



PERSATUAN BUDDHA TI-RATANA  
KUALA LUMPUR & SELANGOR

# Ti-Ratana Buddhist Society

# Wesak 2023

A festival to commemorate the birth, enlightenment (Buddhahood)  
and great passing away (Mahaparinibbana) of Lord Buddha.



@tiratanaofficial | [www.ti-ratana.org](http://www.ti-ratana.org)

# Significance of Wesak

Wesak day commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of our great teacher, the Buddha. It is usually celebrated on the first full moon day in May based on the lunar calendar, but may fall on different days in different countries due to local lunar observance. It is the most important day and a sacred festival for Buddhists all over the world. His birth is celebrated; as if He was not born He would not have left us his important teachings. Everyone is born but thereafter how you lead your life depends entirely on you.

During His lifetime it was all spent on learning and on His enlightenment, The Buddha was able to spread his teachings and open a path for mankind to move forward from a world of superstition, paganism, fear and hatred to a life of happiness and love. A person's destiny does not depend on the will of an Almighty being but falls entirely on the follower's hands. His universal message of understanding the 4 Noble Truths and the adherence to the 8 Precepts and its beliefs allowed followers to attain the end of suffering and nirvana. These Buddhist beliefs and teachings have endured for over 2600 years and will remain relevant in these troubled times for the next 2600 years.

Buddha passed away at the age of 80 and it shows that no matter who you are, death is inevitable. It emphasizes the impermanence of life and in His own words "Life is uncertain but death is certain". We rejoice that on his passing away, it is the end of all His sufferings and He has now reached a state of Nirvana.

During this important day of Wesak, it allows the individual to re-affirm their faith in the teachings of the Buddha. Though the precepts are already observed daily, it is important to remind ourselves that, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants must not be even thought of. Each of us must also refrain from making judgment of other people and talking bad about them.

On Wesak day, most Buddhists will visit a temple so that they can get blessings and prayers from the Sangha. It is a day of quiet contemplation, meditation and prayers. Compassion and loving kindness can be demonstrated by doing Dana, such as donating robes to the Sangha or offering them food and necessities.

Some Buddhists also donate cash or in kind to charitable organisations for the underprivileged, orphanages and the poor. It enables us to express our gratitude and happiness that we are in a position to share what we have with the less fortunate.

Lighting a candle symbolizes the end of darkness and lights the way to enlightenment. The candle is usually made into the shape of a lotus flower. The lotus flower is very symbolic, as it has been told that when the Buddha was born he took seven steps and on each step a lotus flower bloomed. The lotus flower naturally grows in murky water but the bloom is very beautiful and pure. The cessation of self indulgence towards the road to enlightenment will also allow a person's life to bloom in spite of living in a challenging world.

Abstinence from meat and eating vegetarian food on Wesak day is also to re-affirm the precept of not killing a living being. Of course, being a lifelong vegetarian would be even better as it is also good for one's health. The bathing of a Buddha statue signifies the washing away of our bad karma and purifying our minds from any hatred and ignorance.

Wesak Day usually ends by holding a float procession. The occasion allows Buddhists to gather together to show their solidarity and appreciate the teachings of the Buddha.

Buddhism today stays as relevant as when it was preached 2600 years ago. No matter the length and depth of scientific discovery and knowledge, the emphasis on freedom of thoughts, to purify one's mind and to have compassion, loving kindness and happiness are virtues that humanity strives for. The world today needs the end of killing, ultimate peace, tolerance and happiness for all humanity.



# Wesak in Malaysia

This Wesak, Buddhists will celebrate the anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment over 2,600 years ago on the full-moon of the Wesak month, commonly referred to as 'Wesak Day'. This marks the beginning of the Buddhist Era (B.E.) 2566, calculated from the time of the passing away of the Buddha in 543 BCE. This would make it one of humanity's oldest religious celebrations, with historical evidence to show that it was first celebrated in Sri Lanka during the reign of King Dutugemunu in 1st century BCE. It is an amazing fact that Wesak was celebrated continuously over the next two thousand years and became so deeply engrained in the Sinhalese that they took it with them wherever they travelled in the world.

In Malaysia there is evidence to show that Wesak was celebrated in Penang by the Sinhalese community in the last decade of the 18th century. It certainly attracted the attention of the Chinese, Burmese and Thai Buddhists who lived in Penang at that time and over the years, the observance had spread to other towns like Taiping, Kuala Lumpur and Melaka. The celebrations were very much based on the Sri Lankan practice – conducting prayers, learning Dhamma, observing the Eight Precepts, and organising float processions as ways to express our highest reverence and gratitude to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Many honoured the Three Jewels by not just intensifying their practice, but also to make Buddha-Dhamma known to more people by organising large-scale chanting, Dhamma programmes and teachings, meditation retreats and publishing Dhamma books.

