

A discourse on

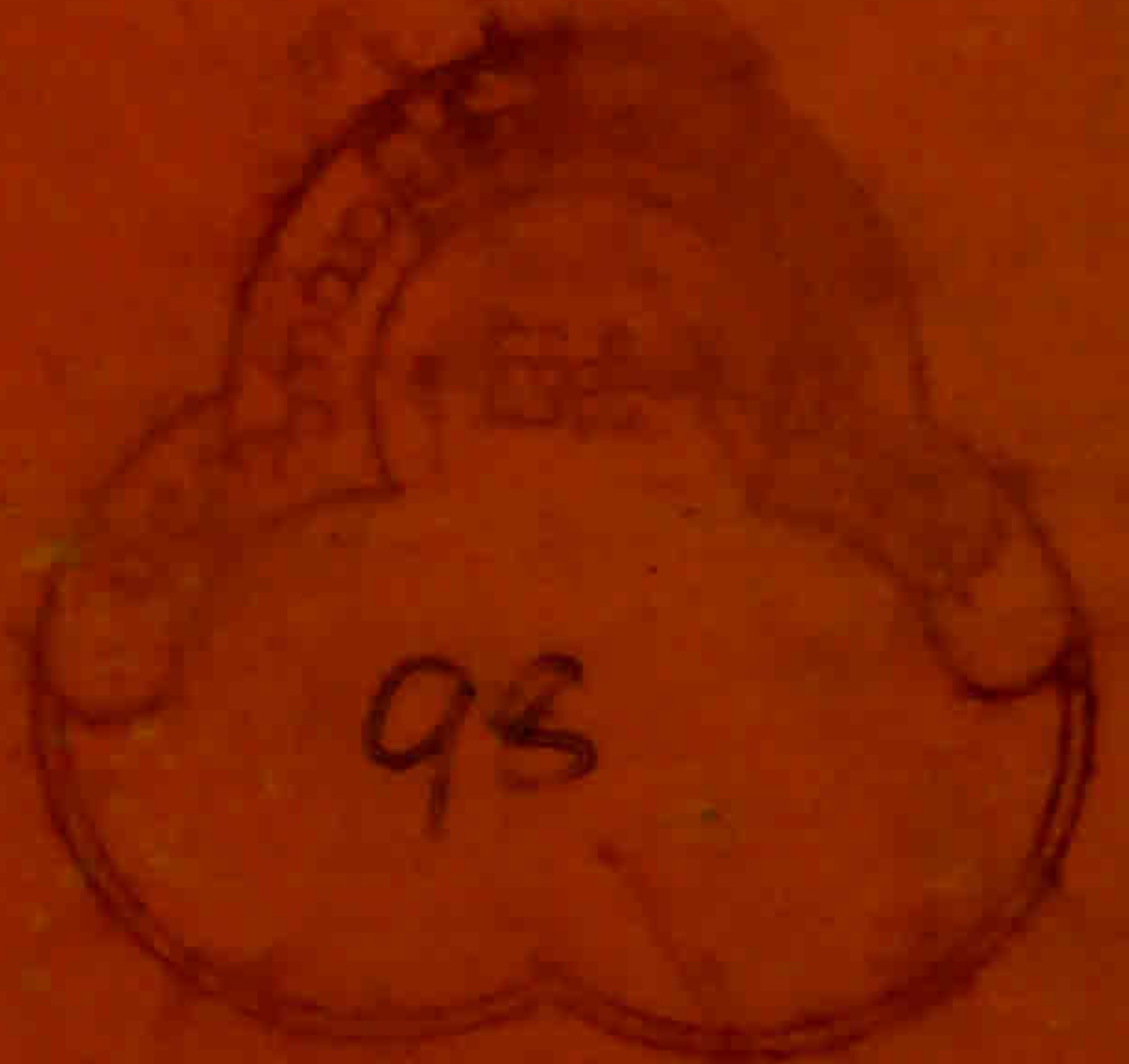
HEMAVATA SUTTA

by

The Venerable Mahāsi Sayādaw

of

Burma



An English Rendering by U On Pe (Tet Toe)

*Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organization
Mahāsi Translation Committee, Rangoon.*

**A DISCOURSE ON
HEMAVATA SUTTA**

**An English Rendering by
U On Pe (Tet Toe)**

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Namo Buddhassa: Honour to the Fully
Enlightened One. Homage to him,
the Great Omniscient Sage Who
spread the net of rays of his Good
Law. These rays of His Good Law-
His message true. Long may they
shed their radiance over the world.

FOREWORD

This book is the translation by U On Pe, a well-known Burmese writer, of the Venerable (Aggamahapandita) Mahāsi Sayadaw's discourse on Hemavata sutta. According to tradition, Hemavata sutta belongs to a place between Dhammacakkra sutta and Anattalakkhaṇa sutta in chronological order. Although it is not as famous as these two suttas, it is no less valuable to those who seek truth and wish to gain knowledge about Lord Buddha and his teachings.

It will not be out of place to mention briefly the circumstances under which the preparation of the original book started. At one time the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw delivered a series of sermons on Dhammacakkra sutta at the request of his disciples. The sermons contained a lot of information about the sutta and its practical application

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and left a deep impression on the listeners. As one of the fortunate persons who had heard the talks, I had them tape-recorded and finally with the approval of the Sayadaw the discourse was published. Now the book is being translated into English for the benefit of non-Burmese reading public.

At the instance of the Venerable Ashin Vannita who helped me in preparing the book on Dhammacakkra sutta, I requested the Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw for a discourse on Hemavata sutta. The Venerable Sayadaw kindly consented and gave a series of talks at the beginning of the Burmese new year in 1963 at the Mahāsi meditation centre when it was crowded with practising yogis, including a host high of school and college students. Six sermons were tape recorded, transcribed, then submitted to the Venerable Sayadaw and came out in print in 1973.

As the work of the learned Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, the discourse on Hemavata sutta is a highly informative and illuminating talk on Buddha-Dhamma in a language so clear and simple that it can be understood by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. The discourse contains interesting stories and remarkable maxims in stanzas that can

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be easily memorized by the reader. Above all, the erudition and wisdom underlying the whole discourse will undoubtedly help the reader to understand the Dhamma and its taste which excels all other tastes. As the Buddha repeatedly says in Vinaya, Anguttara-nikaya and Udāna, "As the great ocean has but one taste, that of salt, so has this Dhamma and Discipline but one taste, the taste of Freedom."

In conclusion, as the saying goes, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it", and the reader will judge for himself and enjoy the taste of the Dhamma in the present work. The discourse provides practical lessons that will be immensely beneficial to all spiritual aspirants regardless of sex, race, nationality, status or occupation. We wish this book, the first of its kind on the subject in English language a thorough success. May all beings attain the Ariyan path and insight as pointed out in this work and achieve liberation and peace in Nibbana, the abode of the Arahants and the Buddhas.

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A DISCOURSE ON HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part I

This Hemavata sutta is really a short piece, and so it is apt to be overlooked by many. In fact, it is the second of the sermons of the Buddha, for it was delivered after the *Dhamma-cakka sutta*, the first of the Buddha's sermons. Only after this sermon was the well-known *Anatta-lakkhaṇa sutta* delivered. This sutta was delivered on the night of the same day on which the *Dhamma-cakka sutta* was delivered.

This sutta is suitable to every person. The dialogue between Hemavata *deva* and Sātāgiri *deva* contains descriptions of the admirable attributes of the Buddha, and also the ways of conduct for those who are members of the Buddha's *sāsanā* (area of teachings). The woman who overheard the dialogue between the two *devas* was so adoring of the attributes of the Buddha that she became a *Sotāpan* although she had

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not yet learnt of the Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood.

Now, if the audience of my lecture were to reach realisation of the *Dhamma* like that woman, it would be really good because the woman heard only a short dialogue whereas my audience would be hearing a discourse which will last over two hours daily for three or four days. My audience would be learning more from an elaborate discourse than what the woman had learnt from a short dialogue. My audience could possibly acquire at least some *pārami* for attaining the stage of *sotāpan*, if not *sotāpan*-hood.

Date for this Sutta

How long ago did the Buddha deliver this sermon? He had administered the cool, soothing water of the *Dhamma* to human beings, *dēvas* and *Brahmās* for forty five years after He had delivered His first sermon of *Dhammacakka sutta* before he passed into *Nibbāna*. From the time of His passing to this day is a period of 2506 years. So adding the fortyfive years of His life as a teacher to the length of that period, the length of time that had passed since the *Hēmapata Sutta* is 2551 years. Being as old as the *Dhammacakka sutta*, it must be taken

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as one of the earliest sermons delivered by the Buddha.

At the end of the full moon day of the month of Kason 2551 years ago, the Buddha attained Buddha-hood, and for seven times seven days He stayed on at the seven nearby places. After 49 days following the attainment of Buddha-hood, the Buddha went to Migadavun jungle near the city of Baneres (modern name: Varanasi) for the purpose of delivering His first sermon to the five hermits (the *pañca vaggi*). The date of the First Sermon was the full moon day of the month of Waso, 2551 years ago. The time was the evening when the reddened ball of the sun was about to sink into the western horizon while the yellowish disc of the full moon was rising from the eastern horizon. It was then that the Buddha began the delivery of His *Dhammacakka sutta*.

Myriads of *devas* and *Brahmas* assembled around the Buddha to listen to His First Sermon. Of the five human beings, the *pañca vaggi*, the oldest one, Ashin Koṇḍañña had attained to the stage of *Sotāpanna* whereas 18 crores of *Brahmās* and numberless *dēvas* had attained the realization of the *Dhamma*, according to *Milinda Pañhā*.

Among the celestial audience was a *dēva*, Sātāgiri, named after Sata mountain which

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was his residence. He was highly gratified to hear the *Dhammacakka sutta*, but he was not certain about the presence of his friend, Hemavata deva, and after looking around, he found that his friend was absent. He was anxious to see his friend present because he thought to himself that after the last sermon of the preceding Buddha, Kassapa, myriads of world-periods past, this was the first time a similar sermon was heard, and so he wished to have his friend, Hemavata, to be present in the audience, and was wondering why the latter had not come to hear the First Sermon. Sātāgiri had failed to attain realization of the *Dhamma* owing to such distraction.

Concentrated Attention is Essential

To attain realization of the *Dhamma* while listening to a sermon, one must have a settled mind, for it is only through concentrated attention and with a settled mind could one attain *samādhi* and only *samādhi* could make for insight. If the mind wanders during the sermon over domestic, economic and other secular affairs, *samādhi* will not be attained. If anxiety sets in, it is all for the worse. If distraction and anxiety crop up, the essence of the *Dhamma* will slip, and as *samādhi* is lacking, there will be no

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insight and if one cannot attain insight for *vipassanā*, how can one attain realization of the *Dhamma*? Concentrated attention while listening to a sermon is, therefore, an important factor. The way to conduct oneself while listening to a sermon is described in *Kassapa samyutta* as follows:

Proper way of listening to a sermon

A sermon must be attended to with a motive of profit, meaning that in a commercial transaction a good and fair bargain must be struck with due care, that in harvesting crops due care must be exercised so that not a grain of corn, not a single string of beans, as the case may be, should be left behind. That utmost care with which gold and gems must be kept needs no special mention. In the same way, in attending a sermon-meeting one must listen carefully so that not a word of the preacher is missed and one must also try to realize the meaning of each and every word uttered. According to that treatise, the listener must listen carefully, with full mental involvement, and words of the *Dhamma* must be adhered to in practice.

That is the proper way of attending to a sermon. If one attends to a sermon in this way, one's mind will be calm and absorbed

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in the sermon; one will be free from interference, and thus attain purity of mind. At such moment there occurred many instances of realization of the *Dhamma* after the sermon on the four Noble Truths was heard. The attainment of redemption from the *samsāra* by Ashin Koṇḍañña and the *dēvas* and *Brahmās* when the sermon of the *Dhammacakka* was heard on that day was due to their concentrated attention to the Buddha's words. In this instance, Sātāgiri might have missed some of the words as he had been thinking about his friend Hemavata. If he had not missed the words, he might have pondered deeply upon the meaning of the words. It appears that he did not quite understand the sermon as he had been wondering why his friend had not turned up; he had been thinking that his friend had been under the spell of pleasures and enjoying them so that he was absent, and so he, Sātāgiri, had not come to the realization of the *Dhamma*.

In the reference to the thinking of Sātāgiri about his friend, there is the mention of Hemavata as being under the spell of pleasures, or in other words, "being beguiled by worldly pleasures". True, the worldly pleasures, do beguile though they do not have any intrinsic values. Some persons

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cannot come to attend this sermon-meeting because they are being beguiled by worldly pleasures. To such people the practice of the *Dhamma* is a far cry. They usually think that the *Dhamma* can be practised later and that, for the present, making a living, making headway in life and enjoying the pleasures of life, are more urgent. That, indeed, is the beguilement of the worldly pleasures (*kāma-guṇa*). But what is really urgent and important is to practise the *Dhamma*. Such practice can be made only within the fold of the Buddha's *sāsanā* whereas worldly pleasures can be sought anywhere at any time. It is, therefore, advisable to pay more attention to the practice of the *Dhamma* after having acquired sufficient means of livelihood.

By the practice of the *Dhamma*, one could attain to one of the stages of spiritual achievement and thus escape from the dangers of the four planes of existence of *niraya* (hell). Even if one cannot yet attain to the stages of *magga* and *phala*, one can become involved in the *Dhamma* and continue making good deeds (*kusala*). Thus, one could be reborn as a human being, or get to the spiritual planes of *devas* or ascend the higher planes of existence and obtain

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the benefits of a higher state of existence. If, however, one wasted one's time in the affairs of secular life, one would be ill-equipped for a good life in the next existence. Therefore, thinking that the worldly pleasures are more important and urgent, though they really are not, is due to the beguilement of the worldly pleasures. It is in fact, an illusion. Sātāgiri was giving a thought to his absent friend and letting his mind wander during the Buddha's discourse. That is why he had missed the chance of realization of the *Dhamma*.

After the Buddha's discourse on the *Dhammacakka sutta*, Sātāgiri left the assembly to invite his friend. Sātāgiri was a leading warrior *deva*, and so when he went out he was accompanied by his five hundred warrior-attendants with chariots drawn by elephants, horses and galons (huge and powerful birds). At the same time Hemavata was on his way to his friend Sātāgiri to invite him to a celestial festival of flowers—wonderful flowers that were then in full bloom in the Himalayan mountains. He, too, came in full force with his warrior-attendants and chariots. Of course, they were both making an aerial journey, Hemavata heading for the south and Sātāgiri

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heading for the north. They met over the city of Rājagiri.

When the two friends met, Hemavata said: “Friend Sātāgiri, the Himalayas are now full of flowers as never before. So I have come to invite you to a feast to celebrate the occasion.”

Sātāgiri asked his friend why the Himalayas were so unusually abloom. Hemavata said he did not know the reason. Then Sātāgiri said: “The Himalayas are not alone in being so unusually abloom; flowers bloom as abundantly and as resplendently everywhere else. The reason is none other than that Sammāsambuddha has attained enlightenment for two months now. Today He delivered his First Sermon, the *Dhammacakka sutta*, and all the flowers of all the trees on this earth blossomed forth by way of making obeisance to the Enlightened One. I remembered you very much while I was attending the sermon-meeting, and so I have now come to invite you to it.”

The woman who overheard the two devas

While the two *devas* were conversing, a rich man's daughter, named Kālī, was enjoying the breeze after having opened a window

of her boudoir. The month of Waso at Rājagiri city was a hot month as it is here at Mandalay or Shwebo. Kālī was then in her family way, and was feeling hot. So she opened the window and was exposing herself to the breeze when she heard the two *devas* overhead. She then lent a very attentive ear to their conversation. She could make out that the conversation was not between two human beings and thought that it must be between two celestial beings. She must have been about sixteen or seventeen, for in India in these days girls were married early and got into family way for the first time at that age. The child she was carrying was none other than a future disciple of the Buddha, *Soṇakuṭīkaṇṇa thera*, who was bestowed upon with *etadagga* (distinction) for his excellent reading skill.

Invitation by Satagiri deva

Sātāgiri said “friend Hemavata, this day is the fifteenth day of the month, a sabbath day, and is bright at night with celestial light. This day is the day on which the Buddha delivered his first Sermon, and so the trees are in full bloom not only in the Himalayan region but in the environment of the Sata mountain. Not only in these regions but also all over the world, the flowers

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blossom by way of making obeisance to the Buddha on this auspicious occasion. The *devas* and *Brahmās* attending the sermon-meeting are so numerous that the world is aglow with celestial lights. And in the east the full moon shines clearly along with *asahlī* planet. This night is therefore, full of light from all these sources, and is a sacred one.”

The world must have been so beautiful with blossoms and celestial lights in the all-seeing eyes of the *devas*. Even to human eyes it must have been beautiful. Incidentally, once I went on a pilgrimage to the Kyaikhtiyoe pagoda. It was the night of the 14th day of Tabodwe (February) in 1293 (Burmese Era). The moon was nearly full and shining clearly. Looking out from mountain range, I found the hills and valleys all around beautiful under the flooded moonlight. Some trees were full of flowers, the trees standing on the mountain slopes made for the scenic beauty of the panorama. Now, from the view of the *devas* the entire world must have been very beautiful indeed on that day of the first Sermon. So Sātāgiri invited his friend Hemavata to go to make obeisance to the Buddha.

“Let us now go to make obeisance to our great teacher, the Buddha of the noble and

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glorious lineage of Gotama," said Sātāgiri to his friend, Hemavata.

Continuing, he said that the great teacher, Siddhattha of the Gotama lineage of the Sākya clan, had practised the *Dhamma* in Uruvela forest for six years and had become the Enlightened One possessing the nine incomparable attributes beginning with the attribute of *Araham*. Now, I will explain briefly the nine attributes of the Enlightened One.

Araham Attribute

Araham means "deserving." What is the Buddha deserving of? He is deserving of special adoration and worship. People in the world worship various objects. Some worship trees, some worship forests, mountains, oceans, the sky, the sun, the moon, the planets. Some worship various kinds of *devas*; some worship god in heaven, some worship *Brahmā*. And among men, too, some worship the headmen of the various sects and denominations. Now, then, why do people worship? Because they want to be free from dangers and disasters. Everybody wants to be free from dangers and disasters and wants to be prosperous, healthy, long-lived, rich. Not only human beings, *devas* also want to be prosperous. People

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want to make greater achievements than their skill can do, so they depend on the *devas* of all sorts, such as, tree and mountain spirits. They worship and make offerings to them. Some imagine a super-powerful being who creates the world and its people and things, and worship that imagined being. There is, however, no one who has ever come across such a being and can describe his appearances. These people worship that being because someone in the past was reported to have said that he had seen that being. That person might have been dreaming.

Each religionist worships in accordance with his or her beliefs from generation to generation without being critical. Even in this age of scientific inquiry, traditional beliefs have remained. In fact, there are no grounds for holding that those who pray to be saved from adversity will be so saved by praying alone. If the gods or God could save these prayerful people all of them would be rich, healthy and prosperous. But such is not the case. Those who do not pray may become rich. As a matter of fact, those who work without praying in any line of profitable trade and occupation have become rich and prosperous. Every person is rewarded for his work according to its

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worth. It is obvious that idlers do not get rich. It is one's own effort that gives the reward, and prosperity is not due to worship of the gods.

The Buddha did not say, "Venerate me, and I will save you." He said that one would enjoy the fruits of one's own deeds and misdeeds. But one can gain an especial merit if one makes adoration to a person who possesses a full measure of morality (*sīla*) and other noble qualities. If the merit thus gained finds an occasion to give of the reward, the adorer will get the reward during his lifetime, but it is also certain that the reward will be gained in the course of the series of existences. So said the Buddha. If the adoration is made to a person who has no qualities that would make him noble and holy, such an adoration is futile. It is like keeping bricks and gravels instead of precious stones, thinking that they are precious. How can you expect to get the price of precious stones if you sell bricks and gravels? If, however, you keep real precious stones, then you can sell them at their standard prices. In the same way, if you make adoration to noble and holy persons, you will gain the kind of merit you expect to get. As for the Buddha, He is the highest among those possessing *sīla* and other noble

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qualities. So if the *devas*, *Brahmās* and human beings make adoration to the Buddha, they will gain merit and receive rich rewards ranging from the benefits of human and celestial lives to the realization of *Nibbāna*. Such benefits are gained not because the Buddha gives them but they are gained from the merit accruing from adoration to the Buddha. So the Buddha has gained the appellation of *Araham*, the One deserving of the adoration of human and celestial beings. This is a noble appellation. Thus Sātāgiri praised the Buddha.

The other meaning of *Araham* is “to be far from something.” What is it far from? The meaning is that the Buddha is far from defilement of the mind, *kilesā*. Beings in all planes of existences hanker after things that are desirable, or in other words, they have greed (*lobha*). They become angry when they come across things that excite their anger (*dosa*) and are under delusion or mistaken notions (*moha*). On the contrary, the Buddha is far away and clear of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. That is the reason why the Buddha deserves the noble appellation of *Araham*.

The next is *Sammāsambuddha* attribute. *Sammā* means “truthfully”; *sam* means “by oneself”; *buddha* means “knowing”. So the

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term means “knowing the truth (the *Dhamma*) fully by oneself.” The Buddha had earlier received tutelage of Ālāra and Udaka; hermits in *samatha* and *vipassana*, but when He attained the Buddhahood, He did so not with the knowledge gained from these hermits but by methods evolved by Himself with His own insight. He did make His own efforts to gain the *jhānas* of *ānāpāna*; He perceived *paṭiccasamuppāda* with His own insight; He judged the state of *rūpa* and *nāma* (physical and mental phenomena) by His own insight, and eventually became Buddha. This is briefly about the Buddha’s realisation of the Truth all by Himself. That is the reason why the Buddha deserves the noble appellation of *Sammāsambuddha*.

Buddha Attribute

When the Buddha attained Buddhahood, He gained full knowledge of the past, the present and the future: He knew immediately whatever He gave His thought to. There is nothing He did not know. For the reason that He knew everything fully and completely all the *Dhamma*, the Buddha is deserving of the noble appellation of “Buddha”. Thus said Sātāgiri in praise of the Buddha.

Sātāgiri told his friend, Hemavata that the noble attributes of the Buddha were so

numerous that one could not count and explain them for myriads of years to do full justice to them. Then he invited his friend to the Buddha's sermon-meeting.

After hearing out his friend, Hemavata made an examination of the points in order to determine whether the one referred to by his friend was really a Buddha. So he put questions to his friend, and Sātāgiri gave his answers. At that time the masters of several sects such as Purāṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla and four others were making the claim that each of them was the Buddha. It was, therefore, necessary to make an examination of this nature.

Hemavata's question (1)

“Friend Sātāgiri, can your Teacher keep his mind in good disposition? That is, is your Teacher well disposed to all the beings without any discrimination?

“Friend Sātāgiri, in this world there are many who claim to be Buddhas. May I ask you: Can your Buddha remain impartial to his disciples and the disciples of others as well, and keep his mind in good disposition toward all living beings? Can he have *mettā* (goodwill) toward all and wish them for

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their wellbeing and happiness? Can he have kindness and pity on all alike?"

This was the question that should be put because in some who claimed to be the Buddha there was partiality, extending *mettā* and *Karuṇā* (loving-kindness and pity) only to those who followed them and made adoration to them, saying that they would save only those who adored them and would punish others who did not. They said that those who did not follow them and adore them would be relegated to hell. Such claimants to Buddhahood should not be regarded as real Buddhas for a real Buddha would keep His mind in good disposition toward all living beings.

Hemavata continued: "Friend, can you? Buddha control his mind and remain neutral in reaction to what is pleasant and also to what is unpleasant?" In this world people are pleased when they come in contact with pleasant things and enjoy them, and are displeased and cannot control their dislike when they come in contact with unpleasant things. They are angry and disappointed, and cannot control their anger. In fact, they let their minds follow the sensations and cannot control their minds. But a real Buddha can control His mind. Hemavata's question is an important one.

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Now, as for people, they let their minds go after senses and sensations. They smile if anything evokes a smile, curl their lips in contempt if a thing invites contempt. They laugh at funny things and weep over things that move them to tears, things that are sad. They desist from going to an undesirable place at first but later, when the temptation makes an urgent push, they go to such places. In the same way, they are tempted to say and do things they should not say or do after a short period of resistance. This is what is called letting one's mind follow the sensations.

Let alone others, some of the yogis were disappointed because they could not make progress in their meditational work and were giving it up and making preparations to leave when their mentors had to stop them by giving them admonitions. Then when they were so persuaded, and when they resumed their meditational work and accordingly made progress, they were pleased. But there are some yogis who would not be persuaded, and went home. That also is an instance of letting the mind follow the sensations. There are still other instances of some yogis attaining the stage of *nibbidāñāna* (insight into wearisome condition), who became disappointed because they found things

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wearisome, and went home. If such yogis had continued with their work they would have attained full insight. But they could not control their mind and had given up. What a loss! However, most of the yogis listened to the admonitions of their meditational mentors and managed to control their minds.

In secular life, too, there are many things over which one could control one's mind. The Buddha's message was for control of the mind. It is found that those who have attended to the *Dhamma* can control their minds considerably. But those who have not, and are outside the influence of the *Dhamma*, are found to be without a sense of shame or fear and do or say what they like. Hemavata, therefore, asked his friend if *his* Buddha was the one who could control his mind. That is quite a relevant question.

