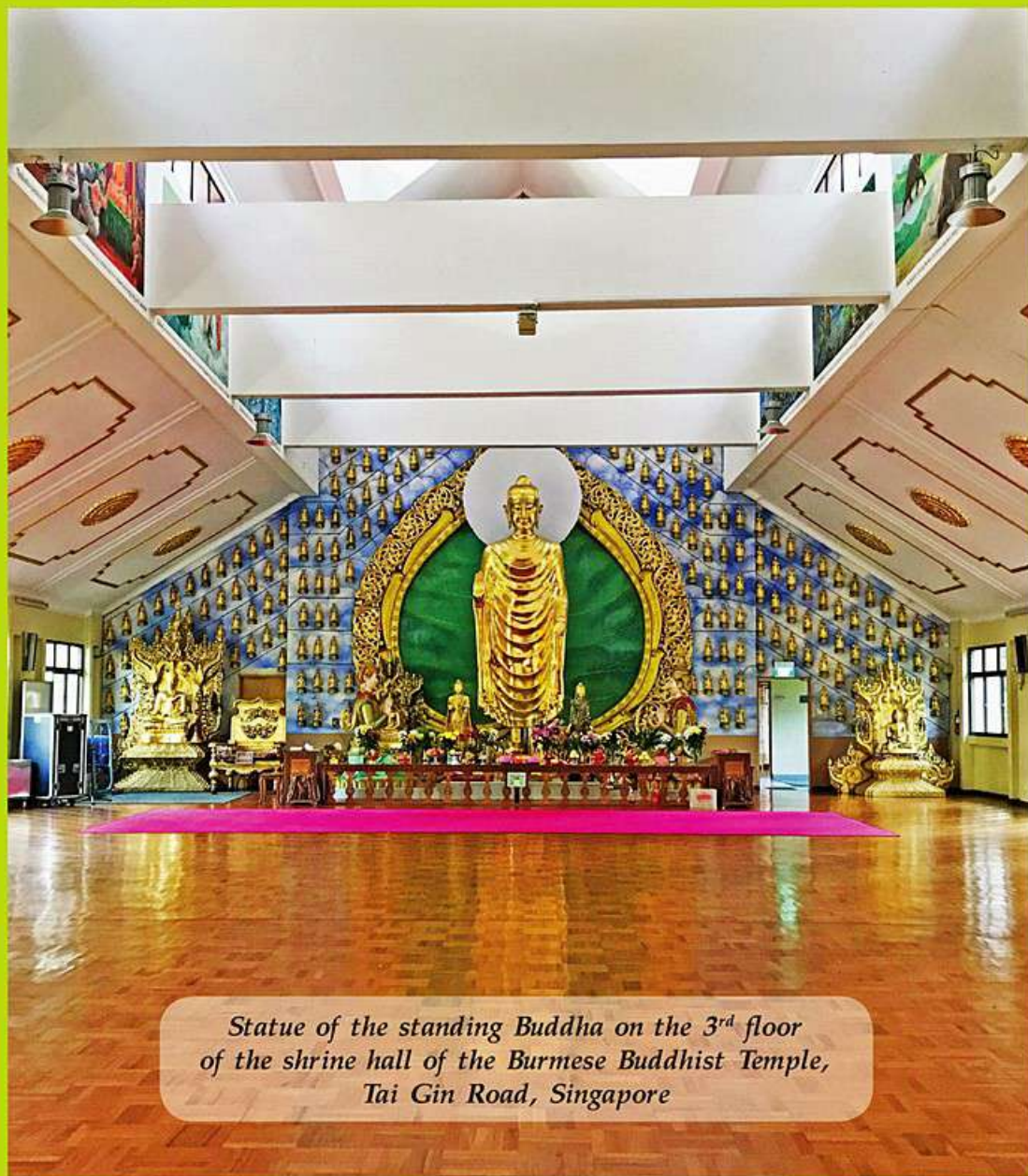




# Burmese Buddhist Temple *Newsletter*

MCI (P) 041/11/2017 缅甸佛教会简讯 VOL 31 NO.1 AUGUST 2018



*Statue of the standing Buddha on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
of the shrine hall of the Burmese Buddhist Temple,  
Tai Gin Road, Singapore*

# Editorial

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To many people the topic on death is morbid. They would not like to think about death because they realise that it means separation from friends and loved ones and also they feel that when death comes all the wealth and material possession are taken away from them for they cannot bring them to the next life. So they sweep the idea of death under the carpet.

