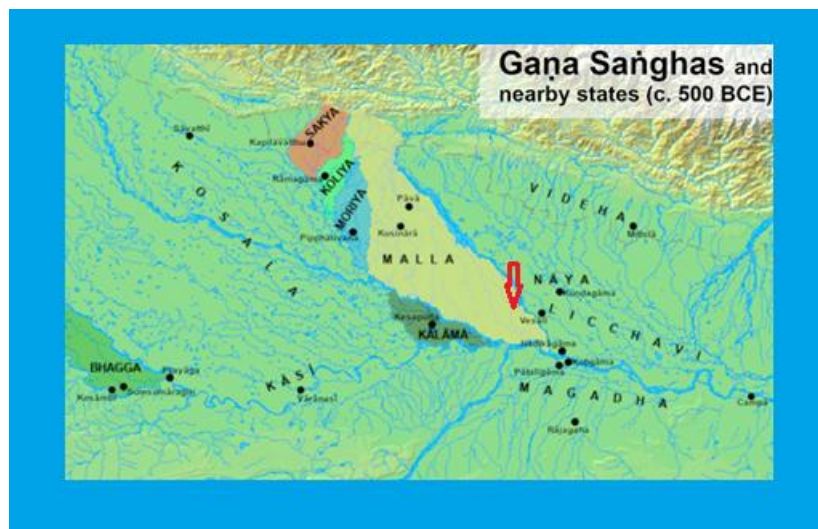


Section: 15-1: Fifth Vassa Spent in Vesālīⁱ (Age 39)

In the previous section (14-3), we described the events that took place during the Buddha's second, third, and fourth vassa—the rainy seasons he spent in Rājagaha. This section focuses on the Blessed One's fifth rainy season, which he spent among the Licchavis in Vesālī, in the Vajjian country. At this time, the Buddha was still relatively young—just thirty-nine years old. Since he attained enlightenment at the age of thirty-five and had already spent four rainy seasons (ages 35–38), we can deduce that he was thirty-nine years old while residing in Vesālī.



Map showing the location of Vesālī the capital of Vajjī Country during the time of the Buddhaⁱⁱ

Invitation by the Licchivi Princes of Vesālī

We saw in Section 14-3 that, at the invitation of the Licchavi princes of Vesālī, the Buddha arrived in Vesālī with a large number of Sangha members and delivered the Ratana Sutta. Through the power of chanting the Ratana Sutta, the great dangers that plagued the city disappeared, and prosperity returned to Vesālī. Grateful for the Buddha's visit and support, the Licchavi princes, rulers of Vesālī, invited the Blessed One to spend the next rainy season there with his Sangha. They donated the Great Wood (Mahāvana) and the Peak-roofed Hall (Kūṭāgārasālā) to the Buddha and the Sangha as a residence for the rainy season. This became another renowned monastery offered to the Buddha and the Sangha, following the donations of Veluvana and Jetavana monasteries.

Vinaya Pitaka describes this event:

*“When the Buddha had stayed at Rājagaha for as long as he liked, he set out wandering toward Vesālī... The Buddha eventually arrived at Vesālī where he stayed in the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood”*ⁱⁱⁱ

The following sources also confirm that the Buddha spent his fifth Vassa in Vesālī

1) The fifth was in the Gabled House Hall in the Great Wood relying on Vesālī^{iv}

(pañcamam Vesālīm upanissāya Mahāvane Kūṭāgārasālāyam)

2) The Sage-Lion of the Sakyas, in the fifth Rains Retreat, has dwelt in the Great Wood, which was near to the very delightful city known by the name of Vesālī, which was resplendent with the rays of the crown-jewels of (many) Princes ^v.

(Sakya-Muni-Kesarī, pañcamamhi Vassamhi, Bhū-pāla-moḷi-maṇi-raṁsi-virājamānam su-rammam nagaram Vesālī-nāma-viditam nissāya Mahā-Vanasmiṁ vāsam akarittha)

3) “ The Buddha took up residence at Kutagara monastery, which had terraced roofing and crowning pinnacle, in the country of Vesālī to observe the fifth vassa ^{vi}.



