

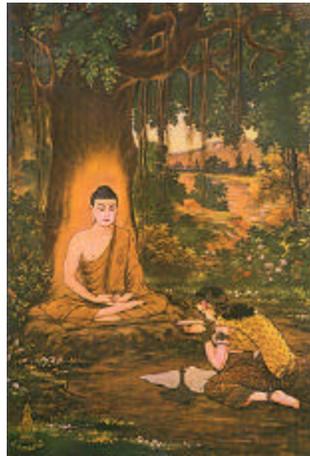
# Attainment of Buddha hood

by

Mingun Sayadaw

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The assistance rendered by Devas and Brahmas



Sujata offers the Ghana Milk Rice

**Introduction:** - This short extract from the main story describing the attainment of enlightenment by Bodhisatta is to illustrate that as significant as the Buddha, beings from the whole world system came to pay their respect and homage to celebrate and welcome the Great achievement.

In the similar manner, but to a lesser degree, when a Bhikkhu is ready to attain Arahatsip, there are Devas and Brahmas who came to welcome and acclaim his accomplishment. When Devas came down to welcome an Arahats, the surrounding area either lit up by their shining bodies or the formation a luminous ball of light rising towards the heaven.

So, when a Laity attained the stage of holiness, Sotapanna and upward, there is a Deva welcoming ceremonial event taken place by the appearance in one's vision the Deva's welcoming party. ([Appendix-A](#)) I will cite here Dhammapad Verse No. 16 the story of *Dhammika Upasaka in support of this spiritual ethical procedure.* .

*In our effort on our spiritual development, we do need the help of the Deities and relatives from the Deva and the Brahma world. There is nothing wrong as Buddhist to receive helps from them and pray for their help when we needed their help. Although Buddha himself did not pray for the Deva's help, the Devas and Brahmas feel*

*obligated to offer their help in the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment with respect and reverence.*

*This show of the ethic of solidarity is more strictly observed in the spiritual world than in the human world. This extract from the Story of Buddha should attest in support of this spiritual ethic between beings.*

## **Attainment of Buddhahood**

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When the Ghana milk-rice was being thus cooked, (1) big froths appeared in large numbers turning round clockwise; but not even a drop spilled out; (2) smoke did not in the least rise above the oven; (3) the *four Deva Kings*, the **Guardians of the world came and stood guard at the oven**; (4) the *great Brahma* gave cover over the **pot of Ghana milk-rice with an umbrella**; (5) *Sakka* arranged the faggots evenly and set fire to them to burn in a blaze; (6) by their supernormal powers *Devas* collected the nutrients suitable for Devas and humans in the Four Continents surrounded by two thousand small islands; they did so as if they were gathering honey from honey combs hanging from branches; and then they poured the nutrients so collected into the pot of Ghana milk-rice<sup>1</sup>.

Having seen in one single day many things of wonder as stated above at the place where the Ghana milk-rice was being cooked, Lady *Sujata*, called the maid servant, *Punna*, by name and ordered her thus:

*"Dear girl, Punna, today our Guardian Deva of the banyan tree appears to be in good mood. In this period of over twenty years<sup>2</sup>, I have never seen such wonderful things. Make haste and go and clean up the banyan tree, the residence of the Guardian Deva."*

The maid servant, Punna, replying, "Very well, my lady", made haste and went near the banyan tree where she saw the Bodhisatta sitting at its foot facing east and also the whole tree shining golden yellow with the radiance emitted from the Bodhisatta's body. Frightened and thinking, "Today Guardian Deva of the banyan tree has come down the tree; it seems to me he is sitting there to receive the offering with his own hands", she hurried back home and reported the matter to lady Sujata.

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<sup>1</sup> On two special occasions, the day the Buddha attained Buddhahood and the day he passed into *Parinibbana*, Devas poured the said nutrients into the pot.

<sup>2</sup> Sujata having her wish fulfilled, she has been making offering to the Tree Deva for the past twenty years,

On hearing the words of the maid servant, lady Sujata felt very happy and saying, "From today, be an elder daughter of mine', bestowed upon her all the apparel and ornaments befitting a daughter."

