

10th Standard - English

The Sermon at Benares Summary

Gautama Buddha a Prince

Gautama Buddha (563 B.C.-483 B.C.) was a prince. His name was Siddhartha Gautama. At twelve he was sent away for schooling in the Hindu sacred scriptures. He returned after four years. He married a princess. They had a son.

World sufferings make Gautama a beggar for enlightenment

Gautama Buddha had been shielded from the sufferings of the world. When he was twenty-five, he saw a sick man. Then he saw an aged man, then a funeral procession. Finally, he saw a monk begging for alms. These made him so sad that he himself became a beggar. Then he went out to seek spiritual knowledge.

Gautama Buddha gets spiritual knowledge

Gautama Buddha wandered for seven years. Finally he sat down under a fig tree. He vowed to stay until spiritual knowledge came to him. He got it after seven days. He named the tree as the 'Tree of Wisdom'. He began to teach. Soon he became known as the Buddha.

Buddha's first Sermon

The Buddha preached his first sermon at Benares. It is the most holy of the places on the Ganges. The sermon has ten important points. This shows Buddha's wisdom about the suffering. These are given below :

1. Kisa Gotami had an only son. He died. She took the dead child to her neighbours to make him alive. She asked for medicine. The people called her mad.
2. At last Kisa met a man. He told her that he had no medicine. But he knew a physician who could give medicine for the same.

3. Kisa Gotami asked him to tell the man. He told her to go to Sakyamuni, the Buddha.
4. Kisa told the Buddha to give medicine to cure the boy.
5. The Buddha told her to bring him a handful of mustard seed. It must be from a house where no one has died.
6. Kisa Gotami went from house to house. People gave her mustard-seed. She asked if no one died in the house. They told her not to remind them of the deepest grief.
7. Kisa Gotami could not get the seed from such a house. At last, she sat tired and hopeless at the wayside. Darkness soon fell. She saw the lights of the city. Soon the darkness of the night was everywhere. She considered the fate of men. She thought that she was really selfish in her grief. Death was common to all. Yet there lay a path. That led man to immortality if he surrendered all selfishness.
8. The Buddha told her that human life was brief and painful. No one could avoid dying. All those who were born were to die one day. Young and adult all have to die like the vessels of a potter. They break after being made.
9. All depart from life. A father cannot save his son. All relatives lament deeply when the dead is taken like an ox for slaughter. So the world is affected by suffering due to death and decay. The wise do not grieve as they know the truth.
10. No one will get peace of mind from weeping or from grieving. On the contrary his pain will be greater. His body will suffer. The dead are not saved by expressing sorrow. He who is off the lamentation and grief shall have peace of mind. One who has overcome sorrow will be free from sorrow and be blessed.