

## Sa,nidāna Sutta

### The “With a Source” Discourse

[Wrong thoughts are conditioned]  
(Sāmyutta Nikāya 14.12/2:151-153)  
Translated by Piya Tan ©2009

#### 1 Synchronic dependent arising

The **Sa,nidāna Sutta** (S 14.12) is an analysis of how wrong thought [§§2-8] and right thought arise [§§9-15]. The “wrong thought” section applies the eight links of the present phase of dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*),<sup>1</sup> that is, consciousness, name-and-form, the six sense-bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging and existence.

An interesting point here is the use of “**element**” (*dhātu*) for the three factors of wrong thought (sensuality, ill will and violence) and the three factors of right thought (renunciation, non-ill will and non-violence). From the Sāmyutta Commentary, we learn that *dhātu* is a generic term for related mental states (or “mental concomitants,” *cetasika*, in Abhidhamma). Hence, we can take *dhātu* here as a canonical counterpart of the post-canonical Abhidhamma term, *cetasika*. In fact, **the Vibhaṅga**, a canonical Abhidhamma work, has, in its Sutta analysis section, a section on the “sex elements” (*chā dhātu*), as they are called there (Vbh §§181-182/86 f).

The related terms used in the wrong-thought phase [2] of the Sutta are as follows:

<u>Wrong thought</u>		<u>Dependent arising (present links)</u>
sensuality element	( <i>kāma, dhātu</i> )	consciousness, name-and-form,
perception of sensuality	( <i>kāma, saññā</i> )	the six sense-bases, contact, feeling,
sensual intention	( <i>kāma, saṅkappa</i> )	craving (formations)
sensual desire	( <i>kāma-c, chanda</i> )	craving
sensual passion	( <i>kāma, parilāha</i> )	clinging
quest of sensuality	( <i>kāma, pariyesanā</i> )	clinging
wrong conduct	( <i>micchā paṭipatti</i> )	existence

The same list of terms are applied mutatis mutandis to ill will (*vyāpāda*) and to violence (*vīhimsā*).

The “right thought” section [§§9-15] follows the “wrong thought” pattern but in a positive manner, giving the diametrical opposite of each of the wrong thoughts, and analyze the process of right thought and right action. [3]

Both the sections use the parable of the burning grass torch. For the wrong thought phase, the parable is about a man who does not immediately put out the first started by the torch. In the torch parable for the right thought phase, the man, having dropped the grass torch, immediately puts out the fire, so that nothing is destroyed and no life harmed.

#### 2 Dependent arising or wrong thought

**2.1 SA,NIDĀNA.** The “wrong thought” phase of the Sa,nidāna Sutta [§§2-8] opens with a listing of the three factors of wrong thought, namely, thoughts of sensuality, of ill will, and of violence [§2], stating that they arise “with a source” (*sa,nidāna*), which evidently is synonymous with “dependent” (*paṭicca*), which is used in the five phases of the dependent arising of the three wrong-thought factors [§§4-6]. The Commentary glosses *sa,nidāna* as “with support” (*sa-p, paccaya*, SA 2:135).

**2.2 THE 3 ELEMENTS OF WRONG THOUGHT.** The source of sensual thought is the “sensuality element” (*kāma, dhātu*), which leads on to sensual perception, sensual intention, sensual desire, sensual passion, sensual quest, and sensually motivated wrong actions of body, speech and mind [§4]. The same

<sup>1</sup> See **Dependent Arising** = SD 5.16.

pattern is used to analyzed thought of ill will [§5] and thought of violence [§6]. Their sources are the “ill will element” (*vyāpāda, dhātu*) and the “violence element” (*vīhimsā, dhātu*), respectively.

### 2.3 THE SENSUALITY ELEMENT.

**2.3.1** According to the Saṃyutta Commentary, **the sensuality element** (*kāma, dhātu*) is sensual thought, all sense-sphere phenomena in general, and in particular everything unwholesome except the ill will element and the violence element, which are listed separately. **The perception of sensuality** (*kāma, -saññā*) arises in dependence on the sensuality element by taking it as an object or by way of association (that is, when the perception of sensuality is associated with sensual thought in the same citta).<sup>2</sup> (SA 2:135). It then quotes the following Vibhaṅga definition.

**2.3.2 The Vibhaṅga** defines the “sensuality element” (*kāma, dhātu*) as follows:

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, wrong thought, associated with desire. This is called the sensuality element.

