

**ENGLISH LESSONS**

*F O R*

**YOUNG BUDDHISTS**

**BOOK III**

**MAHACHULA BUDDHIST SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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## LESSON ONE

# LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Very long ago, in the 6th century B.C., the country which is now Nepal was a kingdom called Sakyas. Kapilavatthu was its capital. The king who ruled over it was called Siddhodana. He was of the Gotama clan.

Eighty years before the beginning of the Buddhist Era, his Queen, Mahamaya, gave birth to a son who was named Siddhattha. The child became the Crown Prince and was brought up in the midst of luxury.

Only seven days after the birth of the Prince, the Queen passed away. From that day Siddhattha was looked after by his aunt, Mahapajapati, who was also his fostermother.

At the age of sixteen, the Prince was married to a beautiful young princess, Yasodhara, who was his own cousin. They lived a happy married life for the next thirteen years. The Princess bore him their only son, Rahula.

In the meantime, the imperfection of life, its impermanence and suffering, made the Prince dissatisfied with his luxurious life. The four sights, which he saw on the way to the Royal Garden, made him very thoughtful about this. He saw that even the luxurious life could not bring him real happiness, and that he could not be really happy while many people were suffering. He should find real happiness, the happiness that all could share, not only he himself, but all other people as well. He wanted to find a way out of suffering and bring perfect happiness to his fellow beings.

One night, when he was twenty-nine years old, Prince Siddhattha left his palace, his wife and son. He spent the following six years studying with many wise teachers and practising self-mortification in the forest. At last he found that these teachers did not know the Truth and that such practice was useless. He left those teachers, gave up self-mortification and turned to the Middle Way.

At last, on the full moon day of May, six years after his renunciation, while sitting under the Bodhi tree, Prince Siddhattha attained the Enlightenment. He reached the real freedom. From that time on he was known as the Buddha, which means the Enlightened One or the Awakened One.

Two months after the Enlightenment, at Isipatana near Benares, the Buddha preached his first sermon, Dhammacakkapavattanasutta, to the Five Ascetics and got his first disciples. As time went on the number of his disciples increased very rapidly until Buddhism was firmly established. He wandered nearly all over India, preaching the doctrine of freedom to the people for forty-five years.

At the age of eighty, the Buddha felt his end coming. He went to Kusinara, and there, under two Sala trees, he passed away, leaving us with the deathless teachings.

**Answer these questions:**

1. What was Nepal twenty-five centuries ago?
2. Who was the Crown Prince of the Sakyas about sixty years before the beginning of the Buddhist Era?
3. Who was the foster mother of Prince Siddhattha?
4. How long did Prince Siddhattha live his happy married life?
5. What were the four sights which Prince Siddhattha saw on the way to the Royal Garden?
6. What did he think when he saw the four sights?
7. What did he do during the six years after he had left the palace?
8. When did Prince Siddhattha become the Buddha?
9. When and to whom did the Buddha preach his first sermon?
10. How many years ago did the Buddha pass away?

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. What are the past and past participle forms of these verbs: *to dwell, to begin, to become, to know*?
2. When I examine something, I (*look for it, look at it carefully, look at it gladly, look at it sadly*)
3. What are the noun forms of these adjectives: *long, true, different, important*?
4. A wealthy man is not (*beautiful, grateful, patient, poor*); a diligent man is not (*lazy, wise, peaceful, young*).
5. After it has been brought forth the child should be (*brought back, brought up, given up, taken away*).



## LESSON TWO

# THE DAILY LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

We all think that we know much about the life of the Buddha. We know that the Buddha was born at Lumbini Park on a Visakha full moon day nearly 2,600 years ago. We know that, as Prince Siddhattha, he was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya. He was married to Princess Yasodhara at the age of sixteen. He renounced the world when he was twenty-nine years old. Six years later, when he was thirty-five, he attained the Enlightenment. After preaching for forty-five years he passed away at Kusinara at the age of eighty. We can tell many other important events during his life. We really know much about the Buddha.

Few of us, however, know what the Buddha did from day to day. Our knowledge of his life will not be complete if we do not know how the Buddha led his daily life. From his daily routine we will know more clearly what the Buddha did for the benefit of the people. Here is what we may call the daily routine of the Buddha.

