



THE HALO OF THE GAUTAMA BUDDHA IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE SIX-COLOURED AT ALL TIMES

The halo of the Buddha and the instances of lights radiating at Buddhist sites were in the centre of attention lately. Various opinions were expressed by various individuals on this topic. Some opinions expressed by lay people, as well as monks, were contradictory. Some opinions were controversial. Following is a dialog with **Ven. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda Thero** , with a view to finding details about this marvelous topic from the Buddhist scriptures and the teaching.

Question : Venerable Sir, there are contradictory views with regard to the halo of rays of the Buddha (*Budu res*). One such view is that the colours of the rays of the Buddha should always be six-fold. Is this correct?

Answer:

“Not at all. Let’s turn to Buddhist discourses to figure out the accuracy of this phenomenon. There is one *sutta* which deals with the halo of the Buddha. According to this *sutta*, the Gautama Buddha, once went to *Kosala* City on arms rounds. There was a man in this city carrying some multi-coloured flowers at that time. Having seen the grace of the Buddha and the *bikkhus* , he offered these flowers to the Buddha with gladness.”

“On this occasion, a bright ray, resembling the glow of lightning, was emitted from the *Gautama* Buddha’s mouth. Having seen this amazing phenomenon, *Ananda thero* inquired from the Buddha,” Awakened One, let us know the reason why you laughed. Please dispel our doubts”

The *Gautama* Buddha explained, “If a person entertains a wholesome thought at my sight, then this person will never be born in a lower realm for many eons. This wholesome deed may result in the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths as a *Pachcheka* Buddha (Silent Buddha) in his last birth”

“This story is found in the *Neththiprakarana*. Does this show the Buddha’s rays with a particular colour? It is mentioned clearly in this story that when the *Gautama* Buddha smiles, a white ray radiates through his teeth and mouth, which moves around his head three times and then disappears”



“It is this ray, emitted from the mouth, signals *Ananda thero* that the *Gautama Buddha* is smiling”

Question: There is another popular belief that the rays of the Buddha radiates only from his person. What is the truth in this statement?

Answer: “This is not true. Rays radiate from *Bodhi* trees as well. References have been made about this. According to *Mahawansa*, the *Gautama Buddha* had made five great resolutions at the time of his passing away.

First, the *Bodhi* branch to be taken by the King *Ashoka* may break itself from the *Bodhi* tree and plant itself in a bowl. So this is how the sacred *Sri Maha Bodhi* which exists even today in Anuradhapura was extracted from the main *Bodhi* tree. Today, various techniques have to be used to extract a branch from a *Bodhi* tree. Sometimes, tools have to be used for this task. In the case of the *Sri Maha Bodhi*, only an incision had been made around the branch to be extracted. Then *Bodhi* branch had severed itself from that point.

Second resolution was for this extracted branch to radiate rays. Accordingly leaves of the *Bodhi* branch had radiated Buddha rays.

Third, the right jaw relic enshrined at the *Thuparama Chetiya* may rise to the air and perform a great miracle. Accordingly, the right jaw relic had performed a great twin miracle (*Yamaka Patihariya*) by emitting fire and water simultaneously when the relic was enshrined at the *chetiya*. However some do not believe in these chronicles. If one does not believe in these chronicles, then he or she needs to reject the existence of statues, *Sri Maha Bodhi* etc. History and background of these artifacts had been recorded in the chronicles.

Question -Is there a Gautama Buddha's resolution with regard to *Ruwanweli Maha Seya*?

Answer - Yes. A resolution for the collection of relics to rise to the air forming the Buddha's image and perform a great twin miracle. (*Yamaka Patihariya*). Details of this twin miracle have been recorded in the same chronicles. According to these chronicles, Sri Lanka earth had glowed when Buddha rays were emitted, and earth had become wet when rays of water were emitted. Both these phenomena had taken place simultaneously. It is regretful to note that people accumulate a great deal of sins by humiliating these miraculous phenomena. This is quite unfortunate for a person who is fortunate enough to be born into this rare human world.

Question – There is another belief that only a living Buddha is capable of emitting rays?

