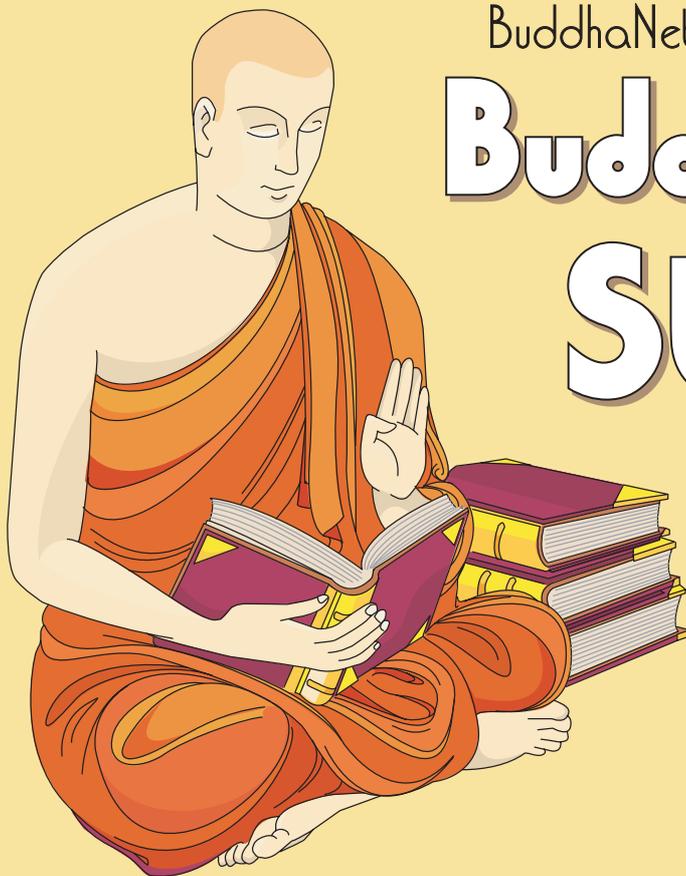




Life of the Buddha for Secondary Students



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LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

(PART ONE & PART TWO)

THIS "LIFE OF THE BUDDHA" HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BY THE BUDDHA DHARMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION. THERE ARE EXERCISES WITH EACH STORY WHICH TEACHERS CAN ELABORATE ON WHEN IT IS USED AS A TEXT BOOK. HOWEVER, WHILE THE STORIES ARE SIMPLE AND BRIEF, THEY DO FOLLOW THE SCRIPTURAL TRADITION AND SO ARE OF VALUE FOR THE GENERAL READER WHO WISHES TO LEARN ABOUT THE BUDDHA'S LIFE

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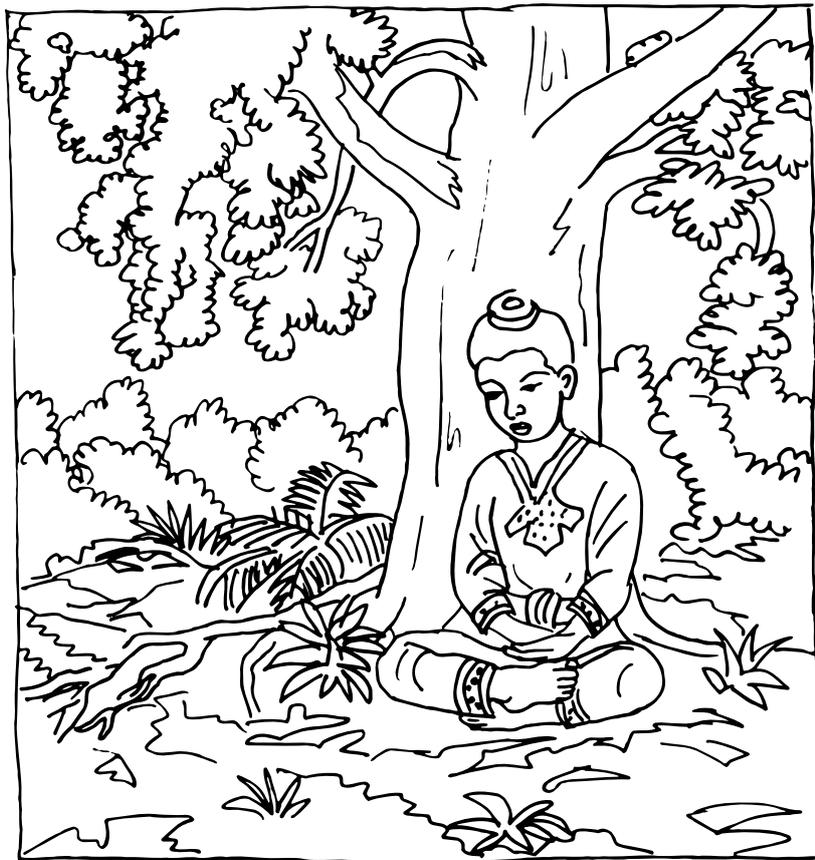
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LIFE OF THE BUDDHA



PART ONE

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1. QUEEN MAHA MAYA'S DREAM

More than 2,500 years ago, there was a king called Suddhodana. He married a beautiful Koliyan princess named Maha Maya. The couple ruled over the Sakyas, a warrior tribe living next to the Koliya tribe, in the north of India, in what is now known as Nepal. The capital of the Sakya country was laid out across the foothills of the Himalayas and called Kapilavatthu.

Queen Maha Maya was the daughter of King Anjana of the Koliyas. Such was her beauty that the name Maya, meaning "vision" was given to her. But it was Maya's virtues and talents that were her most wonderful qualities, for she was endowed with the highest gifts of intelligence and piety. King Suddhodana was indeed worthy of his lovely wife. He himself was called "King of the Law" because he ruled according to the law. There was no other man among the Sakyas more honored and respected. The king was admired by his nobles and courtiers, as well as by the householders and merchants. Such was the noble family from which the Buddha was to arise.

One full moon night, sleeping in the palace, the queen had a vivid dream. She felt herself being carried away by four devas (spirits) to Lake Anotatta in the Himalayas. After bathing her in the lake, the devas clothed her in heavenly cloths, anointed her with perfumes, and bedecked her with divine flowers. Soon after a white elephant, holding a white lotus flower in its trunk, appeared and went round her three times, entering her womb through her right side. Finally the elephant disappeared and the queen awoke, knowing she had been delivered an important message, as the elephant is a symbol of greatness in Nepal. The next day, early in the morning, the queen told the king about the dream. The king was puzzled and sent for some wise men to discover the meaning of the dream.

The wise men said, "Your Majesty, you are very lucky. The devas have chosen our queen as the mother of the Purest-One and the child will become a very great being." The king and queen were very happy when they heard this.

They were so pleased that they invited many of the noblemen in the country to the palace to a feast to tell them the good news. Even the needy were not forgotten. Food and clothes were given to the poor people in celebration. The whole kingdom waited eagerly for the birth of the new prince, and Queen Maya enjoyed a happy and healthy pregnancy, living a pure life for herself and her unborn child.

EXERCISE 1 IS ON PAGE 86

2. THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE

About ten months after her dream of a white elephant and the sign that she would give birth to a great leader, Queen Maya was expecting her child. One day she went to the king and said, "My dear, I have to go back to my parents. My baby is almost due." Since it was the custom in India for a wife to have her baby in her father's house, the king agreed, saying, "Very well, I will make the necessary arrangements for you to go."

The king then sent soldiers ahead to clear the road and prepared others to guard the queen as she was carried in a decorated palanquin. The queen left Kapilavatthu in a long procession of soldiers and retainers, headed for the capital of her father's kingdom.

On the way to the Koliya country, the great procession passed a garden called Lumbini Park. This garden was near the kingdom called Nepal, at the foot of the Himalayan mountains. The beautiful park with its sala trees and scented flowers and busy birds and bees attracted the queen. Since the park was a good resting place, the queen ordered the bearers to stop for a while. As she rested underneath one of the sala trees, her birth began and a baby boy was born. It was an auspicious day. The birth took place on a full moon (which is now celebrated as Vesak, the festival of the triple event of Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death), in the year 623 B.C.

According to the legends about this birth, the baby began to walk seven steps forward and at each step a lotus flower appeared on the ground. Then, at the seventh stride, he stopped and with a noble voice shouted:

"I am chief of the world,
Eldest am I in the world,
Foremost am I in the world.
This is the last birth.
There is now no more coming to be."

After the birth of her baby son, Queen Maha Maya immediately returned to Kapilavatthu. When the king learnt of this he was very happy, and as news of the birth of the long-awaited heir spread around the kingdom there was rejoicing all over the country.

EXERCISE 2 IS ON PAGE 86

3. THE NAMING CEREMONY

King Suddhodana had an old teacher who was known to be very wise. He was called Asita the Sage. Asita lived in the jungle. While sitting one day he heard the devas singing and saw them dancing. “Why are you so happy?” he asked. “Because the most excellent of all beings has been born at Lumbini Park to Queen Maha Maya,” replied the devas. When he heard this, Asita went quickly to see the king and queen and their newborn son.

The king was very happy to see his wise old teacher again. In the palace, after the sage was seated, the king brought the prince before him and said, “Teacher, my son was born only yesterday. Here he is. Please see if his future will be good.”

As the king said this, he lowered the infant prince before the sage so that he might examine him properly. However, the baby turned his feet on to the sage’s head. Thus surprised, Asita took hold of the baby’s feet and examined them very carefully, finding some marks on them. He got up and said, “This prince will become a very great teacher in this world.” The sage was very pleased and, putting his palms together, paid due respect to the baby prince. The king, seeing this, did the same. This was the first salutation of the king.

On the fifth day of his son’s life, the king invited five wise men to witness the naming ceremony and to suggest a good name for the prince. The wise men examined the birthmarks of the prince and concluded, “The prince will be King of Kings if he wants to rule. If he chooses a religious life then he will become the Wisest—the Buddha.”

The youngest of the five wise men, Kondanna, then said, “This prince will be the Buddha and nothing else.”

Then the wise men gave him the name Siddhartha meaning “wish-fulfilled” or “one who has accomplished his goal”.

EXERCISE 3 IS ON PAGE 86

4. THE PRINCE’S EDUCATION

On the seventh day after his birth, Prince Siddhartha’s mother died. The king had another queen, who was called Prajapati Gotami. She was the younger sister of Queen Maha Maya, and she had given birth to a son on the same day that Queen Maha Maya died. Prajapati Gotami gave her own son

to a nurse and brought up Prince Siddhartha, whom she loved very much, as her own son. Prince Siddhartha could not remember his own mother.

When Prince Siddhartha was only a few years old, King Suddhodana sent him to school. There were many children in his class, all of them from noble families. His teacher was called Sarva Mitra.

He studied languages, reading, writing, mathematics, history, geography, science, and games like boxing, archery, wrestling and many others. He learnt all these subjects faster than any other pupil in his class. He was the cleverest in the class and the best at games. He gained distinction in every subject and became cleverer than his teachers. He was the wisest and the only one who asked many questions from his teachers and elders. He was the strongest, the tallest and the most handsome boy in the class. He was never lazy, he never misbehaved and was never disobedient to the teachers. He loved everybody and everybody loved him. He was a friend to all.

EXERCISE 4 IS ON PAGE 86

5. PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S KINDNESS

Prince Siddhartha was very kind to people, animals and other living things. He was also a very brave horseman and won many prizes in the country. Although he did not have to suffer any hardships and difficulties, as he had everything, he always thought of the poor people and living things who were working hard to make him happy. He felt sorry for them and wanted to make them happy too.

One day he was walking in the woods with his cousin Devadatta, who had brought his bow and arrows with him. Suddenly, Devadatta saw a swan flying and shot at it. His arrow brought the swan down. Both the boys ran to get the bird. As Siddhartha could run faster than Devadatta, he reached the swan's injured body first and found, to his surprise, that it was still alive. He gently pulled out the arrow from the wing. He then got a little juice from cool leaves, put it on the wound to stop the bleeding and with his soft hand stroked the swan, which was very frightened. When Devadatta came to claim the swan, Prince Siddhartha refused to give it to him. Devadatta was very angry to see his cousin keeping the swan away from him. "Give me my bird! I shot it down," said Devadatta.

"No, I am not going to give it to you," said the Prince. "If you had killed it, it would have been yours. But now, since it is only wounded but still alive, it belongs to me."

Devadatta still did not agree. Then Siddhartha suggested, "Let us go to the court of the Sage and ask him who really owns the swan." Devadatta agreed, so off they went to the court of the Sage to tell him about their quarrel.

The Sage, hearing both boys' version of the story, said, "A life certainly must belong to he who tries to save it, a life cannot belong to one who is only trying to destroy it. The wounded swan by right belongs to Siddhartha."

EXERCISE 5 IS ON PAGE 87

6. PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S WIFE

The five wise men who were at Prince Siddhartha's naming ceremony not only predicted the great future of the new prince, but had given the king a warning. "When your son sees a sick man, an old man, a dead body and a monk, he will want to leave the palace and become a monk himself," they had said.

These words worried the king. He became afraid that this son would see these four sights and leave the palace. To shield Siddhartha from any such experiences he employed many young servants to distract and protect him, and did not allow any sick or old people or monks to go into the palace. He built Siddhartha three palaces: one for winter, one for summer and one for the rainy season, as well as enclosed parks and hunting grounds.

Siddhartha played in a sunny world of gardens and groves, attended by dancing girls and musicians. He lived in a world of plenty and beauty. He could have whatever he wanted, yet he was not happy.

One day the king asked some wise people, "What shall I do to make my son happy? He seems depressed and sad always." They answered, "Now your son is sixteen years old, why not find him a beautiful girl to marry?"

The king agreed and sent for all the beautiful girls in the country to come to the palace. When they had all arrived, a grand parade was arranged and the king asked the prince to choose one to be his wife.

Among them there was a most charming and kind girl by the name of Yasodhara. When Prince Siddhartha gave her a present more valuable than any he had given to the other maidens, the king saw that the prince had chosen his love. The king happily accepted Yasodhara and allowed his son to marry her.

EXERCISE 6 IS ON PAGE 87

7. THE FOUR SIGHTS: OLD AGE.

The king did everything he could think of to ensure his son Prince Siddhartha would grow up prepared for a life following in his own footsteps and become a king. He ordered a high wall to be built around the palace, including its parks and gardens, but the prince was not happy living like a prisoner. One day he told his father, "I must go out of the palace gate and see how other people live."

"Very well, my son," said the king, "you shall go outside the palace wall to see how people live in my city. But first I must prepare things, so that all would be good and proper for my noble son's visit."

The king ordered the people of the city to prepare for his son's visit by making the streets and homes beautiful and welcoming him as he passed them by. When the people had decorated the city the king said, "Now you can go, my dear son, and see the city as you please."

As the young prince was going through the streets all of a sudden, from a small old hut beside the road, out came an old man with long silver-grey hair, wearing very old, torn and dirty rags. The skin of his face was dried and wrinkled. His sunken eyes were dim and he was almost blind. There were no teeth in his mouth. He stood up, trembling all over, almost bent over double and clutching at a shaking stick with two bent and skinny hands to save himself from falling.

The old beggar dragged himself along the street, paying no attention to all the happy people around him. He was speaking very feebly, begging people around him to give him food, as he would die that very day if he could find nothing to eat. When the prince saw the old man, he didn't know what he was looking at. It was the first time in his life that he had seen an old man of this type.

"What is that, Channa?" he asked his driver. "That really cannot be a man! Why is he all bent? What is he trembling for? Why is his hair silver-grey, not black like mine? What is wrong with his eyes? Where are his teeth? Is this how some people are born? Tell me, oh good Channa, what does this mean?"

Channa told the prince that it was an old man and he was not born like that. "When young he was like us and now, due to his old age he has become this way." Channa told the prince to forget this man. But the prince was not satisfied. "Everyone in the world, if he lives long enough, becomes like this man. It cannot be stopped," said Channa.

The prince ordered Channa to drive back home at once, as he was very sad and wanted to think carefully about that terrible thing called old age.

That night there was a grand royal feast for the prince, but he was not interested or happy at all during the dinner and dance. He was thinking all the time, "Some day you will all grow old and frail and bent—every one of you, even the prettiest."

He could not sleep when night came. He was in bed thinking that one day, everyone would grow old, grey, wrinkled, toothless and ugly like the old beggar. He wanted to know if anyone had found a way to stop this horrible thing—old age.

The king, when he heard this story, was very sad and worried that his son would leave the palace. He told his attendants to put on more dances and dinners. But the prince begged his father to allow him to see Kapilavatthu on an ordinary day without the people being told of his visit.

EXERCISE 7 IS ON PAGE 87

8. THE FOUR SIGHTS: SICKNESS

The king very unwillingly allowed the prince to visit the city a second time. He thought it would do no good to try to stop him, and would only add to his confusion and unhappiness. On his second visit to the city the king did not warn the people to be ready or to prepare the streets. The prince and Channa dressed up as young men from noble families so the people would not know them.

When they arrived, the city was quite different to their last visit. No more joyous crowds of people hailed the prince. There were no flags, bunting, flowers or well-dressed people, but simple folk going about their daily work to earn a living. A blacksmith was sweating and pounding to make knives. The jewellers and goldsmiths were making necklaces, bangles, earrings and rings out of diamonds, gold and silver. The clothes-dyers were dyeing cloths of lovely colour and hanging them up to dry. The bakers were busily baking bread, cakes and sweets and selling them to the customers, who ate them still hot. The prince looked at these simple common people. Everyone was very busy, happy and pleased in their work.

As the two walked along they came across a man on the ground, twisting his body, holding his stomach with both hands and crying out in pain at the top of his voice. All over his face and body were purple patches, his eyes were rolling, and he was gasping for breath.

For the second time in his life something made the prince very sad. At once the prince, being a very kind person and not liking to see people

distressed, ran forward and rested the man's head on his knee, saying, "What is wrong with you? What is wrong?" The sick man could not speak, but only cry.

"Channa, tell me why this man is like this," said the prince. "What is the matter with his breath? Why does he not talk?"

"Oh, my prince," said Channa, "do not hold this man like that. This man is sick. His blood is poisoned. He has plague fever and it is burning all over his body. That is why he is crying loudly without being able to speak."

"But are there any other men like this?" asked the prince.

"Yes, and you may be the next if you hold the man as close as that. Please put him down and do not touch him or the plague will come out of him and go to you. You will become the same as he is."

"Are there any other bad things, besides this plague, Channa?"

"Yes, my prince, there are hundreds of other sicknesses as painful as this," replied Channa.

"Can no one help it? Will everyone be sick? Can it happen at any time by surprise?" asked Siddhartha.

"Yes, my dear prince," said Channa, "everyone in this world. No one can stop it and it can happen any time. Anyone may fall ill and suffer."

The prince was even sadder as he returned to the palace the second time, dwelling on the man and his sickness.

EXERCISE 8 IS ON PAGE 88

9. THE FOUR SIGHTS: DEATH

On returning to the palace after seeing the sick man, Siddhartha was very dissatisfied and depressed and was often seen in deep thought. The king, seeing him so changed, became very sad. Soon enough, the prince asked again for the king's permission to leave the palace to learn more of life in the city. The king agreed, as he knew there was nothing to gain by trying to stop his son.

This time, again wearing the clothes of noblemen, Siddhartha and Channa went out from the palace and walked in many parts of Kapilavatthu. After they had journeyed a good part of the day, the prince saw a crowd of people coming along the street crying, while four men at the back were carrying a plank on which a very thin man lay flat and still. The carried man was like a stone, never saying a word. The crowd soon stopped and

the plank bearers rested the person down on a pile of wood and set the wood on fire. The man did not move as the flames were burning the plank, and then his body, from all sides.

“What is this, Channa?” asked Siddhartha. “Why does that man lie there so still, allowing these people to burn him up? It’s as if he does not know anything.”

“He is dead,” replied Channa.

“Dead! Channa, does everyone die?”

“Yes, my dear prince, all living things must die some day. No one can stop death from coming,” replied Channa.

The prince was so shocked he did not say anything more. He thought that it was terrible that such a thing called death should come to everybody, even kings and queens. Was there no way to stop it? He went home in silence. He went straight to his own room in the palace and sat deep in thought for the rest of the day. Very sadly he pondered, “Everyone in the world must die some day; no one has found out how to stop it. There must be a way to stop it. I must find it out and help the whole world.”

EXERCISE 9 IS ON PAGE 88

10. THE FOUR SIGHTS: A MONK

After many days of contemplation and distress, Siddhartha visited the city for the fourth time. As he was driving to the park he saw a happy man wearing an orange coloured robe. He asked Channa, “Who is this man wearing an orange robe? His hair is shaved off. Why does he look so happy? How does he live and what does he do for a living?”

“That is a monk.” replied Channa, “He lives in a temple, goes from house to house for his food and goes from place to place telling people how to be peaceful and good.” The prince felt very happy now. He thought, “I must become one like that,” as he walked through the park.

He walked until he was tired, then sat under a tree to think some more. As he was sitting under the cool shady tree, news came that his wife had given birth to a fine baby boy. When he heard the news he said, “An impediment (“rahula”) has been born to me, an obstacle to my leaving has been born,” and thus his son’s name became Rahula.

As he was returning to the palace he met the Princess called Kisagotami. She had been looking out of the palace window and, seeing the prince coming, was so taken by his handsome looks that she said loudly,

“Oh! How happy must be the mother, and father, and the wife of such a handsome young prince!”

As he passed this woman, Siddhartha heard this and thought to himself, “In a handsome figure the mother, father and wife find happiness. But how does one escape obstacles and suffering to reach nirvana (escape from suffering, a lasting liberation which is happiness and genuine peace)?” With this question he realised what he must do. “I must quit this household life and retire from the world in quest of enlightenment. This lady has taught me a valuable lesson. I will send her a teacher’s fee.” Loosening a valuable pearl necklace from about his neck, Siddhartha honoured his word and sent it as payment to Kisagotami, with thanks.

EXERCISE 10 IS ON PAGE 88

11. THE PRINCE LEAVES HOME

The king, Siddhartha’s father, arranged a grand dinner and dance for the prince to celebrate the birth of Rahula. Invited were the best dancers, singers and musicians in the country. It was not just out of joy that the king arranged the celebration. He could see that the prince was depressed and that his new baby son was not giving him happiness. The king was afraid Siddhartha was planning to leave the palace for good and, for the last time, did his best to distract him away from his sombre reflections and back to the abundance of palace life.