The Buddha rose early in the morning. Then he meditated up to the time of alms-gathering. In meditation, he surveyed the world to see those whom he should go to help on that day. Then he dressed himself and, with his almsbowl in hand, went out to collect alms, sometimes alone, and sometimes with his followers. During the almsround he went to help the person whom he found in the morning meditation.

Upon returning to the monastery, he ate his one daily meal. Then he sat nearby, waiting for his disciples to finish their meal. After that he would retire to his private room and come out again to teach the monks who had assembled to listen to him. When he finished speaking, some monks would ask him to give them a suitable subject for meditation. After that each monk could go away to spend the afternoon as he wished.

During that time, the Buddha took his afternoon nap, and then considered the people whom he should give special help. Then the people from the village or town nearby would come to listen to his preaching till evening. When this was over, the Buddha took a bath and rested for a short while.

In the quiet evening, about 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., many monks would come to see him and get advice from him. Some would ask him to explain some points of the Doctrine which they did not fully understand. The Buddha would engage in conversation far into the first watch of the night.

About 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. special visitors like gods would come. The Buddha would preach them the Doctrine and answer their questions.

Now, being weary of so much sitting all day, the Buddha used to go to his feet and spend some time walking up and down to refresh his limbs. Then he would retire to his room and go to rest until he rose again and spent the rest of the night in surveying the people. Therefore, the third and last watch of the night was divided among a walk, a short sleep, and early morning meditation.

Sometimes the Buddha accepted invitation to eat in the houses of his lay followers. On such days the morning alms-gathering was omitted and the first talk with his disciples was replaced by a sermon to his hosts.

Now you will see that the Buddha worked more than twenty hours a day for the benefit of the people. He did this regularly throughout the forty-five years of his monastic life. He worked hard and was always punctual. He was happy to do his work and always succeeded. He was really the Great Man. All great men do like him. They work hard and are always punctual. They are happy to do their work and live lives of success.

**Answer these questions:**

1. Tell all important events you know about the life of the Buddha.
2. What did the Buddha do in his morning meditation?
3. How many meals did the Buddha take daily?
4. To whom did the Buddha preach in the afternoon?
5. Did the Buddha go for almsround every morning?

6. Did the Buddha preach outside the monastery? If he did, at what time or on what occasions did he do it?
7. At what time did the Buddha meet the monks daily? What did he do at that time?
8. How long was the monastic life of the Buddha?
9. Did the Buddha's hard work cause him much unhappiness?
10. Describe how great men work.

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. You confess only when you (*hate someone, have some fault, want to find something*).
2. If someone comes to see you from a distance, he comes from (*a far-away place, a near-by place, some place you do not know*).
3. What are the past and past participle forms of these verbs (*to hold, to lead, to marry, to choose*)?
4. Make adjectives from the following : *wisdom, safety, purity, success*.
5. When the Buddha renounced the world, he (*went from the earth to another planet, began to lead a religious life, made the earth turn round, gave a sermon to the world*).



## LESSON THREE

# ANANDA

### *Treasurer of the Doctrine*

We are told that in the second year after the Enlightenment the Buddha stayed at Rajagaha. During this time, Sariputta, Moggallana, Mahakassapa and many other people became his disciples. Meanwhile, King Suddhodana, the Buddha's father, heard the news of his son and sent many messengers to invite him to Kapilavatthu.

During the Buddha's visit to his father's country, a large number of princes and nobles left home to join the Order. They went with the Buddha on his return to Rajagaha.

On the way to Rajagaha, the Buddha stopped for a short time at a mango grove called Anupiya. There he met with a number of Sakyan princes who followed him to ask for ordination. Their names were Bhagu, Kimbila, Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Ananda and Devadatta. These six princes and their Barber, Upali, received ordination and accompanied the Buddha to Rajagaha. Some of these seven disciples became very famous later. One of the best known was Ananda.

Little is known about the life of Ananda during the early years of his ordination. He became well known when he was appointed the personal attendant of the Buddha. This appointment was made in the twentieth year after the Buddha's Enlightenment.