It is customary (*dhammata*) for a Bodhisatta to be offered the alms food of Ghana milk-rice on the day he is to attain Buddha hood; and it is proper to receive that food only in a gold cup worth one lakh. The lady Sujata, intending, "I shall put Ghana milk-rice in a gold cup", had one worth one lakh taken out from her chamber. She then poured the cooked Ghana milk rice, into the cup tilting the pot. Thereupon, all the Ghana milk rice flowed into the cup to the last drop like water drops gliding down from a paduma lotus leaf. The entire Ghana milk rice was just enough to fill the cup to the brim, neither more nor less.

The lady covered the gold cup full of Ghana milk-rice with another gold cup and wrapped them up with a piece of clean white cloth. Then, having adorned herself in hill attire and carrying the gold cup on her head, she went near the banyan tree with great pomp and grandeur. *She was overjoyed on seeing the Bodhisatta and taking him to be the Guardian Deva of the banyan tree*, she proceeded in a respectful manner to where she saw the Bodhisatta. She then lowered the gold cup from her head and opened it and carrying a golden jar of water perfumed with all kinds of fragrant flowers, approached the Bodhisatta and stood nearby.

The earthen alms-bowls, which had been offered to the Bodhisatta by *Ghatikara Brahma* at the time of Renunciation and which had remained with him during the whole six years period of *dukkaracariya*, *disappeared inexplicably* just at the time when the rich man's wife Sujata came to offer the alms food of Ghana. Not seeing the bowl, the Bodhisatta spread out his right hand to receive the water. Lady Sujata offered the alms food of Ghana in the gold cup placing it in the hands of the Bodhisatta. The Bodhisatta looked at lady Sujata, who, understanding perfectly well the way the Bodhisatta looked, addressed him thus: 'O Venerable One, I have offered you the Ghana milk-rice in the gold cup; may you accept it together with the gold cup and go anywhere you like.' Then, uttering words of' prayer,

*"My heart's desire is fulfilled. So too, may your hearts desire be fulfilled!"*

She departed without showing the least concern for the gold cup worth one lakh as if it were a withered leaf.

The Bodhisatta also rose from his seat and , after circumambulating the banyan tree, proceeded to the bank of the *River Neranjara* carrying with him the gold cup containing the Ghana milk -rice. At the Neranjara river there was a bathing ghat, by the name of *Suppatitthita*, where many Bodhisattas went down and took bath on the day they were to attain Buddhahood. The Bodhisatta left the gold cup at the bathing ghat and, after taking bath, came up and sat facing east under the cool shade of a

tree. Then, *he prepared forty-nine morsels<sup>3</sup>*, no more and no less, of Ghana milk-rice, each about the size of the seed of a ripe palmyra nut (not about the size of a palmyra nut) and ate the whole lot without water. The Ghana milk-rice which was taken after being made into forty-nine morsels served as nutrient, (*ahara*), *to sustain him completely for forty-nine days*, (*sattasattaha*), while he was residing in the vicinity of the Bodhi Tree after his attainment of Buddhahood. During these forty-nine days, the Buddha passed the time absorbed *in the peace of Jhana* and of Fruition, without having any other meal, without taking bath, without washing the face and without making the body and the limbs clean.

After he had partaken of the alms food of Ghana milk-rice offered by Sujata, the Bodhisatta made the resolution while holding the gold cup,

*'If I would attain Buddhahood today, may this gold cup float away upstream; if I would not attain Buddhahood today, let it float downstream with the current'.*

He then let the gold cup float in the channel of the Neranjara. The gold cup cut across the current and went straight to the mid-river and then floated upstream from there with the speed of a fast running horse for about eighty cubits and sank in a whirlpool. On reaching the mansion of *Naga king, Kala*, it hit all the three gold cups used by the three previous Buddhas, namely, *Kakusanda, Konagamana* and *Kassapa* on the day they were to attain Buddhahood, producing the (metallic) sound of 'kili, kili' and came to rest under the said three gold cups.