Taking Avīci [crowded hell] the lower limit, the Para, nimmita, vasavatti gods [those who lord over others’ creations], including whatever is in between, occurring therein, included therein by way of aggregates, elements, bases, forms, feelings, perceptions, formations, consciousness. This is called the sensuality element.<sup>3</sup> (Vbh §182/86)

**2.3.3 The Sammoha, vinodanī** (Vibhaṅga Commentary) says:

There are two kinds of sensuality [sense-desire], namely, (1) sensuality as the basis (*vatthu, -kāma*) and sensuality as defilement (*kilesa, kāma*).

Here, sensuality as defilement is the element which is associated with sensuality that is the sensuality element—this is the name for thought of sensuality (*kāma, vitakka*).

As far sensuality as basis, sensuality itself [ie the object desired] as an element is the sensuality element—this is the name for dharmas [mental data] of the sense sphere. (VbhA 74)

The Vibhaṅga Commentary correlates sensual thought with sensuality as defilement (*kilesa, kāma*) and sense-sphere phenomena with sensuality as sense-objects (*vatthu, kāma*).

Sensual intention arises dependent on sensual perception by way of either association or decisive support.<sup>4</sup>

**2.4 THE ILL WILL ELEMENT** (*vyāpāda, dhātu*) is the thought of ill will or ill will itself (ie, hate, *dosa*, SAṬ). It should be noted here that the Commentaries, following the Abhidhamma, differentiate between ill will and the thought of ill will, taking them as two distinct mental concomitants (*cetasikā dhammā*), the former being a mode of the unwholesome mental factor of hate (*dosa*), the latter, the thought (*vitakka*) associated with that mental factor (SA 2:135; VbhA 74). (So, too, with violence, etc.)

**The Vibhaṅga** explains the “ill will element” (*avyāpāda, dhātu*) as

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, wrong thought, associated with ill will. This is called the ill will element.

<sup>2</sup> Here **citta** is anglicized and used as a modern Abhidhamma term, usually tr as “consciousness,” but is more specific. Citta is one of the 4 “realities” or “ultimates” (*param’attha*)—the 4 are matter (*rūpa*), citta, mental concomitants (*cetasika*), and nirvana—and is actually a term for possible mental states or mind-moments, of which there are 89 or 121. In simple terms, a citta is a moment of consciousness. See Abhs;BRS 27-31 (or the whole ch).

<sup>3</sup> *Kāma, paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā micchā, saṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati kāma, dhātu. Heṭṭhato avīci, nirayaṃ pariyantaṃ karitvā uparito para, nimmita, vasavattī deve anto, karitvā yaṃ etasmiṃ antare etthāvacarā ettha pariyāpanā khandha, dhātu, āyatanā rūpā vedanā saññā saṅkhārā viññāṇaṃ, ayaṃ vuccati kāmadhātu. Sabbe pi akusalā dhammā kāmadhātū’ti.* (VbhA 74)

<sup>4</sup> “Association condition” (*sampayutta paccaya*) is a relation between simultaneous mental phenomena; “decisive-support condition” (*upanissaya paccaya*) is a relation between a cause and effect separated in time.

The vexation of mind yn the ten objects of vexation, resentment, wrath, being wrathful, being incensed, being hateful, negative revulsion, thought of harming, mind of hating, anger, showing anger, being angry, dislike, disliking, a state of disliking, harm, harming, harmfulness, hostility, vengefulness, ferocity, easily provoked, lack of mental joy. This is called the element of ill will.<sup>5</sup> (Vbh 86)

**2.5 THE VIOLENCE ELEMENT** (*vīhimsā,dhātu*) is the thought of violence and harmfulness itself. **The Vibhaṅga** explains the “violence element” (*vīhimsā,dhātu*) as

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, wrong thought, *associated with violence*. This is called the violence element.

Here, a certain person harms another with the hand or with a clod of earth or with a stick or with a sword or with a rope or with something or other. Similarly, harassing, annoying, injuring, being violent, causing anger, striking others. This is called the element of violence.<sup>6</sup> (Vbh 86)

### 3 Dependent ending or right thought

**3.1 RIGHT THOUGHT.** The “right thought” phase of the Sa,nidāna Sutta [§§9-15] opens with a listing of the three factors of right thought, namely, thoughts of renunciation, of non-ill will, and of non-violence [§2], stating that they arise “with a source” (*sa,nidāna*). These are the diametrical opposite of the three wrong thoughts.

**3.2 THE RENUNCIATION ELEMENT** (*nekkhamma,dhātu*) is the thought of renunciation and all wholesome states except the other two elements, which are to be explained separately. The perception of renunciation arises dependent on the renunciation element by way of such conditions as conscience (*sahajāta,-paccaya*, etc) (SA 2:136).

**The Vibhaṅga** explains the “renunciation element” (*nekkhamma,dhātu*) as

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, right thought, *associated with renunciation*. This is called the renunciation element.