During the first nineteen years of the Enlightenment, the Buddha had no permanent attendant. Monks and novices took turns carrying his bowl and robe.

One day, at Savatthi, the Buddha said that he should have a permanent attendant because he was growing old. Then all the great disciples except Ananda offered their services but were rejected by the Buddha. Ananda sat in silence, for he thought that the Buddha himself would select him if he wanted him.



At last the Buddha said something, showing that he wanted Ananda. Then Ananda agreed on condition that the Buddha refused him four things and granted him four things.

The four things which Ananda asked the Buddha to refuse were:

1. *The Buddha should not give him robes which he had received.*
2. *The Buddha should not give him food which he had received.*
3. *The Buddha should not allow him to dwell in the same residence as he*
4. *The Buddha should not include him in the invitations which the Buddha had accepted.*

The four things which Ananda wished to accept were:

1. *If he accepted an invitation on behalf of the Buddha, the Buddha should go.*
2. *If people from a distance came to see the Buddha, he should be permitted to bring them to him.*
3. *If he had any doubt, he should be permitted to approach the Buddha as soon as it arose.*
4. *If the Buddha taught anything in his absence, the Buddha should repeat it to him.*

Ananda made these eight conditions because he had no wish to gain any personal benefits from his post. On the other hand, he wanted to get the maximum benefit for others through his service.

When the Buddha agreed, Ananda became his permanent attendant. For the following twenty-five years, Ananda waited upon the Buddha, following him like a shadow, bringing him water and toothbrush, sweeping his room, accompanying him everywhere and so on.

Ananda had a very good memory. He remembered all that he had heard. He remembered all the teaching of the Buddha and was known as "the Treasurer of the Doctrine." After the Buddha's death, he was chosen by the Sangha to recite the Dhamma at the First Council. Thus every Sutta begins with his words, "Evamme sutam—Thus have I heard."

At the end of this First Council, there was another interesting incident. The assembly charged Ananda with five offences. One of these was that he forgot to ask the Buddha which were the minor precepts which the Buddha allowed the Order to revoke. The assembly blamed him and said that he had to confess them as faults. Though Ananda saw no fault in any of these acts, he confessed them out of respect for the Sangha. This incident shows that Ananda was a good example for people in a democratic society.

It was also Ananda who designed the monks' robes. Once he was asked by the Buddha to design a robe for the monks. He then designed it to be in pattern like a rice-field in the Magadha country. The robes which Buddhist monks use today are still in this pattern.

**Answer these questions:**

1. Where was the Buddha when King Suddhodana sent messengers to invite him to Kapilavatthu?
2. Who joined the Order at the same time as Ananda?
3. Were they ordained at Kapilavatthu? Which of them do you know best?
4. When and where did the Buddha appoint Ananda his personal attendant?
5. Why did Ananda sit in silence when other great disciples offered the Buddha their services?
6. Tell if you remember any of the things that Ananda asked the Buddha to refuse or to grant.
7. Why did Ananda ask the Buddha for such refusal and granting?
8. Why did Ananda become known as the "Treasurer of the Doctrine"? What did he do at the First Council?
9. Why did Ananda agree to confess the five offences while he himself saw no fault in any of those acts?
10. In what pattern are the robes of the monks? Who designed them?

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. Two of the following words may be used both as verbs and as nouns. They are (*create, visit, appear, proceed, return, ordain*).
2. What are the past and past participle forms of these verbs: *to grow, to leave, to keep, to bring*?
3. What are the infinitive forms of the following verbs: *sent, felt, found, learnt*?
4. A man becomes a monk when he is (*invited, ordained, praised, prophesied*).
5. Make adjectives from the following: *pride, difficulty, anger, faith*.



## LESSON FOUR

# ANANDA

and

## *the Founding of the Order of Nuns*

Ananda did another great service to Buddhism. This was to help in the founding of the Bhikkhuni-Sangha or the order of nuns.

Buddhism teaches that women can gain the highest attainment, Arahantship, as well as men. But, in former days, women were not allowed to receive the spiritual training that men were. They could not leave home and live religious lives. There was no order of nuns until the Buddha gave ordination to Mahapajapati, his fostermother. Here is the story of the founding of the Bhikkhuni-Sangha.