Ruins of the Peak Hall of Vesali: The Ananda stupa with the Lion Pillar built by King Asoka in the background ^{vii}



Ruins of Kutagarasala Vihara in Vesali ^{viii}

Some of the significant events happened in Vesālī during the fifth rainy season

Visit of Jīvaka Komārabhacca

Building of Walking Paths and Saunas

He was the adopted son of Prince Abaya, one of King Bimbisara's sons, and was appointed by the king as the Physician of the Buddha and the Sangha. One day, while the Blessed One was spending the rainy season in the Great Wood, Jīvaka Komārabhacca arrived there on some business. Seeing that a group of monks appeared unwell, he immediately approached the Buddha and said:

“At present, Sir, there are monks who are often sick, their bodies being full of impurities. Please allow walking meditation paths and saunas. In this way the monks will rarely get sick”^{ix}

After teaching Jīvaka, the Buddha addressed the monks, granting them permission to build walking paths and saunas and instructing them to use them appropriately.

Passing-away of King Suddhodana

We could not find any records in the scriptures confirming King Suddhodana's passing-away as an Arahant. However, the following sources describe the event as follows:

1) *“When the Buddha was observing the fifth vassa in Mahāvana forest near Vesālī, King Suddhodana entered Nibbāna after attaining under the white umbrella in his golden palace.”*^x

2) *“At that time, (when the Buddha was residing in Vesālī), one day, the Buddha, who was looking at the world, saw that the king (his father) was suffering from an illness and that he was eager to see him, and he went there with a group of disciples. There, the king was lying down, and the Blessed One, who was sitting on a cushioned seat, placed his right hand on the king's cheek and, by the power of true action, removed the pain. Then the great arahant Nanda took the king's right hand and performed true action. At that very moment, the fever in that hand also disappeared. The venerable Ananda placed his hands on the king's left hand, the venerable Sariputta on his back, and the venerable Mugalana on both sides and performed true action. At that moment, all the fever in the king's body disappeared completely. Thus, the king was cured of his illness. But he was very old and weak in body. On this occasion the Blessed One admonished the king with a discourse on impermanence. In the midst of the discourse, the king attained arahantship.”*^{xi}

3) The commentator of Therīgata, Venerable Dhammapāla says, on a later occasion, when the Teacher was living in the Kūṭāgāra Hall near Vesālī, the great King Suddhodana attained final quenching [nibbāna], having realized arahantship^{xii}

Founding of the Bhikkhuni Sangha

Another significant and remarkable event during this time was the founding of the Bhikkhuni Sangha. Until then, the Buddha had only the Bhikkhu Sangha, along with laymen and

laywomen followers. The establishment of the Bhikkhuni Sangha fulfilled the Buddha's aspiration to create a '**Fourfold Assembly**' for the flourishing of his dispensation (as briefly mentioned in Section 4-1).

Vinaya Pitaka elaborates this event thus: ^{xiii}

"At one time the Buddha was staying in the Sakyan country in the Banyan Tree Monastery at Kapilavatthu. At this time Mahāpajāpati Gotamī went to the Buddha, bowed down to him, and said, "Sir, please allow women to go forth into homelessness on the spiritual path proclaimed by the Buddha."

"Let it be, Gotami, don't pursue this idea."

On that occasion the Buddha was not inclined to grant her request.

We assumed that Mahāpajāpati Gotamī's request to go forth was made after the passing-away of King Suddhodana. According to tradition, during that time, the Buddha was in Kapilavattu, attending to his ailing father and, after his death, overseeing his funeral and the cremation of his body. In Section 14-1, we saw that during his first visit to Kapilavatthu, the Buddha preached the Dhamma to his father and foster mother, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, establishing both of them in stream-entry.

We believe that Queen Gotamī's requests to renounce lay life after her husband's passing - away was not unusual for a noblewoman like her—by that time, she was already a stream-winner. Reflecting on her background, she had lovingly raised children who later embraced the spiritual path: Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha, Prince Nanda and Princess Nandā joined the monastic order, and her beloved grandson, Prince Rāhula, also entered the noble Saṅgha. Likewise, many of her close relatives, including the Sakyan princes Ānanda, Anuruddha, and Bhaddiya, had become the Buddha's disciples. In this light, Queen Gotamī's requests to go forth seems almost inevitable.

The Historic Ordination of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī: A Pivotal Moment in the Buddha's Dispensation

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* describes Mahāpajāpati Gotamī's ordination as follows: ^{xiv}

After staying in Kapilavattu for as long as he wished, the Buddha set out on his journey to Vesālī. Upon his arrival, he resided in the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood.