Another unifying aspect of the celebration was the hoisting of the Buddhist flag. This flag was designed by an American Buddhist, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and raised for the first time on 28 April, 1885. In that particular year, Wesak Day was significant because it marked the first time that the full-moon day of the Wesak month was declared as a public holiday in Sri Lanka by the British Colonial government.

After the First World War, Wesak was so enthusiastically celebrated by the Malaysian Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists, that the Chief Monk of Mahindarama Temple in Penang, Venerable K. Pamaratana, mooted the idea of securing Wesak Day as a public holiday, arguing that it qualified as a national event because roughly about 20% of the country's population were Buddhists. However, there were many hurdles to be overcome before this dream could become reality.

The first hurdle was, that while Theravadins celebrated the occasion of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Death in the Wesak month, the Mahayanists observed the day of the Buddha's Birth on the 8th day of the fourth moon. Since only one day could be recognized, both groups settled the matter amicably at a public meeting in Penang on 1 March 1949 and agreed to accept and propose the full-moon day of the Wesak month as a public holiday so that Buddhists may devote time and effort to observe this day in a meaningful way. A special committee presented a fresh appeal to the government on 25 March 1949.



# Wesak in Malaysia

Partial success was achieved with this public holiday being granted in 1949 in the Straits Settlement of Penang and Malacca, and also in Kedah and Perak where there was a sizeable population of Thais. Employees of the Buddhist faith in Selangor, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Negri Sembilan were allowed to take a holiday. But Buddhists saw that the Wesak observance united all Buddhists, whether they were from the traditions of Mahayana or Theravada, or from lineages of the Chinese, Thai, Burmese, or Singhalese. Spearheaded by the Malayan Buddhist Association (founded 1959), various organisations appealed to the then Home Minister to declare Wesak Day as a National Holiday. The government graciously agreed and on 3 January 1962 declared Wesak Day a Federal Public Holiday from that year onwards. This year marks the 60th anniversary of that historical event.

Today, all of us in Malaysia enjoy the fruits of our forefathers' labour which allows us to have a full-day holiday to observance this holy anniversary. As we recollect their forward looking and far-reaching efforts, let us show our gratitude by commemorating this auspicious occasion meaningfully as they had envisioned. As Buddhists, let us spend the day spiritually to honour the Buddha, the Fully Enlightened One and reflect on His profound Teachings. Some of the activities which may be useful for you to participate in are Dhamma-learning programmes, meditating for longer periods, reading a Dhamma book or serving the community at temples and Buddhist organisations. May you have a fruitful celebration of Wesak Day. May Buddhism grow and flourish for the welfare and benefit of many. Sukhikhontu.



excerpt from article by  
Vijaya Samarawickrama



# Message from Chief Reverend

Brothers and sisters in the Dhamma,

Today, we are commemorating our great master's thrice sacred day, known as Wesak day. This year, we are commemorating and celebrating our great master, according to the Buddhist calendar - for the year 2566, or according to the English calendar, 2023. Throughout the world, wherever the Buddhist community is living, we will remember our great master this year, on this thrice sacred day.

Lord Buddha was born in Wesak day, full moon day of May. He attained enlightenment on the full moon day of May. He attained Mahaparinibbana on the full moon day of May. All these events happened in different years, but we are very fortunate - we can celebrate them on the same day.

This thrice sacred day is supposed to be a religious day. For the Buddhist community, in those days, we used to observe this day as a Holy day filled with religious practices. But unfortunately, nowadays with the development with the modern society, they parttake in various other activities. So therefore, I humbly would like to appeal to the Buddhist community - please try your best to observe this special day, an important day for the Buddhist community to observe as a Holy day.

We are living in Malaysia - a multiracial, multireligious country. We have the full freedom to practice and we are really fortunate. Although Islam is the main religion, the Buddhist community is the second largest in this country. And we have a public holiday declared by the Malaysian government in 1962. So today, we will be able to celebrate in a free and easy way. So therefore, in Malaysia, most of the Buddhist organizations, they have been practicing and all the religious activities as well as cultural and traditional activities. Therefore, I humbly would like to appeal to all of the Buddhist community, we should try our best to observe this as a Holy day.

In Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Ti-Ratana Buddhist Society, we are also celebrating Wesak among our branches such as Ti-Ratana Vihara in Aman Perdana, Klang, Ti-Ratana Penchala, Petaling Jaya, Ti-Ratana Lumbini Garden, Bandar Puteri, Puchong, Ti-Ratana Anggerik, Cheras, KL, Ti-Ratana Heights, in Seri Kembangan, and Ti-Ratana Bangsar, Lorong Maarof in KL. All these centres, we are celebrating and commemorating our great masters' thrice sacred day. So therefore, whoever is free, please try your best to come and participate in all the activities which we organized during this holiday.

Thank you so much and big Sadhu to all of you and wish you happy Wesak day.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!



