

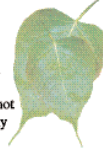
Vesak 2010

Birth

When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother's womb, just as if a gem were placed on Benares cloth, the gem would not smear the cloth or the cloth the gem – why not? - because both are pure, so too the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother's womb unsullied, unsmear'd by water or humours or blood or any sort of impurity, clean and unsullied.

When the Bodhisatta came forth from his mother's womb, a great measureless light surpassing the splendour of the gods appeared in the world with its deities, its Maras, and its Brahma divinities, in this generation with its monks and Brahmins, with its princes and men. And even in those abyssal world interspaces of vacancy, gloom and utter darkness, where the moon and sun, powerful and mighty as they cannot make their light prevail – there too a great measureless light surpassing the splendour of the gods appeared; and the creatures born there perceived each other by that light: 'So it seems that other creatures have appeared here! And this ten-thousandfold world system shook and quaked and trembled; and there too a great measureless light surpassing the splendour of the gods appeared.'

- Majjhima Nikaya



Sri Maha Bodhi, Anuradhapura. ANCL Library

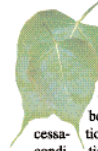
Enlightenment

In the third watch of the night his mind was occupied with dependent arising in forward and reverse order thus: "That comes to be when there is this, that arises with the arising of this. That does not come to be when there is not this; that ceases with the cessation of this; this to say: It is with ignorance as conditions that formations come to be; with formations as conditions, consciousness... with birth as condition ageing and death come to be, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair; that is how there is an origin to this whole aggregate mass of suffering. With cessation of ignorance there is cessation of formation; with cessation of formations, cessation consciousness... with cessation of birth, ageing and death cease, and also sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair; that is how there is a cessation to this whole aggregate mass of suffering.

Knowing the meaning of this, the Blessed One then uttered this exclamation:

When things are fully manifest
To the ardent meditating Brahman,
There, like the sun who lights the sky,
He stands repelling Mara's hosts

- Udana



Passing away

Then the Blessed One, emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling, entered upon the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Emerging from that, he entered upon the base consisting of the infinity of consciousness. Emerging from that, he entered upon the base consisting of the infinity of space. Emerging from that, he entered upon the fourth meditation. Emerging from that, he entered upon the second meditation. Emerging from that, he entered upon the third meditation. Emerging from that, he entered upon the fourth meditation. And on emerging from the fourth meditation, the Blessed One attained final Nibbana.

With the Blessed One's attainment of final Nibbana there was a great earthquake, fearful and hair-raising, and the drums of heaven resounded.

With the Blessed One's attainment of final Nibbana Brahma Sahampathi uttered this stanza.
No being in the world but shall lay down
The temporary compound of its person,
And even such a teacher without peer
In all the world, perfected, with the powers,
Enlightened, has attained complete extinction.

- Maha Parinibbana Sutta.

All translations by Bhikkhu Nanamoli

