

## 8

**(Pasenadi) Piya Sutta**

The Discourse (to Pasenadi) on the Beloved | S 3.4

Theme: How to love oneself

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2011

**1 Main theme**

The **(Pasenadi) Piya Sutta** (S 3.4) is the first of four “solitary retreat” discourses related to rajah Pasenadi in **the Kosala Saṃyutta** (S 3). This forms a collection of teachings the Buddha gives to rajah Pasenadi of Kosala,<sup>1</sup> containing four reflections of Pasenadi which are confirmed by the Buddha [2,2].

The **(Pasenadi) Piya Sutta** (S 3.4) and **the Atta,rakkhita Sutta** (S 3.5) closely parallel each other, centering around the purity of the three karmic doors (the body, speech and the mind). While our Sutta here deals with “self-love” (*piyo attā*), the latter deals with “self-protection” (*rakkhito attā*).<sup>2</sup>

Pasenadi reflects on the fact that if we truly love ourselves, we should conduct ourselves wholesomely through the three karmic doors, that is, the body, speech and the mind [§4]. Self-love is here seen in a positive light, as the desire for personal development and the potential for spiritual growth, that is, practising the ten courses of wholesome actions (*kusala kamma, patha*)<sup>3</sup> [§§4, 5.4-6] brings true liberation. The Buddha confirms Pasenadi’s reflection and adds four closing verses [§§5-9].

Elsewhere, Pasenadi seems to have a more personal sense of “self-love”—as in **the (Piya) Mallikā Sutta** (S 3.8)—but is wisely put right by queen Mallikā.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that the events of (Pasenadi) Piya Sutta occur later.

**2 Solitary retreat**

**2.1 THE PRACTICE OF “TIME ALONE.”** While the training in moral virtue is basically our expressing of lovingkindness and compassion to others, by way of keeping the precepts, the training in mental concentration is that of spending a truly quality time with ourselves. This “time alone” is a momentary renunciation of the external world, that is, the world of the physical senses and sense-objects, and to be fully engaged with our mind—to delve into the heart of our matter, as it were.<sup>5</sup>

For Dharma practitioners, such solitary retreats conduce to the deepening of self-understanding, that is, understanding the nature of the mind and our personality. Even when such time alone is spent in personal reflection, as done by Pasenadi, it conduces to realizing or consolidating basic insights into true reality.

**2.2 SOLITARY RETREAT IN THE TEXTS.** The sentence, *idha mayham, bhante, raho, gatassa paṭisallīnassa evaṃ cetaso parivittakko udapādi* [§2.1], describing a solitary retreat, is stock. Besides those of Pasenadi, we have many other cases of such **solitary retreats** in the texts:

**PASENADI’S FEEDBACKS TO THE BUDDHA:**

	<b>Reflection</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>SD no</b>
<b>(Pasenadi) Piya Sutta</b>	wholesome self-love	S 3.4/1:71 <sup>6</sup>	38.8
<b>Atta Rakkhita Sutta</b>	protecting oneself in the 3 doors	S 3.5/1:72	38.9
<b>Appaka Sutta</b>	danger of luxurious possessions	S 3.6/1:73	91.2
<b>(Kalyāṇa.mitta) Appamāda S</b>	spiritual friendship	S 3.18/1:87	34.3

<sup>1</sup> **Kosala Saṃy** (S 3.1-25/1:68-102) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of book 1—**Sa,gāthā Vagga** (the chapter of versed discourses)—and has a total of 25 suttas, all related to Pasenadi.

<sup>2</sup> S 3.5/1:72 f @ SD 38.9.

<sup>3</sup> See **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41.7-14/1:286-288), SD 5.7.

<sup>4</sup> S 3.8/1:75 = U 5.1/47 @ SD 38.7.

<sup>5</sup> See **Ti,sikkhā S** (A 3.88), SD 24.10c (3).

<sup>6</sup> Qu in Nett 174.

