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Samiddhi Sutta 4
Catuttha Samiddhi Sutta The Fourth Discourse to Samiddhi | S 35.68/4:39 f
[Samiddhi Loka Pañha = Samiddhi’s Question on the World]
Theme: Our senses are the world
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2007

Introduction

1 An important theme of the Saḷāyatana Saṁyutta, the collection discourses on six sense-bases, is that of sense-restraint (indriya,saṁvara), as a support for spiritual cultivation. This Saṁyutta constantly employs two formulas for sense-restraint. The first formulā is a stock passage on sense-restraint so that “bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure do not overflow in us [overpower us]” (abhijjhā domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāsaveyyum). Examples occur in the following suttas:

- the Sāriputta Sutta (S 35.120/4:103-105) not grasping any sign or detail;¹
- the Bhārā, dvāja Sutta (S 35.127/4:110-113) sense-restraint;
- the Rathopama Sutta (S 35.239/4:175-177) sense-restraint, moderate eating, wakefulness;
- the Kummopama Sutta (S 35.240/4:177-179) sense-restraint.

This stock passage on sense-restraint is usually embedded in the pericope on the gradual training, common in the Dīgha Nikāya (eg the Sāmañña, phala Sutta, D 2.64/1:70) and in the Majjhima Nikāya (eg the Cūja Hatthipadopama Sutta, M 27.15/1:180 f).

2 The second formulā presents a contrast between one who is “intent upon a pleasing form and repelled by a displeasing form, etc” (piya, rūpe, rūpe adhimuccati, appiya, rūpe vyāpajjati…), and one who is not swayed by these pairs of opposites. This latter has set up mindfulness of the body, dwells with a boundless mind, and understands the “liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom” where the bad states of lust and aversion cease without remainder. Examples occur in the following suttas:

- the (Saṁvara) Lohicca S (S 35.132/4:116-121) guarding the sense-doors;
- the Avassuta Sutta (S 35.227/4:182-188) not measuring sense-experiences;
- the Dukkha dhamma S (S 35.244/4:188-191) understanding one’s conduct and dwelling;
- the Cha, pāṇā Sutta (S 35.247/4:198-200) sense-restraint.

3 As noted by Bodhi in the Introduction to the Saḷāyatana Saṁyutta, in his translation of the Saṁyutta,

Though no explicit doctrinal allocations are made for these two formulas, it seems the first is prescribed in general for a bhikkhu in the initial stages of training, while the second describes the sense restraint of the trainee (sekha), one at a minimal level of stream-enterer, perhaps too the natural sense restraint of the arahant. (S:B 1127)

4 In the case of the Samiddhi Sutta 4 here, although not explicitly stated, from the Sutta’s simple structure, it is clear that it employs the first kind of training in sense-restraint, that is, so that “bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure” do not invade the mind and remain there.

5 A closely related discourse is the Sabba Sutta (S 35.23) which gives a more succinct statement of “the all.” There the all is simply defined as the six internal sense-organs and the six external sense-objects. The internal senses are our only tools for knowing the all, and all that we can know are the six external sense-objects.²

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¹ See Nimitta and anuvyañjana = SD 19.14.
² S 35.23/4:15 = SD 7.1, see esp the Intro.

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The Fourth Discourse to Samiddhi

Sutta 35.68

1 At one time the Blessed One was staying in the squirrels’ feeding-ground, in the Bamboo Forest [Veḷu, vana], near Rājagaha.

Samiddhi’s question about the world

2 Then the venerable Samiddhi approached the Blessed One and saluted him. Having saluted him, he sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, the venerable Samiddhi said this to the Blessed One:

3a “‘The world, the world,’ bhante, it is said. How, bhante, might there be a world, or the definition of world?”

When there is a world

4 “Samiddhi, where there are the eye, forms, eye-consciousness, and states cognizable by the eye-consciousness—there is the world or a definition of the world. [Where the eye exists, forms exist, eye-consciousness exists, objects cognizable by the eye-consciousness exist—there is the world and a designation for the world.]”

5 Samiddhi, where there are the ear, sounds, ear-consciousness, states cognizable by the ear-consciousness; there is the world or a definition of the world.

6 Samiddhi, where there are the nose, smells, nose-consciousness, states cognizable by the nose-consciousness; there is the world or a definition of the world.

7 Samiddhi, where there are the tongue, tastes, tongue-consciousness, states cognizable by the tongue-consciousness; there is the world or a definition of the world.

8 Samiddhi, where there are the body, touches, body-consciousness, states cognizable by the body-consciousness; there is the world or a definition of the world.

9 Samiddhi, where [40] there are the mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, states cognizable by the mind-consciousness; there is the world or a definition of the world.

When there is no world

10 Samiddhi, where there are no eye, no forms, no eye-consciousness, and no states cognizable by the eye-consciousness—there is neither the world nor a definition of world. [Where the eye exists not, forms exist not, eye-consciousness exists not, objects cognizable by the eye-consciousness exist not, there is neither the world nor a designation for the world.]

11 Samiddhi, where there are no ear, no sounds, no ear-consciousness, no states cognizable by the ear-consciousness; there is neither the world nor a definition of the world.

12 Samiddhi, where there are no nose, no smells, no nose-consciousness, and no states cognizable by the nose-consciousness—there is neither the world nor a definition of world.

13 Samiddhi, where there are no tongue, no tastes, no tongue-consciousness, no states cognizable by the tongue-consciousness; there is neither the world nor a definition of the world.

14 Samiddhi, where there are no body, no touches, no body-consciousness, and no states cognizable by the body-consciousness—there is neither the world nor a definition of world.

15 Samiddhi, where there are no mind, no mind-objects, no mind-consciousness, and no states cognizable by the mind-consciousness—there is neither the world nor a definition of world.

— evam —

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3 This is a more literal rendition, as such sounds somewhat technical.
4 This is a more literal rendition, as such sounds somewhat technical.