

Background to Buddhism The Buddha and the Dharma

Piya Tan ©2003

From materials used in

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The Buddha

- 1.1 **The world of the Buddha.** Other Indian religions, social conditions, why the Buddha succeeded: the true seeker.
- 1.2 **Who really was the Buddha?** His early life up to enlightenment. (Discourse on the Noble Quest): The Buddha in the sacred books. The Buddha's life as legend and myth.
- 1.3 **How Buddhism as discovered.** The 7 weeks after the Great Awakening.
- 1.4 **Why the Buddha "hesitated" to teach.** Events leading to the First Discourse.
- 1.5 **Seeing the Buddha 1.** Aniconic representations of the Buddha.
- 1.6 **Seeing the Buddha 2.** Representations of the Buddha after his Passing.
- 1.7 **Seeing the light.** Visual symbols in Buddhism.

The Dharma

- 2.1 **The Five Precepts.** Why Five Precepts? Why the sequence? Conventional and natural morality. When is a Precept broken? Discussion on such topics as suicide; vegetarianism; commercial piracy; sex; white lies; intoxicants, etc.
- 2.2 **Is there a soul?** Not-self. (The Discourse on Not-self), The 5 aggregates (mind & body). Who and what are we really?
- 2.3 **Have we met before?** Rebirth and its evidence.

Piya Tan who conducts this series was a **Theravada monk** for 20 years, and specializes in early Buddhism and the lay ministry. He was consultant and regular lecturer to the Buddhist Studies Team (BUDS) that successfully introduced **Buddhist Studies in Singapore Secondary Schools** in the 1980s. After that, he was invited as a visiting scholar to **the University of California at Berkeley, USA**. He has written many educational and ground-breaking Buddhist books (such as *Total Buddhist Work*). He is a **full-time Dharma teacher** who runs regular Buddhist, Sutta and Pali classes like the "Pali Without Grammar" series (an introduction to the Pali Suttas); the Sutta Study Group (NUSBS), Sutta studies (the Singapore Buddhist Federation), and Sutta Discovery (Buddhist Fellowship), besides running his own full-time **Pali translation and research project**, the Pali Centre. He is married with 2 children.