The prince attended the party just to please his father. During the dinner the most delicious food was served, the most enchanting and beautiful dancing girls in the country performed, the most sensitive musicians played and the finest puppets and magicians performed incredible feats. But Siddhartha was so tired from thinking that he soon fell asleep.

When the singers and the dancers saw this they too stopped and fell asleep. Some time later that night the prince awoke and was shocked to see these sleeping people. What a sight! All the prettiest, most charming dancing girls, the finest singers, best musicians and cleverest performers in the country, who, hours ago, were trying to make the prince so happy, were now all over the floor of the room in the most ugly, shameful and loathsome positions. Some people were snoring like pigs, with their mouths wide open, some grinding and chewing their teeth like hungry devils. This alteration in their appearance made the prince even more disgusted and unhappy. “How oppressive and stifling this all is,” he thought, and his mind turned

again towards leaving the palace. He got up quietly from the room and, waking Channa, asked for his horse, Kanthaka, to be saddled.

As Channa was preparing his horse, Siddhartha went quietly to see his newborn son for the first time. His wife was sleeping with the baby beside her, her hand resting on the baby's head. The prince said to himself, "If I try to move her hand so I can take the child for one last cuddle I fear I will wake her and she will prevent me from going. No! I must go, but when I have found what I am looking for, I shall come back and see him and his mother again."

Quietly then, Siddhartha left the palace. It was midnight, and the prince was on his white horse Kanthaka with Channa, his faithful servant, holding on to its tail. Nobody stopped him as he rode away from all who knew, respected and loved him. He took a last look at the city of Kapilavatthu—sleeping so quietly in the moonlight. He was going away to learn to understand old age, sickness and death. He rode to the bank of the river Anoma ("illustrious") and dismounted from his horse. He removed his jewellery and princely clothes and gave them to Channa to return to the king. Then the prince took his sword and cut his long hair, donned simple clothes, took a begging bowl and asked Channa to go back with Kanthaka.

"It is no use living in the palace without you, my master," said Channa very sadly, "I want to follow you." But Siddhartha would not allow him to stay, although Channa asked three times.

At last Channa started to go, but Kanthaka refused. The prince talked to the horse very kindly. "Please, Kanthaka, go with my friend. Don't wait for me." But Kanthaka thought, "I shall never see my master again." Tears rolled down from the horse's eyes as it kept them fixed on the prince, until he turned to go away and walked out of sight. As Siddhartha disappeared over the horizon, so Kanthaka's heart burst, and he died of sorrow.

EXERCISE 11 IS ON PAGE 88

12. KING BIMBISARA'S OFFER

From the Anoma River, dressed as a beggar, the young prince wandered from place to place. Eventually he came to Rajagaha City, where King Bimbisara lived. With his begging bowl in his hands Siddhartha walked round the streets begging for food from door to door like any other religious monk. People began to call him "Sakyamuni" or sage of the Sakyas, others called him "Ascetic" or "Ascetic Gotama", but nobody called him Prince Siddhartha any more.

He was most handsome, young, healthy, clean and neat. He spoke very kindly and gently. He did not ask people to give him anything but people were happy and pleased to put some food into his bowl.

Some people went and told the king. "Your majesty, there is a young man. Some people call him 'Ascetic Gotama'. He is very clean, neat, kind, polite and not like a beggar at all."

When King Bimbisara heard the name "Gotama" he knew at once that this prince was the son of King Suddhodana, his friend. He went up to him and asked him, " Why do you do this? Have you quarrelled with your father? Why do you go about like this? Stay here and I shall give you half of my kingdom."

"Thank you very much, Sir. I love my parents, my wife, my son, you and everybody. I want to find a way to stop old age, sickness, worries and death. Therefore I am going thus," said the Ascetic Gotama and off he went.

EXERCISE 12 IS ON PAGE 89

13. THE BUDDHA'S FIRST TEACHERS

At this time in India there were many religious teachers. One of the best and most well known was Alara Kalama. Ascetic Gotama went to study under him. He stayed and was taught many things, including meditation. He worked hard and eventually equalled his teacher in learning. Finally Alara Kalama could not teach Gotama any more and he said, "You are the same as I am now. There is no difference between us. Stay here and take my place and teach my students with me."

But Gotama was not interested in staying. Despite what he had learnt he could see that he was still subject to old age, sickness, and death and that his quest was not over.

Thus, Gotama left Alara Kalama and went in search of a new teacher. At last he found another great teacher, Uddaka, who was famous for his cleverness. Again, Gotama learnt very quickly and soon knew as much as his teacher. He found that Uddaka could not teach him how to stop suffering, old age and death either, and he had never heard of anyone who could solve these problems. Once again the Ascetic Gotama was disappointed and left Uddaka, making up his mind to struggle by himself until he found the cause of all the suffering of life.

EXERCISE 13 IS ON PAGE 89

14. SIX YEARS OF SEARCHING

After leaving his second teacher, Uddaka, Prince Siddhartha was known as Ascetic Gotama. He met five friends—Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji—who had also left the palace and a life of luxury to become ascetics, or students of life, living poorly. They went to Uruvela and for six years Gotama struggled and tortured his body while his five friends supported and looked after him.

“I will carry austerity to the uttermost,” thought Gotama. “This is the way to acquire wisdom.” He practised fasting, which was thought to be one of the best ways to acquire wisdom. He lived on a grain of rice a day, and later, nothing at all. His body became so thin that his legs were like bamboo sticks, his backbone was like a rope, his chest was like an incomplete roof of a house, his eyes sank right inside, like stones in a deep well. His skin lost its golden colour and became black. In fact, he looked like a living skeleton—all bones without any flesh! He suffered terrible pain and hunger, yet continued to meditate.

Another way of torturing his body was to hold his breath for a long time until he felt violent pains in his ears, head and whole body. He would then fall senseless to the ground. During the full moon and new moon he went out into the forest or to a cemetery to meditate, wearing rags from graveyards and rubbish heaps. He became frightened at first, especially when wild animals came, but he never ran away. He stayed behind bravely in these dreadful places, meditating all the time.

For six long years he did these practices and in spite of the great pain and suffering he did not find wisdom or the answers to his questions. He finally decided, “These austerities are not the way to enlightenment.” He went begging through the village for food to build up his body. When his five friends saw this they felt disappointed. They took their bowls and robes and left, wanting nothing more to do with Gotama.

EXERCISE 14 IS ON PAGE 89

15. THE GOLDEN BOWL

Now at the time, in a nearby village called Senani, there lived a young, very beautiful and rich girl called Sujata, who wanted a husband of equal rank and a son. She had waited for many years and she was not successful. The people told her that she must go to certain banyan tree near the Neranjara

river and pray to the tree-god to give her a husband and son. She did as the people told her and later on she got married to a young man and they had a lovely son. She was extremely happy and decided to fulfil her vow to the tree-god for giving her all that she had asked for.

Sujata had a thousand cows, and she fed them with sweet creepers called valmee so that the cow's milk was sweet. She milked these thousand cows and fed that milk to five hundred cows, and then fed their milk to two hundred and fifty cows and so on until she fed only eight cows. She did this to get the sweetest and most nourishing milk, to make delicious milk-rice as an offering to the tree-god.

As she was doing this she was surprised to see her servant running back from cleaning and preparing the area at the foot of the banyan tree. Very happy and excited, the servant said, "My lady Sujata! The banyan god is meditating at the foot of the tree. How lucky you must be to have the god in person to accept your food."

Sujata too was happy and excited and danced with joy with the servant. They then took even more pains to prepare the milk-rice, pouring it into a golden bowl.

Taking the delicious milk-rice both of them went to the banyan tree and Sujata saw what she perceived to be a holy man. He was handsome and golden looking and sat serenely in meditation. She did not know that he was in fact Ascetic Gotama. She bowed with respect and said, "Lord, accept my donation of milk-rice. May you be successful in obtaining your wishes as I have been."

Ascetic Gotama ate the sweet thick milk-rice and then bathed in the river Neranjara. This was the last food and bath he would have for seven weeks. When he finished he took the golden bowl and threw it in the river, saying, "If I am to succeed in becoming a Buddha today, let this bowl go upstream, but if not, let it go downstream." The golden bowl went upstream, all the while keeping in the middle of the river.

EXERCISE 15 IS ON PAGE 89

16. STRIVING FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

In the evening after Sujata's lovely meal, Gotama went to Gaya and looked for a suitable place to sit down and meditate. He found a banyan tree and sat on its east side, the side that was believed to be stable and free from trembles and quakes. After sitting cross-legged with his back towards the

tree, he made this resolution: "Though my skin, my nerves and my bones shall waste away and my life blood go dry, I will not leave this seat until I have attained the highest wisdom, called supreme enlightenment, that leads to everlasting happiness."

He meditated on his breathing in and breathing out. It was the eve of the full moon. During the first part of the night many evil thoughts, described as being like the evil god Mara and his army, crept into his mind. Thoughts of desire, craving, fear and attachment arose, yet Gotama did not allow these thoughts to disturb his concentration. He sat more firm than ever. He began to feel calm and brave as he let these thoughts go and so, in the first part of the night, he found the power of seeing his own past lives.

In the second part of the night Gotama realised the impermanence of life and how living beings die only to be reborn again. In the third part of the night he realised the cause of all evil and suffering and how to be released from it. He understood how to end sorrow, unhappiness, suffering, old age and death.

EXERCISE 16 IS ON PAGE 90

17. THE SUN OF ENLIGHTENMENT SHINES

The Buddha had withstood the worst attacks of Mara. Finally, the Evil One retreated and the terrible storm he had raised died away. Now the mind of the Blessed One relaxed into peace. The great darkness faded away and the full moon and stars reappeared again.

The Lord passed into a deep meditation, passing beyond the limits of ordinary human understanding, seeing the world as it is, and not as it appears to be. Like an eagle soaring effortlessly toward the sun, his mind moved swiftly onward and upward.

He saw his past lives and all his former births, with their good and evil deeds, with their gains and losses. As his mind soared upwards he saw the round of birth and death of all mankind. He saw beings born repeatedly and dying according to their karma.

Those who do good actions have heavenly births. Though these lives last longer than those on earth they also end in death, as they are also subject to the law of impermanence. Those who were suffering in the hell realms would also continue in the round of rebirths. So all beings (except Buddhas) are caught in the same round of existence, due to ignorance.

As his vision became even clearer, he saw the so-called soul of man, which man claims as his own, broken up into parts and laid before him like the unwoven threads of a garment. He saw the cause of the chain of existence—ignorance. The ignorant person, who clings to things that are worthless and transient, creates in him or herself more and more dangerous illusions. But when desire dies, illusions end, and ignorance vanishes like the night. Then the sun of enlightenment shines.

And having understood the world as it is, the Buddha was perfected in wisdom, never to be born again. Craving and destructive desire had been completely eradicated—as a fire goes out for lack of fuel.

Bathed in the brilliant light of all wisdom and truth sat the Buddha, the Perfect One. And all about him the world lay calm and bright and a soft breeze lifted the leaves of the bodhi tree.

Filled with compassion, the Lord sat beneath the tree in deep contemplation of the Dharma, residing in the perfect peace of nirvana.

At the dawn after his enlightenment the Buddha uttered this verse:

“Thro’ many a birth in samsara wandered
Seeking, but not finding, the builder of this house.
Sorrowful is repeated birth.
House builder, thou art seen.
Thou shalt build no house again.
All thy rafters are broken; thy ridgepole is shattered.
The mind attains the unconditioned.
Achieved is the end of craving.”

EXERCISE 17 IS ON PAGE 90

18. SEVEN WEEKS AFTER THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Under the Bodhi Tree

During the first week after enlightenment, the Buddha sat under the bodhi tree experiencing the happiness of freedom and peace. He was free from disturbing thoughts, calm and blissful.

Gazing at the Tree

During the second week, in thanks and gratitude to the tree that had sheltered him during his struggle for Buddhahood, the Buddha stood without moving his eyes as he meditated on the bodhi tree.

Following this example, it is the custom of Buddhists to pay respect to not only the original bodhi tree, but also to the descendants of the bodhi tree that still thrive today.

The Golden Bridge

In the third week, the Buddha saw through his mind's eye that the devas in the heavens were not sure whether he had attained enlightenment or not. To prove his enlightenment the Buddha created a golden bridge in the air and walked up and down it for a whole week.

The Jewelled Chamber

In the fourth week, he created a beautiful jewelled chamber and sitting inside it meditated on what was later known as the "Detailed Teaching" (Abhidhamma). His mind and body were so purified that six coloured rays came out of his body—blue, yellow, red, white, orange and a mixture of these five. Today these six colours make up the Buddhist flag. Each colour represented one noble quality of the Buddha: yellow for holiness, white for purity, blue for confidence, red for wisdom and orange for desirelessness. The mixed colour represented all these noble qualities.

Three Girls

During the fifth week, while meditating under a banyan tree, three most charming girls called Tanha, Rati and Raga came to disturb his meditation. They danced in a most seductive and charming manner and did everything to tempt the Buddha to watch their dance. Yet he continued to meditate unperturbed, and soon they tired and left him alone.

The Mucalinda Tree

The Buddha then went and meditated at the foot of a mucalinda tree. It began to rain heavily and a huge king cobra came out and coiled his body seven times around the Buddha to keep him warm and placed his hood over the Buddha's head to protect him from the rain. After seven days the rain stopped and the snake changed into a young man who paid his respects to the Buddha. The Buddha then said:

"Happy are they who are contented. Happiness is for those who hear and know the truth. Happy are they who have good will in this world towards all sentient beings. Happy are they who have no attachments and have passed beyond sense-desires. The disappearance of the word "I AM " is indeed the highest happiness."

The Rajayatana Tree

During the seventh week, the Buddha meditated under the rajayatana tree. On the fiftieth morning, after seven weeks of fasting, two merchants came into his presence. They were called Tapussa and Bhallika. They offered the Buddha rice cakes and honey to break his fast and the Buddha told them some of what he had found in his enlightenment.

These two merchants, by taking refuge in the Buddha and his Dharma (translated as “teachings of the Buddha”), became the first lay followers. There was no Sangha (order of monks and nuns) then. They asked the Buddha for something sacred to keep with them. The Buddha wiped his head with his right hand and pulled out some hair to give to them. These hair relics, called Kesa Datu, were later reputed to be enshrined by the merchants on their return home to what is now known as Burma, in the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon.

EXERCISE 17 IS ON PAGE 90

19. THE FIRST FIVE MONKS

Now the Buddha wanted to tell other people how to become wise, good and do service for others. He thought, “Now Asita, Alara and Uddaka are dead but my friends Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji are in Benares. I must go there and talk to them.”

Then he set out for Benares, till at last he came to a grove where his five friends were. This grove at Sarnath was called the Deer Park. They saw him coming towards them and one said to another, “Look yonder! There is Gotama, the luxury-loving fellow who gave up fasting and fell back into a life of ease and comfort. Don’t speak to him or show him any respect. Let nobody go and offer to take his bowl or his robe. We’ll just leave a mat there for him to sit on if he wants to and if he does not, he can stand. Who is going to attend on a good-for-nothing ascetic like him.”

However, as the Buddha came nearer and nearer, they began to notice that he had changed. There was something about him, something noble and majestic such as they had never seen before. And in spite of themselves, before they knew what they were doing, they forgot all they had agreed on. One hastened forward to meet him, and respectfully took his bowl and robe, another busily prepared a seat for him, while a third hurried off and brought him water to wash his feet.

After he had taken a seat the Buddha spoke to them and said, “Listen, ascetics, I have the way to deathlessness. Let me tell you, let me

teach you. And if you listen and learn and practise as I tell you, very soon you will know for yourselves, not in some future life but here and now in this present lifetime, that what I say is true. You will realise for yourself the state that is beyond all life and death.”

Naturally the five ascetics were very astonished to hear their old companion talking like this. They had seen him give up the hard life of fasting and consequently believed that he had given up all efforts to find the truth. So initially they simply did not believe him, and they told him so.

But the Buddha replied, “You are mistaken, Ascetics. I have not given up all effort. I am not living a life of self-indulgence, idle comfort and ease. Listen to me. I really have attained supreme knowledge and insight. And I can teach it to you so you may attain it for yourselves.”

Finally the five were willing to listen to him and he delivered his first teachings. He advised his followers to follow the Middle Way, avoiding the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-torture. For the first time he taught the Four Noble Truths and how to practise the Eightfold Path, the Noble Way that would lead to freedom from suffering and to the way of enlightenment. With the conversion of the five ascetics at the Deer Park at Sarnath, the order of monks was established.

EXERCISE 19 IS ON PAGE 90

20. THE BUDDHA’S FIRST TEACHING

The Buddha’s first teaching was called the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, which means the Turning of the Wheel of Truth. It was given on the full-moon day of July, called Asalha.

This discourse was given to the five ascetics who were his former companions, at the Deer Park in Isipatana (now called Sarnath), near Benares, India. Many devas and brahmas (angels and gods) were present to listen to the discourse.

The Buddha started the discourse by advising the five ascetics to give up two extremes. These were indulgence in sensual pleasures and the tormenting of the body (self-indulgence and self-mortification).

He advised against too much sensual pleasure because these pleasures were base, worldly, not noble and unhelpful in spiritual development. On the other hand, tormenting the body was painful, not noble and also unhelpful in spiritual development. He advised them to follow the Middle Way, which is helpful in seeing things clearly, as they are, and in attaining knowledge, higher wisdom, peace, and enlightenment or nirvana.

The Buddha then taught the five ascetics the Four Noble Truths. They are: the truth of suffering; its cause; its end; and the way to its end. Everything in this world is full of suffering, and the cause of suffering is craving. The end of suffering is nirvana. The way to the end of suffering is via the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddha said that he was enlightened only after he understood these Four Noble Truths.

The Noble Eightfold Path has eight parts or factors:

1. **Right understanding** means to know and understand the Four Noble Truths.
2. **Right attitude** means to have three kinds of thoughts or attitudes:
 - (i) Thoughts of renunciation or an attitude of “letting go”.
 - (ii) Thoughts of goodwill to others, which are opposed to ill will.
 - (iii) Thoughts of harmlessness, as opposed to cruelty.
3. **Right speech** deals with refraining from falsehood, such as telling lies or not telling the truth; tale-bearing or saying bad things about other people; harsh words and frivolous talk such as gossiping.
4. **Right action** deals with refraining from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.
5. **Right livelihood** deals with the five kinds of trade which should be avoided in order to lead a noble life. They are: trading in arms (weapons), living beings (breeding animals for slaughter), intoxicating drinks and poison.
6. **Right effort** has four parts using meditation:
 - (i) To try to stop unwholesome thoughts that have arisen
 - (ii) To prevent unwholesome thoughts from arising.
 - (iii) To try to develop good thoughts
 - (iv) To try to maintain good thoughts that have arisen
7. **Right mindfulness** is also fourfold. It is mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings/sensations, mindfulness of thoughts passing through the mind and mindfulness of Dharma.
8. **Right concentration** is one-pointedness of mind as developed in meditation.

These eight factors can be grouped into three smaller groups, as follows:

Sila (morality)

right speech, right action, right livelihood.

Samadhi (concentrated mind in meditation)

right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

Panna (wisdom)

right attitude, right understanding.

These three—morality, concentration and wisdom—are the three stages on the path to mental purity whose object is nirvana. These stages are described in a beautiful verse:

To cease from evil,
To do what is good.
To cleanse one's mind:
This is the advice of all the Buddhas.

EXERCISE 20 IS ON PAGE 91

21. THE SERPENT KING

As soon as he had 60 disciples the Buddha sent them away to teach people everywhere. He left the Deer Park and turned southwards towards the Magadha country.

Along the way, on the banks of a river, there lived three brothers whose names were Uruvela Kassapa, Nadi Kassapa and Gaya Kassapa. Each lived with 500, 300 and 200 followers respectively.

One evening the Buddha visited Uruvela Kassapa's hut and asked, "If it is not an inconvenience, may I spend a night in your kitchen?"

"I don't mind, Great Gotama, but there is a fierce serpent king in the kitchen. I am afraid it will harm you," said Uruvela Kassapa.

"Oh, I don't mind," answered the Buddha. "If you have no objection I will spend the night there."

The Buddha went into the kitchen, spread some grass on the floor for bedding, and sat down. The fierce serpent king, hearing the noise, came slithering out of a hole in the wall, opening his mouth to bite the Buddha. "I will not harm this serpent king. I will subdue him by my love

and kindness," thought the Buddha. The angrier the serpent king became, the more kindly and loving was Buddha. The serpent king could do him no harm.

Early next morning Uruvela Kassapa went to the Buddha and found him sitting in deep meditation. The ascetic was surprised and asked the Buddha whether the serpent king had harmed him. "Here, see for yourself," said the Buddha and uncovered his begging bowl. Out came the fierce serpent king and the ascetic started to run away in fright. But the Buddha stopped him, saying that he had a way to tame any fierce serpent.

"Can I learn?" asked the ascetic. The Buddha then gave his teachings and Uruvela Kassapa, his brothers and all their followers became devotees of the Buddha's Dharma.

EXERCISE 21 IS ON PAGE 91

22. RETURNING HOME

When King Suddhodana came to know that the Buddha was teaching in Rajagaha he sent nine messengers, one after the other, inviting him to come to Kapilavatthu. All the messengers became monks. They listened to the Buddha's teachings and found them so appealing that they forgot to convey the king's message.

The king had made arrangements for the Buddha to stay in a park called Nigrodha. But when the Buddha did not arrive, the king sent Kaludayi, a childhood playmate of Buddha's, to invite him back to Kapilavatthu.

When the people of Kapilavatthu discovered that the Buddha had come to their city they flocked to see him. Prince Siddhartha's own relatives came as well and said, "He is our younger brother, our nephew, our grandson."

Then the Buddha realised that some people, even then, did not understand that he was already enlightened but felt they were his elders. He showed them a miracle called the "Twin miracle". Even the king, seeing this miracle, worshipped him.

The next day the Buddha took his begging bowl and went from door to door begging for food. The king, seeing this, was very annoyed. "Why do you disgrace me, my son? Why do you ruin me like this? Why don't you take food in the palace? Is it proper for you to beg for food in this very city where you used to travel in golden sedan chairs? Why do you put me to shame, my dear son?"

"I am not putting you to shame, O Great King. This is our custom," replied the Buddha calmly.

"How can this be? Nobody in our family has ever begged like this. How can you say 'it is our custom'?" the confused king asked.

"Oh Great King, this is not the custom of the Royal family, but of the Buddhas. All the former Buddhas have lived by receiving food this way."

However, when the king begged the Buddha to take food in the palace the Buddha kindly did so.