Meanwhile, Mahāpajāpati shaved her hair, donned ochre robes, and, accompanied by a group of Sakyan women, set out for Vesālī. When she finally arrived, she stood outside the gatehouse—sorrowful and tearful, covered in dust, with swollen feet.

The Venerable Ānanda saw her standing there in such a condition and said to her:

"Gotamī, why are you standing outside the entrance with your feet swollen and your body covered with dust, miserable and saddened, weeping with a tearful face?"

"I do so, Bhante Ānanda, because the Blessed One does not allow the going forth of women from the household life into homelessness."

Venerable Ānanda comforted her, spoke to her with compassion, and then approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and asked:

“Bhante, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī is standing outside the entrance ...miserable and saddened, weeping with a tearful face, because the Blessed One does not allow the going forth of women. Bhante, it would be good if women could obtain the going forth...”

The Buddha said:

“Enough, Ānanda! Do not favour the going forth of women from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata.”^{xv}

After the refusal of the Buddha on that matter Venerable Ānanda thought for a while and asked this way:

“Bhante, if a woman were to go forth from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, would it be possible for her to realize the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-returning, and the fruit of arahantship?”

“It would be, Ānanda”

“If, Bhante, it would be possible for a woman to realize the fruit of stream-entry... the fruit of arahantship, and considering that Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī had been very helpful to the Blessed One—having been his maternal aunt, wet-nurse, and foster mother who nurtured him with breast milk when his mother died—it would be good if women could obtain the going forth... in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata.”

Then the Buddha said: *“... if Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī accepts eight principles of respect, let that itself be her full ordination.”^{xvi}*

Right then, Venerable Ānanda joyfully shared the good news with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. Filled with gratitude, she wholeheartedly accepted it, **becoming the first Bhikkhunī to be ordained under the Buddha.**

In later occasion The Buddha confirmed her ordination thus:^{xvii}

“Mahāpajāpati was ordained from the moment she accepted the eight important principles”.

Five Hundred Sakyan Women’s Going Forth

After her ordination she approached the Blessed One paid homage and asked:

“Sir, what should I do with these Sakyan women?” The Buddha then instructed... and gladdened her with a teaching, after which she bowed down, circumambulated him with her right side toward him, and left. Soon afterwards the Buddha gave a Teaching and addressed the monks:

“I allow monks to give the full ordination to nuns.”^{xviii}

Afterward, the Sakyan women who had accompanied Venerable Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī from Kapilavattu to Vesālī were ordained by the monks. It is said that sometime after this event, two devas appeared before the Buddha and spoke of the liberation of the Bhikkhunīs. According to the commentary, these were the five hundred Sakyan women who had followed Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and were ordained by the monks in Vesālī.^{xix}



**Mahāpajāpati Gotamī and Five Hundred Sakyan Women: A Courageous Journey from Kapilavattu
in Pursuit of the Holy Life ^{xx}**

How to recognize the Dhamma and the Discipline of Tathāgata

After her ordination, the Buddha delivered a profound discourse to Venerable Bhikkhuni Mahāpajāpati Gotamī at the Great Wood Monastery in Vesālī. He declared that any spiritual path leading to non-attachment, detachment, simplicity, fewness of desires, contentment, solitude, diligence, and being easy to support can be recognized as the true Dhamma. With these guiding principles, the Blessed One illuminated the essence of the noble path, inspiring all seekers to walk in the footsteps of wisdom and liberation. ^{xxi}

Other Important Teachings Given in Vesālī

According to the scriptures, the Buddha delivered many sermons in Vesālī. However, he spent only two rainy seasons there—the fifth and his final one, the 45th *vassa*. The *Sutta Piṭaka* also mentions that he visited Vesālī and the Vajji country frequently during his walking tours, making it difficult to determine with certainty which suttas were delivered during these periods. Therefore, by carefully comparing the scriptures with other sources, we have selected the following Dhamma talks and concluded that they were most likely given during the Buddha’s fifth rainy season in Vesālī.

Discourses given to Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son ^{xxii}

According to the scriptures, the following two suttas were delivered during this period: the *Cūlasaccaka Sutta* (MN:35) and the *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* (MN:36).

