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The Paṭipatti Suttas

(a) (Magga) Paṭipatti Sutta 1 or Paṭipatti Sutta | S 45.31
(b) (Magga) Paṭipatti Sutta 2 or Paṭipanno Sutta | S 45.32

Themes: On the wrong practice and the right practice of the path

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 RELATED TEACHINGS. Both the Paṭipatti Sutta 1 (S 45.31) and the Paṭipatti Sutta 2 (S 45.32) deal with what is wrong and what is right regarding the way of cultivation. As such, they are twin (yamaka) suttas, meaning that they should be studied together.

1.2 RELATED THEMES

1.2.1 They differ only by way of their respective themes, that is,

Paṭipatti Sutta 1 (S 45.31) deals with the wrong practice and the right practice; [sutta 20a]
Paṭipatti Sutta 2 (S 45.32) deals with the wrong practitioner and the right practitioner. [sutta 20b]

1.2.2 The Commentary explains that while in the first, the teaching is given by way of the Dharma or a Dharma-based approach (dhamma, vasena), the second is given by way of the person or a person-based approach (puggala, vasena) (SA 3:132).

1.2.3 The Dharma-based approach applies the direct language of ultimate reality, that is, in terms of ideas (dharmadhiṭṭhāna). The person-based approach, on the other hand, applies a worldly language or worldly conventions, that is, in terms of persons (puggalādhiṭṭhāna).1 While the person-centred approach of teaching points to conventional truths, in terms of “persons,” such as “the practitioner” (paṭipanna) [20b], the Dharma-based or idea-centred approach points to a higher reality, even ultimate reality, in terms of ideas, such as “the practice” (paṭipatti) [20a].

1.3 RELATED SUTTA. These two ways of teaching are based on the Buddha’s advice, given in the Neyy’attha Nīt’attha Sutta (A 2.3.4+5) that we must carefully consider whether its language is conventional (based on everyday language describing causes and conditions) or ultimate (that is, Dharma language, pointing to the fact that things have no intrinsic nature or abiding essence).2

Those suttas or teachings that tell stories, describe ritual acts, or that talk of “beings,” “gods,” etc, need to have their meaning drawn out (NEY’ATTHA), as they do not directly refer to true reality. They use language and words in the form of a story or images to talk about true reality. Their meaning is indirect. They are provisional (pariyāya) teachings, unlike say some Abhidhamma doctrines, which are said to be explicit (nippariyāyena).3

1.4 GRAMMATICAL NOTE. It is interesting to note that while the limbs of the eightfold path in the Paṭhama Paṭipatti Sutta (S 45.31) are given as nouns (eg sammā, diṭṭhi), these limbs in the Dutiya Paṭipatti Sutta (S 45.32) are given as adjectives, as sammā, diṭṭhika. All the other limbs are given in the same way as their respective cognates in the first Sutta. However, it should be noted that the limbs in the second Sutta are all adjectives qualifying the “practitioner” (paṭipanno), thus: sammā, diṭṭhika paṭipanna, the practitioner who has right view, and so on.

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1 This duad is usu used in terms of teaching (desanā): Nett 164 f; MA 1:24; PmA 449; Nett 164 f; also SD 36.1 (1.10).
2 Neyy’attha Nīt’attha S (A 2.3.4+5/1:60), SD 2.6b. See also SD 36.1 (3.0).
3 See Pariyāya Nippariyāya, SD 33.2 (2.1) & SD 68.2.

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Paṭhama Paṭipatti Sutta
The First Discourse on Practice

(Magga) Paṭipatti Sutta | The Discourse on the Practice (of the Path)
Theme: The wrong practice and the right practice
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1 Originating in Sāvatthī.
2 Bhikshus, I will teach you regarding the right practice and the wrong practice. Listen now.
3 And what, bhikshus, is the wrong practice? It is as follows:
   (1) wrong view, micchā diṭṭhi
   (2) wrong thought [wrong intention], micchā saṅkappa
   (3) wrong speech, micchā vācā
   (4) wrong action, micchā kammantā
   (5) wrong livelihood, micchā ājīva
   (6) wrong effort, micchā vāyāma
   (7) wrong mindfulness, micchā sati
   (8) wrong stillness [wrong concentration]. micchā samādhi
This, bhikshus, is called wrong practice.

4 And what, bhikshus, is the right practice? It is as follows:
   (1) right view, sammā diṭṭhi
   (2) right thought [right intention], sammā saṅkappa
   (3) right speech, sammā vācā
   (4) right action, sammā kammantā
   (5) right livelihood, sammā ājīva
   (6) right effort, sammā vāyāma
   (7) right mindfulness, sammā sati
   (8) right stillness [right concentration]. sammā samādhi
This, bhikshus, is called right practice.

— evaṁ —

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4 Comy does not number these suttas, and the rest of chs 4 (patipatti,vagga; aañña,tiittiya peyyāla; suriyassa pey-yāla; eka.dhamma,peyyāla 1+2;gañga,peyyāla) and ch 5 (appamāda,vagga)—pp 41-45—which is unusual. Feer (ed) discusses this at some length, and concludes that these 2 chs “are inserted, apparently as a lengthening of the fourth chapter, but without any numerical designation” (S:eF 5:vi).
5 Micchā,paṭipattiṅ ca vo bhikkhave desessāmi sammā,paṭipattiṅ ca.
Dutiya Paṭipatti Sutta
The Second Discourse on Practice | S 45.32

Theme: The one who practises the wrong way and the one who practises the right way
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2014

1 Originating in Sāvatthī.
2 Bhikshus, I will teach you regarding the wrong practitioner and the right practitioner.6 Listen now.
3 And what, bhikshus, is the wrong practitioner [the one who practises wrongly]?7
Here, bhikshus, a certain person is one
(1) with wrong view,
(2) with wrong thought [wrong intention],
(3) with wrong speech,
(4) with wrong action,
(5) with wrong livelihood,
(6) with wrong effort,
(7) with wrong mindfulness,
(8) with wrong stillness [wrong concentration].
This, bhikshus, is called the wrong practitioner.

4 And what, bhikshus, is the right practitioner [the one who practises rightly]?
Here, bhikshus, a certain person is one
(1) with right view,
(2) with right thought [right intention],
(3) with right speech,
(4) with right action,
(5) with right livelihood,
(6) with right effort,
(7) with right mindfulness,
(8) with right stillness [right concentration].
This, bhikshus, is called the right practitioner.

— evaṃ —

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6 Micchā,paṭipannañ ca vo bhikkhave desessāmi sammā,paṭipannañ ca. Alt tr: “...the one practising wrongly and the one practising rightly.”
7 Katamo ca bhikkhave micchā,paṭipanno,