EXERCISE 22 IS ON PAGE 91

23. THE STORY OF PRINCESS YASODHARA

When the Buddha had taken his evening meal that day, all who knew him as Prince Siddhartha, except Princess Yasodhara, came to talk to him. All of them were surprised but happy to see their prince dressed like a monk.

Yasodhara stayed in her room thinking, "Prince Siddhartha is now the Enlightened One—the Buddha. He now belongs to the line of Buddhas. Is it right for me to go to him? He does not and cannot need me. I think it is better to wait and see."

After a while the Buddha asked, "Where is Yasodhara?"

"She is in her room," said his father. "I shall go there," said the Buddha and, giving his bowl to the king, he went to her room. As he entered he said to the king, "Let her pay me respect as she likes. Say nothing."

As soon as the Buddha entered the room, even before he took his seat, Yasodhara rushed to him. She fell to the floor, held his ankles, placed her head at his feet and cried and cried until his toes were wet with her tears. The Buddha kept quiet and nobody stopped her until she was tired of crying. King Suddhodana then said, "Lord, when my daughter-in-law heard that you were wearing yellow robes she also robed herself in yellow. When she heard that you were taking one meal a day she did the same. When she heard that you had given up lofty couches, she lay on a low couch and when she heard that you had given up garland and scents she too gave them up. So virtuous is my daughter-in-law."

The Buddha nodded and said, "Not only in this last birth, O king, but in a previous birth too, Yasodhara was devoted and faithful to me."

EXERCISE 23 IS ON PAGE 92

24. THE STORY OF PRINCE NANDA

On the third day after the Buddha's return to Kapilavatthu he was invited to the wedding of Prince Nanda, his youngest stepbrother, and his new bride, Princess Janapada Kalyani. The Buddha attended the wedding and celebrations, blessed them all, left his begging bowl with Nanda and went away.

Nanda thought, "I will go to the temple and return the bowl." While he was there, Nanda and the Buddha talked for a while before the Buddha said, "Nanda, would you like to be a monk?"

"Yes, Sir," said Nanda, and the Buddha ordained him.

Afterwards Nanda, thinking of his beautiful bride, became very sad and unhappy. "Why are you so sad, Nanda?" asked the monks.

"Brothers, I am disappointed. I do not like this life. I want to leave it and go home."

The Buddha then came to talk to Nanda. First the Buddha showed him a she-monkey whose nose and tail were burnt and fur singed and bloodied. "Do you see this monkey, Nanda? Then take good note of her," said the Buddha.

Then the Buddha showed Nanda 500 celestial nymphs. "Nanda, do you see these nymphs?"

"Yes," answered Nanda.

"Who is prettier? The nymphs or Janapada Kalyani?"

"Sir, as my bride is prettier than the burnt monkey, so are the nymphs compared to Janapada Kalyani."

"Well, Nanda, what then?"

"Reverend Sir, how does one obtain the celestial beings?"

"By performing the duties of a monk."

"In that case I shall take the greatest pleasure in living the monk's life," said Nanda and he began to follow the Buddha's teaching very carefully.

EXERCISE 24 IS ON PAGE 92

25. THE STORY OF PRINCE RAHULA

On the seventh day after the Buddha's homecoming Princess Yasodhara dressed up young Rahula. The Buddha's son had been brought up by his

mother and grandfather and was now seven years old. She pointed to the Buddha and said, "That is your father, Rahula. Go and ask him for your inheritance."

Innocent Rahula went to the Buddha and, looking up into his face, told him what his mother had asked him to say, adding, "Father, even your shadow is pleasing to me."

As the Buddha left the palace Rahula followed him saying, "Give me my inheritance." Coming to the park the Buddha thought, "He desires his father's wealth, but this goes with the worldly life and is full of trouble and suffering. I shall instead give him what I know and thus give him an excellent inheritance." The Buddha then asked Sariputta, one of his disciples, to ordain Rahula.

When King Suddhodana heard that his beloved grandson had become a monk he was deeply grieved. The king said, "When you left home it made me sad. When Nanda left home my heart ached. I concentrated my love on my grandson and again the one I love has left me. Please do not ordain anyone without their parent's permission." To this the Buddha agreed and never ordained anybody after that without their parents' permission.

EXERCISE 25 IS ON PAGE 92

26. THE TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES

Near Rajagaha there were two villages called Upatissa and Kolita. The headmen of these two villages were also known as Upatissa and Kolita. Both families were very close friends.

One day Upatissa's wife, Sari, gave birth to a son called Sariputta. On the same day Kolita's wife, Moggali, also gave birth to a son called Moggallana. The sons became best friends.

When they grew up both of them liked to watch dramas. One day, while watching a drama called Giragga Samapujja (The Mountain Festival), the young boys decided to leave home in order to seek greater happiness and understanding of life than could be had by watching plays.

Now at this time there was a famous religious teacher called Sanjaya staying near Rajagaha. The two friends went to learn from him, but after a

while they found his teachings unsatisfactory and left. They promised each other they would both continue searching, studying and meditating in an effort to find the truth about life, and that whoever found it first would let the other know.

One morning, in the main street of Rajagaha, Sariputta saw the ascetic Assaji begging for alms. He radiated modesty and calmness as he went from house to house. As Sariputta came closer he saw on Assaji's face a look of perfect peace, like a smooth undisturbed lake under a calm clear sky. Sariputta went up to him and humbly said, "Your face, friend, is serene. Your eyes so clear and bright. Who is your teacher and what does he teach, Sir?"

"I can soon tell you that, brother," replied Assaji. "There is a great ascetic of the Sakya race who has left his home and country behind in order to follow the homeless life. He is my teacher and it is his teaching that I follow and practise."

"Please tell me more."

"I am only a newcomer to the way of the Buddha," replied the ascetic modestly. "I do not know very much yet. But I will give you a brief description."

"That is all I want, brother," said Sariputta quickly. "Tell me the meaning of the teachings. Why make a lot of words about it?"

"Very well then," said the ascetic. "Listen! The Buddha teaches that there is a cause for everything, and also how things cease to be."

After the Venerable Assaji spoke these lines, Sariputta was so clever that he understood their meaning. He realised the truth that everything that ever has come into existence, or will come into existence, must pass away. He said, "If this is what the Buddha teaches you have found the state that is free from sorrow and suffering and full of peace and happiness." After thanking Assaji, Sariputta went to find his friend Moggallana to bring him the great news.

Before he spoke a word Moggallana cried, "Why brother, how clear and shining your face is. Can it be that at last you have found what we have been seeking?"

"It is so, brother, it is so," was Sariputta's glad reply, and he explained the Buddha's teachings to him.

Thus, Sariputta and Moggallana joined the Buddha and in a short time became two of his chief disciples. Sariputta became known for his wisdom and Moggallana for his miraculous power.

EXERCISE 26 IS ON PAGE 92

27. THE STORY OF POOR SOPAKA

There once was a boy by the name of Sopaka, born to a very poor family. When this boy was only seven his father died and his mother married another man who was very wicked and unkind. His new stepfather always beat and scolded small Sopaka who was very kind, innocent and good.

The stepfather thought, "This boy is a nuisance, a good-for-nothing, but I cannot do anything to him because his mother loves him so much. What shall I do about him?"

One evening he said, "Dear son, let us go for a walk."

The boy was surprised and thought, "My stepfather has never talked to me so kindly. Perhaps my mother has asked him to be kind to me." So he happily went with his stepfather.

They walked to a cemetery where there were many rotting bodies and the stepfather tied Sopaka to one of them, leaving him alone and crying.

As the night became darker and darker Sopaka's fear increased. He was alone in the cemetery and so frightened that his hair stood on end and drops of sweat rolled down his body. The noises of the jackals, tigers, leopards and other wild animals made him even more frightened. Then, when he was almost paralysed with fear, he saw a shining noble-looking person with a bright light coming towards him saying, "Sopaka, don't cry. I am here to help you, so don't fear." At that moment Sopaka broke his bonds and stood before the Buddha in the Jetavana monastery. The Buddha bathed him, gave him food to eat, cloths to wear and consoled and comforted him.

Meanwhile, on returning home, the wicked stepfather was questioned by Sopaka's mother. "Where is my son?" she asked. "I don't know," he replied, "he came home before me." But the mother could not sleep the whole night for worrying about her son.

Early next day she went to see the Buddha for help. "Why are you crying, sister?" asked the Buddha.

"O Lord," replied the lady, "I have only one son and since last night he has been missing. My husband took Sopaka for a walk and the little boy never returned home."

"Don't worry, sister. Your son is safe. Here he is." And so saying the Buddha showed her Sopaka, who had become a monk. The mother was overjoyed to see her son again, and after listening to the Buddha's teachings she too became a follower.

EXERCISE 27 IS ON PAGE 92

28. The Story of Lady Patacara

During the Buddha's lifetime there was a rich man who had a charming daughter called Patacara. Her parents loved her so much that they kept her in the seventh storey of their mansion and did not let her go anywhere.

When she was sixteen, Patacara's parents made arrangements for her to marry the son of another wealthy man. But she had already fallen in love with her pageboy and wanted to be with him.

Just before the wedding, early in the morning, Patacara dressed up like a servant and slipped out of the mansion. She met her pageboy at an arranged place and they ran away together.

The couple traveled to a faraway place and were married. After some time Patacara was ready to give birth to their child. "Here I have no one to help me," she said to her beloved husband, "but a mother and father always have a soft spot in their heart for their child. Please take me to my parents' house so I may give birth to our child."

But her husband said, "My darling, what are you saying? If your mother and father were to see me they would torture me to death. It is out of the question for me to go." She begged him over and over again and each time he refused to go.

One day, when her husband was away, Patacara went to her neighbours and told them, "If my husband asks you where I have gone tell him that I have gone home to my parents." When he came home to find Patacara missing, her husband ran after her and soon caught up, begging her to return home. She began to refuse but right then her birth pains started and she soon gave birth to a son. She thought, "There is no point in going to my parents' home now," and returned home with her husband.

After some time she was ready to give birth to her second child and left for her parents' home again while her husband was at work. Again her husband came after her and begged her to return with him but she refused.

While this was happening a fearful storm arose. Patacara told her husband, "Dear, my birth pains have come upon me. I cannot stand it, please find me a place to shelter from this storm."

Her husband took his axe and went here and there in the heavy rain, looking for branches and leaves to make a shelter. Seeing a bush growing on an anthill he went to chop it down. As he did so a poisonous snake slithered out and bit his hand, killing him immediately.

As Patacara waited for her husband, her pains became more and more severe and soon she gave birth to another son. Weak, cold and wet she could do nothing more than place her children to her bosom, curl into the

ground and wait out the night, worrying desperately after her husband and sheltering as best she could.

Early the next morning, with the newborn on her hip and holding the hand of the other child, Patacara went along the path her husband had taken and eventually found him lying dead. "All because of me my husband died on the road," she cried.

After a while she continued walking along the path until she came to the river Acirawati, which was flooded from the storm. Since she felt weak from the previous night she could not carry both children together. Patacara placed the older boy on the bank and carried the younger one across the river. She then put the baby on a bed of leaves and returned for the older child.

Hardly had she come to midstream when a hawk came down from the sky and swooped off with the young child. Patacara saw the hawk and screamed in a loud voice, "Su!, Su!" When he heard her voice across the water the older boy thought, "Mother is calling me." And, in a hurry to get to her, he slipped down the bank and was swept away by the river.

Now Patacara became very distressed and cried and cried, saying, "One of my sons has been carried away by a hawk, the other swept away by the river, and by the roadside my husband lies dead." She went off weeping until she met a man and asked him, "Sir, where do you live?"

"In Savatthi," he replied.

"In the city of Savatthi in such and such a street lives such and such a family. Do you know them, Sir?"

"Yes, my good Lady, but don't ask me about that family. Ask me about another family you know."

"Good Sir, I know only that family. Please tell me about them," said she.

"Since you insist, I cannot hide the truth," said the man. "In the heavy rains last night, the family's house collapsed, killing all of them."

"Oh no!" cried Patacara.

"Yes; can you see that fire over there?" he asked, pointing to some flames. "That is their funeral fire."

No sooner had Patacara heard this than she fell on the ground, rolling to and fro with grief. Some villagers came and took her to the Jetavana monastery, where the Buddha was teaching. The Buddha asked some ladies to wash her, clothe her and give her food, and then he consoled her in a most sweet and wonderful voice. When she recovered her senses, and having gained insight into her experiences, Patacara begged the Buddha to ordain her. Thus Patacara became a bhikkhuni (nun).

EXERCISE 28 IS ON PAGE 93

29. ANGULIMALA, THE BANDIT

The King of Kosala had an adviser called Bhaggawa. Bhaggawa had a wife called Mantani and a son called Ahinsaka.

When Ahinsaka was born, all the weapons in the country shone brightly. The king was disturbed by this, and the next morning he called his adviser to find out the reason why the weapons were shiny. The adviser said, "My wife has given birth to a son, Your Majesty."

"Then why do the weapons shine in such a manner?" asked the king.

"Your Majesty, my son will be a bandit."

"Will he rob alone or with a gang?" asked the king.

"He will be single-handed, Your Majesty," replied Bhaggawa.

"We should kill him now," said the king.

"No!" exclaimed Bhaggawa, "As he will be alone we shall be able to catch him easily."

When Ahinsaka was old enough his father sent him to a school in Takka Sila. Ahinsaka was the strongest, brightest and the most obedient child of all the children in the whole school. Other children became envious of him and behind his back made the teacher hate him. Thus, when he had finished his education, the teacher said, "Now you must pay me my tuition fee."

"How much should I pay, Sir?" asked Ahinsaka.

"I don't want cash but one thousand right-hand human fingers. And remember not to bring two right-hand human fingers from the same person."

Although it was a most difficult thing for him to do, Ahinsaka promised to pay his teacher. Taking a sword, off he went until he reached Kosala.

Hiding near a jungle highway, he waited for passers by. He would rush out and kill them, cutting off a right-hand finger and hanging their corpses on a tree for the vultures and crows. He made a garland out of the finger bones and soon became known as "Angulimala" (anguli=fingers, mala=garland).

Angulimala went to another district and began to kill again. Because he was murdering so many people, the King of Kosala decided to go with his strong army and capture the bandit. When Mantani heard this she went to her husband to try to get him to save their son.

"Darling, he is very fierce now," said Bhaggawa. "He may have changed completely, and if I go there he may even kill me." But the mother

was very soft hearted and loved her son more than she loved herself. She thought, "I must go to the jungle myself and save him."

Now Angulimala had killed 999 people. He had spent months and months in the jungle without proper food, sleep or comfort, so he was impatient to pay off his debt and live a decent life. He thought, "Today if even my own mother comes I will kill her and cut off a finger to make one thousand fingers."

Now that day, while the Buddha looked round the world to see if anybody needed help, he saw Angulimala and his mother. "I must save them," he thought as he set out towards the jungle.

The villagers, seeing the Buddha, cried out, "Teacher, don't go that way, it is too dangerous. Return home quickly." Three times they warned him but the Buddha continued, thanking them for their concern.

Now Angulimala's mother entered the jungle. Angulimala saw her coming and thought, "Poor lady. She comes alone. I pity her but it cannot be helped. I must keep my word and kill her." All of a sudden, the Buddha appeared between them. Angulimala thought, "It is very good that this ascetic comes before my mother. Why should I kill her? I will leave her alone and kill this stranger." And with his sword he ran towards the Buddha. The Buddha walked slowly before him, thinking, "Let this young man see me running." So Angulimala ran and ran towards the Buddha, but he could not catch up with him. He became so weak that he could not run any further. Then he shouted at the Buddha, "Stop! Stand still!"

"I stand still, Angulimala! Do you also stand still?" said the Buddha.

Angulimala could not understand the meaning of the Buddha's words, so he asked him, "How can you say you stand still while running faster than me?"

"I stand still Angulimala evermore,
For I am merciful to all living beings;
But you are merciless to living beings.
Therefore I stand still and you stand not still."

Angulimala was very pleased with what the Buddha said and throwing away his sword knelt before him. The Buddha blessed him and took him to the monastery, where he became a monk.

Meanwhile, the king was waiting with his army at the palace to receive the Buddha's blessing before setting out to the jungle. When the Buddha did not come, he went to the monastery with his five hundred horses and soldiers. The Buddha asked him, "What is it that troubles you, mighty King?"

“There is a most fierce killer called Angulimala and I am going to catch him.”

“But mighty King, suppose you see Angulimala head shaven, wearing yellow robes. What would you do to him?”

“I would worship him,” answered the king.

Then the Buddha called Angulimala and the frightened soldiers started to run away. But the Buddha stopped them, and taught the Dharma to them all.

EXERCISE 29 IS ON PAGE 93

30. WAKKALI & THE BUDDHA

In Savatthi there was a young man called Wakkali who admired the Buddha's beauty. One day he thought, “So long as I am living at home I cannot see the Buddha, but if I become a monk I would see him daily.” So he went to the temple and was ordained by the Buddha.

Now he had the opportunity to always admire the Buddha's appearance. He did nothing all day but follow the Buddha like a shadow. The Buddha waited for Wakkali's wisdom to ripen, saying not a word. But instead of reading, learning and meditating Wakkali just admired the Buddha. The Buddha thought, “Unless this monk gets a shock he will never come to understand.”

So one day the Buddha had an invitation to spend the three months rains retreat in Rajagaha and he left Wakkali behind.

Wakkali was very disappointed and began to think, “Three months is a long time. What a miserable period I will have to spend. What is the use of living any longer? I will throw myself off Vultures' Peak.”

Now the Buddha, staying in Rajagaha, saw with his mind's eye Wakkali about to jump off Vultures' Peak. “If this monk gets no comfort or consolation from me he will kill himself,” he thought. The Buddha immediately sent forth a radiant image of himself and there, on the edge of the summit at Vultures' Peak, Wakkali saw the Buddha before him and felt his sorrow vanish. Wakkali's mind was filled with joy and he thought, “The person who has perfect faith in the Buddha will be full of joy and satisfaction. The person who has perfect faith in the Buddha will reach the place of peace and happiness.”

EXERCISE 30 IS ON PAGE 93

31. SUNITA, THE SCAVENGER

In Savatthi there was a scavenger named Sunita. He was a road-sweeper and barely earned enough to feed himself. Sunita slept on the roadside, for he did not have a house to go to. He saw other people enjoying themselves but he could not mix with them because these people called him an outcast. Whenever a higher caste person went on the road Sunita had to run and hide so his shadow did not fall on them. If he was not quick enough he would be scolded and beaten. Poor Sunita lived a miserable life.

One day, as he was sweeping a dirty, dusty road, Sunita saw the Buddha with thousands of followers coming towards him. His heart was filled with joy and fear and finding no place to hide he just stood, joining his palms in respect. The Buddha stopped and spoke to poor Sunita in a sweet, gentle voice saying, "My dear friend, would you like to leave this work and follow me?"

Nobody had ever spoken to Sunita like this before. His heart was filled with joy and his eyes with tears. "O, most venerable Sir, I have always received orders but never a kind word. If you accept a dirty and miserable scavenger like me I will follow you."

So the Buddha ordained Sunita and took him along with the other monks. From that day forth no one knew what Sunita's caste was, and nobody treated him with disgust and cruelty. Everybody, even kings, ministers and commanders, respected him.

EXERCISE 31 IS ON PAGE 93

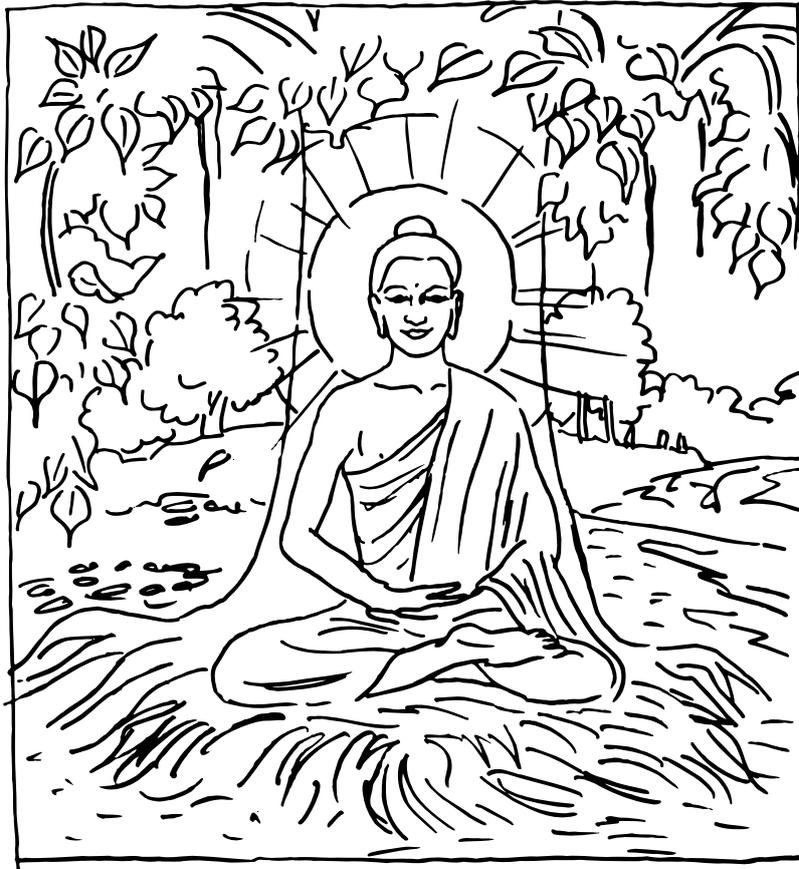
32. THE BUDDHA & THE SICK MONK

One day the Buddha visited a monastery. While he was there he came across a chamber where a monk lay in great pain caused by a loathsome disease. Although there were many other monks at the monastery, not one of them was concerned about their sick brother. The Buddha, beholding this woeful situation, began to look after the suffering man. He called Ananda and together they bathed the monk, changed his dirty bed and eased his pain.

Then the Buddha admonished the monks of the monastery for their neglect and encouraged them to nurse the sick and care for the suffering. He concluded by saying, "Whosoever serves the sick and suffering, serves me."

EXERCISE 32 IS ON PAGE 93

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA



PART TWO

1. THE BUDDHA'S DAILY ROUTINE

The Buddha's daily routine was divided into five parts:

- the morning session
- the afternoon session
- the first watch
- the middle watch
- the last watch

The Morning Session

(4.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon)

The Buddha would get up at 4.00 a.m. and as soon as he had had a wash would sit down to meditate for an hour. From 5.00 to 6.00 a.m. he would look around the world with his mental eye to see if anybody needed help. At 6.00 a.m. he would put on his robe and either go out and help the needy or beg for food.

