

Hemavata Sutta

Practicing the Dhamma to attain Nibbana



Translated by U Thein Han (Mahasi Yogi)
For free distribution only

Compiled for the Serene Joy and Emotion of the Pious

A Gift of Dhamma

Hemavata Sutta

Practicing the Dhamma to attain Nibbana

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Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa



The Hemavata Discourse elucidated by Mahasi Sayadaw
Translated by U Thein Han (Mahasi Yogi)

FORWARD

This discourse was delivered by our Lord Buddha immediately after the *Dhammacakka Sutta* (Turning the wheel of Dhamma or Dhamma sekkyā Tara) was delivered to the *Panca Vaggi* (*ascetic Kondanna, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji*) who were later became the foremost and most senior *Bhikkhu's* to attain the arahatship in this Gotama Dispensation along with millions of *Devas* and *Brahmas*. The discourse was therefore as ancient as the famous *Dhammacakka Sutta - the four Noble Truths Sermon*.

The discourse was about the two *Yakkhas* and their one thousand attendants, the *Sutta* was not so popular to the Buddhists because it was related to the attainment of *Sotapanna* by the two *Ogres* (*Yakkha* or *Devas*). The two *Yakkhas* (*Ogres*) *Hemavata* and *Satagiri*, immediately after the *Dhammacakka Sutta*, after serious assessment of the Buddha attributes met with the Buddha. Having absolutely convinced without a doubt that the Lord *Buddha Gotama* was the true Buddha, took to the refuge in *Buddha, Dhama, Samgha*, followed by the one thousand their attendants. The entire group of *Yakkhas* attained the *Sotapanna* Maggaphalan.

When the first sermon *Dhammacakka Sutta* was delivered to five ascetics, and millions of *Devas* and *Brahmas*, millions had attained *Sotapanna*, *Anagami* and *Arahatship* along with the only human ascetic *Kondannain* attained *Sotapanna*. The *Satagiri Deva*, unlike other *Devas*, although he was at the assembly, listening to the *Dhammacakka Sutta*, was not able to attain *Sotapanna*, because he was not attentive to the Sermon. When *Satagiri* and his friends *Hemavata* later met the Buddha, after hearing Buddha admonition had attained the *Sotapanna* along with their one thousand attendants *Yakkhas*.

The secondary story of this *sutta* was the *Lady Kali* who overheard the *Deva's* dialogue about the attributes of the Buddha. The lady *Kali* who had acquired the divine hearing overheard the *Deva's* (*Yakkha*) conversation, a special divine sense of hearing acquired by people who had accrued great *parami* in their past existence, also had attained *Sotapanna* after she developed her overwhelming adoration of the Buddha attributes.

This sutta is a great inspiration for all of us who are practicing the Dhamma in order to attain Nibbana.

For the inspirational of all the pious Dhamma friends, I have reformatted the *sutta*, explained and paraphrased by *Mahasi Sayadaw*, for the serene joy and the emotion of the pious.

I will begin with the story of *Lady Kali* as an introduction to the *Hemavata Sutta*.

Compiled for the Serene Joy and the Emotion of the Pious

*Maung Paw,
California*

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1. The Story of Lady Kali

1.1 Introduction:

It was the time when *Siddhatta Gotama* attained the enlightenment as *Sammāsambuddha*, the perfect Buddha. There lived in the neighborhood where Buddha delivered his first Sermon, *Dhammacakka Sutta*, a rich man's daughter, named *Kali*, to enjoy the cool breeze, opened her bedroom window. The time was in the month of Waso and the weather was hot in that region as it is here in *Mandalay* or *Shwebo*. The lady *Kali*, being a pregnant woman, in the hot weather, to bring in the cool breeze, she opened her bedroom window to let in some fresh air.

At that moment, from up above she heard some voices up above her head. Pondering for some moment to discern the theme of the dialogue, she realized what she overheard was of celestial beings - non-human; but the dialogue between the two Deva's – The two deva's were *Satagiri Yakkha* and *Hemavata Yakkha*.

It is very rare for human to have acquired the ability to hear through the divine hearing to listen to the Deva's conversation. Only those of great parami could have acquired this ability. So she was able to discern clearly that what she overheard was the discussion between the two Deva's about the attributes of the newly enlightened Buddha.

The young lady Kali was in her early sixteen and was pregnant. It was a tradition for girls to get married at sixteen in India and Kali must be about that age. She was carrying a child none other than a future disciple of the Buddha, *Sonakutikanna Thera*, who was bestowed with *etadagga* (distinction) for **his excellence in reading skill**.

1.2. The dialogue on the attributes of the Buddha

Overhearing the dialogue of the attributes of the newly enlightened Buddha, she became so entrenched in the adoration of the Buddha. The discussion was so intensive and extended to many areas of how *Siddhatta Gotama* attained the Buddhahood. Understanding the Dhamma so clearly and with deep adoration of the Buddha, she went through perceiving the physical and mental phenomenon and the impermanence of the loka (the world) that **she quickly attained the Sotapanna maggaphalan**.

The pregnant lady Kali, in the course of time gave birth to a child who later became *Sonakuttikanna Thera*. *The lady Kali was the first female disciple to have attained the Sotapanna*. She achieved that distinction on overhearing the attributes of the Buddha and having her faith in Him. Later she received from the Buddha the highest honor of *etadagga* (**The foremost female disciple in the Buddha dispensation like the foremost lay male disciples – Tapussa and Bhalika**).

The story illustrates to us that if the young lady Kali by paying attention to the dialogue between the two Deva's could developed the great admiration and adoration of the Buddha, not seeing the Buddha in person, she attained the Sotapanna Maggaphalan, we all have a good chance to strive and achieve the same level. This is a great inspirational story for all the pious.

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part I

2.1 Introduction:

This *Hemavata Sutta* a short discourse about the two Yakkhas , Satagiri and his close friends Hemavata. The sutta is often overlooked by many because discourse is short and hidden between the two great discourses: Dhammacakka sutta and the Anattalakkhana sutta.. In reality, it is the Buddha's second sandwiched between the *Dhammacakka Sutta* and the third sermon *Anattalakkhana* sutta. However this sermon was not so well known as the first and the third sermons. This sutta was delivered on the night of the same day on which the *Dhammacakka Sutta* was delivered.

This sutta is suitable to every person. The dialogue between Hemavata *deva* and *Satagiri deva* contains descriptions of the admirable attributes of the Buddha, and also the ways of good conduct for those practicing the Dhamma with the view to attain Nibbana in this auspicious era – Gotama dispensation.

2.1.1 The discourse on turning the wheel of Dhamma (*Dhammacakka sutta*)

The discourse was delivered by our Lord Buddha some 2,551 years ago. Our Lord Buddha dispensation has a life span of 5,000 years. Our Buddha then, had gone through his Buddha ministry to teach *human beings, devas* and *Brahmas* for forty five years following the delivery of the first sermon, *Dhammacakka Sutta*.

At the end of the full moon day of the month of Kason, some 2551 years ago, the Buddha attained Buddha-hood, and for seven times seven days he stayed on at the seven places, nearby. After 49 days following the attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha went to *Migadaya Forest* near *Baranasi* for the purpose of delivering His first sermon to the five acetic hermits (the *pañca vaggi*) (*five ascetics: Kondanna, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji*), *the first sermon - Dhammacakka sutta*.

Numerous number of *devas* and *brahmas* assembled around the Buddha to listen to His first sermon. Of the five human beings, *pañca vaggi*, the oldest one, Ashin Kondañña had attained the *sotapanna* along with eighteen crores of *brahmas* and countless *devas* had attained the realization of the *Dhamma*, according to *Milinda pañha*.

Among the celestial audience was *deva* named *Satagiri*, from Sata Mountain. He was highly gratified to hear the *Dhammacakka Sutta*, but he was not certain about the presence of his good friend, *Hemavata deva*. After looking around, he found that his friend was absent. He was anxious to see him in attendance because the last sermon of the same was given by *Kassapa Buddha*, who preceded Gotama Buddha some incalculable number of world-periods past, and this was the first time the same sermon was delivered. That was the reason, he wished to have his friend, *Hemavata*, present in

the audience. For this distraction, *Satagiri* had failed to attain realization of the *Dhamma* owing to this distraction.

2.2. How to listen to the Sermon

2.2.1 Concentrated attention is essential

To attain realization of the *Dhamma* when 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 *Samadhi* and only with *Samadhi* could one gain insight. If the mind wanders during the sermon over domestic, economic and other secular affairs *Samadhi* could not be attained.

Anxiety is a distraction to attain *Samadhi* and to Insight. 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:

2.2.2. Proper way to listen to the Dhamma

A sermon must be attended to with an utmost attention and a motive to accrue benefit for attaining the path to Nibbana. 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 said. The listener must listen carefully, with full mental involvement. That is the proper way of attending to a sermon.

Attending to a sermon in this way, one's mind will be calm and absorbed in the sermon; free from interference and with purity of mind. There are instances of *Dhamma* realization at the time when Buddha delivered the *Four Noble Truths*.

Illustration: The attainment was realized by *Ashin Kondanna* and innumerable numbers of *devas* and *brahmas* after listening to the sermon of the *Dhammacakka* was due to their attentive concentrated mind. However, in the same instance, *Satagiri* was unable to attain the *Dhamma* because of his concern of his friend's (*Hemavata*) absence that distracted his mind and attentiveness.

2.3. Practice the Dhamma within the duration of Buddha Sasana.

It is important for one to practice the *Dhamma* in this auspicious era, while we all are living within the Buddha dispensation (within the duration of 5,000 years) as one could attain the *Dhamma* only during this period. To seek out the worldly pleasure is thus secondary.

If one could practice the *Dhamma* diligently, it is possible for one to attain at least the first stage of spiritual development, *Sotapanna* (magga or phalan). By the attainment of the *Sotapanna*, one will be freed from rebirth in the four niraya planes of existence (hell). In the worse case, one can become involved in the *Dhamma* and continue making good

deeds (*kusala*). By the power of meritorious deeds, one could be reborn as a human being, or in the heavenly bliss of Deva world. One should not waste one's life by all the worldly distractions like Satagiri who had missed the opportunity of attainment by allowing his mind is distracted while listening to the Buddha's discourse.

2.4. Satagiri in Search of his friend Hemavata

At the end of *Dhammacakka discourse*, Satagiri left the assembly in search of his friend, *Hemavata Deva*. *Satagiri* being a leader, he was accompanied by five hundred warrior-attendants with chariots drawn by elephants, horses and galleons (huge and powerful birds). At the same time Hemavata was on his way to his friend Satagiri to invite him to a celestial festival of flowers-wonderful flowers that were then in full bloom in Himalaya Mountains. Hemavata too, came in full force with his five hundred warrior-attendants and chariots. Hemavata heading for the south while Satagiri Deva heads for the north. They met half-way over the city of Rajagaha.

When the two friends met, Hemavata said:

Hemavata: "Friend Satagiri, the Himalayas are now full of flowers as never before. So I have come to invite you to a feast to celebrate the occasion."

Satagiri: asked his friend why the Himalayas's flowers were so unusually in bloom?.

Hemavata : He did not know the reason.

Satagiri: "The blooming of flowers in Himalaya Mountains was just like those flowers everywhere and in full bloom so unusually in abundance. The reason is none other than the appearance of *Sammāsambuddha*. A Buddha has arisen in this world for over two months already. Today He delivered His first sermon, The *Dhammacakka Sutta* and all the flowers are in full bloom on all trees making obeisance to the enlightened one. I was attending to the discourse and left to look for you and to invite you to attend the sermon.

Satagiri: "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 Himalaya region but in the environment of the Sata Mountain. All over the world, the flowers blossom making obeisance to the Buddha on this auspicious occasion.

Devas and *brahmas* assembled to listen to the sermon are so numerous that the world is in radiant with celestial lights. And in the east, the full moon shines clearly along with *asahli* planet. Tonight is therefore, full of light from all these sources, a sacred one." Now, from the view of *devas*, the entire world must have been very beautiful indeed on that day of the first sermon. So Satagiri invited his friend Hemavata to go to pay obeisance to the Buddha.

Satagiri: “Let us now go to make obeisance to our great teacher, the Buddha of the noble and glorious lineage of Gotama.”.

Our great teacher, Siddhattha of the Gotama lineage of the Sakkyia clan, had practiced 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 attribute of the Enlightened One.

2.5. Buddha’s Nine attributes:

2.5.1 Araham attribute

Araham means “deserving”. The Buddha deserves 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 *Brahma*. And among men too, some worship the headman 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, and rich. Even *devas* want to be prosperous.

The Buddha said that one would enjoy the fruits of one’s own deeds and misdeeds. But

“One can gain especial merit if one makes adoration to a person who possesses a full measure of morality (sila) and other noble qualities.”

If you make adoration to noble and holy persons, you will gain the kind of merit you expect to get. Buddha, possesses the highest attributes of *sila* and other noble qualities. Thus, the *devas*, *Brahmas* and *human beings* make obeisance to the Buddha, they will gain merit and receive rich rewards ranging from the benefits of human and celestial lives to the realization of *Nibbana*.

*Such benefits are gained from the merits accrued through adoration to the Buddha. So the term **Araham** is used for the Buddha as one deserved the adoration of Devas, Brahma and Human.*

Satagiri: praised the Buddha – *Araham*..

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, *kilesa*. Beings in all planes of existences hanker after things that are desirable, they have

- *Lobha* – greed
- *Dosa* – anger
- *Moha* – delusion

Our Buddha has none of these – clear of *lobha*, *Dosa*, *Moha*. That is the reason why the Buddha deserves the noble term of *Araham*.

2.5.2. Sammasambuddha attribute

The *Sammasambuddha* attribute: . *Samma* means “truthfully”; *sam* means “by oneself”; *Buddha* means “knowing”. So the term means “knowing the truth (the *Dhamma*) fully by oneself.” The Buddha had earlier received tutelage of Brahmin teachers *Alara* and *Udaka* in *Samantha* and *vipassana*; but when he attained the Buddhahood, He did so all on his own through the knowledge gained through insight all by himself alone. He perceived

“**The law of dependent Origination**” *Padiccasamupada*.

