THE

BUDDHA

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VISĀKHA PŪJĀ 1982
"TO THE VOIDNESS"

"Do work of all kinds with a mind that is void,
And then to the voidness give all of the fruit.
Take food of the voidness as do Holy Saints:
And lo! You are dead to yourself from the very beginning."

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu.
We have gone for refuge
to that Exalted One,
who is our Master,
and we delight in the Dhamma
of that Exalted One.
He was indeed the Exalted One,
a noble-born warrior of the Gotama clan,
a son of the Sakyas, gone forth from the
Sakya family.
In the world with its celestial beings,
devels and gods,
with its recluses and brahmins, rulers and
men,
He was enlightened with the Unsurpassed
Perfect Enlightenment.
Without doubt He was the Exalted One,
Arahant and Perfect Buddha,
Complete in knowledge and conduct,
the Well-farer,
Knower of the world,
Unsurpassed Trainer of trainable persons,
Teacher of gods and man,
the Awakened and Awakener,
the Exalted One.
Moreover, well-expounded indeed
is the Dhamma by the Exalted One,
to be studied and practised each for
himself,
regardless of time, inviting investigation,
to be contemplated inwardly
and intuitively seen by the wise
for themselves.
Moreover, of good conduct
is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples,
of upright conduct
is the Order of the Exalted one's disciples,
of wise conduct
is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples,
of proper conduct
is the Order of the Exalted One's disciples,
That is to say
the four pairs, or the eight types, of persons.
And now there is this image
established on account of that Exalted One,
by the sight of which,
having recollected that Exalted One,
confidence and deep faith are aroused.
We, at this time,
that is the Full Moon of Visākha,
having reached the time appointed
for the recollection of the Birth,
Enlightenment and final Passing Away of
that Exalted One,
have come to this place,
holding these candles, incense and flowers,
as offerings.
We shall offer these by way of our actions,
and recollecting the true virtues of that
Exalted One,
shall circumambulate this shrine three times,
thus making our puja (paying homage).
It is well that although the Exalted One
has long ago passed away,
having recollected his virtues they
become clear.
These offerings carried by us,
may they be accepted
for our benefit and happiness for many
a long day.
THE

BUDDHA

On the occasion of Visākha Pūjā, the traditional celebration of the Lord Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbāna, it was thought appropriate to put together some of the Buddha's words, relating to His own life and experiences, and also some of His Teachings. These small excerpts are culled from the book "The Buddha's Words", printed by the Buddhist Association of Thailand.

"Bhikkhus, as long as moon and sun do not arise in the world, so long is there no manifestation of a great light, of great brightness. There is then blinding darkness, a total darkness. There is no discerning of night and day, the months and half-months nor the seasons and the years.

But when moon and sun arise in the world, then there is a manifestation of a great light, of great brightness. There is then no blinding darkness, no total darkness. Then night and day are discerned, the months and half-months and the seasons and the years."
Similarly, bhikkhus, as long as a Tathāgata, a Perfected One, a fully Enlightened One does not arise in the world, so long is there no manifestation of a great light, of great brightness. There is then a blinding darkness, a total darkness. There is no declaring, teaching, making known, establishing, disclosing, analysing, making clear of the four Noble Truths.

But when a Tathāgata, a Perfected One, a fully Enlightened One arises in the world, then there is a manifestation of a great light, of great brightness. There is then no blinding darkness, no total darkness. There is then a declaring, a teaching, a making clear of the four Noble Truths...

Therefore, bhikkhus, to realise, "This is suffering", an effort must be made...
To realise, "This is the causal arising of suffering" an effort must be made...
To realize, "This is the cessation of suffering" an effort must be made...
To realize, "This is the way leading to cessation of suffering", an effort must be made."

"I was delicately brought up, O monks; highly delicate, exceedingly delicate was my upbringing. At my father's house lotus ponds were made: in one of them, blue lotuses bloomed, in another white lotuses and in a third red lotuses, just for my enjoyment. Only sandal unguent from Benares did I use, and of Benares cloth were my head dress, my jacket, my undergarment and my tunic. By day and by night a white canopy was held over me, lest cold and heat, dust, chaff or dew should trouble me. Three palaces
I had: one for the summer, one for the winter and one for the rainy season. In the palace for the rainy season, during the four months of the rains, I was waited upon by female musicians only, and I did not come down from the palace (during these months). While in other people's homes, servants and slaves receive a meal of broken rice together with sour gruel, in my father's house they were given choice rice and meat.

