



## About the Author

Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita is the founder president of Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore. He was a member of the Editorial Board of the Sixth Buddhist Synod (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana) in Yangon, which brought out a complete edition of the sacred Buddhist Scriptures - Tipitaka. Since then he has established many Buddhist centers in India and abroad and rendered yeomen spiritual and humanitarian services. He established Mahabodhi Monastic Institute in Bangalore, India, Buddhist Meditation Center in USA and conducted many Dhamma and Pāli courses, meditation courses and written numerous books and translations of the Pāli Buddhist Texts. They have been published all over the world, including some German, Portuguese, Korean and Chinese translations. He was editing and publishing English monthly DHAMMA Magazine for four decades.

Mahabodhi Academy for Pāli and Buddhist Studies and Bhagavan Buddha University of Theravada Buddhism are the result of his effort and research to provide a systematic Theravāda Buddhist education as widely as possible, first of its kind in India. The Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita passed away on 23rd September 2013 in Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore at the age of 92.



**MAHA BODHI SOCIETY**  
**BUDDHA VACHANA TRUST**

GANDHINAGAR, BANGALORE - 560 009, INDIA

# Supreme Benefactor



**Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita**

Abhidhaja Aggamaha Saddhammajotika, Ph.d, DLit

# THE SUPREME BENEFACTOR

**Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita**

Abhidhaja Aggamaha Saddhammajotika, Ph.d, D.Lit



**Buddha Vachana Trust**

Maha Bodhi Society  
Bangalore, INDIA

**SUPREME BENEFACTOR**

*Published by*

Buddha Vachana Trust

Maha Bodhi Society

14<sup>th</sup> Kalidasa Road, Gandhinagar

Bangalore-560009, India

Tel: 080 2225 0684, Fax: 080-41148440

E-mail: [info@mahabodhi.info](mailto:info@mahabodhi.info)

Web: [www.mahabodhi.info](http://www.mahabodhi.info)

© Buddha Vachana Trust

All rights reserved © 2014

First Edition - 2005

Reprint - 2014

Printed at:

Arvind Printers

Saraswathipuram, Bangalore - 5600096

Ph: 23498198, Mob: 9916461691

## PREFACE

The 'Supreme Benefactor' is the first publication of the Golden Jubilee series brought out by the Buddha Vachana Trust in commemoration of the 2550th Sacred Buddha Jayanti, which was in the year 2006. Coincidentally, the Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore (1956-2006), is also celebrating its Golden Jubilee in the form of bringing out fifty English publications and fifty Kannada publications.

The 'Supreme Benefactor' is the writer's humble offering at the lotus feet of the Blessed One, Lord Buddha. This book contains some of the most inspiring and poignant events of the Buddha's life and his unique mission of compassion. Spiritual seekers will find in this book deeply inspiring material for fulfilling the perfections (Pārami), leading to enlightenment.

May all beings be free from the sufferings of worldly existence!

May all beings be happy!

**Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita**  
Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore

## CONTENTS

### Chapter

1. Visiting Kapilavatthu	1
2. King Suddhodana Sends Missions	10
3. Buddha Walks to Kapilavatthu	18
4. Teaching on the Jewelled Walkway	26
5. Tathāgata Goes on Alms-round	34
6. The Master's Visit to Princes Yasodharā	40
7. Mahādhammapala Jātaka	53
8. Thousand Princess become Monks	66

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



**"Sabba dānaṃ Dhamma dānaṃ jināti"**

Of all gifts the gift of Dhamma excels !

**- The Buddha**

Ms. Barbara Thaddey  
Switzerland

Has donated for the publication of this book.  
May she progress on the onward path to Nibbana!  
May all her family members and relatives share the  
merits of this Dhamadāra!

May she be happy !

Venerable Bhikkhu Sangha  
Maha Bodhi Society  
Bangalore - 560 009



## THE SUPREME BENEFACITOR



### VISITING KAPILAVATTHU

Having come to know that Buddha was staying at Rājagaha, King Suddhodana was eager to see his omniscient son. So he sent a delegation of nobles headed by a minister. When they approached the Master, he was giving a discourse on Dhamma, hearing which every one of the delegation was spiritually transformed. Having become Arahats they lost interest in worldly matters and did not extend the King's invitation.

When the delegation did not return, the King sent another delegation, which too failed to return, since all the men had entered the Holy Order and become saints. Now the King kept sending delegation after delegation till the tenth delegation, headed by Kāludāyi, a faithful minister and a childhood playmate of the Buddha. This delegation too entered

the Holy Order. But since Kāludāyi had secured the king's permission to become a bhikkhu, he conveyed the king's message.

It is said, all the ten thousand Sākyan nobles and ten ministers, having become saints, were absorbed in the bliss of the Deathless. That is how the messages of the King were not conveyed. The Arahat Kāludāyi was an exception. He conveyed the message of the King.

The Buddha readily accepted the invitation and soon embarked on a Dhamma-preaching tour accompanied by a retinue of twenty thousand Arahat disciples. He started on the full moon day of Phagguna (March) and reached Kapilavatthu on the full moon day of Vesakha (May), covering a distance of sixty yojana (60x7=420 miles), in two months. Each day he had travelled a yojana in a slow-moving journey from place to place preaching the Dhamma. By the time he had reached Kapilavatthu he had inspired a vast number of earnest followers, many of whom had become Ariyas, Noble ones, enlightened disciples.

The entire populace of the city of Kapilavatthu, with King Suddhodana at the head together with other royalties, nobles and ministers, devoutly

received the Blessed One outside the city-gate. The King himself ceremonially welcomed the Blessed One.

The Buddha and the Holy Order of bhikkhus were accommodated at the Nigrodha Monastery in the sylvan Great Grove (Mahāvana). There thousands thronged everyday to listen to the discourses of the All-Wise. It is recorded in the scriptures that the rare 'Twin miracle' was performed to subdue the arrogant Sakyan warriors, who, in their pride of being senior in age, did not show due reverence. Having humbled these conceited relatives, the Lord now delighted them with his discourses, leading to their spiritual transformation.

On the second day the Buddha and his disciples went out to the city on alms-round, moving from house to house, without any discrimination between the poor and the rich, the high and the humble. On hearing this, greatly agitated, the King hurried to the scene. After paying obeisance to the Blessed One, he said: "I am overwhelmed with shame to see you begging in my city, where, as the Sovereign, you would have moved about in a golden palanquin. Pray, must the Lord now wander about seeking alms?"

"I don't mean to shame you, Great King. I only follow the tradition of my lineage" said the Buddha.

"Yours is the lineage of the rulers, in which none has ever sought alms" the King replied.

"Oh, Great King, mine is the lineage of the Buddhas, who, though the Most Exalted, preferred voluntary poverty, by living on alms."

And now standing right on the royal highway amidst a great multitude of his people, carrying fruits, flowers and incense as devout worshippers, the Supremely Enlightened Buddha preached the Dhamma to the King, his father, saying:

"Arise! Be not negligent !  
Lead a righteous life.  
The righteous live happily,  
Both in this world and in the next.  
- Dhp. 168

The scripture records that after hearing this gāthā, the King, entering into the Transcendental State of Sanctification, become spiritually transformed. He was established in the Supermundane Path of Stream Entrance, Sotāpatti. Thereafter, carrying the Buddha's alms-bowl himself in the manner of a devout follower, he conducted the Lord and the

twenty thousand Arahāt disciples to the royal palace. A big alms-offering ceremony had been already arranged in the palace. For the King had assumed that the Buddha and his disciples were bound to come to the palace for food. After the meal was over the Buddha gave an inspiring Dhamma discourse, which gladdened and spiritually uplifted all the hearers. He concluded by exclaiming:

"Lead a righteous life;  
Lead not a corrupt life.  
The righteous live happily,  
Both in this world and in the next."  
- Dhp. 169

Hearing this verse Queen Pajāpati Gotami too become spiritually transformed. She became a Sotāpanna, Stream-Enterer, the first stage of the Supermundane Path. With the Queen becoming a Sotāpanna, the king also went a step further on the supermundane path. He became a Sakadāgāmi, the second stage of the transcendental sanctification.

Then, the Buddha accompanied by the King and his chief disciples, visited the mansion of the princess Yasodharā, Rāhula's mother. The Buddha was offered a high seat. Now she entered and held his feet and paid homage to her hearts' content

in an atmosphere charged with expectation and spiritual fervour.

On the third day, since the Buddha's arrival, the king had arranged a great consecration ceremony to celebrate these five auspicious occasions: 1) Consecration of Prince Nanda as the crown prince. 2) Bestowing the crown prince's white umbrella and the gold plate bearing the inscription 'crown prince'. 3) House-warming of the new crown prince's palace. 4) The ceremonial hair-cutting that only the crown prince can have. 5) His marriage to princess Janapada Kalyāni.