Three years after the ordination of Ananda, King Sudhodana fell very ill. The Buddha went to visit and console him on his deathbed. When the king was dead, Queen Mahapajapati decided to leave the world and waited for the opportunity to ask for the Buddha's permission.

In that same year the Buddha visited Kapilavatthu again to settle the dispute between the Sakyans and the Koliyans. These two parties of his relatives quarrelled with each other over the irrigation of the river Rohini which divided their lands. When the dispute had been settled, many of his relatives joined the Order. At this time, the widowed Mahapajapati asked the Buddha for ordination. The Buddha refused her request and returned to Vesali.

Mahapajapati was very much grieved. Then she cut off her hair and put on yellow robes. With many other Sakyan ladies, she walked all the way from Kapilavatthu to Vesali. They arrived with swollen feet and were covered with dust.



There Ananda found them weeping outside the gate of the monastery. Knowing their wish, he took their request to the Buddha, but was again refused.

Then Ananda changed his method. He asked the Buddha whether a woman could win Arahantship. When the Buddha gave him an affirmative answer, he again asked the Buddha to admit the ladies to the Order. The Buddha agreed on condition that they must keep eight strict rules throughout their lives. Mahapajapati gladly accepted the eight rules, and by accepting them she became the first Buddhist nun and the first nun of the world.

From the above story you will see that Mahapajapati was a very strong-minded lady and that she got her ordination with great difficulty. The Buddha realized that it would be very difficult for women to live a religious life in the Indian society of those days. Social conditions and tradition were not good for the existence of the order of nuns. To protect both the order of nuns and the whole religious life, the Buddha had to be very careful in giving permission. He had to make it difficult for women to be admitted to the Order and had to lay down strict rules for them. At the First Council, this support of Ananda for the ordination of women was considered by the assembly as an offence and Ananda had to confess it as a fault.

When the order of nuns had been founded, the number of nuns increased rapidly. Many of them became great disciples of the Buddha. Two female Elders, Khema and Uppalavanna, were appointed the two Chief Female Disciples of the Buddha as Sariputta and Moggallana were in the order of monks.

The order of nuns, however, flourished for only a few centuries. It died out about five hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha. However, the name of Ananda and Mahapajapati are still in the memory of all Buddhists. They remember that the first order of nuns came into being through the effort of these two great persons.

**Answer these questions:**

1. Can a woman be an Arahant?
2. What was the cause of the dispute between the two parties of the Buddha's relatives?
3. Was this quarrel the cause of the death of King Suddhodana?
4. When did Mahapajapati ask the Buddha for ordination for the first time?
5. Where did the Buddha stay after he had settled the dispute and left Kapilavatthu? How did Mahapajapati go there?
6. How was Mahapajapati ordained?
7. Without whose help would Mahapajapati's ordination not have been possible?
8. Why did the Buddha make it difficult for women to gain admission to the Order?
9. Were there many great female disciples? Mention the names of some, if you know any
10. How long did the Order of nuns flourish?

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. In the following list, there are three words which can be used as adjectives. Find them : *shorten, learned, enlighten, became, swollen, widowed, might, leave, chose.*
2. Which of the following persons usually takes care of sick people: *a soldier, a nun, a nurse, a merchant?*
3. The nearest *neighbour* of Thailand is (England, the United States, Malaysia, India).
4. A learned man is one who (*does not know much, likes to learn much, has learnt much, has to learn much more*).  
Which of the following is the opposite of the adjective "same" (*famous, chief, peaceful, different*)?

## THE OLDEST HISTORICAL TREE

In the year 326 B.C. King Alexander the Great invaded the Northern part of India and made Taxila his capital. His kingdom did not last long, for he died at the age of 32, at Babylon in 323 B.C.

At that time there was a great man of India named Candragupta, whom the Greeks called Sandrocatus or Santrakotos. He attacked the Greek officers left behind by Alexander, defeated King Nanda of Magadha and became the king of India in 323 B.C. His kingdom was a large one and it was called the Mauryan Empire.

When Candragupta died, his son, Bindusara, came to the throne and reigned until 273 B.C. Bindusara had many sons. One of them was called Asoka. During his father's reign, Asoka was Viceroy at Taxila and Ujjain.