In the *Cūlasaccaka Sutta*, the Buddha engaged in an in-depth discussion with Saccaka, a well-known debater, on the doctrine of not-self (*anattā*). The Blessed One explained the nature of the self according to his teachings and elaborated on how he trains and instructs his

disciples. The discourse showcases the Buddha's skill in debate and his ability to dismantle Saccaka's misconceptions through reason and logic.

In the *Mahāsaccaka Sutta*, the Buddha delivered a discourse on the development of the body and mind. He described his own journey to enlightenment, including the various extreme ascetic practices he undertook before discovering the Middle Path. He emphasized the importance of mental cultivation and meditation in attaining true wisdom and liberation.

At the conclusion of these two suttas, Saccaka expressed deep admiration and respect for the Buddha's wisdom. However, despite his appreciation, he neither became a lay follower nor sought ordination. According to the commentary, after his passing-away, he was reborn in Sri Lanka, where he eventually became an arahant known as Kāla Buddhārakkhita Thera.^{xxiii}

A straightforward approach to completing the training

On one occasion, a young Vajji monk approached the Buddha and expressed that, due to the numerous training rules being introduced over time, he was struggling to focus on all of them. The Blessed One then asked:

“Can you train in the three trainings, bhikkhu: the training in the higher virtuous behaviour, the training in the higher mind, and the training in the higher wisdom?”

“I can, Bhante.”

“Therefore, bhikkhu, train in the three trainings: the training in the higher virtuous behaviour, the training in the higher mind, and the training in the higher wisdom. As you train in them, you will abandon lust, hatred, and delusion. With the abandoning of lust, hatred, and delusion, you will do nothing unwholesome or resort to anything bad.”

The monk gladly accepted the Buddha's advice, followed it diligently, and was freed from all suffering.^{xxiv}

The Blessed One is perfectly enlightened! The Dhamma is well expounded, and the Saṅgha is following the noble path.

The Buddha made this declaration to a large gathering of Bhikkhus at the Gotamaka Shrine in Vesālī. According to the scriptures, these were the same Bhikkhus who, on a previous occasion, had listened to the *Mūlapariyāya Sutta* (MN:1) but had not been pleased with the Buddha's words. On this occasion, the Buddha offered them this brief teaching.^{xxv}

“The Buddha teaches Dhamma through direct knowledge; teaches the Dhamma with a basis and teaches Dhamma with remedies. Therefore, the Buddha's teachings should be followed accordingly.” The Bhikkhus' were elated in the Blessed One's statement.^{xxvi}

What are the Five Rare Gems in this World?

On one occasion, five hundred Licchavis visited the Buddha at the Great Wood monastery. The Buddha inspired them with the following Dhamma talk:

“Licchavis, the manifestation of five gems is rare in the world”

What five? (1) The manifestation of a Tathāgata. (2) A person who can teach the Dhamma taught by the Buddha. (3) A person who can understand the Teachings—Dhamma. (4) A person who is able to train according to teachings. (5) A grateful and thankful person. ^{xxvii}

It is important to recognize for oneself what is wholesome and what is unwholesome.

On one occasion, the Blessed One was residing at Vesālī in the Great Wood when Bhaddiya the Licchavi approached him, paid homage, and asked:

Bhante, I have heard this: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a magician who knows a converting magic by which he converts the disciples of teachers of other sects...’.

Bhaddiya sought to understand whether the statement was true. In response, the Buddha said:

“Come, Bhaddiya, do not go by oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, by hearsay, by scriptures, by logical reasoning... competence of a speaker...or because the person is your teacher... But when you know for yourself: ‘These things are unwholesome; these things are blameworthy; these things are censured by the wise; these things, if accepted and undertaken, lead to harm and suffering, then you should abandon them.’”^{xxviii}

The Buddha then gave a detailed discourse on the factors that lead to unwholesome actions and how abandoning them can bring long-lasting peace and happiness. At the end of the teaching, Bhaddiya became a lay follower of the Buddha. ^{xxix}

Crossing of the Flood

While staying in the Great Wood in Vesālī, the Buddha gave an extensive Dhamma teaching to the two Licchavi princesses, Sālha and Abhya.^{xxx} They inquired about a teaching proclaimed by some other ascetics, which suggested that by practicing virtue and severe austerities (*sīlavisuddhi* and *tapojigucchā*), one could cross the flood—meaning to go beyond *saṃsāra* or eradicate all defilements.

