

The Beginning of Human Conception

Abhidhamma



Maha Pajapati Gotami requesting for permission from the Buddha to establish the Order of Nuns (Bhikkhuni Sasana).

Uppalavanna Theri – Born from Blue Lotus Flower

This is a continuation of the first article – “**The Beginning of Human Conception**”.

The Buddhist Pali canon said, there are infinite numbers of worlds in the Universe and no world is permanent. Our own earth will end one day like the star in the galaxy. The world we live in will be destroyed by **fire, water or wind**. When it is destroyed by fire, the entire world up to the Brahma plane (3 first-*jhàna* planes) will be burnt completely. The destruction by fire will come in seven consecutive and our world will be destroyed then on the eighth time, the water will destroy it to complete the destruction. The final destruction will be by wind up to 64th times.

Before the destruction begins, the Devas of the four kings, Lokapala Devas, will inform the world about the coming of the end of the world. **People who heard the news, out of fright, perform good deeds and undertake *samatha* (tranquility) meditation (not Vipassana meditation)** to attain the higher *jhànas* in order to be reborn in higher celestial planes to escape the calamity.

The world we live in, we human being, do not have a fixed life span; our life span started ten years and slowly increasing to an infinite life span; and from there it decreasing down to ten years life span. This one complete cycle is in Pali Canon as one world cycle. In this period of the world cycle, we are supposedly in the 100 years life span; but some say we are in the 75 years life span; when this life span comes down to ten years, which is approximately the end of our Gotama Buddha’s dispensation, some 2,400 years from now, and the world will end. (see **Anagatavamsa Desana**). Again, we ask the question: when will Ari Metreyya Buddha appear in the new world so we could meet him and listen to his Dhamma to attain Nibbana? Metreyya Buddha will appear some 10,000,000 years from now.

So then, where in which plane out of the 31 planes of existence, will you like to take rebirth in after this life? The entire world from the bottom most to the 3rd *jhànas* planes will be destroyed. Therefore, even if you have attained stream-winner (Sotapanna) or once-returner (Sakadagami), we all have no place to take rebirth, except in the Brahma planes...

Mode of Conception:

Let me reiterate the Abhidhamma statement that said – human can be conceived in any of the three modes of conception:

- a. Born spontaneously – fully grown – in the case Ambapali Theri
- b. Born from Hollow tree-trunk, fruits and flowers – mae La Mu and Uppalavanna Theri.

c. **Born from womb** – normal conception.

Earlier I have presented to you the legendary **Mae La Mu**, the mother of King Okkalapa, who was born from the fruit of La Mu Then I presented a second case **Ambapali**, who was a spontaneous born – like fallen from space. She was found under a Mango tree in a garden and was named after the Mango as – Ambapali. Now, I will present to you the female chief disciple of Gotama Buddha, **Uppalavanna – the Lotus lady. She was born from the Blue Lotus Flower in one lifetime**

Uppalavanna Theri Life Story

Dhammapada Verse 69 gives a short account of Uppalavanna Their life story like this:

Once there was a young daughter of a rich man in **Savatthi**. Because she was so beautiful, with looks so tender and sweet, **like a blue lotus flower**, she was called "Uppalavanna", the blue lotus. The fame of her beauty spread everywhere and there were many suitors: princes, rich men and many others. However, she decided that it would be better for her to become a bhikkhuni, a female member of the Buddhist Order. One day, after lighting a lamp, she kept her mind fixed on the flame and meditating on the **fire kasina** (object of concentration) she soon achieved **Magga Insight and finally attained arahatship**. She attained supernatural power and was named foremost in supernormal power among the female disciples. She was second to the Chief female disciple **Khema Theri**.

Many aeons ago, at the time **Padumuttara Buddha**, Uppalavanna was born to a wealthy family in the City of **Hannasavati**. She had seen the Padumuttara Buddha appoint a nun foremost in supernormal powers and as His second chief female disciple. Inspired by the nun, Uppalavanna had provided meals and the requisites to the Buddha and His retinue for seven days. She had then made the aspiration to be the second chief disciple of a Buddha. The **Buddha Padumuttara, seeing that Uppalavanna would fulfill her aspiration, prophesied that under the Buddha Gotama she would be the second chief female disciple and foremost in supernormal powers**. From this time, onward Uppalavanna had performed meritorious deeds earnestly and worked towards her aspiration.

