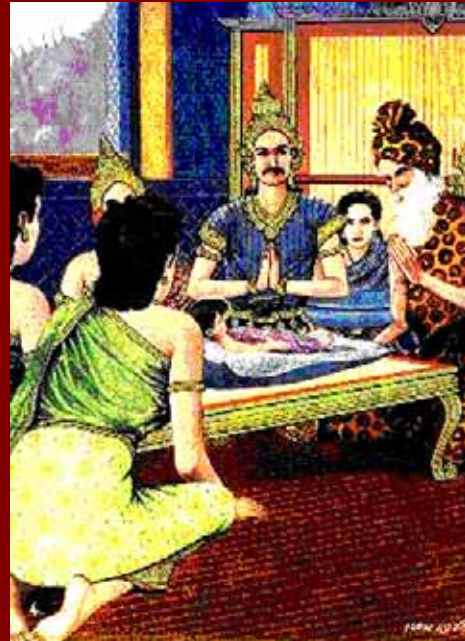


Hermit Kaladevila and Baby Prince Siddhartha



Kaladevila (Asita) Paying Obeisance to Baby Prince Siddhartha

Introduction: Before Buddhism, many of the hermits in India practice Samatha with austere practices. **Hermit Kaladevila** (aka) **Asita** was one who had attained the supernatural power, Five higher knowledge and the Eight attainments (8th. Jhanas). Hermit Kaladevila lives in Himalaya, having acquired the Five Higher Knowledges and the Eight Attainments, could recall events of the past forty *kappas* and also foresee those of the future forty *kappas*. Thus he was capable of recollecting and discerning the events of eighty *kappas* in all. In pre-Buddhist era, Brahmana practicing Jhanas could attain the supernatural power and reach out for their rebirth in eight Arupa Brahma world.

In pre-Buddhist time, Brahmana practices Jhanas austere practice to reach for rebirth in Rupa and Arupa Brahma world.(see 31 planes of existence)

Kaladevila's act of laughing and weeping

Having inspected the major and minor characteristics on the Bodhisatta Prince, Kaladevila pondered whether the Prince would become a Buddha or not and came to know through his foreseeing wisdom that the Prince certainly would. With the knowledge

that "**Here is a superb man,**" the Hermit laughed in great delight.

Again, the Hermit pondered whether he would or would not see the young Prince attain Buddhahood; he realized through his foreseeing wisdom that before the young Prince's attainment of Buddhahood he would pass away and be reborn in an *Arupa abode of Brahmas where nobody would be capable of hearing the Deathless Dhamma even if hundreds and thousands of Buddhas were to come and teach it.* "I will not get an opportunity of seeing and paying obeisance to this man of marvel who is endowed with unique merits of the Perfections. This will be a great loss for me." So saying and being filled with immense grief, **Kadevila wept bitterly.**

Explanation by Mingun Sayadaw (An Arupa abode of Brahmas means a plane of existence which is totally devoid of material phenomena, there being only mental consciousness (*citta*) and its concomitants (*cetasika*). In such an abode are reborn *tihetuka puthujjanas*, worldlings with three roots (**roots of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion**) and such Noble Ones as Sotapannas ('Stream-winners'), Sakadagamis ('Once-returners') and *Anagamis* ('Non-returners') who have attained the Arupa Jhana.