In his response, the Buddha acknowledged the purification of virtuous behaviour as one of the factors of asceticism (*sāmaññaṅga*), but he rejected the practice of austerities. The Buddha said:

“...those ascetics and brahmins whose bodily, verbal, and mental behaviours are impure, and whose livelihood is impure, are incapable of knowledge and vision, of unsurpassed enlightenment... those ascetics and brahmins whose bodily, verbal, and mental behaviour are pure, and whose livelihood is pure, are capable of knowledge and vision, of unsurpassed enlightenment.”^{xxxi}

Therefore, a person who possesses moral purity through body, speech, and mind, along with right samādhi and right view, will ultimately attain liberation.

Factors beneficial to a leader in a community

While staying in the Great Wood of Vesālī, the Blessed One taught the five principles that support a leader or ruler in developing their leadership skills. This discourse was delivered to Mahānāma Licchavi.

1. Veneration and care for one's parents
2. Care for one's wife, family, and workers
3. Respect for neighbours and business associates
4. Worship of the protective deities honoured by family tradition
5. Reverence for good ascetics and brahmins

By adhering to these five principles, a leader ensures the well-being and prosperity of their family, workers, associates, and deities, who, in turn, wish them welfare and success.

The Blessed One further said:

*“ Having done what is good,
he is worthy of veneration and praise.
They praise him here in this world
and after death he rejoices in heaven. ”* ^{xxxii}

Seven Principles of Non-decline ^{xxxiii}

The following discourse was given by the Buddha while he was staying at the Saranda Shrine in Vesālī, addressed to the Licchavi princes. This teaching focused on the qualities to be developed by leaders of a community:

1. Regularly assembling together
2. Conducting affairs in harmony and adjourning in harmony
3. Not introducing new rules or abolishing existing ones without cause
4. Respecting and caring for the elders of the community
5. Refraining from capturing women and girls and forcing them to live with them
6. Continuing to venerate and respect their traditional shrines
7. Providing righteous protection and shelter for arahants

As long as the Vajjis uphold these seven principles, they will not experience decline. ^{xxxiv}

Guidance to Sick Sangha

The following Dhamma guidance were given by the Buddha to a sick bhikkhu, while he was dwelling in Great Wood in Vesālī:

“Bhikkhus, if five things do not slip away from a frail and sick bhikkhu, it can be expected of him: to reach final knowledge...”

What are the five? 1) contemplating the unattractiveness of the body 2) perceiving the repulsiveness of food, 3) perceiving non-delight in the entire the entire world 4) contemplating impermanence in all things 5) contemplation of perception of death. ^{xxxv}

Benefits of the Generosity

To Siha

One day, while the Buddha was staying at the Great Wood in Vesālī, General Siha approached him, paid homage, and asked whether it was possible to identify a directly visible result of generosity. In response, the Buddha contrasted the outcomes of a miser and a generous giver, saying:

“With the breakup of the body, after death, a donor, a generous giver, is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world.”^{xxxvi}

To Ugga

The following sutta also emphasizes the importance of giving.

On one occasion, Ugga, a lay follower of the Buddha, offered all that agreeable to him to the Blessed One and the Sangha at his residence. After the meal at Ugga’s house, the Buddha expressed his appreciation for the offerings, saying:

*“The giver of the agreeable gains the agreeable,
when he gives willingly to the upright ones
clothing, bedding, food, and drink,
and various kinds of requisites.*

*“Having known the arahants to be like a field
for what is relinquished and offered, not held back,
the good person gives what is hard to give:
the giver of agreeable things gains what is agreeable.”^{xxxvii}*

Many laypeople from Vesālī became followers of the Buddha.

According to the scriptures, while the Buddha was residing in Vesālī, leaders of other sects attempted to prevent their followers from coming under the Buddha’s influence. However, those with wisdom, after hearing the Buddha’s teachings, chose to follow him. Some of these individuals became great practitioners and reached noble states of realization. Among them, we have selected a few to illustrate how they developed in the Dhamma.