We are told that on the way from Pataliputra, the capital, to Ujjain, Prince Asoka fell in love with a banker's daughter named Devi. He took her as his wife and went with her to Ujjain. There she bore him two children. One of them was a son and the other was a daughter. Later they joined the Order and became known as Mahinda and Sanghamitta.

At the death of his father, Asoka returned to the capital and became the third ruler of the Mauryan Empire. Asoka's time was the greatest age in the Indian history and he was regarded as one of the greatest men in history.

In the eighth year of his reign, Asoka invaded and conquered Kalinga. The Kalingans were brave and strong, and the war was a terrible one. One hundred thousand men were killed, one hundred and fifty thousand were carried away captive and many times this number died.

After the Kalingan war, Asoka changed. He gave up war completely and became a faithful Buddhist. He became a very



generous patron of the Sangha and a great supporter of Buddhism. Before this change he was called Asoka the Fierce, but after it he was known as Asoka the Righteous.

Asoka loved the Buddha very much. He was most diligent in paying respect to the Bodhi-tree at Gaya, under which the Buddha attained the Enlightenment. Every year, in the month of Kattika or around November, he held a festival in honour of the tree.

King Asoka wanted to spread the teaching of the Buddha even outside India. He sent nine missions to foreign lands to spread Buddhism. One of these missions was headed by his own son, Mahinda, who had become a monk. This mission went to Ceylon and established Buddhism there.

Then the king of Ceylon sent a request to Asoka, asking him to send Sanghamitta to ordain women in Ceylon. Asoka agreed. With his daughter he sent a sapling of the Bodhi-tree at Gaya. Sanghamitta and the sapling were received by the king of Ceylon with great honour. The tree was then taken to Anuradhapura, the capital. There it was planted in the Maha Megha garden where it still stands today. Saplings of this new tree were also taken to and planted in other foreign countries.

Today the Bodhi-tree at Anuradhapura is the oldest one in existence. It is older than the one at Gaya. The Bodhi-tree at Gaya now is not the original one. It was destroyed by Sasamka, an enemy of Buddhism, in the sixth century A.D. Then a seedling from it was planted in its place.

In Thailand you can see a very large number of Bodhi-trees. Many of them were brought from Anuradhapura. Some of them were taken from Gaya. A sapling was brought from Anuradhapura and planted in Sukhothai in the reign of King Litai. In the reign of King Rama II another sapling was brought and planted at Wat Mahadhatu in Bangkok. Several other saplings were brought later. They were planted at different monasteries such as Wat Srakes and Wat Sudassana. The saplings of the Bodhi-tree at Gaya can be seen at Wat Bovornives and Wat Bencha or the Marble Temple. The one at Wat Bovornives was a seed brought from Gaya in the reign of King Rama IV. The one at Wat Bencha was a sapling brought and planted there in the reign of King Rama V.



Now the Bodhi-tree at Anuradhapura is regarded as the oldest recorded tree in the world. H.G. Wells, a famous English historian, says, "In Ceylon there grows to this day a tree, the oldest historical tree in the world, which we know to have been planted as a cutting from the Bo tree in the year 245 B.C. From that time to this, it has been carefully tended and watered. Its great branches are supported by pillars."

In the words of Emerson Tennent, "Compared with it, the Oak of Ellersilla is but a sampling; and the Conqueror's Oak in Windsor Forest barely numbers its years."

**Answer these questions:**

1. Did Alexander rule the whole land of India?
2. Who was Santrakotos? Did he defeat Alexander?
3. Who ruled the Mauryan Empire before Asoka? Where was Asoka at that time?
4. Who was Devi? Did she join the Order?
5. How terrible was the war of Kalinga?
6. How did Asoka the Fierce become Asoka the Righteous?
7. What did King Asoka do annually in the month of Kattika?
8. What was the relationship between Asoka and the King of Ceylon?
9. What is the oldest historical tree? Where is it? Who planted it?
10. Tell the names of two or three monasteries in Thailand where Bodhi-trees from India or Ceylon were planted.