When on alms round the Buddha would go from house to house, eyes fixed to the ground, receiving in silence any food that was put into his bowl. Sometimes he would go begging with his disciples, who would walk behind him in single file. Often people would invite him to their houses for lunch and he would give a discourse to them and his followers.

The Afternoon Session

(12.00 noon to 6.00 p.m.)

In the afternoon the monks would usually go to the Buddha to ask questions and be taught and advised. The Buddha would then retire to his room and look around the world with his mental eye to see if anyone was looking for his help. He would then go and meet people who were waiting for him. He would teach to them in such a way that everybody felt that the Buddha was teaching to each one of them separately, "giving joy to the wise, promoting the intelligence of the average people and dispelling the darkness of the dull-witted".

The First Watch

(6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.)

During this time the followers would come again to the Buddha to either listen or ask questions to clarify their doubts.

The Middle Watch

(10.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m.)

During this period the devas would seize the opportunity to go to see the Buddha and learn the truth of life. The Buddha, on answering their questions, would complete the middle watch of the night.

The Last Watch

(2.00 p.m. to 4.00 a.m.)

For the first hour the Buddha would walk up and down meditating and freeing himself from the discomfort of sitting all day. He then would sleep for an hour. Thus we can see the Buddha was busy the whole day. In fact he only slept one hour each day during this 45 years of teaching. During the early hours of the day he saw the whole universe, blessed it with his boundless love and brought happiness to millions.

EXERCISE 1 IS ON PAGE 95

2. THE CONVERSION OF YASHA

While the Buddha stayed at the Deer Park in Benares, a rich young man called Yasha came to see him. Yasha listened to the Buddha's teachings and was so enthralled by them that he became a monk (bhikkhu).

Towards evening, an elderly man came to the Buddha and told him that his son had left home that morning saying he was going to visit the Buddha, but he had not returned. Both he and his wife were worried, thinking robbers must have killed him. The Buddha told the father not to worry and that his son had become a monk. Then he started to explain his teachings to Yasha's father and soon he too became a follower.

Yasha had fifty-four friends who were presented to the Buddha to hear his teachings. They too became monks. In this way in a short time there were sixty followers.

EXERCISE 2 IS ON PAGE 95

3. KING BIMBISARA, ROYAL PATRON

King Bimbisara had once offered half his kingdom to the ascetic Gautama, who had turned down the bargain because he wanted to search for

Enlightenment. Later, King Bimbisara had asked Gautama to promise to return to Rajagaha to enlighten him, should the ascetic find what he was looking for.

When Gotama became the Buddha, the Enlightened One, he did not forget his promise to come back. He decided to revisit Rajagaha with a large number of his disciples. His fame as a religious teacher was spreading in the city and it eventually reached the ears of King Bimbisara.

On hearing that the Buddha had arrived at his city's gateway, the king went out with a large number of his subjects to welcome the Buddha and his disciples. He approached the Buddha and paid his respects, but some of his subjects did not know to whom they should pay their respects—the Buddha, or Venerable Kassapa. They wondered whether the Buddha was leading a holy life under Venerable Kassapa or the reverse, as both were highly respected religious teachers.

The Buddha read their thoughts and asked Venerable Kassapa why he had given up his fire sacrifice. Understanding the motive behind the question Venerable Kassapa explained that he preferred the peaceful state of nirvana to useless sensual pleasures. After this he fell at the feet of the Buddha and said, "My teacher, Lord, is the Exalted One: I am the disciple."

The devout people were very glad to hear of the conversion. The Buddha then preached the Dharma, and King Bimbisara attained the first stage of sainthood (sotapanna). After realising the doctrine, King Bimbisara addressed the Buddha. "Formerly, O Reverend Sir, when I was a prince, I had five wishes. They are now fulfilled. My first wish was to become king. My second wish was that a Fully Enlightened One should visit my country. My third wish was that I should associate with such an Enlightened One. My fourth wish was that he should preach to me the doctrine. My fifth wish was that I should understand that doctrine. Now all these five wishes are fulfilled."

Out of gratitude for this spiritual gift from the Buddha, King Bimbisara gave a park with a quiet bamboo grove for the use of the Buddha and his disciples. This park was named the Bamboo Grove. The Buddha spent three successive rainy seasons there and three other rainy seasons later.

After listening to the Dharma, the king became a good and pious ruler but, due to his past bad karma, he had to face an untimely and miserable death caused by his son's wickedness.

EXERCISE 3 IS ON PAGE 95

4. VISAKHA, GREAT FEMALE SUPPORTER

Visakha was the devout and generous daughter of a millionaire. When she was only seven years old, the Buddha visited her birthplace. Her grandfather, hearing of the Buddha's visit, advised Visakha to go out and welcome him. Though she was so young, she was religious and virtuous. As such, immediately after hearing the Dharma from the Buddha, she attained the first stage of sainthood.

When she was fifteen years old, some Brahmins saw Visakha and thought she would be an ideal wife for their master Punnavaddhana, the son of a millionaire named Migara. Visakha possessed the five kinds of feminine beauty: beautiful hair, a beautiful figure, beautiful bone structure, beautiful skin which was smooth and golden in colour, and youthfulness. Accordingly, they made arrangements for Visakha to be married to Punnavaddhana.

On her wedding day, her wise father gave her some advice under these ten headings:

1. A wife should not criticise her husband and parents-in-law in front of other people. Neither should their weaknesses or household quarrels be reported elsewhere.

2. A wife should not listen to the stories or reports of other households.

3. Things should be lent to those who return them.

4. Things should not be lent to those who do not return them.

5. Poor relatives and friends should be helped even if they do not repay.

6. A wife should sit gracefully. On seeing her parents-in-law or her husband, she should respect them by rising from her seat.

7. Before taking her food, a wife should first see that her parents-in-law and husband are served. She should also make sure that his servants are well cared for.

8. Before going to sleep, a wife should see that all doors are closed, furniture is safe, servants have performed their duties, and that parents-in-law have retired. As a rule, a wife should rise early in the morning and unless she is sick, she should not sleep during the day.

9. Her parents-in-law and husband should be treated very carefully, like fire.

10. Her parents-in-law and husband should be given the respect due to devas.

From the day Visakha arrived in Savatthi, the city of her husband, she was kind and generous to everyone in the city and everyone loved her.

One day, her father-in-law was eating some sweet rice porridge from a golden bowl when a monk entered the house for alms. Although her father-in-law saw the monk, he continued to eat as if he had not. Visakha politely told the monk, "Pass on, Venerable Sir, my father-in-law is eating stale food."

For a long time Visakha's father-in-law had been unhappy at her because she was a devout follower and supporter of the Buddha while he was not. He was looking for a chance to break off the marriage between his son and Visakha, but her conduct was faultless. Now he saw his chance. Misunderstanding Visakha's words, he thought she had brought disgrace to his family.

He ordered Visakha to be expelled from the house, but she reminded him of her father's request to eight clansmen. Her father had told them, "If there be any fault in my daughter, investigate it."

The millionaire agreed to her request and summoned those eight clansmen to come and investigate whether Visakha was guilty of rudeness. When they arrived he secretly told them, "Find her guilty of this fault and expel her from the house."

Visakha proved her innocence by explaining, "Sirs, when my father-in-law ignored the monk and continued to eat his milk-rice porridge he was not making merit in his present life. He was only enjoying the merits of his past actions. Was this not like eating stale food?"

Her father-in-law had to admit that she was not guilty of being rude.

There were other misunderstandings after this, but Visakha was able to explain to her father-in-law's satisfaction. After these incidents, her father-in-law began to realise his error and to see the great wisdom of Visakha. At her suggestion, he invited the Buddha to their house to give teachings. On hearing the discourse he became a sotapanna (first stage of sainthood).

With wisdom and patience, she succeeded in converting her husband's household to a happy Buddhist home. Visakha was also very generous and helpful to the monks. She built the Pubbarama monastery for the monks at great cost. Immense was her joy when the Buddha spent six rainy seasons there.

In one of the discourses that the Buddha delivered to Visakha, he spoke of the eight qualities in a woman that bring her welfare and happiness in this world and the next: "Herein, Visakha, a woman does her work well, she manages the servants, she respects her husband and she guards his

wealth. Herein, Visakha, a woman has confidence (saddha) in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha; virtue (sila); charity (caga); and wisdom (panna)."

Being a woman who had many talents, Visakha played an important role in various activities amongst the Buddha and his followers. At times, she was given the authority by the Buddha to settle disputes that arose amongst the nuns (bhikkhunis). Some Vinaya rules of discipline were also laid down for the nuns when she was called in to settle their disputes.

Visakha died at the ripe age of one hundred and twenty.

EXERCISE 4 IS ON PAGE 95

5. DEVADATTA, THE BUDDHA'S ENEMY

Devadatta was the son of King Suppabuddha and his wife Pamita, who was an aunt of the Buddha. Devadatta's sister was Yasodhara, making him both a cousin and brother-in-law of the Buddha. Together with Ananda and other Sakyan princes, he entered the order of monks in the early part of the Buddha's ministry, but was unable to attain any stage of sainthood and so worked hard for the worldly psychic powers.

In his early days, he was a good monk known for his grace and psychic powers. Later he became conceited with worldly gain and fame. As his ill-will and jealousy towards the Buddha increased, he became the greatest personal enemy of the Buddha.

One day in a large assembly, which included kings and princes, Devadatta approached the Buddha and asked him to make him the leader of the Sangha. Since he was not capable and worthy enough, the Buddha turned down this request. Devadatta became very angry as a result and vowed to take revenge on the Buddha.

Although Devadatta was an evil monk, he had many admirers and followers. One of his chief supporters was King Ajatasattu, with whom he discussed his anger and plots for revenge. Together they planned to kill King Ajatasattu's father and rival, King Bimbisara and Devadatta's enemy, the Buddha. Ajatasattu succeeded in killing his father, but Devadatta failed to kill the Buddha.

His first attempt to kill the Buddha was to hire a man to kill the Blessed One. The plan was that the man be killed by two other men who would in turn be killed by four other men. Finally the four men would be killed by eight other men. But when the first man came close to the Buddha, he became frightened. He put aside his weapons and took refuge in the

Buddha. Eventually all the men who were hired to kill one another became disciples of the Buddha and the cunning plan failed.

Then Devadatta himself tried to kill the Buddha. When the Buddha was walking on the Vultures' Rock, Devadatta climbed to the peak and hurled a huge stone at the Buddha. On its way down, the rock struck another rock and a splinter flew and wounded the Buddha's foot, causing blood to flow. The Buddha looked up and seeing Devadatta, he remarked with pity, "Foolish man, you have done many unwholesome deeds for harming the Buddha."

Devadatta's third attempt to kill the Blessed One was to make the fierce man-killer elephant, Nalagiri, drunk with liquor. When Nalagiri saw the Buddha coming at a distance, it raised its ears, tail and trunk and charged at him. As the elephant came close, the Buddha radiated his loving-kindness (metta) towards the elephant. So vast and deep was the Buddha's love that as the elephant reached the Buddha, it stopped, became quiet and stood before the Master. The Buddha then stroked Nalagiri on the trunk and spoke softly. Respectfully, the elephant removed the dust at the master's feet with its trunk, and scattered the dust over its own head. Then it retreated, with its head facing the Buddha, as far as the stable, and remained fully tamed. Usually elephants are tamed with whips and weapons, but the Blessed One tamed the elephant with the power of his loving-kindness.

Still trying to be the leader of the Sangha, Devadatta tried yet another plan—a deceitful one. With the help of five hundred misled monks, he planned to split the Sangha community.

He requested the Buddha to make it compulsory for monks to follow five extra rules:

- (i) Dwell all their lives in the forest
- (ii) Live only on alms obtained by begging
- (iii) Wear robes made from rags collected from the dust heaps and cemeteries
- (iv) Live at the foot of trees
- (v) Refrain from eating fish or meat throughout their lives.

Devadatta made this request, knowing full well that the Buddha would refuse it. Devadatta was happy that the Buddha did not approve of the five rules, and he used these issues to gain supporters and followers. Newly ordained monks who did not know the Dharma well left the Buddha and accepted Devadatta as their leader. Eventually, after Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana had explained the Dharma to them, they went back to the Buddha.

After this, evil days fell on Devadatta. He fell very ill at the failure of his plans, and before his death he sincerely regretted his actions, and wanted to see the Buddha before he died. But the fruits of his evil karma had begun to ripen and prevented him from doing so. He grew desperately ill on the way to see the Buddha, near the gate of Jetavana monastery. But before he died he took refuge in the Buddha.

Although he has to suffer in a woeful state because of his crimes, the holy life he led in the early part of his career ensured that Devadatta would become a Pacceka Buddha named Atthissara in the distant future. As a Pacceka Buddha he would be able to achieve Enlightenment by his own efforts.

EXERCISE 5 IS ON PAGE 96

6. THE BUDDHA & THE QUEEN

Just as the Buddha had appointed two chief disciples, Venerable Sariputta and Venerable Moggallana, for the order of monks, he appointed two chief female disciples for the order of nuns. They were Venerable Khema and Venerable Uppalavanna.

Khema was one of the beautiful queens of King Bimbisara. The conversion of Khema was one of the rare cases where the Buddha used his psychic powers to make a change in the heart of another. The Buddha never used his powers to control another person's emotions, but merely to create understanding and make wisdom arise.

Khema was beautiful like a full moon reflected on a still lake at midnight. Her cheeks were smooth as lotus petals and her eyes sparkled like gems. As she had heard that the Buddha did not speak well of physical beauty, she had no wish to see him.

One cool, breezy morning, Khema decided to visit the monastery which King Bimbisara had built for the Buddha in the Bamboo Grove. Squirrels were scampering in the fruit trees that threw long shadows on the grass. The ponds were covered with water lilies and a light scent of jasmine was in the air.

Khema was soon drawn to a deep, clear voice coming from the preaching hall. It was unlike anything she had heard before. It sounded more beautiful than the singing of birds at the break of dawn. The voice was warm, relaxed and full of love and concern. Its words were words of wisdom.

Like a bee being attracted to a flower, Khema moved to the hall where the Buddha was preaching. As she did not want the Buddha to

recognise her she pulled her scarf down over her face and sat at the back of the hall. What she did not know was that the Buddha knew who she was and what she was thinking.

With his psychic powers, the Buddha created the image of a most beautiful young lady about the age of sixteen standing by his side and fanning him. Khema gasped in wonder at her beauty and rolled her eyes in admiration for the girl.

“Oh, look at her finely shaped nose, her mouth, her arms and fingers,” thought Khema. “With her perfect complexion, she looks like a fully bloomed flower in spring. She is far more beautiful than anyone I have ever seen, and is far, far more beautiful than I.”

Just for the moment Khema thought her eyes were playing tricks on her. Did she see this young girl growing older? Oh yes. And the beauty was fading from this lovely creature. Some wrinkles appeared on her face and the smile on her lotus-like lips changed into a toothless grin. Her hair turned grey, then white. The limbs that were slender and strong became thin and feeble, and she fell on the floor. From a young lady, this image had changed into an eighty-year-old woman.

Khema saw this old woman die and rot until her bones turned to dust. She then realised that just like the lovely image, one day she too would grow old and die. All vanity of external beauty fell from her and she instantly understood the impermanence of the physical body and life.

She attained arahantship, and entered into the order of nuns after asking King Bimbisara’s consent. She became renowned for her insight knowledge amongst the order of nuns.

EXERCISE 6 IS ON PAGE 96

7. THE BUDDHA & THE MILLIONAIRE

The millionaire Anathapindika was born as Sadaria. As a result of his great generosity, he was given the name Anathapindika which meant “feeder of the helpless”.

Anathapindika wanted to purchase a magnificent park for the Buddha but it belonged to Prince Jeta, who was reluctant to part with it. By covering the grounds of the park with gold coins Anathapindika eventually persuaded the Prince to sell. He then built a monastery in which the Buddha was to spend many rainy seasons and which came to be known as the Jetavana Monastery. The Buddha spent the major part of his life in these

quiet surroundings and most of his discourses were delivered there. All in all, the Buddha spent twenty-four rainy seasons at the Jetavana Monastery.

Several of the discourses the Buddha delivered to Anathapindika were intended for lay people. Two of them were on generosity and the Four Kinds of Bliss. In the discourse on generosity, the Buddha advised that the first stage of the Buddhist life is to practice generosity, such as giving alms to monks and building monasteries. More important than being generous though, is taking refuge in the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) and observing the Five Precepts, the five rules that help discipline words and deeds. More important again than the observation of the Five Precepts is the regular practice of meditation on loving-kindness (metta-bhavana). But the most meritorious act, said the Buddha, is to develop insight into the fleeting nature of things.

In the discourse telling of the four kinds of bliss a layman can enjoy, the Buddha mentioned the bliss of ownership, the bliss of wealth, the bliss of being debtless and the bliss of blamelessness.

The bliss of ownership means the satisfaction in gaining wealth by honest means and hard work. The bliss of wealth is the satisfaction of enjoying one's wealth while fulfilling all one's duties.

The bliss of being debtless is the satisfaction that a layman enjoys whenever he knows that he does not incur a debt, great or small, to anyone.

The bliss of blamelessness is the satisfaction derived by a person whose actions of body, speech and thought do not cause harm to others and are free from any blame.

When Anathapindika first met the Buddha at the Sitavana forest near Rajagaha, his confidence was so strong that an aura glowed from his body. On hearing the Dharma for the first time Anathapindika became a sotapanna (first stage of sainthood).

EXERCISE 7 IS ON PAGE 96

8. THE BUDDHA & THE FARMER

Once the Buddha was in the village of Ekanala, in Magadha. The rain had fallen and it was planting time. In the early morning, when the leaves were still wet with dew, the Buddha went to the field where Kasibharadvaja, a Brahmin and farmer, had five hundred ploughs at work. When the Blessed One arrived, it was the time for the Brahmin to distribute food to the workers. The Buddha waited there for his alms food, but when the Brahmin

saw him he sneered and said, "I plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat. O ascetic, you also should plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, you should eat."

"O Brahmin, I too plough and sow," replied the Buddha. "And having ploughed and sown, I eat."

The puzzled Brahmin said, "You claim that you plough and sow, but I do not see you ploughing."

The Buddha replied, "I sow faith as the seeds. My discipline is the rain. My wisdom is my yoke and plough. My modesty is the plough-head. The mind is the rope. Mindfulness is the ploughshare and the goad. I am restrained in deeds, words and food. I do my weeding with truthfulness. The bliss I get is my freedom from suffering. With perseverance I bear my yoke until I come to nirvana. Thus, I have done my ploughing. It brings the fruit of immortality. By ploughing like this, one escapes all suffering."

After this explanation, the Brahmin realised his error and said, "May the Venerable Gotama eat the milk-rice! The Venerable Gotama is a farmer, since his crops bear the fruit of Deathlessness!" So saying, the Brahmin filled a large bowl with milk-rice and offered it to the Buddha.

The Buddha refused the food, saying that he could not accept food in return for his teachings.

The Brahmin fell at the feet of the Buddha and asked to be ordained into the order of monks. And not long after, Kasibharadvaja became an arahant.

EXERCISE 8 IS ON PAGE 96

9. MAGANDIYA'S GRUDGE

Magandiya was such a beautiful girl that many wealthy men wanted to marry her. Her Brahmin parents always turned down the suitors, finding none of them good enough for her. Even when her parents found a suitable man for their daughter she refused to agree, saying she would marry nobody less than a king. Magandiya was determined to use her beauty to marry well.

One day, as the Buddha was surveying the world, he noticed that Magandiya's parents were spiritually developed. All it needed was one statement from him to open their eyes to truth. The Buddha went to the place where the Brahmin was making fire sacrifice outside his village.

When Magandiya's father saw the Buddha coming, he was moved with wonder by his physical beauty, calmness and noble manner. There

could not be a better person to give his daughter to in marriage, the Brahmin thought. "Don't go away, O monk," he called out excitedly. "Wait here until I bring my daughter to see you. You are an ideal partner for her, and she for you."

The Buddha did not speak and remained silent. He did not stay either, but stamped his footprint on the ground and went away. Very pleased with what he thought would happen, the Brahmin rushed home to tell his wife. "Dress her up quickly, dear," he said. "I have seen a man worthy of our daughter." When the three of them came back to the spot, the Buddha was nowhere to be seen. The only sign he was ever there was the footprint.

The wife, who was familiar with signs, read the print and said, "I don't think this is the print of one who would marry our daughter. It belongs to a person who has given up worldly pleasures."

"You and your signs again," grumbled her husband. "You see crocodiles in a water pot, and robbers in the middle of the house. Look, there he is sitting under the tree. Have you seen, my dear, anyone so marvelous? Come along, daughter. This time your suitor is so perfect that you cannot complain."

The family rushed over to the Buddha and the father called to him, "Monk, I'm giving my daughter in marriage to you." The Buddha turned down the offer, explaining that he had overcome all his worldly pleasures. He told how he had given up household life with all its enjoyment, and how he could not be tempted by even the beautiful daughters of Mara. He said that however beautiful the body may be, it is still full of impurities.

Hearing this, the Brahmin and his wife understood immediately that the worldly life is miserable and not something to be attached to, no matter how nice it may appear. Both of them attained anagami, the third stage of sainthood.

Unfortunately, proud Magandiyā, who was not spiritually developed, could not understand the real meaning of these words. She thought the Buddha was insulting her beauty. "How could this monk insult me when so many men have fallen for my beauty at first sight? Even if he doesn't want to marry me, he shouldn't declare that my body is full of dirt." Clenching her fists, she whispered under her breath, "You just wait, O monk. When I marry a husband who is powerful, I shall teach you a lesson."

Later, Magandiyā was married to the King of Udena. When she heard that the Buddha had entered the city, her hatred of him rose again and she bribed and instigated the people to insult the Buddha and drive him away.

Ananda, who was with the Buddha, did not want to stay on and endure the insults, but the Buddha advised him to practice tolerance and patience. The Buddha said, “As an elephant in the battlefield withstands the arrows shot from a bow, even so will I endure abuse of irreligious people.” The Buddha said that the abusive talk would not last long, for such is the power of the Buddha. They stayed on in Udena, and all the abuse ended shortly.

EXERCISE 9 IS ON PAGE 97

10. ALAVAKA, THE DEMON

Alavaka lived near the city of Alavi and feasted on human flesh. He was so fierce, powerful and crafty that he was known as “the demon”.

One day, the King of Alavi went hunting for deer in the jungle and Alavaka caught him. The king begged to be released, but in return for his freedom the demon made a deal that he had to send one person every day into the jungle as an offering to Alavaka.

