

Buddhist doctrinal version of the story, Sidhartha sees four specific types of people, which sets him on his process of pondering the nature of death, rebirth and suffering. In the monk's version on this video, however, one of the types of people is different than the "official" story...which person? And to what do you attribute this difference? Do you think the story makes sense in both versions? Come to class ready to discuss your observations and opinions.

Life of the Buddha: the Written Version

This excerpt from the life of the Buddha (beginning on the next page) describes the same episode the monk did in the oral version you listened to: Siddhartha's journey outside the palace for the first time to see the world at large, and his encounter with the four key types of people: a sick person, an old person, a dead person and a monk. Note that in the story here, he encounters a few extra types of people, but all of their conditions serve as an indicator to him of the nature of the suffering of humankind.

If you're a beginning literacy learner, this story can look quite scary! Don't worry, you're not expected to be able to plow your way through it at this point. However, you should try the following: first scan the story, paragraph by paragraph, for sight words you know. Next, read through all the explanatory notes for each paragraph, and then go back to the beginning of the notes and systematically try to locate each word or phrase explained. And pay special attention to the phrases. Don't worry about understanding the meaning of each word in a phrase, but rather get a feel for the shape, contours of the phrase as a whole unit, and use that feeling as a guide in locating the phrase. This may not be especially "fun," but it's extremely useful practice for building your reading skills.

If you're already an intermediate or advanced reader of Lao, of course, you should try reading the story, though you will undoubtedly encounter lots of new vocabulary. Follow the steps given to you on page 12 in the introduction to the Textbook as you read. Try working your way through the story several times before turning to the explanatory notes (or dictionary).

ສະເດັດອອກນອກວັງ

ປ
ຕຸງ

ແຕ່ປະສູດອອກຈົນເຂົ້າພິທີອະພິເສກສົມຣົດ ແລະ ມີພຣະ
ໂອຣົດແລ້ວຫນຶ່ງພຣະອົງ ເຈົ້າຊາຍສິດທັດຖະຍັງບໍ່ເຄີຍສະ
ເດັດອອກໄປນອກວັງຈັກເທື່ອ ມີແຕ່ຢູ່ໃນວັງເພື່ອສຶກສາວິຊາ

Look first at the title. ສະເດັດ means “to go out on a walk or tour,” and is only used for royalty. ວັງ means “palace.”

In section one of the story, above, ປະສູດ is a special verb meaning “to be born” (you’ll also find it in the description of the illustration of Buddha’s birth earlier in this chapter), and it’s only used for royalty as well. ພິທີອະພິເສກ means both “coronation” and “marriage ceremony.” For royalty, the two are generally combined.

ພຣະໂອຣົດ means “prince.”

Note in the phrase (end of second line of the first section of the story), “ຍັງບໍ່ເຄີຍ...ຈັກເທື່ອ,” the overall meaning is “He still hadn’t [gone out of the palace] a single time.”

ສຶກສາວິຊາ a is “to study [various fields of knowledge];” in the next section of the story those subjects are described.

Now on to section two of the story (next page); note the last section of section one continues right into section two:

ທີ່ໄດ້ສຶກສາຮ່າຮຽນຕອນຊົງພຣະເຍົາກໍ່ແມ່ນດ້ານຍຸດທະສາດ ແລະ ການປົກຄອງ ອັນເປັນຮາຊະປະເພນີຂອງກະສັດໃນສະໄຫມນັ້ນ.

ຍາມພັກຜ່ອນ ເຈົ້າສິດທັດຖະມັກຈະໄປພັກຜ່ອນຢ່ອນອາຣົມຢູ່ຕາມຮາຊະອຸທະຍານ ແລະ ຊົງພັກໄຟ່ການກິລາຕ່າງໆ... ໃນທ່າມກາງຄວາມສຸຂສັນອັນເປັນຂອງໂລກີຍະນີ.

ເຖິງຈະມີຄວາມສຸຂພຽງໃດກໍ່ຕາມ ເຈົ້າຊາຍຍັງຊົງມີດໍາຣິຢູ່ສະເຫມີວ່າ.. ໂລກນີ້ແຕ້ມໄປດ້ວຍຄວາມບໍ່ທ່ຽງແທ້ແນ່ນອນ ແຕ້ມໄປດ້ວຍມາຍາຄືສິ່ງທີ່ຫລອກລວງ ຊີວິດຄືຄວາມບໍ່ທ່ຽງ ເປັນພຽງສະຖານທີ່ພັກເຊົາຊົ່ວໄລຍະໜຶ່ງເທົ່ານັ້ນ.

ແລ້ວເຈົ້າຊາຍສິດທັດຖະຈິ່ງຂໍອະນຸຍາດຈາກພຣະບິດາອອກຈາກວັງພ້ອມດ້ວຍນາຍສາຣະຖີ ເພື່ອຢາກຮູ້ເຫັນເລື່ອງລາວຢູ່ນອກວັງ.