**OTHERS WHO SPEAK TO THE BUDDHA:**

	<u>Protagonist &amp; reflection</u>		
<b>Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta</b>	Māluṅkyā,putta on the 10 undeterminable points	M 63.3/1:427	5.8
<b>Laṭukikôpama Sutta</b>	Uḍāyī on the benefits of moderat- ion in food	M 66.6/1:448	28.11
<b>Raho,gata Sutta</b>	a certain monk on the 3 kinds of feelings	S 36.11/4:216	33.6
<b>Uttiya Sutta</b>	the monk Uttiya on the five cords of sensual pleasures	S 45.30/5:22	90.1
<b>Sakkacca Sutta</b>	Sāriputta on 7 kinds of respect	A 7.66.2/4:121	89.2
<b>Pārajika 1</b>	Sāriputta on the length of past buddha's dispensations	V 3:7,21	—
<b>(Nigrodha,kappa) Vaṅgīsa S</b>	Vaṅgīsa on his teacher's awakening	Sn 2.12/60,2	80.6
<b>Culla,vagga 4.4.1</b>	Dabba Malla,putta on how he can best serve the sangha	V 2:74,30	—
<b>Saṅgh'ādisesa 8</b>	Dabba Malla,putta on how he can best serve the sangha	V 3:158,7	—
<b>Mahā,vagga 2.1.2</b>	king Bimbisāra on uposatha days	V 1:101,8 <sup>7</sup>	—
<b>SPOKEN TO THOSE OTHER THAN THE BUDDHA:</b>			
<b>Soṇa Koṭi,kaṇṇa Sutta</b>	the layman Soṇa Kuṭi,kaṇṇa to Mahā Kaccāna on his desire to renounce the world	U 5.6/57,7, 58,8, 58,17	92.1
<b>Mahā.vagga 5.13.3</b>	Soṇa bhikkhu to Mahā Kaccāna on his desire to meet the Buddha	V 1:195,9	—

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## The Pasenadi Discourse on the Dear

S 3.4/1:71 f

1 Originating in Sāvattihī.

### Those who love not themselves

2.1 Sitting at one side, rajah Pasenadi of Kosala said this to the Blessed One:

“Here, bhante, while I was alone in seclusion [solitary retreat], this thought arose in my mind:<sup>8</sup>**Who now loves himself? Who now does not love himself?**<sup>9</sup>

2.2 Bhante, this occurred to me:

3.1 Those who

conduct themselves badly through	the body,
conduct themselves badly through	speech,
conduct themselves badly through	the mind—

love *not* themselves,

3.2 even though they may speak thus,

<sup>7</sup> This story is given in brief at Tha 1:44.<sup>8</sup> *Idha mayham, bhante, raho,gatassa paṭisallīnassa evaṃ cetaso parivitatko udapādi*: see Intro (1).<sup>9</sup> *K'esam nu kho piyo attā, k'esam appiyo attā'ti?*

‘We love ourselves,’ but they truly do *not* love themselves.<sup>10</sup>

**3.3** What is the reason for this?

For, what the unloving [72] would do to the unloved, they themselves do that to themselves.

Therefore, they love not themselves.

### Those who love themselves

**4.1** But those who

conduct themselves well through	the body,
conduct themselves well through	speech,
conduct themselves well through	the mind—

*do love* themselves.

**4.2** Even though they may speak thus:

‘We love not ourselves,’ but they truly *do* love themselves.<sup>11</sup>

**4.3** What is the reason for this?

For, what the loving would do to the loved, they themselves do that to themselves.

Therefore, they *do* love themselves.”

### The Buddha’s response

**5.1** “So it is, maharajah! So it is, majarajah!

Those, maharajah, who

conduct themselves badly through	the body,
conduct themselves badly through	speech,
conduct themselves badly through	the mind—

love *not* themselves,

**5.2** even though they may speak thus,

‘We love ourselves,’ but they truly do *not* love themselves.

**5.3** What is the reason for this?

For, maharajah, what the unloving [72] would do to the unloved, they themselves do that to themselves.

Therefore, they love *not* themselves.

### The Buddha on those who love themselves

**5.4** Those, maharajah, who

conduct themselves well through	the body,
conduct themselves well through	speech,
conduct themselves well through	the mind—

*do love* themselves.

**5.5** Even though they may speak thus:

‘We love not ourselves,’ but they truly *do* love themselves.

**5.6** What is the reason for this?

For, maharajah, what the loving would do to the loved, they themselves do that to themselves.

Therefore, they *do* love themselves.”