But the Buddha encouraged people to think about death, reflect on death. The advantage of thinking about death is that one begins to realise that death could happen any time and any day. It can happen suddenly and unexpectedly and so it is good to do things before death. That is to do meritorious deeds to acquire merit for oneself before it is too late. Let us not feel that when death comes we have not done what has to be done, as if one has lived an unfulfilled life.

Doing meritorious deeds is an act of wisdom because it will have good far reaching effect for oneself in this life and the next and the next many lives to come.

For one thing, one can, in a way, prepare for the happy rebirth by doing meritorious deeds. For this, one needs to be heedful in one's body, speech and mind. Avoid doing something that is negative leading to suffering for oneself.

According to the law of Kama, the law of nature, the universal law, one reaps what one sows. You sow fruit trees with seeds from sweet fruits, then you get sweet fruits. You sow bitter gourd, you get bitter vegetables.

Generally, it is believed that if you make others happy you will be rewarded with happiness. The other way is, when you make others unhappy you will get unhappiness.

The Buddha advised man to be liberal, and generous. In the course of doing all these liberal and generous deeds you will be happy in the long run.

# Introduction To Vipassana Meditation

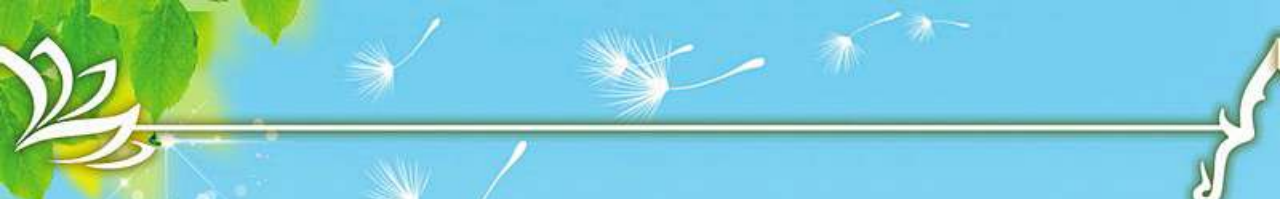
Vipassana meditation is an awareness meditation. It teaches you to be with the present moment, to live in the present moment. It teaches to be aware of everything that comes to you and is happening to you. Only the present moment is important. Everything that comes to you at the present moment through the six sense doors: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind—is to be noted, to be watched, to be observed as the object of awareness.

When you practice Vipassana meditation, by making mental notes or just watching the various things that come to you, you will bring awareness to a high level so that you will be able to see things as they truly are. You will come to see the true nature of mind and body, of the mental and physical phenomena of which you are composed. "True nature", means the nature of impermanence, the nature of dukha or unsatisfaction, and the nature of insubstantiality or the absence of an unchanging self. It is important to see these three characteristics of nature so that you can

have a correct view of things, so that you may have less attachment to mind and body, and gradually be able to weaken the hold of mental defilements that prevent enlightenment.

When you practice Vipassana meditation, you choose an object on which to focus your mind. That object will be the "home" object of meditation. Traditionally, the breath is taken as the object. You keep your mind focused on the "home" breath and make mental notes "in-out-in-out" along with the breaths. During the noting of the breath when your mind gets lost or distracted, you make notes of them too, such as "thinking" or "hearing" or "distractions" or "emotions", etc. Also you make notes of the feelings in your body. In this way, you keep yourself aware of everything that is happening in you or that comes to you through the six sense doors.