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. When the Buddha set out for Kapilavatthu, he (*was building, began a journey to, arrived at*) the city.
2. Spring is between (*summer and winter, summer and autumn, winter and summer*).
3. The exact meaning is that which is (*incorrect, without mistakes, doubtful*).
4. Which of the following words may be used both as a verb and as a noun (*great, appearance, proceed, promise*)?
5. Which of the following lives in a monastery (*a pupil, a monk, a Brahmin, a prince*)?

## INSCRIPTION OF KING ASOKA

The Mauryan dynasty brought forth a ruler who was to become one of the truly great rulers of world history. This was Asoka who ruled in India in the 3rd century B.C. It was through his patronage that Buddhism became one of the principal faiths of the world.

Of him H.G. Wells says in his *Outline of History*: “Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and gracious nesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Ashoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.”

What Asoka felt and how he acted are known to us in his own words in the numerous edicts he issued, carved in rock and metal. Those edicts, spread out all over India, are still with us, and they conveyed his messages not only to his people but to posterity. In some of his edicts it is said:

“Thus saith King Priyadarsi, Beloved of the Gods.

“Twelve years after my coronation, records relating to Dharma were caused to be written by me for the first time for the welfare and happiness of the people, so that, without violation thereof, they might attain the growth of Dharma in various respects”

“This is a proclamation of Priyadarsi Asokaraja, Beloved of the Gods.

“I have been now a lay follower of the Buddha for two and half years.

“Saith he, ‘It is now more than a year that the Sangha has been intimately associated with me and that I have been exerting myself in the cause of Dharma.

“In the ages gone by, kings used to go out on tours of pleasure. During such tours, hunting and other pastimes used to be enjoyed by them.

“Now, King Priyadarsi, Beloved of the Gods, visited Sambodhi ten years after his coronation. Thence started these pilgrimages for Dharma. During these pilgrimages, the following take place, viz. visiting the Brahmanas and Sramanas and making gifts to them, meeting the aged and contacting the people of the countryside, instructing them in Dharma and discussing with them the principles of Dharma, all this being conducive to the promotion of Dharma.

“This is the supreme delight of King Priyadarsī, Beloved of the Gods. All his other pleasures are inferior to this.

“All men are my children. Just as, in regard to my own children, I desire that they may be provided by me with all kinds of welfare and happiness in this world and in the next, the same I desire in respect of all men.

“I consider it my only duty to promote the welfare of all men. But exertion and prompt dispatch of business lie at the root of that. There is verily no duty which is more important to me than promoting the welfare of all men. And whatever effort I make is made in order that I may discharge the debt which I owe to all living beings, that I may make them happy in this world, and that they may attain heaven in the next world.”



“My intention is that the noble deeds of Dharma and the practice of Dharma, which consist of compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness, will thus be promoted among men.”

The labour that King Asoka spent in support of Buddhism was of more lasting influence than his successes as a conqueror. The great empire that he built, uniting virtually all India for the first time under a single government, began to break up soon after his death. But, as Nehru says in his *Glimpses of World History*: The palace of massive stone is gone, leaving no trace behind, but the memory of Ashoka lives over the whole continent of Asia, and his edicts still speak to us in a language we can understand and appreciate. And we can still learn much from them.

**Answer these questions:**

1. To what dynasty did King Asoka belong?
2. According to H.G. Wells, what country, though preserving the tradition of Asoka's greatness, has left his doctrine?
3. Where can we find the numerous edicts issued by King Asoka?
4. When did King Asoka first cause his edicts to be written?
5. For what purpose did the King have his edicts written?
6. Was Asoka a Buddhist? What is the evidence for your answer?
7. What is the difference between the tours of former kings and the pilgrimages of King Asoka?
8. How did King Asoka regard his people? What did he desire in respect of them?
9. What was regarded by King Asoka as the most important duty?
10. According to the King, what lay at the root of the performance of his duty?
11. When was all India united for the first time?
12. Which is greater, Asoka's building of his great empire or his work for the promotion of Buddhism?



**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly.

1. A century is a period of time shorter than a (decade, quarter, aeon, season).
2. A patron is one who gives (satisfaction, support, instruction, pleasure).
3. Which of these is not spelled correctly (graciousness, influence, numerous, appreciate, conquerer)?
4. In which of these can we carve an inscription (air, water, wood, gas)?
5. If John cherishes your memory, he does not (remember, forget, care for, know) you.

