Assāda Samaṇa,brāhmaṇa Sutta
The Discourse on Gratification, Recluses and Brahmins | A 3.102/1:260
Theme: Escape from the world and suffering is possible
Translated by Piya Tan ©2005

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 TWO SUTTAS IN ONE? All the traditional Tipiṭakas of Sri Lanka and SE Asia, except for the Pali Text Society (PTS) edition, list two discreet texts here: the Dutiya Assāda Sutta and the Samāṇa Brāhmaṇa Sutta. The PTS edition, however, combined the two texts into a single sutta, without giving the combined text any name.

The reason for the PTS edition combining the two texts is clearly because the materials are closely connected. In fact, both these texts are also connected with another “split” sutta, that is, the Pubb’eva Sambodha Sutta (A 3.101a = SD 14.6a) and the Paṭhama Assāda Sutta (A 3.101b = SD 14.6b). All the four suttas form a coherent sequence, and may be studied together as such. In summary, here are the four suttas in their proper set sequence:

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The Discourse on Gratification 1

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS. The Dutiya Assāda Sutta, which starts abruptly, is clearly a continuation of the Pubba Sambodha Sutta (A 3.101); hence, it is sometimes called the Pubba Sambodha Sutta 2. Both suttas deal with the same topic, that of the set of three terms—assāda, ādīnava and nissaraṇa. However, while the Pubba Sambodha Sutta deals with the negative aspect, that is, the arising of suffering, the Dutiya Assāda Sutta speaks of the possibility of escape from such suffering. In both the suttas, it is clear that the Buddha has discovered this escape from suffering.

The Commentary to the Cūja Sihaṇāda Sutta (M 11.7/1:65) says the arising (samudaya) of the views of being (bhava,diṭṭhi) and non-being (vibhava,diṭṭhi) are due to any of these eight conditions (attha-t,ṭhāna): the five aggregates, ignorance, contact, perception, thought, unskilful consideration, evil friends, and the voice of another. The passing away (atthaṅgama) of wrong views, by way of conditions (paccaya), is the path of stream-entry which removes wrong views. Both these arising and disappearance may also be momentary (khāṇika). Their gratification (assāda) may be understood as the satisfaction of the psychological need that they impose on one; their danger (ādīnava) is the continual bondage that they entail; the escape (nissaraṇa) from them is nirvana (MA 2:11).

See also the Cha, chakka Sutta (M 148) where the latent tendencies are explained in connection with each of the 6 senses.

2 The key tenses

What is interesting in the Dutiya Assāda Sutta is the use of the different Pali verbs and tenses for the two different groups of people mentioned here: sattā lokassa (the world’s beings) and samanā vā brāhmaṇa vā lokassa (the world’s recluses and brahmins). In §2 the world’s beings who did not have any direct knowledge (na abbaṇāṇāsuṁ) of assāda, ādīnava and nissaraṇa are described in the past tense: “they dwelled (vihaṇṇasus) with a mind that is not free....” The word abbaṇāṇāsuṁ (“they do not directly

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1 A 3.101/1:258 f = SD 14.6.
2 See Assāda Sambodha S (A 3.101/1:258 f) = SD 14.6 (2) for details.
3 Pm 1:138.

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know”) is the past tense 3rd person plural of abhi-jānāti (“he directly knows”), the noun of which is abhiññā.

In the case of those beings (in the same paragraph) who had direct knowledge (that is, personal experience) (abbhaññāsuni) of these three states, “they dwell (viharanti) with a mind that is free….” Here, however, the present tense 3rd person plural (viharanti, “they dwell”) is used.

Then, in the following §3, the world’s recluses and brahmins who lack understanding (nâppajānananti) of the three states “do not dwell (na…viharanti) accomplished…” Both negative verbs are in the present tense. And finally, in the case of the world’s recluses and brahmins who understand (pajānaniti) these three states, they will dwell (viharissanti) accomplished in their goal. The first verb is in the present tense, and the second (spiritual accomplishment) is in the future tense.

In canonical Pali, the past tense (aorist) is not always as well demarcated in time as in modern English. The Pali aorist is used for all kinds of past actions: the historical or narrative past (especially the present perfect, desesi, “I have taught”). As Warder notes, when more precise demarcations of time relations are needed, participles are used in conjunction with the main verb. However, from the Sutta context, it is clear that the Buddha is referring to the nature of spiritual development before the Teaching (only past tense), and when the Teaching is available (all three tenses).

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### 7a

**Dutiya Assāda Sutta**

The Second Discourse on Gratification  |  A 3.102a/1:260

A 3.3.1.3 Āṅguttara Nikāya 3, Tika Nipāta 3, Tatiya Paññasaka 1, Sambodha Vagga 3

Theme: Escape from suffering is possible

1. Bhikshus, if there were no gratification in the world, beings would not be attached to this world. But, bhikshus, as there is gratification in the world, beings are attached to this world.

   Bhikshus, if there were no danger in the world, beings would not be revulsed by this world. But, bhikshus, as there is danger in the world, beings are revulsed at this world.

   Bhikshus, if there were no escape from the world, beings could not escape from this world. But, bhikshus, as there is an escape from the world, beings can escape from this world.

2. (1) BEINGS IN THIS WORLD. Now, bhikshus, so long as the beings have not directly known the world as it really is,

   its gratification as gratification,
   its danger as danger,
   the escape (from it) as escape,

   to that extent, bhikshus, they dwell with a mind that is not free from it, not detached from it, not released from it,

   confined to this world with its devas, Māra and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans.

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6 OED (2nd ed) has only this def: “(transitive) To drag, draw, or pull back; to tear away,” and records its earliest usages as follows: 1669, W Simpson, *Hydrologia Chymica* 78: “This virulent acrimony…becomes by a retrograde motion revulsed into the veins.” 1673, William Harvey, *Anatomical Exercises concerning the motion of the heart and blood* ii 123: “To take away the blood…that it might be revulsed from the lungs.” The more common forms of this word are the n “revulsion” and the adj “revulsive.” The Merriam-Webster 3rd New International Dictionary however has “revulsed,” which it defines as “affected with or having undergone revulsion.” Since the context here is very clear, it is helpful to revive this dying word.

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3 But, bhikshus, so long as the world’s beings have directly known the world as it really is, its gratification as gratification, its danger as danger, the escape (from it) as escape, to that extent, bhikshus, they dwell with a mind that is free from it, detached from it, released from it, not confined to this world with its devas, Māra and Brahmā, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, its devas and humans.

Theme: Escape from the world is possible

4 (2) RECLUSES AND BRAHMINS IN THE WORLD. Bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who have not understood the world as it really is, its gratification as gratification, its danger as danger, the escape (from it) as escape, those recluses, bhikshus, are not regarded as recluses, these brahmins are not regarded as brahmins, by me. And these venerable ones do not dwell accomplished in the goal of reclusehip or the goal of brahminhood, having realized it through direct knowledge, here and now, for themselves.

5 But, bhikshus, those recluses and brahmins who have understood the world as it really is, its gratification as gratification, its danger as danger, the escape (from it) as escape, those recluses, bhikshus, are regarded as recluses, those brahmins are regarded as brahmins, by me. And these venerable ones indeed dwell accomplished in the goal of reclusehip or the goal of brahminhood, having realized it through direct knowledge, here and now, for themselves.

— evam —

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