



# Bodhi Leaves

A newsletter created by children for children

Spring 2002 Issue 5

## The Dawn of the Year 2002

This year our community started the New Year by going to the temple and taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. We also offered milk rice to the Buddha; a tradition that is still done on all auspicious days because Sujatha offered the Buddha milk rice just prior to His enlightenment.

About seventy-five adults and children used this opportunity to start the New Year with the Buddha Dhamma. We also watched a video presentation on Lumbini, Isipathana, Buddha Gaya, Savatthi, and Kusinara. In this way, we walked in the footsteps of the Buddha, from his birth to his passing away. This has become a new tradition in our community.

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## Matthew's Ordination as Bhikkhu Susuddho

Last Sunday we saw a video on Matthew's ordination. I think Matthew's ordination was miraculous. It made us proud to hear how he changed his life and became a monk. He was of Jewish faith but later converted his religion to Buddhism at a very early age. He studied the Dhamma at a very high level and understood that everything in the world is impermanent and that there is suffering in the world. His ambition was to follow the Lord Buddha's footsteps to reach His goal of perfection.

About a year ago he renounced his family and friends to go to California to practice meditation and train to become a monk. That monastery is called the Metta Forest Monastery in California. It is situated in an avocado grove on top of a mountain. This place is a very beautiful and peaceful sight. The chief monk at the monastery is Ajahn Geoff. Ajahn Geoff has the ability to understand others' minds. There

were about 7 other monks there. Matthew had to follow their rules in order to reach his goal. Matthew had to undergo many hardships. He ate only one meal a day and he slept outside in a sleeping bag. He had to get up at 5 in the morning every day to meditate. He also had to give up all of his possessions in order to be a monk.

Finally the day of his ordination came and the first thing done was to shave his hair. The hair cutting started from the oldest to the youngest in his family. Then the rest of the people got a turn to cut his hair little by little in the same order. In the end, he looked like he had patches all over his head. Finally the chief monk, Ajahn Geoff, shaved the rest of his hair and his eye brows. He looked younger than before and very peaceful.

Then he was dressed in a white robe. From that point onwards he could not touch a female. Then his parents got the official orange robes for him and they along with their friends had to walk around the temple 3 times in procession.

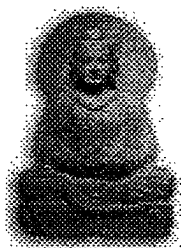
He then entered the temple. He was supposed to be carried on an elephant but there are no elephants in California to walk around a temple. So they tried to imitate an elephant. The ordination ceremony started and Matthew was dressed in the orange robes and he was ordained as a monk.

This is the beginning of the life of a wise monk; guarding the senses, contentment, restraint in line with the Patimokkha. Association with good friends whose life is pure and who are everstriving

Dhammapada 375

I was very happy to be able to see his ordination. He gave up his entire material life to reach Nibbana. He is now the youngest monk in the monastery so he was last in line for food (pinnapatha) the next day. I saw him coming through the forest in the end of the line as a monk. I was pleased to see Matthew as a monk and wish that he will reach his goal of Nibbana.

Chaturika Jayawardana (13)



### Meditation on Breathing Awareness

After about one year of meditation on loving kindness, our Dhamma friend Michael taught us how to meditate on breathing awareness. Prior to this, our teacher gave us an example to understand the importance of meditation on breathing awareness. Many Buddhists practice only generosity and

virtue. This is great, however, without meditation; ones goal of nibbana will never be reached.

Our teacher told us to

think about a fruit. External merit, or generosity and virtue, are like the skin of a fruit. Internal merit, or meditation, is like the flesh of the fruit. One cannot have one without the other. The flesh of a fruit will not grow without the skin, and a fruit with skin and no flesh will not be able to be eaten. This example

taught us that external merit is what protects internal

merit, while the internal merit nourishes the merit outside. Breathing meditation is what can allow us to nourish the generosity and virtue. After that class, I finally understood how important it was for all Buddhists to meditate and really practice our religion.

Chayanika Abeysekera (15)



### How long it takes for one to Become a Buddha

Today at temple we learned about the effort required to become a Buddha and how long it takes for one

Generosity is something that poor people can't practice, but crazy people can. Virtue is something that crazy people can't practice, but poor people can. As for meditation, everyone can practice it, no matter what there age gender or station in life

Ajhan Lee  
Dhammadharo

to become a Buddha. Buddhism is the only religion where a person can try hard with effort and become its founder. It took our Gotama Buddha 300 000 world cycles interspersed with 20 incalculable periods to become a Buddha. This

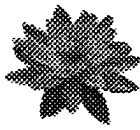
includes the period of mental aspiration, verbal aspiration,

and the period of action. During this period one has to complete the perfections (virtues) with effort.