Embarassing to be questioned

It is important to put searching questions. Once at a food-offering ceremony at a house, a certain Sayadaw told me that he was questioned by an American visitor. The questions were incisive and searching, and the Sayadaw said that it was quite an ordeal to be so questioned. Yet this Sayadaw was wellknown as a conversationalist. The visitor

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asked the Sayadaw how long the latter had practised the *Dhamma* and what *ārāmana* (perceptions) he had had. The Sayadaw said such questions were embarrassing. But to me, such questions were justified because an intelligent enquirer into the *Dhamma* would put such searching questions to the one who ought to know. To a seventy-year old monk who had the reputation of deep learning the enquirer should put such searching questions regarding the monk's personal experiences in the meditational practice. The important thing is to be able to make bold and definitive replies to such questions and not to be embarrassed.

Hemavata was no ordinary person. He was formerly, during the time of Kassapa Buddha, a venerable monk teaching five hundred disciples. That is why he had asked questions relevant to the attributes of a Buddha. Sātāgiri was also a venerable monk at that time who had entered the holy Order together with Hemavata and taught five hundred disciples like the latter.

To the questions put by Hemavata, his friend Sātāgiri gave a graphic answer thus:

Satagiri's answer (I)

“Friend Hemavata, our teacher, the Buddha has the attribute of looking upon all beings

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with the same attitude and also of having full control of His mental disposition on good as well as bad sensations.”

This was Sātāgiri's answer. He meant to say that the Buddha's disposition toward all beings was based on the principle that they were all alike and equal, whether they were those who adored him or those who did not. There were His close disciples who had gained enlightenment because they had heard His sermon on *Dhammacakka* and also just ordinary disciples who simply made adoration to Him and his *Dhamma*, thus becoming disciples who were within the fold of His *sāsanā*. Of course, there were those who were outside the Buddha's *sāsanā*, and there were also followers of Māra, who were actively opposing the Buddha. “Our teacher, the Buddha is equally well disposed to all beings, with no discrimination, giving out His *mettā*, *karuṇā* (sympathy) to all,” said Sātāgiri.

The time was at the commencement of the Buddha's *sāsanā*. In terms of later situations, it may be said that the Buddha was equally well disposed to those who were His devout followers giving Him the four essential needs of a *bhikkhū* as well as to the brāhmins and heretics who were dead against Him. The Buddha adopted the same attitude toward His arch-enemy, Dēvadatta, as toward

his own son Rāhulā, having regard for both of them as beings. The Buddha did not act partially toward anyone; He disseminated his loving-kindness and sympathy to all beings.

So Sātāgiri replied, "Our teacher, the Buddha, is full of *tādiguṇa*, the attribute of a well-balanced attitude to all beings in all planes of existence."

Very Adorable

When one takes into consideration the partiality people in this world have toward those near to them and those far from them, toward the insiders and the outsiders, one cannot but be full of adoration for the Buddha. Partiality is manifest in every sphere of human activity. To those whom we favour we go all the way to giving them all the help we can, with concessions and condonations. To those against us, however, we have no desire to render any help; even to those who have not given us any help, though they may not be opposed to us, we render help grudgingly if we are called upon to do something for them. Attitude towards one and all as alike and equal is a rarity. Leave aside outsiders, we cannot adopt an evenness of mind to all the members of our own family.

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Let alone ordinary human beings, even those, in other religions, who are worshipped as gods have seldom adopted an attitude recognizing equality of all beings. You will come across gods who say, in effect, "I will save only my followers and relegate the others to hell." Compared to such gods, the Buddha is very adorable.

The Buddha wished all beings happiness in the same way as He wished His son, Rāhulā, to be happy; He wished all beings to attain *nibbānā* just as He wished Rāhulā to attain *nibbāna*; He had the same pity and sympathy for all beings as he had for Rāhulā. It is difficult for people to adopt an attitude of equality to all. But in the case of the Buddha and when He disseminated *mahā-karuṇā* (great pity and sympathy), He did disseminate it to all beings in all planes of existence.

How Maha-karuna Happened

According to *Paṭisambhidamagga*, perceiving in all beings the miseries of old age, illness and death, in graded succession, leading to the state of impermanence, a great pity arose in the mind of the Buddha. The Buddha, surveying entire planes of existence, perceived the piteous state, and so great pity arose in His mind. It is like a

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man of kindly disposition having taken pity on persons in great distress. The pity of the ordinary person is just ordinary; there is not much depth in it worth speaking. The pity taken by the Buddha, however, was by far the deepest, by far the most widespread. The Buddha took pity on mankind for the present state of distress, perceiving that in the next existence a particular being would be reborn in the nether regions of *niraya*, *tiricchāna* and *peta*. His pity was even greater. Also perceiving that a being would suffer from old age, illness and death in all the series of existences to come, the Buddha took pity on one and all. Now, look at the life of man. After coming to existence as a man, he has to acquire knowledge for earning his livelihood, and after attaining twenty years of age, he is obliged to take up a job and work on and on till he becomes old and decrepit, and then he suffers from illness of many kinds and at last, unable to get the diseases cured, he dies.

Men are just living their lives without being actually aware of the slow and gradual deterioration of their bodies and the onset of disease of one kind or another till at the last moment when nothing can be done to cure the disease, death is at hand. Then only do they realize the sad fact, The members

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of the family of the dying person do their best to nurse him and allay his suffering but there is really nothing that can be done, and surrounded by weeping relatives, he passes away. For a few months the relatives remember him and feel sad but later they begin to forget him. That, in sum, is the life of man: that is just one stage in the unending stream of existences.

The same pattern applies to his next existence; the gradual deterioration of the body, the onset of old age and disease and the eventual death. This the Buddha perceived: He surveyed millions of ailing beings and dying beings, and the sorrows of those who are near and dear to them, and a great pity arose in Him. "Millions upon millions" is the usual current term, but in reality the number is countless-If the history of a being's existence were to be illustrated pictorially, the pictures so depicted would fill the entire surface of the earth. and more space would be needed. The pictures of the being's birth, old age, illness and death were perceived by the Buddha who felt a great pity for that being; that was how the great pity, or *mahākaruṇā*, arose in Him.

Thus, we may learn: "Man's impermanence is driving him to old age, illness and death."

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The Buddha foresaw that unless He saved the beings from the disasters of old age, illness and death by making them follow His teachings and working out their own salvation, these beings would continue to be involved in the cycle of existences and suffer in the nether regions. So, the Buddha felt pity for all beings in all planes of existence as He had felt for his own son Rāhulā. Thus said Sātāgiri in reply to Hemavata's first query; "All the sentient beings in all the planes of existence are helpless; they have no one to look to for protection and care. Thus, the Buddha felt a great pity, *mahākaruṇā*, for all beings."

In the present life of men there are, however, persons to whom they can look to for help and support, such as parents for their children, children for their parents in old age, teachers for their disciples, disciples for their teachers, and relatives for mutual help and support. But such help and support are just ordinary. Real help and support cannot be offered by anyone else. For instance, the children cannot help their parents from getting old. In the same way, the parents cannot help their children from getting on in years. The children cannot take out and share among themselves the ageing elements of their parents. So also, they can-

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not take out and share among themselves the ailing elements in order to render some relief to the ailing person. Of course, doctors and physicians can do something to some extent but in the case of incurable diseases they can do nothing effectively. They cannot avert oncoming death. Nor can the children and relatives and intimate friends of a dying person do anything to avert death. All they can do is to merely look on the dying person. People have died in this way. No help or support can be rendered to enable a being to free himself from old age, illness and death or from going to the nether regions after death.

Only the Buddha could save the beings from these disasters by guiding them on the right path by His teachings and making them work according to the *Dhamma*. The method of such savings is like the method the physician applies in treating a patient to cure a disease, that is, by prescribing suitable medicine and forbidding him to take unsuitable food and do unsuitable actions. There was no method of working miracles by demanding: "Let him be cured". If the patient did not follow the physician's directions, the disease would not be cured. In the same way, the Buddha could only show the right path and give the right directions, and those who

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followed His instructions would be saved from hell, old age, illness and death; in a word, such beings would be saved from the *samsāra*, the endless cycle of existences.

A Buddha came into being only after a lapse of many *kalpās* (eons), and each Buddha lived only for a certain period in accordance with the general expectation of life in that particular era. It is, therefore, difficult to have an opportunity to hear the sermons of a Buddha. Though the Buddha had passed away, one could hear the discourses on His sermons delivered by learned and saintly monks and laymen, and work according to the instructions contained in them to enable the person concerned to save himself or herself from hell and further involvement in the *samsāra*. But such opportunity could not be obtained in every period of existence. In this world there are many faiths, and if one follows a false faith, then it is a dangerous risk because if one follows the wrong instructions and works for the wrong ends one will sink deeper and deeper into the whirlpool of *samsāra*. As for the Buddha, He felt pity for all beings, irrespective of the faiths they were following. His pity for them was even greater, realising that so many beings in the various planes of existences were following the wrong path.

Followers of wrong faith more pitiable

The follower of a wrong faith is really more pitiable than others because although he has been seeking the right path to happiness and wellbeing, he mistakes the wrong path for the right one, and follows a path which leads him to more disasters, the more he surges ahead. The followers of the Buddha should not feel complacent about having found the right path. They should work to attain at least one stage of salvation, for then only would they be sure of being saved from disasters. In the next existence they will not be with the present parents and teachers; they may be reborn of parents of other faiths. Then they will probably be placed on the wrong path. For that reason, the Buddha takes great pity on the beings who have no one able to save them from the disasters of old age, illness and death, or from hell and from wrong faiths. And His pity is same and equal for all beings, with no discrimination.

Q & A Between king Kawrabya and venerable Rathapala

In this world there are kings who have large armies to protect them and for such kings it may be said that they can place their reliance on them in worldly affairs.

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However, such kings, too, have to become old in due course, and no army of guards could protect him from old age, nor from illness and death when such disasters come to him. In the time of the Buddha there was an *Arahat* by the name of Rathapāla. He was the son of a rich man and friend of king Kawrabya. One day the king asked the venerable monk why he had turned a monk.

The venerable monk said in reply that he had turned a monk after he had heard the Buddha's sermon relating to the helplessness of all sentient beings from the onslaughts of old age, illness and death.

The king did not understand what helplessness meant. He said that as a king, he had large armies to protect him from all harm, and that he did not understand what was meant by having no one to help.

Then the venerable Rathapāla said: "Oh King, did you ever suffer from serious illness?" The king replied, "Yes, sir, I did," Then the venerable monk asked him if he could seek relief from that illness by asking his relatives to share the suffering with him. "That is impossible," the king said, "I had to suffer all alone," The venerable monk then said that was precisely what the Bud-

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dha meant when He said that all the beings were without anyone to help them or anyone to whom they could look for help and succour.

So it is clear that even if one has many persons to help and protect him in worldly matters, one is utterly helpless in matters relating to old age, illness and death. According to the scriptures, in the world of living beings there is not one property which can be called one's own because one has to leave everything when one dies and heads for a new existence. This fact the Buddha realised and His pity for all beings was great, or in other words, *mahākaruṇā* arose in the mind of the Buddha.

Ordinarily, people have what they call their personal and private property such as gold, silver, food, cattle, vehicles, etc., but when one dies one has to leave all these things behind, nay, one's body, too. Death may come today or tomorrow to anybody; so we cannot say that the time for such abdication is still far off. Even during one's lifetime these worldly things could be stolen and taken away by force; they are not really one's own possessions.

One's real possessions comprise one's meritorious deeds, such as, giving of

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alms, observing the precepts and doing meditation. These cannot be stolen or robbed, and they can be taken along from one term of existence to another. Persons who are rich in meritorious deeds will obtain existences of wellbeing. It is therefore necessary to strive to gain merit by doing *dāna* (alms-giving); *sīla* (observing the precepts) and *bhāvanā* and *vipassanā* (mindfulness and meditation), the last two being the most important. You should strive to do them just for one or two days if you can afford to do it only that long, for such a deed is valuable and can be done without incurring any expenses.

Those who have had these things have something to fall back upon at the time of death. At the door of death one could die peacefully by doing meditation till the last breath, and after death one would surely attain to the abode of the *devas* (celestial beings). So you should do assiduously these three meritorious deeds.

The worldly property is not one's own but it is common property. You have to leave it to your survivors who enjoy it after your death, and so if you are mentally attached to worldly property, you will probably become *peta* (being of the nether regions undergoing untold sufferings and misery).

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The Buddhā perceived the helplessness of all beings and felt great pity for them.

The Buddha also saw that beings were assailed by insatiable desires for worldly things and had thus become slaves of lust and greed, and so His pity for them was great. He saw that all beings were always hungered by *taṇhā* (lust), that they all hankered after good and pleasant things to satisfy their six senses, that they were never satisfied with long life and fame that they might have fortunately obtained, that they were never satisfied with all the best endowments their lives had offered them.

Their wants multiply progressively, and these desires dominate all the aspects of their lives, and they are never satisfied. Now there are many millionaires in some countries. They have more money than they can spend, but their wants and desires have no ceilings; they are never satisfied. The kings have never stopped their imperialistic plans; they want more and more countries under their sway.

It is said that the *devas* are much more greedy. The powerful ones usually have five hundred to one thousand celestial maidens in their harems, but they always want some more and are never satisfied. They are

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enjoying all the delights and pleasures of celestial life and yet they want more and are never satiated. So Sakka, the King of the Devas, likened them to the *petas* who are always hungry because they do not have anything to eat.

So the Buddha saw that all beings were slaves of lust and greed, and that moved Him to great pity.

True, all beings are slaves of lust and greed. They serve their lust and greed even at the risk of their lives. They go out in search of the things their lust or greed urges them, and risk their lives to get them. They have to work daily for all their lives to satisfy their lust and greed, and after death and in the next existence, too, they remain slaves of the same master, *taṇhā*. There is no period of rest for them.

In this world a slave may remain a slave only during his lifetime, but a slave of lust has an unending term of servitude till the time of salvation when one becomes an *Arahat* and thus ends his stream of *samsāra*. *Avijjā* (ignorance) colours all things as desirable things and *taṇhā* (lust) makes them seem delightful and urges all beings to strive to obtain them. They strive all their lives and are never satisfied with what they have acquired. They are always hungry, and

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there is no time of satisfaction and so they are always in a miserable state. This the Buddha perceived and was moved to great pity for all the beings in all the planes of existence.

“Unsatiated, all beings are slaves of lust.”

“Men are driven to old age, illness and death.”

“Beings are so weak and helpless.”

“No real personal property, and all have to be abandoned.”

These are the four points in the discourse between the venerable Ratthapāla and king Kawrabya. The venerable monk said that the Buddha saw this deplorable plight of all beings and was moved to great pity. The Buddha said to Himself that there was no one except Him to save them.

Thus Sātāgiri said of the great pity the Buddha had for all beings without partiality or discrimination.

“Besides, our teacher, the Buddha, can take with equanimity all the desirable as well as undesirable sensations,” continued Sātāgiri. It was a reply to Hemavata’s question whether the Buddha could restrain His pleasure when in contact with pleasurable things and His anger at undesirable things, unlike other beings who are moved and

swayed by sensations of all kinds. This was a pertinent question and the answer was apt.

Nowadays, when a man asks one of his friends who seems unconcerned with religious matters to attend a discourse by his reverend teacher, the person so invited puts a rather impertinent question, thus:

“What can your monk do? Is he adept in astrology, or can he do propitiations to enable me to become prosperous? Can he make arrangements to get a separated couple reconciled, or recover a lost property? Or can he make some propitiations for one to gain promotion in his position?”

This is quite an insolent question. This is not just a make-up case; I have learned of several instances of this kind from those who ought to know. Such questions are put by ignorant, irreverent persons.

An enlightened question

Hemavata's question in this context was most pertinent, a wise one. At the time of the Buddha there were many who claimed to be Buddhas. Prominent among these pretenders were:

1. Purāṇa Kassapa, leader of a group;
2. Makkhali Gosāla, another;
3. Ajita Kesakambala, another;

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4. Pakudha Kaccāyana, another;
5. Nigaṇḍa Nataputta, another;
- and 6. Siñcaṇṇa, yet another.

These six had their own respective following who believed in their divination of the past, present and future, and their following was fairly large.

Hemavata, however, knew that these so-called great teachers did not have the ability of viewing things pleasant and unpleasant with equanimity. So he wanted to know whether or not his friend, Sātāgiri's teacher was like them. Sātāgiri gave him a categorical answer to that question.

“What is the Buddha's ability to have His mind in full control in respect of possible reaction to things pleasant and things unpleasant?” The Buddha could view these things with mindful indifference, that is, rejecting both the pleasant and the unpleasant with an equal attitude of mind, of which He had full control. However beautiful and lovely a thing might be, the Buddha could view it to realise that it was after all undesirable. He could look at the beautiful lady, Magandhi, and immediately see that she was made up of the 32 *kotthāsa* (parts of the body), having nothing that

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could be taken as pleasant and desirable. In the same way, He looked at the three beautiful daughters of Māra and saw them as mere conglomerations of detestable *rūpa* (physical) elements.

Not only the Buddha, but His disciples, the *Arahats*, could view things in the same manner and keep their minds in full control. And even the non-*Arahats*, those who had been practising the meditation over the unpleasantness of material things (*asubha-kammatthāna*) could view physical elements in the same realistic manner. Once, in Sri Lanka, Maha Tissa Mahathera of Cetiya Mountain looked at a laughing girl on his round for alms-food and saw the unpleasantness of the physical elements and thus gained *jhāna*, then via the *jhāna* stage to Arahathood. Those practising meditation and having reached the stage of *bhanga-ñāna* will be able to view things in their incessant decay and thus, in their being unpleasant and undesirable.

Ability to view unpleasant things as pleasant

In viewing unpleasant things so that they became pleasant, the Buddha converted hateful beings into loveable ones by means of His *mettā* (loving-kindness). He viewed

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such beings with *karuṇā* (pity), and those beings became as loveable and pitiable as His own son, Rāhulā and thus were free of unpleasant and undesirable elements in their looks. The Buddha viewed Devadatta, who attempted His life by rolling down a large rock from Gijjhakutta Mountain on to Him, as kindly and lovingly as He viewed his son, Rāhula. He had for Devadatta, the same goodwill for the latter's welfare as He had for His son, and thus turned the unpleasant into the pleasant.

For this reason of viewing unpleasant things as pleasant, the Buddha picked up the sari from the dead body of Puṇṇā, a slave woman, and wore it as a robe without any feeling of disgust. For the same reason, too, He ate the cake from the folds of Māllikā's skirt without disgust, and also ate the leavings of a meal eaten by a brahmin named Pañcaggadāyaka without disgust.

Mahākassapa and a leper

There is an instance of Mahakassapa Mahāthera's freedom from the feeling of disgust. Once, the venerable *Arahat* stood for alms-food at the place where a leper was eating his meal. He did so to enable this leper to gain merit which would result in prosperity and happiness in his next existence.

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The leper eating his meal was so full of good volition for giving alms that he put the remainder of the food he had been eating into the alms-bowl of the venerable monk. In doing so, the leper unwittingly dropped one of his disease-eroded fingers into the bowl. The great *Arahat* knew of this but he did not remove the finger and ate all the meal without any feeling of disgust.

This is an example of viewing the unpleasant thing as equal to anything considered pleasant in respect of the elements comprising it. All the *Arahats* could view in this manner, not to say of the Buddha.

The Buddha could also view the pleasant as well as the unpleasant with unconcern. The most important is to be able to feel unconcerned about the ailments occurring in one's body. The Buddha felt pain because He was struck in the foot by a splinter from the rock Devadatta had rolled down from the mountain but He viewed the pain with unconcern. Also, during the last year of His life, the Buddha suffered from a serious illness but He viewed the physical ailment with great unconcern.

Not only the Buddha but the *Arahats* also could view pleasantness and unpleasantness

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with unconcern: This ability is an attribute called *chalaṅgupekkhā*.

The yogis who are practitioners of meditation and who have reached the stage of *sankhārupekkhā ñāna* can ignore pleasantness and unpleasantness by taking cognizance of the fact and dismissing the cognition immediately. Such yogis may be said to have acquired part of the attribute of the Buddha and the *Arahats* for a temporary period. Those who have attained this stage should be glad about it.

There are three kinds of evil intention (*sankappa*).

- (1) *Kāma sankappa*, the intention to obtain desirable and pleasant things;
- (2) *Byāpāda-sankappa*, the intention to cause death and destruction;
- (3) *Vihimsa-sankappa*; the intention to ill-treat others.

These are the three evil intentions which must be dismissed from one's mind. Then there are three kinds of good intentions:

- (1) *nekkhamma-sankappa*, the intention to oppose lustfulness;
- (2) *abyāpāda-sankappa*, the intention to cause happiness and wellbeing;
- (3) *avihimsa-sankappa*, the intention to have kindness.

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These are the three good intentions which must be acquired. The worldly persons have lust for pleasant things, and anger and desire for destruction and torture of things unpleasant.

As for the Buddha, such evil thoughts were far removed. He was full of good intentions. He was free of lust for pleasant things, and also from desire for destruction and torture of things, unpleasant. In Him happened spontaneous feelings of kindness and goodwill for all beings and things irrespective of whether they were pleasant and desirable or unpleasant and abhorrent. His mind was always clear and well under control.

In fine, the Buddha could control His mind and keep it at His own will by going into *jhāna* and *phala samāpatti*. He could keep it in the same condition of goodwill and loving kindness for a moment or for the entire day or for the entire week as long as He wished.

So, Sātāgiri said:

“Our teacher, the Buddha, can keep His mind under control as regards the three evil wishes and the three good wishes, for He has His mind under full control.”

The Buddha is adorable. He does not discriminate between those who have deep reverence for Him or those who are antago-

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nistic to Him, and had *mettā* and *karunā* for all beings. He had good wishes for all pleasant and unpleasant alike, and was in full control of His mind. The Buddha is indeed adorable.

(End of part one)

Part II

The answer to the first query gave Hemavata sufficient cause to be convinced that the Buddha referred to by Sātāgiri was the genuine one. But to be more sure, Hemavata made a second query.

Hemavata's second query

Hemavata said, "Friend Sātāgiri, does your teacher not take the property the owner has not given by action or by word of mouth? Does He not rob or steal?"

No pilfering at all

Taking anything that is not given by its owner is stealing. Stealing consists in taking by stealth or taking by force. This question would seem to Buddhists an insolent one. To ask whether such a personality as the Buddha had ever taken anything by stealth or by force is downright rude. Even if the same question were put to a present-day monk it would be taken as rude. The person

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who is so asked would be greatly offended. "Is your teacher, the monk, free of pilfering?" It is indeed an insolent question. But in those days such a question was not impertinent nor was it insolent. Those were the days when people were eagerly looking for the genuine Buddha, and many bogus Buddhas were on the scene.

The prominent bogus ones such as Purāṇa Kassapa and five others were claiming that they were 'Buddhas. Their followers were adoring them and taking refuge in them in the belief that they were real Buddhas. These bogus Buddhas were giving sermons dismissing the idea of *Kusala* and *akusala* (good deed and evil deed).

Sātāgiri and Hemavata had been *devas* since the latter part of Kassapa Buddha's *sāsanā* till the beginning of Gotama Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood. For such a long period these two celestial beings would have had experiences of pretenders to Buddhahood at a time when people were eagerly awaiting the coming of the Buddha, just as citizens of a country were awaiting the coming of their real king when many pretenders sprang up to claim the throne. Hemavata knew that the bogus ones were not free of pilfering, so he had put this question. He

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wanted to examine Sātāgiri's teacher in respect of misdeeds.

Today we can compare notes with many persons who have been worshipping something or somebody as God. According to their testament, their God does not seem to be free of bad deeds. Their God, the Creator, is said to have punished some persons with death and destruction of property, and such acts are considered by Buddhism as evil deeds. Therefore, Hemavata's question was not impertinent; it was quite pertinent in the context of the prevailing situation of those days. Then Hemavata asked.

**Is He free of guilt of torture
and lassitude?**

“How is that? Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of the guilt of torture and also of lassitude?”

Lassitude is a kind of forgetfulness. While being overwhelmed by sexual desires one is apt to forget that it is sin to commit fornication. Sexual intercourse is an ignoble act, and such act is sin if committed under unwarranted circumstances. “Forgetfulness” used in the original Pali text is a euphemism for immorality.

Rude words of takkadun Kassapa

This *takkadun* (one following the wrong path) was named Kassapa. He was, of course, not Purāṇa Kassapa, a Buddha-pretender. He came to Venerable Bākula about fifty years after the passing away of the Buddha. The *takkadun* belonged to a sect which required its members to practise asceticism with no clothes on. This Kassapa was a follower of Niganda Nataputta, a well-known leader of the sect. The later members of this sect became what are now called Jains.

When I visited Migadavunna Garden in India, I came upon a Jain temple. In that temple were photographs of their monks, called *Muni*. *Muni* means a monk in Buddhism. Our Buddhist monks are fully clothed in yellow robes but their monks are all naked. We found such naked *munis* along the banks of the Gangā.

This Kassapa was a friend of Venerable *Arahat*, Bākula, when the latter was a layman. Kassapa asked Bākula: “Friend, how long have you been in the Buddha’s *sāsanā*?” Bākula replied, “Eighty years.” “How many times did you indulge in sexual intercourse during that period?” asked

Kassapa. That obviously was an insolent question.

Then Venerable Bākūla said: "Friend Kassapa, you should ask, 'How many times did you think of sex?' That is a civilized query."

Kassapa revised the wording of his question accordingly. Then Venerable Bākūla replied: "I became an *Arahat*, on the eighth day of my ordination, and becoming an *Arahat* means becoming free of all desires of sex. So I say that I had not thought of sex since the time of my ordination, that is, not once in the eighty years."

This answer surprised Kassapa who then took refuge in the Buddha's *sāsanā* and after practising meditation, became an *Arahat*. Hemavata was polite because he was not ignorant of the *sāsanā* of the Buddha, and so he referred to "forgetfulness" or "lassitude". He meant to ask if Sātāgiri's teacher was clean of lust.

Is He into the Jhāna?

