He should regard no regard the faults of others, things done and left undone by others, but his own deeds done and undone.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Practice is more important**

As a flower that is lovely and beautiful, but is scentless, Even so fruitless is the well-spoken word of one who Practices it not. Many words are not necessary Better than a thousand useless words, is a single useful sentence, hearing which one is pacified.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Respect the elders**

For one who ever honour and respect the elders, blessings increase-age, beauty, bliss and power.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Single Day of Virtuous Life**

Though he should live a hundred years, immoral and uncontrolled; yet better, indeed, it is to live a single day, virtuous and meditative.\*

\*\*\*\*\*

**No man is Free from Blame and Praise**

There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a person who is wholly blamed or wholly praised.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time.**

hatred cease by love: this is its nature. Let us live happily, not hating those who hate us. Among men who hate us, let us live free from hatred. Let us overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good. Let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth. He in whom there is truth, virtue, love, restraints, moderation, he who is free from impurity and is wise, he called an elder (Dhammapada5,197,223,261).

**Parting word of the Buddha.**

Transient are conditioned things. Try to accomplish your aim with diligence.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Parting word of the Buddha.**

Transient are conditioned things. Try to accomplish your aim with diligence.

-----



*Compiled this article by the inspiration from the book 'The Buddha and his teachings by Venerable Narada Maha Thera published by The Buddhist research society, Kreta Ayer Post office, P.O.Box 324, Singapore 9108. Pictures are by unknown artists.*

-----

