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**🪷 What is Asalha Puja?**

**Asalha Puja** (also known as **Dhamma Day**) is one of the **most sacred Buddhist festivals**, celebrated on the **full moon of the month Asalha** (usually in **July**). It commemorates the **Buddha’s first sermon** after his enlightenment, known as the **“Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta”** — "Turning the Wheel of Dhamma."

**📜 Historical Significance**

* After attaining enlightenment in **Bodh Gaya**, the Buddha spent weeks in silent reflection.
* He then traveled to **Sarnath**, near Varanasi (India), where he met his five former ascetic companions.
* On the **full moon of Asalha**, he gave them the first teaching — the **Four Noble Truths** — forming the foundation of Buddhism.

This day marks:

1. The **birth of the Dhamma** (Buddhist teachings),
2. The beginning of the **Sangha** (monastic community),
3. The **first time the Dhamma was taught**, making it one of the **“Three Jewels”** of Buddhism:  
   **Buddha**, **Dhamma**, and **Sangha**.

**✨ Teachings of the First Sermon**

In this first sermon, the Buddha taught:

**🪞 The Four Noble Truths:**

1. **Dukkha** – Suffering exists
2. **Samudaya** – The cause of suffering is craving
3. **Nirodha** – There is an end to suffering
4. **Magga** – The path to end suffering is the **Eightfold Path**

This marked the **first formal transmission** of his awakened wisdom.

**🧘 How Asalha Puja is Celebrated**

Asalha Puja is a time of **deep reflection**, **gratitude**, and **practice**:

**🛕 Temple Ceremonies:**

* **Listening to sermons** about the Buddha’s first discourse
* **Offering alms** and supplies to monks
* **Lighting candles and incense**
* **Meditation** and chanting

**📿 Merit-Making:**

* Acts of generosity
* Observing the **Five Precepts** more strictly
* **Taking refuge in the Triple Gem** (Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha)

**🧘‍♀️ Start of Buddhist Lent (Vassa)**

The day after Asalha Puja marks the beginning of **Vassa**, the **three-month Buddhist Rains Retreat**, where monks:

* Stay in one monastery,
* Deepen their meditation,
* Receive more teachings,
* Laypeople support them with offerings.

This makes Asalha Puja a spiritually charged day—almost like **a Buddhist New Year for wisdom**.

**🌏 Global Observance**

* **Thailand**: A national holiday with candle processions at night (Wien Tien)
* **Sri Lanka**: Part of the **Esala Festival**, celebrated with great devotion
* **Laos and Cambodia**: Similar rituals, linked to monsoon cycles
* **Myanmar**: Observed as **Waso Full Moon Day**, with robe offerings

**🧠 Modern Lessons from Asalha Puja**

* Encourages living with **awareness and compassion**
* Inspires people to explore **inner peace through mindfulness**
* Reminds Buddhists to **honor the Dhamma** and live according to it

**💡 Summary**

| **Aspect** | **Details** |
| --- | --- |
| **Event** | Buddha's First Sermon |
| **Teachings** | Four Noble Truths, Middle Way |
| **Date** | Full Moon Day of Asalha (July) |
| **Other Names** | Dhamma Day |
| **Significance** | Beginning of Dhamma & Sangha |
| **Followed By** | Start of Buddhist Lent (Vassa) |