Those Sotapannas, Sakadagamis and Anagamis who have reached that Arupa Brahmas' abode will no longer return to the lower planes of existence. As they are experienced in practicing meditation up to the stage of the Path and Fruition while in the sensuous wholesome abodes (*kama sugati*) and in the material (*Rupa*) abodes, they are able to pursue the same *Vipassana* (Insight) meditation that they had practiced previously; they attain higher stages up to the Path and Fruition and Nibbana in the same abodes of Arupa, thereby terminating all suffering in *samsara* even though they do not hear the Dhamma from anyone. Worldlings of the three roots (**who have won the Arupa Jhana in the human world**) such as Hermits **Kaladevila, Alara and Udaka** were reborn in an Arupa abode upon their death; as this abode by nature is devoid of any kind of matter, those who are reborn there have absolutely no eyes (*cakkhupasada*) for seeing the Buddha and no ears (*sotapasada*) for hearing his Dhamma, thus they can neither behold a Buddha nor listen to his sermon even if one comes and delivers it. On their part, Buddhas do not pay a visit and give a sermon in an Arupa abode. And if worldlings have no chance to hear the Dhamma from others (*parato ghosa*), they will never attain the Path and Fruition.

(Kaladevila and Udaka who reached Nevasanna-nasannayatana Arupa abode as worldlings would remain in *samsara* for eighty-four thousand *kappas*. Alara who reached the Arupa abode of Akincannayatana would remain in *samsara* for sixty- thousand *raha-kappas*. Therefore even if a Buddha were to appear in the human world in the present *kappa*, they have no chance to realize Liberation.

“ (In this connection, it may be questioned as to whether Kaladevila could not have been reborn in a Rupa abode provided he directed his mind towards that existence. Since the Hermit had finally attained the eight mundane Jhanas, his rebirth could have taken place in any of the ten Rupa Brahma worlds up to the topmost Vehapphala if he were so inclined. This is the answer.

Can Kaladevila direct his rebirth in rupa abodes?

(If there was such an opportunity, it may be asked: "Why had the Hermit no inclination to be reborn in one of the ten Rupa abodes of his choice?" The reply should be that he had no such inclination because he was not skilful enough to do so. (What it essentially means is this: a winner of the eight mundane attainments is likely to be reborn in one of the Rupa or Arupa abodes that attract him. Devila could have been in a Rupa abode only if he desired to be there. If he were there he would have been in a position to pay homage as a Rupa Brahma to the Buddha. But his failure to be there was due to his lack of proper skill in directing his mind towards that particular abode which is lower than Arupa. “

(There still arises another argument: "Devila who had kept away grief (*domanassa*) through his attainment of Jhanas should not have succumbed to that displeasurable feeling and shed tears." He did so because his was merely keeping grief away. To make it a little more explicit: only those mental defilements that have been completely eliminated by means of the Path cannot reappear in one's mental continuum. But those defilements just kept away from oneself through sheer mundane Jhana attainments are apt to reappear when confronted with something strong enough to draw them (back to oneself). Devila had not eliminated such defilements; he had only kept them away from himself by means of Jhana attainments. Hence his weeping.

(Still another question may be asked as to how it was possible for Devila to be reborn in an Arupa abode since he slipped from the Jhanas through grief when he wept. The answer should be that he could be so reborn because the same Jhanas were regained by him effortlessly. To make it still more explicit: the defilements that have been just removed from worldlings of mundane Jhana attainments come back because of a powerful factor and thereby making them slip from their Jhanas, but if the defilements do not reach the extreme the worldlings can readily regain their Jhanas as soon as the force of the emotion subsides; and it cannot be easily known by others that "These are the ones who have fallen off their attainments."