Prince Nanda's palace was filled with nobles and prominent people of the city. In the forenoon the Buddha arrived on his alms-round. When the alms-meal was over, he blessed prince Nanda with an inspiring discourse. Then, after giving Nanda his alms-bowl, he rose to depart to Nigrodha's grove. Nanda thought that the Lord will take the bowl back soon and followed him. Since the Buddha did not take it back, he went right upto the grove following the Buddha. In his temporary residence the Buddha took his bowl and asked Nanda whether he would like to become a monk. Out of great reverence for his elder brother, he said, 'Yes, I will' and was duly ordained a monk.

## **The most precious legacy**

The Buddha visited Kapilavatthu, the Sākyan Capital, to redeem the solemn pledge he had made on the night he left his palace to lead the homeless life and to seek the final solution to the riddles of life.

He had seen the "four signs" and had a glimpse of the inherent unsatisfactoriness of life. And the pledge was to 'Open the gate of Immortality', that all may find an access unto the dimension of Nibbānic bliss.

Looking at the new-born babe, Rāhula, by the side of princess Yasodharā, both blissfully asleep, just before he left home, he had vowed that he would come back after he had found the key to immortality and establish his beloved Yasodharā and Rāhula therein.

On the seventh day of his 'auspicious return' to Kapilavatthu, Yasodharā, who had been leading a life of penance, dressed her young prince impressively and pointing to the Blessed One, said: "Behold, son, he is your father, that golden-hued Samana (Recluse)! Looking like the great Brahma himself, he is now surrounded by thousands of holy men, himself being the holiest of the holy. Once he used to possess great treasures, which vanished when he renounced worldly life.



Go up to him, dear, and ask for your inheritance. Say to him: 'Father, I am the prince who will be the Chakkavatti, - the universal monarch, after I am anointed. I've need of wealth and glory. Bestow upon me what belongs to the father and which the son owns.'

Innocent Rāhula, coming to the Buddha's presence, conceived warm affection. As the shadow of the Exalted One fell on him, all his hairs bristled and his limbs perspired. His whole frame thrilled, and love was aroused within for the Lord. With a steady gaze, Rāhula exclaimed "Sukhā vata te chāyā, Samana! - Even thy shadow is blissful, O Recluse!"

Now the Sovereign of Wisdom, Dhammarājā, accompanied by the marshal of his Dispensation, Dhamma Senāpati Sāriputta, and the retinue of twenty thousand saints, all liberated from the shackles of saṃsāra, had visited the palace for an alms-meal on the forenoon, at the invitation of the Sākya King. The meal over, the Exalted One gave a moving discourse, transforming the hearts of all, and departed.

Little Rāhula had followed him close behind, saying: "Give me my inheritance! Give me my inheritance. O Serene One!" And reaching out, he grasped the corner of the Lord's robe. "Rāhula go back, and do what your grandfather bids you", said the Lord, and Rāhula let go the robe.

But Rāhula continued to follow the Buddha, insisting, "Give me my inheritance!" None could prevent the prince and he accompanied the Master to the Great Grove where the Lord sojourned in a simple cottage, away from the pomp of the palace.

Now it occurred to the compassionate Lord: "The inheritance that this youth seeks, I will bestow that upon him! That transcendental legacy I discovered under the Bodhi Tree will I now pass on to my beloved boy!" he instructed the Venerable Sāriputta, "Let Rāhula 'go forth', let him be your pupil."

Accordingly, Rāhula was initiated into the novitiate of the Holy Order. He was ordained a Sāmanera. The Pāli scriptures tell how Rāhula grew into a saint and how he thrilled the hearts of the people as he followed the Buddha during his alms-round. The pair looked as if the auspicious royal elephant moved with his noble off-sprint. Both had renounced a throne, both had climbed to the peak of Perfection!

Thus did the Peerless Master bestow on his son the most precious legacy !

– o0o – o0o – o0o –





## KING SUDDHODANA SENDS MISSIONS

After setting down at the Veḷuvana monastery in Rājagaha, the Buddha's daily routine was strenuous. He was teaching the Dhamma to large numbers of people from all walks of life from the kingdoms of Aṅga Magadha. People flocked in search of emancipation, and the Buddha delivered his ambrosial dhamma discourses in many different ways to help the listeners. Thousands of people were spiritually transformed through the attainment of the Supermundane Path and Fruition Insights directly experiencing Nibbāna.

Soon there were ten thousand Arahats. People gained Nibbāna according to their past 'aspirations' (Patthanā) and 'resolve' (Adiṭṭhāna). With the presence of the Buddha, Veḷuvana appeared to be

celebrating the great festivity of deliverance from the bonds of worldly existence. It is said in the Pāli scriptures that the Buddha in all his spiritual glory, taught 'shining like a fullmoon amidst the stars of Arahats all around him'.

At this time, the King Suddhodana received the news from his officials that his son prince Siddhattha had indeed become Gotama the Buddha, the Exalted teacher of both gods and men. The King also heard that after a gruelling six-year period of self-mortification, he became the Buddha and that he had set in motion the Wheel of Truth (Dhammacakka pavattana), by delivering his first discourse at Sāranath, Bārānasi. Then having spent his rain's retreat at Sāranath, he had established his Saṅgha of sixty holy Arahats to whom he gave the inspiring call of "Caratha bhikkhave, cārikaṃ bahujana hitāya...." "Ye Bhikkhus, wander forth, for the good of the many" etc. Now he is staying at Veḷuvana which King Bimbisāra, his earnest disciple, donated.

When the King heard this good news he was thrilled, and forthwith he decided to send a mission, headed by one of his wise ministers, with the instruction: "My dear, with one thousand Sakyan

nobles you form a mission and go to the city of Rājagaha and extend our invitation to the Enlightened One". The minister went to Veḷuvana, but failed to deliver the message, saying: "Most Venerable Sir, your father King Suddhodana pays homage to you and invites you to come to Kapilavatthu and preach the noble Dhamma for the good of all."

They had covered a distance of sixty yojanas (a yojana = seven miles) from Kapilavatthu to reach Rājagaha. They had journeyed by fast chariots arranged in series from place to place and arrived at Rājagaha. First they had met the King Bimbisāra and sought his permission and help. The King had told them quite frankly that he was only a humble disciple and they should approach the Lord themselves to receive his blessings. The mission arrived at Veḷuvana when the Buddha, emitting a halo in all glory, was teaching the Dhamma, amidst a huge congregation of holy men, important citizens and ordinary devotees. Now the minister thought to himself: "Let me listen to the discourse of the Lord before I deliver the King's message"; and while standing at the outer circle of the audience, he and his companions listened to the discourse with rapt attention. All the members of the mission, greatly

thrilled and inspired, were spiritually transformed and became Arahats. Thereafter, they approached the Lord, prostrated at his feet and said: "Blessed Lord, may we receive both the lower and higher ordinations and be admitted to your holy order of bhikkhus."

The Buddha in his characteristic way stretched out his right hand and said: "Etha bhikkhave!" etc. Come Bhikkhus! The Dhamma has been perfectly enunciated, live the holy life and be liberated from all sufferings". As soon as the Buddha uttered this 'Ehi bhikkhu' formula, instantly the minister and the one thousand nobles were transformed into full-fledged bhikkhus with all the eight monastic requisites. And they looked like senior monks. They now humbly paid homage before the Buddha, Lord of all wisdom. Their lay appearances of a minister and nobles miraculously disappeared. Indeed this wondrous spectacle moved the hearts of all the devotees present there.

When a person becomes an Arahāt, having attained to the peak of Disciple's Enlightenment (Sāvaka bodhi), his mind is so transformed that he becomes totally equanimous and indifferent to mundane things. So the minister and his companions did not

convey the message of the King to the Buddha. Instead, they remained immersed in the bliss of emancipation.

Days and weeks passed and the King became anxious why they did not return or send a message. So he decided to send another mission headed by another minister with one thousand noble councillors. The same thing happened to the second mission as in the case of the first mission. This minister and his companions, having reached Rājagaha, on hearing the inspiring discourse of the Lord, became Arahats, and stayed on enjoying the bliss of emancipation.

The King Suddhodana became intrigued and decided to send another mission, which too met with the same result. In this way the King sent nine missions, all with same results. Then his searching mind began to scrutinize as to why such things happened and decided to send Kāludayi, the minister in charge of his administration and the childhood playmate of Siddhattha. Both were born on the same day. Kāludayi, a close confidant, was carefully chosen by the King himself. The King said: "My son, Kāludayi, I have sent nine missions to pay homage to the Tathāgata, the

Blessed One. But no one returned or sent messages. It is difficult to know what happened, did they meet with any danger? I wish to see and worship my Exalted son when I am still alive. So dear Kāludayi, will you be able to undertake this task to bring my son to Kapilavatthu?"