He judged the state of *rupa* and *nama* (physical and mental phenomena) by His own insight, and eventually became Buddha.. That is the reason why the Buddha deserves the noble term of *Sammasambuddha*.

2.5.3. Buddha’s Attribute

When the Siddhatta Gotama attained Buddhahood, He gained the supernatural power and knowledge to see the past, the present and the future: He knew in an instant, whatever He directs his thought to. He is the knower of all things. For that reason He knew everything full and completely all the *Dhamma*, thus, *he deserves to be called Buddha*.

Satagiri: in praise of the “**Buddha**”

Satagiri: Hemavata, the noble attributes of the Buddha were so numerous that it will take numerous years to count and explain them one at a time. Then he invited his friend to come listen to the Buddha sermon.

Hemavata: made an examination of the points to determine whether the one referred to by his friend was a true Buddha.

There had also appeared many branches of knowledge including the system for identifying the features of the Greatest Man. The people were eager to see the Buddha, the Exalted One. At that time, there appeared many impostors who claimed to be the Buddha. Among them were six prominent heretics who were roaming about with their followers proclaiming their own doctrines.

They were:

1. *Purana Kassapa*.
2. *Makkhali Gosala*,
3. *Ajita Kesakambala*,
4. *Pakudha Kaccayana*.
5. *Sancaya Belatthaputta*, and

6. *Nigantha Nataputta.*

They were, in fact, just impostors who appeared prior to the enlightenment of the true and perfect Buddha.

2.6. Hemavata questions:

2.6.1. Buddha Disposition

Hemavata: “*Friend Satagiri, can your Teacher keep his mind in good disposition? Or is your Teacher well disposed to all the beings without any discrimination?*”

“Friend Satagiri, in this world there are many who claim to be Buddha. Can your Buddha remain impartial to his disciples and disciples of others as well, and keep his mind in good disposition toward all living beings?”

2.6.2 Goodwill and Compassion to all

Hemavata: *Can he have metta (goodwill) towards all and wish them for their well being and happiness? Can he have kindness and compassion on all alike?”*

There were some fake Buddha and they will extend their *metta* (loving kindness) and *Karuna* (compassion) only to those who make adoration to him. Those who did not follow them or adore them, they said would be relegated to hell. Those who made such claims are not being regarded as real Buddha.

A true Buddha would keep His mind in good disposition toward all living beings.

2.6.3 Equanimity towards pleasant and unpleasant

Hemavata: “*Friend, can your 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.

A true Buddha should look at both pleasant and unpleasant with equanimity.

2.6.4. Hemavata’s Past Life

Hemavata was no ordinary person; in his former existence, during the time of *Kassapa Buddha*, he was a monk teaching five hundred disciples. That is why he had asked

questions relevant to the attributes of a Buddha. Satagiri was also a monk at that time who had entered the Order of Sangha together with Hemavata and taught five hundred disciples like the latter.

To the Hemavata's questions, his friend Satagiri gave a graphic answer thus:

2.7. Satagiri Answers

Satagiri: “Friend Hemavata, our teacher, the Buddha has the attribute of looking upon all beings with *metta* and *compassion* without discrimination. He has full control of His mental disposition.

Explanation - The Buddha's disposition toward all beings was all equal, to those who adored him and those who opposed him. 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 His and His *Dhamma*, thus becoming disciples. Of course, there were those who were followers of Mara, who were actively opposing the Buddha.

“The Buddha is equally well disposed to all beings, with no discrimination, extends His *metta*, *Karuna* (compassion) to all,”

Illustration: The Buddha took the same attitude toward His arch-enemy *Devedatta*, as he towards his own son *Rahula*; and regards both of them as beings. The Buddha treats everyone the same and disseminated his loving-kindness and compassion to all beings.

Satagiri: “Our teacher has a well-balanced attitude towards all beings in all planes of existence; they be *Deva*, *Brahma* and *human*”

2.8. The Buddha Mahakaruna

Satagiri: The Buddha wished all beings to be happy in the same way as He wished His son, *Rahula* to be happy; he wished all beings to attain *Nibbana* just as He wished, his son, *Rahula* to attain *Nibbana*. He had the same compassion and *metta* to all as he had for *Rahula*. It is difficult for people to adopt an attitude of equality to all. The Buddha, however, disseminated *mahakaruna* (great compassion) to all beings in all planes of existence.

According to *Patisambhidamagga*, perceiving in all beings and the miseries of old age, illness and death, in continuum leading to the state of impermanence, a great compassion arose in the mind of the Buddha. The Buddha's compassion, however, was by far the highest and encompasses by far the most extensive. The Buddha has compassion for mankind not only for the present stage of distress; but for their future distress as well. His compassion is based on old age, illness and death that a being will have to go through the incalculable cycle of birth and rebirths.

He see men as 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 to the last moment when nothing can be done to cure the disease when death is at hand. That, is the life story of man: in the unending stream of existences.

Being able to know and see all aspects of miseries that a being has to go through: it's birth, old age, illness and death Buddha see him with great compassion for all beings without discrimination. This is his Mahakaruna – Great Compassion for all. ;

The Buddha *Mahakaruna* arises in his thought: “*Unless He saved them by showing the path to liberation, all beings will be downed in the whirlpool of samsara - the miseries and distresses of old age, illness and death.*” With that compassion, He had left us his teaching for all beings learn and liberate themselves from the samsara.

“*All the sentient beings in all the planes of existence are helpless. Thus, the Buddha felt great compassion, mahakaruna, for all beings.*”

The Buddha had left his teaching for all to learn and use it to guide their way to liberation form the misery of Samsara. Those who followed His teaching would be saved from hell, old age, illness and death; from the endless cycle of existences, *samsara*..

The appearance of a Buddha

Explanation: Buddha appears only after a lapse of many *kappa* (eons) and each Buddha lived only for a life span of that era. Our Buddha appeared when the human life span was one hundred.

His predecessor *Kassapa Buddha* appeared when the human life span was 30,000 years. It is a rare opportunity to hear the sermons of a Buddha. Though the Buddha had passed away some 2,550 years ago, we could still listen to the discourses of His sermons from his disciple Monks and learned laymen. It is not possible for one to listen to the Buddha's discourses in every plane of existence. It will even be a great loss, if one follows the wrong view.

Illustration: Q & A : Between King Kawrabya and venerable Rathapala

In the life time of the Buddha there was an *Arahat* by the name of *Rathapala*. He was the son of a rich man and a 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 onslaught 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 Rathapala 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 Buddha meant when He said that all the beings were without anyone to help them.

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 there are no single property which can be called your own because one has to leave everything when one dies and heads for a new existence. This fact the Buddha realized and His compassion for all beings arose in the mind of the Buddha.

One’s true possessions are one’s meritorious deeds, such as:

- giving of alms, (*Dana*)
- observing the precepts (*Sila*) and
- doing meditation. (*Bhavana*)

No one can take away your meritorious deeds from you it will follow you from one existence to another and to another and on and on.

Persons who are rich in meritorious deeds will obtain existences in the heavenly bliss.

It is therefore necessary to strive:

- to gain merit by doing *dana* (**alms-giving**),
- *silā* (**observing the precepts**) and
- *samatha and vipassana* (*Bhavana*) (**mindfulness and meditation**),

The last two practices are the most important of them all. You should strive to practice them.

Those who have had these possessions of meritorious deeds 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 the Buddha saw that all beings are slaves to lust and greed. They serve their lust and greed even at the risk of their lives. They go out in search of the things what 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, *tanha*. There is no time to take rest.

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 *samsara*.

“There are No true personal property, and all have to be abandoned.”

The venerable monk said that the Buddha saw this deplorable plight of all living beings. He also saw that he was the one who could save them

Satagiri: *The great compassionate Buddha who sees all beings without partiality or discrimination.*

“Besides, our teacher, the Buddha, can take with equanimity all the desirable as well as undesirable sensations,” continued Satagiri. 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 others who are moved and swayed by sensations of all kinds. *Satagiri*

2.9. Question related to Enlightenment

At the time of the Buddha there were many who claimed to be Buddhas. Prominent among these pretenders were:

1. *Purana Kassapa*, leader of a group;
2. *Makkhali Gosala*, another;
3. *Ajita Kesakambala*, another;
4. *Pakudha Kaccayana*, another;
5. *Nigantha Nataputta*, another; and
6. *Sañjaya Belatthaputta*, 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.

Explanation: 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 the Buddha was like those fakes.

Hemavata: “*What is the Buddha’s ability to have His mind in full control in respect of possible reaction to pleasant and unpleasant things?*”

Satagiri: The Buddha could view all pleasant and unpleasant things in its true state with equanimity. For instance, He looked at the three beautiful daughters of Mara and saw them as mere conglomerations of detestable (physical) elements.”

The Buddha, and his disciples of arahats could view things in equanimity and keep their minds in full control. And even the non-*Arahats* who had been practicing the meditation over the unpleasantness of material things (*asubha-kamma*) could view physical elements as they truly are.

Example: 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 jhana, then via the *jhana* stage to Arahathood.

2.10. Viewing the unpleasant as Pleasants.

In viewing unpleasant things so that they became pleasant, the Buddha converted hateful beings into loveable ones by means of His *metta* (loving-kindness). He viewed such beings with *karuna* (compassion), and those beings became as loveable and adorable as His own son, Rahula 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, Rahula. 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.

Illustration: To illustrate Buddha’s ability of viewing the unpleasant as pleasant, we have witnessed some instances like:

- The Buddha picked up the sari from the dead body of *Punna*, a slave woman, and wore it as a robe without any feeling of disgust.
- The Buddha ate the cake from the folds of *Mallika’s* skirt without disgust, and also ate the left-over of a meal eaten by a Brahmin named *Pañcaggadayaka* without disgust.

The story of Mahakassapa and a leper

There was an instance of *Mahakassapa Mahathera*'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. (*note: The act of alms giving was an act of compassion on the part of the arahat to offer the sentient being have the opportunity to gain merits*".)

The leper was so full of volition to 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 pleasant in respect of the elements comprising it. All the *arahats* could view in this manner, not to say of the Buddha.

2.11. Good and Evil Intentions

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

- (1) *Kama sankappa*, the intention to obtain desirable and pleasant things;
- (2) *Byapada-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.

2.11.2. There are three kinds of good intentions:

- (1) *nekkhamma-sankappa*, the intention to oppose lustfulness;
- (2) *abyapada-sankapa*, the intention to cause happiness and well being;
- (3) *avihimsa-sankappa*, the intention to have kindness.

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

The Buddha has:

- Long removed all evil intentions
- Full of good intentions
- Free of lust for pleasant things,

- Free of desire for destruction and torture of unpleasant things.
- He has spontaneous feelings of kindness and goodwill for all beings and things
- His mind was always clear and well under control.
- The Buddha controls His mind by going into *jhana* and *phala samapatti*.
- He keeps it in control – at will while radiating loving kindness and compassion.

Satagiri: “*My teacher, the Buddha, keeps His mind fully under control on the three evil intentions and the three good intentions.*”

He does not discriminate between those who have reverence for Him and those who are opposed Him; he projects his *metta* and *karuna* on all beings. He views all pleasant and unpleasant alike, and was in full control of His mind. Thus, we should pay reverence to him.

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part II

Hemavata continued on his query about the Buddha whether he is true Buddha, among the many fakes who claimed to be the Buddha.

3.1. Hemavata second question

Hemavata : “Does your teacher take things that are not given *by action, verbal or thought*? Does he rob or steal?”

Explanation: Both Satagiri and Hemavata, had been *devas* since the latter part of Kassapa Buddha’s *sasana* and to the early part of Gotama Buddha’s *sasana*. For such a long period the two celestial beings should have had experiences of many such pretenders at a time when people were eagerly awaiting the coming of the Buddha. Hemavata knew that the bogus ones were not free of taking things not given. Hemavata thus put forth this question about the Satagiri’s teacher, the Buddha.

3.2. Is he free of guilt of torture and lassitude?

Hemavata: *Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of the guilt of torture and also of lassitude?*

Lassitude is a kind of forgetfulness. One who has been overwhelmed by sexual desires easily forget that it is sin to commit immoral sexual behavior. 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.

3.3. Is your teacher free from lust?

Illustration: Purana Kassapa.

The Purana Kassapa, who was on the wrong path, came to see *Venerable Bakula* about fifty years after the passing away of the Buddha. The *takkadun* (*The fake*) belongs to a Sect which required its members to practice asceticism with no clothes on. This Kassapa was a follower of *Niganda Nataputta*, a well-known leader of the sect.

This Kassapa was a friend of Venerable Arahant, Bakula, when the latter was a layman. Kassapa asked Bakula:

Kassapa: “Friend, how long have you been in the Buddha’s *sasana*?”

Bakula: “Eighty years”

Kassapa: “How many times did you indulge in sexual intercourse during that period?”

Bakula: “Friend Kassapa, you should ask, ‘How many times did you think of sex?’ That is a civilized query.”

Bakula : “I became a Arahat on the eighth day of my ordination, and since becoming an Arahat I am free of all desires for sex. So I say that I had not thought 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 sasana and after practicing meditation, became an Arahat.

Hemavata: Is your teacher, the Buddha, free from lustful desire?

Hemavata: Is your teacher, the Buddha, in full 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 (kilesa kama.) *If one is free of lust, one is said to have attained the first stage of jhana.*

Satagiri : “Friend Hemavata, my teacher does not steal or rob, like the bogus ones. The Buddha said in his *Dhammacakka sermon* that He had found the middle path, *majjhima patipada*. He also said that he had practiced *maggangas* that includes right action – *sammakammanta*.(*refraining* killing, stealing and immoral sex act). These are the acts one must avoid; and such avoidance is called *virati*.