The “fields of knowledge of [Siddhartha’s] era” are described in the first two lines of the section above; don’t worry too much about that. The second paragraph in this section describes ສິດທະຖະ’s time spent relaxing from his studies ,in the ຮາຊະອຸທະຍານ, the royal gardenor “king’s pleasure grounds“, playing various sports, for his health, in a manner befitting a ໂລກີຍະນີ or “person of this world“ (in other words, these were necessary things for even a king, due to human nature). Don’t worry about learning any of the above words!!

In the third paragraph above, we find out that “at this time, ສິດທະຖະ (referred to here as “the venerable young man,” or ເຈົ້າຊາຍ), started thinking (ມີດໍາຣິ, a verb meaning “to think” for royalty only) that the world might be filled with uncertainty (ຄວາມບໍ່ທ່ຽງແທ້ແນ່ນອນ), that everything in the world may be a trick or illusory, that life was only one place (“station” or ສະຖານ) among many where we might come into being for but a brief moment (ໄລຍະໜຶ່ງເທົ່ານັ້ນ).

In the fourth paragraph in section two (previous page), we find out that ສິດທະຖະ asked for permission (ຂໍອະນຸຍາດ) from his father (ພຣະບິດາ; ບິດາ alone is a formal term which *can* be used for regular people's fathers but, along with the ພຣະ, it *must* be used for royalty) to go outside the palace, with his servant and companion ນາຍສາຣະຖີ (in English transliteration, usually rendered as “Channa”) in order to see what the world was like. We now move on to the third and final section of the story:

ຕະຫລອດເສັ້ນທາງທີ່ເຈົ້າຊາຍສິດທັດຖະຂີ່ມ້າຜ່ານໄປ ໄດ້ພົບເຫັນສະພາບຂອງປະຊາຊົນທຸກຍາກລຳບາກ ແຫ້ນຄົນເຈັບເປັນລົມຕາຍ ເຫ້ນຄົນຜິດຖຽງທຸບ ຕີກັນ ເຫ້ນຄົນໜ່ວມສາວງາມ ເຫ້ນຄົນແກ່ຊະລາ ເຫ້ນການທຳພິທີທາງສາສນາຂອງພວກໂຍຄີ ຣີສີ ດາບິດ ທີ່ທໍຣະມານຮ່າງກາຍຂອງຕົນເອງ ຫລື ທຳລາຍເຖິງແກ່ຊີວິດຂອງຜູ້ອື່ນເພື່ອການໄຫວ້ເຈົ້າເຂົ້າຊົງ ແລະ ອື່ນໆ...

ພໍເຈົ້າຊາຍສິດທັດຖະກັບເຂົ້າສູ່ວັງ ກໍມີການແຫນແຫ້ຕ້ອນຮັບສັນຣະເສີນຂອງບັນດາບໍຣົມວົງສານຸວົງ ແລະ ຊ້າຣາຊະບໍຣົວານທີ່ພຣະຣາຊະວັງ ແລະ ທົ່ວທັງເມືອງ ມີການມະໄຫຣຣະສົບຄົບຖ້ວນ ເປັນການສະເຫລີມສະຫລອງເຄື່ອງຜູກມັດເຈົ້າຊາຍສິດທັດຖະໃຫ້ຫລົງລົມເລື້ອງລາວຕ່າງໆທີ່ໄດ້ພົບເຫັນຢູ່ນອກວັງ.

Along the road or journey (ເສັ້ນທາງ), he encountered (ພົບເຫັນ) the different situations/ conditions of hardship and suffering in which the populace lived (ສະພາບຂອງປະຊາຊົນທຸກຍາກລຳບາກ), and specifically he saw the four key kinds of people: ຄົນເຈັບ, ຄົນເປັນລົມຕາຍ, ຄົນແກ່ຊະລາ, and in this version of the tale, ພິທີທາງສາສນາຂອງພວກໂຍຄີຣີສີ (“the religious practices of the ascetics”; note the term ໂຍຄີ, which we know in English as “yogi”). This fourth type of person that ສິດທະຖະ sees is given in some versions as “seeing a Hindu monk or priest” or simply ນັກບວດ.

In the second and final paragraph of the above section ສິດທະຖະ returns to the palace,

and all of the nobles of the palace receive him with an extravagant and glorious procession (ມີການແທນແຫ່ສັນຣະເສີນ ...) to try to make him forget (ໃຫ້ລືງລືມ) the various things he had encountered outside the palace (ເລື່ອງລາວຕ່າງໆ ທີ່ພົບເຫັນຢູ່ນອກວັງ)....

Sight Words Set #5

ແມ່

ຮັບ

ຂ່າວ

ໃຫ້

ນ້ຳ

ເມຍ

ອາເມລິກາ

ຕາ

ຂາຍ

ແມ່ mother

ເມຍ wife

ຮັບ to receive

ອາເມລິກາ America (the US)

ຂ່າວ news

ຕາ eye

ໃຫ້ to give

ຂາຍ to sell

ນ້ຳ water, liquid

Some Compounds

ແມ່ນ້ຳ river

ຂາຍດີ to be profitable

ຮັບບໍ່ໄດ້ to not accept

ນ້ຳຕາ tears

ຮັບຮູ້ to take responsibility