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Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa

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Summary

Pavarana, a holy and festive day of the Buddhist, befalls generally on the full moon day of October, and is historically significant to the Buddhist world. It marks the end of three months vassa-vasa (lent) of the Buddhist Monks. A sabbath of the Monks is held in the Chapter Hall where all the Monks have to declare their individual purity. This is called Pavarana.

PAVARANA PURNIMA

(Keeping a Buddhist Heritage) by Ven. Dr. Prajna Nandasri

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The Buddhist festivals are mainly observed to practise Morality, Concentration and Wisdom which are the shorter forms of the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Enlightenment. But inside this religious sentiment, the Pavarana festival becomes a social gathering of the fellow Buddhist in the Temple. Buddhists on this day greet one another, youths bow down at the feet of the elders and admit their faults, if they have any. The elders, too, bless them in return for their happy and prosperous long life. Even an enemy becomes a friend giving up all evil notions from his mind and comes forward to greet his rivals. Thus a friendly and religious atmosphere makes them happy and inspires them to devote religious functions.

It is noticed that after the birth of Bodhisattva Goutam, his mother Devi Mahamaya within the week passed away and took rebirth in Tusita heaven. She could never conceive again. The Mahaprajapati Goutami who brought up Goutam was step-mother of Goutam. The wife Yasodhara and the son Rahula attained the Nibbana during their lifetime. But the Buddha, out of compassion, spent three months in the Tusita heaven with a view to teaching His mother the Abhidhamma along with other Tusita gods and goddesses for their enlightenment and came down on this day at Sankashya, a town in northern India. When the next Buddha will appear in this world, Devi Mahamaya will then take birth in this plain and, after hearing the words of the Buddha, will attain the Nibbana. These are called Dhammata of the Buddha.

The Buddha after his enlightenment spent three months at Saranath and observed the first Yassa-vasa. During this period He made 60 persons

Arahants. On this day He dispatched them saying "Go ye O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure". The Buddha also left for Uruvella where He took shelter at the centre of Jatila Uruvella Kashyapa. He was a famous and prominent fire-worshipping Brahmin in Magadha. He was proud of thinking himself an Arahant. He set the Buddha up in a room where a poisonous snake lay. The whole night it disturbed the Buddha and also tried to expel Him by smoking. At last, the Buddha caught it and put it on his bowl and presented it to Uruvella Kashyapa in the morning. Uruvella Kashyapa thought that the Buddha was not an Arahant as he was. To destroy his pride, the Buddha had to exhibit 16 types of Patihariyas or miraculous powers to combat the situation created by Jatila Uruvella Kashyapa. After all, he admitted the Buddha as an Arahant and the Supreme Enlightened One. He bowed down at the feet of the Buddha and made a prayer for the Ordination. His 500 pupils also agreed to Ordination. The Buddha said, "Come O Monks, well expounded Dhamma, practise holy life to eradicate sorrow". With this word they became full-fledged Monks with robes and bowls. This news quickly spread all over Magadha. His two brothers Jatila Gaya Kashyapa and Jatila Nadi Kashyapa heard the news of their eldest brother. While they were going to Uruvella, on the way they saw all the fire-worshipping materials floating on the river Neranjana. They also met the Buddha and prayed for the Ordination. The Buddha used the words mentioned earlier. Gaya Kashyapa and Nadi Kashyapa had 300 and 200 pupils respectively. They also got Ordination. Thus all of the Jatilas were converted to Buddhist Monks.

The Buddha took them to the Gaya Sirsa Hill (at present south of Gaya) along with thousands of Monks he dwelt. He discoursed upon the Monks the Fire Sermon (Aditya Pariyaya Sutra) and said, O Bhikkhus, all are burning, eye is burning, visible form is burning, eye consciousness, eye contact, eye-contact-feeling either pleasant, unpleasant or neutral are burning. How are they Burning? They are burning by the Fire of Sensuality, Fire of Ill-will and Fire of Ignorance. Similarly, all sense organs and all sense objects are burning.

Knowing it well, the Noble Disciples detached from them. Being detached from them, he is dispassionate, knowing dispassion, he is liberated. He knows that he is liberated and gains wisdom. He clearly understands that his birth has ceased, his holy life well accomplished, well done his deeds. He is now an Arahant. While the Buddha was delivering his sermon, thousands of Monks were freed from Asavas or mental defilements.