

# Buddhist Customs and Traditions 2

Two students of grade 4 in Sri Vajira Pirivena are at the noticeboard. They are reading the Poya day programme.

## Notice

### The Poya Day Programme of Sri Vajira Pirivena

- |            |                                                                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.00 a.m.  | - Observing the Eight precepts                                                      |
| 6.30 a.m.  | - Buddha Pooja                                                                      |
| 7.00 a.m.  | - Offering alms                                                                     |
| 8.00 a.m.  | - Dhamma sermon conducted by Venerable<br>Wanawasala Dhammawasa                     |
| 9.15 a.m.  | - Dhamma discussion by Venerable Panadure<br>Wimaladhamma                           |
| 10.15 a.m. | - Morning tea                                                                       |
| 10.30 a.m. | - Meditation programme                                                              |
| 11.00 a.m. | - Buddha Pooja conducted by Venerable Yatiyana<br>Wijitawansa                       |
| 11.30 a.m. | - Offering alms to the Sanga and the participants                                   |
| 1.00 p.m.  | - Dhamma discussion by Venerable Ahangama<br>Wajirabuddhi                           |
| 2.00 p.m.  | - A discussion on selected Jataka stories by Venerable<br>Kalukondayawe Saranatissa |
| 3.00 p.m.  | - Evening tea/ soft drinks                                                          |
| 3.30 p.m.  | - Meditation programme                                                              |

- 4.30 p.m. - Bodhi Pooja conducted by Venerable Ahangama Wajirabuddhi
- 5.45 pm. - End of the programme

Vijitha : Have you seen this notice?

Saman : No, let's read it.

Vijitha : There are a number of interesting items on the programme.

Saman : Yes, there is a Dhamma discussion in the morning and another in the afternoon. Who will be conducting them?

Vijitha : The Dhamma discussion in the morning will be conducted by Venerable Panadure Wimaladhamma and the afternoon one by Venerable Ahangama Wajirabuddhi.

Saman : I would like to take part in the Bodhi Pooja. Would you like to join me?

Vijitha : Sure, I will bring some flowers and incense sticks for the Pooja and you can bring some oil and wicks for the lamps.

Saman : What about the Dhamma discussion?

Vijitha : There's one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

Saman : Yes, I'm sure that they will be interesting.

Vijitha : Mmmm. I'm looking forward to the discussion on the Jataka stories; what about you?

Saman : Me too. Do you know what Jataka stories he will be discussing?

Vijitha : No, I don't.

Saman : Oh, there goes the bell! Let's go to class now and I must tell my mother about the Poya day programme. I am sure she'd like to come too.

Vijitha : I will tell my mother too.

### Activity 01 – Reading

A) Answer the following questions.

01. What was displayed on the noticeboard?
02. Who was reading it ?
03. What will Vijitha and Saman bring for the Bodhi Pooja?
04. What are the items on the programme held twice?
05. Who do Vijitha and Saman plan to inform about the Poya day programme?

B) Write if the following statements are ‘True’ or ‘False’.

1. An English day programme is displayed on the noticeboard.
2. The evening Bodhi Pooja is conducted by Venerable Panadure Wimaladhamma.
3. There will only be one Dhamma sermon and one meditation programme for the day.
4. There will be a discussion on the eight precepts.
5. Vijitha and Saman will tell their mothers about the Poya day programme.

### Activity 02 - Listening

Listen to the teacher and put the eight precepts in the right order (Put the number in the correct box).

#### Eight Precepts in English

- |  |                                                                                                                                    |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | I promise to abstain from taking what is not given.                                                                                |
|  | I promise to abstain from eating any solid food after noon.                                                                        |
|  | I promise to abstain from using intoxicating drinks and drugs.                                                                     |
|  | I promise to abstain from dancing, singing, playing or listening to music, watching entertainments and wearing cosmetics, perfumes |

or jewellery.

I promise to abstain from false speech.

I promise to abstain from committing adultery .

I promise to abstain from using high and luxurious beds.

I promise to abstain from intentionally taking the life of any living being.

### Activity 03 - Reading

These are some of the questions which the devotees came up with during the Dhamma discussion. Select the suitable answer and write the number in the space given.

#### Questions

1. Venerable Sir, can you name the Triple Gem ? (.....)
2. What are the Four Noble Truths? (.....)
3. Venerable Sir, may I know the Noble Eightfold Path? (.....)
4. Could you please tell me the Three Characteristics? (.....)
5. Could you please tell me the two extremes of life? (.....)