By keeping your mind on the object of meditation, you are able to develop one-pointedness of mind which is necessary for the penetrative knowledge into the true nature of mind and body.



Without concentration this cannot happen. So what you need first is concentration. And in order to have concentration, you must first keep your mind focused on one object. If you can keep your mind focused on one and the same object for some time you can get the necessary concentration. But you will find that in the beginning that is very difficult to do, even for a short time. That is because you are dealing with the mind which is very unruly and difficult to control. You can keep a wild bull by tying it with ropes. But you cannot tie your mind with ropes, so you tie your mind to the object with awareness or mindfulness. In the beginning, mindfulness may not be strong enough to tie the mind down to one object and you may have many distractions to interfere with your meditation. But when distractions come to you, whether through the eyes, ears or nose, etc., do not get irritated or upset. Just turn them into the objects of meditation by making notes of them too.

The beauty of Vipassana meditation lies in the fact that all things are the objects for meditation. The breath is only the “home” object. If you have no other object to note, just keep noting it too. Whether you are keeping your mind on the breath or on other distractions, you are doing good meditation if you are aware of them.

When you practice Vipassana meditation, you have to be patient and perseverance. Do not get discouraged, if you cannot get concentration at the beginning. Everybody has that experience. Leave all your expectations behind when you are meditating. Just be in the present moment. If these thoughts come to you in spite of the instructions, just make them the objects of meditation. In this way, you can effectively deal with everything that comes to you.

## Questions on Vipassana

### 1. Where does the practice of Vipassana come from?

Vipassana meditation chiefly comes from the tradition of Theravada Buddhism. There are two major divisions of Buddhism in the world to-day—Mahayana and Theravada. Mahayana tradition developed as Buddhism spread to the Northern Asian countries of Tibet, China, Japan, etc. Theravada tradition stays in Southern Asia and spread to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

### 2. What does Vipassana mean?

“Vi” means in various ways and “passana” means seeing. So Vipassana means “seeing in various ways”.

### 3. What can *Vipassana* meditation do for me?

The ultimate purpose of Vipassana is to eradicate mental impurities from your mind altogether. Before that stage, there are benefits of tranquility, peace of mind and the ability to accept things as they come. Vipassana helps you to see things as they truly are, not as they appear to be. Things appear to be permanent, desirable and substantial, but actually they are not. When you practice Vipassana meditation, you will see for yourself the arising and disappearing of mental and physical phenomena.

You will have a clearer comprehension of what is going on in your mind and body. You will be able to accept things as they come to you with less agitation and deal with situations in a more positive way.

### 4. Who needs *Vipassana* meditation?

Vipassana meditation is for the cure of diseases of the mind in the form of mental defilements like greed, hatred, delusion. In order to control them we need Vipassana meditation. Vipassana is for all people.

### 5. When is *Vipassana* needed?

Since mental impurities are almost always with us, we need Vipassana meditation almost all of the time. There is no fixed time for the practice of Vipassana. Morning, during the day, before bed, anytime is the time for Vipassana. Vipassana may be practiced at any age.

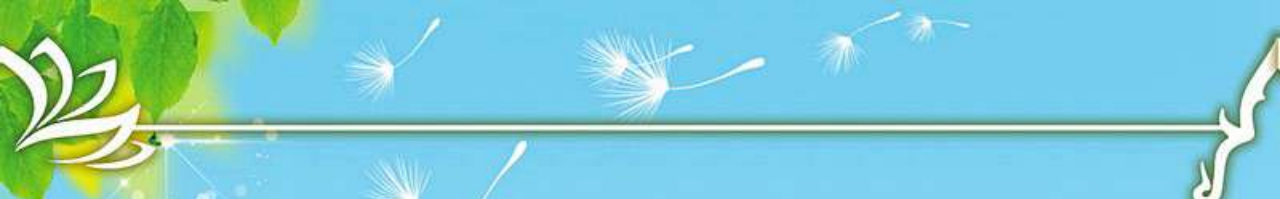
### 6. Do I have to be a Buddhist to practice *Vipassana*.