Explanation: *Virati* is of three kinds;

- *sampatta virati*, refraining from evil deeds without formally taking the precepts of *sila* (observance of morality)
- *samadana virati* refraining from evil deeds after formally taking the precepts of *sila*: and
- *samuccheda virati* - permanent avoidance by means of *Ariya magga* .

The Buddha had completed the practice of *Ariya magga* which embraces all the *virati*, avoidance of all physical misdeeds. So he said,

Satagiri: “*Our teacher, the Buddha, is free of the guilt of stealing*”.

Illustration: Purana Kassapa (Fake Buddha)

I want to give you a further explanation regarding the question of stealing. There were fake Buddhas before the coming of the genuine Buddha and one the six fakes, *Purana 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.

Illustration: Makkhali Gosala (Fake Buddha)

The Makkhali Gosala, another fake, 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 samsara* (cycle of existences), he maintained, and all beings would be saved when their turns came.

Illustration: Pakudha-kaccayana (Fake Buddha)

Pakudha-kaccayana, a leader of another sect, said that all beings were composed of misery, happiness and life elements, and so if one were to cut a being with a sword, the sword would cut into these components but the being would remain unaffected. *Killing a being has no resultant effect.*

Illustration: Ajita (Fake Buddha)

Ajita, another fake, maintained that there was *no such thing as the next life* and any good deeds and evil deeds by the individual would not produce any effect.

3.5. Explanation: On stealing and Robbing

Every being likes 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 anyone. 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.

Unlike the fakes, for the genuine Buddha, these deeds were declared as sins. He did not commit these sins and would not have anyone commit them. This was what made Hemavata put the question about stealing, to which Satagiri made a prompt answer:

Satagiri: "My teacher, the Buddha, was free of the sin of stealing because He was in completely in practice of *sammakammanta*. (*Right actions*)

3.6. Explanation: On Uprooting of evil through Ariya virati

This Ariya virata - *samucchedapahana*. - *achievable through the practice of Vipassana*. In the meditation practice when one reached an advanced stage, one could see the cessation of *nama* and *rupa* and gain the insight of *Ariya magga*. At that time there will never have any desire to steal or to commit any sin. That is the time of uprooting of all the evil desires by means of *Ariya virati*. This complete abandonment is called *samucchedapahana*. This abandonment occurs not only when one reaches the higher stage of meditation insight but even at a lower stage when one becomes a *sotapanna*. At that stage all the evil deeds named in the five precepts (*pañca sila*) have been uprooted.

According to *Dhammadasa sutta*, a *sotapan* 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 *samgha*. So the *sotapan* has come to possess the ability to observe fully the five precepts which the *Ariyas* hold in high esteem.

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

The Ariyas adore the five precepts. They do not want to break them; they are always anxious not to break the *sila*. They observe the precepts to keep their minds in purity, and purity of the mind can be achieved only by observance of the five precepts.

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 an evil deed is and refrains from it and keeps his *sila* in purity since his childhood. Maybe, he had achieved a special insight of the *Dhamma* in his previous existence.

3.7. The first Ariya Stage

A real sotapan had already come into the fold of the Ariyas and so he has been strictly observing the five precepts and has thus completely uprooted all evil deeds. A

Sotapana (stream-winner) 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 breaking 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 behavior of all an ordinary *Ariya*.

Satagiri: The Buddha had already removed all the evil deeds by means of all three *virati*, 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.:

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

Satagiri: *“The 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 fake Buddhas, and the intention was to distinguish the genuine from the fakes..

3.7.1. Explanation: The quality of Sotapanna.

A Sotapan will never kill either to attack or in self-defense. Should one thinks one can and should retaliate the attacker, in self-defense, proves that one is not a *sotapan*, for according to the Buddhist tenet, the person entertaining such a notion is a mere *puthujjana*, definitely not a *sotapan*. A real *sotapan* would not kill even a bug, not to say of a human being. This fact must be remembered once and for all.

Satagiri: *“I declare with the courage of conviction that our teacher, the Buddha, never kills or tortures any being.”*

Satagiri: *“Our teacher, the Buddha, is never forgetful. He is far removed from forgetfulness.”*

Forgetfulness in this context means to be absorbed in the five kinds of *kamaguna* (enjoyment of the five senses) or day dreaming; it is letting the mind lost in these sense-of enjoyments. It is called *pamada* in Pali. It amount to enjoying the pleasure of an imaginary thing of beauty and sensual pleasure.

Hemavata: *Your teacher, the Buddha, was He free of the sin of sexual intercourse.*

Satagiri: *“Our teacher, the Buddha, is absolutely free.”*

The Buddha was free of the physical pleasures and the enjoyment of the six senses such as the *looks*, the *voice*, the *smell*, the *taste* and *other forms of contractual pleasures*. And also, He was free of the forgetfulness in regard to the practice of the *satipanthana* (meditation); He was always into *jhana*.

3.7.2. Explanation: On Samatha Jhana?

Concentration of one’s mind on a certain object is called samatha jhana. *Pathavi kasina* is concentration of one’s mind on the earth.

Is the practice of concentration of mind:

- a. To develop a single point of focus – deters any wild thoughts.
- b. To attain the four Rupa-Jhanas.
- c. Then to the four stages of Arupa Jhanas
- d. Is not the practice to realize insight into the impermanence of the five aggregates.
- e. To attain good concentration and keeping the mind calm and collected.
- f. Based on samatha Jhanas one could move on to Vipassana to realize Insight - *Anicca, Dukha, Anatta*.

The progress in the *jhana* would lead to:

- *dibbacakkhu*, special sight,
- *dibbasota*, special hearing

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

Based on the *samatha jhana* one can practice meditation and eventually attain *magga* and *phala* insights. so *samatha jhana* should not be held in contempt. If one practiced *anapana kammattthana* and *dvattimsakara kammattthana*, one could keep one's mind calm and collected and attain *jhana*. Based on this *jhana*, if one move on for *vipassana* one could attain *magga* and *phala* insights.

Only if one observe the happenings and decays and just practiced the *samatha jhana*, one would get only concentration and calmness of the mind.

3.7.3. Explanation on Vipassana Jhana

Observing the three *lakkhanas*: (signs) means *vipassana jhana*.

The three *lakkhanas* are:

- *anicca* *lakkhana*,
- *dukkha* *lakkhana* and
- *anatta* *lakkhana*.

Observing these three signs means *vipassana jhana*. But one cannot possibly start with observation of these three *lakkhanas*.

- a. 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 as they occur, thus: "going" "lifting" of the foot, "moving forward", of the foot, "dropping" of the foot, as one is walking.
- b. 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 (*rupa*) and the mind (*nama*) 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 First Stage of Vipassana Nana

The mindfulness of this state of affairs in the mental (nama) and physical (rupa) phenomena takes the meditator to be beginning of *sammasanañāna* 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 measure of peaceful happiness that is born from Samadhi (concentration).

This kind of concentration is called *ekaggata Samadhi*. This state is equivalent to the first stage of *jhana*. In the next 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-ñāna*.

The second stage of Vipassana Jhana

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

The Third stage of Vipassana Jhana

At the advanced stage of *udayabbaya* the *light emanating* from the state of joy will be overcome by *sukha* (peaceful happiness) and *Samadhi* (concentration) which have become prominent. That stage is equivalent to the third stage of *jhana*.

The fourth stage of Vipassana Jhana

Then further, even *sukha* dims and fades when attention is focused on the constant decay and passing out of the phenomena as *bhanga-ñāna* (insight on decay and destruction) develops. At that stage *upekkha* (indifferent) stands out prominently. That stage is equivalent to the fourth stage of *jhana*. In fact, (indifference) and *ekaggata (one-pointed concentration)* become more prominent in the next stage of insight *sankharupekkha-ñāna*. The yogis who have advanced to this stage will know what it is.

Satagiri: The Buddha was into jhana and is in all four stages of Jhanas.

3.7.4. When to say Sadhu!

The Buddha was constantly into the *jhana*, and for that He is adorable. While, after the end of a part of a sermon the audience exclaimed in one voice,

“Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

(Well done!)

The Buddha went into jhana even during that brief interval. And then He resumed the sermon. Such constancy is really marvelous.”

3.7.4 a Saying Sadhu in Myanmar

There are occasions for the audience to say “Sadhu” during the preaching. In Myanmar it is usual for the audience to say “*Sadhu*” at the end of a Pali *gatha* (verse) of which the preaching monk gives a literal translation. Usually, when the monk ends in a long drawn-out voice with the (Myanmar) phrase

.....“*phyitkya le dawt tha dee*” the audience says without any hesitation, *Sadhu*.

When not to say Sadhu

For instance, in the *Vessantra jataka*, king Vessantra gave away his two children, a son and a daughter of tender ages of four or five, to Jujaka Brahmin. 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 Myanmar and ended his version with the usual “*tha dee*” the audience rush out the usual “*Sadhu*”.

Well, that is the part of the story which calls for sympathy and sadness from the listeners, not exultation, and so the “*Sadhu*” went awry. But in Myanmar the audience doesn’t care to discriminate.

3.7.4.b. Saying Sadhu? (In Sri Lanka)

In Sri Lanka, however, the audience intones “*Sadhu*” **three times only for the part of the sermon which related to attainment of Arahatsip or Nibbana**, for that is an occasion of exultation when a congratulatory note of joy, such as “*Sadhu*”, is called for.

During the time of the Buddha the practice of saying “*Sadhu*” must be of the Sri Lanka pattern. When the audience said “*Sadhu*” three times, the Buddha paused, and during that brief interval He went into *jhana*, and soon after the saying of “*Sadhu*” by the audience, He resumed His sermon, He never remained idle, How adorable!

The preaching monks of today may not be entering into the *jhana*; 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 compassion, entering into the mode of great compassion and loving kindness (*mahakaruna samapatti*) and also into the ecstatic mood of sanctification *Arahatta samapatti* for twelve crore times each, altogether, twenty four crore times, daily. That shows that the Buddha had not missed one moment in entering into *jhana*; so Satagiri said in reply to his friend’s query,

Satagiri: “*The Buddha who knows all the Dhamma fully and is never away from jhana.*”

To sum up, the Buddha was free of the sin of stealing, the sin of torture and killing, and was free of forgetfulness and He is into jhanas, all the time.

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 *jhana* after the sermon session but, as has been said, He utilized the brief intervals during the sermon session when the audience said “Sadhu” to enter into the *jhana*. He never remained idle for one moment.

3.8 The four stages of Ariya:

The four stages of Ariya magga:

- a. *Sotapanna magga* – **stream winner** - Of the four *magga ñanas*, *sotapatti magga* enables the one who attains it to gain great concentration.
- b. *Sakadagami magga*, **-once-returned** - with the concentration power strengthened he reaches the second stage
- c. *Anagami magga* – **non-returned** - concentration power strengthened further he reaches the third stage
- d. *Arahatta magga* – **Arahant** – with concentration deeply strengthened, he reaches the fourth stage through diligence. The ultimate stage of *Arahatta magga* and thus attain the state of an *Arahat*. At this final stage, he has got rid off the forgetfulness 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 waking up. There is of course, no question of mindfulness while one is asleep. That is how mindfulness is practiced every moment of one’s waking life, according to the Buddha’s admonitions of “*apamadana sampadetha*” (constant awareness).

This is the introductory part of *Hemavata*.

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part III

This part relates to question on sins committed by the action of speech:

Hemavata: “Friend Satagiri, does your teacher, the Buddha,

- Does He refrain from telling *false speech*?
- Does He refrain from using rude, insolent and *condemning words*?
- Does He refrain from uttering *words which destroy friendliness and unity*?

4.1. Illustration - Vassakara ‘s False speech

To illustrate the result of false speech we will look at the story of *Vassakara*. During the time of the Buddha, *King Ajatasattu* wanted to invade Vajji where Licchavi princes reigned. These princes were ruling the country in harmony and unity, and their unity was strength. Ajatasattu tried to disrupt the unity and undermine the strength of Licchavi princes by employing a trick. He sent *Vassakara*, one of his ministers, into exile, and Vassakara went to the princes to seek refuge. Some of the princes said to others, “This Brahmin, Vassakara, 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 Vassakara was received by the Licchavi princes and appointed a teacher to the children of the princes.

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

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, Vassakara 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 Vassakara sent a secret message to King Ajatasattu 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 Ajatasattu could capture the country easily. This story furnishes a good lesson about backbiting. Hemavata, therefore, asked:

Hemavata: *“Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of speech calculating to create misunderstanding?”*

Hemavata: *“Is your teacher, the Buddha, free from telling lies?”*

Satagiri: *“Friend Hemavata, Gotama Buddha does not tell lies, He always refrains from falsehood.”*

Since the time when he was a *Bodhisatta* and since receiving a definite prophecy from *Dipankhara 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

“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 would not commit.”

However, if one has attained *sotapanna magga* through meditation 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 *sotapanna 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 Satagiri gave a definite reply to the query, saying,

Satagiri: *“Our teacher, the Buddha, has completely abandoned the sin of false speech.”*

Then to the second question he replied, 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.

However, 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 Arahata 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.

Satagiri: “Our teacher, the Buddha, speaks only of what is good, appropriate and beneficial either to the secular world or to the spiritual world.”

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

4.2. Explanation on Speech

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.

4.2.1. The six kinds of speech in human communication.

A speech that is a lie,

A speech that is false lack of truth

Illustration No. 1 At the time of Buddha, before the Buddha attained Buddhahood there were some religions that said that sacrificial offering of animals neutralized 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.

Illustration No. 2. At the time of Buddha, at the request of *Queen Mallika*, 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 favor of sacrifices.

Illustration No. 3. At the time of the Buddha, *Ajita*, a leader of a sect, maintained:

“There is neither kusala (good deed) nor akusala (bad 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 ditthi*. 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 not true and has no benefit for any, but many people like it.

4.2.2 A speech of truth but is of no benefit

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

4.2.3. A speech of truth of no beneficial , yet liked by many

This category includes speech which is truth but of no benefit though liked by many. 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 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.

4.2.4. A speech of truth beneficial but not liked by some.

The truth, beneficial but not liked by some persons. Such speech includes an 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 approach 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.