Ugga the householder from Vesālī

He was a householder from Vesālī. Upon seeing the Blessed One for the first time, his mind was filled with confidence in the Buddha. There and then, he bowed down and became a lay follower. He recounted the meeting as follows:

“When, Bhante, I first saw the Blessed One in the distance, as soon as I saw him my mind acquired confidence in him...with a confident mind, I attended on the Blessed One. The Blessed One then gave me a progressive discourse...when the Blessed One knew that my mind was pliant, softened, rid of hindrances, uplifted, and confident, he revealed that Dhamma teaching special to the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Then, just as a clean cloth rid of dark spots would readily absorb dye, so too, while I sat in that same seat, the dust free, stainless Dhamma-eye arose in me”^{xxxviii}

At that occasion he became a stream-winner. The Buddha declared him to be foremost among those who give what is agreeable.^{xxxix} He also acknowledged that Ugga possessed six noble qualities, had attained certainty about the Tathāgata, and had become a seer of the deathless—one who lives having realized the deathless.^{xl}

On one occasion the Buddha addressed the monks and said:

“Bhikkhus, you should remember the householder Ugga of Vesālī as one who possesses eight astounding and amazing qualities.”^{xli}

The scriptures say that before his death, he became a non-returner. After passing away from this world, he was reborn among a group of mind-made deities.^{xlii} As a young deva, he came to pay homage to the Buddha. The Buddha then said:

*“The person who gives the best,
the giver of the foremost,
the giver of the excellent,
is long-lived and famous
wherever he is reborn.”^{xliii}*

Brahmin Piṅgiyānī and Brahmin Kāraṇapālī

Brahmin Piṅgiyānī was another noble lay follower from Vesālī. According to tradition, he had attained the fruit of non-returning. His daily practice was to visit the Buddha and offer him incense and garlands.^{xliv}

On one occasion he praised the Buddha in the presence of five hundred Licchavis thus:

*“As the fragrant red kokanada lotus
blooms in the morning, its fragrance unspent,
behold Aṅgīrasa radiant
like the sun beaming in the sky.”^{xlv}*

According to the sutta, five hundred Licchavis were inspired by Brahmin Piṅgiyānī’s faith and offered him five hundred shawls. In return, Piṅgiyānī offered all of them to the Buddha, his teacher. The Blessed One, appreciating both acts—Brahmin Piṅgiyānī’s gratitude towards the Buddha, as he was established in the Dhamma, and the Licchavi princes’ thankfulness for Piṅgiyānī’s words—praised the spirit of gratitude shown by all. (see above: Five Rare Gems).

*On one occasion, while returning from the Great Wood monastery, the Brahmin Piṅgiyānī met Brahmin Kāraṇapālī, who sought to learn more about the Buddha and asked:

“What do you think of the ascetic Gotama’s competence in wisdom? Do you consider him wise?”

Brahmin Piṅgiyānī replied:

“Who am I, sir, that I could know the ascetic Gotama’s competence in wisdom? Certainly, only one like him could know his competence in wisdom!”

Brahmin Kāraṇapālī:

“You praise the ascetic Gotama with lofty praise, indeed.”

Brahmin Piṅgiyānī replied:

“Who am I, sir, that I could praise the ascetic Gotama? Praised by those who are praised, Master Gotama is best among devas and humans”.

Urged by Brahmin Kāraṇapālī, Piṅgiyānī shared his deep confidence in the Buddha with the following account: ^{xlvi}

1. Just as a man who has found satisfaction in the best of tastes will no longer desire inferior flavours, so too, once one hears of Master Gotama’s Dhamma, they will no longer yearn for the teachings of ordinary ascetics and brahmins.
2. Just as a man oppressed by hunger, who receives a honey cake, will savour the sweet, delicious taste, so too, whatever one hears of Master Gotama’s Dhamma will bring satisfaction and peace of mind.
3. Just as a man who encounters a piece of sandalwood will enjoy its pure, fragrant scent wherever he smells it, so too, whatever one hears of Master Gotama’s Dhamma will bring elation and joy.
4. Just as a capable physician might instantly cure a sick, afflicted person, whatever one hears of Master Gotama’s Dhamma will cause their sorrow to vanish.
5. Just as a delightful pond with cool, clear water can quench the thirst of a thirsty man who enters and drinks, so too, whatever one hears of Master Gotama’s Dhamma will cause their afflictions to subside.

Brahmin Kāraṇapālī, inspired by Piṅgiyānī’s words, said:

“Master Piṅgiyānī, I now go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the Dhamma, and to the Saṅgha of bhikkhus. Let Master Piṅgiyānī consider me a lay follower who from today has gone for refuge for life.” ^{xlvi}

Thus, Brahmin Kāraṇapālī, having heard about the Buddha’s qualities from another, was inspired by them and became a follower of the Buddha.

