

# **KATHINA DAY CELEBRATION**

## **16 OCTOBER 2022**



### **Programme**

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| <b>6.00 am</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Procession of members and devotees carry robes for the Maha Sangha go round the temple 3 times and thereafter assemble in the Shrine Hall for the Kathina Robe Offering Ceremony</b></li></ul>   |
| <b>6.45 am</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Resident Monk invites the Maha Sangha to the Shrine Hall for Morning Puja</b></li><li>• <b>Morning Puja</b></li><li>• <b>Welcome address by Resident Monk Ven P Seelananda</b></li><li>• <b>Offering of the Kathina Robe to the Maha Sangha by Mdm Ann Tiung and Miss Jasmine Tan</b></li><li>• <b>Offering of Gift Bags to the Maha Sangha</b></li><li>• <b>Dhamma Talk</b></li><li>• <b>Transferring of Merits</b></li><li>• <b>Blessings by the Maha Sangha</b></li><li>• <b>Maha Sangha proceed to Mangala Hall to partake breakfast</b></li></ul> |

## **Vassa Invitation**

The Vassana is a period of the Theravada Buddhist Monks' 'retreat' that originated during Lord Buddha's time, more than 2,500 years ago when transportation, communication and living conditions were still primitive. Then and as now, India suffers from heavy rainfalls caused by monsoons, making it difficult for monks to travel from one village to another to preach, seek alms or live in the jungle to meditate. Therefore, kings and lay people invited the monks to live and preach in the palaces, houses and monasteries while they looked after the monks' needs.

As a Theravada Buddhist temple, it is our duty to invite the our resident monks to spend their retreat in our temple to observe the Vassakala (rainy season) for three months.

## **Kathina Day (Robe Offering)**

After the Vassana, a day is selected within the month to celebrate Kathina, a ceremony whereby members and devotees offer the Kathina Robe and other gifts to the Maha Sangha. Buddhists attach great significance to this celebration. 'To care for the needs of the Bhikkhus' is a meritorious deed.

Kathina robes are offered to the Sangha in a monastery only once a year during a specified period. The period starts from the end of Vassa (the rainy season) after the monks successfully complete observation of Vassa and celebration of Pavāranā, to the next full moon day. In other words, Kathina robes can be offered between the days following the Pavāranā to the full moon of November.

Kathina robes are offered to the Sangha, and not to any individual monk. Thus, the offering of Kathina robes to the Sangha is indeed a very rare opportunity. In the Dakkhinā Vibhanga Sutta, the Buddha explained to Venerable Ananda that "in no way does a gift to a person individually ever have greater fruit than an offering made to the Sangha".

When we say "I offer this robe to the Sangha", we mean all the Sangha or the community of Bhikkhus in the world. This includes not only those who have gained enlightenment and but also those on the path to be enlightened. Sangha means the community of monks which must consist of a group of at least four monks. When you offer the Kathina robes, you are offering them to the Sangha; that means all noble disciples of the Buddha – not only the Enlightened Ones.

When we invite the monks to observe the Vassana in our temple and we celebrate the successful completion of it on Kathina Day, many types of merits accrue to those who:-

- a. look after the needs of monks during the period;

- b. participate in dhamma sermons and discussions, meditation programmes and chantings of parittas;
- c. make offering of Kathina robes and other gifts on Kathina day.

### **Benefits of Offerings During the Vassana and Kathina Day**

- a. offering of Kathina robe is considered one of the greatest meritorious activities by the Buddha;
- b. whatever else offered on Kathina day, the same merit could accrue to the donors;
- c. one of the stanzas chanted during Kathina glorifies the greatness of merit from performing Kathina, “Even this solid earth, or a solid rock or a piece of diamond could tremble, shake or break at times but the merit obtained by offering Kathina robe could not be nullified by anything until one achieves the ultimate goal of Nibbāna”. That is why it is called KATHINA (unshakable).
- d. In the Theragāthā Atthakathā, a disciple named Arahant Nāgitha recalled the glorious benefits of paying respect and having offered Kathina robes to the Maha Sangha. At the time of Padumuttara Buddha, he was a young man named Nārada. Due to these meritorious deeds, he was never re-born in lower planes of existence (like spirit world or animal realm) and for the last 30 aeons or kalpa, he had been re-born in higher or blissful realms like divine planes or human world. The merit thus obtained was very helpful to him to realize the ultimate truth.
- e. However, even the great Kathina merits cannot help a person having committed the 5 heinous crimes from suffering the consequences of the act – patricide, matricide, murder of an arahant, wounding of a Buddha or causing schism in the Sangha. For minor bad deeds, the positive power of Kathina merits could reduce or impeach their negative effects. Furthermore, one could be blessed with happiness, long and healthy life, good complexion, physical strength and wisdom in one’s wandering in samsara until the ultimate goal Nibbāna is achieved.

Pavāranā : a ceremony at the end of the rainy retreat.