(In brief, like Devila and others, those who have gained the eight mundane Jhanas can be reborn in one of the ten Rupa Brahma abodes, which are lower, or in one of the four Arupa Brahma abodes, which are higher, if they have prepared their minds to do so. If they have not, they will be reborn only in the abode that is determined by the highest of their mundane Jhanas since that particular Jhana alone can affect such a result. **The knowledge that one can reach any abode that one sets the mind on is acquired only through a Buddha's teaching within his dispensation.** Outside the dispensation, however, there can be no such penetration. Devila was not a disciple of a Buddha; thus he did not belong to a Buddha's dispensation. Therefore he was ignorant of the means to train his mind. If he had known, he would have done so to be reborn in one of the ten Rupa Brahma worlds, of which Vehapphala is the highest. If he had done at all, he could have been reborn there and might get the opportunity of seeing the Buddha. But now his ignorance had led to the failure of doing what would be proper for him. He would therefore be reborn in Nevasanna-nasannayatana which is the topmost Arupa abode, and reflecting on his forthcoming rebirth, he became so distressed that he could not help weeping; when he thus wept, he lost his Jhanas. But, since he had committed no serious evil deeds whatever, he regained the eight mundane attainments by resuming the preliminary exercises of a *kasina* meditation effortlessly as soon as the tempo of his grievous defilements ceased with nobody knowing his slip from the Jhanas. Therefore it should be understood that Devila the Hermit was reborn in the Arupa Brahma abode of Nevasanna-nasannayatana on his death through Nevasanna-nasannayatana Jhana which is the highest of the eight mundane attainments.)

The enquiry made by people

When the courtiers saw the Hermit now laughing and now weeping, it occurred to them thus: **"Our Venerable Hermit laughed first, and later he wept which is strange indeed."** So they enquired: "Venerable Sir, is there any danger that might befall our master's son?" "There is no danger for the Prince. In fact, he will become a Buddha." "Then why do you lament?" the people asked again. "He replied that because I shall not get an opportunity to see the attainment of Enlightenment by a superb man who is endowed with such wonderful qualities. This will be a great loss to me. So thinking, I lament," replied the Hermit.

Explanation:

(The above narration has been made in accordance with what is described in the *Buddhavamsa* and *Jataka Commentaries* and the *Jinalankara, Sub-commentary*. In some works on the life of the Buddha in prose, the reading goes as follows: When King Suddhodana asked, "At what age the Prince would renounce the world and attain Buddhahood?" Kaladevila answered, "At the age of thirty-five." This passage is a deduction from the words addressed by Devila to his nephew (sister's son) Nalaka the youth, "Dear Nalaka, a son has been born to King Suddhodana. The child is the Future Buddha; he will attain Buddhahood at the age of thirty-

five" The king was not pleased to hear that his son would become a Buddha. He wanted to see his son only as a Universal Monarch, not as a Buddha. Therefore, he must not have asked about the time of his son's renunciation and attainment of Buddhahood. That is the reason for the omission of such a passage in the aforesaid *Commentaries* and *Sub-commentary*. Here in this work, too, we therefore make no mention of it.)

The Monkhood of Nalaka the youth

Having answered thus, Kaladevila the Hermit pondered: "Though I will miss the Bodhisatta Prince's attainment of Buddhahood, I wonder whether somebody among my relations will have an opportunity of witnessing it." Then he foresaw that his nephew **Nalaka** would. So he visited his sister's place and summoned his nephew and urged him, saying:

"My dear nephew Nalaka, the birth of a son has taken place in the palace of King Suddhodana. He is a Bodhisatta. He will attain Buddhahood after passing the age of thirty-five.

"You, my nephew, are somebody deserving of seeing the Buddha. Therefore, you had better become a recluse even today."

Though born to the parents of eighty-seven crores' worth of wealth, the young Nalaka had confidence in his uncle, and thought "My uncle would not have urged me to do what is not beneficial. He did so because it is of benefit indeed." With this conclusion he had the robes and the alms-bowl bought and brought immediately from the market. Having his hair and beard shaved, and putting on the robes, he said to himself:

"I have become a recluse with dedication to the Buddha, the noblest personage in the world. (I become a recluse being dedicated to the Buddha who will certainly appear.)"

Having said thus, he faced to the direction of Kapilavatthu, where the Bodhisatta was, and made obeisance, raising his clasped hands in fivefold veneration. Thereafter he put his bowl in a bag, slung it on his shoulder and entered the Himalayas. Awaiting to receive the Buddha there in the forest, he devoted himself to asceticism.

Reference:

The Chronicle of Gotama Buddha – by Ven. Mingun Sayadaw

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