General Sīha

He was formerly a disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas. On one occasion, while sitting in the assembly hall of the Licchavis in Vesālī, General Sīha overheard well-known Licchavis praising the Buddha, his teachings, and his disciples. Impressed by their words, he desired to meet the Buddha. He first went to his teacher, who discouraged him from doing so, and General Sīha abandoned the idea.

On a second occasion, he again heard the Licchavis honouring the Blessed One. He went to his teacher once more, but was again discouraged. However, after hearing about the noble qualities of the Buddha for a third time, General Sīha decided to go see the Buddha, this time with his people in five hundred chariots, without seeking permission from his teacher.

Upon meeting the Blessed One, he said: ^{xlvi}

“I have heard this, Bhante: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of non-doing who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of non-doing and thereby guides his disciples’.”

The Buddha then gave him a detailed discourse, explaining why he was called a "non-doer" by other religious sects. After hearing this, General Sīha was overjoyed and expressed his desire to become a follower of the Buddha. The Blessed One responded:

“Make an investigation, Sīha! It is beneficial for well-known individuals like yourself to investigate... Your family has long supported the Nigaṇṭhas, so you should consider continuing to offer alms to them when they approach you.”

General Sīha requested the Buddha to accept him as a lay follower. The Buddha then gave him a progressive Dhamma talk, and when he saw that Sīha's mind had been uplifted and his confidence strengthened, the Buddha imparted the teaching that was unique to him—the Four Noble Truths. General Sīha understood the teaching and became a stream-winner.^{xlix}

Vāseṭṭha from Vesālī

He met the Buddha in Vesālī and became a lay follower. The Buddha declared that he possessed six qualities: 1) unwavering confidence in the Buddha, 2) unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, 3) unwavering confidence in the Sangha, 4) noble virtue, 5) noble knowledge, and 6) noble liberation. He had attained certainty about the Tathāgata, becoming a seer of the deathless—one who lives having realized the deathless.¹

The Buddha gave following advice to him:

“Vāseṭṭha, observed complete in eight factors, the uposatha is of great fruit and benefit, extraordinarily brilliant and pervasive...”^{li}

Vāseṭṭha then said:

“Bhante, if my beloved relatives and family members would observe the uposatha complete in eight factors, that would lead to their welfare and happiness for a long time.”

Mahāli Licchavi Prince

According to the scriptures, he became a follower of the Buddha while the Buddha was residing at the Great Wood Monastery in Vesālī.^{lii} On one occasion, he approached the Buddha and asked about the causes and conditions for both bad and good kamma.

The Buddha then explained five factors that lead to bad kamma:

1. Greed
2. Hate
3. Delusion
4. Careless attention
5. Wrong view

He then explained five factors that lead to good kamma:

1. Non-greed
2. Non-hate
3. Non-delusion
4. Careful attention
5. Right view

In conclusion, the Buddha said:

“If, Mahāli, these ten qualities did not exist in the world, unrighteous conduct, conduct contrary to the Dhamma, and righteous conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, would not be seen. But because these ten qualities exist in the world, unrighteous conduct, conduct contrary to the Dhamma, and righteous conduct, conduct in accordance with the Dhamma, are seen.”^{liii}

Bhaddiya and Mahānāma Licchavi Princes

According to the scriptures, both princes became lay followers of the Buddha during this period, a matter already discussed under the topic "Other Important Teachings Given in Vesālī." It is also noteworthy that five hundred Licchavi princes respected, honoured, and followed the Buddha. An account of this is found in the Cūḷasaccaka Sutta (MN:35).

Wanderer Vacchagotta

According to the scriptures, while the Buddha was residing at the Great Wood Monastery, Wanderer Vacchagotta was also living in Vesālī. The Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta (MN:71) describes his encounter with the Buddha. After a long discussion, he was delighted by the Buddha's teachings but did not immediately become a lay follower. Later, he did become a lay follower and eventually attained the noble state of an arahant disciple.^{liv}

We will conclude this section here. In the next section (15-2), we will explore where the Buddha spent his sixth rainy season and the Dhamma teachings given during that period.

