

Edmonton Dhamma School – Upekkha Class

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Teacher: Changa Mettananda

The Life of the Buddha – Travelling to different cities to meet people and preach Dhamma

Background

- The ascetic *Siddhartha Gothama* attained the enlightenment and became the Buddha on a Vesak poya day (full moon day) under a *Asathu* Bodhi tree at the *Buddhagaya*.
- The Buddha spent seven weeks near *Buddhagayā*.
- He then visited the five ascetics (*Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, Assaji*) who helped him in the past, to preach the Dhamma (Buddha's doctrine). The first sermon of the Buddha took place at the hermitage at the *Isipathana* Deer Park in *Benares*.
- The five ascetics, *Yasa* and his 54 friend became Arahants and monks to make up the first 60 disciples.
- *Yasa's* parents and his former wife became the first lay followers to seek refuge of the triple gem, Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha (*Tevācika Upāsaka* and *Upāsikā*).
- After spending the first *Vassāna* season in *Beneres*, Buddha advised the 60 Arahant's to go out and about preaching the Dhamma, out of compassion for the world. He advised no two monks to go one way.

Travelling to different cities to meet people and preach Dhamma

- Buddha's visit to *Uruvelā*
 - Having sent other monks to preach, the Buddha himself visited *Uruvelā*.
 - He preached the Dhamma to thirty princes known as *Bhaddavaggiya* princes and their wives. The princes attained various stages of sainthood, namely, *Sothāpanna, Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi*. They all then became monks.
 - He then met three *Jatila* ascetics *Kassapa* brothers, *Uruwelā Kassapa, Gayā Kassapa* and *Nadī Kassapa*, who along with their 1000 followers became disciples of the Buddha. After listening to the *Sutta Aditta Pariyāya*, they all became arahants.
- The first visit to Sri Lanka (to Mahiyangana) to preach to a group of people from the *Yaksha* tribe.
- Buddha's visit to *Rajagaha* in *Maghada* kingdom
 - King *Bimbisara* became a Buddhist and offered the temple *Veluvanaramaya*
 - Around the same time, Ven. Arahant *Assaji* went to *Rajagaha* and met *Upatissa* and *Koliya* who became Arahants *Sāriputta* and *Moggallāna*, the two chief disciples of the Buddha. *Sāriputta* and *Moggallāna* then visited the Buddha and upon hearing his preachings, attained *Arahantship*.
- Buddha's visit to *Kapilawattu*, his place of birth
 - *Suddhodhana* heard that his son attained the Buddhahood and was in *Rajagaha*. Messengers sent nine times failed to deliver the message to Buddha. On the 10th time, his minister *Kāludai* delivered the message and encouraged Buddha to visit his hometown.

- In *Kapilawattu*, Buddha resided in the park of *Nigrodha* – which later became *Nigrodhārāmaya*. Buddha exhibited the Twin-Wonder (*Yamaka Pāthihārya*) to subdue the pride of the *Sākyas*.
- When Buddha was going on the alms round, King Suddhodhana invited him to the palace and offered alms. Buddha then visited Princes Yasodara.
- Prince Nanda (on the 3rd day) and Prince Rahula (on the 7th day) became monks.
- Visit to the *Malla* Kingdom
 - *Sakya* princes *Bhaddiya*, *Anuruddha*, *Ananda*, *Bhagu*, *Kimbila* and *Devadatta* and the servant *Upali* became monks.
 - At this time, the city of *Visala* suffered from three fears: disease, famine, and fear. Buddha recited the *Rathana Sutta* and had *Ananda* Thero to sprinkle sacred water.
 - Buddha then returned to Rajagaha for the 2nd Vassana season.
- Visit to *Sāvatti*
 - Buddha stayed in Rajagaha for the 3rd Vassana season as well.
 - The chief merchant in Rajagaha became a Buddhist, and offered dana.
 - Sudatta, a rich merchant of *Sāvatti* was visiting his friend listed to the sermons and invited Buddha to visit *Sāvatti*.
 - When Buddha visited *Sāvatti*, Sudatta offered the temple *Jetavanarāmaya* to Buddha. *Jetavanarāmaya* later became the main Buddhist Centre. Sudatta also became one of the main lay followers who looked after the wellbeing of the Buddha and monks. *Sudatta is also known as Anatha Pindika*.
- Fourth Year
 - Fourth Vassana season was also spent in Rajagaha, where he met King Pukkusati.
 - It is this time when Buddha Suneetha and Sopaka, two people from the lowest cast became monks.
- Fifth year
 - Upon the request from Prajapati Gothami and Ven. Ananda, Buddha established the order of nuns.
 - Buddha returned to Savatti where King Kosala became a Buddhist.
 - Visited Sri Lanka for the 2nd time
- Sixth year
 - Spent the Vassana season in Savatti. It is this year one of the queens of King Bimbisara, Khema became a monk.

Seventh year

- Buddha visited *Thavathimsa* heaven to preach to the mother-deity, who attained the first stage of sainthood, *Sothapanna*.

Further Reading

Ven. Narada Thero, The Buddha and his Teachings, Chapters 7 and 8 (http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/buddha-teachingsurw6.pdf).