

Note on the character of angulimala



Ans: Angulimala was a thief, a vicious robber, a murderer without mercy, who made villages into non-villages, families into non-families, slaughtering them and cutting off and wearing their fingers in wreaths around his neck. As he wore the garland of fingers, he was called Angulimala. The word “Angulimala” means ‘a garland of fingers’. In the region, where he lived, he was called the second ruler after the king. People were afraid of him. They obeyed him as they obeyed the king.

People were so much scared of him that they never dared to travel alone. They even were afraid to travel in groups. Angulimala was a strong man and a great runner too. No one could escape him. He even caught elephant, deer, horses, even a group of acrobats from the circus. Even though Angulimala was a vicious robber, a merciless slaughter, there was a little goodness inside his heart which even he himself did not know. When Buddha explained a simple truth of life, he was pierced by the words.

His goodness, the softness of his heart emerged with great force. A sudden change came to his heart. At once he surrendered himself to Lord Buddha. He buried his evils with his swords and weapons and became a monk. After that Buddha sent him to the city for alms. There Angulimala witnessed the poor condition of the people; he could feel how much he had tortured the people. When he entered the city for the next time he was also tortured by the people very badly.

As Buddha said, that act made Angulimala sinless and a pure monk. Then Buddha gave him his own begging bowl and robe and left him. Angulimala came in this way to understand the joy of freedom. Thus, though Angulimala

was a cruel, merciless villain, he was later transformed into a sinless, soft-hearted monk with full of goodness inside him.