

The Original Missionary Monks

The sixth disciple was [Yasa](#), son of a rich man. Disgusted with the world he ran away from home at night and met the Buddha, listened to His Dhamma and became an Arahant.

Searching for his son Yasa, the father too met the Buddha and listening to His Dhamma became the first male follower (Upāsaka) who took the [Three-fold Refuges](#).

Likewise Yasa's mother and wife also became the first two female followers (upāsikās) who sought the three-fold refuges. The three lay disciples attained [Sotāpanna](#) (first stage of ariya hood) after listening to the Buddha's dhamma.

Meanwhile Yasa's 54 staunch friends, after hearing the Buddha's Dhamma also became Arahants:

[Vimalā](#), [Subāhu](#), [Punnaji](#) and [Gavampati](#) were the four closest and dearest of Yasa's friends who attained Arahants first. They made up the total of [60 Arahants](#) existing in the World then.

With these Sixty Arahants, the Buddha told them to:

“Go forth, O Bhikkhus, one in each direction, Preach ye the Dhamma, for the good of many, for the welfare and happiness of many, proclaim ye the holy blameless life for the good of the world”.

After that the Buddha set out on foot alone to preach His new-found Dhamma.

On the way He met the [Thirty Bhadda Vaggi](#) royal brothers who were having a picnic:

As one of them was unmarried he engaged a courtesan who stole their gold and jewellery, creating uproar. This made them hunt for the lady thief and consequently meet the Buddha.

After hearing the Dhamma from the Buddha, they became Ariyans in the first three stages of Sainthood (Sotāpanna to Anāgāmi).

The Buddha then proceeded to [Rājagaha](#) and met the famous [three Kassapa Ascetic brothers](#), who lived by the bank of a river. They were very avid and successful Fire-worshippers:

After the Buddha passed a night in the eldest Kassapa brother's temple and defeating the residential Nāga (dragon), he was convinced of the Buddha's powers and became His disciple. This led to the conversion of his two younger Kassapas, also fire-worshippers down-stream.

As they had 500, 300 and 200 disciples respectively who also became Buddhist monks, they made up a total of 1000 bhikkhus headed by the Kassapa brothers and all became Arahants after hearing the Buddha preached the Maha Nārada Kassapa Jātaka.

With these new found disciples the Buddha proceeded towards the kingdom of [King Bimbisāra](#), whom He had promised to visit first after His Enlightenment when He was Bodhisattva Ascetic earlier on.

King Bimbisāra together with one hundred and twenty thousand in his retinue met the Buddha.

King Bimbisāra after hearing the story of Maha Nārada Kassapa Jātaka from the Buddha, attained the first stage of sainthood (Sotāpanna).

Among his retinue, one hundred and ten thousand attained Sotāpanna Sainthood whilst the remaining ten thousand became Buddhists.

He was very happy and expressing joy he told the Buddha that his [5 life-long wishes](#) had been fulfilled. They were as follows

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

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

Tirokuṭṭa Sutta

After the donation of Veluvana Bamboo Grove Temple to Buddha, that night King Bimbisāra heard frightful, fearsome and horrible demons screaming and shouting outside the palace.

After consulting the Buddha, he was told that the Throne and Kingdom were not in danger but those were his previous relatives in deprived state and who wanted the sharing of his merits.

So as advised, the King duly performed alms giving and shared merits to his relatives whom the Buddha revealed them in their pitiful states.

That became the starting of sharing of merits by reciting:

“**Idam No Ñatinam̐ Hotu Sukhitā Hontu Ñatayo!**”

“**May our relatives share in the merits we have accrued and may they be well and happy!**”

The Royal Invitation

His royal father King Suddhodana sent nine invitations to invite the Buddha to return home and visit His birth place but they were all unsuccessful:

When the royal messengers met the Buddha, they heard His dhamma and attained Arahantship. They were so happy and elated that they forgot their royal mission and became monks.

Only Kāḷudāyī succeeded in inviting the Buddha. After his successful invitation, Kāḷudāyī, a former playmate of the Buddha who was born on the same day as Buddha, also became a Bhikkhu.

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

On arriving at Kapilavatthu, the elderly royal Sakyan relatives, according with their traditions, sent their younger ones to picnic away in the country side, expecting the Buddha to pay them the due respect.

However the Buddha knew the real situation and performed the twin miracle:

The twin miracle was the issuing of fire and water from His body simultaneously. This wonderful and spectacular feat captured and subdued their pride.

His royal father, seeing this wonder, saluted Him, saying that it was his third respect. Finally the elderly Sakyan relatives paid their respect to the Buddha.

The next day with bowl in hand, He went from house to house seeking alms in the streets of Kapilavatthu.

The King rushed up to Him and asked why He was disgracing him thus. The Buddha replied that it was the tradition of Buddhas.

On hearing this the King became a [Sotāpanna](#). Later he became a [Sakadāgāmi](#), He attained [Anāgāmi](#) when he heard the Dhammapāla Jātaka. On his death bed he became an [Arahant](#).

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

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

So the Compassionate Buddha accompanied by a host of retinue led by the King and Pajāpati Gotamī, went to see her.

Yaśodharā then clasped the Buddha's ankles and worshipped Him as she liked. Meanwhile the King announced her sterling virtues to all present.

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

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

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

1. preparing the hair style for the Crown Prince,
2. consecration of the Crown Prince,
3. the coronation of the Crown Prince,

74. the wedding of the Crown Prince, and
5. the presentation of the whole exclusive Royal umbrella

which took place on the third day of the Buddha's visit.

However later after the dāna, when he followed the Buddha back to Nijodhārāma Monastery carrying the alms-bowl of the Buddha, whereupon he was ordained as a Bhikkhu.

On the seventh day of the Buddha's visit, [Prince Rāhula](#) who was prompted by his mother to ask for his inheritance was instead ordained as a novice monk at the young age of seven:

This ordination which had the seven supra-mundane treasures was the more appropriate and beneficial inheritance the Buddha gave instead. In due course he became an Arahant.

[King Suddhodana](#) became upset at the ordination of his only grandson and requested the Buddha to establish a radical rule that anyone who had obtained the consent of his parent or guardian should only be ordained as a monk.

On the seventh year of His enlightenment, the Buddha went to [Tāvātimsa Heaven](#) to preach the Abhidhamma (Higher Philosophical Truth) to His deva mother and also to observe the Vassana (Rains Retreat) for three months there.

Many celestials, including a very large retinue headed by His deva mother, greatly benefited by attaining the various stages of Sainthood.