

Stockton Cambodian Buddhist Temple (Wat Dharmararam)

Location: 3732 Carpenter Road, Stockton, California 95215. Exit Hwy 99 at Mariposa Road.

Visitors welcome daily during daylight hours. Free entry, donations accepted. Bathrooms available on site.

As seen on Huell Howser's ROAD TRIP to Stockton in 2007, the Stockton Cambodian Buddhist Temple (Wat Dharmararam) is an active Buddhist temple that features over 90 colorful and larger than life jewel encrusted statues that celebrate the life and story of the Cambodian Buddha. You have to see it to believe it....the temple boasts a 50 foot long recumbent Buddha. Also home to the annual Cambodian New Year Celebration every April.

Please call the Stockton Convention & Visitors Bureau for more information at @ 877-778-6258 or check out the Temple's official website at www.watdhammarambuddhist.org

Below is a guide to many of the statues at the Cambodian Buddhist Temple. Download, print, and bring this guide with you in order to best understand the story behind this beautiful display of art. Visitors should feel free to ask questions of the Temple members and monks.



Entrance to Stockton Cambodian Buddhist Temple from Carpenter Road.



1. The birth of Buddha is celebrated by the Theravada Buddhist in January. Queen Maha Maya gave birth to a prince in Lumbini Park while she was on her way to see her parents. Five days after the Prince's birth, the king asked five wise men to select a name for his son. They named him Siddhartha. This means "the one whose wishes will be fulfilled." The seven lily pads represent the seven steps that Buddha took after his birth. After seven days his mother passed away.



2. The chariot represents when Siddhartha left the kingdom to see the poor people outside the castle. He was 28 years old. Seeing the poor people made him very sad and he started to question his privileged life. He began to meditate and understand life. He took several short visits to the nearby towns. These experiences caused him to want to leave his current life as a royal to study with the Brahm mystics.



3. This statue shows Siddhartha leaving the castle and his luxurious life behind him so that he may study with Ascetic monks in order to discover the true meaning of life.



4. The Prince stopped at a river some distance from the city where he took off his expensive dress, pulled out a sword and cut off his hair, representing his final renunciation of his previous life. He put on the robes of a monk and began meditating.



5. Siddhartha tried to become an Ascetic. He thought that if he practiced hard enough, he would become enlightened (that is, know the way and be able to overcome suffering.) But after much fasting and meditating, (about six years), Siddhartha realizes he is still suffering. Fasting and meditation has not let Siddhartha to "the true way".



6. One morning, a girl named Sujata offered Siddhartha some delicious milk-rice porridge and said to him, "May you be successful in obtaining your wishes." Here, he eats and becomes healthy again so that he can continue his studying.



7. Through his studies, Siddhartha finds enlightenment and becomes the Buddha. He has reached Nirvana.



8. Buddha taught his first Dharma to his five Ascetic friends, Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama, and Assaji.



9. At first, many distracting images appeared in his mind, but finally, Buddha's mind became very calm, like a pond of still water. He saw "good" leads the way from suffering to peace. He was now the Supreme Enlightened One.



10. The King of all the Giants came to talk and show off to Buddha. The Giant boasted that was the strongest of all. Buddha tried to calm him down. Buddha asks him questions about having law for the Giant's people. The Giant said, "No, I have my muscles to fight everyone." To which Buddha said, "Ah, you are not strong. To be strong you must have law for the people." The Giant was now calm and listened. Then Buddha named the five precepts, the law of the people: 1. Don't kill; 2. Don't steal; 3. Don't commit adultery; 4. Don't lie; and 5. Don't drink. The Giant came to know how wise these laws are and obeyed both Buddha and the rules.



11. Buddha was on his daily alms-rounds at Rajagaha when his cousin, Devadatta, set loose a wild elephant to kill Buddha and his monks. Devadatta was jealous of Buddha because of his fame and following. Buddha thought about reminding the elephant of past lives and communicated this thought to the elephant. The elephant recognizes his old "friend" and bows down to Buddha.



12. Classmates were also jealous of Buddha's success. The master of the classmates paid a student to become a Murderer and sent him to kill and collect fingers from each of his victims. The Murderer was close to collecting 1000 fingers, but needed one more. Only the Murderer's mother remained. He didn't want to kill his mother. After searching for another alternative, he saw Buddha and went to kill Buddha instead. When he met up with Buddha, Buddha talked

to him about how evil his master teacher was to force the student to become a murderer. The student found in Buddha a new teacher, renounced his old ways and never killed again.



13. Buddha rests as he leaves earth for Nirvana. At 80 years old, he passed away. This is the most important statue and every Temple must have one on its grounds. Laypeople come to trust monks when they see this statue. The reclining Buddha measures 54 feet long and 12 feet high. It took four months to build the body and an additional six to seven months to build the throng.

Along the east of the statue area there are many statues of goddesses, including the Four Faced Goddess (Faces represent Mercy, Happiness, Kindness, and Peace); the Goddess of Nature; and the Goddess of the Earth.