## OUR FIRST TEACHERS

The Buddha says, "Monks, you should train yourselves like this: Let us be grateful and bear in mind what has been done to us. Let us not forget even a particle of what has been done to us."

We should be grateful to our parents. Our parents are our first teachers. From the time of our birth, we got the first training from our parents. Then we were passed on to other teachers for training in the arts and sciences. Therefore, our home is our first school.

Our parents are also our holy persons. The Arahants or the holy persons forgive every wrong action of a man and wish him every kind of happiness. In the same way our parents forgive us for all of our mistakes and wish us whole-hearted success and happiness. Therefore, the house where the child worships his parents is his first temple.

The Hindus believe that Brahma is the God who created the world. The term Brahma is held by them as the most sacred word. Buddhism does not believe in God the Creator. The Buddha says instead: Parents are called Brahma, because they bring up their children and introduce them to the world.

Mother and father not only bring forth the child, but they also bring him up. They keep him away from evil and train him in virtue. They give him education by having him taught in the arts and sciences. When the child grows up, they arrange for his marriage into a good family and hand over the property to him in due course.

A grateful child can do many things to serve his parents. He should be respectful to them. He should serve them with all

their requirements such as food, clothing, comfortable beds and chairs. He should support and look after his parents in his turn. He should do their work for them. He should make himself worthy to be their heir and should keep up the honour and the traditions of the family. After their death he should honour their memory.

That is what a grateful child should do. He who performs these services is called a grateful child. However, most of these are only bodily services and they are not the best services. We cannot return the kindness of our parents with these material services. Then, what is the best service of a grateful child towards his parents? A child may return the kindness of his parents only by doing them spiritual services. He who can cause stingy parents to become generous, non-virtuous parents to be virtuous, and foolish parents to be wise, is doing the best service of gratitude.

**Answer these questions:**

1. To whom did the Buddha teach us to be grateful?
2. Why are our parents our first teachers?
3. Why are our parents compared to the Arahants?
4. Is the place where his parents worship gods called the child's first temple?
5. What should the child do to serve his parents when they are still living?
6. What should the child do to show his gratitude to his parents after their death?
7. What are called the material services of a grateful child?
8. In what way should a child perform the spiritual services to his parents?
9. Why are the spiritual services called the best services of gratitude?
10. Give a clear meaning of the word 'gratitude', and find its synonyms.

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. A sheet of cloth which is hung up as a covering at a window is called a (*rag, bag, robe, curtain, handkerchief*).



2. Which of these can give shelter from the sun (*a lamp, a shoe, a roof, a fan, a bouquet*)?
3. When your mother asks you again and again, she asks you (*after a very long time, all the time, very often, sometimes*).
4. "To live" is sometimes used instead of (*to wear, to dwell, to leave, to weep*); "To recite" is sometimes used instead of (*to renounce, to refuse, to repeat, to rewrite*).
5. Which of the following is the opposite of the verb "to remember" (*to enter, to join, to discover, to forget*)?

## BUDDHIST HOLY DAYS

In Thailand now we have fourteen national holidays every year. Of these fourteen, four are Buddhist holy days. They are Magha-Puja Day, Visakha-Puja Day, Asalha-Puja Day and Khao Pansa Day. Of these four, the first three are connected with the life of the Buddha and his preaching. The last one, Khao Pansa Day, is the first day of the Rains-residence. It is connected with the discipline of the monks and is generally called the beginning of the Buddhiste Lent. We will not discuss the Khao Pansa Day now. But we have many things to do on the other three days, so let us see what happened and what Buddhists do on these three days.

The Buddha was born on the full moon day of the sixth lunar month called Visakha. Thirty-five years later, also on the full moon of Visakha, he attained the Enlightenment. Forty-five years after the Enlightenment, on another Visakha full moon, he passed away. Every year, when this important day comes, Buddhists all over the world commemorate the birth, the Enlightenment and the death of the Buddha by great worship. They call it the Visakha-Puja Day which means the day of worship in the month Visakha. Generally, this day falls around the middle or the end of May. It is the most important of all Buddhist holy days. It is also called the Buddha Day.