Hemavata asked whether Sātāgiri's teacher, the Buddha was into *Jhānā* or in other words, was He full of awareness so that he could reject all lustful desires which are an impediment to Arahathood. Lust is a basic

impediment. (Hankering after pleasant things and indulging in pleasures, or *kilesā kāma*.) If one is free of that, one is said to have attained the first stage of *jhāna*. Now this question is just a corollary to the question of lassitude. Thus, Hemavata had put these questions relating to misdeeds of physical nature, namely, pilfering, killing and sex act. Then he asked about *jhāna*.

Sātāgiri's Answer No. 2

“Friend Hemavata, our teacher is free of the guilt of pilfering. He does not steal or rob, like the bogus ones. Why am I so sure? Because the Buddha said in his *Dhammacakka* sermon that He had found the middle path, *majjhima paṭipadā*. He also said that he had practised *maggangas*. These eight noble truths consists of *sammākammanṭa*, right action. This refers to refraining from killing, stealing and sex act. These are the acts one must avoid; and such an avoidance is called *viratī*.

Viratī is of three kinds: *sampatta viratī*, refraining from evil deeds without formally taking the precepts of *sīla* (observance of morality); *samā-dāna viratī* refraining from evil deeds after formally taking the precepts of *sīla*; and permanent avoidance by means of *Ariyā magga*, called *samuccheda viratī*.

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Sātāgiri knew that the Buddha was free of the guilt or physical misdeeds because the Buddha had declared that He had completed the practice of *Ariyā magga* which embraces all the *virati*, avoidance of all physical misdeeds. So he said, "Our teacher, that Buddha, is free of the guilt of pilfering."

The bogus Buddhas

I want to give you a further explanation regarding the question of pilfering. The bogus Buddhas claimed to be Buddhas much earlier than the coming of the genuine Buddha. Of the six bogus ones, Purāṇa Kassapa said that killing, stealing, robbing were not evil deeds, and that at the same time, alms-giving and other good acts were not good deeds.

Another bogus one, Makkhali Gosāla, said that there was no cause for either misery or happiness, for such states were predestined, and so, however much one did evil deeds one would not suffer in the same way as one would not gain any merit by doing good deeds. There was no such thing as *samsāra* (cycle of existences), he maintained, and all beings would be saved when their turns came.

Pakudha-kaccayana, a leader of another sect, said that all beings were composed of

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the four elements together with misery, happiness and life, and so if one were to cut a being with a sword, the sword would cut into these seven components but the being would remain unaffected.

Ajita, another bogus one, maintained that there was no such thing as the next life for any being, and good deeds and evil deeds would not produce any effect.

From the teachings of these bogus ones we can surmise that they encouraged committing evil deeds; they seemed to be urging people to kill and steal.

Nobody wants to be killed or robbed

As a matter of fact, every being would like to live long, and would not want to be killed, or to be robbed of his or her hard-earned possessions. Therefore, no one should kill any one. Sacrifices should not be made by killing lives under a mistaken notion that such sacrifices were meritorious deeds. In the same way, no one should steal anyone's property, either for himself or for others.

Yet in those days the bogus leaders of the sects maintained that killing or stealing was no sin, and it may be inferred that since they said so, they themselves would not be free of such sins. As for the genuine Buddha, these deeds should be declared as sins. He

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did not commit these sins and would not have anyone commit them. This was what made Hemavata put the question about stealing, to which Sātāgiri made a prompt answer saying that his teacher, the Buddha, was free of the sin of stealing because He was in complete practice of *sammākam-manta*.

Free by means of *samuccheda virat*

If one were not in complete practice of *sammākam-manta* one would not be quite reliable although one might have declared that he would avoid taking things which the owner had not allowed him to take. One may steal when one has a chance of stealing and cannot resist the temptation. To take an obvious example, at the time of the British evacuation and just before the coming of Japanese troops into this country, most of the people of the towns fled, leaving their property and the people of the countryside swarmed into the towns to loot. It is said that it was an amusing sight to see almirahs too large for the hovels in which these looters lived.

These looters were in their ordinary lives observers of the five precepts, but when they were given an opportunity to steal with impunity, their precepts were broken. That

is because of the absence of *samuccheda viratī*, that is avoidance of sins by means of *Ariyā magga*. As for the Buddha, He was in complete practice of *sammākammanā* and was therefore free of the sins of stealing and killing.

You would'nt steal if you had sympathy

Stealing other persons' property is an act devoid of sympathetic feeling that a moral person should have. Nobody likes to be robbed, so also nobody should rob anybody. This feeling of sympathy a moral person would surely have, and so would not have the desire to steal even if he had not formally taken the precepts. This kind of avoidance is called *Sampatta viratī*. The avoidance after taking the precepts is called *samādāna viratī*.

On the subject of stealing, a Jain master said, "One's property is one's outer life, and so stealing is taking one's life" This is quite a plausible argument though a little contrived. What he meant to say is that killing is an outright taking of another person's life, and stealing is also another form of taking his life, for his property constitutes his outer life since he has to depend upon it for his living. That person has acquired

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his property by dint of hard work and diligent saving and hoarding. So his property is really part of his life. Some persons die of sorrow for the loss of their property. That is why the Jain master declared that property is one's outer life.

Freedom from sin of stealing through vipassanā

Even if one is not free of *lobha* (greed), one should refrain from stealing either by having a feeling of sympathy or by strict observance of the precept. To the yogis who take cognizance of the incessant happening and immediate passing of things, avoidance of the sin of stealing is already a completed act. To them everything is in the process of incessant happening and immediate decay and passing out, meaning *anicca* (impermanence); everything going on in that process is therefore not under anybody's control, meaning *anatta*, and so the desire to kill or steal will not occur. To the yogis, the practice of *virati* is already an accomplished act.

Freedom from sin of stealing through Ariyā magga

When the meditational practice reached an advanced stage, one could see the cessa-

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tion of *nāma* and *rūpa* and gain the insight of *Ariyā magga*. At that time there never occurred any desire to steal or to commit any sin. That is the time of uprooting of all the evil desires by means of *Ariyā virati*. This complete abandonment is called *samuccheda-pahāna*. This abandonment occurs not only when one reaches the higher stage of meditational insight but even at a lower stage when one becomes a *sotāpan*. At that stage all the evil deeds referred to in the five precepts (*pañca sila*) have been uprooted.

According to *Dhammadāsa sutta*, a *sotāpan* possesses an insight which enables him to know full well the attributes of the Buddha and so he has a deep reverence for Him. In the same way, he comes to have a strong conviction of the attributes of the *dhamma* and the *saṃgha*. So the *sotāpan* has come to possess the ability to observe fully the five precepts which the *Ariyās* hold in high esteem.

So a person reaching the stage of *sotāpanna* insight becomes fully convinced of the attributes of the Buddha, of the Dhamma, and of the Samgha, and has come into the fold of *Ariyās* with an ability to observe the five precepts fully.

The *Ariyās* adore the five precepts. They do not want to break them; they are always

anxious not to break the *sīla*. They observe the precepts not because they are afraid that others would censure them but because they want to keep their minds in purity, and purity of the mind can be achieved only by observance of the five precepts. Not only during this life but in all future existences do they not want to fail in keeping the precepts. They may not know that they have become *sotāpan* in their previous existence but they do know that they must observe the five precepts fully and with no default.

Sometimes one comes across a person who has never done any evil deed such as killing or stealing since his infancy. He was not given any particular instructions by his parents, but he knows by himself what is an evil deed and refrains from it and keeps his *sīla* in purity since his childhood. Maybe, he had achieved a special insight of the *dhamma* in his previous existence. There are also instances of persons who though born of non-Buddhist parents have come all the way to this country to practise meditation. Maybe, such persons have had some practice of observance of the Buddha's *dhamma* in their previous existences. These are interesting instances, and their cases must be evaluated in accord with the extent and

depth of their study and practice of the *dhamma*.

A real *sotāpan* has already come into the fold of the *Ariyās* and so he has been strictly observing the five precepts and has thus completely uprooted all evil deeds. Though he is not entirely free of *lobha* (greed) and *dosa* (anger), he does not have so much of them as to drive him to commit sins in contravention of the five precepts. He would not think of stealing, and if he wanted something that would be useful to him, he would buy it or ask the owner to give it to him in charity. That is the behaviour of an ordinary *Ariyā*. The Buddha had already removed all the evil deeds by means of all three *viratī*, and so stealing is entirely out of the question. When he was giving the *Dhammacakka* sermon, He declared that he had rejected all evil-doing. So Sātāgiri said:

“Gotama Buddha is clean of the sin of taking anything that was not given by the owner by word or by action. This I declare with the courage of conviction.”

Hemavata did not put this question relating to the sin of stealing not to know a mere temporary and occasional abstinence from that sin but to be convinced that the Buddha completely cleared Himself of the

sin of stealing. Sātāgiri's answer was categorical.

Then the second answer was: "Also, Buddha Gotama is free of the sin of torture on all beings. He is free of torturing and killing beings." This answer seems to be not matching with the attributes of the Buddha, but the question to this answer was put because in those days there were bogus Buddhas, and the intention was to distinguish the genuine from the bogus. In those days there were also believers in God, the creator of all beings and things, and such creator was reported in plain terms in their own books as having meted out punishment to those creatures who went against his wishes.

Punishment by that God consists in causing great storms and floods to kill people, causing great earth-quakes and destruction to the crops for the same purpose. If it were so, then their God was not free from the sin of killing his creatures. The question Hemavata put about the sins of stealing and killing was relevant in the context of the situation prevailing in those days.

One prone to killing is not a sotāpan

Once, a writer said in one of the journals that a *sotāpan* will not kill others, but if

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anyone comes to kill him, he will kill his attacker. That writer declared that he made that statement after a research of the nature of the human mind.

That is ridiculous. I just wonder whose mind he had made a research of, and how he could do that. He must have made a research of his own mind. He might have thought he was a *sotāpan*. He might have asked himself if he would allow the attacker to kill him when he had an effective weapon to return the attack by way of defence, and might have got his own answer that he would attack the attacker first. From his personal argument he obtained the conclusions which he expressed as his remark in his article. According to the tenets of Buddhism, this is a ridiculous statement.

The very fact that one thinks one can and should retaliate the attacker proves that one is not a *sotāpan*, for according to the Buddhist tenet, the person entertaining such a notion is a mere *puthujjana*, definitely not a *sotapān*. A real *sotāpan* would not kill even a flea or a bug, not to say of a human being. This fact must be remembered once and for all.

As for the Buddha, the rejection of such sins is complete. So Sātāgiri gave a cate-

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gorical answer: "I declare with the courage of conviction that our teacher, the Buddha, never kills or tortures any being."

Then comes the third answer: "Our teacher, the Buddha, is never forgetful. He is far removed from forgetfulness."

Forgetfulness in the secular sense is well known. You forget to do something or you forget names and so on. Or you fall unconscious and fall from the height or get drowned. But forgetfulness in the present context is not that kind. Forgetfulness means to be absorbed in the five kinds of *kāma-guṇa* (enjoyment of the five senses); it is letting the mind lost in these sense-enjoyments. It is called *pamāda* in Pali.

Like letting loose the ropes tied around the necks of cattle and allowing them to wander and graze where they like, if the mind is let loose and allowed to enjoy all kinds of the senses, it is *pamāda*, or forgetfulness. That kind of forgetfulness is very enjoyable indeed, if you will. Enjoying the beauty of a woman or of a man, the sweetness of the voice, the sweetness of the smell, the sweetness of the taste and the delight of the touch of an individual is pleasurable. To think of the good things in life even if you cannot have them really,

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to think of enjoyment of the senses—such fancies also bring some kind of pleasure to you.

All your waking hours are spent in thinking of sensual pleasures and working out arrangements for enjoying them. You do that not just for one day, one month or one year; you do that all your life. If you do not have a chance of thinking of such pleasures you get bored. If there were no sensual pleasures to think of and arrange to get them, then people wouldn't want to live in this world.

Such getting lost in thought and enjoyment of sensual pleasures is called *pamāda*. Of these sensual pleasures, sexual pleasures are most prominent. So Hemavata asked his friend whether his teacher, the Buddha, was free of the sin of copulation.

To this question Sātāgiri gave a definite answer, "Our teacher, the Buddha, is absolutely free."

This apparently impertinent question was quite pertinent in the context of the situation of that period. The answer was also definite. The Buddha was free of not only the physical pleasures but also of the enjoyment of the looks, the voice, the smell, the taste and other forms of contactal pleasures. And also, He was free of the forgetfulness in

regard to the practice of the *satipatīhāna* (meditation); He was always into *jhāna*.

There are two kinds of *jhāna*. (1) *Samatha jhāna*, concentration on appearances and (2) *Vipassanā jhāna*, constant mindfulness of the physical and mental phenomena by dwelling deeply on the incessant happening and immediate decay and perceiving thus the *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (misery) and *anatta* (non-entity) of all ingredients.

Samatha jhāna

Concentration of one's mind on a certain object is called *samatha jhāna*. *Pathavī kasina* is concentration of one's mind on the earth. Such concentration would not make for insight into the happening and decay of things but as the mind is fixed on the same object, sensual thoughts do not have a chance to enter the mind. One can attain by this method the four stages of *rūpa jhāna*, and then on to the next four stages of *arūpa jhāna*. These *jhānas* would not give the practitioner an insight into the impermanence of the ingredients of existences; they are good only for getting concentration and keeping the mind calm and collected.

The progress in the *jhāna* would lead to *dibbacakkhu*, special sight, *dibbasota*, special

hearing, *pubbenivāsa*, ability to review past existences and *cetopariya*, ability to know another person's mind.

Then basing the *samatha jhānā* one can practise *vipassanā* meditation and eventually attain *magga* and *phala* insights. So *samatha jhāna* should not be held in contempt. If one practised *ānāpāna kammathāna* and *dvattimsākāra kammattthāna*, one could keep one's mind calm and collected and attain *jhāna*, and basing on that *jhāna*, if one went in for *vipassanā* one could attain *magga* and *phala* insights. But if one did not observe the happenings and decays and just practised the *samatha jhāna*, one would get only concentration and calmness of the mind.

Vipassanā jhānā

Observing the three *lakkhaṇā* (signs) means *vipassanā jhāna*.

The three *lakkhaṇā* are *anicca lakkhaṇā*, *dukkha lakkhaṇā* and *anatta lakkhaṇā*. Observing these three signs means *vipassanā jhāna*. But one cannot possibly start with observation of these three *lakkhaṇā*. One must start observing the consciousness emanating from the six sense-doors of the body. To observe the actions of the body, one must make a note of them

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as they occur, thus: “going”, “lifting” of the foot, “moving forward”, of the foot, “dropping” of the foot, as one is walking. In the same way, one must note the standing, sitting, sleeping, bending, stretching, rising of the abdomen, and its falling, seeing, hearing etc.—all actions as they occur.

While noting these actions of the body and the mind as they occur, one will come to know of the new occurrence or happening of the actions and also the passing out of these actions to be followed by a new series of actions. By making this observation one will come to know of the impermanence (*anicca*), or the constant changes indicating instability which spells difficulty; distress and misery (*dukkha*) and of the absence of control of the actions by anything called self (*anatta*).

The mindfulness of this state of affairs in the physical and mental phenomena takes the meditator to the beginning of *sammāsanañāna* stage of insight. At this stage the yogi will make a note of any movement or action, physical or mental, over and over, and thus derive a measure of peaceful happiness that is born of *samādhi* (concentration). This kind of concentration is called *ekaggatā samādhi*. This state is equivalent to the first stage of *jhāna*. In the next

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stage, as the yogi progresses to it, the actions and movements will present themselves spontaneously for noting. The yogi has passed the first stage in which he has to make an effort to note them. That stage of insight is called *udayabbaya-ñāṇa*.

At that stage *vitakka* (thinking) and *vicara* (wandering of the mind) are absent, and *pīti sukha* (joyfulness) abounds with a further strengthening of *samādhi*. Therefore, the earlier part of this *udayabbaya* stage of insight is equivalent to the second *jhāna* stage.

At the advanced stage of *udayabbaya* the light emanating from the state of joy will be overcome by *sukha* (peaceful happiness) and *samādhi* (concentration) which have become prominent. That stage is equivalent to the third stage of *jhāna*. Then further, even *sukha* dims and fades when attention is focused on the constant decay and passing out of the phenomena as *bhanga-ñāṇa* (insight on decay and destruction) develops. At that stage *upekkhā* (indifference) stands out prominently. That stage is equivalent to the fourth stage of *jhāna*. In fact, *upekkhā* (indifference) and *ekaggatā* (one-pointed concentration) become more prominent in the next stage of insight *sankhārupekkha-ñāṇa*. The yogis

who have advanced to this stage will know what it is.

When *Sātāgiri* said that the Buddha was not out of *jhāna* he meant that the Buddha was into all these stages of *jhāna*.

Buddha into jhāna while audience were saying “Sādhu”

The Buddha was constantly into the *jhāna*, and for that He is adorable. While, after the end of a part of a sermon the audience exclaimed in one voice, “Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu! (Well done!), the Buddha went into *jhāna* even during that brief interval. And then He resumed the sermon. Such constancy is really marvellous.

Burmese Sādhu and Ceylonese Sādhu

There are occasions for the audience to say “*Sādhu*” during my preaching but they are rather few. But in Burma it is usual for the audience to say “*Sādhu*” at the end of a Pali *gāthā* (verse) of which the preaching monk gives a literal translation. When the monk ends in a long drawn-out voice with the (Burmese) phrase “*phyitkya le dawt tha dee*” the audience says without any hesitation, “*Sādhu*”. They don’t care to notice whether the verse so recited and translated relates to a subject which calls

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for an exultant hailing or not. They just note the ending words “*tha dee*” and drone out “*Sādhu*”.

For instance, in the *Vessantrā Jātaka*, king Vessantrā gave away his two children, a son and a daughter of tender ages of four or five, to Jujakā Brāhmin. The Pali verse in that connection describes the Brahmin’s cruel treatment of the children who wept desolately; how the Brahmin beat them cruelly and dragged them away. When the preaching monk recited that verse and translated it into Burmese and ended his version with the usual “*tha dee*” the audience droned out the usual “*Sādhu*”. Well, that is the part of the story which calls for sympathy and sadness from the listeners, not exultation, and so the “*Sādhu*” went awry. But in Burma the audience don’t care to discriminate.

In Ceylon, however, the audience intones “*Sādhu*” three times only for the part of the sermon which related to attainment of *Arahatship* or *Nibbāna*, for that is an occasion of exultation when a congratulatory note of joy, such as “*Sādhu*”, is called for.

During the time of the Buddha the practice of saying “*Sādhu*” must be of the Ceylonese pattern. When the audience said “*Sādhu*”

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three times, the Buddha paused, and during that brief interval He went into *jhāna*, and soon after the saying of “Sādhu” by the audience, He resumed His sermon, He never remained idle. How adorable!

The preaching monks of today may not be entering into the *jhāna*; that brief interval is probably the time of resting his voice or it is the time for him to think of the words he will utter when he resumes his sermon.

Moreover, the Buddha looked on all beings with great pity, entering into the mood of great pity and loving kindness (*mahākaruṇa samāpatti*) and also into the ecstatic mood of sanctification *Arahatta samāpatti* for twelve crore times each altogether twenty four crore times, daily. That shows that the Buddha had not missed one moment in entering into *jhāna*; So Sātāgiri said in reply to his friend's query, “The Buddha who knows all the *Dhamma* fully is never away from *jhāna*”.

To sum up, the Buddha was free of the
sin of stealing,
the sin of torture and killing,
and was always away from forget-
fulness,
nor did He ever stop entering into
jhāna.

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As the Buddha knew all the *Dhamma* fully, He did not have to think ahead of what He would say in a sermon session. He was always prepared. He also knew of the measure of maturity of any individual for Him to give an appropriate teaching, so He did not need to take time for any kind of preparation. Not only did He enter into the *jhāna* after the sermon session but, as has been said, He utilised the brief intervals during the sermon session when the audience said “*Sādhu*” to enter into the *jhāna*. He never remained idle for one moment.

Taking this into consideration, we should know how adorable the Buddha is, and we must adore Him by taking refuge in Him with concentrated attention, and while we are doing that we should make a note of the happening of the joy emanating from adoration and immediate fading out of that joy and thus meditate in the *vipassanā* way, thereby strengthening the insight thus gained till we reach the ultimate stage of *Ariyā magga*.

Now in conclusion of today's session, I would like to urge the new yogis to enter into the meditational practice by first noting the actions of the body, such as the rising and falling of one's abdomen, and thoughts

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and fancies of the mind. Noting the mental phenomena is *cittānupassanā*. Noting the stiffness and the aching of the limbs and all the other physical discomforts constitutes *vedānānupassanā*. Seeing, hearing, etc., and anger, disappointment and other workings of the mind noted and meditated upon make for *dhammānupassanā*. Noting the various movements and actions of the body constitutes *Kāyānupassanā*.

The yogis at this meditation centre have been doing this meditational practice, and all of them have been trying to free themselves from forgetfulness (*pamāda*.) In a few days, or one month, they will have attained advanced stages of meditational insights.

Of the four *magga ñāṇa*, *sotāpatti magga* enables the one who attains it to gain great concentration. Then advancing from that stage to the next, *sakadāgāmi magga*, the yogi will have his concentration power strengthened further, and when one reaches the next stage, *anāgāmi magga*, there will not be any wandering of the mind and the concentration will be much deeper; from that stage one can advance through diligence to the ultimate stage of *Arahatta magga* and thus attain the state of an *Arahat*. At that

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final stage, forgetfulness is out of the question, Mindfulness is ever present. So in praising the insight of an *Arahat*, it is said: "The *Arahat* is of all mindfulness while walking or standing or sleeping or waking."

An *Arahat* never misses a moment in his mindfulness of the physical and mental phenomena, and his awareness is of a sweeping nature. By "sleeping" it means that there is mindfulness till the point of falling asleep and the mindfulness is resumed at the point of waking up. There is of course, no question of mindfulness while one is asleep. That is how mindfulness is practised every moment of one's waking life, according to the Buddha's admonition of "*apamādena sampādetha*" (constant awareness).

Our yogis have been doing meditational work. That is a really gratifying fact. They must work hard enough to attain at least the first stage of *magga*, that is *sotāpanna magga*. When one attains that stage one will never go to four nether regions of hell.

This is the introductory part of *Hemavata sutta*.

Part III

The two questions put by Hemavata relate to physical commission of sin, and also whether the Buddha was far and away from *jhāna*. Then Hemavata put questions relating to sins of speech.

“Friend Sātāgiri, does your teacher, the Buddha, refrain from telling falsehoods? Does He refrain from using rude, insolent and condemning words? Does He refrain from uttering words which destroy friendliness and unity?” said Hemavata.

Hemavata wanted to know whether the Buddha committed sins of speech, such as, using abusive words, telling lies, and telling tales which could set one person against the other. Unity among friends and allies could be disrupted by someone dropping a few words, quite politely, hinting at something which could create misunderstanding

Vassakāra's slanner

During the time of the Buddha, King Ajātasattu wanted to invade Vajji where Licchavi princes were reigning. These princes were ruling the country in harmony and unity, and their unity was strength. Ajātasattu tried to disrupt the unity and undermine the strength of Licchavi princes by employing a ruse. He sent Vassakāra, one of his ministers, into exile, and Vassakāra went to the Licchavi princes to seek refuge. Some of the princes said to others, "This Brahmin, Vassakāra, is a cunning man. Don't let him take refuge". Others replied, "This Brahmin was exiled because he spoke for us against his own king. So we should take him on." So Vassakāra was received by the Licchavi princes and appointed a teacher to the children of the princes.

Vassakāra taught the princes' children well, and thus earned the trust of the princes. Once he obtained the trust and confidence of the princes, Vassakāra started his campaign of setting one prince against another. The ruse he employed was subtle: He called one prince aside and asked in a whisper, "Have you taken your meal?" "What curry did you eat?"

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The other princes saw this, and asked the prince what the teacher told him. The prince said, truthfully, that the old man asked him whether he had taken his meal and what curry he ate. Other princes did not believe him. They thought to themselves, "One would not ask such questions in a whisper. There must be some important secret."

Next, the Brahmin called another prince and asked, "Does your father plough the field? How many bullocks draw his plough?" When the other princes asked him what had passed between the Brahmin and him, the prince told them truthfully, but none of them believed him. Then the Brahmin called another prince and asked in a whisper, "Are you cowardly?" The prince asked him in surprise, "Why? Who told you that?" Then the Brahmin said, "Oh, your friend, that prince" and pointed to another prince. The prince was angry at being so accused and began to misunderstand the other prince.

In this way, using simple words, Vassakāra set about setting one prince against another, and within three years he had succeeded in creating misunderstanding among the Licchavi princes. The disruption of the unity was so great that each prince would not like to look at the face of the other. Then

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Vassakāra sent a secret message to King Ajātasattu who led an army against the kingdom of the Licchavi princes, Vajji. As each prince misunderstood the others as having accused him of cowardice, none of them went out to fight the invading army. They said to themselves, “If they say I am cowardly, let them go out and fight”. So King Ajātasattu could capture the country easily. This furnishes a good lesson about backbiting. Hemavata, therefore, asked: “Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of speech calculating to create misunderstanding?”

The fourth question was: “Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of speech devoid of important and valuable import?” Such kind of talk includes the present-day novels and fairy tales which are devoid of morals and valuable messages for the good of secular life or spiritual life of people. They are written up for pleasure reading; they contain only some “stories” and descriptions just for reading pleasure. Hemavata asked his friend, Sātāgiri, whether his teacher, the Buddha, was free of such kind of frivolous speech.

Sātāgiri's Answer No. 3

Satagiri said in reply, “Friend Hemavata, Gotama Buddha does not tell lies; He

always refrains from falsehood.” Since the time when he was a *bodhisatta* (would-be Buddha) and received an assuring prophecy from a former Buddha, He had refrained from telling lies. He had always been free of that sin. He always told the truth. For the person who tells lies there is no sin he would not hesitate to commit because he will lie about his deed when asked about it. He dares do any kind of evil deed.