Illustration. 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 *samghabhedaka* sin, would fall into hell and suffer misery there for the entire *kappa* (aeon). This prediction was not liked by the Devadatta group but 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 the truth and beneficial to many though not liked by some.

4.3.5. A speech beneficial and also popular

This category includes discourses on *dana* (charity) *sila* (morality) and *bhavana* (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.

Buddha never use the first four kinds of speech; he will use the last two kinds of speech in all cases. 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 in serious subjects such as meditation on death or insight into the state of *Nibbana*. 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 Satagiri 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.

4.4. Hemavata’s Question on Sensual Pleasure.

Hemavata: *“Friend Satagiri, is your teacher, the Buddha, free of desires for sensual pleasures?”*

4.4.1. Hemavata question on Buddha clean of desire to kill?

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

By this he meant whether the Buddha was free of *byapada*, entertains his mind to wish a person he hates *destroyed*. People generally wish someone they do not like dead; some even utter the words to express that wish. The fake Buddhas of those days entertained such wishes. 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, *byapada* is after all an expression of anger, and so it can never be termed clean-mindedness. Hemavata wanted to know whether the Buddha was clean-minded; he said, in effect,

Hemavata: “*Is the mind of your teacher, the Buddha, free of the dirt of evil wishes; is it clean?*”

Hemavata: “*Has the Buddha overcome moha (delusion rendered by ignorance)?*”

Micchaditthi, the wrong belief, is a combination of *moha* and *avijja* (ignorance). So, asking whether the Buddha was clean of *micchaditthi*, which is one of the three signs of the mind. It would appear 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.

4.4.2 Explanation on Micchaditthi

4.4.2.1. Not believing in the law of Kamma

Among the fake Buddhas, *Purana 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 *akiriyaditthi*.

4.4.2.2. Believing in An nihilism

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 *nitthika ditthi*- an nihilism.

4.4.2.3. Reject the kamma and its effect

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 *achetukaditthi*. This belief also rejected *kamma* and its effect.

4.4.2.4. Believing in non-an nihilism (finite)

Another heretical leader, *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* by any force. Any good or bad deed could not affect this composite entity. Therefore, neither sin nor merit had any meaning, which is not true according to Buddhism..

These leaders of false faiths had had wrong conceptions and were sunk under *moha* and *avijja*. Hemavata's query whether the Buddha was free of *micchaditthi*. .

Hemavata: “Does your teacher, the Buddha, have the eye of knowledge of see all the *Dhamma*?”

Hemavata: “Does your teacher, the Buddha, have the eye of knowledge to see all the *Dhamma*?”

Questions relating to the sins by bodily action, by the speech and by the mind did not quite satisfy Hemavata and so he went further with his inquiry whether the Buddha was the real *Samma-Sam Buddha* Buddha, for these attributes could be had by *paccekabuddhas* and *Arahats*. *Paccekabuddha* is a non-preaching, lesser, Buddha. So Hemavata put an important question;

Hemavata: “Does your teacher, the Buddha, have the eye of knowledge to see all the *Dhamma*?”

Satagiri : “Friend Hemavata, our teacher, the Buddha, has never has any sensual desire and is always clean of *tanha*.”

Explanation: 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 *tanha* through *Arahatta magga*. This He had declared when He gave the *Dhammacakka sermon*, saying that He had rejected all the ingredients constituting *samudaya sacca* (*The truth of the cause of suffering*)

Satagiri: “The mind of our teacher is always clean.”

The Buddha's mind was always permeating with *metta* for all beings and there were not a shadow of ill will and anger.

Illustration:

- a. While *Anguli Mala* was chasing the Buddha with a sword the Buddha was full of loving kindness and compassion towards him.

- b. When the drunken elephant, *Nalagiri*, rushed to gore Him, the Buddha was likewise full of loving kindness and compassion.
- c. When *Devadatta* rolled down a huge rock upon Him. Even on such critical occasions His mind was full of loving kindness and compassion.

The Buddha 's mind was free of ill-wills and anger through *Arahatta magga*, had always been of clean mind.

Satagiri : “Our teacher, the Buddha, has overcome through the four *Ariya maggas* all the delusion (*moha*) and ignorance.(*Avijja*).”

4.5. Buddha had given up on all the false view- (Micchaditthi)

a. Since the Bodhisatta as *Sumeda ascetic* was given a definite prediction by *Dipankhara Buddha* that he would become a Buddha, he had given up all false views, the beliefs which denied the principles of *kamma*.

b. Since his renunciation, He rejected all *sensual pleasure* (*Kilesa*). He then referred to the false faiths propagated by the heretical leaders, Purana Kassapa and others, and directed his audience not to follow the wrong paths.

c. **Buddha rejects this false view.** There is a wrong view that said: the predestination which asserts that one has just to live out his time in the *samsara* and need not make any effort for improvement. (*Man born again as man*) 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 be born again as man. In Burmese, *lu the lu phyit* (man dies, becomes man).

Explanation: 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 in that era people had in them less amount of *loba*, *dosa* and *moha*, and so were not captivated 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 man life span had gone down to one hundred, they were not popular. .

The current situation: Now as moral deterioration on the increase, 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 life span 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 favorable attention because people's greed (*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.

The ignorance of *kamma* and its effect that is becoming widespread now is the result of overwhelming *lobha* superimposed by *moha*. The Buddha realized 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 realization through meditation practice and thus free themselves from these false faiths.

Comment: The Buddha was obviously free of false view (*Miccha ditthi*), but at a time when there were many fake Buddhas, Hemavata's query whether the Buddha has free himself of *Miccha ditthi* was quite pertinent, and Satagiri's answer went far beyond because it said that the Buddha had overcome all delusion (*moha*).

Satagiri: “*Our teacher, the Buddha, has the type of knowledge which sees all the Dhamma.*”

4.5.1. Explanation on the five kinds of eyes.

- (1) *mamsa cakkhu*, the ordinary eye;
- (2) *dibba cakkhu*, the eye of *abhiññana* (higher psychic powers):
- (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 *yujana*.

(2) **Dibba cakkhu**, or the eye of *abhiññana* can see all material forms, large or small, near or far: *it can see the abodes of devas and Brahmas*, the nether regions such as *niraya* (hell), and (ghosts and spirits); it can see the universes. This eye can see anything anywhere, any shape or color; *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. He saw all of the human and animal worlds.

(3) **The eye of knowledge**, the term “knowledge” refers to that gained from *vippassana magga*, especially by *Ariya magga*. The eye of knowledge is often referred to as the eye of *Dhamma* which is synonymous with *sotapanna magga ñana*.

(4) **The eye of Dhamma** - *Samanta cakkhu* is synonymous with *sabbaññuta* The Buddha had declared while giving the first of all His sermons, *Dhammacakka sutta*, that He had acquired this *cakkhu* and become the Buddha.

(5) **The eye of Buddha** - *Buddha cakkhu* means. This constitutes *indriyaparopriyatta ñana* which is the insight into the grades of maturity of the minds of all beings. The Buddha could perceive the degree and grade of maturity of all beings. 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 *Nibbana*. If a certain individual was still lacking in maturity, the Buddha would not yet teach him the *Dhamma*.

Illustration: The story of *Bahiya-daruciriya* : To illustrate, let us look at *Bahiya-daruciriya*. He came from his residence in *Supparaka* in the region of *Aparanta* on the western coast of India to *Jetavana* monastery near the city of *Savatthi*, 200 *yujanas* 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. *Bahiya* 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.”*

Bahiya, while hearing the sermon, became an *Arahat* after going through the stages of insight, the four *magga* and *phala*. *Bahiya* maturity came in a few minutes.

4.5.2. Explanation on View and Knowledge

There are two elements in the mental makeup of the individual, namely view or theory (*ditthi*) and knowledge (*nana*). Those who are worldly usually have view (*ditthi*) deep in their minds they subscribe to either eternalism (*sassata*) or faith (*uccheda*). Some like immortality of the soul and some like annihilation after death. The Buddha knew whether an individual was inclined to the eternalism or a nihilism. He teaches according to one's inclination the true faith to quickly attained *magga*.

As *sotapanna* and *sakadagami* are not fully clear of *kama*, *raga* and *byapada* (desire, lust and anxiety), they may relapse into these feelings to a certain extent during their off periods from meditation.

4.5.3. Explanation on Kilesa:

The predisposition on lust (*anusaya kilesa*) comprises seven components, namely,

- *kama raga* (sexual desire),

- *bhava raga* (lust for life),
- *patiga* (aversion or ill-will)
- *mana* (conceit),
- *ditthi* (wrong belief),
- *vicikacca* (perplexed thinking) and
- *avijja* (ignorance).

4.5.4. Explanation on Buddha Eye (Cakkhu)

The Buddha discerned what is important in an individual mind and gave him an appropriate teaching. That was why those who had had an opportunity of hearing the Buddha's sermon quickly attained *Nibbana*.

Now these two kinds of insight, in the Buddha is called *Buddha cakkhu*, "***the eye of the Buddha.***" This twin insight was possessed only by the Buddha and none other *Arahat*: not even Venerable Sariputra has it. Venerable Sariputra could not determine the grades of maturity of the mental state of an individual and give him an appropriate teaching.

Illustration: Once, *Venerable Sariputra* taught a disciple of his the loathsome meditation - *asubha kammathana* exercises, and asked him to practice it for the whole period of the Lent. The disciple could not make any progress, so Venerable Sariputra, took him to the Buddha, reported the matter and gave up the disciple to Him. Then the Buddha discerns the 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.

The monk did as he was directed, and looking at the golden louts, gained the four stages of *jhana*. Then the Buddha caused the flower to wilt and get brownish black, and the monk, rising out of the *jhana* perceived the decay and realized the decay of his own body. 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 a goldsmith for the past five hundred existences* and naturally likes everything neat and tidy. He was, therefore, not interested in *asubha kammathana* which involves contemplation of the decomposition of corpses. Venerable Sariputra did not have the Buddha's eye, taught him an unsuitable method of contemplation. The Buddha, with his Buddha's eye, knew very well of the individual's prejudices and gave him the appropriate teaching - *lahita kammathana* (contemplation of redness) the golden Lotus. The monk attained within a few hours the *arahatta phala*..

As the Buddha alone possessed these two kinds insight, Satagiri replied definitely;

Satagiri: "***Our teacher, the Buddha has the eyes, to see the Dhamma in all its aspects.***"

As Buddha was in possession of the four supernatural eyes sights, Satagiri's reply.

Satagiri: " Hemavata, that the Buddha:

- *Has no desires and lusts*
- *has a clean mind*
- *has no anger (dosa) and anxiety (byapada) and*
- *has no anger and anxiety at all times.*

Illustration: *Venerable Sariputra* was free of anger. He was never angry. A certain Brahmin unbeliever would not believe it. He maintained that Venerable Sariputra was not angry because there was nobody to provoke his anger. So one day while Venerable Sariputra was on his round for alms-food, he (Arahat) was slapped on his back severely. Venerable Sariputra did not even look back at him and was walking with composure. Then only the unbelieving Brahmin realized the truth and humbly begged the Venerable *Arahat's* pardon. In fact, not only Venerable Sariputra but all other *Arahat's* also were clear of anger.

Satagiri: *The Buddha had overcome all aspects of moha. He knows the four noble truths and that he knows truth as truth.*

One should react to all the six senses as mind and matter (nama-rupa) under going constant changes, appearing and disappearing. In that process dilution (*moha*) tends to lead one to think of them, as good and pleasant and encourages one to be mentally attached to them. This attachment leads one to a new existence.

4.5.5. Explanation on delusion (Moha) Influence

- *Moha* makes one loath *dana*,
- *Moha* makes one to loaths *sila*
- *Moha* makes one to loaths *Bhavana*

It was *Moha* that pulls you back to attaining Nibbana. *Satagiri* meant was that Buddha had overcome all anger, delusion and ignorance.

Other Hemavata's questions runs as follows:

Hemavata: *(1) "Friend, Satagiri, has your teacher, the Buddha, in full possession of special knowledge (nana) or called wisdom (vijja)?*

(2) Has he possessed the basic moral conduct (carana?)

(3) Has your teacher, the Buddha, completely rid Himself of all sensuality, rebirth (lust of life), speculation and ignorance (asava kilesa?)

(4) Is He free from the cycle of existences! That is, he is living his last existence?

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

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part IV

5.1. Satagiri answer: To these four questions, Satagiri answered them all categorically:

Satagiri: (1) *the Buddha, in full possession of special knowledge (nana) or called wisdom (vijja)?*

(2) *Has he possessed the basic moral conduct (carana)?*

(3) *the Buddha, completely rid Himself of all sensuality, rebirth (lust of life), speculation and ignorance (asava kilesa)?*

(4) *the Buddha Is He free from the cycle of existences! That is, he is living his last existence?*

And in addition,

- the Buddha, has *basic moral conduct*, that is required of all the basic moral conduct that paves the way to *Nibbana*.”
- the Buddha, has in Him *none of kilesa asava*”
- the Buddha, *has no more new existence*; He is free from the cycle of existences.”

The reason for Satagiri’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 the knowledge of the magga sacca - *eight maggas*. (*Noble Eightfold Path*).

Right Understanding (*Samma-ditthi*),
Right Thoughts (*samma-sankappa*),
Right Speech (*samma-vaca*),
Right Actions (*samma-kammanta*),
Right Livelihood (*samma-ajiva*),
Right Effort (*samma-vayama*),
Right Mindfulness (*samma-sati*), and
Right Concentration (*samma-samadhi*).

That encompassing the three training practices: *Sila-Samadhi-Panna*..

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 knowledge and wisdom. That is why Satagiri gave his answers with strong conviction.

Another reason for his definite answer was that in the *Dhammacakka Sutta* the Buddha said that He had completely rid of (attachment) *samudaya sacca*. This statement together with the declaration of Himself as *Sammāsambuddha* convinced Satagiri 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 kilesa is permanent.”