End Notes: Section 15-1

ⁱ During the Buddha's time Vesali was a wealthy and populous city of Vajji country—republic ruled by Lichavi princes (now in state of Bihar). It surrounded by forest areas and two main forests during the time of the Buddha were: Mahavanaya and Gosingha Sala Vanya. It says Niganthanatha one of the contemporary teachers of the Buddha was born there, Vesali was his strong hold. * The Licchavis were the dominant clan in the Vajji republic, which had its capital at Vesālī, see: AN: Note: 495.

ⁱⁱ Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Licchavis_of_Vaishali.

ⁱⁱⁱ VP: Chulavagga:KD15.

^{iv} Source 1: Madhuratthavilāsinī (Buddhavarṇasatthakathā) of Bhadantācariya Buddhaddatta Mahathera: Translated by I. B. Honer, 1946.

^v Source 2: Jinacaritaṃ, The Life of the Victorious Buddha, translated by Bhikkhu Anandajoti.

^{vi} Chapter 23: The Great Chronicles of Buddhas by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw.

^{vii} Source: Sunday Lankadeepa; Sri Lanka Newspaper: <https://www.lankadeepa.lk/sunday/rasawitha>

^{viii} Source: Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishali_\(ancient_city\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishali_(ancient_city))

^{ix} VP: Chulavagga:KD15.

^x Chapter 23: The Great Chronicles of Buddhas by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw. * It says that King Suddhona's attainment of arahant ship was given in the treatise entitled "Tathāgata Udāna Dipani". * The commentary to the Anguttara Nikaya also described this event.

^{xi} <https://pitaka.lk/books/buddha-charithaya/12-2.html>. * It says that the Blessed One attend to the cremation of his body, gave a teaching of impermanency of all and returned back to Vesali. * see also *The Life of Buddha*, by A. Ferdinand Herold, tr. by Paul C Blum [1922], at sacred-texts.com <https://sacred-texts.com/bud/lob/lob42.htm>

^{xii} See: AN: Notes: 1731.

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- xiii VP:Chulavagga: Kd20. Similar account is described in AN8:51 (Gotami sutta).
- xiv Ibid. See also AN8:51.
- xv AN8:51.
- xvi Known as Aṭṭha garudhamma, details are given in the sutta, see also AN:Note: 1733.
- xvii VP:Chulavagga: Kd20.
- xviii Ibid.
- xix AN7:56. See: AN:Note:1540.
- xx Source: Deepak Anand <https://www.blogger.com/profile/14702525494865105362>
<https://nalanda-insatiableinoffering.blogspot.com/2022/01/kapilavastu-palace-city-witness-to-two.html>
- xxi AN8:51.
- xxii He was a debater and a clever speaker regarded by many as a saint. According to MA, Saccaka was the son of Niganṭha (Jain) parents who were both skilled in philosophical debate. He had learned a thousand doctrines from his parents and many more philosophical systems from others. In the suuts he was referred to by his clan's name, Aggivessana, see: MN: Notes: 369.
- xxiii See: MN:Note:394.
- xxiv AN3:84.
- xxv See: AN: Notes: 585 & 586.
- xxvi AN3:125 (Gotamaka sutta).
- xxvii AN5:195.
- xxviii AN4:193 (Bhaddiya sutta).
- xxix Ibid.
- xxx AN4: 196 (Sāḷha sutta), see also: AN: Notes: 923 & 924.
- xxxi Ibid.
- xxxii AN5:58.
- xxxiii AN7:1. * This teaching is also mentioned again in DN:16.
- xxxiv See: AN: Note: 1475.
- xxxv AN5:121.
- xxxvi AN7:57.
- xxxvii AN5:44.
- xxxviii AN8:21.
- xxxix AN1:251.
- xl AN6: 120. * The six qualities are: Unwavering confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha (1-3), unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, unwavering confidence in the Saṅgha, 4) noble virtue 5) noble knowledge, 6) noble liberation.
- xli The eight qualities are described in this sutta, see: AN8:21.
- xlii * Reborn into a group of devas in the pure abodes who are produced through the mind of jhāna, see: AN:Notes: 1033.
- xliiii AN5:44.
- xliv See: AN: Notes: 1195.
- xlvi AN5:195.
- xlvi AN5:194.
- xlvi AN5:194.
- xlvi AN5:194.
- xlvi AN8:12.
- xlvi Ibid.
- l AN6: 120.
- li AN8:44
- lii AN10:47.
- liii Ibid.
- liv See: MN:72 and MN:73.