The Dhammapada says:

“He who leaps over truth or abandons truth and resorts to lies, abandons beneficial effects in his next existence, and so there is no sin he cannot commit.”

Leaping over truth means abandoning truth, and that means telling lies. One who does not hesitate to tell lies can commit any kind of sin for he is ready with a false explanation. Such persons will do anything for his personal gain. One who dares do any evil deed has no good future in his next existence, and that means he leaps over the next existence. He cares only for his welfare in the present existence and does not care for what will happen to him in his next existence. Such a person will do any kind of evil deed if only it can produce material benefit for him in the present life.

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So untruthfulness is the leader of all other sins.

The would-be Buddha had avoided this great sin of false speech in all his existences. His avoidance of this sin is, of course, through *sampatta viratī* and *samādāna viratī* but not through *samuccheda viratī*. Only when he became the Buddha did He avoid this sin through the last-named *viratī*: that is, the avoidance through *Arahatta magga*.

To explain further, the would-be Buddha avoided telling lies though he had not formally taken the precepts. He did not lie and always told the truth. That is avoidance through *sampatta viratī*. If a person has taken the precepts formally, saying: "I take the precept of avoidance of telling falsehood," then he avoided telling lies through *samādāna viratī*.

Such instances of avoidance of falsehood are usually in consideration of some factors, such as, advanced age, reputation, fear of censure or fear of committing a sin.

However, if one has attained *sotāpanna magga* through meditational practice, one abandons false speech completely. At that stage telling falsehood is foreign to his nature. The Buddha had abandoned this sin since His attainment of this early stage of

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sotāpanna magga. When He reached the ultimate stage of *Arahatta magga* this matter was entirely out of the question. The Buddha had declared that He had already attained that ultimate stage. So Sātāgiri gave a definite reply to the query, saying, “Our teacher, the Buddha, has completely abandoned the sin of false speech.”

Then to the second question he replied, “Also, the Buddha is free of using crude, abusive and contemptuous language besides being free of speech calculated to cause misunderstanding and disruption of amity and unity”.

In the case of *Arahats* there were instances of use of rude language because they had such a habit though, of course, they had no evil motives. For instance, Venerable Pilindavaccha had the habit since he was a Brahmin of calling people “*vasala*” which means “mean fellow”. Even after he had become an Arahāt he did not abandon this habit. As for the Buddha, there was no instance in which He had retained His habits, good or bad, after His attainment of Buddhahood. He was completely clear of all the habits that are usually carried along through one’s series of existences.

To the fourth question Sātāgiri replied: “Our teacher, the Buddha, speaks only of

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what is good, appropriate and beneficial either to the secular world or to the spiritual world.”

By that Sātāgiri meant that the Buddha saw the truth of any matter by His *ñāṇa* and spoke either for the benefit of secular or of spiritual life, and that He never indulged in an idle talk.

There are four elements of speech. They are: (1) telling the truth, no lies; (2) no slander, saying things with a view to effecting amity and unity, (3) using pleasant language, avoiding rude words; (4) avoiding idle talk, using words of no value or benefit. Those four elements apply to communication in worldly affairs as well as religious affairs. If one observes these four rules of speech, one can be said to be of clean speech.

Of six kinds of speech two are permissible

It is said that there are six kinds of speech in human communication. Number one is the speech that is a lie, that is not of any benefit and also not liked by others. For instance, if one makes a false accusation of immorality against a person who has a clean record, then the accuser's speech is a lie. His accusation might be believed by

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another person who will then take the accused person amiss, and thus unwittingly earn demerit. The accused person will also feel badly because he has been wrongly accused. The accuser's false accusation will not be liked by wise and moral persons. So such speech is malicious and inappropriate.

Number Two: A speech is not truth, and there is no benefit from it, but it is liked by many. In this category are included tales, words causing misunderstanding and disunity, and discourses on false religions. Tales, fables and novels or stories are mere fabrications. They are not the accounts of real events, and so reading them gives no benefit to the reader who may be sexually aroused or moved to sorrow, anger or dejection. Yet these tales and stories are liked by many people. Then backbiting constitutes false accusations and descriptions of the other party, designed to cause destruction of amity and unity. The present day propaganda contains many such lies and unwarranted accusations. Such slanders cause distress in the listener but he may often feel that such speech is for his own good and like it.

I shall refer to some statements in the Pitaka literature of the Buddha's time. Before the Buddha attained Buddhahood there were

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in ancient times religions which said that sacrificial offering of animals neutralised evil deeds and brought prosperity and happiness. Even King Pasenadi Kosala had once made arrangements for sacrifice of animals to propitiate the gods. He arranged to have five hundred each of young cows, bulls, goats and sheep killed and sacrificed.

At that time, at the instance of Queen Mallikā the King approached the Buddha and submitted the case. The Buddha said that the sounds and voices that the King had been hearing had relationship with the propitiation of the gods, that killing the animals for sacrifice was detrimental to the King's interest, that on the contrary, if the animals were released and allowed to live, the meritorious act would bring him peace and happiness. The King realized his error and ordered the sacrificial animals released. There is no acceptable logic in killing animals for the purpose of obtaining prosperity and happiness for oneself. It is unreasonable to suppose that other's misery will bring about one's happiness. Yet there are many people who are in favour of sacrifices.

Even in the time of the Buddha, Ajita, a leader of a sect, maintained: "There is neither *kusala* (good deed) nor *akusala* (bad

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deed; and these deeds have no effect because there is no next existence." If you consider the immediate effects of good and bad deeds, you will see that this argument is not tenable. According to Buddhism, such belief is called *uccheda diṭṭhi*. The subscriber to such belief will not do any good deed, and he will not shun bad deed. Thus, there will be no moral quality with him that deserves praise. When after his death he goes to the next existence which he has denied, then he will go to one of the nether planes and suffer great misery. Such is his plight, according to the Buddha's teachings.

Such beliefs are of no benefit, yet many people subscribe to them. So the statement, "There is no *kamma*, or its effect, because there is no afterlife" is no truth and has no benefit for any, but many people like it. This is an example of the Number Two category of speech. Though many people like such statements, they must be avoided because they are no truth and have no benefit. And the Buddha avoided them.

Number Three: This category includes speech that is truth but it is of no benefit and is not liked by others. This is, for instance, calling a thief a thief, a cheat a cheat, a fool a fool, or a blind person blind. This is true but there is no benefit and is not

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liked by the person concerned. This kind of speech was never used by the Buddha.

Number Four: This category includes speech which is truth but of no benefit though liked by many. This is, for instance, quoting somebody and setting him against the other. Such speech causes misunderstanding and distress in the person concerned. Though distressed, he might like it because he is under the impression that the reporter lets him know what the other person said about him. This also includes political rumours and side-talks which may be true and which may be relished by many but it is of no benefit to the people generally: it disturbs the mind of those who are devoting themselves to religious work. Such kind of speech was never made by the Buddha.

The two kinds used by the Buddha

Number Five: The truth, beneficial though not liked by some persons. Such speech includes admonition which says, "In your previous existences you have done a lot of bad deeds and so you are now in misery. If you don't mend your ways and continue doing bad deeds it will be difficult for you to save yourself from hell." This admonition is motivated by a kind wish for the welfare of the person concerned. This direct ap-

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proach may not be liked by the person concerned though it is a statement of truth, but such speech should be made. And the Buddha made such kind of speech.

The Buddha said that Devadatta who tried to set up a parallel organization by persuading some of the monks to renege, thus committing what is called *saṃghabhedaka* sin, would fall into hell and suffer misery there for the entire *kalpa* (aeon). This prediction was not liked by the Devadatta group but it was made for the benefit of others who might otherwise happen to commit a similar sin. The Buddha made such speech because He knew that it was truth and beneficial to many though not liked by some.

Number Six. True, beneficial and popular. This category includes discourses on *dāna* (charity) *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (meditation). These are the truths beneficial and liked by wise and moral persons, and so the Buddha used this kind of speech on appropriate occasions. The Buddha's main purpose was to make such kind of speech.

Now we have completed the list. Of the six categories the speech which is falsehood and not beneficial should not be made though it may be liked, or not liked, by

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others. Such kind was never used by the Buddha. Truth but not beneficial though it may or may not be liked by others would never be said by the Buddha. These are the four kinds the Buddha never used. Truth, beneficial though it may be liked or not by others, was said by the Buddha. Of course, the Buddha chose the appropriate occasion for the use of such speech. He never said anything irrelevant to the situation.

To choose the right words for the right occasion is an important matter. It is not appropriate to say something true and beneficial at a place where festivities are being held. For instance, at a wedding ceremony or an initiation ceremony where people are light-minded, it is not appropriate to give discourses on serious subjects such as meditation on death or insight into the state of *nibbāna*. In the same way, it is not appropriate to give a discourse on *Mangala* at the alms-food offering ceremony, at a funeral house.

Summing up, the Buddha used only words which represent the truth and are of benefit to many. So Sātāgiri said in reply to Hemavata's query that the Buddha said what should be said after surveying the benefit in the mundane and spiritual affairs.

The attribute of Sugata

For the reason that the Buddha used appropriate speech for appropriate occasions He was in possession of the attribute of *Sugata* which means “saying good (appropriate) words”. In other words, the Buddha said what was true and beneficial to many though it may or may not be liked by some. So we will say, “The Buddha had the attribute of saying good words whether they are liked or not.”

After Sātāgiri had made a reply about the Buddha’s abstention from the four sins of speech, Hemavata put questions relating to the sins of the mind.

Hemavata’s Question No. (4)

Hemavata said, “Friend Sātāgiri. is your teacher, the Buddha, free of desires for sensual pleasures?”

Of the three sins of the mind, *abhiṭṭhā* refers to the desire to get other’s possessions and scheming to achieve that purpose. Hemavata wanted to know whether the Buddha was free from *abhiṭṭhā*. People generally want to possess things that please their senses, even those who declared themselves to be Buddhas were not free from *abhiṭṭhā*.

“Is the mind of your teacher, the Buddha, clear of the desire to kill and destroy?” Hemavata asked.

By this he meant whether the Buddha was free of *byapāda*, the wish entertained by a person to see others he hates dead or destroyed. People generally wish someone they do not like dead; some even utter the words to express that wish. The bogus Buddhas of those days were not free from this desire. They said that one could kill with impunity. The God who punished his creatures with death cannot be said to be free from this desire. The wish for other's death, *byapāda* is after all an expression of anger, and so it can never be termed clean-mindedness. Hemavata wanted to know whether the Buddha was so clean-minded; he said, in effect. “Is the mind of your teacher, the Buddha, free of the dirt of evil wishes: is it clean?”

Then; Hemavata put the next question; “Has the Buddha overcome *moha* (delusion rendered by ignorance)?”

Micchā ditthi, the wrong belief, is a combination of *moha* and *avijjā* (ignorance). So, asking whether the Buddha had overcome *moha* means asking whether the Buddha was clean of *micchā ditthi*, which is one of the three signs of the mind. It would appear

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rude to put such a question about the Buddha but in those days when many leaders of heretics were claiming to be Buddhas, this question was pertinent.

Three kinds of micchā ditthi

Among the bogus Buddhas, Purāṇa Kassapa preached that killing, stealing and other evil deeds did not constitute sin anymore than alms-giving and other good deeds constitute merit. This belief which rejects the principle of *kamma* and its effect is called *akiriya ditthi*.

Ajita, another heretical leader, preached that there was no effect of either good deed or bad deed because after death there would be no new existence. Death spelled the end of life. This belief is called *natthika ditthi-nihilism*.

Another heretical leader, Makkhali, preached that there was no cause either for defilement and misery or for happiness and purity in all beings. This no-cause belief is called *aketuka ditthi*. This belief also rejected *kamma* and its effect.

The last of them, Pakudha, said that all beings were composed of the four elements, plus *sukha dukkha* and *jiva* (life), and these seven elements could not be annihilated

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by any force. Any good or bad deed could not affect this composite entity. Therefore, neither sin nor merit had any meaning, he added.

These leaders of false faiths had had wrong conceptions and were sunk under *mōha* and *avijjā*. Hemavata's query whether the Buddha was free of *micchā ditthi* was therefore pertinent.

Hemavata asked: "Does your teacher, the Buddha, have the eye of knowledge to see all the *dhamma*?"

Questions relating to the sins of the body, of the speech and of the mind had been made and categorical answers received, but that by itself did not satisfy the inquiry whether the Buddha was the real *Sammā-sambuddhā* Buddha, for these attributes could be had by *Pacceka-buddhas* and *Arahats*. *Pacceka-buddha* is a non-preaching, lesser, Buddha. So Hemavata put an important question; "Does your teacher, the Buddha, have the eye of knowledge to see all the *Dhamma*?"

Sātāgiri's Answer No. 4

Sātāgiri said, "Friend Hemavata, our teacher, the Buddha, has never had any sensual desire and is always clean of *taṇhā*."

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This is the answer to Hemavata's first of Number Four in the series of questions. Since the time of renunciation at the age of 29, the Buddha had been clean of sensual desires. Even when He was suffering acutely from extreme asceticism, His mind had not harkened back to the former state of joys and pleasures of the palace. He was far removed from the desire to possess other person's possessions. When he had attained Buddhahood, the Buddha rejected all elements of *tanhā* through *Arahatta magga*. This He had declared when He gave the Dhammacakka sermon, saying that He had rejected all the ingredients constituting *samudaya saccā*.

The answer to the second question in the series said: "The mind of our teacher is not sullied and it is always clean." The Buddha's mind was always permeating with *mettā* for all beings and there was not a shadow of *byāpāda* and *dosa*. While Anguli Māla was chasing the Buddha with a sword, the Buddha was of a clean mind full of *mettā* and *karuṇā* for the man who was chasing Him. When the drunken elephant, Nālāgiri, rushed to gore Him, the Buddha was likewise of clean mind. So was He when Devadatta rolled down a huge rock upon Him. Even on such critical occasions His mind was

clean of desires; nothing need be said of it at other times. The Buddha who had cleaned His mind of *byāpāda* and *dosa* through *Arahatta magga*, had always been of clean mind. Hence Sātāgiri's answer.

Also free of moha

As an answer to the third question, Sātāgiri said, "Our teacher, the Buddha, has overcome through the four *Ariyā magga* all *moha* and *avijjā*."

What Hemavata meant to ask was whether the Buddha had overcome *ducarita micchā ditthi* based on *moha*, but Sātāgiri's answer went beyond that and was all-embracing. He said that the Buddha had overcome all *moha* which is obviously a complete answer.

Free of micchā ditthi since receiving assuring prediction

Since the time when the would-be Buddha was given an assurance by Dipankara, a former Buddha, that he would become a Buddha, he had been free of beliefs which denied the principles of *kamma*, such beliefs as *sassata ditthi* and *uccheda ditthi*. When He attained Buddhahood, He rejected all *kilesā* which includes, of course, *ducarita micchā ditthi*. He then referred to the false faiths propagated by the heretical

leaders, Purāṇa Kassapa and others, and directed his audience not to follow the wrong paths.

The Buddha had said that the belief that killing, stealing and other evil deeds did not produce evil effects was the product of ān attachment to *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra* and *viññāna*, the five ingredients of physical matter. If *rūpa* was known to be subjected to *anicca* and *dukkha*, the remaining ingredients would be likewise subjected, and that knowledge could not lead anyone to the wrong beliefs, the Buddha pointed out.

The Buddha likened leading heretic Makkhali to a dragnet and urged His disciples to reject that false faith. Let us recount briefly Makkhali's faith. According to him, there was no cause for either poverty or prosperity, and there was no agency to alter or improve the situation because all beings were predestined, and so they would have their share of poverty and prosperity; all beings got their existences in accordance with predestination, either in higher planes or lower planes of existences. There was no lengthy period of misery for the bad and the foolish, nor a short period for the rich and the wise; each being was to take his own share of misery and happiness,

poverty and prosperity, and just as the rolling ball of thread comes to a stop when all the thread has been untwined, so also the *samsāra* for each being would come to an end when he had lived out his predestined period of existence.

Tallies with the theory of “man dies and is reborn as man”

This idea of predestination which asserts that one has just to live out his time in the *samsāra* and need not make any effort for improvement for he will mature automatically and gradually, goes very well with those who do not have to make any effort to do good deeds and also with those who want to do bad deeds. It is quite a good idea for lazybones and bad-hats. It also seems to be in accord with a recently propagated belief that since man has already attained the status of man, he will not get downgraded after his death, for he will gradually mature automatically; the belief assuming the term, in Burmese, *lu the lu phyit* (man dies, becomes man).

The Buddha likened Makkhali as a human dragnet, for once a man gets into the net of his faith he cannot get out but has to die in it. The Buddha meant by this that

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those who favoured this belief would not do any good volitional act which would enable them to attain to celestial planes and *nibbāna*, and so they would fall into hell.

Now I have heard that there are some who tell their audience that it is enough for them merely to listen what they preach and that it is not necessary for anyone to do any meditation. Such preachers should make a note of the metaphor of the dragnet used by the Buddha for the leading *ditthi* Makkhali. Not only Makkhali's faith but also the faiths of Purāṇa and Ajita fall into the same category of "dragnet faiths" which remove the opportunity for beings to go to celestial planes of existence or to attain *nibbāna*.

When did false faiths spring up?

When did the false faiths denying *kamma* and its effect spring up? According to *Cakkavatti sutta*, they sprang up during the era in which man's life-span was one thousand years. It is probable that till that era people had in them less amount of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, and so were not enamoured of this argument about *kamma* and its effect, but since then people were more and more depraved, and began to subscribe to these faiths. But these faiths were not as popular

as they appeared to be, for even at the time of the Buddha when the span of man's life had gone down to one hundred, they were not liked by many.

But now as moral deterioration is gradually increasing, people are becoming more and more immoral, and the false faiths are beginning to flourish. And according to *Cakkavatti sutta*, at the time when man's expectation of life is reduced to just ten years, morals will fade out and the term *akusala* (evil deed) will go out of usage. This theory of rejection of *kamma* is gradually gaining more favourable attention because people's *lobha* is increasing and their hankering after sensual pleasures is making a corresponding increase. Nowadays, there are some who are of the opinion that if one avoids evil deeds one will not achieve any useful purpose. That view leads people to these false faiths.

Free of all moha

The ignorance of *kamma* and its effect that is becoming rife now is the result of overwhelming *lobha* superimposed by *moha*. The Buddha realised this for Himself and so He preached to the people for making efforts to reduce the volume of *lobha* and *moha*. The disciples follow the Buddha's

direction and try to reach realisation through meditational practice and thus free themselves from these false faiths. They come to realise that the *kamma* of the previous existences had made them what they are in the present existence, and the *kamma* of the present existence, if not yet free of *taṇhā*, will determine the state of the next existence. Thus, they confirm their belief in the true faith.

The Buddha was obviously free of *micchā ditthi*, but at a time when there were many bogus Buddhas, Hemavata's query whether the Buddha had overcome *moha* which makes for *micchā ditthi* was quite pertinent, and Sātāgiri's answer went far beyond because it said that the Buddha had overcome all *moha* (that is, all the accessories of *moha*).

Has the eye of knowledge

In answer to the fourth question, Sātāgiri said, "Our teacher, the Buddha, has the type of knowledge which sees all the *dhamma*."

There are five kinds of eyes. They are:
 (1) *maṃsa cakkhu*, the eye of flesh, or the ordinary eye;
 (2) *dibba cakkhu*, the eye of *abhiññāṇa* (higher psychic powers);

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- (3) *dhamma cakkhu*; the eye of knowledge;
(4) *samanta cakkhu*, (all-seeing eye) insight
(5) *Buddha cakkhu*, the eye of the Buddha.

(1) The ordinary eye is very clear and can see around to the distance of one *yūjanā*.

(2) *Dibba cakkhu*, or the eye of *Abhīñña* can see all material forms, large or small, near or far: it can see the abodes of devas and Brahmās, the nether regions such as *niraya* (hell), *peta* and *asurakayas* (ghosts and spirits); it can also see the universes. This eye can see anything anywhere, any shape or colour; it can also see where a being after death has gone to take up its next existence. The Buddha had attained this eye at midnight of the day when He was to attain Buddhahood. He then saw all the 31 planes of existence in which beings of all sorts were either enjoying pleasures or suffering from misery. We need not add that He saw all of the human and animal worlds.

(3) As for the eye of knowledge, the term "knowledge" refers to that gained from *vipassanā magga* and *paccavekkhanā*, especially to *Ariyā magga*. The eye of knowledge is often referred to as the eye of *dhamma* which is synonymous with *sotāpanna magga ñāna*.

(4) *samanta cakkhu* is synonymous with *sabbaññuta nana*. It is the eye which sees all the *dhamma*. The Buddha had declared while giving the first of all His sermons, *Dhammacakka sutta*, that He had acquired this *cakkhu* and become the Buddha.

Buddha cakkhu

(5) *Buddha cakkhu* means "the eye of the Buddha." This constitutes *indriyaparopriyatta ñana* which is the insight into the grades of maturity of the minds of all beings. *Saddhā*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi* and *paññā* (well-established confidence in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha; diligence; mindfulness; concentration; wisdom respectively) constitute *indriya*. The Buddha could perceive the degree and grade of maturity of all these aspects. He examined a being's state of mental faculty to determine how that particular being stood in the matter of perceiving the *Dhamma* and thus attaining *nibbāna*. If a certain individual was still lacking in maturity, the Buddha would not yet teach him the *Dhamma*. The Buddha waited till he reached the stage of maturity, and that period of postponement might extend to years or months, or it might be just a matter of hours or minutes.

To give an instance of such postponement, a person named Bāhiya-dāruciriya came from

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his residence in Suppāraka in the region of Aparanta on the western coast of India to Jetavana monastery near the city of Sāvatti, 200 *yujanās* away. He arrived at the monastery at the time when the Buddha was out to receive alms-food in the city. He did not wait at the monastery, but went into the city to see the Buddha. When he met the Buddha he made obeisance and requested Him to teach him the Dhamma. The Buddha saw that he was not yet mature enough to receive His teaching, and said that it was not fitting to give teachings while going the rounds for alms-food. Bāhiya made the request for a second time, and the Buddha refused. When he made the third request, the Buddha saw that his *indriya* had attained sufficient maturity and gave him the following sermon:

“If seeing happens to be mere seeing, if hearing happens to be mere hearing, if arriving happens to be mere arriving, if knowing happens to be mere knowing, such actions do not happen, they do not remain still, and as they do not remain still, they are neither here nor there, and nothing remains. That non-happening is the end of misery ”

Bāhiya, while hearing the sermon, became an *Arahat* after going through the stages

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of insight, the four *magga* and *phala*. This is an instance of postponement for a few minutes.

Āsayā-nusaya ñāṇa

Āsayānusaya ñāṇa means an insight into the idiosyncrasies of an individual. The predilections are called *āsaya*, and there are two elements in the mental makeup of the individual, namely *ditthi* and *ñāṇa*. Those who are worldly usually have *ditthi* deep in their minds. They subscribe to either *sassata* or *uccheda* faiths. Those who like the former do not like the latter, for they like immortality of the soul. Those who like the latter do not like the former, for they favour the idea of the disappearance of all entities of a being after death. Though they may change over for some reasons or other they revert to their former faith later. They are like dogs which wander during the day and come back to their sleeping places at night. The Buddha knew whether an individual was inclined to the *sassata* faith or the *uccheda* faith, and directed His teachings accordingly, so that particular being realised the true faith and quickly attained *magga*.

As for those who wanted to get out of the rut of *samsāra* and attain *nibbāna*, there are those who have acquired *vipassanā ñāṇa* and also those who have attained *Ariyā magga*

ñāṇa. Although they had not yet reached the stage of *Ariyā magga*, and were still holding the views of *nicca* (permanence), *sukha* (happiness) and *atta* (self), they would regain the insight of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* when they heard the Buddha's sermon. Such is the case with those who have gained *vipassanā* insight but have stopped making note of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* for some time, for they can regain their insight soon after they go back into their meditational practice. That is like returning to one's home.

As *sotāpanna* and *sakadāgāmi* are not fully clear of *kāma*, *rāga* and *byāpāda* (desire, lust and anxiety), they may relapse into these feelings to a certain extent during their off-periods from meditation. Once into it again, they will regain their insight of the truth, if only for some time. It is like going out of one's home, a stately mansion, to several places during the day for one reason or another and coming back to their homes for the night. The Buddha saw this state of mind and gave a teaching best suited to the inclinations and idiosyncrasies of such individual so that he might attain the stage of *magga* and *phala*.

The *anusaya kilesā* comprises seven components, namely, *kāma rāga* (sexual desire),

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bhava rāga (lust for life), *patiga* (aversion or ill-will), *māna* (conceit), *ditthi* (wrong belief), *vicikicchā* (perplexed thinking) and *avijjā* (ignorance). The Buddha discerned what was uppermost in the mind of an individual and gave him an appropriate teaching. That was why those who had had an opportunity of hearing the Buddha's sermon quickly attained *nibbāna*.

Now these two kinds of insight, namely *indriyaparopriyatta-ñāna* and *āsayā-nusaya ñāna* are together called Buddha cakkhu, "the eye of the Buddha." This twin insight was possessed only by the Buddha and none other *Arahat*; not even Venerable Sāriputrā, had it. Venerable Sāriputrā could not determine the grades of maturity of the mental state of an individual and give him an appropriate teaching.

Once, Venerable Sāriputrā taught a disciple of his the *asubha kammathāna* exercises, and asked him to practice it for the whole period of the Lent. The disciple could not make any progress. so Venerable Sāriputrā took him to the Buddha, reported the matter and gave up the disciple to Him. Then the Buddha viewed the idiosyncrasies of that monk and gave him a golden lotus which He had created for the purpose and asked him to focus his attention on it and make a note of the redness of the flower.