By that He meant that the deliverance was complete and not for temporary measures, it was permanent and irreversible. The Buddha added that the present existence of his was the last, and there was no future new existence for Him.

5.1. Explanation on Vijja (Wisdom)

There are three kinds of *vijja*:

- *pubbenivasa nana* - ability to recollect past existence
- *dibbacakkha nana*- ability to see in divine eyes, exceeding all others **and**
- *asavakkhaya nana*- ability to purge off all lusts

5.1.1. The Pubbenivasa Nana – Ability to recollect the Past Existences

The *ñana* is the mental ability to look back and see the previous existences. The Buddha acquired this *ñana* in the first part of the night of the full moon day of the month of Kason, the day on which the Buddha was to attain Buddha hood.

5.1.2. The Dibbacakkhu Nana – Ability to see exceeds that of divine Eye

This *ñana* 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 *ñana* but, in fact, the ability far exceeds that of the eye of *deva*. What a *deva*'s eye cannot see, this *ñana* can. The persons possessing this *ñana* can ponder and look far distances, of more than many crores of *yuzana* and see the colors and forms of being there. This *ñana* 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 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, nevertheless, 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 seeing their forms. Among the spirits that usually frighten people are devas also.

Example – The recitation of metta paritta sutta –

Here is a reference in *Metta sutta* to terrestrial 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.

Example - The story of king Bimbisara.

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 “*Sadhu*” (well done!) when the King distributed his merits sharing, merits gained from the good deed of alms-food offering. So they gathered around the Buddha’s monastery and waited to say “*Sadhu*” 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 haunt him just to remind him.

When the king reported to the Buddha about this, the Buddha told the King that these *peta* beings had been the King’s [relatives 92 kappas ago](#), and that these beings haunted the royal chamber to frighten him to remind him about his failure to distribute his merit to all beings. So the King again offered alms-food to the Buddha and Sangha on the following day and distributed his merit to all beings. The *peta* beings said “*Sadhu*” and thus obtained celestial food. So there are various kinds of haunting and frightening by spirits, 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.

Example: The story of Shin Moggallana.

During the time of the Buddha, one day *Venerable Maha Moggalana* and *Venerable Lakkhana* were coming down from *Gijjakutta Mountain*. While on their rounds for alms-food, they saw on the way various kinds of *peta* spirits. There are *peta* beings made up of

- *those only skeletons,*
- *those of only flesh, and*
- *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 running about in the sky. *Venerable Maha*

Moggallana 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 Moggallana*, in the presence of the Buddha, why he had smiled. *Venerable Maha Moggallana* 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 *ñāna*. and can, therefore see what a human eye cannot see such beings as the *peta*. **Now my disciples can bear witness to the fact that there are such beings as *peta*.** I myself, had seen them on the night when I was about to attain Buddha hood while sitting on the *aparajita* 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 disbelief in this matter.

That strange *peta* was a butcher in this city of *Rajagiri*. He had fallen into hell and suffered many hundreds of thousand of years before he became this *peta* to repay a residue of the debt of his sins. *Moggallana* was right when he said he had seen a strange *peta* being.”

The Buddha continued to describe more than twenty kinds of *peta* beings.

- Some *peta* 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.

No human being in the area could see them. Here, *Venerable Lakkhana* who had not acquired *dibbacakkhuñāna* yet could not see them. 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 *abhiññana* can see them; the ordinary human eye cannot.

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

5.1.3. Explanation on four *Magga*'s *nana*.

This *ñāna* is the ability to purge all lusts desires and other defilements. It is *Ariya magga* of which there are four grades:

- *sotapanna magga ñāna*, (*stream-winner's knowledge*)
- *sakadagami magga ñāna*,(*once-returner knowledge*)
- *anagami magga nana*(*non-returner knowledge*) and

- *Arahatta magga nana* (arahat knowledge).

Sotapanna magga nana - Of these four *ñana*, *sotapanna magga ñana* purges the defilements (*asavo* and *kilesa*) concerning *ditthi* (wrong belief):

Sakadagami magga nana -the defilements concerning gross *kama raga* (lust and desires);

Anagami magga ñana the defilements concerning subtle manifestations of *kama raga*; and

Arahatta magga ñana purges all the remaining defilements of lust and desires.

So these four *magga ñana* are collectively called *asavakkhaya ñana*. But the *Arahatta magga ñana*, alone can purge all the defilements; this *ñana* is referred to as *Arahatta magga ñana*. This *ñana* the Buddha attained on the full moon day of Kason just before dawn.

This *ñana* attained by the Buddha after meditating upon the *paticca samuppada*, past midnight of that day when he rose from the *anapana jhana* during which he observed the state of happening and deterioration of the five *upadanakkhanda*. Such observations are called *udayabbaya*. *This observation is like the observation of seeing, hearing, knowing, etc, now being practiced by the yogis here today.* But there is one distinction in regard to the Buddha's practice, that is, He entered all the *jhana*s 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 ñana* in accordance with the various stages of meditation and observation of *Vipassana*. When He attained the *Arahatta magga ñana*, He saw the state of *Nibbana*, and then attained Buddha hood after gaining *sabbaññuta ñana* 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 Satagiri said that the Buddha had the three *vijja nana*.

5.1.4. Explanation on Eight *vijja*

The three *vijja* namely have been explained above:

1. *pubbenivasa nana* - ability to recollect past existence
2. *dibbacakkha nana*- ability to see in divine eyes, exceeding all others and
3. *asavakkhaya nana*- ability to purge off all lusts

And we are going to add five more vijja:

4. *Vipassana ñana, - nama-rupa phenomena*
5. *manomayiddhi ñana,*
6. *iddhividha ñana,*
7. *cetopariya ñana and*
8. *dibbasota ñana.*

5.1.4.(4).. Vipassana nana- observation of physical and mental phenomena - Nama-rupa

The Vipassana nana is attained by observing the actions of nama rupa in the state of anicca, dukkha and anatta. It is through the in-depth observation of the actions as they 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 *Maha Satipatthana sutta,* said “**As you go, observe to know that you go.**” By that He meant that one should observe the force of *vayo* (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 *Maha Satipatthana* 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, *kayanupassana.*

While sitting if you feel the strain, the heat or the pain in the body, you should observe these *vedana* (feelings). That constitutes *vedananupassana.* If a thought occurs, you should note it. That constitutes *cittanupassana.* Then the observation of seeing, hearing, etc, as they are, that is, as a series of phenomena, constitutes *dhammanupassana.* Summing up, your practice of meditation is complete with the four kinds of *satipatthana.*

Now, as you do meditation embracing the four *satipatthana,* 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 should 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 practicing yogi will be able to discern the *nama* (mind) from *rupa* (matter). That stage of insight is called *nama-rupa pariccheda ñana*, which is indeed important as the foundation of the meditation insight. Without the attainment of this *ñana* the other stages of meditation 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 *paccaya pariggaha ñana* 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 by that of *dukkha* and *anatta*. This series of insights constitutes *vipassana ñana*.

The cognitive ability becomes sharper and quicker as the yogi continues with his meditation practice. This *vipassana ñana* can be attained by an ordinary yogi, but in the case of the Buddha, the attainment of *vipassana ñana* was an easy matter since He had already attained *jhana* and purity of mind.

5.1.4.(5 & 6) The ability to create – *Manomayiddhi* and *Iddhividha Nana*

Manomayiddhi and *Iddhividha ñana* are for creating images and the creating of variety of things.

- *Manomayiddhi ñana* is for creating one’s own image, and
- *Iddhividha ñana* is for creating a variety of things.

The latter *ñana* is of a wider scope.

- The sky could be created as the earth; an earthen road could be created in the sky for one to 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 ñana* which is an *abhiññana* in accord with the *fourth jhana*.

5.1.4.(7). Reading the thought of others – *Cetopariya Nana*

Cetopariya ñana is also in accord with the fourth *jhana*, and one who possesses this *ñana*

- 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 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 Matika Mata. an old woman who had come to possess this *ñana*.

Illustration – The story of Matika Mata (Dhammapada Verse 35)

When the Buddha was residing at Jetavana monastery in Savatthi, 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 *Matika* where *Matika Mata*, 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 meditation practice, and we must follow them. We should reside alone and separately.” So they lived, each alone, and commenced their meditation practice.

One day Matika Mata 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 they hear the signal. A signal was given, and the monks came out separately from their separate places of meditation, thinking that one of them had fallen sick and that they were asked to assemble to help him.

Matika Mata misunderstood the monks, and asked, “Have you all quarreled?” 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 practicing *samana Dhamma* and so they were living separately. They said practicing the *Samana Dhamma* in separate places facilitated attainment of *samadhi* and *ñana*.

Matika Mata had never heard of *samana 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 especially for the monks and whether it could be practiced by lay people. The monks said that this could be practiced by any person. Then Matika Mata requested the monks to give her instructions for the meditation 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 meditation practice can be undertaken only after one has been through a course of *Abhidhamma*. That is, in fact, one way of discouraging people to take up the practice.

Matika Mata came home and began the practice. It is not known how many days she took to attain *anagami magga* and *phala* but she did attain them long before the monks did. Once she attained the *anagami magga*, she came to possess the *four patisambhida ñana*, and thus attained the *abhiññana*. She made an observation and found out that the monks had not attained any *jhana* or even *vipassana ñana*, 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 meditation practice and attained *Arahatship* during the Lent. From this we should know that *food is an important factor in the meditation practice*.

When the Lent was over, the sixty monks went to pay their respects to the Buddha at Jetavana monastery. They praised Matika Mata 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 meditation 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 other’s 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”. Matika Mata 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 *Matika Mata*, “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 other's thoughts. Matika Mata replied that those who possessed such power behaved in that manner. Her reply was an indirect admission. This is the case with every *Ariya*. The *Ariyas* 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 other's 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 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 Matika Mata 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 enquires, 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 meditation 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.

People want to be happy. The best way to make one happy is to tame the wild and uncontrollable mind and discipline it. The method of disciplining the mind is the attitude of *yoniso manasikara* (an attitude of “*whatever will be, will be*”). Happiness will come as much as the mind is disciplined.

At least if one can hold *saranagunan* (devotion to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) 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 tamed if one could successfully observe

- Five Precepts*
- Devotion to - Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha*
- Do charity – Dana*
- Morality – sila*
- Bhavana – meditation practices*

5.1.4 (8) Power to hear all sound – Dibbasota Nana.

Dibbasota Nana is the last of the five remaining nana.

- *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 *brahmas* can be heard by one in possession of *dibbasota ñana*. Then sounds from other universes can also be heard.

So Satagiri told his friend, Hemavata, that the Buddha was in full possession of the three *vijja* as well as the eight *vijja*, the supreme mental abilities. “Besides.” said Satagiri, “Our Teacher, the Buddha, possess *carana*, pure and excellent basic conduct.”

5.2. Brief Explanation: Samatha and Vipassana Bhavana

Samatha Bhavana: Heavenly bliss could be obtained in the regions of *rupa* and *arupa* through practice of *samatha bhavana*,

Vipassana bhavana could elevate one to the attainment of the *bliss of Nibbana*.

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. “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. These thoughts and wishes could send one down to hell or other nether planes of existence.

There is a saying in Pali; “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 meditation practice starting with the noting of the rising and falling of the abdomen¹ 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 tamed. When a yogi reaches the stage of *sankharupekkha ñana* 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, Matika Mata. 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 I want to say is that not only the Buddha but such persons as Matika Mata could possess *cetopariya ñana*, the ability to read other’s 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.

Illustration - Personal Experience: It is true that one who is near a person who can read one’s mind dare not entertain any unwholesome thought. In 1293 M.E (1930 A.D), when I was in my eighth year as a monk, I went to live in a cemetery. At 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 Ohn Gaing* which was at the place called *Shweyaungpya Hill* near Donwun railroad depot in Thaton district. This Venerable monk always practiced austerity and did his meditation work at a cemetery. He passed his

¹ A method of noting that is equivalent to noting the breathing in and breathing out as practice by another method.

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. 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 forearm bones 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. Other recited *Metta 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 Matika Mata was obliged to control his mind and keep it pure, so he attained *Arahatship* so quickly.

5.3. Explanation of Carana (Basic Conduct).

Satagiri: *The Buddha was in full possession of the fifteen categories of basic conduct (Sila).*

5.3.1. Patimokkha samvara sila: The meaning of this term is that the one who keeps this *sila* (precept) will be duly favored 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 samsara.*

For the lay people the five precepts are in fact patimokkha samvara sila, and for the monks the 227 precepts, or nine thousand crores of precepts in detail, are *patimokkha 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 *samsara*, he will be free from the possibility of falling into hell and the four nether regions of misery. So this protecting *sila* is called *patimokkha samvara sila*.

5.3.2. Indriya samvara sila:

This *sila* is guarding one self as one *sees, hears, smells, etas 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.

5.3.3. Bhojane mattaññuta sila:

This *sila* is 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; and when, one has bad food, one is disappointed and unhappy. One should control one’s delight or disappointment by reacting to good and bad.”

One takes meal merely to sustain oneself, to relieve hunger, for hunger would bring about suffering and ill-health. One has to be healthy to be able to do what the Buddha has instructed: 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 mattaññuta*.

5.3.4. Jagariamyoga sila:

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.

Example: 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 me sick. If one harbors 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 harboring ill-thoughts. But what this rule of conduct means 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.

This instruction is that one should make one’s mind pure and free of greed, lust and other undesirable things by taking physical exercise of walking, standing or sitting. 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*.

5.3.5 (5 to 8) – Four Rupa Jhana - sila ; These are the four *rupa jhana*.

5.3.9.(9-10) Sadha and Viriya – Faith and Effort –sila - There is no need to dilate on *saddha* and *viriya*. These two are included in the ten *carana*.

5.3.11.(11-15) Sati (awareness) and Panna (intellect), hiri (shame to do misdeed), Ottapa (fear of doing misdeed), bahusacca (well informed) sila: Then there are *sati* (awareness); *pañña* (intellect); *hiri* (shame for misdeeds) *ottappa* (fear of misdeeds); and *bahusacca* (being well-informed.)