Amidst such splendour and an entirely carefree life, O monks, this thought came to me:

An ignorant, ordinary person, though sure to become old himself and unable to escape ageing, feels depressed, vexed or repelled when seeing an old and decrepit man, being forgetful of his own situation. Now, I too am sure to become old and cannot escape ageing. If, when seeing an old and decrepit man, I were to feel depressed, vexed or repelled, that would not be proper for one like myself. When I thus reflected, O monks, all pride in youthfulness vanished.

An ignorant, ordinary person, though sure to become ill himself and unable to escape illness, feels depressed, vexed or repelled when seeing a sick man, being forgetful of his own situation. Now, I too am sure to become sick and cannot escape sickness. If, when seeing a sick person, I were to feel depressed, vexed or repelled, that would not be proper for one like myself. When I thus reflected, O monks, all pride in my health vanished.

An ignorant, ordinary person, is sure to die himself and cannot escape death:
yet when seeing a dead person, he feels depressed, vexed or repelled, being forgetful of his own situation. Now, I too am sure to die and cannot escape death. If when seeing a dead person I should feel depressed, vexed or repelled, that would not be proper for one like myself. When I thus reflected, O monks, all pride in life vanished."

"Before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, being myself subject to birth, ageing, ailment, death, sorrow and defilement, I sought after what was also subject to these things. Then I thought: Why, being myself subject to birth, ageing, ailment, death, sorrow and defilement, do I seek after what is also subject to these things? Suppose, being myself subject to these things, seeing danger in them, I sought after the unborn, unageing, unailing, deathless, sorrowless, undefiled supreme surcease of bondage, Nibbāna?

"Before my enlightenment, while I was still only an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I thought: House life is crowded and dusty; life gone forth is wide open. It is not easy, living in a household, to lead a Holy Life as utterly perfect and pure as a polished shell. Suppose I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the yellow cloth, and went forth from the house life into homelessness?

"Later, while still young, a black-haired boy blessed with youth, in the first phase of life I shaved off my hair and beard - though my mother and father
wished otherwise and grieved with tearful faces - and I put on the yellow cloth and went forth from the house life into homelessness".

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The Blessed One then wandered as a travelling ascetic in his quest for Enlightenment. At first he sought the guidance of teachers, choosing those who were most renowned in his day as men of insight and wisdom. But after studying with them and mastering their teachings, He found that those teachings led only to refined states of meditation, not to Liberation.

"I thought: This Law does not lead to dispassion, to fading of lust, to cessation, to peace, to direct-knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna, but only to the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. I was not satisfied with that Law. I left it to pursue my search.

Still in search of what is good, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I wandered by stages through the Magadhan country and at length arrived at Senānigāma near Uruvelā. There I saw an agreeable plot of ground, a delightful grove, a clear-flowing river with pleasant smooth banks, and nearby a village as alms resort. I thought: This will serve for the struggle of one who seeks the struggle".

* * *
At this place the Blessed One undertook stringent austerities, matching the greatest efforts of the yogis who had gone before - fasting, wearing little clothing, eating only refuse, and other forms of austerity - all in an effort to torture the body in a mistaken quest for Liberation.

"I thought: Whenever a monk or brahmin has felt in the past, or will feel in the future, or feels now, painful, racking, piercing feeling due to striving, it can equal this but not exceed it. But by this gruelling penance I have attained no distinction higher than the human stage, worthy of the Noble Ones' knowledge and vision. Might there be another way to enlightenment?

I thought of a time when my Sakyan father was working and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree: quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unprofitable things I had entered upon and abode in the first meditation, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application with happiness and pleasure born of seclusion. I thought: Might that be the way to enlightenment? Then, following up that memory there came the recognition that this was the way to enlightenment.

Then I thought: Why am I afraid of such pleasure? It is pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual desires and unprofitable things. Then I thought: I am not afraid of such pleasure for it has nothing to do with sensual desires and unprofitable things.

I thought: It is not possible to attain that pleasure with a body so excessively
emaciated. Suppose I ate some solid food - some boiled rice and bread?

Now at that time five bhikkhus were waiting on me, thinking "If the monk Gotama achieves something, he will tell us". As soon as I ate the solid food, the boiled rice and bread, the five bhikkhus were disgusted and left me: "The monk Gotama has become self-indulgent, he has given up the struggle and reverted to luxury".

