

ENGLISH

THE SARMON AT BENARES

~Summary~

-by Betty Renshaw

Buddha as a Prince

Gautama Buddha was born as a prince named Siddhartha Gautama in Northern India. At twelve, he was sent for schooling in Hindu sacred scriptures. Four years later, he returned home and got married to a princess. They had a son. They lived a royal life for ten years.

Gautama Feels Sufferings of the World

He was protected from the sufferings of the world. One day, he saw a sick man, an old man, a funeral procession and a monk begging for money and food. This moved Buddha and he then went out to seek enlightenment.

Gautama Seeks Enlightenment

He travelled aimlessly for seven years and then he stayed under a peepal tree until he attained enlightenment. After seven days, he got enlightened and renamed the tree as Bodhi Tree (Tree of Wisdom). There, he began to teach and share his knowledge and became known as Buddha.

Buddha Gives his First Sermon

Buddha preached his first sermon at the city of Benares. It is the holiest of the dipping places on the river Ganges. This sermon reflects Buddha's wisdom about the kind of suffering that is impossible to interpret.

Kisa Gotami's Story

Kisa Gotami had only one son who had died. She carried her dead son in her arms and went door to door asking for medicines for her dead child. The neighbours pitied her but could not help her as her son was dead. They were as helpless as Kisa and couldn't go against the will of God. Finally, somebody suggested that she should go to the Sakyamuni, the Buddha. Kisa Gotami went to meet Gautama Buddha. Gautama told her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had never knocked at the door. Kisa thought that it was a very easy task. She went

to all the houses in the village but couldn't find a single house where death had not taken a beloved away.

She sat down, hopeless and tired. She soon realised that she was being very selfish in her grief. Death is common to all.

Buddha's Reply to Kisa Gotami

The life of mortals is troubled, brief and combined with pain. It is not possible to avoid death. As the ripe fruits are in danger of falling, as the earthen vessels made by the potter break, similarly the mortals have the danger of death. Wise men and fools, all fall in the power of death. Only the wise do not grieve and they accept the reality. All weeping and grieving will bring more pain and sufferings to the body. One, who is composed, will obtain peace of mind and will be free from sorrow and be blessed.

Conclusion of The Sermon at Benares

The chapter – The Sermon at Benares explains one of the holiest preachings of Lord Buddha that ended the suffering of a grieving mother, Kisa Gotami who lost her son. By accepting the truth of life, she freed herself from unending pain.