To be well-informed means to make note of the Buddha's teaching. Making note of the preaching and thus getting information of the *Dhamma* is "hearing" or *agama sutta*. Discerning and realizing the truth after doing actual practice of meditation is "seeing", or *adhigama sutta*. These two added become *bahusacca*. How much of general knowledge should one have? For an ordinary devotee, being informed of one *gatha*, or verse, is sufficient. For those preachers they should have learnt all the Buddha teachings

Then the question arises: "*How was it that the Buddha who had had no opportunity of learning from others is 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.

Satagiri - His teacher, the Buddha was in full possession of the three vijja, eight vijja and fifteen carana.

One with Vijja (wisdom) and Carana (conduct) is most sacred

5.4. Explanation: The Caste System. There was in India a caste system which divided people into different caste:

- *Brahmana* - priestly
- *khattiya* -warrior
- *Vessa* - merchant
- *Sudda* - peasant

Inspite of the caste system, 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 other's mind, 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.*

Example: There was once, a woman living 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 attic 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 there were similar instances, even today. If only the powers of *abhiñña* could be displayed, people would have the highest esteem.

Among these *ñanas* the most important are:

- *vipassana ñana* (the power attained through observing actions of nama-rupa, and
- *asavekkhaya nana* (ability to purge lusts, desires and defilement).

5.5. Explanation on the Qualification of Sotapanna: -

- *If one has gained vipassana ñana, one becomes cula sotapan, and*
- *If one has gained asavekkhaya ñana as well, one becomes a full sotapan*

He will then be free from the dangers 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 existences he would surely attain *Arahatship* and enter the state of Nibbana. If one has gained *ñanas* of higher degree, one will surely attain a much higher status than that of a *sotapan*.

Those who have attained high status in the planes of existence, those of the human, celestial and Brahma 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 vijja and carana, one becomes nobler.

Yogi’s Attribute

The yogis who have been doing meditation work have, in the first instance, the attribute of *vipassana ñana*. And one who has attained *Ariya magga phala* has gained *asavekkhaya ñana*. From among the five *carana*, the practicing yogi is in possession of

sila, has control of his physical and mental actions, and is alert. So the practicing yogis meditation centers could gain the attributes of *vijja* and *carana* and become noble in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha..

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

Illustration: The Story of Suppabuddha

In this reference, a story of a poor man *Suppabuddha* of long ago is given. During the time of the Buddha there lives 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 other's sleep. He was therefore called Suppabuddha, "*the Waker of sleepers*"

One day, on his rounds of begging. Supabuddha 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 ñana that Suppabuddha would see the light of Dhamma on that day.* The Buddha went on with His sermon on *dana* and *sila*. The Buddha exhorted the audience to refrain from killing, stealing, etc. Suppabuddha was determined to observe the precepts. So, gradually he gained *sila*. *When the Buddha's discourse on the Four Noble Truths, Suppabuddha meditated upon them, and thus became a sotapan.*

After the meeting had ended, Suppabuddha went away as the crowd dispersed. Then a little later, he came back to the Buddha. One the way 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 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 not 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,

- *saddha*, - faith and belief
- *sila*, - morality
- *hiri*, - sense of shame
- *ottappa*, - ashamed to do wrong
- *suta*, - religious knowledge
- *caga*, - a heart bent on giving
- *pañña*, - knowledge and wisdom

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. After *Suppabuddha* had made his report to the Buddha, he went 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 over the *devas*.

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. The king of *Devas* said in reply 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 person highly placed spiritually still 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 *vijja carana*.

- 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.

Hemavata Deva: “Is your teacher, the Buddha, free of lust and desires? Is he also free of a future existence?”

Satagiri Deva: “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 *vijja carana*. Only when there is no more existence will one be rid of all the miseries. These two points are of utmost importance.

Hemavata:“*The mind of the Buddha is fully pure His physical and mental behavior is also free of faults; the Buddha has all the attributes of vijja & carana. I adore Him.*”

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part V

6.1. Hemavata took Refuge in Buddha

was immensely gratified with Satagiri's reply regarding the Buddha's possession of the attributes of *vijja* (wisdom) and *carana* (conduct).

Hemavata: *“Friend Satagiri, 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 vijja and carana. You, my friend, have praised the Buddha truly.”*

This is congratulating Satagiri on his praises of the Buddha. Hemavata said,

“Sadhu: Sadhu: Sadhu” (Well done! Well done! Well done!)

Satagiri: Satagiri 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 Satagiri, 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 jhana 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, Satagiri.

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 austerity which he abandoned only over two months ago. During the period of austerity the Bodhisatta, 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.

Hemavata: To all his entourage - *“Devas, let us approach the Buddha who, like a lion, is hard to approach, who rises and flourishes alone, for He does not have the company*

of kilesa (defilements), who if free of evil deeds, who is not trapped in lust and desires. Let us submit on 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

Hemavata: *“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 higher-ups 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 scriptures, in his existence before he became a *deva*. So he knew manners.

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

- *“Oh, Lord, how does a *sattava* (a being) arise?*
- *What does *loka*, which constitutes *sattava*, have as company?*
- *To which is it attached?*
- *What is involved in the misery suffered by *sattavas* 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*.

6.2. Explanation on Buddha's answers:

1. *“Hemavata, *sattava* or *loka* arises when there are six together.*
2. *Loka* which is composed of *sattavas* has the six in company.
3. To the six is it attached.
4. The six are involved in the misery suffered by a *sattava* who constitutes *loka*.”

6.2.1..Loka arises when there are six (ayatanas) together.

The six referred to by the Buddha are the *ayatanas* (six sense-bases).

- *the eye,*
- *the ear,*
- *the nose,*
- *the tongue,*
- *the body and*
- *the mind.*

They are called the **inner *ayatanas***. If there are these six, a *sattava* comes into being. And the *sattava* otherwise called *loka*. All living beings must have these six sense-based. 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 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 *sattava*. Some marine animals appear to be logs or weeds but they are living beings. So there can be a *sattava* if there are the tongue, the body, and the mind in the *rupa* plane of existence if there is no nose or tongue or body yet there are beings with the eye, the ear and the mind only. In *arupa* 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 the maximum of the six to which the Buddha referred in His answer.

*How about the six inner *ayatanas*?* In the human world an initial 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 *sattava* 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 *sattava*.

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 occur. Once they cease, and if the person concerned is not free of *kilesa* (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 *patisandhi citta*. This mental phenomenon is *manayatana* (sense-base of the mind). Simultaneously, the material base has in it *kayayatana* (sense-base of the body). So since the inception of

a being there appear two, three, four, 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 is *loka***; it is not that a new being springs up or the old being transferred to a new plane of existence. In fact, new sense bases appear because of the previous *kamma*. *Without the six ayatana 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 *ayatana* (sense bases) move on without a break or a gap. This is considered by one with no meditation insight as stable and permanent.”

6.2.2. Only the six are in company

***Loka* which is composed of *sattavas* has the six in company.**

The Buddha had said that *loka* or *sattava* is constantly in the company of the six.

The six inner *ayatana*, namely,

- the eye,
- the ear,
- the nose,
- the tongue,
- the body and
- the mind,

Are constantly in close association with

The six outer *ayatana*, 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 six sense objects. The latter may be living or inanimate.

6.2.2.1 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

cakkhayatana, the sense of seeing, or *manayatana* and the sight or the appearance, or *rupayatana* all blended. There is really no such thing as man or woman or thing according to the *paramattha* (realistic) point of view. Think deeply and carefully, and you will come to know that after all, this is interplay of *ayatana* or sense-bases. To a yogi who is a meditation practitioner, with well-developed concentration, such realization 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.”

6.2.2.2. 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.

6.2.2.3. The nose and the sense of smell associated with 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, et. 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. So there is the nose, the sense of smell or the mind, and the smell all associated with one another.

6.2.2.4. The tongue the sense of taste associated with 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.

6.2.2.5. The body and the sense of touch associated with the touch.

The touch or the physical contact is the composition of the three elements. *pathavi tejo* and *vayo*.

- The roughness or the smoothness is *pathavi*
- The warmth or the cool is *tejo*,
- The stiffness. or the push or the movement is *vayo*.

The tactile contact with other bodies or things such as clothes, bed etc, is transitory. The meditation 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 true nature of *vayo*, the motor-action. In the same way, they were asked to make a note of every physical action such as standing, sitting, lying, and 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 *kilesa* 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 *Ariya magga nana*, the miseries of *kilesa* and *kama* 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 meditation practice. This instruction is apparently ready to follow. Once the yogi has acquired *samadhi*, he will come to realize the sense of touch in the toughening and softening of the abdomen and thus realize physical and mental *ayatana* 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.”

6.2.2.6. The mind associated with Ideas

The mind which differentiates man and woman, associates itself with thoughts or ideas. In other words, *manayatana* associates itself with *dhammayatana*. 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 our waking hours. They run in series. Unwholesome thoughts, too, occur often. Every time 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 meditation practice.

There are some preachers who instruct their audience to keep their minds *free and relaxed* instead of concentrating on meditation points because concentration, they say, restricts the mind.

This is in contradiction to 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. Indulgence in such idle thoughts is the same as indulgence in sensual pleasures.

In order to separate the mind from the ideas, one must go in for meditation 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.

6.3. Buddha's admonition

The Buddha admonished His disciples:

“Bhikkhus, attainment of the Dhamma may 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 *Mahagosinga Sutta*.

“Sariputta! The bhikkhu 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.”

The Buddha in the *Gosinga Sutta* said:

From these statements one can clear the doubts about the sin of tiring the body especially in reference to the Endeavour to achieve meditation insight, and also about the undesirability of sparing one's physical and mental efforts in the meditation practice. You must remember once and for all that making utmost effort in the meditation practice cannot be equated with ill-treating one's body and thus committing the sin of *attakilamatha* (self-mortification).

6.3.1. Explanation: Difference between self-mortification and the meditation practice

The practice which fails to control one's mind with mere mindfulness which is in fact the lowest step to attainment of meditation insight and which allows one's mind to wander as it wishes is indeed (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
- that food is for gaining strength to enable one to carry out the meditation practice.

6.2.2. Meditation to attain Sila, Samadhi & Panna – is not self mortification.

Then on other hand, tiring one's body and mind in one's Endeavour to attain meditation insight does not constitute the sin of self mortification (*attakilamatha nuyoga*). 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* without the object of gaining *sila*, *samadhi* or *pañña* constitutes self mortification..

Tiring one's body and mind to keep precepts is not self-mortification.

To keep sila: - Tiring one's body and mind for keeping the five-fold, eight-fold, ten-fold precepts (*sila*) or the precepts to be kept by the monks and novices does not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*; It is following the middle path of *sila magga*.

To attain Samadhi: Making utmost physical and mental efforts to attain *samadhi* does not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*. It is following the middle path of *samadhi magga*.

To attain Insight: To make an incessant note of the actions of the body and mind in order to attain *vipassana pañña*, and *maggaphala pañña*, does not constitute *attakilamatha nuyoga*. It is following the middle path of *Pañña magga*.

6.3. What is the Middle Way?:

Of the three parts of the Middle Way (*sila*, *samadhi* and *pañña*), the *sila* part is obvious and does not need any elaboration. The other two parts need to be differentiated.

6.3.1. Samatha – anapana Samadha Bhavana - *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 *anapana samatha bhavana*. As one concentrates upon the inhaling and exhaling breaths, one gradually gains *samadhi*, stability of the mind.

In the same way, by other forms of *samatha kammathana*, such as, contemplation of a corpse, *samadhi* can be gained. **This *samadhi*, however, does not involve the differentiation of *rupa* and *nama* nor does it by itself give a knowledge of the physical and mental phenomena, as well as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.**

Samatha bhavana is merely for gaining concentration. The Buddha directed His disciples to control the mind by means of *samatha*.

6.3.2. Vipassana Bhavana: - **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 *ñama*:

- *The appearing and disappearing of the actions in succession.*
- *To think deeply of the **anicca, dukkha and anatta** nature of this flux of actions.*

By thus seeing keenly the true changing nature of physical and mental phenomena, - *rupa* and *nama*, is practicing *vipassana* or meditation practice.

Those who do not know properly are under the impression that *vipassana* 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 *vipassana*. Through *vipassana*, 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*.

Illustration Ayatana – the six sense base

There must be no transgression from one area to another, for instance, from the area of *pañña* to the area of *sila*. Some persons do not really know the nature of *ayatana* but they have learnt from the books or the lectures, and think much of their secondhand knowledge. From their pseudo-knowledge they often draw wrong conclusions. They argue that:

- *Syrup, they say, is of the apo (water) 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 phothappa (sense of touch), then the touch between man and woman is also no sin, as the touch of a bed-sheet, or a pillow.*

This kind of foolish argument is the same as that forwarded by a monk named **Arittha** during the time of the Buddha.

Illustration: The story of Arittha

Arittha: Why laymen enjoying sexual pleasures could attain the state of *sotapanna* while monks were denied such pleasures;

Arittha: 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.

Arittha: 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 Arittha a hopeless man who could not attain the state of *magga* and *phala*. Even then Arittha did not discard his belief. At the present time there are people like Arittha.

6.4. Is Samadhi necessary to gain Nibbana?

Some are saying that *samadhi* is not necessary, that if one just ponders upon the two *pañña magga*, namely, *Sammaditthi* (right understanding) and *sammasankappa* (right thought), there is no need to make a note of happening and destruction. This is a transgression of the area of *samadhi*. *Jhanasamadhi* is indeed the best to attain, but failing that, one should have acquired *khanika samadhi* which is equivalent to *upacara samadhi*. Otherwise, it is not real *vipassana pañña*. So said the Buddha;

“*Bhikkhus try to acquire samadhi. A bhikkhu who has a stable mind knows the truth.* What is meant by knowing the truth? It is the

- that *cakkhu* (the eye) is non-permanent,
- that *rupa* (appearance) is non-permanent, and
- that *cakkhu-viññana* (the sense of seeing) is non-permanent.”