Answer – That is not correct. When the *Sri Maha Bodhi* was brought in, a number of miracles had taken place. First such miracle took place when the *Bodhi* branch severed itself and planted itself in a bowl. Secondly, when an attempt was made by a non-Buddhist king to destroy the Tooth Relic, which is preserved in Kandy today, by crushing with a hammer, the Tooth Relic had risen to the air unscathed and emitted Buddha Rays. Later, a special chamber had been erected by this king and started paying homage to the Tooth relic. Details with regard to virtues, dignity and miracles of the Tooth Relic have been recorded in the *Dhatuwansha*, *Thupawansha*, *Dhadawansha*, and *Mahawansha*. If someone rejects these matters, then we are not in a position to explore our own Buddhist History. In that case, we will be led to a point where we will be deprived of opportunities to venerate any statue or *Bodhi*.

Question - Do statues emit rays?

Answer – Of course. This is evident from the historical instances as well as from similar incidents at *Somawathie Chetiya*. We should not fall prey to people who believe in and spread western ideology for personal benefits. As Buddhists, we need to confront the reality. The expectations of those who continue to disparage these phenomena are clear to us. That is to create a group of materialists in the country. They aim at making materialistic, politically motivated businesses flourish and getting people used to a life style based on self-indulgence.

Question – Are there any other instances of Buddha Rays being emitted from statues?

Answer – Huin Xian's records bear witness to similar instances. Huin Xian came to India in 6th century A.D. and his records indicate the blessed effects of *stupas* and Buddha statues.

Question – When devotees congregate in a sacred site and make a resolution on a religious matter, could that site emit rays of light? There were such reports about a sacred place recently.

Answer – There were true incidences of sighting of Buddha Rays at some sacred sites when devotees were performing religious rites in isolation. Buddha Rays had been visible in the absence of devotees at these sites as well. Buddha rays are visible when *Devas* worship at these holy sites. Photographs had been taken on such occasions.

When I first visited *Somawathie Stupa*, I witnessed Buddha Rays with my own eyes. There were five others with me at that time. All of us were able to witness the Buddha Rays.

Question – When devotees are on a collective pilgrimage at a holy site, is it possible for them to emit rays of light with mental power?

Answer – A certain type of ray is emitted from an ordinary person. This varies from person to person. At the time of the passing away, *Arahant Upawana* was fanning the Gautama Buddha. The Gautama Buddha made *Arahant Upawana* move away from him to enable innumerable *Devas* to see the Awakened One's holy body. *Arahant Upawan's* aura had prevented *Devas* from seeing the *Gautama Buddha's* holy body clearly. *Arahant Upawan's* aura was powerful enough to shut down the vision of the *Devas*. No one was aware of this at that time. *Maha Parinibbana Sutta* has these details.

This shows that even human beings can emit certain rays of light. However, Buddha rays are a miraculous phenomenon. According to the *Athbuta Sutta*, the hell which is in total darkness is said to be illuminated by the birth of a Buddha. This particular illumination takes place when a Buddha attains enlightenment and attains *Parinibbanan*. However, these miraculous phenomena are unbelievable for people with sentient mentality.

What leads these sentient laymen to disbelieve these phenomena? They may be clinging to various views. What happened in Afghanistan? The extremists destroyed the sacred *Bamiyan* Buddha Statue using shells. You may observe what is happening in Afghanistan right now. The whole country is getting destroyed by bombs and shells.

How many miraculous things had happened during the tsunami in Sri Lanka? An amazing story was told by one mother and her daughter. On this fateful day, a raging wave had hit and submerged her once. Then the wave had tossed her to the surface. At this time she had started contemplating the qualities of the Buddha. All of a sudden, the next wave tossed her on to a rooftop. On seeing her daughter, who was almost drowning in the water, mother had yelled, asking her to contemplate the qualities of the Buddha, which she did immediately. A wave had tossed the daughter on to the same rooftop miraculously. Both are living in *Pelana (Galle)*. Many people, who were practitioners of the Buddha Qualities, had survived the Tsunami by contemplating the qualities of the *Gautama Buddha*, as they used to do in their day to day lives, on this fateful day as well.

Similarly, the tsunami, which wreaked havoc on human lives and properties, could not do any harm to any of the Buddha statues found on the affected coastal area.

How do laymen in our country, who seek refuge in science far more than the westerners, interpret these phenomena? I would like to appeal to those with *Metta* to refrain from accumulating an immeasurable amount of sins by challenging the omniscient knowledge of the *Gautama Buddha* with a sentient mentality. It is highly advisable for them to look in to their own ignorance and sentient mentality which would lead them to well-being.