The king, afraid for his own life, agreed. Every day after that a prisoner would be sent from the palace dungeons into the forest with a plate of rice. The wretched soul was told that to gain freedom he had to go to a certain tree, leave the plate there and then he could go as he pleased. At first many prisoners volunteered to go on that “simple” mission. But as the days went by and no one returned to tell the other prisoners what had happened, the prisoners soon grew suspicious and had to be forced each day to go into the forest.

Soon the prison became empty. How was the king to fulfill his promise of sending a person each day to be eaten by the demon? His ministers advised him to drop packets of gold in the streets. Those found picking up the packets would be caught as thieves and sent to Alavaka. When the word got around, nobody dared to collect the packets. As a last resort, the king started catching children for offering. The terrified families of the city began to flee, leaving the streets deserted and the king completely desperate. There was only one more boy left—and he was the king’s son. With much reluctance, the king ordered that the prince be sent to Alavaka the following morning.

That day, the Buddha happened to be near the city. When he surveyed the world with his Divine Eye that morning, he saw what was going to happen. Out of compassion for the king, the prince and Alavaka,

the Buddha traveled the whole day to the demon's cave and in the evening he arrived at the entrance.

The demon was away in the mountains, and the Buddha asked the gatekeeper if he could spend a night at the cave. When the gatekeeper left to inform his master about the request, the Buddha went into the cave, sat on the seat of the demon and taught the Dharma to his wives.

When the demon heard what was happening, he hurried home, very angry. With his extraordinary power, he created a terrifying thunderstorm which shook and rattled the forest with thunder, lightning, wind and rain. But the Buddha was unafraid.

Alavaka then attacked the Buddha by throwing his spear and club at him, but before the weapons could touch him, they fell at the feet of the Blessed One.

Unable to frighten the Buddha, Alavaka asked, "Is it right that you, a holy man, should enter and sit amongst a man's wives when the owner of the house is away?" At this, the Buddha got up to leave the cave.

Alavaka thought, "What a fool I am to have wasted my energy trying to frighten this ascetic." So he asked the Buddha to enter the cave again. The demon ordered the Buddha three times to get out and three times to enter the cave, in the hope that he could kill the Buddha with fatigue. Each time the Buddha did as he was ordered. But when the demon asked the Buddha to leave for the fourth time the Buddha refused to do so, saying, "I'm not going to obey you, Alavaka. Do whatever you can but I'm going to remain here."

Unable to force the Buddha to do what he wanted, Alavaka changed his tactics and said, "I will ask you some questions. If you can't answer I'll split your heart, kill you and throw you over to the other side of the river."

The Buddha told him calmly, "There is no one, Alavaka, whether man or deva, ascetic, brahma or brahmin who can do such things to me. But if you want to ask anything, you may do so."

Alavaka asked some clever questions which he had learned from his parents who had, in turn, learned them from their parents. The demon himself had forgotten the answers, but he had preserved the questions by writing them on gold leaves. The questions were:

"What is the greatest wealth for a man?

What brings the highest bliss when well mastered?

What is the sweetest of all tastes?

Which is the best way of life?"

The Buddha answered:

"The greatest wealth for a man is confidence.

The true doctrine, when well mastered, brings the highest bliss.

The sweetest taste is truth.

Wise living is the decent way of life.”

Alavaka asked many more questions, all of which the Buddha answered.

The final question was: “Passing from this world to the next, how does one not grieve?”

The Buddha’s reply was: “He who possesses these four virtues—truthfulness, good morals, courage and generosity—grieves not after passing away.”

Understanding the meaning of the Buddha’s words, Alavaka said, “Now I know what is the secret of my future welfare. It is for my own welfare and good that the Buddha came to Alavi.” Alavaka prostrated before the Buddha and begged to be accepted as a disciple.

The next morning, when the officers of Alavi came with the king’s young son, they were surprised at the sight of the Buddha preaching to Alavaka, who was listening attentively to the sermon. When the boy was handed to Alavaka, he grew ashamed of what he had been. Instead of seeing the boy as an offering, he stroked the boy on the head, kissed him and handed him back to the officers. After that the Buddha blessed the child and Alavaka.

Indeed, the conversion of Alavaka the cannibal showed how the Buddha, with his great wisdom and compassion, could tame a savage and change him into a gentle disciple.

EXERCISE 10 IS ON PAGE 97

11. SUJATA & THE SEVEN TYPES OF WIVES

Sujata came from a wealthy family and was married to the son of Anathapindika. She was arrogant, did not respect others and did not like to listen to the instructions of her husband and his parents. As a result of her attitude there was trouble in the family every day.

One day, when the Buddha visited the house of Anathapindika, he heard an unusual uproar in the house and asked what it was about.

Anathapindika replied, “Lord, it is Sujata, my daughter-in-law. She does not listen to her mother-in-law, her father-in-law or to her husband. She does not even honour nor pay respect to the Exalted One.”

The Buddha called Sujata to him and spoke kindly to her, “Sujata, there are seven types of wives a man may have. Which of them are you?”

“What are the seven types of wives, Venerable Sir?” asked Sujata.

“Sujata, there are bad and undesirable wives. There is a wife who is troublesome. She is wicked, bad tempered, pitiless, and not faithful to her husband.”

“There is a wife who is like a thief. She wastes the money earned by her husband.”

“There is a wife who is like a master. She is lazy, and thinks only about herself. She is cruel and lacking in compassion, always scolding her husband or gossiping.”

“Sujata, there are the good and praiseworthy wives. There is a wife who is like a mother. She is kind and compassionate and treats her husband like her son and is careful with his money.”

“There is a wife who is like a sister. She is respectful towards her husband, just as a younger sister to her brother, she is modest and obedient to her husband’s wishes.”

“There is a wife who is like a friend. She rejoices at the sight of her husband, just like a friend who has not seen her friend for a long time. She is of noble birth, virtuous and faithful.”

“There is a wife who is like a handmaid. She behaves as an understanding wife when her shortcomings are pointed out. She remains calm and does not show any anger although her husband uses some harsh words. She is obedient to her husband’s wishes.”

The Blessed one asked, “Sujata, which type of wife are you like, or would you wish to be like?”

Hearing these words of the Blessed One, Sujata was ashamed of her past conduct and said, “From today onwards, let the Exalted One think of me as the one in the last example for I’ll be a good and understanding wife.” She changed her behaviour and became her husband’s helper, and together they worked towards enlightenment.

EXERCISE 11 IS ON PAGE 97

12. ANANDA, THE LOYAL ATTENDANT

The Buddha had no regular attendant during the first twenty years of his ministry. Several monks used to attend to the Buddha, accompany him on alms rounds and carry his extra robes and bowl. The monks who served him were Nagasamala, Nagita, Upavana, Sunakhatta, Cunda, Sagata, Radha and Meghiya.

These monks did not always obey the Buddha's instructions. For example, one day when the Buddha and Venerable Nagasamala came up to a crossroads, the Venerable Nagasamala decided to go one way, although the Buddha suggested that they should go the other way. The monk went along the road of his choice and he was robbed and beaten by highway robbers. He came back to the Buddha to be reminded of his disobedience and consoled.

On another day, as the Buddha was on his way to the village of Jantu, Venerable Meghiya, who accompanied him, wanted to stop by a mango grove and practise asceticism. Three times the Buddha advised him against his idea, but Meghiva went his way. Eventually he returned to the Buddha and confessed that he had failed in his practice because almost all the time he was in the grove, three kinds of evil thoughts disturbed his mind: thoughts of sensual desires, ill-will and cruelty.

When the Buddha came to the Jetavana Monastery in Savatthi, he said, "Now I am old, Bhikkhus. When I say, 'Let us go this way,' some of you go the other way; some drop my bowl and robe on the ground. Choose one disciple to attend always on me." The Buddha was fifty-five years of age at that time.

The Venerable Sariputta and Moggallana both volunteered their services, but the Buddha didn't accept as they had other valuable services to perform for the world. The offers of other disciples were also turned down. As Venerable Ananda was silent, waiting to be nominated by the Buddha himself, other monks advised him to offer his services.

The Buddha said, "It is not necessary for Ananda to be induced by others. He will serve me of his own accord."

Venerable Ananda agreed to serve the Buddha regularly, subject to eight conditions:

1. He should not be given the robes received by the Buddha.
2. He should not be given the food received by the Buddha.
3. He should not sleep in the Fragrant Chamber of the Buddha.
4. He should not be asked to go with the Buddha to accept alms on invitation.
5. The Buddha should consent to invitations received by him.
6. The Buddha should give him permission to introduce visitors who came from afar to see the Buddha.
7. He should be allowed to consult the Buddha whenever he had any doubts to clarify.
8. The Buddha should repeat to him the discourses preached in his absence.

After the Buddha consented to these eight conditions, Venerable Ananda became the regular attendant of the Buddha and remained with him for twenty-five years.

Venerable Ananda was the son of King Suddhodana's younger brother, and therefore a cousin of the Buddha. He entered the order of monks during the second year of the Buddha's ministry and long after attained the first stage of sainthood (sotapanna) after hearing the sermon given by Venerable Punna Mantaniputta.

From the time he became the Buddha's personal attendant, Ananda served the Buddha with devotion and care, right up until his master's last moments. Day and night, he served the Master and he was faithful and dedicated. At night, for example, he would patrol the place where the Buddha was resting to prevent his sleep from being disturbed.

When acknowledging the qualities of his disciples, the Buddha said that Venerable Ananda was first among monks who are learned, mindful, well-behaved and determined. He was very much involved in the establishment of the order of nuns (bhikkhunis). And he is reputed to have had the Ananda bodhi tree, which survives today near the Jetavana Monastery, planted.

Although Venerable Ananda had the rare privilege to listen to every discourse of the Buddha, he did not attain arahantship until after the Buddha had passed away.

Venerable Ananda was said to have lived to one hundred and twenty years of age.

EXERCISE 12 IS ON PAGE 97

13. THE TRAGEDY OF KING BIMBISARA

King Bimbisara had a son, Prince Ajatasattu, who was a good friend of the Buddha's enemy, Devadatta. The two spent much time together and soon Devadatta had convinced the young prince to kill his father.

One silent and dark night, Prince Ajatasattu crept into the king's room with a knife tied to his thigh. He was creeping toward his sleeping father when the palace guards caught him and the king discovered the plan. Kind King Bimbisara thought to himself, "Ah, I have remained king for too long. It is time for me to step down and make Ajatasattu king so that he can rule in peace, and I can retire into a religious life." Instead of punishing Ajatasattu for his evil intentions, King Bimbisara made him king.

After Ajatasattu was made the new king he surprised everyone, including his father. Swift like a viper caught by its tail, he sprang round against his father and had him thrown into the darkest, coldest dungeon in the palace. "Let him have no visitors other than my mother," ordered Ajatasattu. "And give him no food so that he will starve to death."

But King Bimbisara did not die. His loyal wife secretly brought him food hidden in her clothes. When Ajatasattu found out and stopped this, she carried food in her hair knot. Again Ajatasattu found out. Finally, the queen had to bathe her body and cover it with a mixture of honey, butter, ghee and sugar. By licking this food off her body, the good king survived. At last Ajatasattu found out his mother's plan and banned her from visiting his father at all. Now the king had no food at all to sustain him and would surely die.

Days passed and still the king did not die. Ajatasattu lost his patience and shouted out in rage, all through the palace, "Call the barber."

When the barber came, the king spoke to him in a fury, "I command you to go to Bimbisara's cell, cut open the soles of his feet with your razor, tear the skin away and put salt and oil on the raw flesh. Then I command you to force him to walk on burning charcoal until he dies."

When King Bimbisara saw the palace barber approaching, tears of joy watered his cheeks as he thought, "At last my son has realised his folly. Now he sends a barber to trim my beard and cut my hair before releasing me from prison." Instead, with the help of two soldiers, the barber carried out the orders of the new king Ajatasattu and the good king died in great pain.

On that very day, Ajatasattu received news that his wife had given birth to a son. Great was his joy at being a father and a thought came to his mind. He hurried to his mother and asked, "Tell me mother, did my father love me as much as I love my son?"

His mother turned around, stared at him in silence with her sorrowful eyes and then murmured in disbelief, "What did you say, Ajatasattu? You asked if your father loved you?"

"Ajatasattu, when you were in my womb, I wanted to drink blood from your father's hand. When he found this out, happily he cut his wrist for me to drink his blood for you. When the fortune-tellers predicted that you would be your father's enemy, I tried to have a miscarriage but he prevented me. Again I tried to kill you when you were born; he stopped me even though he knew that one day you would kill him. Is that not love?"

"Do you see that scar on your thumb? That was a boil you had when you were small. You were crying from so much pain that nobody could put you to sleep. When your father heard this, he stopped from his royal duty

and came running to see you. Gently he took you in his lap and sucked the boil until it burst open in his mouth. Oh my son, your father swallowed it out of love for you—that pus and blood. In what way did he not love you, Ajatasattu? Tell me, Ajatasattu, would you do for your son what your father did for you? This man who loved you, this man who you have killed.”

When he heard this, Ajatasattu was choked with tears. He ordered his guards, “Run, run and release my father before he dies.” But none of them moved. “Go, I command you. Release my father before he dies,” Ajatasattu shouted.

Then his adviser stepped forward and said slowly, “Great king, your father died this morning.” Ajatasattu fell to his knees and cried until his body jerked violently, uttering over and over, “Forgive me, father. Please forgive me.”

Ajatasattu realised the love of a father only when he became a father himself. As for King Bimbisara, he was reborn as a deva in the Catummaharajika Heaven.

EXERCISE 13 IS ON PAGE 98

14. KING PASENADI OF KOSALA LEARNS THE PAIN OF LOVE (1)

King Pasenadi was the king of Kosala, which was north of Magadha ruled by King Bimbisara. The capital of the kingdom of Kosala was called Savatthi. One of King Pasenadi’s sisters was the chief queen of King Bimbisara, which made him the brother-in-law of King Bimbisara.

King Pasenadi of Kosala had become a follower of the Buddha very early in the Buddha’s ministry and had remained a loyal supporter ever since. His chief queen was Mallika, a wise and religious queen who was well versed in the Dharma and acted as his religious guide on several occasions.

The first time the king met the Buddha, he asked, “How is it that Master Gotama claims he has gained full enlightenment? Master Gotama is both young in years and young as a monk.”

The Buddha replied, “Great King, there are four things that should not be looked down upon and despised because they are young. They are a noble warrior, a serpent, a fire and a bhikkhu (monk). An enraged young warrior may ruthlessly cause harm to others. The bite of even a small snake may kill. A little fire may become a huge inferno that destroys building and forests. Even a young monk may be a saint.”

Hearing this, King Pasenadi of Kosala understood that the Buddha was indeed a wise teacher and decided to become his follower.

King Pasenadi liked going to the Buddha for advice. Even during his official duties, he found time to speak to the Buddha. When talking to the Buddha one day he received news that his wife, Queen Mallika, had given birth to a daughter. The king was not pleased with the news because he wanted a son.

The Buddha, unlike any other religious teacher, spoke well of women. He said, "Some women are better than men, O king. There are women who are wise and good, who regard their mothers-in-law as goddesses, and who are pure in word, thought and deed. They may one day give birth to brave sons who would rule a country."

The king remembered then once hearing the Buddha say this: "It is the dear ones whom we love that bring sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair." The king asked Queen Mallika whether she agreed with the Buddha. She said that if the Buddha had said so, it must be true. But the king was not satisfied. "How can a loved one bring sorrow?" wondered the king.

Queen Mallika approached a Brahmin to ask the Buddha to explain this. Having heard many stories to explain the problem, the Brahmin related them to the queen. She then asked the king, "Sire, what is your opinion, is Princess Vajira, your daughter, dear to you?"

"Yes, Mallika, she is very dear to me," said the King.

"If some misfortune were to happen to Princess Vajira, would that bring sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair?"

"Yes," said the King.

"Sire, it was because of this that the Blessed One said that dear ones whom we love bring sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair."

"Mallika," said the King, "it is wonderful, it is marvelous! How far the Blessed One sees with understanding."

When King Kosala later lost in battle to his nephew and had to retreat to his capital at Savatthi, the Buddha commented to his disciples that neither the victor nor the defeated would experience peace:

"Victory breeds hatred.
The defeated live in pain.
Happily the peaceful live,
Giving up victory and defeat."

In a later battle, the two kings fought again and King Kosala not only won, but captured his nephew King Ajatasattu alive with all his elephants, chariots, horses and soldiers. King Kosala thought that he would release

the young king, but not his horses, elephants and others. He wanted the satisfaction of keeping these material possessions as the prizes of victory.

On hearing about this, the Buddha told his disciples that it would have been wiser for King Kosala not to have kept anything for himself. The truth of this statement still applies to this modern war-weary world:

“A man may plunder, as he will. When others plunder in return, he who is plundered will plunder in return. The Wheel of Deeds turns round and makes the ones who are plundered plunderers.”

King Pasenadi of Kosala passed away in his eightieth year when his son Vidudabha revolted against him.

EXERCISE 14 IS ON PAGE 98

15. KING PASENADI LEARNS TO SEE TRUE CHARACTER (2)

One evening, when King Kosala was talking to the Buddha, there passed by on the road a band of ascetics with knotted hair, hairy bodies and long nails. They walked past slowly, with heads bent low. At once the king got up and knelt down to worship them, uttering his own name three times.

The king came back to the Buddha and said, “Sir, there were saints among those ascetics. Just see how calmly they walked with heads bent down.” With his divine eyes the Buddha saw that those men were not saints, but spies who were sent out to gather information.

“Your Majesty,” said the Buddha, “by mere appearances alone it is not possible for one who leads a life of comfort to know the real nature of another. If we want to understand a person’s real nature, his good and bad qualities, we must associate with him for some time. We must be wise and have sharpness of mind.”

“We can know a person’s purity by conversing with him, observe his courage in the face of misfortune and understand his wisdom during discussions. The bad people, O king, sometimes pretend to be good and it is difficult for you to judge their state of morality.”

EXERCISE 15 IS ON PAGE 98

16. AN ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT THE BUDDHA

In the twentieth year of the Buddha’s ministry, two important events took place. The first of these was the conversion of the bandit Angulimala. The

second happened at Savatthi, where some jealous ascetics tried to discredit the Buddha. This is the story of the second event.

The Buddha and his disciples were famous and respected religious teachers at Savatthi. Large numbers of people from the area came regularly to listen to their sermons and to offer them alms.

However, not all the people of Savatthi were followers of the Buddha. There were many ascetics in the area who believed that their teachings were superior. These other leaders were very jealous when they saw more and more people going to the Buddha and his disciples to offer alms and gifts of robes and medicine. Soon, overcome by jealousy, they decided to do something about it.

In Savatthi there was a female wandering ascetic by the name of Sundari. She was young in age and bad in character. The ascetics planned to attack the character and reputation of the Buddha and the monks through this female ascetic.

“Sister, you must try to help us do something about the Buddha,” they told her. “He is attracting supporters away from us.”

“What can I do for you?” Sundari asked.

“You can help us by visiting the Jeta’s Grove regularly to find out as much as you can about the Buddha. Find us a way we may try to win the people back to support us.”

Sundari visited the Jeta’s Grove regularly to spy on the Buddha. She did not know the real purpose—an evil one—of the ascetics in asking her to go there. After a time, the ascetics became sure that many people had seen Sundari going regularly to the Jeta’s Grove. They killed her and buried her in a nearby ditch. They then went to King Pasenadi of Kosala and reported that Sundari was missing and was last seen with the Buddha.

“Where do you suspect she is?” asked the king.

“She may still be in the Jeta’s Grove, Great King,” they replied. “We are worried because she has never been known to remain very long after the Buddha has finished giving his sermon.”

The king said, “Then you must go immediately to search for her there.”

The ascetics pretended to search for Sundari in the Jeta’s Grove. After searching for some time, they went to the spot where they had buried her and dug up her body. Placing the corpse on a stretcher, they carried it back to Savatthi. All the way they shouted angrily at the top of their voices, “See Lords, see the work of these monks who call themselves holy people. They are shameless and wicked liars. See what they have done. They have committed sexual misconduct with poor Sundari and then they have killed her to hide their crimes.”

The Buddha's disciples became frightened by these accusations and did not know what to do, but the Buddha calmly told them to control their fears. There was nothing to be frightened about, since they were innocent of the crime.

The Buddha advised them, "The people will accuse you and scold you, but you will do nothing except to recite these words: 'Those who lie and those who deny what they have done are equal in their evil deeds and both suffer.' Then be patient. The people will see how calm you are and will grow tired of scolding you. Within seven days, the shouting and accusations will subside."

The disciples heeded the Buddha's advice and people soon began to ask each other why the Buddha and his disciples were so calm. Then they remembered that the Buddha and his disciples were virtuous and that they had never been known to commit any evil crime. "Someone else must have murdered poor Sundari!" they cried. "It's impossible that such compassionate religious teachers could have done it." In the end, the shouting stopped and the Buddha used this incident to give some advice to his disciples on how to endure abuse with patience: "When harsh words are spoken to a bhikkhu, let him endure with an unruffled mind."

After some time, the king discovered that the very ascetics who had warned of the evil deeds had committed the crime. When they were brought before the king, they confessed their crimes in public and were punished accordingly. After the incident the Buddha and his disciples became more honoured and respected in Savatthi.

EXERCISE 16 IS ON PAGE 99

17. HE WORSHIPPED IN ALL DIRECTIONS

The Discourse on a Layperson's Duties

One morning, the Buddha left the Bamboo Grove to go into Rajagaha. On his alms round he saw a young man called Sigala, dripping wet as though he had just taken a bath. Sigala was bowing down in each of the four directions—to the East, South, West and North. He was bowing to the sky above and to the ground beneath his feet. Seeing all this, the Buddha stopped and asked the young man what he was doing.

"This was my father's last wish just before he died," Sigala replied. "My father advised me to worship in all directions, to keep evil away from the four directions and from above and below."

The Buddha thought about this and said, "It is the right thing to do, to keep the advice your father gave you as his last wish, but you must not take your father's words literally. Your father did not intend that you should actually bow down in this way." Then the Buddha explained the real meaning of worshipping in all directions:

"To worship the East really means to respect and honour your parents.

To worship the South means to respect and obey your teachers.

To worship the West means to be faithful and devoted to your wife.

To worship the North means to be pleasant and charitable to your friends, relatives and neighbours.

To worship the sky means to look after the material needs of religious persons such as the monks and ascetics.

