

Poson Poya

Posted on

Poson Pōya is the day of establishing the Buddha sānaya in Sri Lanka.

Vesak is celebrated by Buddhists around the whole world but Poson Po¯ya is of interest only to Sri Lankans, as Arhat Maha¯ Mahinda Thero, the only son of the King great Dharma¯s o¯ka or Aso¯ka of India who was known as ‘Anu Budu’ in the folk tale, was sent by the King Asoka as a Dharma du¯ta (envoys) to introduce Buddhism to Sri Lanka at the request of his friend, king De¯va¯nampiya Tissa. At that time in Sri Lanka, according to Chronicles, the first meeting of Mahinda Maha¯ Thero and De¯va¯nampiya Tissa took place on the Missaka pabbata, now known as Mihintale¯, on a Poson Po¯ya day (While Lord Buddha arrived in Kelaniya on a Vesak Po¯ya day.)

Accordingly, we in Sri Lanka started celebrating this Poson Po¯ya as a special day of establishing the Buddha Sa¯sana. So, what is ‘Buddha Sa¯sana’? As described in the ‘Pa¯li-Sinhala Dictionary’ 385-P, of Venerable, Maditiyawela Siri Sumangala Thera, it means “Buddha¯nusa¯sana¯ (Buddhassa Anusa¯sana¯) or Buddhism or Buddhist doctrine or Thipitaka Dharma’’. In addition to this, it is mentioned as “the teaching (instructions) of the Buddha “ – in Pa¯li-English Dictionary, 113-P, of T.W. Rhys

Davids, the Pa¯li-Text Society, London, what is intended by the name of ‘Buddha Sa¯sana’ in Buddhist literature; in Pa¯li, it is illustrated as follows :

“Sabba Pa¯passa. Akerenan.

kusalassa. upasampa.da¯

sachitta. pariyo¯dapanan.

e¯tan. Buddhana.sa¯sanan.”

It defines as: the prevention of doing all evils, developing the virtuous, and controlling the mind, is the advice of The Buddha.

Fulfilling this advisory of the Buddha, Arhat Mahinda Thero, intended to deliver the Dharma to the King. But, he skepticized again whether the King could realize this profound Dharma. Then, the Thero wanted to test the King’s intelligence in understanding the Dharma. This is mentioned in the ‘History of Buddhism in Ceylon’ 50-P, by Venerable Dr. Walpola Ra¯hula Thero, Buddhist Cultural Centre, Dehiwala, as: “During their first conversation, Mahinda Thero, to gauge the king’s intelligence and capacity to understand, put some questions to him … though simple and easy at first glance, it required a clear and acute mind to answer it.” The King answered all the questions correctly.That brought home to the thero that the King was an intelligent person and he could understand the Dharma. This is the general belief regarding the arrival of Arhat Mahinda in Sri Lanka. But Ven. Ra¯hula thero criticizes it in his book, mentioned above as:

“Although this may be regarded as the official introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon, it is not reasonable to believe that information about the Buddha and his teachings and the news of the activities of the mighty Buddhist Emperor of India had not reached the Island earlier.”

According to the questions asked by the Arhat Thero, and folk tales, we can understand that the King had heard about the Buddha and His teachings before the arrival of Arhat Thero in Sri Lanka. To my mind, I see the pattern of most people in this world is the argument about history, religion, or beliefs. But unfortunately, they do not like to do anything for the sake of their knowledge or to produce anything. Just they criticize others and their works. This is the pattern of Sri Lankans. It is said, ‘hear it-see it-do it, the goal is there.’

Despite that, what was taught to us by Arhat Mahinda Thero? That teaching is described in the Cu¯lahatthipadopama-sutta, the first sermon delivered by the Thero.

This sermon gives a clear idea of The Lord Buddha, The Dhamma, and The San.gha, and describes how one becomes a Bhikkhu or Buddhist by understanding the Dharma, but not by forcefully converting. It also describes the simple and holy life of a Bhikkhu and a Buddhist and the sublime qualities he practices and possesses. Except that, the things he abstains from and the various stages of development of his life, and the attainment of arhantship, which is the final fruit of a Buddhist.

We must first understand ourselves, our lives, and about sadness and happiness. Sorrow or dukkha come about, how it is common to everyone in the world, the problem is misunderstanding it. We must see the reality as it is to understand the reality of life. Today, we have to understand the whole society to lead a good life as it is in a chaotic state. On this Poson Po¯ya day, we can follow the path of The Dhamma, which we were given by the Arhat Maho¯ Mahinda Thero for the sake of us and others, with the Compassion and Metta. I wish for a calm and prosperous future for all in the world.

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