Kāludayi replied: "Your Majesty, it would be possible for me to do so, provided I am granted the permission to enter the holy order, under the Blessed Lord Buddha". A dialogue ensued: The King said: "Dear son Kāludayi, whether you become a monk or not, it is of no concern. Please undertake the task for enabling me to see my son. That is the important thing." Saying: "Very well", Kāludayi undertook the mission and set out for Rājagaha together with one thousand Sakyan noble councillors carrying the King's humble invitation to the Buddha. In the same way as the other missions, Kāludayi arrived when the Buddha was delivering a discourse. He stood at the far end of the audience, listening to the discourse, and became an Arahāt. Thereafter having received "Ehi bhikkhu" ordination, he delivered the invitation of the King in a unique manner.

First he composed sixty elegant gāthās (verses), describing the Lord's beautiful journey amidst

stimulating scenes and weather patterns. Now this was the fifth month after the Buddha had left Bārānasi.

The cold winter months were over. Now it was sprint, approaching the fullmoon day of Phagguna (March). After becoming an Arahat, Kāludayi requested the buddha to visit the royal city of Kapilavatthu by means of this extraordinary literary feat, and succeeded to win the hearts of everyone present there.

He began, saying: "Oh Blessed Lord, the Supreme Benefactor, the Peerless Hero, mighty of diligence, with lustrous body, the time is opportune now to pay a visit to Kapilavatthu, your land of birth! Lord, the winter has gone and the spring in all its beauty has set in. The trees have shed their decayed leaves, and tender leaves are sprouting, as if to bloom with fresh buds of flowers and fruits, nature is glowing with bracing and stimulating weather, and with colourful scenery, the time to visit Kapilavatthu has indeed come!" etc.

With such a moving presentation of Kāludayi, the Tathāgata. Bearer of Truth, now responded, saying: "Dear Kāludayi, why are you urging me to visit

Kapilavatthu in such moving words of praise uttered in such sweet tone?" Then Venerable Kāludayi replied: "Most Venerable sir, your own father, King Suddhodana, wishes to pay homage to you and the holy Saṅgha. I therefore earnestly urge that the Lord, bestows the favour to the royal relatives by visiting Kapilavatthu."

The Tathāgata granted with these words: "Dear Kāludayi, your request is granted. You may give intimation to the Saṅgha of my immediate visit to Kapilavatthu to honour my royal relatives. Make the necessary arrangement as required for this occasion". "Very well, Lord", replied the Venerable Arahat Kāludayi, and duly informed all the twenty-thousand Arahat bhikkhus, ten-thousand Sakyan Arahat bhikkhus forming the ten missions, and ten thousand Arahat bhikkhus from Aṅga and Magadha.

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



## BUDDHA WALKS TO KAPILAVATHU

Now the Exalted Bearer of Truth (Tathāgata) left Veḷuvana monastery for Kapilavatthu together with twenty-thousand Arahats.

After attending the Phagguna fullmoon day ceremony, early next morning, the Buddha and his Arahats went on a preaching mission (cārikā). The Lord adopted the Atūrita (unhurried) mode of travelling, i.e., walking for only one yojana (seven miles) a day, and stopping at every village on the way to preach the noble Dhamma for the good and welfare of all. The mission covered in two months, the distance of sixty yojanas between Rājagah and Kapilavatthu. The Buddha and his Arahats went on alms-round, in the morning, after completing the daily chores. Then having partaken of the alms-

meal, they set out and walked for seven miles a day and stopped in the next village.

The villagers having heard about this unique mission gathered to welcome the Lord. The Buddha and the Arahats rested for a while, mostly by practising meditation. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha gave a discourse. Thousands of people from all around the area flocked there to hear the Dhamma, and a large number of men and women were spiritually transformed. This routine was maintained for two months until they arrived at Kapilavatthu.

As the Tathāgata set out for Kapilavatthu in his unhurried preaching tour (Atūrita cārikā), the Venerable Kāludāyi thought to himself: "Let me go ahead and inform the King Suddhodana of Lords' departure from Rājagaha and that he is heading towards Kapilavatthu adopting the atūrita cārikā mode of journey". Accordingly, he applied his Supernormal powers (Iddhividha abhiññā), rose in the air, and descended in the royal palace of King Suddhodana.

When the King saw him flying into the palace, he was thrilled and profoundly moved with devout joy. He greeted the Arahats with words of polite respect, saying: "Welcome Venerable Kāludāyi"

and offered him his royal throne for the Arahāt to sit. Then he offered him a choice alms-meal. The Venerable Kāludāyī partook of his alms-meal sitting on the throne. After the meal was over, the King took his bowl, had it washed with perfumed water and filled it up with nutritious alms-food and requested him to offer it to the Buddha, saying: "Please offer this alms-food to the Tathāgata. Then the King asked: "Where is the Tathāgata." The Venerable Kāludāyī mentioned that he is on his way. The king then made a special request, saying: "Venerable sir, please come every day to fetch the Tathāgata's alms-meal and take your alms-meal here, until the Tathāgata arrives." The Venerable Arahāt consented by remaining silent.

The Venerable Kāludāyī, now applying his Supernormal powers, sent the bowl up in the air, filled with alms-meal for Tathāgata, then holding it flew back. The king and the members of the royal family in the courtyard looked on with great awe and amazement. Descending where the Tathāgata had arrived for his first days discourse, he devoutly offered the alms-bowl to the Lord, and after the alms-meal was over, related all that had transpired.

The Venerable Kāludāyī brought Tathāgata's alms-meal every day offered by the king and also partook his meal in the palace. This practice continued throughout the preaching tour (Cārikā). The twenty-thousand Arahats, as already mentioned, having rested, went out on alms-round in the surrounding villages. This program continued throughout the journey. Now as the Venerable Kāludāyī brought Tathāgata's alms-meal from Kapilavatthu and also had his own in the palace, he also delivered a special Dhamma preaching every day. First, he announced how much distance the Tathāgata had covered so far, what discourse the Tathāgata had delivered, and how the populace enthusiastically and devoutly responded to the Tathāgata's compassionate mission of spreading the light of Truth (Dhamma).

The Venerable Arahāt gave all these details of the Lord's Dhamma preaching tour to sow the seed of Saddhā, faith rooted in wisdom, in the hearts of his royal audience and to familiarize them with the glorious attributes of the Exalted Bearer of Truth. Years later, referring to this noble service of Venerable Kāludāyī, the Buddha had praised him, saying: "Etadaggaṃ, bhikkhave, mama sāvakānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ kulappasādakānaṃ yadidaṃ Kāludāyī" - "Bhikkhus, Kāludāyī is pre-eminent

among my disciples, who excel in generating devout faith rooted in wisdom among my royal relatives." Having elevated him thus, in a special ceremony, the Buddha related the account of services of the noble Arahats, Kāludāyī.

Sixty days later, having covered the entire distance of sixty yojanas, the Tathāgata and his twenty-thousand Arahats disciples, adopting the Atūrita Cārikā method, arrived in Kapilavatthu. The King Suddhodana had made elaborate arrangements for offering a fitting welcome, along with all the royalties, nobles, important citizens and the common people. He also had made arrangements for the accommodation of the Tathāgata and his Arahats in the delightful and specious Nirgodha grove, belonging to the Sakyan prince Nigrodha. This place was very beautiful and tranquil providing seclusion to the holy bhikkhus.

On the day of the Tathāgata's arrival, the King as well as everyone else, fittingly dressed themselves in white, to honour the Lord, carrying flowers, incense etc. They lead the Buddha in a procession to the Nigrodha grove monastery. On reaching the grove, the Buddha was offered a high seat of honour, and the Arahats befitting seats. The Sakyan warrior clan

meticulously followed certain customs, such as, who is to be respected by whom and in what manner, who is to be given priority etc. The pride of birth was quite evident among the royal courtiers and nobles.

The Sakyans had already made arrangements as to how the Tathāgata is to be venerated. Those who thought Siddhattha was younger in age, they had told their younger ones, who were younger to Siddhattha, saying: "You young princes may pay homage first by being seated in the front row. Since we are senior in age, we can't bow down, so we will sit behind you.

The Buddha, noting the arrangements, thought: "Obviously, my relatives have grown in vain, due to pride and haughtiness. It is necessary for these conceited relatives to be appropriately instructed in the Dhamma. Obviously they have no idea about the nature of the Tathāgata. So let me reveal unto them the might and glory of a Supremely Enlightened One, by performing the Twin Miracles (Yamaka Pāṭihāriya), that unique supernormal power which the Buddha alone possesses, and which he displays only for bringing about spiritual transformation in those who are evolved enough to be helped to become enlightened.



