THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BINARA POYA

Posted on

On one such Binara Poya, the order of Buddhist nuns (Bhikkuni) was established following the request by Mahā Prajāpathi Gōthami and 500 women. It reflects how females achieved their freedom 2,500 years before.



Maha¯ Praja¯pathi Go¯thami requesting permission for women to enter the Order.

When we talk about women's emancipation, we cannot forget the two thousand five-hundred-year-old histories of the Buddhist era. Why is this Binara day an important day for Buddhist females? It is because of the establishment of the Bhikkhuni order on the Binara or September. That is why all Buddhist countries,

including Sri Lanka, celebrate this day as a significant day. This day is specifically important for women. Maha Praja pathi Gothami, the stepmother of Prince Siddhartha, together with the other 500 royal family mistresses, urged Lord Buddha to ordain them as Bhikkhunis. After some reluctance initially, the Buddha consented to their request, and it took place in the fifth year of Enlightenment.

The facts for this incident were as follows. While Buddhism spread very fast at this period, many people understood the Dhamma, and the bhikkhu order flourished with the ordination of the male party. But as there was no Bhikkuni ordination, women did not have the opportunity to be Ordained. This phenomenon brought about outsize unrest among women. They were worried about this situation and then, after discussing it with The Queen Maha Praja pathi Gothami, came up with the idea of getting them ordained. Therefore, those 500 women with queen Maha Praja pathi Gothami, on a full moon Poya day, visited The Lord Buddha and urge that they would like to get ordained as Bhikkhunis. But, without answering them, The Buddha kept silent for the first, second, and third times when the same request was made without any avail of their request. Later again, queen Maha Praja pathi Gothami accompanied by 500 grieving women, since their husbands had already been ordained, having shaved their heads and wearing yellow robes, went to Visala Mahanuwara to request the relevant matter to The Lord Buddha. After much thought and consideration over this request, The Buddha allowed the women to get ordained as Bhikkhunis, after laying down eight rules (eight Garu Dharma) and regulations for them to abide by. After obtaining the approval to get ordained as Bhikkunis, many women subjected to misogyny and oppressed by men were allowed to get rid of such stigma.

Although this is a story, more than 2,500 years old, regarding the women's freedom, which has been rendered in the 'The character of Buddha' written by venerable Balangoda Ananda Maythree Thera in 1951, we must pay our attention to today's story of women, which is in a very complicated and sorrowful situation. At this juncture, why do we not consider the norms of femininity in today's society, as it has been changed towards to unfortunate situation? Among those, do they fulfill their responsibilities in the family society? In this regard, it is essential to discuss whether the duties for women in today's society are fulfilled by society. On the other hand, the responsibilities of the women to society are fulfilled.

When we discuss the 'FREEDOM' of a particular society, we cannot forget mentioning about the 'Kesaputhiya Kalama Sutra in Angguttara Nikaya. (Here, Kesaputhiya is a village, and Kalama means the villagers). According to this Sutra

there are ten essential points mentioned in this sutta, preached by The Lord Buddha to Kalamas, the Noble people in the Kesaputhiya, a sub-village, in Kosala – India where The Buddha was visited at this moment. It is essential to follow this advice when one is skeptical about any person, regarding any incident or concept of doubt.

The Buddha advised to Kalamas: “Alang hi vo Kalama kankhitun, alang vicikicchithun’’

Do not doubt Kalamas yourself, do not uncertainty or perplexity. If you were uncertain Kalama, think this way!

1 Do not accept anything just because that you heard something.

2 Do not accept anything just because of that in the tradition.

3 Do not accept anything just because that something had happened like this.

4 Do not accept anything just because that it was in our doctrine.

5 Do not accept anything just because that it matches the logic.

6 Do not accept anything just because that it fits the theory.

7 Do not accept anything just because that it matches to check facts.

8 Do not accept anything just because that it matches our vision, which we made up.

9 Do not accept anything just because that he is a suitable person or our preacher.

10 Do not accept anything just because the priest is someone we respect

The Buddha asks Kalamas to consider again,

“Yadathumheattanawa janeyyatha, ime Dhamma Kusala, ime Dhamma Akusala…’’

Kalamas! if you know by yourself that these things are right, then accept them.’ (If you know by yourself that these are wrong, then give them up.)

It is clear that if we look at a society like that of today, these norms are very important for the well-being of any society. And on the other hand, if we follow

norms like these today, can’t we decrease the social problems and our family problems in our day-to-day life? As these are very important for society, it will be very helpful to uplift social well-being. When the social norms are fulfilled accordingly, women’s freedom will also be protected.

Information provided by:
Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero
(B.A., M.A., M.Phil.)
Expert Psychological Counselor and
Meditation Instructor
Siriwardhanarama Buddha Dhamma
College
Mano¯daya Meditation Center
Mano¯daya Asapuwa (Face Book)
Siriwardhanaramaya, Temple Lane,
Kollupitiya
sirirevathad@gmail.com
dhammavedi.com



Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Colpetty.