The Buddha said further that one lacking *Sammaditthi* (right understanding), is deprived of *vipassana-ñana*.

So it is clear that without *samadhi*, one cannot acquire *vipassana-ñana* and attain *maggaphala-ñana* and one cannot attain Nibbana without the knowledge of *Vipassana*. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to try to acquire the true knowledge (*paramatha sacca*) by constantly making a note of the nature of the six sense bases by *vipassana* method.

6.5. Explanation: Six Sense bases.

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

6.5.1. Suffering cause by the six sense bases.

To the question on “How do the beings suffer from the six sense-bases, the Buddha replied that beings suffered from the ill effects caused in the six sense-bases. He said that beings suffered because their desire and greed (*loba, Dosa* and *Moha*) drive them to satisfy these six sense-bases. According to the commentary on the *sutta*, the sensations emanating from the outer objects drive on the six sense-bases. The sensations such as sight, sound, taste, smell, touch and thought invite *tanha* (desire) and it thus makes beings to go through the suffering.

6.5.2. Take for example the sense of eye.

People are constantly making efforts to get beautiful things, 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, they make an effort to hold them and safe guard them. Thus people are constantly

going through the anguish of seeking and safe guarding and thus suffered. The same is true of other senses – ear, taste, touch and thought.

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. Again, people try to live healthy to live long to enjoy the six senses a little longer. In making these efforts people have to go through suffering of anxiety to seek, possess and to enjoy longer. Though they make constant efforts for containing these sensations, things do not work out as they wish. Things disappear as quickly as they appear. On such occasions people suffer greatly not only physically but mentally. This concerns not only human being but celestial beings because they too are subject to the six senses, same like human No being is ever satisfied with what has been given to them, they will always ask for more. To get more, further efforts have to be made, and suffering ensues from these efforts.

Enjoying the senses is not the true happiness; it brings only suffering. Take for instance on eating good food and when you over eat suffering will follow. Initially, eating good food seems enjoyable 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.

Hemavata: “O, Lord, the *sattava* which is in effect *loka* is filled with misery. What is the attachment (*upadana*) 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 sacca*) and his second question is about the way to free oneself from misery.

Buddha: , “*the mind, one of the six sense-bases produces desire and causes attachment for the five other senses.* ”

The five *kamaguna* - 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 carries with it *thoughts and feelings*.

To those who have not experience *vipassana* practice, any object they see gives them the idea that it is “*my eye that sees.*” The young who 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 mine; 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 entrapped of his or her beauty and desires of 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 *ayayana*, 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."

Buddha: "*Hemavata, in loka the six sense-bases cause tanha (lust), and if that tanha could be 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 *ayatana*. This ignorance is like insanity. Madmen have unstable minds and cannot tell the good from the bad, the valuable from the valueless; they do not 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.

Example: The story of Patacara Theri: During the time of the Buddha, the lady *Patacara* 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 realized her situation at once and eventually became an *Arahat*. Being one with parami (potential for perfection) *Patacara* 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 *sotapanna*. This is an instance of acquiring the right vision and discarding the worthless notions.

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.

Example: The Story of Malukyaputta Bhikkhu - When the Buddha was about to give instructions to Malukyaputta bhikkhu, He asked:

“*Malukyaputta, do you have any desire of the appearances that you have never seen, or those that you are about to see or those that you never expect to see?*”

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

Now if I asked you the same question as the Buddha put to malukyaputta bhikkhu, you all would give the same answer as he did. A person whom you have never seen, you would not have any feeling of love or hatred for him, would you? Now, such persons are so many, in so many village towns, cities and countries, and you wouldn't ever have any feeling of love or hatred. For them you wouldn't have any attachment, desire of lust. *Kilesa* doesn't arise from the unseen. This point should be noted.

In that case, one need not have to get rid of kilesa by means of vipassana. The thing simply doesn't happen for there is no seeing, there arises no kilesa. So you don't gain merit, nor does akusala (evil, sin) happen.

As for the things seen, *kilesa* 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. *kilesa* 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 *vipassana*.

The Buddha gave Malukyaputta bhikkhu the doctrine of *dittheditthamattan bhavissati* (seeing only what is being seen), or **minding the present**.

6.5. Instruction on Vipassana

According to the Buddha's instructions to Malukyaputta bhikkhu, *one must note what is seen as seen and no more*. That is the general idea of the instructions. For meditation 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:

6.5.1. Walking Process

Walking and its process: - that is,

- **lifting** the foot,
- moving **forward** and
- letting **fall** the foot,

Notice 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 tanha is got rid of.*

Hearing: To some *vipassana* 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 ear

Smell - Smell also appears and disappears in rapid succession and no attachment of any kind occurs.

Tasting - The same with tasting food.

Touch - 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.**

Mind - As regards the mind that wanders, it is not so difficult to make note of it, and a practiced meditator's mind seldom loafs, and when it does, it is usually caught and brought back immediately to the point of concentration. Thus *tanha* is rid of from **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

6.5.2. Takes note of the event.

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 *tanha* should be rid of the thought or the feeling.

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

Hemavata & Satagiri: Upon hearing the two answers of the Buddha, Hemavata and Satagiri and their followers attained the state of *Sotapanna*.

HEMAVATA SUTTA

Part VI

7. Hemavata and Satagiri attained Sotapanna.

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 *satapan* after hearing the Buddha's reply to the second question paying high respect to the *Dhamma*. Hemavata put the third question as follows:-

Hemavata: “Oh, Lord in this *loka* who can swim out of the whirl pool current of *kilesa*?”

In the never-ending chain of existences, called *samsara*, there is a fast-flowing current with eddies, called *kilesa*. Who can swim so skillfully 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 *samsara*?”

Samsara, an uninterrupted cycle of birth and rebirth of existences, a successive formation and destructions of the five aggregates (*khanda*) 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.

7.1 Who can be liberated from Samsara?

Hemavata: “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?”

Buddha: To this question the Buddha made the following answer:

“Hemavata, one:

- whose **sila** is clean and full, and
- whose **samadhi** is firm, making a note of the physical and mental acts without fail, and
- whose **knowledge (panna)** of things secular and spiritual is of a high order,

With these three practices one will be able to swim across the usually unswimmable stream of *samsara*.” This is the Buddha's answer to the first part of Hemavata's question.

7.2 What is Kama – Desire:

Delightful objects invite desire and attachment, called *kama* which is likened to a current with eddies; *kamogha*.

- Those who are involved in *desire*,
- Those who are involved in *lust*, and
- Those who are involved in *attachment*

They are said to be drifting in the current of *kama*. Those who follow after the pleasant objects of desire such as:

- *sight*,
- *smell*,
- *taste*,
- *touch*,
- *man or woman*,
- *property of all sorts*,

Will 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 *samsara*.

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 *samsara*.

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 *samsara*.

7.3. Bhava – Existence (Life)

To be captivated by *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 jhana* and *arupa jhana*. When they reach these higher planes of existence their spans of life are very long, to be counted in an 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 release from the chain of existences.

7.4. The 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 categorized into two:

- **Sassata ditthi** - one embracing the belief that all beings are indestructible,

- **Uccheda ditthi** - the other the belief that a being is destroyed in its entirety or annihilated after its death

Belief in Annihilation – 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 latter because, to them, there 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.

Belief in Indestructibility of Being: Those who believe in the indestructibility of beings do something which they take to be good deeds but among, such deeds are 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.

Silabbata paramasa ditthi - Religious Practices that does not lead to Nibbana : 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 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 *sila*, *samadhi*, and *pañña* without making the mind work hard and properly? All beliefs in religious practices which cannot lead to liberation from *samsara* belong to what is called *silabbata paramasa ditthi*. The followers of such faiths will never get out of the great whirl pool of *samsara*. They will go through a long series of existences as they drift along the current of *samsara*. This is really terrible.

7.5. The current of Avijja – Ignorance:

Then there is what is called “the current of *avijja*” – **the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths**. People mistook Avijja (ignorance) misery for happiness, like they say “*ignorance is bliss*”; they do not know the truth about misery (*dukkha sacca*) 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 **taste** 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*, *avijja*). Desiring for such things is *tanha*, to be attached to them is *upadana*, 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 thirty one planes of existence are due to this *avijja*, This current of *avijja* flows down to the lowest hell and up to *bhavagga* (topmost region of existence, the highest region of *Brahma*.)

Illustration: In *Bhuridatta* and *Campeyya jatakas* 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 *avijja* 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.

7.6. Qualification of successful swimmer:

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

Dhamma - The one who firmly believes in the Buddha's teachings must believe that if only one is fully equipped with pure *sila* for all times, one will be able to overcome the whirlpool of *kilesa* and thus attain *Nibbana*.

Illustration: The Story of Minister Santati: Some may refer to the story of *Minister Santati*, a king's minister, who attained *Nibbana*. Some may refer to the story of *Santati*, a king's minister, who attained *Nibbana* 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 *sila*. Well, such are few instances; I should say, one in a hundred thousand. Such persons had had with them already *parami* 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 *parami*.

Illustration - Panca Vaggi - In the case of the first five monks, *pañca vaggi*, only *Kondañña* attained to the state of *sotapanna* on the first day of the *Dhammacakka* sermon; the other four (*Ascetics Vappa Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji*) had to strive for it for four more days in succession, one after another. Not all of them were in possession of *parami* of the same caliber; such differences in grades and caliber of *parami* 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 *parami*.

Now in the Buddha's word about the purity of *sila* 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 *sila* pure, and that feeling or achievement would bring about *samadhi*.

Doubt about one's own *sila* would impede the progress in the attainment of the state of complete concentration.

Without concentration one cannot acquire *vipassana ñana*.

And without *vipassana ñana*, *magga phala ñana* would be far from one's reach.

Householder's qualification -: For a layman, one must be fully equipped with *pañca sila*, for a monk one must be equipped with *patimokkha sila*. *Sila* is the first requisite, the first qualification for one who strives to swim out of the four great currents.

7.7. Samadhi : The second qualification relates to *samadhi*.

- *Cultivate first – sila*
- Work hard to attain the states of *samadhi* and *jhana*.

It means that one must work for the attainment of all the eight kinds of *jhana* or at least one or two of them. **This is for disciples of the higher order**. If one cannot strive to attain *appana jhana*, one must work for attainment of *upacara samadhi* or its equivalent *khanika samadhi*. that is, *vipassana samadhi*. This is the least requirement for one to become fully equipped with *cittavisuddhi* (purity of mind), and with this, one can attain *Nibbana*. Otherwise, the purpose would not be achieved.

7.8. The Third Qualification - Panna

The third qualification is *pañña*.

Pañña 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-up? 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 the matter is.

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.

Those who have attained *jhana* must make a note of the state of *jhana* as well as all the phenomena emanating from the acts of seeing, hearing, etc. Such mixed phenomena are together called *pakinnaka*. Those who have not attained *jhana* 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 *vipassana*. As matter of fact,

- ***vipassana* 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.

Vipassana is intended to get rid of the consequences 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 Nikaya* 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.

- **Making a note of what is happening in the physical and mental make-ups** and thus gaining *samadhi*,
- **One acquires insight (pañña) by perceiving nama (mind) and rupa (matter)** separately, and also by knowing the deep significance of cause and effect. *Vipassana* is achieved by a deep perception of *anicca, dukkha* and *anatta*,
- **When vipassana ñana (meditation insight) has been gained and developed further, one will graduate to the Ariya magga.** One who has attained *Ariya magga* is the swimmer who can swim out of the rough and strong currents of *samsara*. That is what the Buddha said in reply to Hemavata's question.

7.8.1. Explanation: The Way to Liberation:

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 *Nibbana* through the insight of *sotapatti magga ñana*, one must be said to have crossed the current of *ditthi*.

It is said that a *sotapan* is cleared of the obsession of the false beliefs:

- That a being is indestructible, the *sassata ditthi*.
- That nothing remains after death the annihilation **Uccheda ditthi**
- Religious practices that does not lead to Nibbana - ***Silabbata paramasa ditthi***

A *sotapan* has never failed to embrace in the belief in:

- His belief in the *Buddha, Dhamma* and *Sangha*,
- His belief in acquiring of : *sila, samadhi and pañña*.

It is only those who are not *sotapan*, 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 and thus suffer much along the long path of *samsara*.

Sotapanna – Sotapanna never deviates from the right path and will be free of the sufferings after seven more existences. It is therefore clear that if one could swim across **the current of *ditthi***, one would make an immense gain.

Sakadagami magga nana - One would be able to weaken the force of **the current of *kama-raga*** but not be completely rid of it. One must surge ahead by continuing the meditation practice. He has one more existence to go through

Anagami magga and phala: that one will be **completely rid of the current of *kama***. 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 ***Kama - desire*** to swim across.

The yogi who has achieved up to the stage of *anagami magga ñana* must carry on with the meditation till he attains the most mature insight if *arahatta magga ñana*. 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 *samsara* and got out of it.

7.9 The freedom out of the stream of Samsara

Buddha – “*Hemavata deva, The arahat who has overcome all the strings of samyojana attachment after having cleared himself of the desires, never be drowned in the bottomless, refuge less sea of samsara, but remains afloat always and in a state of happiness.*”

Arahat - 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 had become an *arahat*. For him there is no new existence; he is completely out of the stream of *samsara*.

Anagam – (*Non-returner*) has crossed the currents and is on his way out of the stream.

Sakadagam (*Once-returner*) has one more existences to strive for deliverance, and

Sotapan (*stream-winner*) has seven more existences to go through.

Puthujjana - there is no guarantee against falling into hell though he may have done good deeds. To such persons the *samsara* is a terrible sea in which there is nothing to grasp, or take refuge in, to keep oneself afloat. Now is the time to work for deliverance from the sea of *samsara* or the cycle of existences in the thirty one regions of existence.

Now the exposition of the text of the *Hemavata Sutta* has come to an end. Only Hemavata's adoration 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 Satagiri 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: “*We, the thousand deva yakkhas, 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.