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The monk did as he was directed, and looking at the golden lotus, gained the four stages of *jhāna*. Then the Buddha caused the flower to wilt and get brownish black, and the monk, rising out of the *jhāna* perceived the decay and realised the decay of his own body through introspection. Then the Buddha appeared before him and gave him a sermon, and the monk attained *Arahatta phala* while attending to the sermon.

In this episode, the monk had been for five hundred existences a goldsmith and naturally liked everything neat and tidy. He was, therefore, not interested in *asubha kammāthāna* which involves contemplation of the decomposition of corpses. Venerable Sāriputrā did not know of his predilection and taught him an unsuitable method of contemplation. The Buddha, on the contrary, knew well of the individual's prejudices and gave him *lohita kammāthāna* (contemplation of redness) after giving him a golden lotus. Because of the appropriate teaching the monk attained *Arahatta phala* within a few hours.

As the Buddha alone possessed these two kinds of insight, Sātāgiri replied definitely: "Our teacher, the Buddha, has the eye to see the *dhamma* in all its aspects."

Of the five kinds of eyes, enumerated in an earlier paragraph, all except the first

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kind, the ordinary eye, which needs no special mention belongs to insights pertaining to the *dhamma*, and the Buddha was in full possession of all the four. Hence, Sātāgiri's reply.

To reiterate, Sātāgiri said to his friend, Hemavata, that the Buddha was clear of all desires and lusts and was of clean mind; that the Buddha had expurgated *dosa* and *byāpāda* through *anāgāmi magga*, meaning that His mind was never sullied by feelings of anger or anxiety.

Incidentally, Venerable Sāriputrā was praised for absence of *dosa* in him. He was never angry. A certain Brāhmin unbeliever would not believe it. He maintained that Venerable Sāriputrā was not angry because there was nobody to provoke his anger. So one day while Venerable Sāriputra was on his rounds for alms-food, he slapped the *Arahat's* back severely. Venerable Sāriputrā did not even look back at him and was walking with composure. Then only the unbelieving Brāhmin realised the truth and humbly begged the the Venerable *Arahat's* pardon. In fact, not only Venerable Sāriputrā but all other *Arahat's* also were clear of anger. Yet they still had some idiosyncracies which are vestiges of anger.

Only the Buddha could dispense with all traits of character. His mind was always exceedingly clean.

Sātāgiri said the Buddha had overcome all aspects of *moha*. *Moha* means not knowing the four Truths. Conversely, it means having wrong notions of them, that is, for instance, taking *dukkha* as *sukha*. Whenever one is in the process of incessant happening and immediate fading out, there is nothing pleasant or stable; all are unpleasant and unstable, and for that reason, there is no happiness but only misery. Yet *moha* causes one to mistake misery for happiness.

In the same way, whatever is heard, or smelt or eaten or touched or thought of is really the *nāma rupa* undergoing constant changes of happening and disappearing. But *moha* persuades one to think of them as good and pleasant and encourages one to be mentally attached to them. And this attachment (*samudaya saccā*) makes for new existences. Cessation of existences is *nirodha saccā*. *Moha* makes one dislike it, because cessation of existences is taken to mean the final death, and is therefore not relishing.

Moha makes one dislike *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* which are the causes for attaining *nibbāna*. These are taken to be arduous tasks! so is *vipassanā* thought to be. That

is *moha*: having wrong notions. Sātāgiri meant to say that the Buddha had overcome all aspects of *moha* and was clean of *moha* and *avijjā*.

The next series of Hemavata's questions runs as follows:

- (1) "Friend, Sātāgiri, has your teacher, the Buddha, full possession of special ñāṇa called *viññā*?
- (2) And also of the basic moral conduct called *cāraṇa*?
- (3) Has your teacher, the Buddha, completely rid Himself of all *āsava kilesā*?
- (-) Is He free from the cycle of existences! that is, that there is no new existence for Him?

To these questions Sātāgiri gave categorical answers to the effect that the Buddha was in full possession of all the qualities referred to by Hemavata.

As we know, *Kāli*, a rich man's daughter who overheard the dialogue between the two celestial beings in the sky over her head attained the stage of *sotāpanna magga*. She became a *sotāpan* because she learned about the attributes of the Buddha and was happily adoring Him while she

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went through the stages of meditation, perceiving *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* of matter and mind. Kāli's achievement was really wonderful.

Sātāgiri's full answers are given in the following chapter, This is the end of Part III.

Part IV

Hemavata's Query No. 5

To these four questions Sātāgiri said that the Buddha possessed fully and completely all the *ñāna* called *viññā*.

Viññā means "special knowledge" or "wisdom". There are three kinds and also eight kinds. The Buddha had all these fully.

"Besides, our teacher, the Buddha, has clean basic moral conduct, that is, all the basic moral conduct that paves the way to *Nibbāna*.

"Also, our teacher, the Buddha, has in Him none of *kilesā āsava*, that is, *Kāmāsava*, *diṭṭhāsava* and *avijjāsava*.

"And, our teacher, the Buddha, has no more new existences; He is free from the cycle of existences."

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The reason for Sātāgiri's definite answers to Hemavata's four further questions was that he had heard the Buddha declare during the *Dhammacakka* sermon that He had already had completely *magga* 'saccā, or the eight *magga*. Of them, *sammā ditthi* and *sammā sankappa* are the *maggas* relating to *paññā* or what is called *vijjā*, the special knowledge and mental powers. *Sammā vācā*, *sammā kammanā* and *sammā ājīva* constitute *sīla magga*, and *sammā vāyama*, *sammā sati* and *samma samādhi* are together *samādhi magga*. These *sīla magga* and *samādhi magga* are what constitute *carana* or the basic moral conduct.

In the *Dhammacakka* sermon there was also a declaration by the Buddha that He was *Sammāsambuddha*, the Enlightened One, the genuine Buddha, who was in full possession of special mental powers called *vijjā* and *carana*. That is why Sātāgiri gave out his answers with the courage of conviction.

Also, the reason for the definite answer to the question about *āsavo kilesā* was that in the *Dhammacakka sutta* the Buddha said that He had completely rid Himself of *samudaya saccā* (attachment). This statement together with the declaration of Himself as *Sammāsambuddha* convinced

Sātāgiri that his teacher, the Buddha, was the genuine Buddha.

The answer to the fourth question that the Buddha had no future new existences was due to the Buddha's declaration in the *Dhammacakka* sermon, "My deliverance from kilesā is permanent." By that He meant that the deliverance was complete and not for a temporary measure; it was not just a few moments or for a certain period; it was permanent and inviolable. The Buddha added that the present existence of his was the last, and there was no future new existence for Him.

Three kinds of vijjā

There are three kinds of *vijjā* as well as eight kinds. The three kinds *pubbenivāsa ñāṇa*, *dibbacakkha ñāṇa* and *asavakkhaya ñāṇa*. (These are often referred to with their initials as *pu*, *di*, *ā*.)

Pubbenivāsa ñāṇa

This *ñāṇa* is the mental ability to look back and see the previous existences. The Buddha acquired this *ñāṇa* in the first part of the night of the fullmoon day of the month of Kason, the day on which the Buddha was to attain Buddhahood. Since then He had known about the previous existences and pondered upon them.

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Dibbacekkhu ñāna

This ñāna is the ability to see as if with the eye of a *deva*. The metaphor of the eye of a *deva* is used just to explain the ability contained in this *ñāna* but, in fact, the ability far exceeds that of the eye of *deva*. What a *deva*'s eye cannot see, this ñāna can. The persons possessing this ñāna can ponder and look far distances, of more than many crores of *yuzanā* and see the colours and forms of being there. This ñāna can see what the human eye cannot. It can see through walls, mountains and other forms of barrier. It can see the beings suffering in the nether regions of hell, animal kingdom, and the world of *peta*. It can see the entire human world, and also the celestial planes of existence.

The human eye cannot see even guardian angels of forests, mountains and trees in the vicinity. Some say that there is no such being as *deva* because such a being cannot be seen, but such persons dare not remain under the trees or places reputed to be haunted by ghosts. They dare not behave in such a way as to offend the spirits. Some guardian spirits of property and ghosts do sometimes show their forms and frighten people. Some persons have had a chance of

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seeing their forms. Among the spirits that usually frighten people are *devas* also. There is a reference in *Mettā sutta* to celestial spirits which showed the monks who had come to reside at the monasteries in the forest, in various forms and thus tried to frighten them. Such spirits were the guardian angels of trees.

There are instances in which the *peta* beings did frighten. Once, King Bimbisara returned to his palace after he had offered alms-food to the Buddha and Sangha, and on that night *peta* beings haunted the royal chamber in the palace and tried to frighten the King. These beings heard from Kassapa Buddha, a previous Buddha, that they would obtain things to eat after they had said “*Sādhu*” (well done!) when the King distributed his merits gained from the good deed of alms-food offering. So they gathered around the Buddha’s monastery and waited to say “*Sādhu*” but, unfortunately, the King forgot to distribute his merit, and returned to his palace.

He did not know about this matter. So the *peta* beings entered his chamber to frighten him just to remind him.

When the King reported to the Buddha about this, the Buddha told the King that

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these *peta* beings had been the King's relatives 92 *kalpas* ago, and that these beings haunted the royal chamber to frighten him by way of reminding him about his failure to distribute his merit to all beings. So the King offered alms-food to the Buddha and Sangha again on the following day and distributed his merit to all beings. The *peta* beings said "Sādhu" and thus obtained celestial food. So there are various kinds of haunting and frightening by spirits, for the *devas*, the *peta* spirits of property who also belong to the category of *deva*, can do haunting and frightening. The human eye cannot see these spirits but the eye of *dibbacakku abhiññāṇa* can:

Dibbacakkhu can see peta spirits

During the time of the Buddha, one day Venerable Mahā Moggalāna and Venerable Lakkhana were coming down from Gijjakutta Mountain while on their rounds for alms-food, when they saw on the way various kinds of *peta* spirits. There were *peta* beings made up of only skeletons, those of only flesh, and also those of bodies on fire. The skeleton ones and flesh ones were beings pecked at by crows, vultures and kites, and they were crying loudly from pain and run-

ning about in the sky. Venerable Mahā Moggalāna smiled at the thought that he had been free of the possibility of such an existence of suffering. Venerable Lakkhana asked him why he smiled. He said, “ask me after the alms-food round.” Soon after having had their meals, Venerable Lakkhana asked Venerable Maha Moggalana, in the presence of the Buddha, why he had smiled. Venerable Mahā Moggalāna replied simply that he smiled because he saw the strange sight of *peta* beings. Then the Buddha said, “My disciples have acquired the eye of *nāna*. and can, therefore, see what a human eye cannot such beings as the *peta*, Now my disciples can bear witness to the fact that there are such beings as *peta*. I myself, had been them on the night when I was about to attain Buddhahood while sitting on the *aparājita* pedestal under the Bhodi tree. I have withheld a discourse on these beings because I was sympathetic with those who would earn *akusala* by their scepticism in this matter. That strange *peta* was a butcher in this city of Rājagiri. He had fallen into hell and suffered many hundreds of thousands of years before he became this *peta* to repay a residue of the debt of his sins. Moggalāna was right when he said he had seen a strange *peta* beings.”

The Buddha continued to describe more than twenty kinds of *peta* beings. Some *peta* beings had to suffer pain from swords, lances, arrows and pins that fell upon their bodies and pierced them. Some had lumps of iron of various sizes fall through their bodies and were running about, crying aloud from the excruciating pain they were suffering from the process. No human being in that area could see them. Nor could Venerable Lakkhana who had not acquired *dibbacakkhuñāṇa* yet. Such miserable beings were found not only on Gijjakutta Mountain but elsewhere too, in places where they had, in their previous existences, done misdeeds. Only the eye of *abhiññāna* can see them; the ordinary human eye cannot.

The *dibbacakkhu abhinnāna* can see not only *peta* beings but all other beings, too, in hell and in the abodes of *devas* and *Brāhmās*. Venerable Anuruddhā could see one thousand universes at once with the eye of this *abhinnāna*, and the Buddha could see innumerable universes. He had acquired this *abhinnāna* on the night of the full moon day of Kason when He was just about to attain Buddhahood.

Asavakkhaya ñāna

This *ñāna* is the ability to purge all lusts, desires and other defilements. It is *Ariya*

magga ñāṇa of which there are four grades: *sotāpanna magga ñāṇa*, *sakadāgāmi magga ñāṇa*, *anāgāmi magga ñāṇa* and *Arahatta magga ñāṇa*.

Of these four *ñāṇa*, *sotāpanna magga ñāṇa* purges the defilements (*āsavo* and *kilesā*) concerning *ditthi* (wrong belief); *sakadāgāmi magga ñāṇa* the defilements concerning gross *kāma rāga* (lust and desires); *anāgāmi magga ñāṇa* the defilements concerning subtle manifestations of *kāma rāga*; and *Arahatta magga ñāṇa* purges all the remaining defilements of lust and desires. So these four *magga ñāṇa* are collectively called *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*. But as the last-named *ñāṇa*, *Arahatta magga ñāṇa*, alone can purge all the defilements, this *ñāṇa* is referred to as *Arahatta magga ñāṇa*. This *ñāṇa* the Buddha attained on the full moon day of Kason just before dawn.

This *ñāṇa* was attained by the Buddha after meditating upon the *paṭicca samuppāda*, past midnight of that day when He rose from the *ānāpāna jhāna* during which He observed the state of happening and deterioration of the five *upādānakkhandā*. Such observation is called *udayabbaya*. This observation is just like the observation of seeing, hearing, knowing, etc, now being

practised by the yogis here today. But there is one distinction in regard to the Buddha's practice, that is, He entered all the *jhānas* and at the same time observed the happening and deterioration of the things inside and outside the body. There was nothing left unobserved, that is the important distinction. The observation process was, of course, the same.

The Buddha went on from this stage toward the attainment of *Ariya magga nāna* in accordance with the various stages of meditation and observation of *vipassanā*. When He attained the *Arahatta magga nāna*, He saw the state of *nibbāna*, and then attained Buddhahood after gaining *sabbannuta nāna* and all the other attributes of the Buddha. This the Buddha declared when He gave the first sermon, *Dhammacakka sutta*, stating that He was *sammāsambuddha*. That is why Sātāgiri said that the Buddha had the three *vijjā nāna*, known by the initials of *pu*, *di*, *ā*.

Eight Vijjā

The three *vijjā* namely, *pu*, *di*, *ā*, have been explained. Now to make up eight *vijjā* we will have to add five, namely *vi*, *ma*, *ce* and *di* by their initials. The long forms

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are *vipassanā nāna*, *manomayiddhi nāna*, *iddhividha nāna*, *cetopariya nāna* and *dibbasota nāna* respectively.

Vipassanā nāna

Vipassanā nāna is attained by observing the actions of *nāma rupa* in the state of *anicea*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. It is not attained simply by casual observation but by in-depth observation of the actions as they are happening without leaving any one of them unobserved. Thus the observation should be on all actions such as, seeing hearing, smelling, eating, etc., as they are happening and without failing to observe any single action. At the beginning one should pitch upon one kind of action performed by a living being. So the Buddha in *Mahā Satipatthāna sutta*, said *gicchantova gicchāmiti*, *pajānāti*, meaning, "As you go, observe to know that you go." By that He meant that one should observe the force of *vāyo* (wind, or the propelling force) as one walked. So also, He said, "As you sit, observe to know that you sit."

So as you are concentrating your attention on the action of sitting. you will observe such mental or physical feeling as occasioned by this action of sitting. In the same manner, you will observe bending, stretching,

moving as these actions are happening. So I have instructed you to take the easy practice of observing the rising and falling of the abdomen as you sit in a pose of meditation.

The Pali text in *Mahā Satipatthāna sutta* gives full instructions for observation of that changing state of the body, so my instruction for observing the rising and falling of the abdomen while sitting quietly is in accord with it.

If you think there is a gap in the observations between the rising and falling of the abdomen you can put in an observation of the sitting posture, such as rising, falling, sitting rising, falling,...Such gap-filling would complete the observation of the entire state of the body. That constitutes observation of physical state, *kāyānupassanā*

While thus sitting if you feel the strain, the heat and the pain in the body, you should observe these *vedanā* (feelings). That constitutes *vedanānupassanā*. If a thought occurs, you should note it. That constitutes *cittānupassanā*. Then the observation of seeing, hearing, etc., as they are, that is, as a series of phenomena, constitutes *dhammānupassanā*. Summing up, your practice of

meditation is complete with the four kinds of *satipatthāna*.

Now, as you do meditation embracing the four *satipatthāna*, your mind will not go anywhere but it will be fully concentrated and will make the observation of the actions as they happen, without any omission. There will be only concentrated observation. Thus the mind becomes purified, obtaining the state of mental purification (*citta visuddhi*). While in that state of mind, the act of observation and the mind, which makes that observation, will become distinct from each other. When you observe the rising of the abdomen, the rising as such is separate from the cognitive knowledge of the rising. The same applies to the falling of the abdomen, the bending, the stretching, etc. Thus, the action and the cognitive knowledge become separate, which means that the non-knowing physical action and the knowing mind are two separate entities. In other words, the practising yogi will be able to discern the *nāma* (mind) from *rūpa* (matter). That stage of insight is called *nāma-rūpapariccheda nāna*, which is indeed important as the foundation of the meditational insight. Without the attainment of this *nāna* the other stages of meditational insight cannot be reached.

Going on with the practice, the yogi will come to discern the cause and effect of actions, such as that the form of motion happens because of the desire for motion: knowing happens because of the feeling of knowing, or seeing happens because of the object of seeing, etc. The yogi will come to realize that the causes and effects are after all in the mind and the matter. This knowledge brings him to *paccayaṅpariggaha nāna*, the insight that sees causes and effects.

Continuing the practice of meditation, the yogi makes a note of the appearance and disappearance of actions and feelings. For example, when pain *happens*, the yogi makes a note of the pain as it occurs such as, “paining, paining...” till the pain disappears. Thus he makes a note of the entire process from the beginning to the very end. This making a note of successive happenings makes for an observation of *anicca*, followed of course by that of *dukkha* and *anatta*. This series of insights constitutes *vipassanā nāna*.

The cognitive ability becomes sharper and quicker as the yogi continues with his meditational practice. This *vipassanā nāna* can be attained by an ordinary yogi, but in the case of the Buddha, the attainment of *vipassanā nāna* was an easy matter

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since He had already attained *jhāna* and purity of mind.

Manomayiddhi and iddhividha nāna

Manomayiddhi and *Iddhividha nāna* are for creating. *Manomayiddhi nāna* is for creating one's own image, and *Iddhividha nāna* for creating a variety of things, whatever one wishes to create. The latter *nāna* is of a wider scope. The sky could be created as the earth; an earthen road could be created in the sky so that one could walk on it. One could create oneself as light as cotton wool so that one could be blown away in the wind. One could create the earth to become water or a tunnel so that one could dive into it. One could make oneself invisible. One could create anything. Such creative power is called *Iddhividha nāna* which is an *abhinnāna* in accord with the *fourth jhāna*.

Cetopariya nāna

Cetopariya nāna is also in accord with the *fourth jhāna*, and one who possesses this *nāna* can read the thoughts of others and know what has happened in the past week and also the thoughts that will crop up in the forthcoming seven days. Current thoughts are an open book to him. It is

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rather difficult to live with such a person. Living with such a person is in a way a check on the misdeeds one is apt to make. Here is the story of Mātika Mātā, an old woman who had come to possess this nāna.

Mātika Mātā, the woman devotee who attained abhinnāna

When the Buddha was residing at Jetavana monastery in Sāvattthi, sixty monks came to take meditation instructions from Him, and looked for a suitable place to settle down for meditation practice. They came to a village by the name of Mātika where Mātika Mātā, the mother of the village headman requested them to reside in the village for the Lent. Monasteries were built for them, and the sixty monks settled down.

The monks assembled and gave advice to one another. "We should not be careless and negligent," they said, "for the eight great *niraya* (hell) are like an open house. We have received from the Buddha instructions for meditational practice, and we must follow them. We should not reside together, even two by two. We should reside alone and separately." So they lived, each alone, and commenced their meditational practice.

One day Mātika Mātā had butter, oil and molasses brought to the monasteries and she herself came with her retinue in the evening. She found none of the monks. Then those who knew said that the monks would come to the meeting place when a signal was given, and the monks came out severally from their separate places of meditation, thinking that one of them had fallen sick and that they were asked to assemble to help him.

Mātika Mātā misunderstood the monks, and asked, "Have you all quarrelled?" The monks said, "No", and when asked why they did not come all together as they usually did when they came to her residence for alms-food, they said that they were practising *samaṇa dhamma* and so they were living separately. They said practising the *samaṇa dhamma* in separate places facilitated attainment of *samādhi* and *ñāṇa*.

Mātika Mātā had never heard of *samaṇa dhamma* and asked the monks what it was. The monks explained that the anatomical parts of the body had to be contemplated upon and their decay and deterioration noted. The old woman asked whether this *dhamma* was specially for the monks and whether it could not be practised by lay people. The monks said that this could

be practised by any person. Then Mātikā Mātā requested the monks to give her instructions for the meditational practice. The instructions were given. Of course, it did not take more than an hour or two to give them. Now, some people say that meditational practice can be undertaken only after one has been through a course of *Abhidhammā*. That is, in fact, one way of discouraging people to take up the practice.

Mātika Mātā came home and began the practice. It is not known how many days she took to attain *anāgāmi magga* and *phala* but she did attain them before the monks did. Once she attained the *anāgāmi magga*, she came to possess the four *paṭisambhidā nāṇa*, and thus attained the *abhinnaṇa* just referred to. She made an observation and found out that the monks had not attained any *jhāna* or even *vipassanā ñāṇa*, Owing to lack of sufficient nutrition. So she had nutritious food sent to the monks who having been properly fed, applied themselves more vigorously to the meditational practice and attained *Arahatship* during the Lent. From this we should note that food is an important factor in the meditational practice.

When the Lent was over, the sixty monks went to pay their respects to the Buddha

at Jetavana monastery. They praised Mātika Mātā before the Buddha, saying that the old woman knew their minds and complied with their wishes, and that as they were strong enough to apply themselves to the meditational practice, they had achieved concentration and attained insight. Hearing this news, a certain monk wanted to go to that village and do meditation there. So he requested meditation-instructions from the Buddha and went to that village monastery.

When he reached the monastery, he thought to himself, "This old woman is said to know others' thoughts. I am tired today from the journey, and cannot sweep the monastery. It would be better if the old woman sent someone to sweep the monastery." Mātika Mātā knew of the monk's thought and sent a man to sweep the monastery. Then the monk was thirsty and wished some syrup sent to him. The syrup was accordingly sent to him. On the following morning he wished to have meat salad and soft porridge sent to him, and his wishes were complied with.

The monk then wanted to see the old woman, and the old woman knew his wishes and went to see him at the monastery, bringing with her alms-food. After partaking of the food the monk asked the old woman

whether she was Mātika Mātā. “Yes, Reverend son,” the old woman replied. When she asked him why he enquired about her, the monk said that he did so because he had found that she knew every wish of his. The old woman said that there were many among the monks who possessed such power. The monk said that he wanted to know whether she knew others’ thoughts. Mātika Mātā replied that those who possessed such power behaved in that manner. Her reply was an indirect admission. This is the case with every *Ariyā*. The *Ariyās* have no pride, and they do not want to reveal their real capabilities. When confronted with a direct question, they usually give an indirect reply.

When the monk came to know that the old woman was really in possession of the power to read others’ thoughts, he felt rather uneasy to be residing in the monastery built on her charity. He thought to himself that being a *puthujjana*, he might entertain some evil thoughts and wishes, and with this woman knowing his thoughts and wishes, he would be caught in the act and be reprimanded and put to shame. So he said that he was leaving the monastery, and left forthwith.

The old woman asked him where he was going and the monk said that he was going

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back to his Teacher, the Buddha. The old woman requested him to stay on at the monastery, but the monk could not be persuaded. He was really afraid of her.

When the Buddha asked him why he had turned back, he said that he was afraid to reside in that monastery because Mātika Mātā knew every single thought of his, and would one day catch him red-handed when as a *puthujjana* he entertained some unwholesome thoughts. The Buddha pondered upon a suitable place for the monk and found out that the monastery was most suitable to such a monk who was in that habit of entertaining so many thoughts and wishes. With the old woman unwittingly acting as a curb on his random thoughts, this monk would feel constrained to achieve concentration. Incidentally, some of the yogis do need a meditation-instructor who knows their thoughts. When they are asked to make a note of the actions of the mind and the body and not give themselves up to contemplation, they cannot help entertaining stray thoughts and wishes. Some of them waste their time by having chit-chat with one another. When the meditation-instructor suspecting them makes enquiries, hints of their doings come up to light. If a thorough probe could be made, they would not dare

to entertain stray thoughts and wishes. For this monk the place where the old woman was present to watch his thoughts seemed most suitable. So the Buddha asked him to go back to the monastery which he fled. He told the monk to control only his mind, and said if he could make a note of the actions of his mind there was nothing to be afraid of.

The Buddha said the mind which is hard to control, the mind which is quick in flight and touches on all the feelings, if that mind could be tamed and disciplined, well done. The tamed and disciplined mind conveys happiness.

The mind is uncontrollable. If asked not to think about some things, the mind does flit about on these very things. It cannot be beaten and punished. It is really uncontrollable. The mind is quick, very quick. At the beginning of the meditational practice, the noting of the flitting mind is a hard task. This flitting mind touches on various thoughts and wishes. Unlike physical matter, the mind cannot be barred or impounded. Though the body is in the meditation cell the mind goes out and about wherever it wants to roam. It is good to discipline the mind, for a disciplined mind could bring happiness.