This miracle involves simultaneous streaming forth of two opposite currents i.e., of water and fire, alternatively, from various parts of the body; and this is performed by creating, at the same time, an ambulatory or meditation walk-way (Caṅkamana) in the sky. When the twin miracle is performed it is witnessed in many world systems. As water and fire alternatively streamed forth from twelve different areas of the body, i.e., from up and down, front and back, left and right sides of the body, and other parts, such as eyes, ears, nose, shoulders, hands, legs, fingers, toes, even from every pore of every hair of the body. These movements produced most fantastic and unbelievable spectacle to those witnessing it.

The King pays homage for the third time

When the King Suddhodana saw the wonderful and awesome spectacle of the twin miracle, he was profoundly moved and spontaneously bowed down, and solemnly addressed the Buddha, saying: "Oh Exalted One, on the day of your birth, when I tried to raise your clasped hands to the hermit Kāladevala, I saw your pair of tiny feet rise up and firmly placed on the hermit's head. On seeing this miracle, on that occasion I paid my first homage to you."

"Again on the day of royal ploughing ceremony, as I was engaged in the annual ceremonial ploughing of the palace ground, before huge crowds of the populace, we had kept you under the cool shade of a tree to protect you. Sitting down erect in a meditative posture, you soon plunged in profound samādhi, ecstatic absorption. Then as the sun moved on after the midday, and had crossed the meridian, while all the trees around had shifted their shades, the shade of the tree under which you sat did not shift. It remained in the same position and kept on protecting you. Seeing this miracle, I paid my second homage at your feet."

"Today seeing this extraordinary and unique spectacle of the twin miracle, I devoutly bow down at your feet and pay homage for the third time. When the King with such devout humility paid homage to the Tathāgata, all the members of the royal family as well as the royal relatives and nobles, without exception, automatically bowed down and paid homage to the Tathāgata.

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



## TEACHING ON THE JEWELLED WALKWAY

Having subdued the pride of the Sakyan royalties by performing the Twin Miracles in the open sky, the Buddha penetrated the mental dispositions of the people present there with his powerful omniscient mind to teach the Dhamma in a way as to bring about spiritual transformation. Accordingly, he now created with his supernormal power a jewelled walk-way - 'Ratana Cankamana', extending from east to west. This psychically produced ambulatory was so created that not only the human beings but also the devas and brahmas of various divine realms could see it, and be benefited by having a direct experience of the Buddha's spiritual glory.

Thereafter the Exalted One, resplendent with the six-coloured aura of the Supremely Enlightened

Buddha, began to slowly pace up and down on the dazzling walk-way. Apart from the Sakyan audience in the Nigrodha grove, the high divinities of Brahmāloka and the shining gods of the Kāmavacara divine realms, and the people of Kapilavatthu, witnessed this incomparable miracle. In sheer awe they listened to the Dhamma preaching as the Buddha paced up and down in all his spiritual majesty. The Devas and Brahmas, scattered celestial Mandārava flowers on the walk-way as offerings.

The Buddhavaṃsa Pāli of the Khuddaka Nikāya contains twenty special verses describing this unique event with the devas and brahmas worshipping from their respective realms, and human beings worshipping from the Nigrodha grove and elsewhere.

While the Dhamma preaching was in progress, the Venerable Sāriputta, residing with five-hundred Arahats on the slopes of Mount Vulture's Peak (Gijjakūta) in Rājagaha, saw through his supernormal powers, this spectacle of the Tathāgata walking to and fro on the walk-way in the sky. Profoundly moved by devout awe, the Venerable Sāriputta told his fellow bhikkhus: "Venerable ones, look at the Exalted One performing the Twin-

Miracles, having created a Jewelled Walkway in the sky, to tame his royal relatives and to bring about spiritual transformation in them. Come, we will go to Nigrodha monastery, be in the presence of the Supremely Enlightened Buddha and make a special request to recount the stories of his past life as Bodhisatta, as well as recall the lives of the previous Buddhas, which only a Buddha can do, none else. Only by his Omniscient Knowledge can the Buddha penetrate into the lives of the previous Buddhas and relate the accounts for the spiritual edification of all."

Then Venerable Sāriputta and his five-hundred fellow Arahats, applying their supernormal powers, instantly flew to the place and worshipped the Buddha, who was suspended in the air, pacing up and down on the Jewelled Walkway. The Venerable Sāriputta together with some of his senior colleagues, such as, Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, Mahā Kasappa etc., paid homage by remaining in the sky before the Buddha. The Buddha, being aware of the profound faith and enthusiasm of Venerable Sāriputta and the others, decided to give a discourse on the Buddhavaṃsa, the Chronicle of the twenty-four past Buddhas before him, as well as his own attainments.

## **Discourse on Buddhavaṃsa**

As the Buddha walked to and fro on the Jewelled Walkway, he began his discourse by narrating how he met the Buddha Dīpaṅkara and decided to follow in his footsteps. Then he delivered a discourse on the Four Noble Truths to the gathering of men, devas and brahmas. Now the Venerable Sāriputta thought to himself: "A discourse on the Buddhavaṃsa and the Bodhisatta's past life stories (Jātaka) would be immensely beneficial to both human and divine beings, rousing in them wisdom-rooted faith."

Accordingly he requested the Tathāgata to give an exposition of his past life-stories fulfilling the ten perfections, thrice over; and how he had received the prophecy from the Buddha Dīpaṅkara of his becoming a Buddha in the future etc. Thereafter the Lord expounded the Dhamma on the salient characteristics of all the Buddhas, by way of describing the names of each Buddha, his clan, family details etc. He narrated the lives of the twenty-four Buddhas, from Dīpaṅkara to Kasappa Buddha. Then he narrated how he, as a Bodhisatta, perfected the thirty Pāramis, giving details of his past lives (552 of them found in Jātaka), and the

time required for this entire spiritual evolution i.e. four asaṅkheyyas, incalculable great aeons, plus hundred thousand aeons. As he narrated his past life-stories, he also gave an exposition on the three types of pāramis, spiritual perfections, namely:

1. The Paramattha Pāramis of the Supremely Enlightened One (Sammāsambuddha).
2. The Upapāramis of the Hermit Buddhas (Pacceka Buddhas).
3. The Pāramis of the Enlightened disciples (Arahat Buddhas) of the Supremely Enlightened Buddha.

When he started his carrier as a Bodhisatta fulfilling these three types of perfections, he had already perfected the ten Pāramis, and he could have become an Arahat, an enlightened disciple of the Dīpaṅkara Buddha. But he decided to postpone his spiritual liberation just by seeing the sheer glory and majesty of the Supremely Enlightened Dīpaṅkara Buddha, and opted to follow in his footsteps. Thereupon he requested the Buddha to reveal whether he could become a Buddha in future. The Buddha Dīpaṅkara penetrated into his future and discerned that he indeed would become a Buddha in future, Gotama by name.

Now the Lord narrated how he had fulfilled the then Paramattha Pāramies in the form of ten Jātaka stories, as found in the Jātaka literature and in the Cariyā Pitaka. Then he mentioned, about his present life from birth to the present moment. Thereupon he narrated all the major events of his future mission, one by one. That is to say, he foretold all the events which are to unfold in the course of forty-five years of his great mission of compassion. Everything that the Buddha had foretold had come true. Having narrated all the life-stories, he concluded this discourse by giving a definite instruction to the Venerable Sāriputta and his fellow bhikkhus, saying: "Extent yourselves with heedfulness and fulfil the teachings which all the Buddhas have given alike."

Showers of auspicious rain (Maṅgala Vuṭṭhi) fell when the Buddha completed his discourse on Buddhavaṃsa, and the Bodhisatta Cariyā. Thereupon the Buddha descended from the Jewelled Walkway in the sky to sheer the large audience of royalties and others had gathered, and took his seat on the Throne of Dhamma (Dhammāsana) which was exclusively set up for the Buddha. With the haughtiness of the royal relatives subdued, the

royal family as well as others calmly and devoutly seated themselves before the Buddha.

The heavy shower of auspicious rain was a wonderful event. During this rainfall there were those who did not want to get wet. That is, as the people wished so it happened. The royalty, the princes, and the ordinary people, all were struck with wonder and awe at this miraculous incident. In one voice they exclaimed!, "Oh! What an auspicious rain, what a marvellous thing to happen! This is indeed unprecedented, no one had ever heard of such a thing !"