There is nothing which can be called particularly Buddhist in Vipassana meditation. There is no element of religion. It is a scientific investigation and examination of yourself. You just observe closely everything that comes to you and is happening to you in your body and mind at the present moment.

### 7. Is *Vipassana* meditation difficult to practice?

Yes and no. Meditation involves control of mind and mind is most unruly. You come to know this personally when you practice meditation. So it is not easy to practice Vipassana meditation because it





is not easy to control the mind, to keep the mind on one and the same object. In another way, Vipassana meditation is easy to practice. There are no elaborate rituals to follow or much to learn before being able to practice. You just sit, watch yourself and focus your mind on the object. Just that.

### **8. Are there prerequisites for Vipassana meditation?**

You need a genuine desire to practice and a readiness to follow the instructions closely because if you do not practice properly, you will not get the full benefits of meditation. You also need to have confidence in the practice and a teacher and an open mind to try it and see what it can do for you. Patience is also very important. When you meditate, you have to be patient with many things. There will be distractions, sensations in your body, and disturbance your mind. Also in Theravada Buddhism, purity of morals is emphasized because without pure moral conduct, there cannot be good concentration or peace of mind. Thoughts of something wrong you have done will come to you again and again, especially when you are in meditation, and it will be more difficult for you to get good concentration.

### **9. What gadgets do I need for Vipassana meditation?**

Actually, you do not need anything at all. All you need is a place where you can sit down, close your eyes and focus on the object. But I am not against using cushions, benches or even chairs and other things because in order to practice meditation, you need some degree of comfort. You should take care not to be too much attached to comfort, or sloth and torpor will come to you and you will go to sleep.

### **10. In what posture can Vipassana be practiced?**

Vipassana meditation can and should be practiced in all postures-sitting, walking, and lying down. Whatever you do, you should be mindful.

### **11. Is cross-legged posture essential in sitting meditation?**

Although it is customary and traditional to sit on the floor to practice meditation, it is not essential in Vipassana. If you cannot sit cross-legged, you may sit any way you like as long as it is comfortable for you. What matters in Vipassana is just the awareness, not the posture.





## 12. Must my eyes be closed when meditating?

It is better to keep your eyes close, but you may leave them open if you like, whichever is least distracting for you. But if you happen to look at anything, then you have to be aware of the “looking” and note it. The important thing is to have good concentration.

## 13. What should I do with my hands when meditating?

There are no strict rules as to how to put your hands in Vipassana. You may put them any way you like. The most usual position is on the lap, one over the other. Or you may put them on your knees.

## 14. How long must I practice meditation at a time?

That depends on how much time you can spend on meditation. There is no fixed rule. But if you cannot sit for one hour at the beginning, then you may sit for half an hour or fifteen minutes, and little by little extend the time, until you can sit longer. If you can sit for more than an hour without much discomfort, you may sit for two or three hours if you like.

## 15. Should I practice every day?

We eat every day, care for our bodies every day. Since we almost always have mental defilements with us we need to cleanse our minds every day. I recommend the morning hours because then your body and mind are rested and you are away from the worries of the previous day. It would also do you good to meditate in the evening before you go to bed. But you may practice any time. If you make it a habit to practice every day, it will be good and beneficial to you.

## 16. Do I need a teacher to practice Vipassana?

This is important. Whenever you learn a new skill, you need a teacher. With the advice from a teacher, you learn quicker and you cannot go wrong. You need a teacher who is competent to give instructions, correct your mistakes, and give guidance when you have trouble in the course of meditation.

Sometimes only the teacher can tell you your mistakes, If you cannot find a teacher, you may rely on books, although no book can entirely take the place of a teacher. You may be able to do fairly well by reading the instructions and following them carefully. But even then, you





may have need for discussion with a teacher occasionally.

### **17. Can Vipassana be applied to daily life?**

You can have awareness of whatever you do whether you are working, walking, doing a thing. It will not be as intense as in meditation or during a retreat, but a more general awareness. When you apply mindfulness to problems in your life, you will be able to deal with them more effectively.