Ven Datuk Dr K Sri Dhammaratana  
Buddhist Chief High Priest of Malaysia  
Founder & Advisor of Ti-Ratana





PERSATUAN BUDDHA TI-RATANA  
KUALA LUMPUR & SELANGOR

# Our Ti-Ratana Branches

## **Ti-Ratana Buddhist Society Kuala Lumpur & Selangor (HQ)**

Wisma Ti-Ratana  
17, Lorong Maarof  
59000 Bangsar  
Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur  
  
T: +603 2287 4800  
E: [info@ti-ratana.org](mailto:info@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [www.ti-ratana.org](http://www.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Bangsar**

Level G @ Wisma Ti-Ratana  
17, Lorong Maarof  
59000 Bangsar  
Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur  
  
T: +603 2282 4800  
E: [bangsar@ti-ratana.org](mailto:bangsar@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [bangsar.ti-ratana.org](http://bangsar.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Lumbini Garden**

36 & 38, Jalan Puteri 4/2  
Bandar Puteri, 47100 Puchong  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
  
T: +603 8051 6630 (+WhatsApp)  
E: [puchong@ti-ratana.org](mailto:puchong@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [puchong.ti-ratana.org](http://puchong.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Vihara**

Lot 57313, Persiaran Aman  
Perdana 2, Aman Perdana  
41050 Klang  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
  
T: +6018 382 3132 (+WhatsApp)  
E: [klang@ti-ratana.org](mailto:klang@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [klang.ti-ratana.org](http://klang.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Taman Anggerik**

Lot 6711, Jalan 5/154  
Taman Bukit Anggerik, 56000 Cheras  
Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur  
  
T: +6012 217 3310 (+WhatsApp)  
T: +6012 321 8006 (+WhatsApp)  
E: [cheras@ti-ratana.org](mailto:cheras@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [cheras.ti-ratana.org](http://cheras.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Heights**

Lot 8604, Jalan Taming 2,  
Kaw Perusahaan Taman Taming  
Jaya, 43300 Seri Kembangan,  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
  
T: +6018 366 9900 (+WhatsApp)  
E: [heights@ti-ratana.org](mailto:heights@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [heights.ti-ratana.org](http://heights.ti-ratana.org) (TBC)

## **Ti-Ratana Penchala**

21, Jalan Penchala,  
46000 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
  
T: +603 7784 9002  
E: [pj@ti-ratana.org](mailto:pj@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [pj.ti-ratana.org](http://pj.ti-ratana.org)

## **Ti-Ratana Welfare Homes**

in Desa Petaling is run by our  
sister organization, Ti-Ratana  
Welfare Society.

T: +603 7988 1818  
E: [info@ti-ratana.com](mailto:info@ti-ratana.com)  
W: [www.ti-ratana.org.my](http://www.ti-ratana.org.my)

**We have the upcoming Ti-Ratana Bentong Sanctuary project. Visit [bentong.ti-ratana.org](http://bentong.ti-ratana.org) to donate.  
We also have a separately managed Ti-Ratana Sri Lanka organization: [www.tiratana.org.lk](http://www.tiratana.org.lk).**





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# Our Initiatives and Sections



## Ti-Ratana Youth Buddhist Section (TRBYS)

Based at all branches, primarily Puchong and Seri Kembangan.

Nurturing the Buddhist Youth of today through an inclusive environment.

Conducts Dhamma Talks, Sunday Dhamma Service, movie, karaoke and games nights as well as the annual Sayonara Youth Camp.

T: +6017 246 8870 (WhatsApp Only)  
E: [youth@ti-ratana.org](mailto:youth@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [youth.ti-ratana.org](http://youth.ti-ratana.org)



## Ti-Ratana Institute of Buddhist Studies

Based at Puchong.

Conducts Sunday Dhamma School for children and teens, Buddhist Dhamma Classes for college and university students and special classes for adults and seniors.

Courses are conducted both in-person and online. All courses are free of charge. Certificates are awarded for those who fulfill the course completion requirements.

E: [education@ti-ratana.org](mailto:education@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [www.ti-ratana.org/ibs](http://www.ti-ratana.org/ibs)



## Ti-Ratana Meals on Wheels

Based at Ti-Ratana Penchala.  
Fills the stomachs of those in need.

T: +603 7784 9002  
E: [mealsonwheels@ti-ratana.org](mailto:mealsonwheels@ti-ratana.org)  
W: [www.meals-on-wheels.com.my](http://www.meals-on-wheels.com.my)



## Ti-Ratana Meals on Wheels

Based at Ti-Ratana Taman Anggerik.

T: +6012 217 3310 (+WhatsApp)  
W: [cheras.ti-ratana.org/sundaydhammaschool](http://cheras.ti-ratana.org/sundaydhammaschool)





**Do good, avoid evil, purify  
the mind. That is the  
teaching of all Buddhas.**

**- Dhammapada 14:183**



**Scan to visit our special Wesak page  
or visit [www.ti-ratana.org/wesak](http://www.ti-ratana.org/wesak) to get further  
information, schedules and dates for Wesak 2023  
at Ti-Ratana Buddhist Society.**

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