To worship the earth means to be fair to your servants, giving them work according to their abilities, paying them fair wages, and providing them with medical care when they are sick.

It is by doing these things that one can keep away from evil."

The Buddha also advised Sigala of four evils to avoid.

"There are four evils of conduct," he said. "These should surely be avoided: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and telling lies."

Still the Buddha talked with Sigala. "There are four evil motives which make people perform evil actions: partiality (or being biased and prejudiced), enmity, foolishness and fear.

"And finally, Sigala, you must avoid the six ways of wasting one's wealth: drinking intoxicating drinks, roaming about the streets until late at night, spending too much time at fairs and thinking too much about entertainment, gambling, associating with evil friends, and being lazy."

Young Sigala listened with respect to this advice and suddenly remembered that when his father was alive, he had often told him what a good teacher the Buddha was. Although the old man had tried to get Sigala to go and listen to the Buddha, Sigala had always given excuses that it was too troublesome, that he had no time, was too tired or he had no money to spend on the monks.

The young man confessed this to the Buddha and asked him to accept him as his follower. He promised that from now on, he would keep his father's dying wish, but in the correct way as was taught to him by the Buddha.

EXERCISE 17 IS ON PAGE 99

18. AMBAPALI'S GIFT

Persons of all castes—high and low, women as well as men—sought the teachings of the Buddha and he gladly received them all.

When the Buddha and his disciples stopped one day at Vesali, a lady named Ambapali offered them the use of her garden of mangoes outside the city so that they might rest in the cool shade of her trees.

Ambapali was as lovely as the golden sun rising from the ocean, but she was immoral in character. Lady Ambapali did not intend to visit the Buddha, but her servant said to her, "Lady, all the nobles and people went on foot to the Garden of Mangoes yesterday. When I asked them why they had gone there, they said that it was because of the man who is resting there. There are no others like him. He is the son of a king and has given up his kingdom so that he might find the Truth."

Always ready for new insight, Lady Ambapali leapt to her feet, rushed to one of her coaches and rode toward the garden, casting proud glances about her. When she arrived at the garden gate, she descended from the coach and walked through the palms and mango trees. It was very quiet, even the leaves did not stir. Lady Ambapali walked quietly through the garden, until she saw beneath the deep shade of tall trees a man who could only have been the Buddha seated with folded hands and feet. Around his head an aura glowed like the midnight moon.

Ambapali stood there amazed, forgetting her beauty, forgetting herself, forgetting all but the Blessed One. Right there, her whole heart melted and flowed away in a river of tears. Very slowly, she approached the Buddha and fell before his feet, laying her face on the earth.

The Buddha asked her to rise and be seated. He spoke the Dharma to her. She listened to these great words with ears that drank them as the dry earth that has longed for the rain. After she had received the Dharma, Lady Ambapali bowed at his feet and invited the Buddha and his disciples to a meal the following day. The Buddha accepted her invitation.

Now the nobles of Vesali had also come out to meet the Blessed One. On the way to the Garden of Mangoes they met Ambapali and heard that the Buddha had accepted her invitation to a meal the following day. They said to her, "Lady Ambapali, we have a bargain for you. Sell us the honour of his company for great weights of gold."

And she, glowing with joy, said, "Sirs, even if you were to give me Vesali and all its territories, yet I would not give up this honourable meal."

In anger, the nobles went to the Buddha and requested the honour of offering another meal, but the Buddha informed them that he had accepted Ambapali's invitation.

The following day, Ambapali set sweet milk-rice and cake before the Buddha and his followers, and she herself attended them in great humility. After the Buddha had eaten, Ambapali sat on one side, with folded palms and said, "Holy one, I present this garden to the order. Accept it, if it be your will."

The Buddha accepted the gift, seeing the purity of heart that offered it. He then gladdened Lady Ambapali again with the Dharma. This was the turning point of Ambapali's life: she understood the Dharma and became a virtuous woman. Some time later she entered the order of nuns and with the heart of wisdom strengthened in her, she became an arahant.

Just as the lotus does not grow on dry land but springs from black and watery mud, Ambapali, despite her immoral past, managed to achieve the height of spiritual development.

After this incident, the Buddha and his disciples moved to a little village nearby called Beluva. As the rainy season was about to begin, the Buddha decided to spend the last rainy season at this village.

EXERCISE 18 IS ON PAGE 99

19. JIVAKA, THE BUDDHA'S DOCTOR

Jivaka was the most celebrated doctor in India during the Buddha's time. Immediately after his birth, Jivaka was placed in a wooden box and thrown away by his mother, a courtesan, on a rubbish heap beside the road.

The same morning baby Jivaka was abandoned, Prince Abhaya, a son of King Bimbisara, happened to pass by the rubbish dump on his way to the palace. When the prince discovered that the baby was still alive, he was moved by compassion and ordered it to be brought up as his adopted son.

When he grew up, Jivaka studied medicine for seven years under a famous teacher. Soon his unusual skill as a physician and a surgeon became known. He was called upon to treat kings and princes, including King Bimbisara himself. But of all the distinguished people Jivaka attended to, his greatest pleasure was to attend to the Buddha, which he did three times a day.

Jivaka helped in many ways. When Devadatta threw down a rock splinter and injured the Buddha's foot, it was Jivaka who healed him.

Realising the advantages of having a monastery close to his house, Jivaka built one in his mango garden. He invited the Buddha and his disciples to the monastery, offered alms and donated the monastery to the Buddha and the monks. After the blessing ceremony of this monastery, Jivaka attained the first stage of sainthood (sotapanna).

Later, when King Ajatasattu asked him where he could go for religious discussions, Jivaka brought him to see the Buddha. Although the king had killed his father under the evil advice of Devadatta, King Ajatasattu became a distinguished lay follower of the Buddha and supported the First Buddhist Council after the Buddha's death.

EXERCISE 19 IS ON PAGE 99

20. THE QUARREL AT KOSAMBI

In the ninth year of his ministry, the Buddha was residing at Kosambi. While he was there, a quarrel arose between two parties of monks. One party consisted of experts in the disciplinary code or the Vinaya rules; the others were experts in the Dharma, or the teachings.

The Buddha tried in various ways to settle the quarrel peacefully, but finally, when his efforts failed, he left them without a word, taking only his bowl and robes, and retired to the Paileyaka Forest.

During his time in the forest, an elephant ministered to the needs of the Buddha. The elephant cleared a portion of the forest in the midst of which stood a stone cave. Each day the elephant brought fruits as offerings to the Buddha. One day a monkey, who had watched the elephant making his offerings, brought a honeycomb as an offering too.

Meanwhile, the people of Kosambi found out that the Buddha had gone alone to the Paileyaka Forest because of the quarreling amongst the monks. When they heard these stories, they stopped offering alms to the monks. News of this reached Ananda at Savatthi. At the end of the rainy season Ananda decided to visit the Buddha and told him that people everywhere were eager to hear the Dharma from him, especially the people at Savatthi. In this way the Buddha was persuaded to return to Savatthi and some time after this, the quarreling monks came to seek the Buddha's forgiveness. It was because of the quarrel at Kosambi that the Buddha gave a sermon in which he said:

“One should associate with the wise, not the foolish.

It would be better to live alone if we cannot find good friends.

There is no companionship with the foolish.”

EXERCISE 20 IS ON PAGE 99

21. THE BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

Upali* was a millionaire, and one of the best pupils of another religious teacher, Nigantha Nathaputta, whose teaching differed from that of the Buddha. Upali was also a very good debater and was asked one day by his religious teacher to challenge the Buddha on certain points of the law of cause and effect (karma). After a long and complicated discussion, the Buddha was able to convince Upali that his religious teacher's views were wrong.

Upali was so impressed with the Buddha's teaching that he immediately asked to become his follower. He was surprised when the Buddha advised him, "Upali, you are a famous person. Be sure that you are not changing your religion just because you are pleased with me or that you are under the influence of your emotions. Thoroughly investigate my teaching with an open mind before you decide to become my follower."

Hearing the Buddha's spirit of free inquiry, Upali was even more pleased and said, "Lord, it is wonderful that you have asked me to think this over carefully. Other teachers would have accepted me without hesitation, taken me through the streets in a procession and proclaimed that the millionaire had renounced his former religion and embraced theirs. Yes, indeed, I am sure now, Lord please accept me as your follower."

The Buddha agreed to accept Upali as his lay follower, but further advised him, "Although you have now become my follower, Upali, you should practise tolerance and compassion. Continue to give alms to your former religious teachers as they still depend very much on your support. You cannot just ignore them and withdraw the support you used to give them."

The advice the Buddha gave that day about tolerance, free inquiry and not accepting his teachings for emotional reasons has led to the clean record in the history of Buddhism. There has never been any Buddhist religious fanatic who forced people to accept the religion by torture or fear of punishment. Buddhism spread through peaceful means mainly because of its beauty and goodwill.

EXERCISE 21 IS ON PAGE 100

* This is not the Venerable Upali, a barber before he became a monk, who answered questions on the Vinaya rules at the First Buddhist Council.

22. THE MONK WHO TRIED TOO HARD

Sona was the son of a rich businessman. He liked most of all to listen to lute music and to play the instrument. He had been raised in wealth and luxury, so his skin was very delicate and soft. It was even said that hair grew out of the skin of his soles. The rumour was so strong that Sona was once brought before King Bimbisara, who wanted to see the unusual feet he had heard so much about.

Sona lived near the Vultures' Peak Rock in Rajagaha, where the Buddha stayed during some rainy seasons. One day, Sona went to the Vultures' Peak Rock to listen to the Buddha's discourse, which was about the happiness experienced from non-attachment to worldly desires. As he wanted to experience this happiness, Sona asked to be ordained as a monk.

After becoming a monk, he was taught to be constantly mindful, even when walking. Sona was very enthusiastic. Every day he walked to and fro in meditation in the monastery until one day his feet developed blisters and bled.

But even after all his efforts Sona did not experience happiness, only pain and disappointment. Thoughts of craving for worldly things still came to his mind. "It is no use," Sona said to himself. "I have tried so very hard, but have still not achieved what I wished for. It is better for me to return to lay life and enjoy the happiness I used to experience by performing charity."

When the Buddha heard about this he went to see Sona. "Sona," he said, "I have heard that you are not getting good results from your practice of mindfulness and want to return to the lay life. Suppose I explain why you did not get good results, would you stay on as a monk and try again?"

"Yes I would, Lord," replied Sona.

"Sona, you were a musician and you used to play the lute. Tell me, Sona, did you produce good music when the lute string was well tuned, neither too tight nor too loose?"

"I was able to produce good music, Lord," replied Sona.

"What happened when the strings were too tightly wound up?"

"I could not produce any music, Lord," said Sona.

"What happened when the strings were too slack?"

"I could not produce any music at all, Lord," replied Sona.

"Sona, do you now see why you did not experience the happiness of renouncing worldly craving? You have been straining too hard in your meditation. Do it in a relaxed way, but without being slack. Try it again and you will experience the good result."

Sona understood and stayed on in the monastery as a monk and soon attained sainthood.

EXERCISE 22 IS ON PAGE 100

23. THE ORDER OF NUNS

In the fifth year of his ministry, the Buddha was staying at Vesali when he heard that his father, King Suddhodana, was ill. He decided to visit him again at Kapilavatthu to teach him the Dharma, and made the long journey. After hearing the Dharma, the king immediately attained arahantship and passed away peacefully seven days later. It was in this year that the order of nuns was founded at the request of Maha Pajapati Gotami, the aunt and foster mother of the Buddha.

Three times she approached the Buddha and asked him to ordain her into the Sangha, but each time the Buddha refused, giving no reason at all. After the Buddha had stayed at Kapilavatthu a while, he journeyed back to Vesali.

Pajapati Gotami was a determined lady, and would not be so easily discouraged. She had a plan to get her way. She cut her hair, put on yellow garments and, surrounded by a large number of Sakyan ladies, walked 150 miles from Kapilavatthu to Vesali. When she arrived at Vesali, her feet were swollen and her body was covered with dust. She stood outside the hall where the Buddha was staying with tears on her face, still hoping that the Buddha would ordain her as a nun.

Ananda was surprised to see her in this condition. "Gotami, why are you standing here like this?" he asked.

"Venerable Ananda, it is because the Blessed One does not give permission for women to become nuns," she replied.

"Wait here, Gotami, I'll ask the Blessed One about this," Ananda told her. When Ananda asked the Buddha to admit Maha Pajapati Gotami as a nun, the Buddha refused. Ananda asked three times and three times the Buddha refused.

So Ananda put the request in a different way. Respectfully he questioned the Buddha, "Lord, are women capable of realising the various stages of sainthood as nuns?"

"They are, Ananda," said the Buddha.

"If that is so, Lord, then it would be good if women could be ordained as nuns," said Ananda, encouraged by the Buddha's reply.

"If, Ananda, Maha Pajapati Gotami would accept the Eight Conditions* it would be regarded that she has been ordained already as a nun."

When Ananda mentioned the conditions to Maha Pajapati Gotami, she gladly agreed to abide by those conditions and automatically became

* These rules are related to the monks and nuns code of ethics.

a nun. Before long she attained arahantship. The other Sakyan ladies who were ordained with her also attained Arahantship.

The establishment of an order of nuns with rules and regulations was an opportunity for women that Buddha offered for the first time in the history of the world. No other religious leader had given such a high religious position for women.

EXERCISE 23 IS ON PAGE 100

24. THE BUDDHA ON THE CASTE SYSTEM

At the time of the Buddha the caste system was firmly established in India. According to this system, a person's position in society was determined from the time he was born and there was no way to change his lot in life. There were four castes, or classes, of people in society:

1. The Brahmins or priests, who claimed to be the highest caste and the purest of peoples
2. The warriors
3. The merchants and traders
4. The untouchables, who were considered the lowest class. They became workers and servants who did all the menial jobs, and were treated as slaves.

The Buddha condemned the caste system, which he considered unjust. He pointed out that there existed wicked and cruel people as well as virtuous and kind people in every caste. Any person who had committed a crime would be punished accordingly by his karma no matter what caste he belonged to. He said a person may be considered to have come from a high or low caste according to his good and bad deeds. Therefore, according to the Buddha it is the good and bad actions of a person and not his birth that should determine his caste.

The Buddha introduced the idea of placing a higher value on morality and the equality of people instead of on which family or caste a person is born into. This was also the first attempt to abolish discrimination and slavery in the history of mankind.

The Buddha said:

- By birth one is not an outcaste,
- By birth one is not a Brahmin;
- By deeds alone one is an outcaste,
- By deeds alone one is a Brahmin

EXERCISE 24 IS ON PAGE 100

25. THE MIRROR OF THE DHAMMA

From Rajagaha the Buddha, accompanied by Venerable Ananda and a large number of his disciples, started the journey to the north. They would stop a while at every city and village, and the Buddha would teach the Dharma.

They stopped at a place called the Brick Hall in a little village called Nadika. It happened that some monks and lay devotees had passed away at this village, and Venerable Ananda wanted to know the future states of those who had passed away.

The Buddha revealed that as they had been practising what he had taught, all of them had attained at least one of the stages of sainthood. He continued, "Now, it is natural for human beings to die; but if you ask this question each time a person dies, it wearies me. So I will give you a discourse called 'The Mirror of the Dharma or Truth'. With this, a noble disciple can predict for himself, 'There is no more suffering for me, no more evil and low states. I am a sotapanna and I am not subject to falling back to the lower states. I shall be assured of final enlightenment.'

"What, O Ananda, is the Mirror of the Dharma? Herein a noble disciple has absolute confidence in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Because of his confidence, he spends much time to reflect or think about the great qualities of the Triple Gem. These reflections will help him develop the great qualities within himself and the power to concentrate the mind. These results will help him attain the first stage of sainthood (sotapanna).

"Possessing this Mirror of Dharma, a noble disciple shall be able to predict for himself that he shall not fall back to lower states like hell, the animal world, the ghost world and other sorrowful and unhappy states."

After delivering this discourse at Nadika, the Buddha and his disciples then proceeded to Vesali.

EXERCISE 25 IS ON PAGE 100

26. THE BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TO MIRACLES

When the Buddha was once living at Nalanda in the Pavarika Grove, a man by the name of Kevaddha went up to him, paid homage, and said, "Lord, Nalanda is a successful city. The people living in Nalanda are prosperous, and they have confidence in the Blessed One. Lord, it would be good if the Blessed One appointed a monk to work a marvel of supernatural power,

so that the people of Nalanda might become much more confident in the Blessed One.”

The Buddha replied, “Kevaddha, I do not teach the Law to bhikkhus in that way.” The Buddha gave the same reply when the question was put to him the second and third time. After the third question, the Buddha replied that there were three kinds of supernormal levels:

1. The marvel of supernormal power to appear as many persons, to pass through walls, to fly through the air, walk on water. All these are physical actions the ordinary people cannot perform.

2. The supernormal power to read other people’s minds.

3. The supernormal power to be able to guide people according to their mental development, for their own good, using suitable methods to fit these people.

The first two supernormal powers, if displayed for their own sake in order to impress people, are no different from the performance of magicians. A monk who practices such worldly miracles is a source of shame, humiliation and disgust. Such actions may impress and win converts and followers, but they do not bring enlightenment to help them put an end to suffering.

The third kind of supernormal power, though, which may be called a “miracle”, helps people to get rid of suffering. This is the only supernormal power that is fit to be practiced.

The only miracles that should be performed are these: when you see a man full of passion, craving and greed and you teach him to free himself from passion, craving and greed; when you see that a man is a slave to hatred and anger and you use your powers to help him control his hatred and anger; when you come across a man who is ignorant and who cannot see the true nature of the world (everything in this world is impermanent, sorrowful and egoless) and you use your powers to help him overcome his ignorance. These are worthy “miracles” you can perform.

This advice to Kevaddha was also extended to the Vinaya rules that forbid monks from performing miracles to impress people and gain converts, without helping them to be enlightened. This was clear in the case of Pindola.

Arahant Pindola Bharadwaja was famous for miraculous psychic powers. A rich man, wanting this monk to prove his psychic powers, placed a beautiful bowl at the top of a high place and challenged any holy man to get the bowl down. If he could do it, he could keep the bowl.

Pindola Bharadwaja flew up and took the bowl down easily. This was also done to prove to the rich man that there are saints in the world,

a fact that the rich man did not believe. When the Buddha came to know about this incident, he called Pindola Bharadwaja to bring his bowl. He broke the bowl into pieces in front of a large gathering of monks, saying, "I am displeased about the demonstration of your psychic powers. You must never show off your powers just to impress simple ignorant people."

EXERCISE 26 IS ON PAGE 101

27. THE BUDDHA'S LAST ILLNESS

The Buddha had not been staying very long at Beluva during the rainy season when he became sick. The severe sickness attacked him with violent and deadly pains. But, mindful and self-possessed, he bore them without complaint. And this thought came into his mind: "It would not be right for me to pass away without addressing the disciples, without taking leave of the order. Let me now by a strong effort of the will suppress this sickness." He suppressed the sickness and it abated.

And when he began to recover, he went out of the monastery, and sat down on a seat spread out for him. The Venerable Ananda went to where the Buddha was, sat respectfully beside him, and said, "I have seen how the Blessed One suffered, and at that sight my body became weak as a creeper. Yet I had some little comfort in thinking that the Blessed one would not pass away until he had left some instructions for the order."

"What more then, Ananda does the order expect from me?" said the Buddha. "Now, a Perfect One does not think that it is he who shall lead the order or that it is dependent upon him. Ananda, I am now grown old and full of years. My journey is drawing to its close. Therefore, Ananda, each of you should make the Dharma his island, and have no other as his refuge. And whoever after I am dead shall be an island unto themselves, who makes the Dharma their island, the Dharma their refuge, they will be the foremost amongst my monks."

Though old and feeble, the Buddha continued to use every opportunity to teach the Dharma to his disciples. He also went on alms rounds when there were no private invitations from the villagers at Beluva.

One morning the Buddha robed himself early in the morning and, taking his bowl, went into Vesali for alms. When he returned from his alms round, he spoke to the Venerable Ananda: "Take a mat, Ananda, let us go to the Capala Shrine to pass the day."

They sat down on a mat and the Buddha spoke about the pleasant surroundings in all the shrines in Vesali, and then addressed Venerable Ananda thus:

“When anyone has practiced and developed the Four Means of Accomplishment, he could, if he wished, live for a longer period. I have completely mastered the Four Means of Accomplishment, and if I so wish, I could live longer.”

Even though the Buddha gave a clear suggestion, Venerable Ananda could not understand its meaning and therefore ask the Buddha to live longer for the good, benefit, and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world. At that time Venerable Ananda could not understand because his mind was confused.

The Buddha addressed him, saying, “You may leave me, Ananda, for a while.” So Ananda went and sat under a nearby tree.

The Buddha had appeared on earth to teach the seekers of Truth how to see things as they truly are and to show the path for deliverance from all the ills of life. The Buddha reflected about the long years of teaching he had performed to fulfil his mission. He felt that he had given all the necessary instructions to his followers, both monks and the lay followers. Not only were they following his teaching, they were also able to teach the teachings to others. He therefore decided not to live up to his full life span and announced to Venerable Ananda that he would pass away in three month’s time.

Only then Venerable Ananda remembered what the Buddha had said earlier and begged him to live for a longer period for the good and happiness for all.

“Enough, Ananda, do not beg me. The time for making such a request is now past. Let us now go to the Hall with the Pointed Roof in the Great Wood,” said the Buddha.

When they arrived at the Great Hall, he said, “Ananda, go and summon all the monks living in Vesali. Ask them to meet at the service hall.” When the monks had all come, he spoke to them, “Whatever truths I have taught you, study them and put them into practice, so that the holy life may last long for the good and benefit of the many.

“All component things must grow old and pass away. Work out your salvation with diligence. At the end of three months from this time, the Blessed One will pass away. My age is now full ripe; my life draws to its close. Be diligent, mindful and virtuous. Keep watch over your own hearts. Who lives out diligently the Dharma and Discipline will leave the round of rebirths and make an end of suffering.”

All the Buddha's disciples were grieved to hear the sad announcement of his death in such a short time to come. All of them came forward to pay their last respects except one monk named Dhammarama. They did not know why he did not come and suspected him of not being loyal and dutiful to the Buddha.

This matter was reported to the Buddha, who summoned Dhammarama to his presence to explain his absence to all the other monks. He then replied that since the Buddha would be passing away in three month's time, he thought that the best way of honouring the teacher was by attaining arahantship before his death.

"Excellent, excellent! He who loves me should follow the example of Dhammarama. He honours me most who practises my teaching best," said the Buddha, in praise of this monk.