7.10. Hemavata's Past Lives:

Kassapa Buddha passed into *Nibbana* 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 Buddha's *sasana* (instructional discipline) out of their free will and noble volition. (Incidentally, there are two kinds of monks,

7.10.1 Explanation: Two kinds of *pabbajita*,

- those who enter the Order out of their **free will** and noble volition, called *saddha pabbajita*, and
- those who enter the Order out of **fear of punishment** by law for their crimes, called *bhaya pabbajita*.

The former are the true servants of the Order and the latter the detractors who weaken and spoil it if no proper guidance is given to them. The duties of a monk are under two main categories.

7.10.2. The first category of monks:

- To study and eventually teach the *Dhamma*, (*Pariyatti*) and
- To practice meditation to achieve the purpose of the *Dhamma*. (*Patipatti*)

During the time of Buddha Gotama there were many *bhikkhus* beginning with the first five. *pañca vaggi*, who became *arahats*. There were, for instance, the son of *Yassa*, the rich man, and his fifty four friends, the thousand hermits led by *Uruvela Kassapa*, the ones who were to become *Venerable Sariputra* and *Maha Moggallana* and their two hundred and fifty hermit followers. All of them practiced the *Dhamma* and became

arahats. Of them the son of *Sona*, a rich man, did most creditably in the practice of the *Dhamma*.

Illustration: – The Story of Sona Thera:

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 *bhikkhu* for deliverance from the misery of *samsara*, a problem arose. He worked the hardest. He carried out his meditation 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*. Later he despaired and thought of leaving the Order. He was under the impression that he had not enough *parami* 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 *bhikkhu* followed the Buddha's advice and soon became an *arahat*.

Buddha: “*The bhikkhu in the Buddha’s sasana, one who practices the Dhamma while young with a view to attaining maggaphala, enlightens the loka which is synonymous with his own five khandas, just as the moon, which is released from the banks of cloud, shines over the world.*”

The person who practices vipassana enlightens his own loka in the same manner as the moon lights up the world.

Start the Practice of – Three training Practices: Sila-Samadhi & Panna.

Step #1. 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**,

Step #2 - He then goes on with his noting, he comes to know the real nature of *namakkhanda* (mental make-up). He learns the deep truth of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.

Step #3 - As his practice advances, his insight deepens and enlightens his *loka*, or *nama-rupa*, or the five *khandas*.

Achievement with Age: It may be asked whether the same kind of enlightenment will not occur to the old. Certainly it will,

- For the old the realization 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
- 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 meditation 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 *sila* 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.

The would-be Hemavata and the would-Satagiri died before they attained old age. They seem to have had no chance to practice the Dhamma.

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 Satagiri. They belonged to the higher echelon of the ogre (guardian angels) hierarchy, holding the rank of commandants of the ogre battalions. There were twenty eight such high officials including these two, under the charge of the chief, *Kuvera*.

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 Satagiri repented their misdeeds in their past lives and deplored their weakness as they succumbed to corruption by an evil monk. They said that their long and meritorious services to the *Kassapa sasana* 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, *Satagiri* hurried to his friend *Hemavata* and broke of the news of the first sermon *Dhammacakka Sutta* of Buddha Gotama.”

They had lived aeons, and after the rise and fall of several *kappa* (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, *Dhammacakka Sutta*, to the five hermits, the *pañca vaggi*, with thousands upon thousands of celestial beings in attendance. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this discourse, Satagiri 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 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 samsara:

- *The current of **Ditthi** – false views*
- *The current of **kama-raga** – sensual pleasure*
- *The current of **kama-desire***
- *The current of **Bhava** - existence*

By the diligent practice of the three training practices – *Sila – Samadhi – Panna* one shall attain the blissful state of **Nibbana**.

SADHU! SADHU! SADHU!

Appendix – A

Yakkha



A class of non human beings generally described as amanussá. They are mentioned with *Devas, Rakkhasas, Dánavas, Gandhabbas, Kinnaras, and Mahoragas* (? Nágas) (E.g., J.v.420).

In other lists (E.g., PvA. 45, 55) *they range immediately above the Petas*; in fact, some of the happier Petas are called Yakkhas. Elsewhere (E.g., A.ii.38) they rank, in progressive order, between manussá and gandhabbá. They are of many different kinds: spirits, ogres, dryads, ghosts, spooks. In the early records, yakkha, like nágá, as an appellative, was anything but depreciative. Thus not only is Sakka, king of the gods, so referred to (M.i.252; J.iv.4; DA.i.264), but even the Buddha is spoken of as a yakkha in poetic diction (M.i.386). Many gods, such as Kakudha, are so addressed (S.i.54).

According to a passage in the Vimánavatthu Commentary, (VvA.333) which gives illustrations, the term is used for Sakka, the Four Regent Gods (Mahárájáno), the followers of Vessavana, and also for puriso (individual soul?). In the scholiast to the Jayadissa Játaka (J.v.33), *the figure of the hare in the moon is also called yakkha*. Of these above named, the followers of Vessavana appear to be the Yakkhas proper. The

term *yakkha* as applied to *purisa* is evidently used in an exceptionally philosophical sense as meaning "soul" in such passages as *ettávatá yakkhassa suddhi* (SN.vs.478), or *ettávat' aggam no vadanti h' eká, yakkhassa suddhim idha pánditáse* (SN.vs.875).

In the *Niddesa* (MNid.282), *yakkha* is explained by *satta, nara, mánava, posa, puggala, jíva, jagu, jantu, indagu, manuja*. The last term is significant as showing that *yakkha* also means "man."

The cult of *yakkhas* seems to have arisen primarily from the woods and secondarily from the legends of sea faring merchants. To the latter origin belong the stories connected with *vimánas* found in or near the sea or in lakes. The worship of trees and the spirits inhabiting them is one of the most primitive forms of religion. Some, at least, of the *yakkhas are called rukkha devatá* (E.g., J.iii.309, 345; Pv.i.9; PvA.5) (spirits of trees), and others *bhummadevatá*, (PvA.45,55) (spirits of the earth), who, too, seem to have resided in trees. Generally speaking, the *Yakkhas* were decadent divinities, beings half deified, having a *deva's* supernormal powers, particularly as regards influencing people, partly helpful, partly harmful. They are sometimes called *devatá* (E.g., S.i.205), or *devaputta* (E.g., PvA. 113, 139). Some of these, like *Indakúta* and *Suciloma*, are capable of intelligent questioning on metaphysics and ethics. *All of them possess supernatural powers; they can transfer themselves at will, to any place, with their abodes, and work miracles, such as assuming any shape at will.* An epithet frequently applied is *mahiddhika* (E.g., Pv.ii.9; J.vi.118). Their appearance is striking as a result of former good *kamma* (Pv.i.2, 9; ii.11; iv.3, etc.). They are also called *kámakámí*, enjoying all kinds of luxuries (Pv.i.3), but, because of former bad *kamma*, they are possessed of odd qualities, *thus they are shy, they fear palmyra leaf and iron. Their eyes are red and they neither wink nor cast a shadow.* J.iv.492; v.34; vi.336, 337; these various characteristics are, obviously, not found in all *Yakkhas*. The *Yakkhas* are evidently of different grades - as is the case with all classes of beings - the highest among them approximate very nearly to the *devas* and have *deva-powers*, the lowest resemble *petas*. *The Yakkhas are specially mentioned as being afraid of palm leaves* (J.iv.492).

Their abode is their self created palace, which is anywhere, in the air, in trees, etc. These are mostly *ákasattha* (suspended in the air), but some of them, like the abode of *Álavaka, are bhumattha* (on the ground) and are described as being fortified (SNA.i.222). Sometimes whole cities e.g., *Álakamandá* stand under the protection of, or are inhabited by, *Yakkhas*.

In many respects they resemble the Vedic *Pisácas*, though they are of different origin. They are evidently remnants of an ancient demonology and have had incorporated in them old animistic beliefs as representing creatures of the wilds and the forests, some of them based on ethnological features. (See Stede: *Gespentergeschichten des Petavatthu* v.39ff).

In later literature the Yakkhas have been degraded to the state of red eyed cannibal ogres. The female Yakkhas (Yakkhini) are, in these cases, more fearful and evil minded than the male. They eat flesh and blood (J.iv.549; v.34); and devour even men (D.ii.346;

J.ii.15ff.) and corpses (J.i.265). They eat babies (J.v.21; vi.336) and are full of spite and vengeance (DhA.i.47; ii.35f.). The story of Bhúta Thera is interesting because his elder brothers and sisters were devoured by a hostile Yakkha, so the last child is called Bhúta to propitiate the Yakkha by making him the child's sponsor!

Ordinarily the attitude of the Yakkhas towards man is one of benevolence. They are interested in the spiritual welfare of the human beings with whom they come in contact and somewhat resemble tutelary genii. In the *Atánátiya Sutta* (D.iii.194f), however, the *Yakkha king, Vessavana*, is represented as telling the Buddha that, for the most part, the Yakkhas believe neither in the Buddha nor in his teachings, which enjoin upon his followers abstention from various evils and are therefore distasteful to some of the Yakkhas. Such Yakkhas are disposed to molest the followers of the Buddha in their woodland haunts. Cp. the story of the Yakkha who wished to kill Sáriputta (Ud.iv.4). But the Mahá Yakkhas (a list in D.iii.204f), *the generals and commanders among Yakkhas, are always willing to help holy men and to prevent wicked Yakkhas from hurting them*. Among Yakkhas are some beings who are sotápannas - e.g., Janavasabha, Suciloma and Khara (s.v.). Some Yakkhas even act as messengers from another world, and will save prospective sinners from committing evil (Pv.iv.1). The case of the Yakkha Vajirapáni is of special interest. D.i.95. The Commentary (DA.i.264) says he is not an ordinary Yakkha, but Sakka himself.

He is represented as a kind of mentor, hovering in the air, threatening to kill Ambattha, if he does not answer the Buddha's question the third time he is asked. In many cases the Yakkhas are "fallen angels" and come eagerly to listen to the word of the Buddha in order to be able to rise to a higher sphere of existence e.g., Piyankaramátá and Punabbasumátá, and even Vessavana, listening to Velukandakí Nandamátá reciting the Paráyana Vagga (A.iv.63). At the preaching of the Mahásamaya Sutta (q.v.) many hundreds of thousands of Yakkhas were present among the audience.

It has been pointed out (Stede, op. cit) that the names of the Yakkhas often give us a clue to their origin and function. These are taken from (a) their bodily appearance e.g., Kuvanná, Khara, Kharaloma, Kharadáthika, Citta, Cittarája, Silesaloma, Súciloma and Háritá; (b) their place of residence, attributes of their realms, animals, plants, etc. e.g., Ajakalápaka, Álavaka (forest dweller), Uppala, Kakudha (name of plant), Kumbhíra, Gumbiya, Disámukha, Yamamoli, Vajira, Vajirapáni or Vajirabáhu, Sátágira, Serísaka; (c) qualities of character, etc. e.g., Adhamma, Katattha, Dhamma, Punnaka, Mára, Sakata; (d) embodiments of former persons e.g., Janavasabha (lord of men= Bimbisára), Dígha, Naradeva, Pandaka, Sívaka, Serí.

Vessavana (q.v.) is often mentioned as king of the Yakkhas. He is one of the four Regent Gods, and the *Atánátiya Sutta* (D.iii.199ff) contains a vivid description of the Yakkha kingdom of Uttarakuru, with its numerous cities, crowds of inhabitants, parks, lakes and assembly halls. *Vessavana* is also called *Kuvera*, and the Yakkhas are his servants and messengers. They wait upon him in turn. The Yakkhinís draw water for him, and often are so hard worked that many die in his service. E.g., J.iv.492. Mention is also made (e.g., DA.ii.370) of Yakkhadásís who have to dance and sing to the devas during the night.

Early in the morning they drink a cup of toddy (surá) and go off into a deep sleep, from which they rise bedtimes in the evening ready for their duties.

No one, apparently, is free from this necessity of waiting upon the king even Janavasabba has to run errands for Vessavana (D.ii.207). Among the duties of Vessavana is the settling of disputes between the devas, and this keeps him (J.vi.270) much occupied. In this work he is helped by the Yakkhasenapati, whose business it is to preside over the courts during eight days of each month (SNA.i.197). The Yakkhas hold regular assemblies on Manosilátala on the Bhagalavatípabbata (SNA.i.187; cp. D.iii.201 and DA.iii.967). *As followers of Kuvera, lord of riches, the Yakkhas are the guardians and the liberal spenders of underground riches, hidden treasures, etc., with which they delight men. E.g., Pv.ii.11; PvA.145; Pv.iv.12; PvA.274. These were seven yakkhas who guarded the wealth of Jotiyasetthi* (DhA.iv.208f.).

It is difficult to decide whether the Yakkhas, who are the aborigines of Ceylon (Lanká), were considered human or non human. Kuveni, one of their princesses, and her maid, can both assume different forms, but *Vijaya* marries *Kuveni* and has two children by her. (Cp. Vin.iii.37; iv. 20; where sexual intercourse with a Yakkha is forbidden). The Yakkhas are invisible, and *Vijaya* is able to kill them only with the help of *Kuveni* (Mhv.vii.36); but their clothes are found fit for *Vijaya* and his followers to wear (Mhv.vii.38). Again, *Cetiyá* (q.v.) could make herself invisible and assume the form of a mare, but *Pandukábhaya* lived with her for four years and she gave him counsel in battle. Later, when he held festivities, he had the Yakkha *Cittarája* on the throne beside him (Mhv.x.87). In all probability these Yakkhas were originally considered as humans, but later came to be confused with non humans. Their chief cities were *Lankápura* and *Sirísavatthu*.

The commonly accepted etymology of Yakkha is from the root *yaj*, meaning to sacrifice. Thus: *yajanti tattha balim upaharantí ti yakkha* (VvA.224), or *pújaníyabhávato yakkho, ti uccati* (VvA.333).

Source: http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali_names/y/yakkha.htm