Vap Poya Marks the Completion of the Vas or the Rainy Season Sojourn

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A Kathina Ceremony at the premises of the Siriwardhanaramaya, Temple Lane, Colpetty.

The Vap Pōya is significant because it is associated with Bhikkhūs' Completion of Vas or the Rainy season retreat and several other momentous events in Buddhism.

On Vap full moon Po¯ya day (in October), several significant occasions are celebrated, including the completion of Vas observation or the rainy season retreat by Buddhist monks; the visiting of The Lord Buddha to Sankassa city, in India after

the conclusion of preaching Abhidhamma in the Heaven named Thavatinsa; the arrival of the venerable Arhath Sanghamitta Bhikkhuni to Sri Lanka with Jayasirima Bo Tree; convening of a convocation to verify the Vinaya pitakaya; the code of conduct for Buddhist monks by Venerable Arittha maha Thera at Thuparamaya temple in Anuradhapura city in Sri Lanka; and the beginning of the “Cheevara Puja” offering of Kathina robes for Buddhist monks who have completed the three months of Vas observation or the rainy season retreats up to this month (Vap full moon day). Hence, the article would intend to discuss the Katina Cheevara Puja, which is going to be held after the Vap full moon Poya day as it is recommended to fulfill once, in one time between the Vap Poya and the Ill Poya, in November.

From this Vap Poya until Ill Poya is called ‘Cheevara Masaya’ in Sinhala or the ‘Kathina Cheevara Puja Masa’ in Pali or Kathina Robe offering month. Kathina cheevaraya is a length of cloth made in a day and presented to a Buddhist priest who had completed the Vas season or rainy season retreat for three months. This month of Cheevara offering is significant for Buddhist devotees because this is the year when they can accumulate merits engaging in various religious activities.

In detail, there is a significant value in a Kathina Cheevara Puja or Kathina Ceremony. ‘Kathina Cheevara Puja’ is held in every Theravada Buddhist country in the world. Katina ceremony is very limited to this ‘Vap’ month. It is an annual event in every temple. Moreover, there are some other reasons for this day to be very important for Buddhist monks. Kathina Puja Ceremony, though it is a religious festival, there are many Vinaya Kamma or discipline rules to be performed. And also, it is mentioned in Dhamma, the devotees who fulfill this Kathina Puja, would gain a big fortune in this world and in the hereafter, like ‘Ayusha, Warna, Sepa, Bala, pragna’ – Long life, Beauty, Comfort, Power, and Wisdom as a result, in both lives. If there are bad karmas done, in this world or in the previous lives by them are neutralized preventing them from going to a bad world after this life, like hell or an animal world. In a nutshell, it is mentioned that the Kathina Puja is the KING of all Pu¯jas. As the noblest religious activity. According to psychology, good thoughts stimulate brain function, bringing about mental and physical good health and well[1]being. Because good thoughts produce good hormones like dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin, and reduce mental stress, and keep the mind calm and quiet. It plays a role in how we feel pleasure. According to Buddhism, that’s called KUSALA or merit, which makes a person happy, healthy, and contended. As the final goal, it paves the way to supreme bliss or Nubbana.

As the origin of Kathina Puja, the legend goes to The Lord Buddha’s period. Once

thirty bhikkhu from Paweyya state were journeying to Jethwanaramaya in Sawathi in India, where The Buddha was in retreat during a Vas period. Since it was the rainy season, on their way, they got caught in heavy rains as the rainy season was not over. They came to Jethwanaramaya in wet robes. On inquiry, they told The Buddha that they had got caught in the rain. Having heard that The Buddha gave them permission to have a ‘Kathinastharanaya’ or have an extra robe. It makes on the Kathina ceremony day. Finally, we must keep in mind thoroughly not to hold Kathina or any other ceremony during this pandemic period, considering it as a big disaster for the welfare of oneself and others.

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