The Buddha decided to continue his last journey the next morning. His next destination was the little village of Pava.

EXERCISE 27 IS ON PAGE 101

28. THE LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA

After his 55th year, many incidents in the life of the Buddha were recorded without an exact indication of the year in which they happened. However, the incidents occurring in his eightieth year were dated and recorded in the Maha Parinibbana Sutta.

When the Buddha reached his eightieth year, he felt that his days in this world were coming to an end. Although he had suffered the sicknesses and effects of old age like any other man, he was different from ordinary men. With his mental powers, developed through advanced mental training, he was able to overcome certain painful feelings of the body. His mind was always sparkling like a radiant diamond, even though his body was beginning to weaken.

In this last year of his life, he decided to spend his last days in the peaceful and simple surroundings of Kusinaga, a small village in northern India. He preferred to leave behind him the large and prosperous cities such as Rajagaha and Savatthi with their crowds, their merchants and kings.

The starting point of his journey to the country was Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha. He journeyed on foot, accompanied by Venerable Ananda and many disciples. It was a long journey and the party travelled through many cities and villages on their way. By this time, Venerable

Rahula and Yasodhara had already passed away, and so had the Buddha's two chief disciples, Venerable Moggallana and Venerable Sariputta.

During the journey, the Buddha's thoughts turned to the welfare of the order of monks. Many of his teachings were concerned with advising on how the monks should behave to ensure that the order would carry on after his death. He reminded his disciples to practice all the truths that he had taught them.

One teaching he gave reminded the disciples to practise the seven factors of enlightenment. Another teaching was on the four ways to check whether a teaching was a true teaching of the Buddha or not, by comparing it with the Vinaya (the disciplinary rules for the order) and the suttas (discourses of the Buddha).

There was one teaching which the Buddha gave again and again during the many stops on his last journey. It was a sermon on the fruits of following the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path—morality, concentration and wisdom—which would help his disciples put an end to all sufferings.

EXERCISE 28 IS ON PAGE 101

29. THE BUDDHA'S LAST MEAL

When the Buddha and his disciples arrived at Pava, the son of the village goldsmith, whose name was Cunda, invited the party to a meal called sukaramaddava, or "boar's delight". Some scholars believe it was a special delicious dish of mushrooms, while others believe it to be a dish of wild boar's flesh.

The Buddha advised Cunda to serve him only with the sukaramaddava that he had prepared. The other food that Cunda had prepared could be served to the other monks. After the meals were served Buddha told Cunda, "Cunda, if any sukaramaddava is left over, bury it in a hole. I do not see anyone in the world other than the Blessed One who could digest the food if he ate it."

"So be it, Lord," Cunda replied, and buried the leftovers in the ground. He went to the Buddha and, after paying homage to him, sat down at one side. Then the Buddha taught him the Dharma. The Buddha also praised Cunda for the meal that had refreshed and strengthened him after his journey. But soon after this, the Buddha suffered from an attack of the dysentery he had been suffering from earlier and sharp pains came upon him. By an effort of will he was able to bear the pain. Though extremely

weak the Buddha decided to continue on immediately to Kusinaga, a little more than six miles away. After a painful struggle, he reached a grove of sala trees just outside the town.

The Buddha took his last bath in the Kakuttha river. After resting a while, he said, "Now it may happen that some people may make Cunda regret having given me the meal that made me sick. Ananda, if this should happen, you should tell Cunda that you have heard directly from the Buddha that it was a gain for him. Tell him that two offerings to the Buddha are of equal gain; the offering of food just before his supreme enlightenment and the offering of food just before he passes away. This is the final birth of the Buddha."

Then he said, "Ananda, please make a couch ready for me with its head to the North between two big sala trees. I am tired and I want to lie down."

Now, on that occasion, those two sala trees were covered with blossoms through the influence of the devas, though it was not the season. They scattered and sprinkled the Buddha with the falling blossoms, as though out of respect for him. Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ananda, "Ananda, the two big sala trees are scattering flowers on me as though they are paying their respects to me. But this is not how I should be respected and honoured. Rather, it is the monks or nuns, or the men or woman lay followers, who live according to my teaching, that should respect and honour me."

A little while later it was noticed that Venerable Ananda was nowhere to be seen. He had gone inside a hut and stood leaning against the door bar, weeping. He thought: "Alas! I remain still but a learner, one who has yet to work out his own perfection. And the Master is about to pass away from me—he who is so kind!"

And the Buddha, sending for Ananda, said to him, "Enough now, Ananda! Do not sorrow and cry. Have I not already repeatedly told you that there is separation and parting from all that is dear and beloved? How is it possible that anything that has been born, has had a beginning, should not again die? Such a thing is not possible.

"Ananda, you have served me with your acts of loving-kindness, helpfully, gladly, sincerely, and so too in your words and your thoughts. You have gained merit, Ananda. Keep on trying and you will soon be free of all your human weaknesses. In a very short time you too will become an arahant.

"Now you can go, Ananda. But go into Kusinaga and tell all the people that tonight, in the last watch of the night, the Buddha will pass away into nirvana. Come and see the Buddha before he passes away."

So Venerable Ananda, taking with him another monk, did as the Buddha bid him and went to Kusinaga to tell the people. When they heard the news, they were much grieved. And all the people of Kusinaga, men, women and children came to the two big sala trees to bid a last farewell to the Buddha. Family by family, they bowed low down before him and so bade him farewell.

There are four places for faithful followers to see their inspiration. These are four holy places made sacred by their association with the Buddha. They are:

1. The Buddha's birth place (Lumbini)
2. The place where the Buddha attained enlightenment (Bodh Gaya)
3. The place where the Buddha gave his first teachings and set in motion the Wheel of the Dharma or Truth (Sarnath)
4. The place where the Buddha attained parinibbana, or final liberation (Kusinaga).

EXERCISE 29 IS ON PAGE 101

30. SUBHADDA, THE LAST DISCIPLE

Now it happened that a certain wandering ascetic called Subhadda was staying near Kusinaga and, hearing that the Buddha was about to pass away, he resolved to go and see him. Subhadda had a question he could not resolve and was sure that the Buddha could answer his question and clear his doubts.

So Subhadda went to the sala tree grove, and asked Venerable Ananda whether he could see the Buddha. But Venerable Ananda said, "Enough, friend Subhadda, the Buddha is very weary. Do not trouble him."

For a second and third time Subhadda made his request and for the second and third time, Venerable Ananda replied in the same manner.

However, the Buddha caught a word or two of the conversation between Venerable Ananda and Subhadda, and called Venerable Ananda to him, saying, "Come, Ananda. Do not keep Subhadda from seeing me. Let him come. Whatever Subhadda may ask of me, he will ask from a desire for knowledge and not to annoy me. And whatever I may say in answer to his questions, that he will quickly understand."

Permission granted, Subhadda approached the Buddha, and after greeting him, said, "O Gotama, there are many famous religious teachers who teach other teachings, different from yours. Have they all, as they

claim, discovered the truth? Or have only some of them discovered the truth while others have not?"

"Enough, O Subhadda," said the Buddha, "You should not worry about other teachings. Listen to me and pay close attention to what I say, and I will make known to you the truth.

"In whatever doctrine or teaching the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, there will neither be found those who have become sotapanna, sakadagami, anagami or arahant (four levels of sainthood). But in those teachings where the Noble Eightfold Path is found, there also you will find the sotapanna, the sakadagami, the anagami and the arahant. In this teaching of mine, O Subhadda, is to be found the Noble Eightfold Path, and in it alone the sotapanna, the sakadagami, the anagami, and the arahant are found. In no other schools of religious teachers can such arya beings (saints) be found. And if only my disciples live rightly and follow my precepts or training rules, the world will never be without genuine arahants."

Then Subhadda asked to be admitted to the order of monks and the Buddha granted his request. In this way Subhadda became the very last convert and disciple of the Buddha, just as Kondanna in the deer park at Benares was the first convert and disciple forty-five years earlier.

And by earnest and diligent effort in following the teaching, Subhadda very shortly became an arahant.

EXERCISE 30 IS ON PAGE 102

31. THE BUDDHA'S LAST WORDS

After the conversion of Subhadda, the Buddha spoke again to Venerable Ananda. "It may be, Ananda, that some of you will say, 'without the Buddha, the Sublime Teacher, there is no teacher for us'. No, Ananda, you should not think in this way. Whatever doctrine and discipline taught and made known by me will be your teacher when I am gone."

Then the Buddha, addressing the other monks said, "If any amongst you has any doubts as to the Buddha, the teaching, or the order of monks, ask me now so that afterwards you may have no cause to regret that you did not ask me while I was still with you."

But at these words, none of the monks said anything. None had any questions, and all of them were silent. For the second and third time the Buddha addressed the monks in this way. And for the second and third time, all the monks were silent.

The Buddha said, "Perhaps it may be out of respect for the teacher, that you do not question me. Let a friend, O disciples, tell it to another friend." Still the disciples remained silent.

Then Venerable Ananda spoke to the Buddha, "It is wonderful. It is marvellous, Lord! I do believe that in all this great company of monks there is not a single one who has doubts or questions about the Buddha, the teaching or the order of monks, or the path and the method of training and conduct."

"With you, Ananda," said the Buddha, "this may be a matter of faith and belief. But, Ananda, I know that not one single monk gathered here has any doubt or question about these things. Of all the 500 monks here, Ananda, he who is the most backward is a sotapanna, not subject to fall back to a lower state of existence, but is certain and destined for enlightenment."

Then the Buddha addressed all the monks once more, and these were the very last words he spoke:

"Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are changeable. They are not lasting. Work hard to gain your own salvation."

Then the Buddha lapsed into the jhana stages, or meditative absorptions. Going from level to level, one after the other, ever deeper and deeper. Then he came out of the meditative absorption for the last time and passed into nirvana, leaving nothing whatever behind that can cause rebirth again in this or any other world.

The passing away, or the final nirvana of the Buddha, occurred in 543 BC on a full-moon day in the month of May, known in the Indian calendar as Vesak.

EXERCISE 31 IS ON PAGE 102

32. THE FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL

After the Buddha passed away a meeting was held to preserve his teachings.

Understandably, the Buddha's death was a great loss to most of his followers, except the deeply realised disciples, and many were plunged into deep grief. Yet there was a monk who had entered the order in his old age, who rejoiced at the Buddha's death.

"Do not be sad, brothers," he said. "Cry not. We are now free of the Great Ascetic. He constantly worried us, saying 'This is suitable, this is not suitable.' Now we are free do do what we like."

These unexpected words spoken by a monk hardly a week after the death of the Great Teacher caused the Venerable Maha Kassapa, the third

chief disciple of the Buddha, to call a meeting of the leading arahants in order to protect and preserve the teachings. The other elder monks were consulted and they all welcomed the suggestion.

King Ajatasattu was informed of the intention of the order of Monks and he made all necessary arrangements for the monks to meet at the entrance of the Sattapanni Cave in Rajagaha.

Five hundred seats were arranged and prepared in the large hall, but only 499 famous arahants were chosen for the meeting. The empty seat was reserved for the Venerable Ananda, who was still only a sotapanna.

Soon there was only one more day before the meeting was to begin. The Venerable Ananda thought, "The meeting is tomorrow. It is not right for me to go to the meeting as a mere learner and not an arahant. I must try very hard to purify my mind in the little time left to me".

He spent much of the night in the Contemplation of the Body, one of the meditation exercises taught by the Buddha for the purification of mind. When it was almost dawn, he thought, " I shall lie down," but he kept mindful of the body. Before his head touched the pillow and after he raised his feet off the ground, all the remaining defilements disappeared from his mind. He had attained arahantship. And so he went to the council meeting as an arahant.

The meeting started three months after the passing away of the Buddha. That meeting is now referred to as the First Buddhist Council.

The Venerable Maha Kassapa was the president at the First Council. Venerable Upali was chosen to answer questions about the Vinaya, the monks' and nuns' disciplinary rules. Venerable Ananda, who had the honour of hearing all the discourses of the Buddha and who had an unusually good memory, was chosen to recite all the discourses and answer questions about the teachings.

The First Buddhist Council collected together and arranged the Buddhist Scriptures known as the Pali Tipitaka, which have since been handed down from one generation of monks to another. In the early days of Buddhism, there was no written record of the teachings. The monks had to memorise the scriptures and then teach the next generation of monks in the same way, it being an oral tradition.

About 83 B.C., during the reign of the pious Sinhalese king, Vatta Gamani Abhaya, a Council of Arahants was held in Sri Lanka and the Tipitaka, for the first time in the history of Buddhism, was put down in writing on ola leaves.

EXERCISE 32 IS ON PAGE 102



PART ONE EXERCISES



EXERCISE 1. QUEEN MAHA MAYA'S DREAM

1. WHO WAS SUDDHODANA?
2. WHERE WAS HE RULING?
3. WHO WAS HIS QUEEN?
4. WHICH KINGDOM DID SHE COME FROM?
5. WHAT WAS HER DREAM?
6. WHAT DID SHE DO IN THE MORNING?
7. WHAT DID THE KING DO AFTER THE DREAM?
8. WHY WERE THE KING AND QUEEN HAPPY AFTER THE DREAM?
9. WHAT DID THE KING DO TO SHOW HE WAS HAPPY?

EXERCISE 2. THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE

1. WHY DID QUEEN MAHA MAYA WANT TO LEAVE KAPPILAVATTHU?
2. WHERE WAS HER FATHER'S PALACE?
3. HOW DID THE KING SEND HER OFF?
4. WHY DID THE QUEEN STOP AT THE PARK?
5. WHAT WAS THE PARK CALLED?
6. WHEN DID THE BIRTH OF THE BABY TAKE PLACE?
7. WHAT DOES THE LEGEND SAY ABOUT THE BIRTH?
8. THE BABY WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE SAID SOMETHING. WHAT DID HE SAY?

EXERCISE 3. THE NAMING CEREMONY

1. WHO WAS ASITA?
2. WHY DID HE GO TO THE PALACE?
3. WHAT DID THE KING DO AFTER ASITA WAS SEATED IN THE PALACE?
4. WHAT HAPPENED AS THE KING TRIED TO SHOW THE BABY TO THE SAGE?
5. WAS ASITA ANNOYED AT THIS INCIDENT?
6. WHAT DID ASITA DO WHEN THE INCIDENT HAPPENED?
7. WHAT DID ASITA SAY ABOUT THE PRINCE?
8. WHAT DID KONDANNA SAY?
9. WHAT WAS THE NAME GIVEN TO THE PRINCE?
10. WHAT DOES THIS NAME MEAN?

EXERCISE 4. THE PRINCE'S EDUCATION

1. WHO WAS PRAJAPATI?

2. HOW WAS SHE RELATED TO MAHA MAYA?
3. WHO WAS THE TEACHER OF SIDDHARTHA?
4. WAS THE PRINCE A CLEVER BOY?
5. WHAT DID HE STUDY?
6. DID HIS FRIENDS LIKE HIM? WHY?
7. WHY DID THE TEACHER LOVE HIM?

EXERCISE 5. PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S KINDNESS

1. WHO WAS DEVADATTA?
2. WHO WAS MORE KIND?
3. WHAT DID DEVADATTA DO WHEN HE SAW A SWAN FLYING?
4. HOW DID SIDDHARTHA SAVE THE LIFE OF THE SWAN?
5. DID THE BOYS EXPECT TO SEE THE SWAN ALIVE?
6. FILL IN THE BLANKS: "A LIFE MUST BELONG TO HIM WHO....., BUT NOT TO ONE WHO TRIES TO..... . THE SWAN BELONGS TO....., NOT TO.....?"
7. WHY WAS SIDDHARTHA GIVEN THE SWAN?

EXERCISE 6. PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S WIFE

1. WHAT DID SIDDHARTHA'S FATHER DO TO MAKE HIM HAPPY?
2. WHY DID THE KING ALWAYS GIVE HIM YOUNG SERVANTS?
3. WHAT WAS THE PRINCE ALWAYS DOING?
4. WHAT DID THE KING ASK THE WISE PEOPLE?
5. WHO DID THE PRINCE MARRY?
6. HOW OLD WAS HE WHEN HE MARRIED?

EXERCISE 7. THE FOUR SIGHTS: OLD AGE

1. WHY WAS THE PRINCE NOT HAPPY IN THE PALACE?
2. WHAT DID HIS FATHER SAY WHEN HE ASKED HIS PERMISSION TO GO OUT OF THE PALACE?
3. WHAT DID HE SEE WHEN HE WENT TO THE CITY?
4. WHAT DID THE OLD MAN SAY?
5. WHAT DID THE PRINCE ASK THE DRIVER?
6. WHAT DID THE DRIVER SAY TO HIM?
7. HAD THE PRINCE SEEN MANY OLD PEOPLE BEFORE? WHY?
8. DO YOU THINK YOU ALSO WILL GROW OLD LIKE THAT?
9. WHAT DID THE KING DO AGAIN TO MAKE HIM HAPPY?

EXERCISE 8. THE FOUR SIGHTS: SICKNESS

1. WAS THE KING WILLING TO LET HIS SON GO OUT OF THE PALACE? WHY?
2. HOW DID THE PRINCE GO TO THE CITY THIS TIME?
3. WHAT WERE PEOPLE DOING THIS TIME?
4. WHAT MADE HIM SAD THIS TIME?
5. WHAT DID HE SAY WHEN HE SAW THE MAN ON THE GROUND?
6. WHAT DID HE DO TO HIM?
7. WHY DID CHANNA NOT ALLOW HIM TO DO THAT?
8. WHY WAS THE PRINCE SHOCKED TO SEE HIM LIKE THAT?
9. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SEE A SICK MAN LIKE THAT?
10. DO YOU THINK YOU WILL ALSO FALL SICK ONE DAY?

EXERCISE 9. THE FOUR SIGHTS: DEATH

1. WHAT DID PRINCE SIDDHARTHA SEE THIS TIME?
2. WHAT MADE HIM SADDER?
3. WHAT DID HE ASKED CHANNA?
4. WHAT DID HE THINK AFTER THAT?
5. WHAT DID HE WANT TO FIND OUT?

EXERCISE 10. THE FOUR SIGHTS: A MONK

1. WHAT DID THE PRINCE SEE THIS TIME?
2. WAS HE HAPPY TO SEE HIM? WHY?
3. WHAT DID CHANNA SAY ABOUT THE MONK?
4. WHAT IS THE NAME OF PRINCE SIDDHARTHA'S SON?
5. WHAT DID SIDDHARTHA HEAR WHEN HE RETURNED TO THE PALACE?
6. WHAT DID HE THINK ABOUT WHAT HE HEARD?

EXERCISE 11. THE PRINCE LEAVES HOME

1. WHO DID THE KING INVITE TO ATTEND THE DINNER PARTY?
2. WHAT WAS THE PRINCE DOING WHILE THE PARTY WAS GOING ON?
3. WHAT DID HE SEE WHEN HE WOKE UP?
4. WHERE DID HE QUIETLY GO THEN?
5. WHAT DID HE ASK CHANNA TO DO?
6. AFTER CROSSING THE ANOMA RIVER WHAT DID HE ASK CHANNA TO DO?
7. WHY DID KANTHAKA DO?

EXERCISE 12. KING BIMBISARA'S OFFER

1. WHERE DID THE PRINCE GO FROM ANOMA RIVER?
2. WHAT DID THE PEOPLE CALL HIM WHEN HE BECAME A MONK?
3. HOW DID HE GET HIS FOOD?
4. WHO WAS BIMBISARA?
5. WHAT DID HE TELL THE PRINCE?
6. WHAT DID GOTAMA TELL THE KING?
7. WHY WERE PEOPLE HAPPY TO GIVE HIM FOOD?

EXERCISE 13. THE BUDDHA'S FIRST TEACHERS

1. WHO WAS GOTAMA'S FIRST TEACHER?
2. WHY DID HE LEAVE HIM?
3. WHAT DID THE TEACHER TELL ASCETIC GOTAMA?
4. WHO DID HE MEET NEXT?

EXERCISE 14. SIX YEARS OF SEARCHING

1. WHEN THE ASCETIC GOTAMA WAS IN THE JUNGLE FOR SIX YEARS WHY DID HE BECOME SO THIN?
2. WHAT DID HIS BODY LOOK LIKE?
3. WHAT ARE THE WAYS HE USED TO TORTURE HIS BODY?
4. FOR HOW LONG DID HE DO THIS?
5. WHY DID HE FINALLY GIVE IT UP?
6. WHY DID THE FIVE FRIENDS LEAVE HIM?

EXERCISE 15. THE GOLDEN BOWL

1. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE LADY WHO GAVE FOOD TO ASCETIC GOTAMA?
2. WHAT DID SHE WANT FROM THE TREE GOD?
3. HOW DID SHE PREPARE THE MILK-RICE?
4. WHAT DID HER SERVANT SEE UNDER THE BANYAN TREE?
5. WHAT DID THE ASCETIC GOTAMA DO AFTER EATING THE MILK-RICE?

EXERCISE 16. STRIVING FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

1. WHERE DID THE ASCETIC GOTAMA GO AFTER EATING SUJATA'S MILK-RICE?
2. WHAT DO YOU CALL THE TREE UNDER WHICH HE MEDITATED?
3. WHAT WAS THE RESOLUTION HE MADE UNDER THE TREE?
4. WHAT SORT OF THOUGHTS CAME TO HIS MIND?
5. WHAT DID HE REALISE IN THE FIRST PART OF THE NIGHT?
6. WHAT DID HE REALISED IN THE SECOND PART OF THE NIGHT?

EXERCISE 17. THE SUN OF ENLIGHTENMENT SHINES

1. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA SEE IN HIS DEEP MEDITATION?
2. WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE CHAIN OF EXISTENCE?
3. EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE VERSE UTTERED BY THE BUDDHA SOON AFTER HIS ENLIGHTENMENT.

EXERCISE 18. SEVEN WEEKS AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT

1. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO DURING THE FIRST WEEK AFTER ENLIGHTENMENT?
2. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO DURING THE THIRD WEEK?
3. WHO VISITED THE BUDDHA DURING THE FIFTH WEEK?
4. FOR HOW LONG DID HE FAST?
5. WHAT ARE THE COLOURS OF THE BUDDHIST FLAG, AND WHAT DOES EACH COLOUR SYMBOLISE?
6. WHO BECAME THE FIRST TWO LAY DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA?

EXERCISE 19. THE FIRST FIVE MONKS

1. WHO DID THE BUDDHA WANT TO TALK TO FIRST?
2. WHERE DID HE GO
3. WHAT DID HIS FIVE FRIENDS WANT TO DO?
4. DID THEY?
5. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA TELL THEM?
6. DID THEY BELIEVE HIM?