And all wholesome states, too, are the renunciation element.<sup>7</sup> (Vbh 86)

The Vibhaṅga Commentary adds that non-greed (*alobha*) is renunciation in the sense of renouncing greed; and that the first dhyana is renunciation in the sense of renouncing the hindrances; and all that is wholesome is renunciation in the sense of renouncing the unwholesome. (VbhA 74)

**3.3 THE NON-ILL WILL ELEMENT** (*avyāpāda,dhātu*) is the thought of non-ill will and non-ill will itself, that is, lovingkindness towards living beings. (SA 2:136)

**The Vibhaṅga** explains the “non-ill will element” (*avyāpāda,dhātu*) as

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, right thought, *associated with non-ill will*. This is called the non-ill will element.

<sup>5</sup> *Vyāpāda,paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā micchā,sāṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati vyāpāda,dhātu. Dasasu āghāta,vatthūsu cittaṣṣa āghāto paṭivirodho kopo pakopo sampakopo doso padoso sampadoso cittaṣṣa vyāpatti manopadoso kodho kujjhāna kujjhitattam doso dūsanā dūsitattam vyāpatti vyāpajjanā vyāpajjitattam virodho paṭivirodho caṇḍikkaṃ asuro po anattamanatā cittaṣṣa, ayaṃ vuccati vyāpāda,dhātū'ti* (Vbh 86).

<sup>6</sup> *Vihimsā,paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā micchā,sāṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati vihimsādhātu. Idh'ekacco paṇinā vā leḍḍunā vā daṇḍena vā satthena vā rajjuyā vā aññatar'aññatarena vā satte viheṭheti. Yā evarūpā heṭhanā viheṭhanā himsanā vihimsanā rosanā parūpaghāto, ayaṃ vuccati vihimsā,dhātū'ti* (Vbh 86).

<sup>7</sup> *Nekkhamma,paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā sammā,sāṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati nekkhamma,dhātū'ti. Sabbe pi kusalā dhammā nekkhamma,dhātu.*

That which in beings is lovingkindness, being lovingkind, a state of lovingkindness, loving-kindness that is mental freedom (from ill will). This is called the non-ill will element.<sup>8</sup> (Vbh 86)

**3.4 THE NON-VIOLENCE ELEMENT** (*avīhimsā, dhātu*) is the thought of non-violence and compassion. (SA 2:136)

**The Vibhaṅga** explains the “non-violence element” (*avīhimsā, dhātu*) as

The mentation, thinking, intention, fixing, focusing, mental application, right thought, *associated with non-violence*. This is called the non-violence element.

That which in beings is compassion, being compassionate, a state of compassion, compassion that is mental freedom (from violence). This is called the non-violent element.<sup>9</sup> (Vbh 86)

— — —

---

<sup>8</sup> *Avyāpāda, paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā sammā, saṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati abyāpādadhātu. Yā sattesu metti mettāyanā mettāyitattaṃ mettāvvetovimutti, ayaṃ vuccati avyāpāda, dhātū'ti.*

<sup>9</sup> *Avihimsā, paṭisaṃyutto takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā vyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā sammā, saṅkappo, ayaṃ vuccati avihimsā, dhātu. Yā sattesu karuṇā karuṇāyanā karuṇāyitattaṃ karuṇā, cetovimutti, ayaṃ vuccati avihimsā, dhātū'ti*

## “With a Source” Discourse

(S 14.12/2:151-153)

1 (The Blessed One) was staying at Sāvattḥī.

### The three wrong thoughts

2 “Bhikshus,  
a sensual thought                      arises with a source, not without a source;  
a thought of ill will                 arises with a source, not without a source;  
a thought of violence                arises with a source, not without a source;

3 And, bhikshus,  
 how does a sensual thought arise with a source, not without a source?  
 how does a thought of ill will arise with a source, not without a source?  
 how does a thought of violence arise with a source, not without a source?

4 THE SENSUALITY ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
 dependent on the sensuality element,                      perception of sensuality arises;<sup>10</sup>  
 dependent on perception of sensuality,                    sensual intention arises;  
 dependent on sensual intention,                            sensual desire arises;  
 dependent on sensual desire,                                sensual passion<sup>11</sup> arises;  
 dependent on sensual passion ,                            sensual quest arises;  
 engaged in the quest of sensuality, the uninstructed worldling conducts himself wrongly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.<sup>12</sup>

5 THE ILL WILL ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
 dependent on the ill will element,                         perception of ill will arises;<sup>13</sup>  
 dependent on perception of ill will,                        ill-willed intention arises;  
 dependent on ill-willed intention,                         ill-willed desire arises;  
 dependent on ill-willed desire,                             ill-willed passion arises;  
 dependent on ill-willed passion ,                         ill-willed quest arises;  
 engaged in the quest of ill will, the uninstructed worldling conducts himself wrongly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.