On hearing this exclamation, the Buddha made this remark: "This is not the first time that the auspicious rain fell in a large assembly of people listening to Dhamma. Indeed, there was a similar occasion in the past when such an auspicious rainfall occurred. Since the audience eagerly wanted to hear about this event, the Buddha recounted the great Jātaka story of Vessantara, to the utter delight and amazement of all. Now as the night approached the audience devoutly paid homage and then departed.

However, not one single person from the audience, not even the king himself, invited the Buddha and the Arahats for alms-meal on the next morning.

King Suddhodana and other members of the royal family had taken it for granted that: "After all, there is no other place, apart from the royal palace, for the Buddha and his Arahats to visit for the morning alms-meal." Based upon this assumption the king had also ordered to make arrangements for alms-offering to the bhikkhus and had appropriate seating arrangements made for the twenty-thousand Arahats headed by the Buddha.

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



## TATHĀGATA GOES ON ALMS-ROUND

The next morning, the Tathāgata together with twenty-thousand Arahats, entered the city of Kapilavatthu on alms-round. At the beginning there was none to welcome the Buddha from the royal family. The Buddha had already reflected on the manner in which previous Buddhas went for alms-food in their respective capital cities. Such an alms-round was characterised by collecting alms-food from door to door, not exclusively from royalties or rich homes. With his Omniscient Vision he saw through all the events from the past. When he became aware that not a single Buddha in the past had ever received alms-food only from selected homes, he too followed suit.

As soon as he entered Kapilavatthu's main gateway, he began the alms-round from door to door, without

discrimination. Then he made an act of will, thus: "Let my disciples in future too emulate this example and happily fulfill the duty of a bhikkhu by visiting every house, door to door, without making any discrimination." It is mentioned in the Majjhima Nikāya commentary thus: "As the Buddha started his alms-round, beginning with the first house close to the city gate, then house after house, there was a mild earthquake. He walked gently, not treading upon even a tiny insect, and miraculously the road became of even surface freed of holes."

Seeing the Buddha walking with serene dignity, people from all around flocked to pay homage to the Blessed One, exclaiming: "There comes our great Lord, Prince Siddhattha, on his alms-round!" Princess Yasodharā mother of Rāhula, seeing the Buddha and the Arahats calmly and majestically walking on the road, thought to herself: "Formerly our noble Lord used to travel in royal glory, being carried on a golden palanquin. But Lo! Now he is going about the city wearing robes and collecting alms-food with the bowl in hand. Is it seemly, or is it not? Then she noticed the six-coloured aura around the Buddha. And she noted: "How majestically he walks adorned with thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics peculiar only to the Buddhas!"

Profoundly moved and entranced by thrill, she drew the attention of her son Rāhula and recited the nine inspiring verses, now known as Narasīha Gāthā, Eulogy to the Lion of Men, in praise of the Lord.

## Narasīha Gāthā

### Eulogy to the Lion of Men

1. Cakka varaṅkita ratta supādo,  
Lakkhaṇa maṇḍita āyata paṇhi,  
Cāmara chatta vibhūsita pādo,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

His noble reddish feet are marked with sacred wheels; his long heels are decked with Great One's sacred-marks; and his feet are embellished with the regal marks of parasol and yak tail fan. Indeed, this is your father the Lion of Men.

2. Sakya kumāra varo sukhumālo,  
Lakkhaṇa vitthata puṇṇa sariro,  
Loka hitāya gato naravīro,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho

Delicate and noble is the prince of the Sakya's, with a body embellished with the Great One's sacred marks. The Hero among men, he is ever dedicated to the welfare of the world. Indeed this is your father, the Lion of Men !

3. Puṇṇa sasaṅka nibho mukha vaṇṇo,  
Deva narāna piyo naranāgo,  
Matta gajinda vilāsita gāmi,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

His bright face is like a full moon. Dear to gods and men, he is the Noblest of men. With the graceful gait of a tusker of pure breed. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men !

4. Khattiya sambhava agga kulīno,  
Deva manussa namassita pādo,  
Sīla samādhi patiṭṭhita citto,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

Scion of the warrior race of Noble lineage, his feet receive homage of gods and men, and his mind is steeped in virtue and meditation. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men !

5. Āyata tuṅga susaṇṭhita nāso,  
Gopamukho abhinīta sunetto,  
Indadhanu abhinīla bhamukho,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

He has well-proportioned prominent nose, and his blue eyes, like those of a heifer, are decked with the rainbow dark blue eyebrows. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men!



6. Vaṭṭa sumaṭṭa susanṭhita gīvo,  
Sīhahanu miga-rāja sarīro,  
Kañcana succhavi utta ma vaṇṇo,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

With smooth, well-formed round neck, like that of a lion, his body, like that of king of beasts is embellished with beautiful bright golden hued skin. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men!

7. Suniddha sugambhīra mañju sughoso,  
Hiṇḡula bandhu suratta sujīvho,  
Vīsati vīsati seta sudanto,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

His sweet voice is deep and soft, his tongue is red as vermilion and he has the whitest teeth twenty in each row. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men !

8. Añjana vaṇṇa sunīla sukeso,  
Kaṇcana patta visuddha lalaṭo,  
Osadhi paṇḍara suddha su-uṇṇo,  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

He has dark blue hair like collyrium, and forehead like brightly polished gold plate, with a white coiled hair like the morning star. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men!

9. Gacchati nīlapathe viya cando,  
Tāragaṇā parivethita rūpo,  
Sāvaka majjhagato samanindo  
Esa hi tuyha pitā Narasīho.

Even as the moon crosses the sky, surrounded the by galaxies of stars, he, as the Lord of bhikkhus, is ever surrounded by his disciples. Indeed, this is your father, the Lion of Men !

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



## THE MASTER'S VISIT TO PRINCESS YASODHARA

Then the princess approached the King and said: "Oh! Father, your royal son is going on alms-round, accompanied by twenty-thousand Arahats." Hearing this the King became greatly upset and rushed out of the palace. On reaching the Tathāgata, he stood before him and said: "Most Venerable Sir, why do you put us to shame by going round for alms-food?"

Now an interesting dialogue ensued. The Buddha replied: "Great king, I am not putting you to shame. I am only following the custom of my lineage."

Said the king: "But, Most Venerable Sir, is it the custom of our lineage to make a living by seeking alms? Ours is the lineage of the warrior king Mahāsammata. And no warrior has ever gone out seeking alms."

The Buddha replied: "Great king, seeking alms is not the custom of your royal lineage, but it is the custom of my Buddha lineage. Thousands of my precessor Buddhas had gone on alms-round, receiving alms from door to door. Alms-round has always been the means of right livelihood for us.

Then, while standing on the road, the Tathāgata exhorted the King, saying:

"Uttitthe nappa majjeyya,  
Dhammaṃ sucariṃ care,  
Dhammacāri sukhaṃ seti  
Asmiṃ loke paramhi ca."

"Arise! Do not be heedless! Lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next."  
- Dph-168

At the conclusion of this exhortation, king Suddhodana became spiritually transformed by attaining to the first stage of supermundane insight of Stream-Entrance, Sotāpatti, together with direct experience of Nibbāna.

Having become an enlightened disciple of the Supremely Enlightened Buddha, the king now devoutly sought for the Buddha's alms-bowl and holding it with his hand conducted the Lord and the twenty-thousand Arahats to his palace. After the Buddha had seated on the seat of honour and

the disciples on their respective seat, the king Suddhodana served them with choice alms-food. When the alms-meal was over, the king and the members of the royal family sat before the Buddha and holy bhikkhus to receive blessings and to hear the Dhamma. Now the Buddha uttered the second Gāthā and exhorted them, saying:

"Dhammaṃ care sucaritaṃ  
Na naṃ duccharitaṃ care,  
Dhammacāri sukhaṃ seti  
Asmiṃ loke paramhi ca."

"Lead a righteous life; lead not a base life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next." Dhp-169

At the conclusion of the exhortation the king attained to the second Supermundane stage of Sakadāgāmī, Once-Returner. And simultaneously, Queen Pajāpati Gotami also attained to the first Supermundane stage of Sotāpatti, Stream-Entrance, and became an enlightened disciple who had entered into the stream leading irreversibly to Nibbāna.

At this auspicious alms-offering ceremony the only person of the royal household who was conspicuous by her absence, was Rāhula's mother, princess Yasodharā. When her female attendants had requested her to come to the alms-offering and pay homage

to the Exalted One, she had said: "If ever I had rendered loyal service to the Lord, he will visit me. Only then will I pay homage at his feet."

When the ceremony of the alms-offering was over, the Buddha handed over his alms-bowl to the king Suddhodana, and accompanied by his two chief disciples, entered princess Yasodharā's apartment. After the Lord was seated, he told the chief disciples: "Let the king's daughter pay homage to the Tathāgata as she likes. Say nothing to her."

