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(Khandha) Deva,daha Sutta

The Deva,daha Sutta (on the Aggregates) | S 22.2
or (Pacchā,bhūma,gāmikā) Deva,daha Sutta The Deva,daha Discourse (on the West Country Folks)

Theme: How to answer Dharma questions
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2014

1 Introduction

The (Pañcaka) Deva,daha Sutta is about some monks who are taking leave of the Buddha to go for the rains-retreat in the west country (*pacchā,bhūma janapada*) [§§1-3.1]. The Buddha advises them to take leave of Sāriputta, as he is a very wise teacher [§§3.2-5.1]. So they approach Sāriputta to take leave of him, too [§§5.2-6].

Sāriputta then tells them that they, as strangers in a new country, would be visited and asked by curious and wise people about the Buddha's teaching, and that they should be prepared to answer them in a proper manner [§§7-9.1]. In summary, then, these are **Sāriputta's instructions**:

[§10] The Buddha teaches the ridding of lustful desire.

[§11] The ridding of lustful desire towards the 5 aggregates.

[§12] Seeing the disadvantage (*ādīnava*) of the 5 aggregates, namely, suffering arises from lustfully desiring any of the 5 aggregates.

[§13] Seeing the advantage (*ānisaṃsa*) of letting go of the 5 aggregates, namely, being free of suffering.

[§§14-15] The unwholesome (*akusala*) brings suffering here and hereafter.

[§§16-17] The wholesome (*kusala*) brings happiness here and hereafter.

[§18] The monks rejoice.

2 The saha,dhammika pericope

2.1 SĀRIPUTTA'S OPENING ADVICE. A tricky passage in **the (Pacchā,bhūmika,gāmika) Deva,daha Sutta** is Sāriputta's opening advice to the monks who are leaving for their rains-retreat in the west. Sāriputta is reported to have said:

"I hope you venerables have learned the teachings well, grasped them well, attended to them well, remembered them well, penetrated them well with wisdom,¹
so that, when answering, you would explain what has been said by the Blessed One without misrepresenting him with what is contrary to reality, but would explain the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, so that no colleague in the Dharma, following what has been said, would find reasonable ground for censure?"²

Kacci vo āyasmantānaṃ dhammā sussutā suggahitā sumanasikatā sūpadhāritā suppaṭividdhā paññāya.

Yathā vyākaramānā āyasmanto vutta,vādino c'eva bhagavato assatha, na ca bhagavantaṃ abhūtena abbhācikkhēyyātha, dhammassa cānudhammaṃ vyākareyyātha, na ca koci saha,dhammiko vādānupādo [Comy vādānupāto] gārayhaṃ ṭhānaṃ āgaccheyyāti. [§7.2]

¹ *Kacci vo āyasmantānaṃ dhammā sussutā suggahitā sumanasikatā sūpadhāritā suppaṭividdhā paññāya.*

² Cf *saha,dhammikā vādānupātā garayhā ṭhānā āgacchanti* (A 2:31×2, 3:4×2). See Intro (2).

Of special interest are the underlined words, *saha,dhammiko* [2.3] and *vādānuvādo* [2.4], because of the difficulties they present.

2.2 OCCURRENCES OF THE PERICOPE. For convenience, let us call this passage, especially the second paragraph, the *saha,dhammika* pericope, on account of its most difficult term. This pericope, with slight variations, depending on the context, is found in such texts as these:

Te,vijja Sutta	D 13/1:482, 483	SD 1.8
(Phassa) Añña Titthiya Sutta	S 12.24/2:33,36	SD 83.5
(Kamma,vāda) Bhūmija Sutta	S 12.25/2:3b×2, 39	SD 31.2
Upavāṇa Sutta	S 12.26/2:41	SD 85.5
(Pañcaka) Deva,daha Sutta	S 22.2/3:8	SD 46.2
(Khandha) Anurādha Sutta	S 22.86/3:117, 118	SD 21.13
Sambahula Bhikkhu Sutta	S 35.81/4:51	SD 85.4
Pāṭaliya Sutta	S 42.13/3:340	SD 65.1
(Avyākata) Anurādha Sutta	S 44.2/4:381	SD 21.13
(Magga) Kim-atthiya Sutta	S 45.5/5:7 f	SD 82.18

2.3 SAHA,DHAMMIKA

2.3.1 The most difficult word in this Sutta is *saha,dhammika*, which has two important senses, that is:

- (1) a noun, meaning “one of the same teaching,” which is clearly the context at **the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta** (M 11/1:64,13), and
- (2) an adjective, meaning “reasonable, legitimate, rightful,” clearly the case in **the Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta Sutta** (S 41.8/4:299,25 f)³ [2.4.3].

