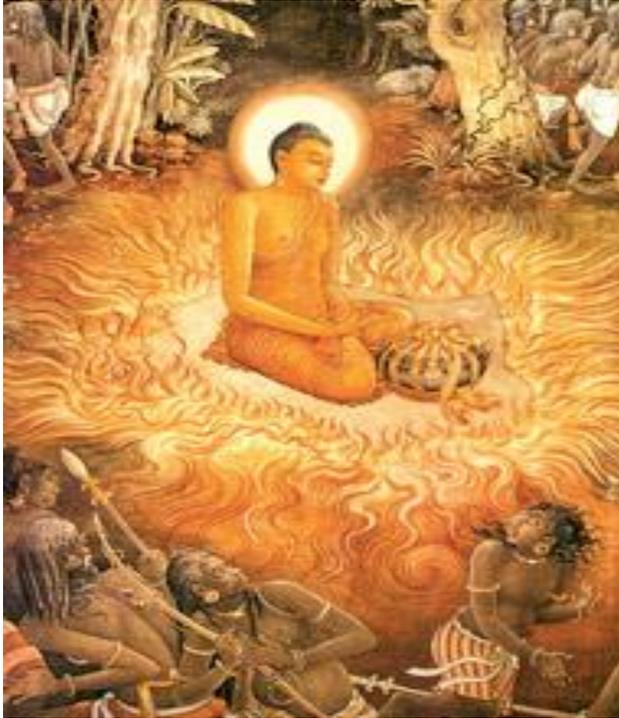


Significance of Duruthu Full Moon day



Buddha's first visit to Sri Lanka

The significance of Duruthu Full Moon Poya Day, marks Gautama Buddha's first visit to Sri Lanka. During the sixth century B.C., nine months after the enlightenment, Gauauthama Buddha visited Mahiyangana to restore peace between the Yakkas and Nagas who were in constant confrontation. When the Buddha visited this time, the country was inhabited by the Yakkas who were human descendent of Rawana and his brother Vibhishana. The Naga descendents were the prehistoric inhabitants of Lanka. There is also a common belief that the God Sumana Saman invited the Buddha to conclude this dispute among the 2 groups. Yakkas were gathered for a meeting when Buddha visited Mahanaga Grove in Mahiyangana. The Enlighten one laid the 'pathkada' and stood in the sky above Mahanaga Grove

radiating the rays of light from His body and a rainbow-like halo emanated around Him.

Frighten Yakkhas thought that the Enlightened One was an invader, and took up arms without listening to the Buddha. Then He set forth a terrible drought, heavy rains and thunder storms which the Yakkhas could not endure. They were terrified and realizing the Buddha was a supernatural being and turned submissive. They obeyed the Buddha and begged his pardon. Ultimately, the Buddha set foot on the Mahiyangana Mahanaga Grove

According to legends, Devas and Nagas assembled at the Maha Naga Grove in large numbers and took refuge in the Triple Gem. God Sumana Saman who was a member of the Deva tribe from the central hills of Sri Lanka was also among them. This God attained "Sowan" or the first level of sainthood leading to Nirvana. God Saman begged for a relic to worship and the Buddha gave him a lock of his hair, the Hair Relic. God Sumana Saman received the Hair Relic in a gold casket. God Sumana Saman built a Dagaba enshrined 'Kesa Dhathu' or Hair Relic. Miyuguna Seya which is also known as the Mahiyngana Dagaba was built at the site of the Mahanaga Grove where the Buddha subjugated the Yakkhas. This was the first dagaba built in SL.

With the visit of the Enlightened One Sri Lanka was purified, and was made suitable soil for Arahant Mahinda Maha Thero to establish Buddhism. The teachings of Buddha are deeply imbued with the spirit of peace (Santi) that two cannot be separated. The terms of peace, He expounded at

Mahiyangana on Duruthu Poya included calmness (Sama). Tranquility (Samatha), contentment (Santutthi) Harmlessness (Ahimsa) non-violence (Avihimsa) and peacefulness (Vupasama)

Buddha's visit to Magadha kingdom and offering Veluvanaramaya

According to the Buddhist History, the Buddha visited the Magadha Kingdom accompanied by Jatila Arahants during the Duruthu month. The three Jatila brothers, Arahants Uruwela Kassapa, Nadi Kassapa, Gaya Kassapa and their followers accompanied the Buddha. King Bimbisara who was ruling the kingdom, hesitated to believe that Uruwela Kassapa was a disciple of the Buddha when he noticed the Buddha with Arahant Kassapa. Realizing the king's misconception Arahant Uruwela Kassapa performed a miracle to indicate that all the Jatila Arahants including himself were disciples of the Buddha. King Bimbisara and his people were very much delighted and devotedly embraced Buddhism. Buddha preached the Dharma and all of them took refuge in the Triple Gem. Then King Bimbisara offered Veluvanaramaya to the Buddha and Buddha made a proclamation allowing Bhikkhus to accept monasteries during this Duruthu Full Moon day.