Now when I had eaten solid food and had regained strength, then quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unprofitable things I entered upon and abode in the First Meditation, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application, with happiness and pleasure born of seclusion. But I allowed no such pleasant feeling as arose in me to gain power over my mind. With the stilling of initial and sustained application I entered upon and abode in the Second Meditation, which has internal confidence and singleness of mind without initial and sustained application, with happiness and pleasure born of concentration. But I allowed no such pleasant feeling as arose in me to gain power over my mind. With the fading as well of happiness, I abode in onlooking equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, I entered upon and abode in the Third Meditation, referring to which the Noble Ones announce "He has a pleasant abiding who looks on with equanimity and is mindful". But I allowed no such pleasant feeling as arose in me to gain power over my mind. With the abandoning of bodily pleasure and pain and with the previous disappearance of mental joy and grief, I
entered upon and abode in the Fourth Meditation, which has neither pain nor pleasure and the purity of whose mindfulness is due to onlooking equanimity. But I allowed no such pleasure as arose in me to gain power over my mind.

When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished and rid of imperfection, when it had become malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to imperturbability, I directed, I inclined my mind to the knowledge of recollection of past lives I recollected my manifold past life, that is to say, one birth, two, three, four, five births, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many ages of world contraction, many ages of world expansion, many ages of world contraction and expansion: I was there so-named, of such a race, with such an appearance, such food, such experience of pleasure and pain, such a life term; and passing away thence, I reappeared elsewhere, and there too I was so-named, of such a race, with such an appearance, such experience of pleasure and pain, such a life term; passing away thence I reappeared here - Thus with details and particulars I recollected my manifold past lives This was the first True Knowledge attained by me in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and True Knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who is diligent, ardent and self-controlled. But I allowed no such pleasant feeling as arose in me to gain power over my mind.

When my concentrated mind was thus purified, I directed, I inclined my mind to the
knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of creatures. With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw creatures passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, happy and unhappy in their destinations. I understood how creatures pass on according to their actions: These worthy creatures, who were ill-conducted in body, speech and mind, revilers of Noble Ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death have reappeared in states of privation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell; but these worthy creatures, who were well conducted in body, speech and mind, not revilers of Noble Ones, right in their views, giving effect to right view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a happy destination, even in a heavenly world. Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I saw creatures passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, happy and unhappy in their destinations. I understood how creatures pass on according to their actions. This was the second True Knowledge attained by me in the second watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who is diligent, ardent and self-controlled. But I allowed no such pleasant feeling as arose in me to gain power over my mind.

When my concentrated mind was purified... I directed, I inclined my mind to the knowledge of exhaustion of taints. I had direct knowledge, as it actually is,
that "This is suffering", that "This is the origin of suffering", that "This is the cessation of suffering", and that "This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering". I had direct knowledge, as it actually is, that "These are taints", that "This is the origin of taints", that "This is the cessation of taints", and that "This is the way leading to the cessation of taints". Knowing thus and seeing thus, my heart was liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When liberated, there came the knowledge: "It is liberated". I had direct knowledge: "Birth is exhausted, the Holy Life has been lived out, what was to be done is done, there is no more of this to come". This was the third True Knowledge attained by me in the third watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who is diligent, ardent and self-controlled.

"Then when I had stayed on at Uruvela as long as I chose, I set out to go by stages to Benares. Between the Place of Enlightenment and Gaya the Ajivaka Upaka saw me on the road. He said: "Your faculties are serene, friend; the colour of your skin is clear and bright. Under whom have you gone forth? Or who is your teacher? Or whose Law do you profess?"

When this was said, I addressed the Ajivaka Upaka in stanzas:
I am an All-transcender, an All-knower, 
Unsullied in all ideas, renouncing all, 
By craving's ceasing freed. And this I 
Owe to my own wit, To whom should I 
Concede it?

I have no teacher, and my like 
Exists nowhere in all the world 
With all its gods, because I have 
No person for my counterpart. 
I am the Teacher in the world 
Without a peer, accomplished, too. 
And I alone am quite enlightened, 
Quenched, whose fires are all extinct. 
I go to Kasi's city now 
To set the Wheel of Law 
In motion: in a blindfold world 
I go to beat the Deathless Drum".

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For the next forty five years the Buddha taught the Way to realise the Dhamma which He had Himself realized. In that time He taught people from all stations in life; monks, nuns and lay followers, kings and queens, recluses from other sects, rich and poor alike. His gift of expounding the Dhamma, and the true nature of the Dhamma itself, caused many people to develop faith in the Buddha and His Teaching.