On hearing the sound, Naga King Kala said: It was only yesterday that a Buddha appeared; today, another Buddha appears." and then he rose uttering words of praise in many verses, ( The period of time intervening the *appearance of Kassapa Buddha and our Buddha was so long that in the meantime the Great Earth had risen by one yojana and three gavutas<sup>4</sup>*, But as for Kala Naga. it was so very short that he could say of these appearances as happening yesterday and today.

Then, the Bodhisatta took rest for the day in the sala grove on the bank of the Neranjara which was replete with very fragrant flowers, verdant and delightful to everyone. He then proceeded to practice *Anapana* meditation; after attaining the eight mundane *jhanas* and the five *Abhinnanas*, at twilight in the coolness of the evening, he walked along the path decorated by Devas and Brahmas; having descended into the Neranjara and after taking a bath, he headed towards the Maha Bodhi Tree by the very path created by Devas and Brahmas. Thereupon, Nagas, Yakkhas and Gandhabba Devas paid homage to him with offerings of celestial flowers, perfumes and scented paste. They also sang soft and sweet celestial songs.

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<sup>3</sup> Forty nine days – In Myanmar, many follow this tradition by taking the significant of the number forty nine when they taken vow wishing to complete a task for spiritual development. Some Bhikkhus did the same forty nine morsels from their bowl, no more, no less for their daily meals..

<sup>4</sup> According to Pali Canon, this period is calculated at Asandkheyya – incalculable period. By the life span Kala Naga must be in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Jhanas Realm as a minimum. The realm of Infinite Lustre (Appamanabha)

Then the whole of the ten thousand world-systems was almost covered with celestial flowers and perfumes and also with wild acclaim by Devas and Brahmas.

At that time, Sotthiya, a Brahmin grass-cutter was coming from the opposite direction carrying grass; sensing the wish of the Bodhisatta (from his manner) to have some grass, he offered him eight handfuls of grass. The Bodhisatta, carrying the eight handfuls of grass, went up the high ground of Maha Bodhi and stood south of the Maha Bodhi Tree facing north. At that moment, the southern part of the ten thousand world-systems sank so much so that it looked as if it would touch Maha Avici; and the northern part of the ten thousand world-systems rose so much so that it looked as if it would fly up to reach Bhavagga. On seeing this phenomenon, the Bodhisatta considered thus: 'This is not the place where *Arahattamagga Nana* and *Sabbannuta Nana* can be realized'; and so, making a clockwise turn round the Maha Bodhi Tree, he proceeded to the west of the tree and stood there facing east. Just at that moment, the western part of world-systems sank so much so that it looked as if it would touch Maha Avici; and the eastern part of it rose so much so that it looked as if it would fly up to Bhavagga. On seeing this phenomenon, the Bodhisatta considered again: 'This is not the place where *Arahattamagga Nana* and *Sabbannuta Nana* can be realized'; and so, making a clockwise turn round the Maha Bodhi Tree, he proceeded to the north and stood there facing south. Just at that moment, the northern part of the world-system sank so much so that it looked as if it would touch Maha Avici; and the southern part of it rose up so much so that it looked as if it would fly up to reach Bhavagga. (The position of the great earth at the places in the south, the west and the north where the noble Bodhisatta had stood, was such that it sank at his back and rose in front of him ... like the wheel of a cart resting flat on its central hub on the ground; it rocks or reels when trampled upon at the fringe). On seeing this phenomenon, the Bodhisatta considered again; 'This is also not the place where the *Arahattamagga Nana* and *Sabbannuta Nana* can be realized'; and so making a clockwise turn round the Maha Bodhi Tree, he proceeded to the east and stood facing west.

(In this matter, the *Buddhavamsa Commentary* mentions only this: "The Noble Bodhisatta proceeded to the Bodhi Tree, and circumambulating it three times, stood at the north-east corner - scattering the eight handfuls of grass." It does not mention the fact that the great earth tilted over to one side when he stood on the south, the west and the north. The *Jinalankara Tika*, however, states that "when the Bodhisatta stood on the south, the west and the north, the great earth trembled like the drop of water falling on the Paduma lotus leaf, and that standing at the north-east corner he scattered the eight handfuls of grass.")