### **18. What is a meditation retreat?**

A meditation retreat provides an opportunity to deepen meditation practice in a supportive environment with the guidance of an experienced teacher. Everything you do at a retreat becomes the object of meditation.

### **19. What happens at a retreat?**

A retreat day consists of alternate periods of sitting and walking meditation, a nightly lecture and personal interviews with the

teacher. Continuity of practice is developed by bringing mindfulness to all other activities throughout the day as well. Noble silence is observed during the retreat. Retreats can last for one day, a weekend, a week or longer.

### **20. Why should I go to a meditation retreat?**

The intensive practice of a retreat is very beneficial for developing good concentration and quieting the mind. Since concentration is essential for penetrative wisdom to arise, a meditation retreat gives you the best possible opportunity to experience for yourself the true nature of reality.

May All Beings Be Well,  
Happy And Peaceful!

By the late Ven. U. Silananda



# Meditation Instructions

## (For Loving-kindness Meditation and Vipassana Meditation)

*The instructions given here are for those who want to practice meditation for an hour or so. So detailed instructions are given only for sitting meditation and walking meditation.*

To practice meditation, you have to look first for a suitable place which offers you the necessary seclusion for your meditation: You may find secluded places in nature. However, when you are meditating inside a house, you have to look for the place which is most suitable for meditation and you will then use this place for meditation each time. You may want to put up a statue or a picture of the Buddha, some flowers, a candle or some incense to assist your meditation, but these items are not so important as a secluded place where you will always practice your meditation in the future.

### **Sitting Meditation: Postures**

To begin your meditation, please be seated in a comfortable posture, preferably in cross-

legged position, and keep the upper portion of your body erect, but not stiff or tense. One of the two kinds of cross-legged position is recommended, namely, the half lotus position or the easy posture, which some teachers call "Burmese posture". In the half lotus position one leg is put on top of the other, but in the easy posture one leg is put in front of the other, thus the pressure on either leg is minimized. If any of the cross-legged position is still too difficult for you, you may take any sitting posture which is most comfortable for you. Some comfort is necessary to continue the practice of meditation, you may even sit on a cushion, a chair or a bench. Though the cross-legged position is the ideal position for meditation, you have to decide for yourself in which position you can maintain your meditation best. The important thing in all sitting positions is that you keep the upper portion of your body erect.



## Forgiveness And Loving-Kindness


Teachers of meditation suggested that we ask for forgiveness from those whom we may have offended by deed, speech or thought; forgiving others and ourselves. All these clear our minds of ill-will. The practice of loving-kindness is also beneficial in that it calms our minds down so that we can go into Vipassana meditation smoothly. So, before we practice Vipassana meditation, we will practice forgiveness (which consists of asking forgiveness from others, forgiving others and forgiving ourselves), and loving-kindness meditation.

We practice forgiveness to remove any guilt feelings. Sometimes you did something wrong to somebody by body, speech or mind and then you have this feeling of guilt. Especially, when you are meditating, you want to keep your mind pure but these thoughts come to you again and again and spoil your meditation. To practice Forgiveness and Loving Kindness meditation you must ask for forgiveness from others and then you forgive others. There may be somebody who has done something wrong to you and you have some anger or grudge against that person. You have to get rid of this anger or grudge, too. In order to practice loving-kindness fully, you must be

able to send thoughts of loving-kindness to all beings without exception. But if you cannot forgive some people (including yourself), you will not be able to practice loving-kindness meditation fully. So, loving-kindness and forgiveness go together. Thirdly, you forgive yourself. Sometimes, you find it more difficult to forgive yourself than to forgive others. If you cannot forgive yourself, you will not be able to practice loving-kindness to yourself, and if you cannot practice loving-kindness to yourself, it is very unlikely that you can practice it to other beings.

Therefore, before entering Vipassana meditation, you have to practice forgiveness; after that you practice loving-kindness meditation.