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People want to be happy. There is no one who wants to be unhappy. The best way to make oneself happy is to tame the wild and uncontrollable mind and discipline it. The method of disciplining the mind is the attitude of *yoniso manasikāra* (an attitude of “whatever will be, will be”). Happiness will come as much as the mind is disciplined.

At least if one can hold *saraṇaguṇam* (devotion to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha)¹ and thus discipline one's mind, one would find bliss in human and celestial existences. Otherwise, one would not possibly obtain such rewards, and would be wallowing in misery in the nether planes of existences.

The mind would be more disciplined and tamer if one could successfully observe one or two of the five precepts in addition to devotion to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Of course, if all the five precepts could be observed properly it would be much better. Added to that, if one could do meritorious deeds of *dāna* (charity), *sīla* (precept) and *bhāvanā* (meditation), it would be far better. *Bhāvanā* could do much better. Of two kinds of *bhāvanā*, bliss could be obtained in the regions of *rupa* and *arupa* through practice of *samatha bhāvanā* while

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vipassanā bhāvanā could elevate one to the attainment of the *bliss of nibbāna*.

For beginners it would not be so easy to make a note of the rapidly changing phenomena. They will have to persist in the noting until the happening and disappearing process is clearly seen. The mind is difficult to discipline and, as you all know, it flits about and is hard to catch and bridle. To describe the waywardness of the mind, I would put it as follows:

“The mind is uncontrollable, fleeting, touching on whatever it wants to. If this riotous mind could be caught by watching and noting its action, and thus disciplined, it would be tame and civil, and would give of happiness.”

The unbridled mind flits from one thought to another at random. Stray and idle thoughts occur to people who do not care to make a note of the action of the mind which gives imagination full play. Thus, irrelevant thoughts and wishes are spawned and some of these thoughts and wishes sometimes drive those who entertain them to acts of indiscretion and violence. Such criminal actions make for unlimited unhappiness. These thoughts and wishes could send one down to hell or other nether planes of existence.

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There is a saying in Pāli: “*cittena niyate loko*”, meaning “the mind carries the world.” In other words. the mind carries one to various planes of existence, it can take one to the regions of happiness if it is good, and it can take one to the regions of unhappiness if it is evil. So it is our duty to discipline the mind so that it takes us to higher planes.

The meditational practice starting with the noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen is for catching hold of the fleeting mind and keeping it from alighting on unwholesome desires. If such efforts for control of the mind are made persistently by repeated noting of its actions, it will become docile. When a yogi reaches the stage of *sankhārupekkha ñāṇa* the mind will become considerably tame and civil. Such a tame and civil mind could eventually carry one to the ultimate stage of insight, when one will attain *Arahatta magga* and *phala*.

Now to return to the noble old woman, Mātika Mātā. She saw in her concentration the return of the monk, and prepared proper food which she offered him when he arrived. The monk resumed his meditation and in a few days became an *Arahat*. What

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I want to say is that not only the Buddha but such persons as Mātika Mātā could possess *cetopariya ñāna*, the ability to read others' thoughts. Another point I want to make is that one could attain the highest stage of insight if one could only get rid of undesirable and unwholesome thoughts.

No mischief near a mind-reader

It is true that one who is near a person who can read one's mind dare not entertain any unwholesome thought. In 1293, Burmese Era, when I was in my eighth year as a monk, I went to live in a cemetery. As that time I had not done any meditation work. I was then in search of a suitable meditation-teacher and arrived at the monastery of Venerable U On Gaing which was at the place called Shweyaungpya Hill near Donwun railroad depot in Thaton District. This Venerable monk always practised austerity and did his meditation work at a cemetery. He passed his nights there. He went from one cemetery to another near the villages where he went for his alms-food.

When I arrived at the Venerable monk's monastery I went along with his disciples who were following him to a cemetery.

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Before long, the venerable monk was approached by some villagers with a request that he go and keep watch on the grave of a freshly buried corpse. The corpse was that of a fifteen-year old suicide. The villagers made this request apparently to have the venerable monk watch the grave and guard it against possible exhumation by black magicians who were usually out to cut off the wrists of the corpses of suicides to use them in their black magic.

The venerable monk and his disciples including myself accepted the offer and shifted to the cemetery containing the grave of that suicide girl. We got to the cemetery just before sunset. We were all eight. Mats were spread around the grave, pots of drinking water were also set at suitable places. When we took our seats, I chose a seat nearest the corpse of the suicide girl. I was only about two cubits away from it. Other monks were experienced, but I was not. It was the first time I had been at a cemetery. I felt rather uneasy. I couldn't possibly change places with any other because I was the most senior among the disciples. Others recited *Mettā sutta* and lay down to sleep. I didn't lie down; I didn't want to. So I sat tight. I remembered the words in *Visuddhi Magga*

to the effect that ogres usually haunted the grave and sat near the corpse, so I sat just tight. I did so for four nights.

While I was sitting like that I had to control my thoughts because if the cemetery guardian angels and the ogres were near the corpse, they would probably know my thoughts and frighten me. So my thoughts were then within limits. From my experience I surmise that the monk near Mātika Mātā was obliged to control his mind and keep it pure, so he attained *Arahatship* so quickly.

Dibbasota nāna

This is the last of the remaining five *nāna*. Just as *dibbacakkhu* is the power to see all objects irrespective of size or distance, *dibbasota* is the power to hear all sounds irrespective of volume or distance. Not only the sound from the human abode but also the sound from either the abode of *devas* or the abode of *Brāhmās* can be heard by one in possession of *dibbasota nāna*. The sounds from other universes can also be heard.

So Sātāgiri told his friend, Hemavata, that the Buddha was in full possession of the three vijjā as well as the eight vijjā, the supreme mental abilities. “Besides,”

said Sātāgiri, “Our Teacher, the Buddha, possess *carana*, pure and excellent basic conduct.”

Fifteen Carana

Sātāgiri replied, when Hemavata asked, that the Buddha was in full-possession of the fifteen categories of basic conduct. These are as follows:

(1) *Pātimokkha samvara sila*: The meaning of this term is that the one who keeps this *sila* (precept) will be duly favoured by this *sila* itself. This *sila* protects the one who keeps it from all the disasters emerging from the present existence and those from the future existences in the course of *samsāra*. For the lay people the five precepts are in fact *pātimokkha samvara sila*, and for the monks the 227 precepts, or nine thousand crores of precepts in detail, are *pātimokkha samvara sila*. If one keeps these precepts, one will be free from slander or contempt and also from punishment by royal decree. In terms of *samsāra*, he will be free from the possibility of falling into hell and the four nether regions of misery. So this protecting *sila* is called *pātimokkha samvara sila*.

(2) *Indriya samvara sila*: This *sila* is guarding oneself as one sees, hears, smells,

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eats against jealousy, greed, lust, ill-will, dejection and anger. This *sila* can be observed only when one is doing one kind of meditation or another. Otherwise, it can be observed with only partial success.

(3) *Bhojane mattaññutā*: This is care taken by one when one partakes of food, or receives alms, or uses things of daily use. When one takes food, one must take care as the Buddha had instructed thus: "When one has good food, one delights in it; when, however, one has bad food, one is disappointed and unhappy. So one must get rid of all reactions, whether good or bad."

One takes one's meal not to be delighted, not to revel, in the meal, not to become plump and pretty. One takes meal merely to sustain oneself, to be saved from hunger, for hunger would bring about suffering and ill-health, and one has to be healthy to be able to do what the Buddha has enjoined upon people, that is, to faithfully observe the precepts. In the same way, one wears the robes to keep out cold and heat, to protect oneself from attacks of mosquitoes, flies, snakes and scorpions. So in eating or wearing the robes, one must care to know why these are being used. That is called *bhojane mattaññutā*.

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(4) *Jagariyānuyoga*: *jagariya* means “to be alert” and *anuyoga* means “to make an effort”. It refers to light and less sleep and to keep one’s mind and body alert. Of course, that is for the purpose of doing meditation. If one is up and about doing other things, the purpose will not be achieved. Once a monk told me that when he was awake his mind used to entertain so many unwholesome thoughts that he was obliged to sleep as long as possible. What he said makes sense. If one harbours ill-thoughts while awake, one will be acquiring demerit. So it sounds rather reasonable to say that if one is asleep one has less chance of harbouring ill-thoughts. But what this rule of conduct means to bring home is that one must be active in meditation work. The Buddha’s preaching says that by pacing to and fro, by sitting all through the day, one could be free from the thoughts that preclude good deeds, and thus one’s mind would be kept pure.

The instruction is that one should make one’s mind pure and free of greed, lust and other undesirable desires by taking physical exercise of walking or sitting. Of course, between walking and sitting is standing, and that physical action should be included. Only the remaining of the four physical

postures, that is, lying down is not prescribed. One should keep one's body alert by walking, sitting and sometimes standing throughout the day till 10 p.m. before midnight. Then for four hours one may lie down to sleep in order to maintain one's health. But while one is still lying before one falls asleep, one should continue with the meditation. Then one should wake up at two in the morning and resume the meditation. Of the six parts of one day, one should sleep only one part and keep awake for the remaining five and be engaged in the meditation. That is what is called *jagariyanuyoga*.

(5-8): These are the four *rupa jhāna*. It is possible to include *arupa jhāna* as the fourth *jhāna*.

(9-10) There is no need to dilate on *saddhā* and *virīya*. These two are included in the ten *caraṇa*.

Then there are *sati* (awareness); *paññā* (intellect); *hiri* (shame for misdeeds) *ottappa* (fear of misdeeds); and *bahusaccā* (being well-informed).

Being well-informed means in this context that one should have heard and made note of the Buddha's preaching. Making note of the preaching and thus getting informa-

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tion of the *dhamma* is “hearing”, or *āgama suta*. Discerning and realising the truth after doing actual practice of meditation is “seeing”, or *adhigama suta*. These two added become *bahusacca*. How much of general knowledge should one have? For an ordinary devotee, being informed of one *gātha*, or verse, is sufficient. For those who will preach to others many of the Buddha’s teachings should have been learnt. Then the question arises: “How was the Buddha who had had no opportunity of learning from others full of hearing and seeing?”

The answer is: the Buddha was fully equipped with “seeing”; He knew everything there was to know, and had no need to learn from others. It is like a person who does not have to learn from others about the things that are in his house because he knows everything about them. As the Buddha knew all the *dhamma* without exception, His knowledge was full and sacred.

Sātāgiri declared emphatically that his teacher, the Buddha was in full possession of the three *vijjā*, eight *vijjā* and fifteen *carana*.

As I have said earlier, the young lady named Kāli who was with child heard the dialogue between the two *devas*. As the

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voices floated down from the sky, she knew that they must be the voices of *devas* and listened attentively. Kāli was endowed with *pārami* (special endowment), so she heard the angels although an ordinary human would not be able to hear them. She could also understand their dialogue, so she became devoted to the Buddha.

One with vijjā caraṇa is most sacred

There was in India a caste system which divided people into different classes, *Brahmaṇa* and *Khattiya* classes were regarded as noble and superior to *Vessa* and *Sudda* who were the commoners. Then there were also clans. *Kosiya* and *Bhāradvāja* clans were inferior to *Gotama* and *Moggalāna* clans. Then you all know about the avoidance of contact with beggars, scavengers, etc., who are called “untouchables”. These untouchables had to live in a village of their own outside the city. When they walked about in the city they had to tap the ground with a stick so that the sacred ones could avoid physical contact with them. In the story of *Mātanga*, the rich man’s daughter *Diṭṭhamangalikā* happened to have seen the beggar *Mātanga* and said that it was inauspicious. So the rich man’s servants beat *Mātanga*. This distinction of caste was pronounced

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in those days, and it still remains in today's India.

Here is a hearsay evidence. The late Veluvun Sayadaw of Bahan Township in Rangoon city saw it himself. During the British rule when he went to India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) on a pilgrimage, he was received as a house guest by an Indian rich man. The rich man told the venerable monk, "You can put up at my house but as we cannot occupy the place where you have stayed, we will make a special place for you. We will also make a special bathroom because we cannot use the same one you have used."

That was a special treatment given only to those from Burma. In their country a person of lower caste cannot enter the temple visited by people of higher castes. According to their belief, one born into a family of a lower caste cannot improve his social position, and one born of a high caste family remains superior and "noble" whatever mischief he may have made. Such beliefs are in their scriptures as they are in Buddhist books as well.

There is a caste distinction in Ceylon too, but it is not so severe. In that country a monk born of a high caste family does not

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pay respects to the monk born of a low caste family and the monk of the low caste appears to be rather diffident toward high caste laymen. There is, however, no such distinction in Burma.

Among laity, Khattiya caste, or the ruler caste, is said to be of the highest status. The members of this caste would not marry outside their caste and they said that their caste was "pure". The members of this caste were brave and loyal to their caste and their country, too. They were the holders of power. So in the caste system the Khattiyas were the noblest, and as such, they were in possession of the attributes of *vijjā carana*, for only those who possess such attributes are the noblest among men and gods.

From temporal point of view, the person of Khattiya caste is the noblest, and from the spiritual point of view, the person who has the attributes of *vijjā-carana* is the noblest. Such declaration was made of the Buddha by Sahampati Brāhmā, and the Buddha replied in support of it. The person of high caste was the noblest only as long as he lived, but when he died he had nothing to fall back upon. But the person who had the attribute of *vijjā carana*, remained noble for all times; the more attribute he had, the nobler he became.

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People would have a high esteem for any person who had the ability to fly in the air and dive into the ground; or one who had the ability to read others' minds, or who could tell the next existence of the dead. They would have high regard for one possessed with the "hearing and seeing" power. Well, such power can be had by some yogis whose concentration powers are at their keenest.

By the way, there is a woman living on an island in Pakokku district, who did meditation work in accordance with our instructions and is said to have gained the "hearing and seeing" powers. one day, her younger sister lost her jewellery, so she asked her elder sister where to locate it. The woman entered into meditation and saw in her mind's eye that the maidservant of the house stole the jewellery and stowed it away on the loft in the kitchen in her house. The younger sister took a policeman to the maidservant's house and searched, and the stolen property was found at the place indicated. It is said that the policeman was surprised.

Well, this is a present day instance of such powers, and similar instances are none too few. If only the powers of *abhiññā* could be displayed, people would have the highest esteem.

Among these *ñāṇas* the most important are *vipassanā ñāṇa* and *asavekkhaya nāna*. If one has gained *vipassanā nāna*, one becomes *cula sotāpan*, and if one has gained *asavekkhaya nāna* as well, one becomes a full *sotāpan* and will be free from the danger of falling into hell and the four nether regions. For seven future existences he would be assured of freedom from misery and during that tenure of these seven he would surely attain *Arahatship* and enter the state of *Nibbāna*. If one has gained *nānas* of higher degree, one will surely attain a much higher status than that of a *sotāpan*.

Those who have attained high status in the planes of existence, those of the human, celestial and *Brahmā* worlds, are all in possession of the attribute of *carana* and *sila*. Those who are attending religious sermons such as the one you all are now attending, have the attributes of *carana* in the same way as the *Ariyas* who have achieved *magga* and *phala* of different grades. If, however, one is in possession of both the attributes of *vijjā* and *carana*, one becomes nobler.

Yogis here have these attribute, too

The yogis who have now been doing meditation work have, in the first instance, the attribute of *vipassanā ñāṇa*. And of

course, the one who has attained *Ariya magga phala* has gained *asavekkhaya ñāna*. From among the five carana, the practising yogi is in possession of *sila*, has control of his physical and mental actions, and is alert. So the yogis at this meditation center could gain the attributes of *vijjā* and *carana* and become noble in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha. This is really gratifying.

As for the Buddha, all the attributes of *vijjā* and *carana* were fully possessed by Him. The Buddha's attribute of *vijjā carana sampanno* is now fully explained.

The story of Suppabuddha

In this reference, a story will be told of a poor man of long ago, named Suppabuddha. During the time of the Buddha there lived a man called Suppabuddha. Abandoned by his parents when he was a mere child, Suppabuddha became a beggar. He was stricken with leprosy. Homeless, he had to sleep on the roadside. As his disease gave him pain during the night he groaned and thus disturbed others' sleep. He was therefore called Suppabuddha, "the Waker of sleepers"

One day, on his rounds of begging, Suppabuddha saw a large gathering of people. Thinking that he would get much

charity from the crowd, he went near the people and found that it was a congregation to hear the Buddha's sermon. He wanted to hear the sermon So he meekly sat at the edge of the gathering. The Buddha saw with His *dibbacakkhu ñāṇā* that Suppabuddha would see the light of Dhamma on that day. The Buddha went on with His sermon on *dāna* and *sīla*. The Buddha exhorted the audience to refrain from killing, stealing, etc., Suppabuddha was determined to observe the precepts. So, gradually he gained *sīla*. When the Buddha discoursed on the Four Noble Truths, Suppabuddha meditated upon them, and thus became a *sotāpan*.

After the meeting had ended, Suppabuddha went away as the crowd dispersed. Then a little later, he came back to the Buddha. The King of the celestial beings wanted to test Suppabuddha's integrity. The King said, "Hey, Suppabuddha. You are one of the poorest men and also stricken with leprosy. If you obey me, I will give you much wealth and cure you of your disease."

Suppabuddha said, "Who are you? What are your instructions?" The King of *devas* said, "I am the King of *devas*. Gotama who has been giving sermons is not a true

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Buddha. His disciples are not true bhikkhus. You must say: 'I don't take refuge in the Buddha; I don't take refuge in the Dhamma; I don't take refuge in the Sangha'."

Suppabuddha said, "You are too rude for a King of *devas*. You shouldn't be talking with me. You said that I am very poor and have none to take refuge in. Why did you say that? I am now a true son of the Buddha. I am not poor. I am now wealthy and noble because I am now in full possession of the seven kinds of property of the good and noble, namely, *saddhā*, *sila*, *hiri*, *ottappa*, *suta*, *cāga*, *paññā*, as enumerated by the Buddha. You are not fit to hold conversation with me." And he sent the King of *devas* away.

Suppabuddha went to see the Buddha and reported to Him his findings of the Dhamma. It is the same with the present day yogi who is eager to report to his or her meditation-instructor what he or she experienced during the meditation session. After Suppabuddha had made his report to the Buddha, he came away. As fate ordained, Suppabuddha was gored to death by a cow on his return from the Buddha's monastery. He became a *deva* in the celestial abode of *Tavatimsa* where he had superior powers

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over the *devas* who had reached the celestial abode for merits done outside the Buddha's *sāsanā* (the scope of teachings).

These *devas* were dissatisfied. They said that although this Suppabuddha was among the lowliest in his life as a human being, he was holding a position higher than theirs. The King of *devas* had to explain to them why Suppabuddha had attained a higher position. He said that in the human existence Suppabuddha had performed the seven duties of the good and noble, and so in this existence of deva he was endowed with the benefits of his previous meritorious deeds.

This story illustrates the point that a spiritually highly placed person stands higher than others even though he may occupy a lowly position in secular society. Suppabuddha had performed the seven duties only for a few hours before his death, but he was in possession of the attributes of *viññā caraṇa*. He had been a leper because in one of his previous existences he called a *pacceka Buddha* a leper. He was gored by a cow because in one of his previous existences he robbed and killed a prostitute. The Buddha, in reference to his fate, warned the audience to avoid doing bad deeds just as one has to avoid impediments and pot-

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holes while walking. Our yogis should learn the moral of this story and avoid bad deeds.

Now Hemavata asked, “Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of lust and desires? Is He also free of a future existence?”

And Sātāgiri replied: “Our teacher, the Buddha, is free of lust and desires. For Him there is no future existence.”

This is just a reiteration of the question and the answer. The points are: the riddance of lust and desires and cessation of the cycle of existences. Now, if one is not cleaned of lust and desires, one will have a new existence and suffer from birth, old age, disease, and other kinds of misery, although one may have the attribute of *vijjā caraṇa*. Only when there is no more existence will one be rid of all the miseries. These two points are of utmost importance.

About Lady Kali

Turning back to Kāli, we find that this young pregnant woman overheard the two angels and was overjoyed to hear about the attributes of the Buddha. As she was filled with joy, she did meditation forthwith and soon reached the stage of *sotāpanna magga* and *phala*, thus becoming a *sotāpan*, In due

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course, she gave birth to a child who later became Soṇakuttikanna thera. Kāli was the first woman to have become a *sotāpan*. She achieved that distinction on overhearing the attributes of the Buddha and thus having a firm faith in Him. Later, she was to receive from the Buddha the highest honour of *etadagga*.

Hemavata, too, became confident of the attributes of the Buddha and was eager in the adoration of the Buddha. He said to his friend, Sātāgiri, "The mind of the Buddha is fully pure. His physical and mental behaviour is also free of faults; the Buddha has all the attributes of *vijjā carana*. I adore Him."

Let us close today's discourse. We will say more about the adoration at our next session. May the audience be able to work to deserve the attributes of *vijjā carana* and continue their good work till they attain the state of *nibbāna*.

Part V

Hemavata was immensely gratified with Sātāgiri's reply regarding the Buddha's possession of the attributes of *viññā* and *caraṇa*. So he said, "Friend Sātāgiri, the Buddha whom you have praised is truly of a pure mind; He is clean of any act of taking what the owner does not give; He is clean of lies and malicious speech. The Buddha has all the attributes of *viññā* and *caraṇa*. You, my friend, have praised the Buddha truly."

This is congratulating Sātāgiri on his praises of the Buddha. Hemavata said, "Sādhū: Sādhū: Sādhū" (Well done! Well done! Well done!)

In reply, Sātāgiri congratulated Hemavata on his acceptance of his praises of the Buddha in good faith. Then he asked Hemavata to come with him to the Buddha to worship Him. This invitation Hemavata accepted. He said, "Friend Sātāgiri, let us go to worship the Buddha who has smooth

calves like those of a forest goat, who is thin of body, who has courage and industry, who is free of desires and obsessions, who partakes of food sparingly, who usually enters into the state of *jhāna* in the forest such as Uruvela forest; the Buddha who is of the Gotama clan." Then he turned to the audience of celestial beings and asked them to follow him and his friend, Sātāgiri.

When he said that the Buddha had smooth calves like those of the forest goat, Hemavata meant that the calves of the legs of the Buddha were smooth, without any lumps. When he said that the Buddha was thin, he meant to refer to the Buddha's six years of āusterity which He abandoned only over two months ago. During the period of austerity the Bodhisatta, then of course not yet the Buddha, was emaciated. So He could not have recovered his former normal weight after two months or so. Usually, according to the scriptures, of all the Buddhas, the Buddha Gotama and his predecessors, were never hefty.

The reference of the Buddha's partaking of food sparingly, according to the scriptures, is to the habit of the Buddha to take just one bowlful of meal only once for the day. He took a little more when He had to make a journey during the day,

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Then turning to the celestial beings who were following him, Hemavata said: "Devas, let up approach the Buddha who, like a lion, is hard to approach, who rises and flourishes alone, for He does not have the company of *kilesā* (defilements), who is free of evil deeds, who is not enmeshed in lust and desires. Let us submit to Him queries with a view to obtaining answers which will unravel Death's trap."

When they reached the presence of the Buddha, Hemavata sought permission to submit questions. He said "Oh Lord, the Enlightened One, who can and does preach the Four Noble Truths both synthetically and analytically, who knows all the Dhamma fully as no one else does, who overcomes all dangers, may we submit a few questions?"

This is the usual approach in polite society. In those days among the higherups in society, such as kings, lords, wise men, the one who wished to make an enquiry usually prefaced his question with a request for permission. Only the ill-educated shot the questions without any ceremony. Hemavata had been a well-educated monk, learned of the scriptutes, during his existence before he became a *deva*. So he knew manners.

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Hemavata's Question No. I

When the Buddha gave him the permission, Hemavata put the first question thus:

“Oh, Lord, how does a *sattavā* (a being) arise? What does *loka*, which constitutes *sattavā*, have as company? To which is it attached? What is involved in the misery suffered by *sattavās* who constitute *loka*?”

The four points in this question do carry deep significance. An ordinary *deva* could not have put such a question. Hemavata could because he had been a well-educated and learned monk during the time of Buddha Kassapa.

Buddha's Answer (I)

The Buddha replied thus:

“Hemavata, *sattavā* or *loka* arises when there are six together. *Loka* which is composed of *sattavās* has the six in company. To the six is it attached. The six are involved in the misery suffered by a *sattavā* who constitutes *loka*.

(a) Where the six are, there *loka* is.

The six referred to by the Buddha are the *āyatana*s (sense-bases). The six are the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. They are called the inner *āyatana*s. If there are these six, a *sattavā* comes into

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being. And the *sattavā* is otherwise called *loka*. All living beings must have these six sense-bases. Statues and images have figures of these sense-bases but as they are not living ones, they do not have any of these senses.

If there are four or five sense-bases, there may be a being. One who is defective of the eye has other sense-bases, so, too, one defective of the ear or the nose. I once came across a monk whose nose was defective and could not have any sense of smell. If there are the tongue, the body and the mind, there can be a *sattavā*. Some marine animals appear to be logs or weeds but they are living beings. So there can be a *sattavā* if there are the tongue, the body and the mind. In the *rūpa* plane of existence, if there are no nose or tongue or body, yet there are beings with the eye, the ear and the mind only. In *arūpa* plane, there is only the mind in a being. All the six sense-bases are absent in *asaññassa* plane of existence. It is supposed that in this answer the Buddha meant to exclude this plane. So we can conclude that when there is only the mind there can be a being. Of course, when there are all the six in the being there is nothing more to say. The existence of one, three, four or five sense-bases is included in

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the maximum of the six to which the Buddha referred in His answer.

Now about the six inner *āyatanas*? In the human world an incipient mind appears in the womb of the mother at the same time as the formation of the fetus. So the mind and the body appear together, and a *sattavā* comes into beings. It is only after the birth that the eye, the material sense-base and the seeing, the mental sense-base appear simultaneously. So do the ear and the hearing; the nose and the smelling; the tongue and the taste; the body and the sense of touch. As for the mind, the thought comes with it. Then all these sense-bases together make up the *sattavā*.

