Incidents of Freedom in May

Posted on



Vesak Po¯ya Day falls in May every year, as well as Labour Day. Both are very important for the whole world as both celebrate the independence of human beings. They celebrate expecting freedom on these two days. On May Day, they celebrate it as an Independence Day of Labourers. It is crucial to contemplate whether they honor their absolute freedom on May Day. In my view, really not at all, especially in Sri Lanka. We can see they suffer from physical and mental troubles instead of freedom. May Day is a day to celebrate their freedom; instead of that, what do they do? They are divided into a few political parties, and they shout, saying some slogans, going on a parade. Mainly they develop hatred and jealousy of each other not only with other parties but also within the same party and with their relatives. So, can they expect freedom on labor day, very rarely?

If we look at the other day, that’s Vesak Day; how serene it is when we celebrate it as Freedom Day? It is a significant festival for all Buddhists in the world, as well as non-Buddhists. It signifies three important incidents in the life of The Gauthama Buddha, namely, the Birth of the prince Siddha¯rtha, the Enlightenment of The

Buddha, and the Passing of The Buddha (Parinibba¯na). Furthermore, The Buddha made his first visit after Enlightenment to his hometown of Kimbulwath Nuwara to see His father, King Suddho¯dana, and other relatives on Vesak Po¯ya Day. Another significance of this day, especially for Sri Lankans, is the Buddha's visit to the country.

It is believed that the Buddha brings great peace to the world and is reflected in the Pa¯li phrase 'Sukho¯ Buddha¯nang Uppa¯do¯.' For this reason, a Buddha always emerges after tens of thousands of years (many Kalpas) in Dambadiva, India. The village was in Kimbulwath Nuwara of Gautama Buddha, but he was born in the 'Royal Sal Garden' in Lumbini on a Vesak Day. The reason is that Queen Ma¯ya¯ decided to travel to her hometown close to the baby's birth, and on the journey, Prince Siddhartha was born in Lumbini. After that, relatives brought the Queen and the baby Prince back to Kimbulwath Nuwara.

The baby prince was named Siddhartha, and when he was 16 years old, The King boult three beautiful palaces known as 'Ramya, Suramya, Subha' for each season. And the King wanted the young Prince to appreciate the kingdom's wealth. Furthermore, the King also arranged the marriage

between Prince Siddhartha and Princess Yasho¯dhara¯, the daughter of the Sa¯kya. King, Suppabuddha.. However, after 13 years of marriage, Prince Siddha¯ rtha became disillusioned with life. While he used to go to the park for rest every day, he happened to observe the Four Great Signs, 'an elderly man, a sick man, a funeral procession, and a saffron-robed Priest'. These four sights were the reasons for Prince Siddha¯rtha to leave all worldly pleasures and seek the end to suffering.

According to the 'Canki¯ Su¯ tra', while his entire family was in tears, shaving his hair and donning a saffron robe, the prince left mundane comforts behind him and the palace (renunciate). Thus, it is believed that at the young age of 29, The Bo¯ddhisatva who is seeking Enlightenment will realize life, and as Prince Siddha¯rtha had seen the Four Great Signs, he understood life and left home. After years of being ordained, the hermit Siddha¯rtha having understood the 'Four Noble Truths', attained Enlightenment and thus became The Buddha. This is the second milestone in the life of the Buddha, which is signified by the Vesak Po¯ya Day. From that day onwards, The Buddha preached the Dharma (doctrine) to many people, from his first five disciples (Paswaga Thawusan) to His last disciple, Subhadra Bhikkhu, and showed them the path of the Dharma. For over 45 years, the Buddha taught the Dharma, and at 80, he passed away (Parinibba¯na), the third significant

milestone of the Buddha's life on Vesak Po¯ya Day. In addition to the three significant milestones, the Buddha visited his hometown of Kimbulwath Nuwara, also on Vesak Po¯ya Day. It is said that King Suddho¯dana, the Buddha's father, had sent an envoy headed by Minister Ka¯ludaai to Rajagaha Nuwara to invite The Buddha to visit Kimbulwath Nuwara. The Buddha accepted the invitation and began the journey to Kimbulwath Nuwara, which took two months, and arrived on Vesak Po¯ya Day. Another important event is the Buddha's visit to Sri Lanka on Vesak Po¯ya Day during His eighth year after Enlightenment, at the invitation of King Mani Akkhika. of the Na¯ga. tribe. The Buddha visited Kelaniya and delivered a sermon to the people of the Na¯ga. tribe. God Sumana was present on this occasion and invited The Buddha to visit Samanala Kanda, the Sripa¯da. In this journey, The Buddha visited Deeghava¯pi, the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhiya, Magul Maha¯ Da¯geba., and She¯ila Cheitiya. in Anura¯dhapura before returning to Jetavana¯ra¯maya. in Sevat Nuwara in India.

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Today, prominence has been given to A¯misa pooja¯: Vesak lanterns, pandals, and the singing of Bhakti Geeta. However, Vesak has a more profound significance. It should also be a time to engage in the Dharma, and we should partake in religious observances and obtain a deeper understanding of the Dharma on Vesak Day. For this, we can focus our minds on this occasion. At the time of His Parinibba¯na, seeing A¯nanda Thero weeping, The Buddha advised him by saying, "A¯nanda, do not cry or be sad. Everything that arises in this world is bound to change. Thus, it is futile to prevent this by saying do not decay or not change. No one can change the inevitable."

On the other hand, in the Buddha's first sermon to the five disciples, He emphasized this fact in the 'Dhamma Cakka. Pavattana Su¯ tra.', which describes the Four Noble Truths. In the section on dukkha. , it is said that when we do not receive what we expect and what we want, there is dukkha.. In psychology, this fact is explained when people experience mental pressure during day-to-day life. Thus, by understanding the Dharma, a person would have a clear and peaceful mind.

We do not need to overspend on Vesak lanterns, massive pandals, and large

decorations at this juncture. We should focus on assisting the poor and caring for the sick, pay homage to Triple Gem, and concentrate on dharma and meditation. This will provide great spiritual benefits. Then you can learn new facts about dharma and develop the spiritual process. Many Su¯tra., as well as scientists, describe that the Dharma and Bha¯vana¯ are good medicine for the mind and body. Thus, through religious activities, you can get comfort from stress and anxiety during this challenging period. Therefore, it is very important to focus on the spiritual growth of this Vesak celebration. I wish all of you in the world good health and long life.

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