Loving-kindness is a kind of love, i.e., love without attachment, craving or lust. It is a wholesome and genuine desire for the well-being of all beings including ourselves. So when you practice loving-kindness and wish for your own happiness, saying, "May I be well, happy and peaceful", this should not be interpreted as selfishness because, in order to send out thoughts of loving-kindness to others, we have to generate these thoughts first to ourselves. Also, when you send thoughts to yourself, you can take yourself



as an example. That means, when you say, “may I be well, happy, and peaceful,” you have to think, “Just as I want to be well, happy and peaceful, so do all other beings. So may they also be well, happy and peaceful.” To be able to practice loving-kindness towards other beings, you first have to practice loving-kindness towards yourself. Then you send your thoughts to other beings. You can send these thoughts in different ways. You can send thoughts to all beings by location.

You can send loving-kindness to all beings in this house. By “all beings” we mean not only

human beings, but also animals, insects, etc. then you send loving-kindness to all beings in this area, in this city, in this country, in this state, in this world, in this universe, and last, to all beings in general. When you say the sentences to yourself, please mean them and try to see and visualize the beings you mention as really well, happy, and peaceful, and your thoughts of loving-kindness reaching them, touching them, embracing them and making them really well, happy, and peaceful. It will take about fifteen minutes.

**When practicing forgiveness, fold your hands up, and say,**


*If by deed, speech or thought,  
Foolishly I have done wrong,  
May all forgive me honored ones,  
Who are in wisdom and compassion strong.*

*I freely forgive anyone who may have hurt or injured me.  
I freely forgive myself.*

**Now you can practice loving-kindness meditation, repeat the following sentences silently to yourself, about ten times each.**

*May I be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this house be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this area be well, happy, and peaceful.*





*May all beings in this city be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this county be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this state be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this country be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this world be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings in this universe be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.*

*May suffering ones be suffering free and the fear - struck fearless be.  
May the grieving shed all grief and all beings find relief*

Loving-kindness can also be practiced by way of person, as follows:

*May I be well, happy, and peaceful  
May my teachers be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May the indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May the unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all meditators be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May all beings be well, happy, and peaceful.  
May suffering ones be suffering free and the fear ~ struck fearless be.  
May the grieving shed all grief and all beings find relief.*

After you have sent thoughts of loving-kindness to the whole world and all beings, you practice Vipassana meditation.

By the late Ven. U. Silananda

*\*To be continued in the next issue*

# THE OUTCOME OF LUST

Dhammapala Story

No. 16 (5) The Story of Anitthigandha Kumara (Verse 215)

While residing at the Jetavana Monastery, the Buddha spoke this verse, with reference to a youth named Anitthigandha.

Anitthigandha, we are told, passed from the World of Brahma and was reborn in Savatthi in a family possessed of great wealth. From the day of his birth he refused to go near a woman. When he reached manhood, his mother and father said to him, "Son, we wish to arrange a marriage for you." The youth replied, "I have no use for a woman." Time and again they asked him, and time and again he refused. Finally he caused five hundred goldsmiths to make a solid image of beaten gold in the form of a woman of surpassing beauty and said to his parents, "If you will bring me such a maiden as that, I will do your bidding." So saying, he pointed to the image of gold. So his mother and father summoned several noted Brahmins and sent them forth, saying, "Our son possesses great merit; there must certainly be a maiden who wrought works of merit with him. Take this image of gold with you, go abroad, and bring back with you a maiden of equal beauty." "Agreed," said the Brahmins, and they travelled from place to place until they came to the city of Sagala in the kingdom of Madda.