Vyagghapajja Sutta

"Conditions of Welfare"

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling amongst the Koliyans in their market town named Kakkarapatta. Then Dīghajānu, a Koliyan, approached the Exalted One, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. Thus seated, he addressed the Exalted One as follows:

"We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy worldly pleasure. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of Kasi. We deck ourselves with garlands, perfume and unguents. We use gold and silver. To those like us, O Lord, let the Exalted One preach the Doctrine, teach those things that lead to weal and happiness in this life and to weal and happiness in future life".
Conditions of Worldly Progress

"Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life. Which four?

"The accomplishment of persistent effort, the accomplishment of watchfulness, good friendship and balanced livelihood.

What is the accomplishment of persistent effort?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, by whatsoever activity a householder earns his living, whether by farming, by trading, by rearing cattle, by archery, by service under the king, or by any other kind of craft - at that he becomes skillful and is not lazy. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means, he is able to carry out and allocate (duties). This is called the accomplishment of persistent effort.

What is the accomplishment of watchfulness?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, whatsoever wealth a householder is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means - such he husbands well by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal, fire would not burn, water would not carry away, nor ill-disposed heirs remove. This is the accomplishment of watchfulness.

What is good friendship?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, in whatsoever vill-
age or market town a householder dwells, he associates, converses, engages in discussions with householders or householder's sons, whether young and highly cultured or old and highly cultured, full of faith, full of virtue, full of charity, full of wisdom. He acts in accordance with the faith of the faithful, with the virtue of the virtuous, with the charity of the charitable, with the wisdom of the wise. This is called good friendship.

What is balanced livelihood?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, a householder knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

Just as a goldsmith or an apprentice of his, knows on holding up a balance, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up; even so a householder, knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with little income were to lead an extravagant life, there would be those who say - "This person enjoys his property like one who eats woodapples." If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with a large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say "This person will die like a starveling".
The wealth thus amassed, Vyagghapajja, has four sources of destruction:

(1) Debauchery,
(2) Drunkenness,
(3) Gambling and
(4) Friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and outlets, if a man should close the inlets and open the outlets and there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease of water is to be expected in that tank, and not an increase, even so there are four sources for the destruction of amassed wealth - debauchery, drunkenness, gambling and friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

There are four sources for the increase of amassed wealth:

(1) Abstinence from debauchery,
(2) Abstinence from drunkenness,
(3) Non-indulgence in gambling and
(4) Friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a person were to open the inlets and close the outlets, and there should also be adequate rainfall, an increase of water is certainly to be expected in that tank and not a decrease, even so these four conditions are the sources of increase of amassed wealth.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, are conducive to a householder's weal and
happiness in this very life.

**Conditions of Spiritual Progress**

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. Which four?

The accomplishment of faith, the accomplishment of virtue, the accomplishment of charity and the accomplishment of wisdom.

What is the accomplishment of faith?

Herein a householder is possessed of faith, he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One. Thus indeed is that Blessed One, he is the Pure One, fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well-gone, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, all-knowing and blessed. This is called the accomplishment of faith.

What is the accomplishment of virtue?

Herein a householder abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and from intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness. This is called the accomplishment of virtue.

What is the accomplishment of charity?

Herein a householder dwells at home with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in generosity, attending to the needy, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called the accomplishment of charity.
What is the accomplishment of wisdom?

Herein a householder is wise, he is endowed with wisdom and understands the arising and cessation (of the five aggregates of existence), he is possessed of the noble penetrating insight that leads to the destruction of suffering. This is called the accomplishment of wisdom.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life.

Energetic and heedful in his tasks, Wisely administering his wealth, He lives a balanced life, Protecting what he has amassed.

Endowed with faith and virtue too, Generous he is and free from avarice, He ever works to clear the path That leads to weal in future life.

Thus to the layman full of faith, By him, so truly named 'Enlightened', These eight conditions have been told Which now and after lead to bliss."

*       *       *
This was said by the Lord at the time of the Parinibbāna, this was His last utterance: "Listen well, O bhikkhus, I exhort you. Subject to decay are all compounded things. Strive on with heedfulness!" And this was said by the Lord: "O bhikkhus, just as whatsoever jungle creatures there be, the feet of those species are contained by the elephant's foot, the elephant's foot is said to be the greatest of them all because of its size, even so, O bhikkhus, whatsoever skillful dhammas there be, all those spring from the root of heedfulness, unite in heedfulness, heedfulness is said to be the greatest of them all".

May all beings be happy!