Two months after the Enlightenment the Buddha found his first five disciples at Isipatana. There, on the full moon of the month Asalha, he preached them the First Sermon called Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta. At that time Kondañña won the Eye of Truth and asked for ordination. He was ordained and became the First Disciple of the Buddha. This completes the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Buddhists in Thailand commemorate this event every year. They call it the Asalha-Puja Day, which means the day of worship

in the month Asalha. This day falls around the middle or the end of July. It is sometimes called the Sangha Day.

After the first rains the Buddha went to Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha. There he met with Sariputta and Moggallana. These two wise men listened to his preaching and became his chief disciples.

Not long after that, on the full moon day of the month Magha (February-March), 1,250 disciples of the Buddha assembled in the Bamboo Grove (Veluvana) where the Buddha was staying. Sariputta and Moggallana were also in the assembly. This assembly is called the Fourfold Assembly because it consisted of four factors, namely,

1. *It was the full moon day of the month Magha.*
2. *1,250 disciples assembled by themselves without an appointment.*
3. *All of these monks were Arahants who had the sixfold superknowledge.*
4. *All of them had been ordained by the Buddha himself.*

At this assembly the Buddha summarized his teaching into a number of principles called the Ovāda-Pātimokkha. There are three principles in the Ovāda-Pātimokkha which are well known.

These are:

1. *Not to do any evil.*
2. *To do good.*
3. *To purify the mind.*

On the Magha full moon of every year, Buddhists in Thailand perform great worship to commemorate the event at the Bamboo Grove. They call it the Magha-Puja Day or the day of worship in the month Magha. It falls around the middle or the end of February. It is also called the Dharma Day.

Another event is also commemorated on the Magha-Puja Day. It is the Buddha's telling of his decision to pass away into Parinibbana. This happened three months before the death of the Buddha. Then, he told Ananda at Pavala Chedi that he would pass away at the end of three months. This was



an important event and it was called the Buddha's Rejection of the Aggregate of Life or the Buddha's Announcement of His Death.

In former time the Visakha-Puja Day was the most important day. People had a three-day festival. But today ceremonies on the Visakha-Puja Day are nearly the same as on the other two days.

Early in the morning, people offer food to the monks. They may give alms-food or bring special food to the monastery. In the evening there is a Circumambulation Ceremony. People assemble in the monastery. They repeat words of worship after a monk. Then they march in procession around the Uposatha hall or the Viharn with flowers, lighted candles and incense sticks in their hands. They keep their right sides towards the hall and make three rounds of circumambulation. This is a special act of paying respect to the Triple Gem. While they are walking, they remember the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. They remind themselves of their responsibility to practise those virtues themselves.

**Answer these questions:**

1. Give the names of the four Buddhist holy days and their English meanings.
2. What is the difference between a holiday and a holy day?
3. What is the most important of all Buddhist holy days?
4. Which Buddhist holy day is called the Sangha Day? Why is it called so?
5. When and where did the Fourfold Assembly take place? What are its four factors?
6. What did the Buddha do at this assembly?
7. The three principles in the Ovāda-Pāṭimokkha are very well known. Do you remember them? Repeat them, if you can.
8. What is the Buddha's Rejection of the Aggregate of Life? Can you give a simple meaning of it? When did it take place?
9. Are the three Buddhist holy days observed in every Buddhist country?
10. Tell some important things which you think that Buddhists usually do on the three Buddhist holy days.

**Vocabulary Practice:** Answer each of the following correctly:

1. A boy should be guided by (*his teacher, an invisible being, a helpless man, his enemy*).
2. The end comes after the beginning and the effect comes after (*the cessation, the end, the truth, the cause*).
3. You can gain *merit* by (killing a pig, distributing gifts among the poor, not eating anything, walking in the sun, telling a lie).
4. When someone is on tour, he is not (*away from home, travelling, going on a journey, at home*).
5. When you say "*three tens are thirty*," you are (adding 3 to 10, dividing 3 into 30, subtracting 10 from 30, multiplying 10 by 3).