At the time of the **Kassapa Buddha**, the Buddha who preceded our Gotama Buddha, Uppalavanna was born to the royal family in the city of **Benares** as the daughter of King Kiki. She had been a devoted follower of the Buddha and had performed many meritorious deeds, including the building of a beautiful monastery for the Buddha. At death, she was reborn in a divine realm and enjoyed heavenly bliss for a long time.

Between the time of the Supreme Buddha Kassapa and the Supreme Buddha Gotama there had appeared on earth many Pacceka Buddhas. One day, a Pacceka Buddha who had been in deep meditation for seven days in the Gandhamadana Mountain had descended from the mountain in search of alms. At that time, Uppalavanna had just picked some blue lotus flowers and rice, which she had then made into popped rice. On seeing the Pacceka Buddha, she had offered Him the popped rice and the beautiful blue lotus flowers that she had just picked. Then, full of joy, she had aspired to be as beautiful as the blue lotus. Accepting the meal and the flowers, the Pacceka Buddha had returned to the mountaintop, using astral travel. At death, Uppalavanna was reborn in a heavenly realm where she enjoyed heavenly bliss for a long time. Later she took rebirth on earth.

One day, there was a holy hermit living in the forest near a lake full of blue lotus. One morning, the hermit found a baby near a blue lotus flower. **"The text documents that a hermit who lived in the forest near a lake where blue lotus flowers grew had found the beautiful baby by the side of the lake, beside the flowers."** The baby, who was very beautiful with skin the color of a blue lotus, was named **Uppalavanna** by the hermit. He then decided to adopt the helpless infant. Uppalavanna grew up to be exceedingly beautiful and resembled a celestial nymph. She led a sheltered life alone in the forest with the hermit. We can only conclude that Uppalavanna was born from the Blue Lotus flower based on her aspiration before the Peccakabuddha.

One day, a traveler who was passing through the forest saw the unusually beautiful girl and inquired from the hermit as to her origin. When the hermit explained that she was an orphan and that he had brought her up as his own child he went back and informed the king of the exceptionally beautiful maiden who lived in the

forest. The King decided to make her his consort. Together with his courtiers, he visited the hermit and asked Uppalavanna to be his queen. She agreed. Leaving the forest, she moved into the palace and soon became his favorite queen.

The next rebirth was when Uppalavanna was reborn in **Rajagaha** as the wife of a farmer. At this time, eight Pacceka Buddhas had appeared in the world and Uppalavanna had the good fortune to offer them alms. She had prepared a meal of fragrant rice and was taking it to her husband who was tilling the land when she saw the eight Buddhas seeking alms. She had immediately given the Buddhas the meal that she had prepared for her husband, and invited them to her home for their meal on the following day. She had then prepared fragrant food and picked eight bunches of blue lotus flowers, which she had offered to the Buddhas after the meal. For the second time, **she aspired to be as beautiful as the blue lotus.**

At the time of our Gotama Buddha, the aspiration made at the time of the **Padumuttara Buddha was to bear fruit.** She decided to join the order of nuns under the Buddha. Even though the text documents two instances of Uppalavanna's aspiration to be as beautiful as the blue lotus it is most likely that she also renewed her original aspiration to be foremost in supernatural powers and the second chief disciple of the Buddha. Fulfillment of such an aspiration requires great effort and many meritorious deeds.

By her name – Uppalavanna – the Lotus flower – her skin, texture and beauty in the likeness of the blue lotus flower assured us that in one lifetime she was born from the lotus flower, the mode of conception so unique that we can only find it in Abhidhamma.

Please read the Abhidhamma – Ultimate Science – by Prof. Mehm Tin Mon, Ph.D (University of Illinois)

Source:

1. Dahammapada Verse 69
2. Relatives and Disciples of the Buddha by Radhika Abeysekera
3. Abhidhamma – Ultimate Science – by Prof. Mehm Tin Mon, Ph.D