#### Answers

1. Self mortification , self indulgence
2. Impermanence, suffering, non-self
3. Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha
4. Suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, the path to the cessation of suffering
5. Right view, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, mindfulness, Samadhi

### Activity 04 -

#### How to conduct a *Bodhi Pooja*



A Bodhi Pooja is a common practice done by all Buddhists to show their respect to the Bodhi tree. It is better to know how to perform a Bodhi Pooja appropriately. Before you engage in a Bodhi Pooja you are supposed to be clean. Then, you must collect fresh clean water into a pitcher and add either some fragrant powder or scented flowers like jasmine. You also need, incense sticks and oil lamps for the Bodhi Pooja. It is good to choose a time when you feel that you are in need of blessings. It is suitable to wear white or light-coloured appropriate clothing for this occasion. Before you start the Bodhi Pooja, you have to sweep the premises around the Bodhi tree.

To begin the Bodhi Pooja, you must take the water pitcher into your hand respectfully and tread around the Bodhi tree murmuring the Nine qualities of the Buddha. While doing this, you pour water to the roots of the Bodhi tree in all directions. Next, you offer flowers to the Bodhi tree, light oil lamps and incense sticks. Then, you sit by the Bodhi tree and chant verses and stanzas to venerate the Bodhi tree. After this, it is better if you could chant Sutras such as *MahaMangala*, *Ratana*, *Karaniyametta* and *Dhammachakkappavattana*. Furthermore, engaging in meditation under the Bodhi tree will be useful for relaxation of your mind. To conclude the Bodhi Pooja, it is customary to transfer merit to the departed ones and deities.

### Activity 05

Answer the following questions.

1. What do you do before starting a Bodhi Pooja?
2. Where do you conduct a Bodhi Pooja?
3. What kind of clothes should you wear when conducting a Bodhi Pooja?
4. What kind of Sutras do you chant under the Bodhi tree?
5. How do we usually conduct a Bodhi Pooja?

### Activity 06

Copy the following grid into your writing book and place the underlined words in the above text in the correct column.

Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs

### Activity 07

Go through the passage on Bodhi Pooja and find antonyms for the following words.

1. rare
2. remove
3. bad
4. impure
5. black
6. finish
7. after
8. stand
9. worse
10. useless

### Activity 08

Go through the above text and find synonyms for the following words.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. appropriate | 6. worship    |
| 2. walk        | 7. whispering |
| 3. pure        | 8. finish     |
| 4. want        | 9. give       |
| 5. begin       | 10. fragrant  |

### Activity 09

#### ***Better than...***

*Adapted from Dhammapada Sahassa Vagga*

*Better than a thousand*

*Hollow words*

*Is one word that brings peace.*

*Better than a thousand*

*Hollow verses*

*Is one verse that brings peace.*

*Better than a hundred*

*Hollow lines*

*Is one line of the law bringing peace.*

*It is better to conquer yourself*

*Than to win a thousand battles.*

*Then the victory is yours.*

Read the above poem and answer the following questions.

- What is the title of this poem?
- How do we bring peace to our lives?

- c) Can you find rhyming words in this poem?
- d) What is better to win than a thousand battles?
- e) What is the message given in the poem?

### Activity 10

Mudras – Symbolic hand positions of Buddhist rituals

Study these pictures and match them with the explanations given below.

(Put the correct number in the box given under each picture.)

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



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Illustrations by D.G. Prasanna Wimalaratne



1

**Namaskara Mudra**

Gesture of greeting, prayer and respect made by those devoted to the path taught by the Buddha.

2

**Dhammachakra Mudra**

The gesture of teaching interpreted as turning the Wheel of Law. The hands are held level with the heart, the thumbs and index fingers form circles.

3

**Dhyana Mudra**

The gesture of absolute balance and meditative poise. The hands are relaxed in the lap. The tips of the thumbs and fingers touch each other.

4

**Abhaya Mudra**

Gesture of reassurance, blessing and protection.  
Do not fear.

5

**Vitakka Mudra**

Intellectual argument and discussion. The circle formed by the thumb and index finger is the sign of the Wheel of Law.

6

**Bhumisparsa Mudra**

The Buddha touched the ground to call the earth goddess *Sthavara* to bear witness to his awakening.

7

**Varada Mudra**

Fulfilment of all wishes, the gesture of charity.

8

**Jhana Mudra**

Teaching. The hand is held at chest level and the thumb and index finger again form the Wheel of Law.