A world cycle contains millions and millions of years, and each world cycle is broken into four main parts. The first part is between the destructive rainfall and the world being covered in dust, and is also known as the chaotic period. The second period is known as continued chaos, when both the heavens and the world are covered in dust. The third period is when the productive rainfall occurs and continues until the sun and the moon show through the dust. The fourth and the last period are when the sun and the moon show clearly, and continue until the next destructive rainfall.

A comparison to the length of the time of a world cycle would be for a person to rub a 7m x 7m x 7m granite rock with a silk scarf once every hundred years until the rock is worn out completely. From this we can see how long it takes to become a Buddha.

Sohani (13)



### The Period of Mental Aspiration

There are three separate periods in which the Bodhisatta did his aspirations and worked on the perfections. The first one is called the Mano-panidhana kala, the period where our Bodhisatta made the mental aspiration to become a Buddha in front of another Buddha. The period lasted for 100,000 world cycles interspersed with 7 incalculable periods. The period started when King Atideva (our Bodhisatta at the time) saw the Buddha Brahma-Deva from his balcony. King Atideva went down and started to worship him making a mental aspiration to become a Buddha. There were 125,000 Buddhas that came after the Buddha Brahma-Deva and to each of them, our

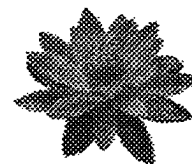
Bodhisatta went and made a mental aspiration to become a Buddha. The Bodhisatta started to work on the perfections during this period.

Nilupama (13)

### The Period of Verbal Aspiration

The Bodhisatta made his first verbal aspiration to Buddhahood in the period called the Vaci Panidani Kala. There was a king and queen who had a son. He gave up his royal life and attained enlightenment in fourteen days. He was called the (Purana) Gotama Buddha. Our Bodhisatta wanted to be like him. He made a verbal aspiration to be from a family known as Sakyan and to be known as the Gotama Buddha. The (Purana) Gotama Buddha said, "If you fulfill all the perfections you will surely achieve your desire and attain Buddhahood. Our Bodhisatta then gave up his kingdom and followed the teachings of the (Purana) Gotama Buddha as a disciple. The period of verbal aspiration was 200 000 world cycles interspersed with 13 incalculable periods long. The Bodhisatta continued to work at completing the 10 perfections during this period.

Malsha (12)



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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The 10 Perfections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generosity</li> <li>Morality</li> <li>Renunciation</li> <li>Wisdom</li> <li>Effort</li> <li>Patience</li> <li>Truth</li> <li>Determination</li> <li>Loving Kindness</li> <li>Equanimity</li> </ul> |
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## Requirements for the Definite Proclamation

A Bodhisatta has to complete eight things to receive the definite proclamation. From this point he actively works at completing the 10 perfections. This period is known as the period of action. The eight conditions are:

1. If he so wished, he can attain arahanthship
2. he must be a human being
3. He must be male
4. He must come face to face with a living Buddha
5. He must be an ascetic
6. He must possess physical powers known as Attha-Samapatti Jhanalabhi
7. He must be prepared to lay down his life for a Buddha
8. He must have strong determination to be a Buddha

Our Bodhisatta received the definite proclamation as the ascetic Sumedha from the Dipankara Buddha. At this point our Bodhisatta was certain He would be a future Buddha. He had to make a decision, either to attain arahanthship or to continue practicing the perfections and become a Buddha. Our Bodhisatta decided to become a Buddha. I think our Bodhisatta made the right de-

cision because many people can just attain enlightenment as arahants, but only a very special person can become a Supreme Buddha and show the path so that others can become arahants.

## Udeesha (12)



### Was the Buddha a Saviour?

Buddhists believe that Supreme Buddhas, like the Gotama Buddha, are fully enlightened, compassionate, and powerful beings. It is said that the purpose of a Supreme Buddha is to help other beings be liberated from suffering and attain Nibbana. By listening to the Dhamma, the Buddhas' teachings, many have indeed been liberated and many more have had their lives changed for the better. However, there are those who have heard the Dhamma and yet have not experienced any such change in their lives. If a Buddha is truly a compassionate being

why would He not use His power to liberate all beings?

The Buddha Gotama was once confronted by a young man with this same question many years ago, in the city of Savathi. For years this young man had visited the Buddha and listened to His teachings each evening, but had never put the teachings into practice. He became doubtful of the Dhamma since he had observed how some people were liberated by the teachings and some had their lives changed for the better, but others, like himself, had not experienced either.

When he questioned

the Buddha about his doubts the Buddha asked the man what city he was from. The young man replied that although he currently lived in Savathi, he had originally come from Ragajaha. He told the Buddha that he traveled the

Rare is the birth of an enlightened being. Through effort is birth as a human obtained. With these two conditions is liberation from samsara achieved. Why, good people, do you not strive on then?