If there is no eye and so cannot see, no ear and so cannot hear, no sense of smell, no sense of touch, nor sense of feeling, then it is no being in the human world. Look at a corpse. A little after death, a corpse is just like a living human being. However, the difference is that there is no sense-base of any kind in it. So a corpse is not a being. If one cuts up a corpse, one does not commit an act of killing. But if one treats the corpse of a person of noble character disrespectfully, then one commits a sin. Some people have an attachment still

for a corpse which has of course none of the sense-bases, and so cannot be called a being.

Some people are under the impression that death means the exit of some living thing from a body, but it is not so. If the sense-bases continue their operations, then one is considered to be alive. At the last moment these sense-bases cease to operate, then death occurs. Once they cease, and if the person concerned is not free of *kilesā* (defilements), a new mental phenomenon pitches itself on a certain material base.

The mind at the last moment of the cessation of the life of a being is called *cuti citta* (the dying mind), and the new mental phenomenon on a new material base is called *patisande citta*. This mental phenomenon is *manāyatana* (sense-base of the mind). Simultaneously, the material base has in it *kayāyatana* (sense-base of the body). So since the inception of a being there appear two or three or four or five or all six sense-bases. With the appearance of these sense-bases a new being appears. So said the Buddha, "Where there are the six, there *loka* is". However, it is not that a new being springs up, nor is the old being transferred to a new plane of existence. In fact, new sense-bases appear

because of the previous *kamma*. Without the six *āyatana* there can be no being. Like a flowing river in which the water moves on with no gap though the old flow is followed immediately by a new flow, the *āyatana* (sense-bases) move on without a break or a gap. This is considered by one with no meditational insight as stable and permanent.

To a yogi who has been constantly making a note of the successive happening and disappearing of the six *āyatana*, the incessant change has been seen and the impermanence is thereby realised. He or she comes to know for himself or herself that human existence is a series of incessant happenings and disappearances and that there is nothing permanent in that existence.

(b) Only the six are in company

The Buddha had said that *loka* or *sattavā* is constantly in the company of the six. The six inner *āyatana*, namely, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind, are constantly in close association with the six outer *āyatana*, namely, the sight, the sound, the smell, the taste, the touch and the thought. In other words the six sense-bases are closely related to the

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six sense-objects. The latter may be living or inanimate.

The eye and the sense of seeing associated with the sight

We differentiate between men and women by appearances. In effect, the eye and the sense of seeing associate themselves with the sight or appearance. Once seen, the mental sense-base takes an impression of the sight. Though the sight itself has disappeared and is no longer there, the impression on the mental sense-base remains. This makes the association of human beings, and such association or relationship is, in fact, the eye, or *cakkhāyatana*, the sense of seeing, or *manāyatana* and the sight or the appearance, or *rūpāyatana* all blended. There is really no such thing as man or woman or thing. This is according to the *paramattha* (realistic) point of view. Think deeply and carefully, and you will come to know that, after all, this is an interplay of *āyatana* or sense-bases. To a yogi who is a meditational practitioner, with well-developed concentration, such realisation is just normal; there is nothing extraordinary about it. He or she will make a note of appearance and immediate disappearance of the senses. So said the Buddha: "Where there are the six,

there is *loka*, and *loka* is closely associated with the six."

**The ear and the sense of hearing
associated with the sound**

Differentiation between men and women is made by hearing the male voice and the female voice. The ear, hearing and the sound are associated with one another and the mind retains the memory of the sound, whether it is the voice of a man or of a woman, whether it is pleasing or repugnant to the ear. There is no owner of the voice, according to the *paramattha* point of view; there is only an association of the ear, the mind and the sound. To a yogi of meditational experience it is obvious.

The nose, the sense of smell and the smell

The nose and the sense of smell associate themselves with all kinds of smell, man's smell, woman's smell, the smell of a flower, etc. The mind registers the smell. In this matter, it is not only the smell itself but the possessor of the smell, whether it is a woman or a man, that makes an impression on the mind. For instance, if you kiss your son, there is no kisser or the kissed; there is the nose, the sense of smell and the smell all blended. In other words, there is the nose, the sense of smell or the mind,

and the smell all associated with one another.

The tongue, the sense of taste and the taste

Eating food and feeling the sense of taste make the mind take an impression of the taste. The eater will be saying this food is tasty, that food is tasty; it is sweet, or creamy or something as the mind registers the taste. However, the eater, the food and the taste and the preparer of the food are really not there. Once the food is gulped down, the taste disappears. There is no permanence.

The body, the sense of touch and the touch

The touch or the physical contact is the composition of the three elements, *pathavī*, *tejo* and *vāyo*. The roughness or the smoothness is *pathavī*, the warmth or the cool is *tejo*, the stiffness, or the push or the movement is *vāyo*. The tactile contact with other bodies or things such as clothes, bed, etc, is transitory. The meditational practitioner has to make note of these touches and contacts.

That is why the Buddha exhorted His disciples to note “going while going”. This was, in effect, an instruction to discern the

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true nature of *vāyo*, the motor-action. In the same way, they were asked to make a note of every physical action such as standing, sitting, lying, sleeping. Why this instruction? The reason is that if one did not note the bodily actions, one would not know of the physical actions and that ignorance spawns *kilesā* which would make for either good or bad actions. After having noted the bodily actions, one should be mindful of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. If one is deeply mindful of them, as one has accordingly developed *Ariyā magga nāna*, the miseries of *kilesā* and *kāma* will be completely rid of.

Here, I would like to point out that the rising and falling of the abdomen is included in the physical actions. I have, therefore, been instructing my disciples to make a note of the rising and falling of the abdomen when a yogi begins his meditational practice. This instruction is apparently easy to follow. Once the yogi has acquired *samādhi*, he will come to realize the sense of touch in the toughening and softening of the abdomen and thus realise physical and mental *āyatana* in accordance with the Dhamma. The yogi will know clearly that there is no "I", there is just the touch and the sense of touch.

Mind associates with Ideas

The mind which differentiates man and woman, associates itself with thoughts or ideas. In other words, *manāyatana* associates itself with *dhammāyatana*. People often say, "I am paying attention to somebody," "I am thinking of someone," "I have dreamt of someone," etc. In fact, nobody meets anybody else. Such thoughts do occur incessantly during all waking hours. They run in series. Unwholesome thoughts, too, occur often. Everytime a thought occurs, the mind associates itself with it, and many people revel in such thoughts, and would not like the suggestion that they go in for meditational practice.

There are some preachers who instruct their audience to keep their minds free and relaxed instead of concentrating on meditational points because concentration, they say, restricts the mind. This is in contravention of the Buddha's instructions although it assumes an appearance of the Buddha's teachings. If, according to these preachers, the mind is set free it will surely indulge in fond thoughts and revel in sensual pleasures. It would be like the idle thoughts of an opium smoker. Indulgence in such idle thought is the same as indulgence in sensual pleasures. In this *Hemavata* sutta,

the statement that the mind works conjointly with sense-objects or ideas is appropriate. In order to separate the mind from the ideas one must go in for meditational practice to gain concentration. If the concentration power is weak, the mind will go astray associating itself with the sense-objects outside the point of meditation, as the yogis must have found for themselves.

Some pretentious preachers blame meditational practice as causing bodily discomfort. This is really discrediting the Buddha's word. Those who follow their advice would be losing their chance of gaining true insight and would be unwittingly committing a great sin against *Ariyas* and other noble persons.

Tiring oneself is not necessarily attakilamatha

Tiring oneself mentally and physically for non-meditational occupations is an *attakilamatha* practice, but it doesn't relate to meditational practice. The idea that if the body is mortified sensual feelings will not occur is wrong, and the physical mortification in accordance with such idea is an *attakilamatha* practice. But if, while trying to attain meditational insight, one makes physical exertions, one doesn't commit the sin of physical mortification. Even if the

exertions cause death, it isn't a sin of that kind. Consider the case of an opium-addict who refrains from taking opium at the risk of great physical discomfort. Such a person is not committing the sin of *attakilamatha*. Would the Buddha blame a person who risks his life to keep his *sīla* intact?

For instance, refraining from adultery by restraining one's carnal desire in the face of temptations is a great physical discomfort. Would the Buddha blame such a person? So also one who refrains from afternoon meals just to keep one's *sīla* of the eight precepts, would the Buddha blame him? There is an instance of a servant of Anāthapindika, who determinedly abstained from afternoon meals though he was being assailed by a gastric disease, and who eventually died. This is not an *attakilamatha* practice. This servant man became an arboreal guardian-angel after his death. The Buddha praised such determined acts of abstinence to keep *sīla* intact thus: "My disciples do not break their precepts even at the risk of their lives".

The Buddha's admonition

The Buddha admonished His disciples: "Bhikkhūs, attainment of the Dhamma may

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be achieved by diligence and strength even though one is reduced to a skeleton. You shall make an endeavour for such attainment with determination and persistence.” This is an urgent admonition of the Buddha, as contained in *Mahāgosinga sutta*.

“Sāriputtā! The bhikkhū who after his meal sits cross-legged with the determination not to leave this sitting posture before attainment of freedom from defilements, and carries out the practice of meditation is the one who adorns this sal forest of Gosinga.”

Thus said the Buddha in the *Gosinga sutta*.

From these statements one can clear the doubts about the sin of tiring the body especially in reference to the endeavour to achieve meditational insight, and also about the undesirability of sparing one's physical and mental efforts in the meditational practice. You must remember once and for all that making utmost effort in the meditational practice cannot be equated with ill-treating one's body and thus committing the sin of *attakilamatha*. You must avoid the bogus instructors of meditational practice, or you would be misled.

Kāma-sukhallika and attakilamatha differentiated

The practice which fails to control one's mind with mere mindfulness which is in fact the lowest step to attainment of meditational insight and which allows one's mind to wander as it wishes is indeed *kāma-sukhallika nuyoga* (indulgence). The monks should strive to be free from this by at least being mindful at the time of taking meals that food is not for enjoyment of sensual pleasures but for gaining strength to enable one to carry out the meditational practice. Then on the other hand, tiring one's body and mind in one's endeavour to attain meditational insight does not constitute the sin of *attakilamatha nuyoga*. Self-mortification without the object of gaining *sīla* or *samādhi* or *paññā* by remaining naked and heating one's body at the fire or in the sun, or soaking one's body all day in the water is indeed *attakilamatha nuyoga*.

Tiring one's body and mind for keeping the five-fold, eight-fold, ten-fold precepts (*sīla*) or the precepts to be kept by the monks and novices does not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*; It is following the middle path of *sīla magga*. Making utmost physical and mental efforts to attain *samādhi* does

not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*. It is following the middle path of *samādhi magga*. To make an incessant note of the actions of the body and mind, thus tiring the body and the mind, in order to attain *vipassanā paññā* and *magga-phala paññā*, does not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*. It is following the middle path of *Paññā magga*.

Samatha and Vipassanā

Of the three parts of the Middle Way, namely, the *sīla* part, the *samādhi* part and the *paññā* part, the *sīla* part is obvious and does not need any elaboration. The other two must be differentiated. Samatha is concentration upon a certain object, such as inhaling breath and exhaling breath. This is just to keep the mind from its constant flights: it is to keep the mind stable. Making a note of the inhaling breath as it brushes the tip of the nostrils, and also making a note of the exhaling breath as it pushes out of the nostrils this noting is called *ānāpāṇa samatha bāvanā*. As one concentrates upon the inhaling and exhaling breaths, one gradually gains *samādhi*, stability of the mind. In the same way, by other forms of *samatha kammathāna*, such as, contemplation of a corpse, *samādhi* can be gained. This *samādhi*, however, does not involve

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the differentiation of *rūpa* and *nāma* nor does it by itself give a knowledge of the physical and mental actions, as well as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. *Samatha* *bāvanā* is merely for gaining concentration. The Buddha directed His disciples to control the mind by means of *samatha*. *Vipassanā* comes in only when one concentrates on the actions of the six sensual organs of the body and makes a note of their actions. What kind of noting should be made? Noting should be made of the nature and significance of *rupa* and *nāma*, the appearing and disappearing of the actions in succession. At the same time, one has to think deeply of the *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* nature of this flux of actions. By thus seeing keenly the true nature of *rūpa* and *nāma*, one is practising *vipassanā* or meditational practice. Those who do not know properly are under the impression that *vipassanā* is mere making a note of only one thing. They do not know that making a note involves observation of the physical and mental actions which are in constant flux and such observation is to be made in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. So the Buddha said that whatever emanates from the six “doors” of the body should be made a note of and pondered upon. The

Buddha also preached thousands of sermons for control of the mind through *vipassanā*. Through *vipassanā* people will be able to know of the association of the sense-bases with the sense and the sense-objects and such actions and interactions do constitute the world or planes of existence.

No transgression

There must be no transgression from one area to another, for instance, from the area of *paññā* to the area of *sīla*. Some persons do not really know the nature of *āyatana* but they have learnt up from the books or the lectures, and think much of their second-hand knowledge. From their pseudo-knowledge they often draw wrong conclusions. They argue that a gourd is a chemical conglomerate just as is a fowl. So, they say if no sin is committed by cutting the gourd, cutting the fowl is likewise no sin. Syrup, they say, is of the *āpo* element, so is liquor. So it is no sin to drink liquor as it is no sin to drink syrup. If the touch between man and man is no sin, as it is mere *phoṭṭhappa* (sense of touch), then the touch between man and woman is also no sin. The touch is of the same nature, they say, as the touch of a bed-sheet, or a pillow. This kind of foolish argument is the

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same as that forwarded by a monk named Arittha during the time of the Buddha.

Ariṭṭha's false notions

Arittha was asking why laymen enjoying sexual pleasures could attain the state of *sotāpanna* while monks were denied such pleasures; although the monks were allowed to sleep on soft beds why they were not allowed the similar soft touch of the female body, for the feeling of touch was identical. He was saying that it was no sin to enjoy the touch of the female body. Other wise and saintly monks reasoned with him and persuaded him to the right view but he was saying that it was what the Buddha had taught, or that it was in accord with the Buddha's teachings. So he was taken to the presence of the Buddha. When the Buddha asked him, he said that that was what the Buddha had taught. The Buddha then said that He had never taught in that way, and called Ariṭṭha a hopeless man who could not attain the state of *māgga* and *phala*. Even then Ariṭṭha did not discard his belief. At the present time there are people like Ariṭṭha; I would even say that they are the relatives and descendents of Ariṭṭha who still argue that their belief is in accord with the teachings of the Buddha.

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Now, if they say that syrup is essentially the same as liquor because both are liquids, then liquor is essentially the same as urine. Would they drink urine? If they say that gourd is essentially the same as fowl or, for that matter, their children, would they have their children cut up like the gourd or chicken? If they say the feeling of touch is the same between that of the bed-sheet and pillow and that of the female, can they live all their lives married only to the bed-sheet and pillow? If we ask these questions, the correct answer will come out. The *Arahats* who know in their wisdom the true nature of sense of feeling, have never transgressed from the bounds of *sīla*. Only those who have superficial knowledge say things which are outside the scope of *sīla*. They do not merely say so, but they go further and commit sin. If they do that, they would be like holding a live coal, thinking that it is not hot. Sin would not let them go scot-free; it would give of its evil effect as best it could. So those holding the live coal in their full grips would get the worst burn.

**Must not transgress the area of
samādhi**

Some are saying that *samādhi* is not necessary, that if one just ponders upon the

two *paññā magga*, namely, *Sammāditthi* and *sammāsankappa*, there is no need to make a note of happening and destruction. This is a transgression of the area of *samādhi*. *Jhanāsamādhi* is indeed the best to attain, but failing that, one should have acquired *khanika samādhi* which is equivalent to *upacāra samādhi*. Otherwise, it is not real *vipassanā paññā*. So said the Buddha; “*Bhikkhus* try to acquire *samādhi*. A *bhikkhu* who has a stable mind knows the truth. What is knowing the truth? It is knowing that *cakkhu* (the eye) is non-permanent, that *rūpa* (appearance) is non-permanent, and that *cakkhu-viññā* (the sense of seeing) is non-permanent.”

The Buddha said further that one, bereft of *sammāditthi*, is bereft of *vipassanā-nāna*. So it is clear that without *samādhi* one cannot acquire *vipassanā-nāna* and attain *maggaphala-nāna*. One can, therefore, decide that knowledge outside of *samādhi* is not *vipassanā-nāna* and that without *vipassanā-nāna* one cannot attain *nibbānā*. Superficial knowledge is not the monopoly of the Buddhists, for non-Buddhists could acquire it if they make a study of *Abhidhammā*. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to try to acquire real knowledge by constantly

making a note of the nature of the sense-bases by *vipassanā* method.

The six sense-bases make up man

To the question how *loka* came into being, the Buddha's answer was *loka's* existence was based upon the six sense-bases. It means that all beings which comprise *loka* come into being on the basis of the six sense-bases.

Suffering in the six

To the question where do the beings suffer from ill effects of the six sense-bases, the Buddha replied that they suffered from the ill effects in the six sense-bases themselves. He said that the beings suffered because they made efforts to satisfy these six sense-bases. According to the commentary on the *sutta*, the sensations emanating from the outer objects make an attack on the six sense-bases. In my opinion, the sensations such as sight, sound, taste, smell, touch and thought invite *taṇhā* (desire) and it makes beings suffer. I think that is a better explanation.

People are constantly making efforts to get beautiful things, animate or inanimate, and if they do not get them they go on searching for them till they can get hold of them. When they come to possess them,

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they make efforts to hold them and prevent them from being lost or destroyed. Thus, the people are constantly making efforts and suffering. In the same manner, they try to get other feelings and sensations, such as sweet sounds, good taste, delightful touch, and fond hopes and thoughts. They try to make themselves healthy and long living so that they may enjoy these sensations longer. In making these efforts people have to feel anxious about themselves as well as others. Though they make constant efforts for containing and maintaining these sensations, things do not occur as they wish. Things disappear as quickly as they appear. Dangers set in and destroy them. On such occasions people suffer greatly not only physically but mentally too. This concerns not only human beings but celestial beings also, for these celestial beings, too, make similar efforts for similar purposes. Do not have the impression that if one becomes a celestial being owing to one's good deeds, one gets to a place where every wish is fulfilled and one does not need to have any more wishes; that is, one would be satisfied to the full. No being is ever satisfied with what has been given, and will always ask for more. To get more,

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further efforts have to be made, and suffering ensues from these efforts.

Suffering will result from action involving sacrifice of lives of other beings under the mistaken notion that one would gain merit from such act. If one kills, steals or does things which one thinks will make for one's own prosperity and happiness and those of one's relatives and friends, one will receive all the sufferings resulting from the act. Not only that; one will go down to the nether regions of existence.

Enjoying the senses does not bring any real happiness; it brings only suffering. Say, for instance one continues eating good food after having reached the state of satiety or fullness. Eating good food seems enjoyable in the first stages but gradually the enjoyment will decline and suffering will ensue. It is the same with other senses. If one looks at beautiful things constantly, one will get tired, and suffering, probably in the form of disgust, will set in. One would not enjoy, tactile contact constantly; suffering would certainly set in after one has passed the stage of satisfactions. Enjoyment is only transitory, and it can cover up the innate sufferings just for a while. Making an effort is, in fact, suffering.

Hemavatā's Question Number Two

Hemavata said, "O, Lord, The *sattavā* which is in effect *loka* is subjected to misery. What is the attachment (*upādāna*) which makes one believe this is myself, this is my own? May I ask what is the way to redemption. Would you, O Lord, please say how one must free oneself from misery?"

Hemavata's first question to the Buddha related to the truth about misery (*dukkha siccā*) and his second question is about the way to free oneself from misery.

"Hemavata" said the Buddha, "the mind which is the sixth of the six sense-bases produces desire and causes attachment for the five other senses and sense-bases."

The five *kāmaguṇa* means the desire to enjoy the sight, the sound, the smell the taste and the touch. These senses carry with them their respective sense-bases; the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and the body. The mind also carries with it thoughts and feelings.

To those who do not have *vipassanā* practice, any object they see gives them the idea that it is "my eye that sees." The young hwo can see well will say that their eyes are good and clear, but the old whose eyesight is defective will lament their plight. Both

the young and the old feel that the sense organ of sight is theirs. This idea of self extends to all parts of the body and the whole body and then to one's own property. This notion extends further to cognition of male and female "This body is mind; I am this body." Looking at a beautiful person and liking him or her, and wanting to possess, and having thus got, thinking "This is mine, my own"...all these are the products of the mind.

For instance, you go to the bazaar and look at dresses on display and choose what you like and buy them and think that they are your own. In the same manner, one looks at another and is enamoured of his or her beauty and desires that person and wants to possess that person's body. The eye, the object of sight and the sense of sight; these are the three *āyatana*, and there is attachment. "This is mine, this is my own. I possess it."

The same attachment or obsession applies to the case of hearing, smelling, tasting or touching. Everything is for attachment. If, for instance, you touch somebody and you know the sense of touch, then you say, "I touch him or her." If you feel hot or stiff in the limbs, you say "I feel hot", or "I feel stiff in my limbs."

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So the Buddha said: “Hemavata, in *loka* the five *kāmaguṇa* and the mind (*manāyatana*), or the six sense-bases cause *taṇhā* (lust), and if that *taṇhā* is discarded, deliverance from *dukkha* is certainly achieved.”

The reason for attachment and desire is ignorance of the fact that the sight-object or matter, the seeing and the eye are all *āyatana*. This ignorance is like insanity. Madmen have unstable minds and cannot tell the good from the bad, the valuable from the valueless; they don't know what is useful, valuable and keep useless things in their bags. You all must have seen such lunatics. The so-called sane men would act in the same way if they were under mistaken notions.

At the end of the Second World War those who foresaw the coming end of the Japanese occupation in Burma exchanged the Japanese currency notes which would soon be worthless, with many things. Those who did not have such foresight cheerfully received the notes in the hope that these notes would continue to be valid. Then in a day or two, the change came. The Japanese currency notes became worthless, and the hoarders suffered the consequences.

When I was young I came across people who filled pots with sand and waited for

them to turn into gold according to the prediction of a con-man who posed as a master-magician whom these people believed. They are really fools and mad men who cannot tell the truth from the lie, the good from the bad. Once they are cured of madness, they will find that the things they have cherished are worthless. During the time of the Buddha Padācārā became raving mad. She went about without any clothes on, but as she was insane she thought what she was doing was good and proper. When she came near the Buddha, the Buddha restored her to sanity by admonition and she realised her situation at once and eventually became an *Arahat*. Being one with *pāramī* (potential for perfection), Padācārā knew at once at the Buddha's word of caution that she was naked. Her sense of propriety returned, and she took a shawl from a person near her and wrapped herself and sat down to listen to the Buddha's sermon. And while listening to the sermon she attained the state of *sotāpanna*. This is an instance of acquiring the right vision and discarding the worthless notions.

The people I spoke about just now found out in due course that the things they had cherished were after all worthless,

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and yet they could not discard their worthless things. Those who are always mindful of the constant changes involving happening and disappearing all the time, will have no attachment for anything that others have been setting so much value upon.

Giving instructions to Mālukya-putta bhikkhū

When the Buddha was about to give instructions to Mālukya-putta bhikkhū, He asked:

“Mālukya-putta, do you have any desire for the appearances that you have never seen, or those that you are not in the act of seeing or those that you never expect to see?”

“No, sir, that is impossible,” replied the bhikkhū.

Now, if I asked you the same question as the Buddha put to Mālukya-putta bhikkhu, you all would give the same answer as he did. A person whom you never expect to see,.....you would not have any feeling of love or hatred for him, would you? Now, such persons are so many in so many villages, towns, cities and countries, and you wouldn't ever have any feeling of love or hatred. For them

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you wouldn't have any attachment, desire or lust. *Kilesā* doesn't arise from the unseen. This point should be noted.

In that case, one need not have to get rid of *kilesā* by means of *vipassanā*. The thing simply doesn't happen for, since there is no seeing, there arises no *kilesā*. So you don't gain merit, nor does *akusala* (evil, sin) happen. As for the things seen, however, *kilesā* arises both in the act of seeing and after having seen, because a mental picture is retained in the memory and on reflection or recall, *kilesā* would recur. These cherished memories are stored up in the archives of *anusaya* (rooted memories). It is necessary to root out these by means of *vipassanā*.

The Buddha gave Mālukyaputta bhikkhū the doctrine of *diṭṭheaitṭhamattam bhavissati* (seeing only what is being seen), or minding the present.

Discarding taṇhā occurring on the sight

According to the Buddha's instructions to Mālukyaputta bhikkhū, one must note what is seen as seen and no more. That is the general idea of the instructions. For meditational practice, however, one must note the beginning of any object or sense

as it is in the process of happening. One must accordingly make a note of, let us say, walking in its process, that is, lifting the foot, moving forward and letting fall the foot, and noticing that each act in the process appears and disappears in rapid succession. Only those who have higher perception will be able to notice clearly this rapid chain of action. If one could concentrate on each phenomenon distinctly and separately, one would not feel any attachment or desire, and thus *taṇhā* is got rid of.

To some *vipassanā* practitioners hearing was taken notice of as mere hearing, and no like or dislike is attached to it. Some are reported to have felt the sound enter the ear, and can tell whether it enters the right ear or the left. Smell also appears and disappears in rapid succession and no attachment of any kind occurs. The same with tasting food.

The sense of touch is quite distinctly marked. The rising and falling of the abdomen is obvious; so are the aches and pains. Physical actions are also easy to make note of, and making note of each act in the process of an action precludes any kind of attachment or desire. As regards the mind that wanders, it is not so difficult to make note of it, and a practised meditator's mind

seldom loafs, and when it does, it is usually caught and brought back immediately to the point of concentration. Thus *taṇhā* is rid of from the mind.