6 THE VIOLENCE ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
 dependent on the violence element,                        perception of violence arises;<sup>14</sup>  
 dependent on perception of violence,                      violent intention arises;  
 dependent on violent intention,                            violent desire arises;  
 dependent on violent desire,                                violent passion arises;  
 dependent on violent passion ,                            violent quest arises;  
 engaged in the quest of violence, [152] the uninstructed worldling conducts himself wrongly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.

7 PARABLE OF THE GRASS TORCH FIRE. Bhikshus, suppose a man were to drop a blazing grass torch into a dry grassy park, and if he were not to quickly put it out with his hands and feet, those creatures living dependent on the grass and wood would meet with disaster and destruction.

<sup>10</sup> See Intro (2.2-2.3).

<sup>11</sup> *Pariḷāha* here can also be rendered as “fever,” but not in the positive context below [§§11-13].

<sup>12</sup> *Kāma,pariyesanam, bhikkhave, pariyesamāno assutavā puthujjano tīhi ṭhānehi micchā paṭipajjati kāyena vācāya manasā.*

<sup>13</sup> See Intro (2.4).

<sup>14</sup> See Intro (2.5).

8 Even so, bhikshus, if any ascetic or brahmin does not quickly abandon, remove, make an end of the vicious perceptions that have arisen in him,  
he dwells suffering in this very life with trouble, with despair, with fever, and after death, with the body’s breaking up, a bad destination is expected of him.

### The three right thoughts

9 “Bhikshus,  
a thought of renunciation arises with a source, not without a source;  
a thought of non-ill will arises with a source, not without a source;  
a thought of non-violence arises with a source, not without a source;

10 And, bhikshus,  
how does a thought of renunciation arise with a source, not without a source?  
how does a thought of non-ill will arise with a source, not without a source?  
how does a thought of non-violence arise with a source, not without a source?

11 THE RENUNCIATION ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
dependent on the renunciation element, perception of renunciation arises;<sup>15</sup>  
dependent on perception of renunciation, intention of renunciation arises;  
dependent on intention of renunciation, desire for renunciation arises;  
dependent on desire for renunciation, passion<sup>16</sup> for renunciation arises;  
dependent on passion for renunciation, quest for renunciation arises;  
engaged in the quest for renunciation, the instructed noble disciple conducts himself rightly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.<sup>17</sup>

12 THE NON-ILL WILL ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
dependent on the non-ill will element, perception of non-ill will arises;<sup>18</sup>  
dependent on perception of non-ill will, intention of non-ill will arises;  
dependent on intention of non-ill will, desire of non-ill will arises;  
dependent on desire of non-ill will, passion for non-ill will arises;  
dependent on passion for non-ill will, the quest for non-ill will arises;  
engaged in the quest for non-ill will, the instructed noble disciple conducts himself rightly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.

13 THE NON-VIOLENCE ELEMENT AS SOURCE. Bhikshus,  
dependent on the non-violence element, perception of non-violence arises;<sup>19</sup> [153]  
dependent on perception of non-violence, intention of non-violence arises;  
dependent on intention of non-violence, desire of non-violence arises;  
dependent on desire of non-violence, passion for non-ill will arises;  
dependent on passion for non-violence, the quest for non-ill will arises;  
engaged in the quest for non-violence, the instructed noble disciple conducts himself rightly in these three ways—with the body, with speech, and with the mind.

14 PARABLE OF THE EXTINGUISHED GRASS TORCH FIRE. Bhikshus, suppose a man were to drop a blazing grass torch into a dry grassy park, and if he were to quickly put it out with his hands and feet, those creatures living dependent on the grass and wood would not meet with disaster and destruction.

15 Even so, bhikshus, if any ascetic or brahmin quickly abandons, removes, makes an end of the vicious perceptions that have arisen in him,

<sup>15</sup> See Intro (3.2).

<sup>16</sup> *Pariḷāha*; in the negative context above, “fever” [§§4-6].

<sup>17</sup> *Kāma,pariyesanam, bhikkhave, pariyesamāno assutavā puthujano tīhi thānehi micchā paṭipajjati kāyena vācāya manasā.*

<sup>18</sup> See Intro (3.3).

<sup>19</sup> See Intro (3.4).

he dwells happily in this very life without trouble, without despair, without fever, and after death, with the body's breaking up, a good destination is expected of him.”

— evaṃ —

090729; 090731