<sup>10</sup> *Piyo no attā’ti, atha kho tesam appiyo attā.*

<sup>11</sup> *Appiyo no attā’ti, atha kho tesam piyo attā.*

## The Buddha's verses

5.7 The Buddha said this. Having said this, the well-farer [sugata], the teacher further said this,

- |  |   |                           |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| <p>6 <i>Attānañ ce piyaṃ jaññā<sup>12</sup><br/>na naṃ pāpena saṃyuje<br/>na hi taṃ sulabhaṃ hoti<br/>sukhaṃ dukkaṭa, kārīnā</i></p>                                       | <p>If one knows oneself as dear [loving],<sup>13</sup><br/>one would not yoke oneself to bad.<br/>For, not easily obtained<br/>is happiness by the bad-doer.</p>  | <p>S 385</p>              |
| <p>7 <i>Antakenādhīpannassa<br/>jahato mānusaṃ bhavaṃ<br/>kiñhi tassa sakāṃ hoti<br/>kiñ ca ādāya gacchati<br/>kiñcassa anugaṃ hoti<br/>chāyā 'va anapāyini</i></p>        | <p>When one is seized by the end-maker [death],<sup>14</sup><br/>when one leaves the human state,<br/>what can one call to be truly one's own,<br/>or, take when one moves on?<br/>What is it that follows one<br/>like a shadow, never leaving?<sup>15</sup></p> | <p>S 186</p>              |
| <p>8 <i>Ubho puññañ ca pāpañ ca<br/>yaṃ macco kurute idha<br/>tañ hi tassa sakāṃ hoti<br/>taṃ va ādāya gacchati<br/>taṃ v'assa anugaṃ hoti<br/>chāyā 'va anapāyini</i></p> | <p>Both the good and the bad<br/>that a mortal does here—<br/>this is what is truly one's own,<br/>this only one takes along with one,<br/>this indeed is what follows one<br/>like a shadow, never leaving.</p>  | <p>S 387<sup>16</sup></p> |
| <p>9 <i>Tasmā kareyya kalyāṇaṃ<br/>nicayaṃ samparāyikaṃ<br/>puññāni para, lokasmim<br/>patiṭṭhā honti pāṇinan 'ti</i></p>  | <p>Therefore, one should do good,<br/>building it up for the hereafter [the future state].<br/>Merits are supports in the other world<br/>for living beings (arising there).</p>  | <p>S 388<sup>17</sup></p> |

<sup>12</sup> *Jañña*, opt 3 sg of *jānāti* (“he knows, understands, finds out”) (3 pl: A 3:352,32; J 5:218,26\*; 3 sg (same): V 1:135,18; M 3:187,27\*; A 352,32; Dh 157a; Tha 10). Comy treats it as absol: *~ti jānitvā* (ThaA 1:57,11).

<sup>13</sup> This line as at Dh 157a (sg) (verse qu at Nett 175): “If one knows oneself as dear, | one would guard it well. || For one or other of the three watches | the wise would stay awake (in meditation).” (Dh 157)

<sup>14</sup> *Antakenādhīpannassa*, also at Dh 288c (*antaka* = “death,” *maraṇa, saṅkhāto ~o*, DhA = SA); = J 4:396,30 (Comy: “under the power of death on account of life's end,” *jīvit'anta, kareṇa maccunā abhibhūtassa*, JA). *Antaka*, here a personification of death (V 1:21,16; S 3.4/1:72,14\*; Dh 47; Tha 1207; Thī 59 ≠ V 1:21,16\* ≠ 22,34\* ≠ S 1:103,22\* ≠ 111,31\* = V 1:21,16\*; J 4:476,26\*; Vism 233,14\*). Elsewhere, it clearly refers to Māra (S 448/4.2/1:103\*; Dh 48; Vism 233,14\*). Māra is called “end-maker” because he binds beings to death. As such, he is also personified as Death (*maccu, māra*), esp in Comys (Vism 211; ThaA 2:16, 46; VAT:Se 1/481; DAAT:Be 1:22, 17:6); see *Māra*, SD 61.8. On *death*, see *Death and Buddhism*, SD 48.1. SED def *antaka* as “making an end, causing death; death; Yama, king or lord of death.”

<sup>15</sup> This line is popular: M 91.8/2:135 (the brahmin youth Uttara “followed the Buddha around like a shadow”); S 3.4/386+387/1:72, 417/1:93); see here; Dh 2d as figure for wholesomeness, while Dh 2d has “like a wheel trailing after an ox's hoof” (*chāyā 'va anapāyini*), with vl *anupāyini* (Se Ke throughout); Tha 1041d+1042d+1043d, Ānanda on how he is close to the Buddha serving him with lovingkindness through body, speech and mind: cf D 31.33/3:191 (the Buddha to Sigāla on how to regard good recluses and brahmins); Ap 1:52; J 517 verse 230 (Be) = 546/6:-473\*.

<sup>16</sup> This verse (except for lines ab) and the foll (S 387 f) recurs in *Aputtaka S 2* (S 417-418/3.20/1:93,9-12). Both pairs of verses evoke the same spirit to our not able to take anything with us at death except our karma.

<sup>17</sup> This verse recurs in *Ayyikā S* (S 432/3.22/1:97,30-33) & *Aputtaka S 2* (S 418/1:93,11-12) but see prec n, too. **Lines cd** at *Biḷāri Kosiya J* (J 450.12/4:64,26-27 = J:Be 128/1:218) = *Macchari S* (S 87/1.32/1:18,22-23) = *Anna S* (S 1:32,21-22) = *Serī S* (S 2.34: vv 335/2.23/1:57,32-33 = 337/58,5-6 = 339/59,32-33). The last 2 lines (S 388cd) = *Kāla Dāna S* (A 5.36\*/3:41.26).

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