On being told that the Lord had arrived and was seated on the prepared seat, princess Yasodharā quickly came and fell at his feet. Holding the Buddha's feet, she placed her forehead on them and worshipped them, again and again, while tears flowing from her eyes washed the Lord's feet. Thus demonstrating her deep devotional adoration, she sat down fully contented.

The king Suddhodana spoke to the Blessed One praising the loyalty and virtue of princess Yasodharā, saying: "Lord, when my daughter heard that you had donned the golden brownish coloured robe, she too dyed her clothes in similar colour; when she heard that you lived on one meal a day, she too subsisted on a single meal; when she heard that you had given up luxurious bed and couch,

she did the same; when she heard that you abstained from using things meant to adorn and beautify oneself, such as garland, scent, fragrant paste etc., she also refrained from using all cosmetic and beautifying products."

Lord, on your renunciation of the worldly life, when several princes sent messengers proposing matrimonial relationships, she refused even to look at them. Such, indeed, is the loyalty and virtue of my daughter."

The Buddha replied: "Oh, Great King, not only in this life-time, but even in a previous life-time she was totally loyal and protected me." Thereafter the Buddha recalled the Canda Kinnarī Jātaka (No. 485). In that state of existence, though her wisdom was still not ripe, Rāhula's mother maintained her dignity and loyalty. Now that her wisdom is ripe, she is capable of protecting herself more effectively.

### **Prince Nanda's ordination**

On the third day of the Buddha's arrival in Kapilavatthu, the king Suddhodana had arranged for conducting several auspicious ceremonies in honour of prince Nanda, the heir apparent, who was to be formally designated as the Crown Prince and the Regent. There are some interesting facts about prince Nanda. His mother, queen Mahā Pajāpati Gotami, was the sister of queen Mahā Māyā

Devī, who gave birth to prince Siddhattha Gotama. Two days after Siddhattha's birth Mahā Pajāpati Gotami gave birth to prince Nanda. So, there was a difference of two days between two brothers. Queen Mahā Māyā died a week after Siddhattha's birth, and Mahā Pajāpati Gotami, entrusting her own son Nanda to the care of nurses, herself took up nursing the Bodhisatta, feeding him with her own milk. Nanda was four finger breadth shorter in height than prince Siddhattha and looked very much like the Bodhisatta. In later days often bhikkhus mistook Nanda coming from afar to be the Buddha (Vinaya Piṭaka).

The ceremonies in question slated to be performed on the third day of the Lord's arrival were : 1) Prince Nanda to be consecrated formally as the Crown Prince and Regent. 2) His marriage engagement to princess Janapada Kalyāni (a cousin). 3) House warming of the Crown Prince's new palace. And several other festive programs. The Buddha went on alms-round to Prince Nanda's royal residence on this occasion. After the alms-meal was over, he gave a discourse on the benefits of meritorious deeds. This day at dawn the Buddha emerged from his Samādhi of boundless compassion and having penetrated into prince Nanda's potential

for spiritual emancipation, became aware that with proper guidance he would win Nibbāna, if he could renounce worldly life. Accordingly he had gone to Nanda's house where the preparations for the celebrations were going on.

After the discourse, the Lord rose from the seat, and handing over his alms-bowl to his younger brother Nanda, departed for the Nigrodha monastery. Prince Nanda carrying the alms-bowl and following the Lord, expected the Buddha to take his alms-bowl outside his residence. The Buddha, however, continued to walk. Nanda too continued to follow the Lord, out of his profound deference, while earnestly wishing that he will soon be relieved of the alms-bowl.

While he was leaving his residence, Janapada Kalyāni had earnestly urged him to return quickly. Her words heavily weighted in Nanda's mind. However, because of his strong devotion and hoping that the alms-bowl will be taken back soon, he followed the Tathāgata, till both reached the monastery. On arrival at his cottage, the Buddha asked Nanda: "Nanda, would you like to become a bhikkhu?" Awe inspired, Nanda consented, saying: "Yes Lord, I will become a bhikkhu". Accordingly he was ordained as a monk and he stayed in the monastery.

## **Ordination of prince Rāhula**

On the seventh day since his arrival in Kapilavatthu, the Buddha and the twenty-thousand Arahats were invited to the palace for an alms-offering ceremony. Princess Yasodharā had her seven year old son, Rāhula, tastefully dressed up for this occasion, She told him: "After the alms-meal, approach your father, and ask for your inheritance". She had also instilled in him that his father would have become an Universal Monarch (Cakkavati Maharāja), had he not renounced his royal throne to become a monk. She said: "Dear son, before his renunciation, we had four golden pots filled with treasures. All these immense wealth vanished when he gave up household life and opted for the homeless life of a recluse. So, tell him that in keeping with ancient tradition the son inherits all belongings of the father."

When young Rāhula came in the presence of the Buddha, he felt the warmth of love for the father and overwhelmed with joy he said: "Oh! Recluse, even your shadow is so pleasing' sukhā vata te chāyā Samana!"

After the alms-meal the Buddha gave a discourse on the merits of alms-offering and rose to leave for the Nigrodha monastery. Just then the innocent

young prince muttered: "Give me my inheritance" as advised by his mother. Then he kept sweetly chattering much else - that he is going to be an Universal Monarch and he needed great wealth as befitting his status. Now he clearly specified what he wanted, thus: "Lord, please bestow on me those four golden pots of treasures as my inheritance."

When the Buddha left the palace together with the twenty-thousand Arahats for Nigrodha monastery, Rāhula too followed the Blessed One repeating all the way: "Lord, please bestow on me those four golden pots of treasures as my inheritance!" The Buddha did not utter a word, nor the king's men dared to say anything. Thus Rāhula arrived at the monastery together with the Lord.

On reaching the Nigrodha grove, the Buddha thought: "Prince Rāhula wants to inherit his fathers treasures. Worldly wealth only prolongs worldly existence and perpetuates suffering. I shall bestow on him the seven transcendental treasures which I have won under the Bodhi Tree after vanquishing Māra and his evil forces." Having decided thus, the Buddha asked the Venerable Sāriputta to ordain him a monk.

"How should I ordain him Lord?" asked Venerable Sāriputta. The Buddha explained the procedure

of ordaining Rāhula a novice monk by making him take refuge in the Triple Gem (Tiratana) three times. According to the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A. 2.398) the seven treasures of the Noble One (Ariya) are mentioned in the following verse -

"Saddhā dhanam Sīla dhanam,  
Hiri otappiyam dhanam,  
Suta dhanāñca, Cāgo ca,  
Paññā ve sattamam dhanam."

"Treasures of faith and virtue,  
Treasures of moral shame and dread,  
Treasures of learning and generosity,  
Wisdom being the seventh treasure."

When king Suddhodana heard that prince Rāhula has been ordained as a novice monk, he became greatly disturbed. For, he had entertained high hopes of seeing Rāhula as a great king of the Sakyān warrior clan. Troubled that his royal dynasty has now been severed, the king went to the Buddha, saluted him, sat down and asked the Lord for a favour. The Buddha replied: "Great King, the Tathāgatas are passed the stage of granting favours." The king said: "Lord, my request is fair and faultless." The Buddha then asked him to make the request.

The king said: "Lord, when you renounced the world, I suffered immensely from sorrow and pain. When my second son, Prince Nanda, was ordained my feelings of hurt and disappointment were also intense. When my grandson was made a novice monk my distress became unbearable. Lord the love of parents and grand parents pierce into the outer and inner skin and cuts right through the flesh, vein, bones and marrow. They do agonize when their loved ones are separated. Therefore I request that the noble ones may not confer ordination on a son without the approval of his parents."

The lord accepted his proposal and consoled the king by delivering a discourse appropriate to the occasion. When the king left, the Master had the bhikkhus assembled and after relating the episode made a proclamation enjoining a rule of monastic training and discipline (Vinaya) as follows:

"Na bhikkhāve, ananuññāto mātā pītu hi putto pabbājjetabbo; Yo pabbājjeyya āpatti dukkaṭassa."

"Bhikkhus, a young boy should not be ordained without the consent of his parents. Whosoever ordains such a person would commit the offense of wrong doing."

## King Suddhodana becomes an Anāgāmī, Non-Returner

One day the king invited the Buddha and his twenty thousand Arahats disciples to partake of both the morning and the forenoon alms-meals. The Buddha and the Arahats went to the palace for the early morning alms-offering (breakfast). When the breakfast was over, the Buddha enunciated on the benefits of offering the morning rice gruel etc. which acts as a health food.