The locality where the unconquered throne, *Aparajita*, would appear to the east of the Maha Bodhi Tree stood unshaken and firm, being the place not to be abandoned; *Avijahitathana*, where the thrones of all the Buddhas had appeared. Knowing that "This place is certainly the auspicious site of victory where all the Buddhas destroy the defilements", and holding their tips, the noble Bodhisatta scattered the eight handful of grass he had brought.

The moment he scattered the eight handfuls of grass, they were transformed into a large jewel throne, fourteen cubits in size, which was so magnificent that no painter or sculptor would be able to paint or carve the likeness of it, and they existed in this marvelous form (of a jeweled throne).

With the Maha Bodhi Tree as the back-drop, facing east and with a steadfast mind, the Bodhisatta declared:

(1) Let only the skin remain,

(2) Let only the sinews remain,

(3) Let only the bones remain,

(4) Let my whole body, and all the flesh and blood dry up, unless and until I attain Buddhahood, I will not in any way change the cross-legged posture I have now assumed. Thus developing a firm resolution of four factors, he sat on the jewel throne assuming the Invincible (*Aparajita*) cross-legged posture (the posture for conquering the enemies, not for conceding defeat), which cannot be destroyed though struck simultaneously by hundreds of thunderbolts.

Vanquishing *Vasavatti Mara* (Devaputta Mara) before sunset

When the Bodhisatta had taken his seat on the Invincible, *Aparajita* throne, at the foot of the Mah~ Bodhi Tree, for realization of Sabba~uta ~'ina, *Sakka* came to pay homage and stood blowing the *Vijayuttara conch*. (This conch was 120 cubits in length and when once blown, its sound ceased only after four months.) *Paricasikha Deva* came to pay homage and stood playing *Beluva harp*. *Suyama Deva* stood waving the yak-tail fly-flap, *Santusita Deva* stood waving the circular nibby fan, and *Sahampati Brahma* stood holding the white umbrella, three *yojan3s* in length. *fla Naga* arrived with a company of *eighty- thousand female Naga dancers* and stood paying homage by chanting hundreds of verses in praise of the Bodhisatta. All the Devas and Brahmas from the ten thousand world-systems arrived to pay homage with offerings of festoons of very fragrant of flowers, perfumes, scented powder, incense and incense sticks and singing thousands of songs in acclaim.

## Appendix - A

### Verse 16

#### The Story of Dhammika Upasaka

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, the Buddha uttered Verse (16) of this book, with reference to Dhammika, a lay disciple.

Once there lived in Savatthi, a lay disciple by the name of Dhammika, who was virtuous and very fond of giving in charity. He generously offered food and other requisites to the bhikkhus regularly and also on special occasions. He was, in fact, the leader of five hundred virtuous lay disciples of the Buddha who lived in Savatthi. Dhammika had seven sons and seven daughters and all of them, like their father, was virtuous and devoted to charity. When Dhammika was very ill and was on his death-bed he made a request to the Samgha to come to him and recite the sacred texts by his bedside. *While the bhikkhus were reciting the Maha satipatthana Sutta, six decorated chariots from six celestial worlds arrived to invite him to their respective worlds.* Dhammika told them to wait for a while for fear of interrupting the recitation of the Sutta. The bhikkhus, thinking that they were being asked to stop, stopped and left the place.

A little while later, Dhammika told his children about the six decorated chariots waiting for him. Then and there he decided to choose the chariot from the Tusita world and asked one of his children to throw a garland on to it. Then he passed away and was reborn in the Tusita world. Thus, the virtuous man rejoices in this world as well as in the next.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

**Verse 16:** Here he rejoices, hereafter he rejoices; one who performed meritorious deeds rejoices in both existences. He rejoices and greatly rejoices when he sees the purity of his own deeds.