

Wearing jewelled, heavy earrings was the norm of the affluent, and that's why, his earlobes had become permanently stretched in artistic depictions.

This reminds me that even Buddha — Prince Siddhartha, that is — tasted luxury and the material world before he gave them up to become ascetic to find true meaning.

Thus, a Buddha garden is not all about art and decor, but also of iconography. An example would be the lotus over which a Buddha figure is often placed: "The spirit of the best men is spotless, like the new Lotus in the muddy water which does not adhere to it," a Buddhist dictum goes.

Another iconic imagery we see is the posture commonly known as the reclining Buddha, where he is shown lying down — the representation of the historic moment when Buddha left this world.

And this, he had foretold, announcing his impending death, which we observe today as Maghi Purnima.

By M H Haider

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