Before serving the next forenoon alms-food, the king recounted his experience with a god, (deva), thus: "When the Lord was engaged in practising very severe self-mortification for six years, prior to the attainment of supreme Enlightenment, one day a certain deva, hovering in the sky before me, said: "Prince Siddhattha, your son, has died due to extreme asceticism." The Buddha asked the king: "Did you believe him?" The king replied: "I did not. Forthwith I rejected the deva's words by saying: "It is impossible for my son to pass away without attaining Omniscience (Sabbāññutā) under the great Bodhi Tree'."

The Buddha then said: "Great king, this is not the only time you have rejected such a false report. Even in a previous existence, as a chief of a remote



rural region, you had rejected the words of a famous teacher (disāpāmokkha), who had told you that Dhammapāla, your young son, has died. And prove, he had even showed some bones, which happened to be the bones of a goat. Then too you had refused to believe the false report, saying: 'In our Dhammapāla family no one has ever died so young'. Now in the evening of your existence, surely you will not believe the celestial's hearsay."

Then at the request of the king, the Buddha recalled the story of the king's past life as Mahādharmapāla and delivered a discourse on the Mahādharmapāla Jātaka (No. 447).

The Buddha then concluded by expounding on the most excellent aspect of his teaching, namely, the four Noble Truths, Caturāriyasacca, hearing which the king forthwith experienced a further spiritual transformation. He was firmly established in the third stage of the supramundane insight into reality and became an Anāgāmi, Non-returner. As such he became a Noble One who is emancipated from Kāmaloka, the realm of desire.

– o0o – o0o – o0o –



## MAHĀDHAMMAPĀLA JĀTAKA

The Buddha related this story to his father, King Suddhodana, when he was staying at the Nigrodhārāma, during his first visit to Kapilavatthu. The occasion was an alms-offering at the palace to honour the Buddha and his twenty-thousand Arahāt disciples. After the conclusion of alms-offering, the king related one of his experiences, in which a certain deity came to him and poised in air, said this: "Prince Siddhattha, your son, who has been practising severe austerities for six years, has now died". The Buddha asked him: "Great King, did you believe what the deity said?"

"Most Venerable sir, I did not believe." On the contrary, I told him: "My son cannot die until he had attained to the Supreme Enlightenment under the sacred Bodhi tree" replied the king.

The Buddha then revealed: "This is not the first time that you refused to believe when the diety said: 'Your son is dead'. Indeed long in the dim past, when a famous teacher visited you and said: 'your son is dead', and then in order to prove his point, produced bones, saying: 'These are his bones'. Even at that time you, as Mahādhammapāla, the well-known righteous brahmin, had refused to believe the teacher, saying: 'In our family, no one has ever died young'"

Now the king requested, saying: "Please do reveal the past life incident."

Thereupon the Buddha related this past-life account.

### **Past life account**

Long in the dim past when the king Brahmadatta ruled over the kingdom of Kāsi, there lived a very virtuous man whom the people called Dhammapāla, protector of Dhamma. He was the head of the village situated near Bārānasi, the capital of Kāsi. Dhammapāla strictly observed these ten courses of wholesome action (Dasa Kusala Kammapatha), namely:

1. Abstaining from killing any living creature, but protecting all life.

2. Abstaining from stealng, but giving alms-food etc.
3. Abstaining from sexual misconduct, but leading a chaste family life.
4. Abstaining from lying, but consciously telling truth.
5. Abstaining from slandering or backbiting, but consciously promoting good understanding and amity among people.
6. Abstaining from harsh language to hurt others, but speaking kindly and softly.
7. Abstaining from gossiping, but speaking wisely and meaningfully.
8. Giving up covetousness.
9. Giving up ill-will.
10. Giving up wrong views.

In his household many holy men, travellers, and poor people were always welcomed and generously served with food, etc. Besides, all the family members, including household workers, observed the Uposatha retreat day, on every full moon and new moon days. Because of this life of virtue, Dhammapāla's family ever prospered and never suffered from any misfortune.

Now the Bodhisatta was born in that household, and his name was Cūla (Junior) Dhammapāla. He was greatly loved and cherished by everyone. When he grew up, he was sent to a well-known educational institution of the time, famous for its learned teachers, in the city of Takkaṣāla. Mahā Dhammapāla provided him with sufficient money, provisions etc., and generous gifts for the famous teacher (Ācariya). Now Cūla Dhammapāla was a very good student. He soon became very popular. Afterwards he became the senior-most of his teacher's five hundred students.

The teacher's eldest son too was a co-student. It so happened that suddenly he died. The entire household of the teacher became overwhelmed with grief. The teacher himself, his relatives and the large company of students and household workers, all wept, except Cūla Dhammapāla.

Later the boy was cremated in the local cremation ground. When the students returned, there was a discussion as a part of the mourning ritual, as to why their fellow student should die in such a tender age. The teacher too was present in this discussion. One student said: "What a fine friend he was for me! I feel so sad that he left all of us, and his life was cut off so early!"

In reply Cūla Dhammapāla said: "Indeed at such a tender age he left. But the question is why should he die so early? That he should pass away at that age is not timely."

The other student said: "Have you forgotten that he too is mortal?"

Cūla Dhammapāla replied: "Yes, I do know it that all of us are mortal. But it is not necessary that one's life should be cut off so early. There must be some reason. Well, if one were to die in old age, it would be considered natural, but not at such an early age." The other then argued: "Well, everything is changing. Is he too not impermanent, *anicca*?"

Dhammapāla said: "Yes, all conditioned things are impermanent. It is true. But a young person need not die. Only old ones do". Then the other students in a chorus asked: "Well, is it the custom in your family?"

Dhammapāla replied: "Yes, that is so. No one has ever died so early in our family."

Having heard this, the teacher asked Dhammapāla: "My son is dead. Is it true that no one has ever died so early in your family?"

"It is true, revered teacher". Dhammapāla replied. Now the teacher wondered: "How can this happen? He thought: "Indeed it is wonderful. So let me visit his father and ask him about it. How such a thing is possible? What kind of living brings this about?"

So, having completed all the religious ceremonies connected with his son's death, the famous teacher decided to visit Dhammapāla's family. Now wanting to test the reaction of his father, he thought: "I will carry a piece of goat-bone in my bag". Then with a young domestic worker, he left Takkasīla, and in due course arrived at Dhammapāla's village in the vicinity of Bārānasi.

Mahā Dhammapāla, seeing him from afar, sent one of his domestic workers ahead to welcome the teacher and carry his umbrella, shoes, bags etc. Then he respectfully performed the host's duty of washing the guest's feet, making him sit on a couch etc., and then offered him a sumptuous meal. After the guest had rested, a discussion ensued between the teacher and Mahā Dhammapāla, thus:

The teacher said: "Sir, your son Cūla Dhammapāla has suddenly passed away. He was a perfect student. He had mastered various branches of knowledge,

such as, religion, philosophy etc. But since all conditioned things are impermanent, he lost his life. Alas! so early in life."

Now Mahā Dhammapāla began to clap his hands and laughed loudly. The teacher thought: 'It is ridiculous. Instead of weeping he is laughing'. So, he asked Mahā Dhammapāla: "Sir, why are you laughing?"

The father replied: "Because, it can not be my son, but it must be somebody else."

"No sir", insisted the teacher, "Your son is dead and not somebody else." Then he produced the bone from his bag and said: "Look this is his bone, now you have to believe."

The Mahā Dhammapāla said: "I am sure, it is not the bone of my son, but the bone of a goat or a dog. For, in our family, for seven generations, no one has died in the tender years. You must have concocted this story." Then he again clapped his hands and laughed aloud. Greatly moved, the teacher exclaimed: "What a wonderful thing, indeed, that in your family-line no one has died at a young age! He wondered: "But what could be the reason for this?" So he put a question by composing a verse:

"Kiṃ te vataṃ kiṃ pana brahmacariyaṃ,  
Kissa suciṇṇassa ayaṃ vipāko;  
Akkhāhi me brāhmaṇa etamatthaṃ,  
Kasmā nu tumhaṃ daharā na miyare"ti.

"Sir, Please do tell me what is the underlying reason,  
Why in your-family-line no one dies young?  
What is the course of conduct you follow?  
What good deed you perform that no one dies young?"

Now in order explain what virtuous course of  
conduct his family has been following, as a result  
of which, no one every dies young, he composed  
the following nine inspiring verses:

### **Mahādhammapāla Vaṇṇana**

**(Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā 447)**

"Dhammaṃ carāma na musā bhaṇāma,  
Pāpāni kammāni parivajjayāma;  
Anariyaṃ parivajjemu sabbhaṃ,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na miyare.

We practice Dhamma (spiritual life),  
And do not tell lies,  
And abstain from all evil actions.  
Since we avoid all that is ignoble,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Suṇoma dhammaṃ asataṃ sataṇṇa,  
Na cāpi dhammaṃ asataṃ rocayāma;  
Hitvā asante na jahāma sante,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na miyare.