Sometimes mental pictures of persons, *bhikkhus*, gardens and many other things appear; they are mere figments of the imagination. They will soon fade out if one makes a note of them. No attachment occurs. Sometimes, too, one hears or seems to hear, a celestial being or a teacher saying something but if one makes a note of that, the hearing will disappear and no attachment can occur. The yogi who experiences such hearing should not be falsely flattered. If he is pleased or flattered, that fact should be made note of immediately and it will disappear. That is how *taṇhā* should be rid of the thought or the feeling.

And that is also the way in which *vipassanā* insight is gained and eventually *Ariyamagga* achieved and *nibbāna* attained. As the strength of insight increases, wisdom increases, too, and thus occurrence of attachment is entirely ruled out. So the Buddha said that if *taṇhā* is discarded, deliverance from *dukkha* is certainly achieved.

Upon hearing the two answers of the Buddha, Hemavata and Sātāgiri and their followers attained the state of *sotāpanna*.

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The young lady, Kāli, who had heard only the dialogge between Sātāgiri and Hemavata became a *sotāpanna* before they did. They should have reached the ultimate state of an *Arahat*, but they were destined to attain to the first state only.

END OF PART V

Chapter VI

This is the last part of the discourse on this sutta. The main points of interest are the three questions Hemavata put to the Buddha. Hemavata became a *sotāpan* after hearing the Buddha's reply to the second question but in deference to the *Dhamma*, Hemavata put the third question as follows: -

“Oh, Lord,” said Hemavata, “in this *loka* who can swim out of the eddying current of *kilesā*?”

In the never-ending chain of existences, called *samsāra*, there is a fast-flowing current with eddies, called *kilesā*. Who can swim so skilfully that he or she can swim out of this current? Hemavata repeated the question in another metaphor, saying: “Who can swim out of the vast stretch of deep water, called *samsāra*?”

Samsāra, which is an uninterrupted flow of existences, a successive happenings and

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destructions of the aggregates (*khandā*), is likened to a fast-flowing, wide and deep river, or a vast stretch of water. It is difficult for one, however skilful in swimming, to swim out of it.

Continuing, Hemavata said: “Apparently bottomless, there is nothing above the surface of the water to hang on to; who can manage to escape from drowning in that vast stretch of water, Oh, Lord?”

To this question the Buddha made the following answer:-

“Hemavata, one whose *sīla* is clean and full, and whose *samādhi* is firm, making a note of the physical and mental acts without fail, and whose knowledge of things secular and spiritual is of a high order, will be able to swim across the usually unswimmable stream of *samsāra*.” This is the Buddha’s answer to the first part of Hemavata’s question.

The current of *kāma*: Desire

Delightful objects invite desire and attachment, called *kāma*, which is likened to a current with eddies: *kāmogha*. Those who are involved in desire, lust and attachment are said to be drifting in the current of *kāma*. Those who like and want

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the objects of desire, such as sight, smell, taste, touch, man or woman, property of all sorts, have to put forth their efforts to obtain and possess them. Once they have them, they have to put forth more efforts to preserve and maintain their possessions. They have to resort to sins such as theft, murder, robbery, cheating, adultery to gain possession of these objects of their desires. For such sins they will go down to hell and other nether regions of misery. That is what is called drifting in the sea of *samsāra*. There are other people who do good deeds and are accordingly able to gain existence in human or celestial world where they are endowed with wealth which they enjoy immensely. That is also called being immersed in the sea of *samsāra*. Existence in human or celestial world presupposes old age and death for which one will surely feel anguish and suffer from misery. That is, in fact, an immersion in the sea of *samsāra*.

The current of bhava, existence

To be enamoured of *bhava* (existence or life) is called drifting in the current of *bhavogha*, the eddying current of *bhava*. Some want to attain higher planes of existence such as *rupa bhava* and *arupa*

bhava, and accordingly work to acquire *rupa jhānā* and *arupa jhāna*. When they reach these higher planes of existence their spans of life are very long, to be counted in a eons, but they are not everlasting. They have to die, and some go to human world and others to celestial world, where misery abounds. They get only a brief relief, not a release from the chain of existences.

The current of *ditthi*, false beliefs

To be entangled in the various currents of *ditthi* or false beliefs is very common. There are many kinds of belief, some beliefs belonging to some racial groups and some to some localities. The various beliefs can be categorised into two: one embracing the belief that all beings are indestructible, called *sassata ditthi*, and the other the belief that a being is destroyed altogether after its death, called *uccheda ditthi*. Those embracing the latter belief do not care to avoid evil deeds, nor do they feel the need to do good deeds. They can do what they like so long as they avoid crimes punishable by law. They believe that they will not be obliged to pay for the deeds they have done during their lifetimes or later because, to them, there

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is no more new existence. Such people will probably go to hell and other nether regions because the deeds they have done during their lifetimes will probably be far from good. This is an example of getting into trouble by following a wrong path.

There are people today who turn the Buddha's teachings topsy-turvey and advise their followers not to do good deeds, not to do meditation, or they would be in trouble. Their followers will most probably do only bad deeds and are most likely to go to hell.

Those who believe in the indestructibility of beings do something which they take to be good deeds but among such deeds is sacrifices of some animals' lives in rites according to their beliefs. Such evil deeds done under mistaken notions will surely send the evil-doers to hell. It is like taking wrong medicine which aggravates the disease. There are some other people who believe that they can do anything, good or bad, with impunity so long as they have faith in their God.

There are worshippers of the sun, the moon, the mountain, the spirits or gods; there are also some who believe they can be delivered from misery if they starve themselves or stay naked or stay in the heat of

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the sun or stay immersed in water; there are also some who believe that they will be free of misery if they keep their minds idle. How can one acquire *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* without making the mind work hard and properly? All beliefs in religious practices which cannot lead to liberation from *samsāra* belong to what is called *sīlabbata parāmāsa ditthi*. The followers of such faiths will never get out of the great whirl pool of *samsāra*. They will go through a long series of existences as they drift along the current of *samsāra*. This is really terrible.

The current of *avijjā*, ignorance

Then there is what is called “the current of *avijjā*” which means ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. People mistake misery for happiness; they do not know the truth about misery (*dukkha saccā*). All the actions emanating from the physical and mental make-ups are really elements of misery, but most people think that the sight they want to see, the sound they want to hear, the smell they want to smell, the food they want to eat, the touch they want to touch, and the thought they want to think are all good. Such thinking is the result of ignorance (*moha*, *avijjā*). Liking such things is *taṇhā*, to be attached to them is *upādāna*,

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and to strive to gain the objects of desires is deeds, either good or bad, (*kusala* or *akusala*). Owing to the deeds, good or bad, existence recurs repeatedly; the existences in the 31 planes of existence are due to this *avijjā*. This current of *avijjā* flows down to the lowest hell and up to *bhavagga* (topmost region of existence, the highest region of *Brahmā*.) In *Bhuridatta* and *Campeyya jātakās* it is explained that the would-be Buddha became a great snake or dragon because he longed to become a snake, thinking that such existence would be good. This current of *avijjā* is very fearful indeed

It is not easy to get beyond these currents; one must have the ability to swim out of them. That is why Hemavata asked the Buddha who could swim out of them. In answering that question, the Buddha described the qualifications of the successful swimmer.

First qualification of the successful swimmer

The Buddha said that the first qualification of the successful swimmer is that he must always be fully equipped with pure *sīla*. This is a really essential qualification, so the Buddha put it as the first. The one who

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firmly believes in the Buddha's teachings must believe that if only one is fully equipped with pure *sīla* for all times, one will be able to overcome the four great currents and thus attain *nibbāna*. Some may refer to the story of Santati, a king's minister, who attained *nibbāna* just before his death "while the smell of the liquor had not yet left his mouth", and enquire about the requirement of being equipped for all times with pure *sīla*. Well, such are few instances; I should say, one in a hundred thousand. Such persons had had with them already *pārami* of the highest order. They were rare even in the time of the Buddha. They were exceptions. The Buddha knew of them and their grade of *pāramī*.

In the case of the first five monks, *pañca vaggi*, only Kondañña attained to the state of *sotāpanna* on the first day of the *Dhammacakkha* sermon; the other four had to strive for it for four more days in succession, one after another. Not all of them were in possession of *pārami* of the same calibre; such differences in grades and calibre of *pārami* should be noted. There are those who gain the *dhamma* while hearing a sermon, but they are very few; others have to work for some length of time, some for a few hours, some others for days, months

or years in accordance with their respective *pārami*.

Now in the Buddha's word about the purity of *sīla* for all times: the phrase "for all times" means the length of time from the time of commencing the practice of the *dhamma* through the entire period of the practices. It is only then that one can feel happy that one has all along had one's *sīla* pure, and that feeling of achievement would bring about *samādhi*. Otherwise, doubt about one's own *sīla* would impede the progress in the attainment of the state of complete concentration. Without concentration one cannot acquire *vipassanā ñāna*. And without *vipassanā ñāna*, *magga phala ñāna* would be far out of one's reach. For a layman, one must be fully equipped with *pañca sīla*, for a monk, one must be equipped with *pātimokkha sīla*. *Sīla* is the first requisite, the first qualification for one who strives to swim out of the four great currents.

The Second Qualification

The second qualification relates to *samādhi*. It means that after having been equipped with pure *sīla* one must work hard to attain the states of *samādhi* and *jhāna*. It means that one must work for the attainment of all the eight kinds of *jhāna* or at least one

or two of them. This is for disciples of the higher order. If one cannot strive to attain *appanā jhāna*, one must work for attainment of *upacārd samādhi* or its equivalent *khaṇika samādhi*, that is, *vipassanā samādhi*. This is the least requirement for one to become fully equipped with *cittavisuddhi* (purity of mind), and with this, one can attain *nibbāna*. Otherwise, the purpose would not be achieved.

The Third Qualification

The third qualification is *paññā*. *Paññā* can be attained only by being mindful of the actions and phenomena occurring within one's physical and mental make-ups. One can gain real knowledge of the incessant motions of acts and happenings only when one makes a note of them internally. How can one gain real knowledge by noting the acts and actions of another person's mental and physical make-ups? You may think that a person is happy but he may really be in a sad mood. In the same manner, you may think one is doing a good deed but he might be about to do something bad or evil. It is only of oneself one can know fully. If one makes a note of what is going on in oneself, one will be able to know what really is the matter. It

is not really difficult to make a mental note of the things in flux in oneself; one has only to make a note of things as they occur or disappear in quick succession.

Don't Talk Rashly About Eko-dhammo

Those who have attained *jhāna* must make a note of the state of *jhāna* as well as all the phenomena emanating from the acts of seeing, hearing, etc. Such mixed phenomena are together called *pakiñṇaka*. Those who have not attained *jhāna* must make a note of what they see, hear, etc. In fact, they must note the actions emanating from mind and matter. Some say that making a note of what happens as it happens could result in deterioration of one's concentration. They say that it spoils the concept of *eko-dhammo* (single purpose). Such persons do not understand the workings of practice in *vipassanā*. As a matter of fact, *vipassanā* doesn't mean concentrating only on one object; it is making note of all the acts and actions of mind and matter. If one does not make a note of them, one will probably take them to be permanent, capable of giving happiness, and representing self, and such obsessive thinking will bring about *kamma* which will in turn make for a new existence. *Vipassanā* is intended to get rid of the con-

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sequences by making a note of the phenomena and coming to a realization of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. The Buddha said all phenomena must be perceived with insight.

There is no mention of *eko-dhammo* in the Pali scriptures or in the commentaries. There is, however, mention of it in *Anguttara Nikāya* and *Dasuttra sutta* but the meaning is not what some people rashly take it to be. It means that one should stick to one method of meditation and in the books are mentioned as many as ten different methods. Talking rashly about “eko-dhammo” without knowing its proper meaning and intent should be discouraged.

Now, by making a note of what is happening in the physical and mental make-ups and thus gaining *samādhi*, one acquires insight (*paññā*) by perceiving *nāma* (mind) and *rūpa* (matter) separately, and also by knowing the deep significance of cause and effect. *Vipassanā* is achieved by a deep perception of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*, and when *vipassanā ñānā* (meditational insight) has been gained and developed further, one will graduate to the *Ariyā magga*. One who has attained *Ariyā magga* is the swimmer who can swim out of the rough and strong currents of *samsāra*. That

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is what the Buddha said in reply to Hemavata's question.

The manner of swimming out of these currents will now be explained for the benefit of those who still need further clarification. If one can discern *nibbāna* through the insight of *sotāpatti magga ñāna*, one must be said to have crossed the current of *diṭṭhi*. That is why it is said that a *sotāpan* is cleared of the obsession about *atta*, of the false belief that a being is indestructible, which is the belief of *sassata diṭṭhi*, of the false belief that nothing remains after the death and destruction of the present form and mental make-up, which is the belief of *uccheda diṭṭhi*. He is also rid of the false belief called *sīlabbata parāmāsa diṭṭhi* which says that one can gain deliverance from *samsāra* not by working for acquisition of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* but by doing a little bit of mental exercise. A *sotāpan* has never failed to be entrenched in the belief in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, and in the belief that one must work for the acquisition of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. It is only those who are not *sotāpan*, who are indecisive in fixing their belief and so go round looking for mentors and more often than not, walk into the camps of leaders of false doctrines

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and thus suffer much along the long path of *samsāra*.

As for a *sotāpan*, he never deviates from the right path and will be free of the sufferings belonging to a being after at most seven existences. It is therefore clear that if one could swim across the current of *diṭṭhi*, one would make an immense gain.

Getting on to the next step in the graduated stages to the attainment of *nibbāna*, that is, state of *sakadāgāmi magga ñāna*, one would be able to weaken the force of the current of *kāma-rāga* but not be completely rid of it. One must surge ahead by continuing the meditational practice. It is only when one has attained the state of *anāgāmi magga* and *phala* that one will be completely rid of the current of *kāma*. For him there is no such thing as desire; he will not even think of wanting anything; there is no wish, no longing or hankering. Thus, he is in a happy state, free of the misery resulting from desires. But he has the current of *bhava* to swim across.

The yogi who has achieved up to the stage of *anāgāmi magga ñāna* must carry on with the meditation till he attains the most mature insight of *Arahatta magga ñāna*. Then he will have swum across the current

of *bhava*; for him there is no new existence. By then he has swum successfully across the four currents of *samsāra* and got out of it.

The Buddha's Answer (3B)

“Hemavata deva” said the Buddha. “The *Arahat* who has overcome all the strings of *samiyojana* attachment after having cleared himself of the desires, never gets drowned in the bottomless, refugeless sea of *samsāra*, but remains afloat always and in a state of happiness.”

According to the first part of the Buddha's answer, the one who has persisted in the practice of meditation attains the Ultimate Stage and has become an *Arahat*. For him there is no new existence; he is completely out of the stream of *samsāra*. However, an *anāgamī* has crossed the currents and is on his way out of the stream. *Sakadāgamī* has no more than two existences to strive for deliverance, and *Sotāpan* has at most seven existences to go through. All of them have saved themselves from hell and the nether regions of existence. For a *puthujjana* there is no guarantee against falling into hell though he may have done good deeds. To such persons the *samsāra* is a terrible sea in which there is nothing to grasp, or take refuge in, to keep oneself afloat. Now is

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the time for working for deliverance from the sea of *samsāra* or the cycle of existences in the 31 regions of existence.

Now the exposition of the text of the *Hemavata sutta* has come to an end. Only Hemavata's adulation of the Buddha remains.

After having heard the words of the Buddha and perceived the great wisdom of the Enlightened One, Hemavata was full of adoration and turned to the celestial beings, a thousand of them, followers of his and of his friend Sātāgiri, and urged them to worship the Buddha. He asked them to worship the Buddha endowed with deep and full wisdom, free of desires of all kinds, the Buddha who had been walking the path of the *Arahat*. He said that because they had worshipped the Buddha and heard His sermon, they had come upon the dawn of enlightenment. Then turning to the Buddha, Hemavata said, "We, the thousand *deva-yakkas*, adore and take refuge in Thee, the noblest Lord and Master."

The reason for these thousand celestial beings having achieved the purpose of the *dhamma* can be found in the story of their past.

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The Past History of Hemavata and Company

Kassapa Buddha passed into *nibbāna* and His relics were enshrined in a great golden pagoda. At that time two men entered the order of monks in the sacred circle of the Buddha's *sāsanā* (instructional discipline) out of their free will and noble volition, (Incidentally, there are two kinds of monks, that is, those who enter the Order out of their free will and noble volition, called *saddhā pabbajita*, and those who enter the Order out of fear of punishment by law for their crimes, called *bhayā pabbajita*. The former are the true servants of the Order and the latter the detractors who weaken and spoil it. The duties of a monk are under two main categories. The first category is to study and eventually teach the literature of the *Dhamma*, and the second is to practise meditation to achieve the purpose of the *Dhamma*.)

During the time of Buddha Gotama there were many *bhikkhūs* beginning with the first five, *pāñca vaggi*, who became *Arahats*. There were, for instance, the son of Yassa, the rich man, and his 54 friends, the thirty clansmen of Bhaddavaggi, the thousand hermits led by Uruvela Kassapa, the ones who were to become Venerables Sāriputra

and Mahā Mogglāna and their 250 hermit followers. All of them practised the *Dhamma* and became *Arahats*. Of them the son of Sena, a rich man, did most creditably in the practice of the *Dhamma*.

This person was very soft and tender. He had never set his feet on the earth. The soles of his feet were covered with soft hairs. When this soft and tender man entered the Holy Order, fully determined to work hard at the duties of a *bhikkhū* for deliverance from the misery of *samsāra*, a problem arose. He worked his hardest. He carried out his meditational practice while walking up and down the passageway barefooted. His feet were so soft and tender that they soon had blisters and bled. The passageway was stained with blood, yet he did not give up. However, he could not achieve the purpose of the *Dhamma*. Latter he despaired and thought of leaving the Order. He was under the impression that he had not enough *pāramī* to achieve the purpose of the *Dhamma*. Then the Buddha came to him and advised him not to strain too much nor to relax too much, that is, to follow the middle path. The *bhikkhū* followed the Buddha's advice and soon became an *Arahat*.

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There were in the days of the Buddha countless numbers who attained the state of an *Arahat*, or the state of a *sotāpan*, *sakadāgam* and *anāgam*, all the noble ones who fulfilled the wishes of the Buddha by practising meditation and achieving the purpose of the *Dhamma*. The two new monks who entered the Order thought to themselves that the number of those who practised the *Dhamma* were very many, and that as they themselves were still young they should first make a study of the literature of the *Dhamma*. They said to themselves that they would practise the *Dhamma* when they grew old. Thus applying themselves diligently to the study of the literature of the *Dhamma*, the two monks became masters of the *tri-pitakas*. They then taught five hundred monks the various treatises of the *Dhamma*, and became famous teachers.

Now, let us discuss the decision made by the monks who were future Hemavata and his friend Sātāgiri. They decided to study the *Dhamma* when young and practise it when old. Who can guarantee that a person will not die young? If he dies young, then he will miss the opportunity of practising the *Dhamma*. The Buddha's wish is for all

to start the practice of the *Dhamma* when young.

The Buddha said "The *bhikkhū* in the Buddha's *sāsanā*, who practises the *Dhamma* while young with a view to attaining *magga phala*, enlightens the *loka* which is synonymous with his own five *khandās*, just as the moon which is released from the banks of cloud shines over the world."

The person who practises *vipassanā* enlightens his own *loka* in the same manner as the moon lights up the world. He starts his practice with the regular noting of the rising and falling of his abdomen and thus comes to know the real nature of mind and matter first, and then as he goes on with his noting he comes to know the real nature of *nāma-kkhandā* (mental make-up). He learns the deep truth of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*. As his practice advances, his insight deepens and enlightens his *loka*, or *nāma-rupa*, or the five *khandās*.

It may be asked whether the same kind of enlightenment will not occur to the old. Certainly it will, but in the old the realisation and enlightenment may be slow to come. Age slows down the faculties of the body and the mind. A man of thirty may achieve his purpose within one month where-

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as a man of sixty or seventy may be able to do it only in two or three months. The difference lies in the physical and mental health and strength, and in the worries and anxieties, too. The young person's brain power is keen while the old man's deteriorates. The latter may have more worries to contend with. So the Buddha praised the young for doing the meditational practice.

In the case of monks, it is better for the freshly-ordained monks to start the practice of meditation because they are young and keen, their confidence strong, their *sīla* free from doubts and defaults. Although it is admittedly important to pursue the studies of the literature of the *Dhamma*, young monks should do the meditation practice at least in the first three months. Well, that is my opinion. Possibly, the would-be Hemavata and the would-be Sātāgiri died before they attained old age. They seem to have had no chance to practise the *Dhamma*.

Those two venerable monks received the high esteem of their disciples, both *bhikkhūs* and the laity, and the Buddha's *sāsanā* of those days was flourishing. At that time there lived in a monastery two young monks, one a strict follower of the rules and regulations of the Order and the other a reca-

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litrant. When the good follower pointed out the errors of the recalcitrant, the latter would not brook criticism. The former told him to wait till the *pavāraṇā* time came.

The monks were all obliged to attend the *pavāraṇā* ceremony soon after the end of the Lenten period. They invited one another to point out the errors or the commissions and omissions of the rules and regulations of the Order. This ceremony is held annually on the full moon day of the month of Thadingyut, the end of the Lent. The one who is criticised for his erroneous acts and behaviour thanks the one or ones who point out the errors and promises them to be more careful in future. This ceremony of criticism is for making the Buddha's *sāsanā* clean and intact. The Buddha prescribed this ceremony; attendance is compulsory.

One should be thankful to the critic who points out one's errors and faults, for such criticism gives one an opportunity to make amends. *Āpatti* (default) in a monk is far more serious than the fault or crime in a layman. If a monk dies without knowing that he has had *āpatti* and so has had no opportunity to make amends, he can get to hell. If he knew his *āpatti* and made amends

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accordingly, his *sīla* would become pure, and if at that time of purity he practised the *Dhamma*, he could acquire wisdom of a high order, or if he died, he would get to upper regions of bliss. So the Buddha said, "The good people who point out others' faults with good intentions are loved and respected by other good people but they are hated by the bad and the evil ones."

The monk who was the recalcitrant opposed the monk who was a strict follower of the rules and regulations of the Order. So the latter told the former that he would report the matter to the synod of senior monks. The recalcitrant was afraid that he might be ousted, so he approached the members of the synod and gave them robes and begging bowls and paid them respects. He rendered small services to the senior monks and behaved meekly. The monks asked him what the matter was. He said that he had had a dispute with his monastery mate over his behaviour, and asked them to reserve judgment when his case came up to the synod. The senior monks said that they could not burke any case, but the recalcitrant insisted. The monks had already accepted his gifts and services and felt rather diffident to deal with his case. So they promised to burke his case when it came up. This is,

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of course, partiality and corruption. When thus assured, the recalcitrant went back to his monastery and treated his colleague with arrogance. The faithful monk had some suspicions and made quiet enquiries. He had wondered at the delay in the disposal of the case he had put up to the synod. The disciples of the senior monks whom he approached were reticent.

The recalcitrant became more and more brazen-faced. He asked the faithful about the case and insolently challenged him. "Now you have lost your case. You should not come back to the monastery. Go elsewhere; don't live with me," he said. The faithful asked the senior monks about the case and received an unsatisfactory answer. These old monks were otherwise very honest but since they had accepted the favours from the bad monk they deviated from the path of honesty.

The young faithful monk shouted, "Since the passing of the Kassapa Buddha you two monks, senior and learned, have been looked up to as another Buddha but you have rendered yourselves unfit to pass judgments on cases relating to the rules and regulations of the holy order. The Buddha's *sāsana* has gone decay; it is being

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destroyed". Of course, such corrupt practices are to be deplored.

The two senior monks became repentent when they heard the accusation made by the young monk and this prick of their conscience persisted through their lives. They could not get rid of their doubts about their honesty even after long years of service to the Order by teaching their disciples the *Dhamma* and observing the rules and regulations of the Order up to the time of their death. So they became celestial ogres on the Himalayas though they should otherwise have reached higher regions of existence in the celestial world because of their great services. One came to be known as Hemavata and the other Sātāgiri. They belonged to the higher echelon of the orge (guardian angels) hierarchy, holding the rank of commandants of the ogre battalions. There were 28 such high officials, including these two, under the charge of the chief, Duvera.

The celestial ogres, by the way, are far superior to the ordinary ogres though they might not be handsome like the *devas* or angels.

Hemavata and Sātāgiri repented their misdeeds in their past lives and deplored

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their weaknesses as they succumbed to corruption by an evil monk. They said that their long and meritorious services to the Kassapa *sāsanā* should have sent them to one of the elevated regions in the celestial world. They felt sorry to find that some of their lay disciples had got to the upper regions whereas they were obliged to take lower positions. They promised between themselves that if one had some great news he should immediately inform the other. In pursuance of this promise, Sātāgiri hurried to his friend Hemavata and broke of the news of the first sermon of Buddha Gotama.

They had lived aons, and after the rise and fall of several *kalpā* (long periods of time) they reached the time when Gotama Buddha, some 2550 years ago, on the full moon day of the month of Kason, gave His first sermon, *Dhammacekka sutta*, to the five hermits, the *panca vaggi*, with thousands upon thousands of celestial beings in attendance. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this discourse, Sātāgiri failed to locate his friend, Hemavata, in the assembly and so he hurried to him to tell the great news.

Hemavata was overjoyed at the hearing of the Buddha's sermon and went round

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from village to village, from mountain to mountain, of the celestial kingdom to announce the coming of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

This is the end of the *Hemavata sutta*. May the audience be able to cross the four great currents of *samsāra* by their arduous practice of *vipassanā* and thus attain the blissful state of *nibbāna*.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

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