Now there lived in this city a certain maiden of about sixteen years of age, and she was exceedingly beautiful. The Brahmins set the golden image down by the side of the road leading to the bathing-place. When the nurse of that maiden saw the image, she said to herself, "I thought this was my own daughter; pray what can this be?" Then the Brahmins asked her, "Woman, does your daughter look like this image?" "What does this image amount to, compared with my daughter?" "Well then, show us your daughter." The nurse accompanied the Brahmins to the house. The mistress and master of the household exchanged friendly greetings with the Brahmins, and then called their daughter to come down and stand on the lower floor of the palace beside the golden image. So great was the beauty of the maiden, that the image no longer seemed beautiful. The Brahmins gave them the image, took the maiden, and went to inform

the mother and father of Anitthigandha Kumara. Delighted at heart, they said to the Brahmins, "Go fetch this maiden hither with all speed." When Anitthigandha Kumara heard the report he said, "Let them fetch the maiden hither with all speed." The maiden entered a carriage, but so delicate was she that as she was being conveyed along the road, the jolting of the carriage gave her cramps, and she died. When the death was reported to the youth, he exclaimed, "Alas, to think that I should have failed to meet so beautiful a woman!" Profound melancholy came over him, and he was overwhelmed with grief and pain.



The Buddha, seeing that he was ripe for conversion, stopped at the door of his house on his round for alms. He was invited in for a meal by the youth's parents. At the end of the meal, the Buddha asked of the youth, "Youth, you seem to be very sad." "Yes, Venerable," replied the youth, "a most beautiful woman just died upon the road, and the news of her death has made me very sad." Then said the Buddha to him, "But, youth, do you know the cause of the intense sorrow which has afflicted you?" "No, Venerable, I do not." "Youth, because of love, intense sorrow has come upon you. Sorrow and fear both spring from love."

## **KODHA VAGGA (Anger) HE WHO IS NOT ASSAULTED BY SORROW**

### **No. 17 (1) The Story of Princess Rohini (Verse 221)**

While residing at the Nigrodharama Monastery, the Buddha spoke this verse, with reference to Princess Rohini, sister of Venerable Anuruddha.

On one occasion, Venerable Anuruddha visited Kapilavattu. While he was staying at the Monastery there, all his relatives, with the exception of his sister



Rohini, came to see him. On learning from them that Rohini did not come because she was suffering from leprosy, he sent for her. Covering her head in shame, Rohini came when she was sent for. Venerable Anuruddha told her to do some meritorious deed and he suggested that she should sell some of her clothing and jewellery; and with the money raised, to build a refectory for the monks. Rohini agreed to do as she was told. Venerable Anuruddha also asked his other relatives to help in the construction of the hall. Further, he told Rohini to sweep the floor and fill the water-pots every day even while the construction was still going on. She did as she was instructed and she began to get better.

When the hall was completed, the Buddha and his monks were invited for alms-food. After the meal the Buddha asked for the donor of the building and alms-food, but Rohini was not there. So the Buddha sent for her and she came. The Buddha asked her whether she knew why she was inflicted with this dreaded disease and she answered that she did not know. So the Buddha told her that she had the dreadful disease because of an evil deed she had done out of spite and anger, in one of her past existences. As explained by the Buddha, Rohini was, at one time, the chief queen of the king of Baranasi. It so happened that the king had a favourite dancer and the chief queen was very jealous of her. So the queen wanted to punish the dancer. Thus one day, she had her attendants put some itching powder in the dancer's bed and blankets. Next, they called the dancer, and as though in jest, they threw some itching powder on her. The girl itched all over and was in great pain and discomfort. Thus itching unbearably, she ran to her room and her bed, which made her suffer even more.

As a result of that evil deed Rohini had become a leper in this existence. The Buddha then exhorted the congregation not to act foolishly in anger and not to bear any ill will towards others. At the end of the discourse, many in the congregation attained sotapatti fruition. Princess Rohini also attained sotapatti fruition, and at the same time her skin disease disappeared, and her complexion became fair, smooth and very attractive.





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Management Committee Members for the year 2018



*Though few the sacred texts  
he chant the heedless man's no practicer,  
as cowherd counting other's kine in samanaship  
he has no share.*

*Though few the sacred texts  
he chant in Dhamma does his practice run,  
clear of delusion, lust and hate,  
wisdom perfected, with heart well-freed.*



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