We hear the teachings of both,  
The wise and the unwise,  
But do not follow the way of the unwise.  
Having avoided the unwise,  
We never give up the wise.  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Pubbeva dānā sumanā bhavāma,  
Dadampi ve attamanā bhavāma;  
Datvāpi ve nānutappāma pacchā,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na miyare.

Even before giving, we joyously await to give,  
And while giving, we re inwardly happy too.  
And after giving, since we do not ever repent,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Samaṇe mayaṃ brāhmaṇe addhike ca,  
Vanibbake yācanake dalidde;  
Annena pānena abhitappayāma,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na miyare.

To monks, priests, travellers, mendicants  
Beggars, and to all needy people,  
We devoutly satisfy with food and drinks,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Mayañca bhariyaṃ nātikkamāma,  
Amhe ca bhariyā nātikkamanti;  
Aññatra tāhi brahmacariyaṃ carāma,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na mīyare.

We are faithful to our wives,  
And our wives too are faithful to us.  
Apart from them, since we practice  
Chastity towards others.  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Pāṇātipātā vira māma sabbe,  
Loke adinnaṃ parivajjayāma;  
Amajjapā nopi musā bhaṇāma,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na mīyare.

We refrain from killing all living beings,  
Eschew stealing anything of the world,  
Since we do not tell lies, nor drink intoxicating drinks,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Etāsu ve jāyare suttamāsu,  
Medhāvino honti pahūtapaññā;  
Bahussutā vedaguno ca honti,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na mīyare.

Children that are born to our faithful wives,  
Are intelligent, well-bred and learned.  
And they become well-versed in scriptures,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Mātā pitā ca bhaginī bhātaro ca,  
Puttā ca dārā ca mayañca sabbe;  
Dhammaṃ carāma paralokahetu,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na mīyare.

Mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers,  
Sons and daughter-in-laws, all alike.  
Live the life of dhamma for the hereafter.  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Dāsā ca dāsyo anujīvino ca,  
Paricārakā kammakarā ca sabbe;  
Dhammaṃ caranti paralokahetu,  
Tasmā hi amhaṃ daharā na mīyare"ti.

Even our servants and maids  
And all those who work for us,  
All live the spiritual life for the hereafter,  
So no one among us ever dies young.

"Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ,  
Dhammo suciṇṇo sukhamāvahāti;  
Esānisamso dhamme suciṇṇe,  
Na duggatiṃ gacchati dhammacārī.

Indeed, Dhamma protects him,  
who practises the Dhamma,  
When well practiced, Dhamma only brings happiness,  
These blessings are inherent in well-practiced Dhamma,  
And a practitioner of Dhamma never goes to  
states of woe.

"Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ,  
Chattaṃ mahantaṃ viya vassakāle;  
Dhammena gutto mama Dhammapālo,  
Aññassa aṭṭhini sukhi kumaro"ti.

Indeed Dhamma protects him who practices the Dhamma.

Just as a big umbrella protects one during rains.  
Guarded by Dhamma is my son Dhammapāla.  
These are other's bones, not of my beloved junior's.

On hearing these, the teacher was thrilled, and was deeply moved by a sense of gratitude. He burst into this joyous utterance: "Indeed, this journey of mine has been truly a happy one! It has been most fruitful and not fruitless!" Then with roused emotion, he asked Dhammapāla's father to forgive him, and then made a confession, saying: "I came here carrying these goat bones, only to try you. Your son is perfectly safe. I beg of you to impart to me the moral precepts that your family has been practising for seven generations, as the result of which no one ever dies young in your family."

Then he meticulously noted down the instructions on a bark-parchment and undertook to abide by these rules in his family. Having spent sometime with Cūla Dhammapāla's father he returned to

Takkasīla. Then after gathering all his students, he related the entire episode. Thereafter he urged everyone to undertake these noble moral precepts for these reasons:

1. To enjoy longevity,
2. To make life truly meaningful,
3. To progress on the path to spiritual deliverance.

Having heard this, King Suddhodana was greatly moved, so were the members of his family. Then the Buddha gave a discourse on the Four Noble Truths, and the step by step approach to realize them, which brought about a further spiritual clarity in King Suddhodana. And as already mentioned he had become an Anāgāmi, one established on the third stage of the supermundane path-insight.

The Buddha then identified the various characters of that birth-story with their present lives. He said: "At that time Cūla Dhammapāla's father and mother were the present King Suddhodana and his Queen. The teacher was Venerable Sāriputta, and the body of students, was the Buddha's present retinue of holy bhikkhus, and I myself was Cūla Dhammapāla.





## THOUSAND PRINCES BECOME MONKS

Having established his father king Suddhodana in the third supermundane stage of spiritual transformation, the Buddha departed from Kapilavatthu together with his newly ordained kinsmen and the Arahats, and journeyed towards Rājagaha. On the way he broke his journey for some days at Anupiya mango grove in the principality of the Malla warrior clan.

When the Buddha and the Arahats left, King Suddhodana summoned all the members of the royal Sākyan clan-assembly and addressed them, saying: "Members of the royal Sākyan clan, prince Siddhattha Gotama would have become an Universal Monarch (Cakkavatti), but he chose to be the Dhammarājā, Sovereign of Dhamma, thus the

Supreme Teacher of gods and men. As such, he is able to deliver beings from the bonds of worldly existence."

"My second son, prince Nanda and grandson, prince Rāhula, who would have become the sovereign of the Sākyan warrior clan, too have joined the Holy Order of the Blessed One's noble disciples. You all are Sākyan nobles of royal descent. Now that we have the Buddha, his noble Dhamma and the holy Saṅgha, arising from our clan, let only the princes of royal blood attend upon the Buddha. Therefore, I would urge that every royal Sākyan household presents one prince who will be ordained a bhikkhu by the Lord himself."

The elders of the clan agreed to offer one prince from each of the one-thousand Sākyan families of royal descent. Then the king, together with one-thousand princes and their family members, went to the Anupiya mango grove. And in a grand ordination ceremony held under the trees, the princes received ordination from the Buddha.

### Six princes and Upāli the barber

Although a thousand Sākyan princes had entered the holy order to follow the Buddha, the Great

Sākyan Sage, six prominent princes, closely related to the royal family, did not follow suit. So, all Sākyan families of royal descent began to censure them, saying that they behaved as though they were strangers, not blood relatives. Accordingly, prince Mahānāma who was the next in line after the aged king Suddhodana, to be the king of the Sākyans, informed them about the reactions of others.

These six princes were : 1) Prince Bhaddiya 2) Prince Anuruddha 3) Prince Ānanda 4) Prince Bhagu 5) Prince Kimbila 6) Prince Devadatta. Now they discussed among themselves about the implications of leading the holy life in the dispensation of the Buddha. These princes were given to a life of ease and comfort, and knew pretty little about the predicaments and anxieties of worldly life. When they were given a realistic appraisal of running the business of household life, as against the struggle-free peaceful life in the holy order of the Buddha, they decided to join the holy order.

Accordingly they left Kapilavatthu and headed towards Anupiya mango grove in the neighbouring Malla principality accompanied by their barber Upāli. Once they crossed the border, they took off their precious ornaments, wrapped them up

with an upper garment, and handed the bundle to Upāli as a gift, saying: "Dear Upāli, you may return. This gift may serve you till life's end." Overcome with sorrow, Upāli fell at the feet of his royal masters and cried. Not daring to disobey the princes, he took the bundle and made his way to Kapilavatthu.

After waling for a short distance, Upāli stopped and began to consider about the possible outcome thus: "The Sākyan royalty, seeing me returning alone with this bundle of ornaments, may wrongly conclude that I might have got them killed in order to rob their precious jewels. The royalty may become angry and have me killed." He also reflected on the nobility and large-heartedness of these princes. He thought: "If these princes, my masters, could renounce all the royal splendour and comfort, as though they were throwing our spittle from the mouth, so could I, however wretched my status may be." So he took out all the precious items and hanging them on a tree loudly announced: "I give all these precious things as charity to anyone who may find them."

Thereafter he returned to the princes. On being questioned what makes him return to the princes,

he explained all that have occurred and concluded by saying: "May this humble act of dāna be shared by all beings." Deeply moved, the princes took Upāli along with them to Anupiya mango grove.

On arrival, they approached the Lord, humbly bowed down before him, and addressed him thus: "Lord, we Sākyan royalty may be vain and arrogant because of our pride of birth. This man Upāli has been our servant for many years. We beg the Lord to ordain him first, before anyone of us, so that he will receive our salutation. This way our Sākyan pride and vanity will be controlled and destroyed." Accordingly the Buddha had Upāli ordained first followed by the six princes.

– o0o – o0o – o0o –