EXERCISE 20. THE BUDDHA'S FIRST TEACHING

1. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE BUDDHA'S FIRST SERMON?
2. TO WHOM WAS THIS SERMON PREACHED?
3. WHAT ARE THE TWO EXTREMES THE BUDDHA ASKED HIS LISTENERS TO GIVE UP?
4. WHAT IS THE PATH THE BUDDHA ADVISED TO FOLLOW?
5. WHAT ARE THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS?
6. WHAT ARE THE EIGHT PARTS OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH?
7. DESCRIBE BRIEFLY THE THREE GROUPS INTO WHICH THE EIGHT FACTORS CAN BE GROUPED?

EXERCISE 21. THE SERPENT KING

1. WHO WERE THE THREE BROTHERS?
2. HOW MANY FOLLOWERS DID EACH OF THEM HAVE?
3. WHERE DID THEY LIVE?
4. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO TO TAME THE SERPENT KING?
5. WHAT DID URUVELA KASSAPA FIND THE NEXT MORNING?
6. WHAT DID THE OTHER BROTHERS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS DO WHEN THEY HEARD THAT URUVELA KASSAPA HAD BECOME A BUDDHIST?

EXERCISE 22. RETURNING HOME

1. WHERE WAS THE BUDDHA WHEN THE KING SENT MESSENGERS?
2. HOW MANY MESSENGERS DID HE SEND?
3. WHY DID THEY NOT TELL HIM THE MESSAGE?
4. WHO DID GIVE HIM THE MESSAGE?
5. WHERE HAD THE KING ARRANGED FOR HIM TO STAY?
6. WHAT DID THE ELDERLY PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY CAME TO SEE HIM?
7. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO?
8. WHY WAS THE KING NOT HAPPY?
9. WHAT WAS THE "CUSTOM" THAT THE BUDDHA SPOKE ABOUT TO THE KING?

EXERCISE 23. THE STORY OF PRINCESS YASODHARA

1. WHAT DID THE PEOPLE DO WHEN THE BUDDHA HAD TAKEN HIS MEAL?
2. WHO WAS NOT PRESENT?
3. WHAT DID YASODHARA DO WHEN SHE SAW THE BUDDHA COMING TO SEE HER?
4. WHAT DID THE KING SAY?

EXERCISE 24. THE STORY OF PRINCE NANDA

1. WHO WAS NANDA?
2. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO WHEN HE HAD TAKEN HIS LUNCH?
3. WHAT DID NANDA DO?
4. WAS NANDA HAPPY WITH THE MONK'S LIFE? WHY?
5. HOW DID THE BUDDHA MAKE HIM HAPPY?

EXERCISE 25. THE STORY OF PRINCE RAHULA

1. WHO WAS RAHULA?
2. HOW OLD WAS HE WHEN THE BUDDHA VISITED KAPILAVATTHU?
3. WHAT DID HE ASK THE BUDDHA?
4. DID THE BUDDHA GIVE HIM WHAT HE ASKED?

EXERCISE 26. THE TWO CHIEF DISCIPLES

1. WHO WERE SARIPUTTA AND MOGGALLANA?
2. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE DRAMA THEY WATCHED?
3. WHO WAS THEIR FIRST TEACHER?
4. WHAT WAS THEIR PROMISE?
5. WHO MET THE SECOND TEACHER?
6. WHAT WAS THE SECOND TEACHER'S NAME, AND WHAT DID HE TELL SARIPUTTA?

EXERCISE 27. THE STORY OF POOR SOPAKA

1. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE POOR BOY?
2. WHY DID HIS STEPFATHER WANT TO KILL HIM?
3. HOW DID HE TRY TO KILL THE BOY?
4. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO TO SAVE THE BOY?

EXERCISE 28. THE STORY OF LADY PATACARA

1. WHO DID PATACARA MARRY?
2. WHY DID PATACARA'S HUSBAND NOT WANT TO GO TO HER PARENTS' HOUSE.?
3. WHAT DID PATACARA TELL HER NEIGHBOURS WHEN SHE LEFT FOR HER PARENTS' HOUSE?
4. HOW DID SHE TRY TO TAKE HER CHILDREN ACROSS THE RIVER?
5. WHAT HAPPENED TO HER HUSBAND?
6. HOW DID THE BUDDHA HELP HER?

EXERCISE 29. ANGULIMALA, THE BANDIT

1. HOW MANY PEOPLE DID ANGULIMALA KILL?
2. WHAT WAS HIS REAL NAME?
3. WHY WAS HE CALLED ANGULIMALA?
4. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO TO MAKE HIM GOOD?
4. WHO ELSE WANTED TO SAVE ANGULIMALA?
5. WAS THE BUDDHA AFRAID OF THE KILLER?

EXERCISE 30. WAKKALI & THE BUDDHA

1. WHY DID WAKKALI WANT TO BECOME A MONK?
2. WHY WAS WAKKALI DISAPPOINTED?
3. WHAT DID HE TRY TO DO THEN?
4. HOW DID THE BUDDHA HELP HIM?

EXERCISE 31. SUNITA, THE SCAVENGER

1. WHO WAS SUNITA?
2. WHY WAS HE SO MISERABLE?
3. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA SAY TO HIM?

EXERCISE 32. THE BUDDHA & THE SICK MONK

1. WHO HELPED THE SICK MONK?
2. WHY DID THE BUDDHA REPRIMAND THE OTHER MONKS?
3. WHAT DID HE SAY WHEN HE CONCLUDED HIS TALK?



PART TWO EXERCISES



EXERCISE 1. THE BUDDHA'S DAILY ROUTINE

1. IN THE BUDDHA'S TIMETABLE HOW MANY PARTS ARE THERE IN A NIGHT?
2. WHEN DID THE BUDDHA GET UP AND WHEN DID HE GO TO SLEEP?
3. WHAT DID HE DO EARLY IN THE MORNING?
4. HOW MANY HOURS DID HE SLEEP IN THE DAY?
5. WHAT DID HE DO AFTER LUNCH?
6. FOR HOW MANY YEARS DID HE TEACH?

EXERCISE 2. THE CONVERSION OF YASHA

1. WHO WAS YASHA?
2. WHAT IS A "BHIKKHU"?
3. HOW MANY FOLLOWERS WERE THERE IN A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME?

EXERCISE 3. KING BIMBISARA, ROYAL PATRON

1. WHAT WAS THE PROMISE OF THE ASCETIC GOTAMA TO KING BIMBISARA?
2. WHY WERE PEOPLE CONFUSED ABOUT PAYING RESPECTS TO THE BUDDHA AND VEN. KASSAPA?
3. HOW DID THE BUDDHA MAKE KNOWN TO THE PEOPLE THAT HE WAS THE TEACHER?
4. WHAT WERE THE FIVE WISHES OF KING BIMBISARA?

EXERCISE 4. VISAKHA, GREAT FEMALE SUPPORTER

1. WHO WAS VISAKHA? AND HOW OLD WAS SHE WHEN THE BUDDHA VISITED HER BIRTH PLACE?
2. ON HEARING OF THE BUDDHA'S VISIT, WHAT DID THE FATHER ADVISE VISAKHA?
3. WHAT DID VISAKHA POSSESS?
4. WHOM DID VISAKHA MARRY?
5. WHAT WERE THE TEN PIECES OF ADVICE GIVEN TO HER BY HER FATHER ON HER WEDDING DAY?
6. WHAT DID VISAKHA SAY TO THE BHIKKHU?
7. WHY WAS THE FATHER-IN-LAW UNHAPPY WITH HER?
8. HOW DID VISAKHA PROVE HER INNOCENCE?
9. WHAT HAPPENED TO HER FATHER-IN-LAW ON HEARING THE BUDDHA'S DISCOURSE?

EXERCISE 5. DEVADATTA, THE BUDDHA'S ENEMY

1. WHO WAS DEVADATTA?
2. WITH WHOM DID HE ENTER THE ORDER OF MONKS?
3. IN HIS EARLY DAYS, WHAT WAS HE KNOWN FOR?
4. WAS HE ABLE TO ATTAIN ANY STAGE OF SAINTHOOD?
5. WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM LATER?
6. WHAT WAS DEVADATTA'S REQUEST TO THE BUDDHA? DID THE BUDDHA ACCEPT IT? WHY?
7. WHO WAS THE CHIEF SUPPORTER OF DEVADATTA?
8. DID DEVADATTA SUCCEED IN KILLING THE BUDDHA?
9. WHAT WAS HIS FIRST ATTEMPT TO KILL THE BUDDHA?
10. HOW DID DEVADATTA HIMSELF TRY TO KILL THE BUDDHA?
11. HOW DID NALAGIRI REACT TO THE BUDDHA?
12. WHAT WILL DEVADATTA BE IN THE FUTURE?

EXERCISE 6. THE BUDDHA & THE QUEEN

1. WHO WAS KHEMA?
2. WHO WERE THE TWO CHIEF FEMALE DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA?
3. WHO BUILT THE MONASTERY FOR THE BUDDHA?
4. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO WHEN HE KNEW THAT KHEMA WAS LISTENING TO HIM?
5. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY OF SIXTEEN?
6. WRITE YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS LESSON.

EXERCISE 7. THE BUDDHA & THE MILLIONAIRE

1. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF ANATHAPINDIKA'S GREAT GENEROSITY?
2. WHY DID HE BUILD THE JETAVANA MONASTERY?
3. HOW MANY RAINY SEASONS DID THE BUDDHA SPEND IN JETAVANA?
4. WHAT ARE THE FOUR KINDS OF BLISS A LAYMAN CAN ENJOY?
5. WHAT HAPPENED TO ANATHAPINDIKA WHEN HE FIRST MET THE BUDDHA?

EXERCISE 8. THE BUDDHA & THE FARMER

1. WHAT DID THE BRAHMIN SAY WHEN HE SAW THE BUDDHA?
2. WHAT WAS THE BUDDHA'S ANSWER?
3. WHAT DID THE BRAHMIN SAY AND DO WHEN HE REALISED HIS ERROR?
4. DID THE BUDDHA ACCEPT THE FOOD?
5. WHY?

EXERCISE 9. MAGANDIYA'S GRUDGE

1. WHO WAS MAGANDIYA AND HOW DID SHE LOOK?
2. WHOM DID SHE WANT TO MARRY?
3. AFTER NOTICING THE PARENTS OF MAGANDIYA WHERE DID THE BUDDHA GO?
4. WHAT HAPPENED TO MAGANDIYA'S FATHER WHEN HE SAW THE BUDDHA AND WHAT DID HE SAY?
5. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA DO AFTER HEARING MAGANDIYA'S FATHER?
6. WHAT DID THE BRAHMIN'S WIFE SAY AFTER SEEING THE FOOTPRINT?
7. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA SAY WHEN THE BRAHMIN OFFERED THE BUDDHA HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE?
8. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BRAHMIN AND HIS WIFE AFTER LISTENING TO THE BUDDHA?
9. WHAT DID MAGANDIYA THINK AND SAY AGAINST THE BUDDHA?

EXERCISE 10. ALAVAKA, THE DEMON

1. WHERE WAS ALAVAKA LIVING, AND HOW WAS HE?
2. WHO CAUGHT THE KING WHEN HE WENT HUNTING IN THE FOREST?
3. WHAT WAS THE KING'S LAST RESORT?
4. WHY DID THE BUDDHA TRAVEL TO THE DEMON'S CAVE?
5. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA ASK THE GATE-KEEPER?
6. DESCRIBE HOW THE BUDDHA WON THE BATTLE WITH THE DEMON?

EXERCISE 11. SUJATA & THE SEVEN TYPES OF WIVES

1. TO WHOM WAS SUJATA MARRIED AND HOW WAS HER BEHAVIOUR?
2. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA HEAR WHEN HE VISITED ANATHAPINDIKA'S HOUSE?
3. HOW MANY KINDS OF WIVES ARE DESCRIBED BY THE BUDDHA?
4. WHAT DID SUJATA FEEL AFTER LISTENING TO THE DISCOURSE AND WHY?
5. AMONG SEVEN KINDS OF WIVES WHICH ONE DID SUJATA PREFER?

EXERCISE 12. ANANDA, THE LOYAL ATTENDANT

1. NAME SOME OF THE MONKS WHO SERVED THE BUDDHA DURING HIS EARLIER DAYS.
2. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE BUDDHA BY VEN. NAGASAMALA?

3. HOW OLD WAS THE BUDDHA WHEN HE ASKED THE BHIKKHUS TO CHOOSE HIS ATTENDANT?
4. HOW MANY CONDITIONS DID VEN. ANANDA PUT TO THE BUDDHA?
5. WHAT WAS VEN. ANANDA'S RELATED TO THE BUDDHA?
6. FOR WHAT DID THE BUDDHA RECOGNISE THE VEN. ANANDA AT FIRST?
7. WHAT ARE THE OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS OF VEN. ANANDA?
8. AT WHAT AGE DID VEN. ANANDA PASS AWAY?

EXERCISE 13. THE TRAGEDY OF KING BIMBISARA

1. WHOSE SON WAS PRINCE AJATASATTU?
2. WHY DID HE TRY TO KILL HIS FATHER?
3. WHAT WAS HIS FATHER'S RESPONSE TO HIS MURDER ATTEMPT?
4. HOW DID HIS MOTHER TRY TO GIVE FOOD TO KING BIMBISARA?
5. HOW DID AJATASATTU KILL HIS FATHER?
6. WHAT THOUGHT CAME TO AJATASATTU'S MIND WHEN HE HEARD THAT A SON WAS BORN TO HIM?
7. DESCRIBE THE LOVE EXTENDED BY KING BIMBISARA TOWARDS AJATASATTU.
8. WHAT DID AJATASATTU REALIZE AFTER LISTENING TO HIS MOTHER?

EXERCISE 14. KING PASENADI OF KOSALA LEARNS THE PAIN OF LOVE (1)

1. WHAT WAS THE RELATION BETWEEN KING PASENADI AND KING BIMBISARA?
2. WHO WAS MALLIKA? WAS SHE A GOOD WIFE?
3. WHAT ARE THE FOUR THINGS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LOOKED DOWN UPON BECAUSE THEY ARE YOUNG?
4. WHAT WAS BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN?
5. IN WHAT SENSE DID THE BUDDHA SAY THAT LOVED ONES BRING SUFFERING?
6. WHO WAS KING PASENADI'S SON?

EXERCISE 15. KING PASENADI LEARNS TO SEE TRUE CHARACTER (2)

1. WHAT DO YOU LEARN FROM THIS PART OF THE STORY?

EXERCISE 16. AN ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT THE BUDDHA

1. WHY WERE THE ASCETICS JEALOUS OF THE BUDDHA?
2. WHAT WAS THEIR PLAN TO DISCREDIT THE BUDDHA USING SUNDARI?
3. WHAT WAS THE BUDDHA'S ADVICE TO HIS DISCIPLES?
4. WHAT DID PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE BUDDHA AND HIS DISCIPLES AFTER OBSERVING THEM?

EXERCISE 17. HE WORSHIPPED IN ALL DIRECTIONS

1. WHY WAS SIGALA WORSHIPPING IN ALL DIRECTIONS?
2. WHAT WAS THE BUDDHA'S INTERPRETATION OF WORSHIPPING IN ALL DIRECTIONS?
3. WHAT FOUR EVIL CONDUCTS SHOULD BE AVOIDED?
4. WHAT ARE THE SIX WAYS OF WASTING ONE'S WEALTH TO BE AVOIDED?

EXERCISE 18. AMBAPALI'S GIFT

1. WHO OFFERED THE GARDEN OF MANGOES TO THE BUDDHA TO REST IN, AND WHERE WAS IT?
2. WHEN AMBAPALI APPROACHED THE BUDDHA FOR THE FIRST TIME WHAT DID SHE SEE AND HOW DID SHE FEEL?
3. WHAT REQUEST DID THE NOBLES OF VESALI MAKE TO AMBAPALI, AND WHAT WAS HER REPLY?
4. HOW IS AMBAPALI COMPARED WITH THE LOTUS?
5. WHERE DID THE BUDDHA SPEND HIS LAST RAINY SEASON?

EXERCISE 19. JIVAKA, THE BUDDHA'S DOCTOR

1. WHO SAVED THE CHILD JIVAKA?
2. IN WHAT FIELD DID JIVAKA BECOME AN EXPERT?
3. HOW DID JIVAKA HELP AJATASATTU?
4. WHAT WAS JIVAKA'S ATTAINMENT?

EXERCISE 20. THE QUARREL AT KOSAMBI

1. WHICH TWO PARTIES QUARRELLED?
2. WHO MINISTERED TO THE BUDDHA WHEN HE WAS IN PAILEYYAKA FOREST?

3. WHAT DID THE PEOPLE OF KOSAMBI DO?
4. WHAT WAS BUDDHA'S ADVICE?

EXERCISE 21. THE BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIOUS TEACHERS

1. WHAT DID THE RELIGIOUS TEACHER REQUEST UPALI TO DO?
2. WHEN UPALI ASKED THE BUDDHA TO MAKE HIM A FOLLOWER WHAT WAS BUDDHA'S ADVICE TO HIM?
3. AFTER ACCEPTING UPALI AS A FOLLOWER WHAT WAS THE BUDDHA'S ADVICE TO HIM?

EXERCISE 22. THE MONK WHO TRIED TOO HARD

1. HOW WAS SONA BROUGHT UP?
2. WHY DID SONA BECOME A MONK?
3. WHAT WAS THE REASON SONA DID NOT GET GOOD RESULTS FROM HIS MEDITATION?
4. HOW DID THE BUDDHA MAKE SONA UNDERSTAND?

EXERCISE 23. THE ORDER OF NUNS

1. WHO WAS MAHA PAJAPATI GOTAMI?
2. WHY DID SHE APPROACH THE BUDDHA?
3. WHEN THE BUDDHA REFUSED TO MAKE HER A NUN WHAT DID SHE DO?
4. WHY WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ORDER OF NUNS A HISTORIC EVENT?

EXERCISE 24. THE BUDDHA ON THE CASTE SYSTEM

1. WAS THERE A CASTE SYSTEM DURING THE BUDDHA'S TIME?
2. WHAT WERE THE FOUR CASTES?
3. ACCORDING TO THE BUDDHA WHO BECOMES HIGH OR LOW?
4. WRITE THE HISTORIC STATEMENT MADE BY THE BUDDHA?

EXERCISE 25. THE MIRROR OF THE DHAMMA

1. WHY WERE THE MONKS AND LAY DEVOTEES WHO HAD PASSED AWAY SOTAPANNAS?
2. WHO IS NOT GOING TO BE BORN IN THE LOWER WORLDS?

3. HOW DOES A PERSON ATTAIN SAINTHOOD?
4. WHERE AND TO WHOM WAS THE DISCOURSE 'THE MIRROR OF THE DHAMMA' GIVEN?

EXERCISE 26. THE BUDDHA'S ATTITUDE TO MIRACLES

1. WHO ASKED THE BUDDHA TO APPOINT A MONK TO PERFORM MIRACLES?
2. HOW MANY KINDS OF MIRACLES ARE THERE?
3. WHAT KIND OF SUPERNORMAL POWER HELPS PEOPLE TO END SUFFERING?
4. DESCRIBE THE INCIDENT OF MIRACULOUS POWER SHOWN BY PINDOLA.

EXERCISE 27. THE BUDDHA'S LAST ILLNESS

1. HOW DID THE BUDDHA SUPPRESS HIS SICKNESS?
2. WHY DID VEN. ANANDA THINK THAT THE BUDDHA WOULD NOT PASS AWAY?
3. WHAT SHOULD BE ONE'S REFUGE WHEN THE BUDDHA HAS PASSED AWAY?
4. WHAT HINT DID THE BUDDHA GIVE TO VEN. ANANDA?
5. WHY DID DHAMMARANA NOT COME TO PAY RESPECTS TO THE BUDDHA?
6. WHO HONOURS THE BUDDHA MOST?

EXERCISE 28. THE LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA

1. WHAT RECORDS ARE PLACED IN THE MAHA PARINIBBANA SUTTA?
2. WHERE DID THE BUDDHA DECIDE TO SPEND HIS LAST DAYS?
3. WHICH GREAT DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA HAD PASSED AWAY BEFORE THE BUDDHA?
4. WHAT WERE THE BUDDHA'S USUAL TEACHINGS IN HIS LAST DAYS?

EXERCISE 29. THE BUDDHA'S LAST MEAL

1. WHO OFFERED THE LAST MEAL TO THE BUDDHA?
2. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE MEAL PREPARED BY CUNDA?
3. WHAT WAS THE BUDDHA'S ADVICE TO CUNDA REGARDING THE LEFT-OVER FOOD?
4. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BUDDHA AFTER EATING THE MEAL?
5. WHAT DID THE BUDDHA TELL ANANDA REGARDING CUNDA'S MEAL?
6. WHY WAS ANANDA CRYING?
7. WHAT MESSAGE DID THE BUDDHA SEND THROUGH ANANDA TO THE PEOPLE OF KUSINAGA?
8. WHAT ARE THE FOUR PLACES TO BE VISITED BY THE FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS OF THE BUDDHA?

EXERCISE 30. SUBHADDA, THE LAST DISCIPLE

1. WHY DID SUBHADDA SEEK OUT THE BUDDHA?
2. WHAT DID BUDDHA SAY TO ANANDA WHEN HE TRIED TO STOP SUBHADDA APPROACHING HIM?
3. WHERE ARE THE ARAHANTS OR SAINTS FOUND?

EXERCISE 31. THE BUDDHA'S LAST WORDS

1. WHO IS OUR TEACHER AFTER THE BUDDHA HAS PASSED AWAY?
2. WAS THERE ANYONE WHO HAD DOUBTS TO BE CLEARED?
3. WHY?
4. WHAT WERE THE BUDDHA'S LAST WORDS?
5. HOW AND WHEN DID THE BUDDHA PASS AWAY?

EXERCISE 32. THE FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL

1. WHAT PROMPTED VENERABLE MAHA KASSAPA TO CALL FOR A MEETING?
2. WHO MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST COUNCIL, AND WHERE?
3. HOW MANY ARAHATS WERE CHOSEN?
4. WHAT DID VENERABLE ANANDA DO TO ATTAIN ARAHATSHIP?
5. WHO WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL?
6. WHO WERE CHOSEN TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VINAYA AND DHARMA?
7. HOW WAS THE TIPITAKA HANDED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION?
8. WHEN WAS THE TIPITAKA PUT DOWN IN WRITING?



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