Vidagama Maha Thera

road between the cities often and knew it so well that he could walk the road blindfolded. When the Buddha asked him whether he had ever given people directions on

how to get from Savathi to Ragajaha, the man said that he had done so several times. Then the Buddha asked him whether all of these people he had given directions to, had reached Ragajaha. The young man then replied that not all of them had reached the city, and that only the ones who had followed his directions correctly and had traveled the entire path had.

The Buddha then explained that, because he had attained Nibbana, others came to him to learn the path to liberation, just as people had come to the young man for directions. However, a Buddha can only show people the path to Nibbana, they have to take the steps and make the effort themselves if they are to reach it, he explained.

With this analogy the Buddha portrayed the reason for the varied levels of spiritual development of his devotees. He also illustrated that a Buddha is not a savior, but a teacher, and the important lesson that you are your own savior.

Hasantha (16)

## Santathi

Craving is the cause of suffering of living beings. The more attached we are to a certain object or person; the more suffering is caused when that object or person is gone.

One day King Pasenadi Kosala's minister, Santati, went to the Buddha weeping tears of sorrow. When the Buddha asked him why he was crying, Santati said that

his favourite dancing girl had suddenly died. The Buddha then explained to Santati that the reason his grief was so strong was because he had known this girl in many of his past births. Every birth, the attachment to this girl had grown stronger, so every time she had passed away, the suffering had become stronger as well.

"If you collect the tears that you have shed for this girl in all your past birth, you will see that it is more than the waters in the great oceans," said the Buddha. Santati was then told about the impermanence of everything and how the craving or attachment to an object can cause suffering. Four lines were then told by the Buddha

By oneself is evil done. By oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil avoided. By oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity depends on oneself. No one can purify another.

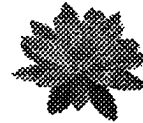
Gotama Buddha

to help Santati realize the Truth, and they were:

"Whatever in the past be produced by excellence let there be no ownership after words, and if in the present you will not grasp at all you will fare onto the perfect peace."

After hearing these four lines, Santati attained Arahantship.

Thisaru (13)



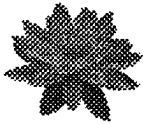
## Santati's Past Merit

91 world cycles ago at the time of the Vipassi Buddha, Santati was born in the city of Bandhumati. He was dedicated in teaching the Dhamma of the Vipassi Buddha. One day the king asked him what he was doing. Santati said he was spreading the teachings of the Vipassi Buddha so as to help people that were suffering. The king asked how he was going from city to city. Santati said, by foot. The king then gave Santati a horse to ride on.

Many years later Santati came back to Bandhumati. The king again asked how he was doing, Santati informed him of his dedication to the practice and teaching of the Dhamma. The king gave him a

chariot with 4 horses for his travel. Years after Santati returned and told the king his progress in teaching others. The king was very pleased with his devotion. This time he gave him the royal elephant, wealth and jewels. As a result of these meritorious deeds Santati attained Enlightenment after hearing just 4 lines of the Dhamma.

Roshan (16)



Are you practicing the Dhamma?

Sri Lankan Buddhists generally honour the Buddha with flowers, incense, lamps, and chanting. However, in the Parinibbana Sutta the Buddha made it clear that one honours the Buddha not through flowers, but through the practice of his teachings. As such, our teacher constantly encourages us in daily meditation. She read the following passage from Ajhan Lee Dhammadharo's book, *The Skill of Release* to encourage us in daily practice.

I would like to begin by talking about how one drills a well. There are three types of wells that come to mind. First, is a small depression.

All it does is catch water like a pond. One cannot use this type of water too much because animals such as buffaloes and cattle drink and bathe in the water. To be able to use this water, we must filter it many times. This type of well is like generosity; your rewards are shallow just like the depression.

The second type of well is a deep reservoir. It is too deep for the cattle and buffaloes to drink and bathe in; however, animals such as toads and frogs are able to get into the water. If one wanted to drink this water, they must still filter it. This well is like the virtue of observing the precepts, which gives deeper rewards than generosity.

The third type of well is an artesian well with a constant running spring. The water supply is endless. With this well, even mosquitoes (your defilements) cannot get down into the water. This type of well is like meditation because one has to use strong mindfulness, discernment, persistence, and endurance to dig such a well. Mindfulness is like the diamond bit and endurance is like the steel shaft. When one uses persistence to drill downward, the results will arise as inner worth and skillfulness that keep flowing in and bathing the mind, like the waters of immortality that

provide the mind with a constant stream of refreshment and delight.

Are you practicing the Dhamma? Do you practice meditation daily?

Chayanika (15)

It is through unshaken perseverance that I have reached the final goal and enlightenment. Through unceasing effort that I have reached the peace supreme. If you also strive unceasingly you too will attain the highest goal of bliss.

Gotama Buddha

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