It is likely that both senses apply to our Sutta passage [§7.2]. Hence, the translation here tries to reflect both these senses: “so that no colleague in the Dharma, following what has been said, would find reasonable ground for censure” [§7.2].

2.3.2 The Commentary on the passage in **the Nānā Titthiya Sutta** (S 12.24), says: “How should it be so that there is not the slightest consequence or implication (*vādānupāto vāda-p,pavatti*) regarding the recluse Gotama’s assertion, on account of what has been stated, being reasonable for the reason mentioned (*vutta,kāraṇena sa,kāraṇo hutvā*)—that might invite criticism.” (SA 2:56)

It is clear here that it is not the Buddha’s word that is in question, but the person speaking of it, that he does not misrepresent the Buddha. The phrase, “On account of what has been stated,” is clear about this here.

2.3.3 In **the Sikkhā Sutta** (A 5.5), we have the sentence, “(where) there arise grounds for justified criticisms and rebukes” (*saha,dhammikā vādānuvādā gārayhā ṭhānā āgacchanti*), which is contrasted with “(where) there arise grounds for justified praise” (*saha,dhammikā pāsamsā ṭhānā āgacchanti*). (A 3:4,-10+19)

2.4 VĀDĀNUVĀDA OR VĀDĀNUPĀTA? The pericope has a variant reading, that is, *vādānuvāda* (“blame for what has been said”) and *vādānupāta* (“on account of what has been said”), and we have almost no clue as to which is the original reading. The Commentaries use *vādānupāta* to gloss *vādānuvāda*,⁴ and

³ See SD 40a.7 (2.2.4.1).

⁴ AA 2:257,33. NettA ad Nett 52,4. See Nett p xxxviii n26.

even say that *vādānupāto* is variant reading for *vādānuvādo* (SA 2:25). Hence, it is likely that the original reading is *vādānuvāda*.

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(Khandha) Deva,daha Sutta

The Deva,daha Discourse

(on the Aggregates)

S 22.2

1 Thus have I heard.

Westward-bound monks approach the Buddha

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was dwelling amongst the Sakyas. There was a market-town of the Sakyas named Deva,daha.⁵

2 Then, some monks who were westward bound [leaving for the west], approached the Blessed One, saluted him and then sat down at one side.

3 Sitting thus at one side, the monks said this to the Blessed One,
“We, bhante, wish to go to the west country. We are taking up residence in the west country.”⁶

The Buddha asks them to take leave of Sāriputta

3.2 “Have you, bhikshus, taken leave of Sāriputta?”⁷

“No, bhante, we have not taken leave of the venerable Sāriputta.”

“Then, bhikshus, take leave of Sāriputta. Wise, bhikshus, is Sāriputta, caring⁸ of monks who are fellows in the holy life.”⁹ [6]

“Yes, bhante,” the monks replied to the Blessed One in assent.

⁵ Deva,daha is the native town of the Buddha’s mother. Journeying between Deva,daha and Kapila,vatthu, she stopped at Lumbinī park and gave birth to the Buddha while holding a branch of the sal-tree (J 1:52). Comy says that it is called *deva,daha* because kings are “gods” (*devā*): it is their lucky lake, and it arose spontaneously. Hence, it is called “deva lake” (*deva,daha*) (*deva,dahan’ti devā vuccanti rājāno, tesam maṅgala,daho, sayam,jāto vā so daho’ti, tasmā devadaho’ti vutto*) (SA 2:256).

⁶ *icchāma mayam bhante pacchā,bhūmam janapadam gantum, pacchā,bhūme janapade nivāsam kappetun’ti*. The “residence” (*nivāsa*) here refers to the rains-retreat (*vass’āvāsa*). Comy explains this as the entering into the 3-month rains-retreat (*nivāsan’ti te,māsam vass’āvāsam, SA 2:256*).

⁷ *Apalokito pana vo bhikkhave sāriputto’ti?*

⁸ “Caring,” **anuggāhaka**, “helping, furthering,caring” (M 3:248,23; S 3:5,32; J 2:123,2”), adj of *anuggaṇhati, anuggaṇhati. anuggaheti* (*anu*, “again and again, or after” + √GRAH, “to hold, seize”), “favours, treats with kindness; protects, helps; acknowledges, admits” (V 4:324,29 f, 325,14; M 1:457,31S 3:91,28; A 1:125,26). Comy gives a long account of how Sāriputta is caring of the monks both in a material way (*āmisānuggaha*) and in the Dharma (*dhammānuggaha*) (SA 2:256 f). Tr in Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, 1997:21 f. See also Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2002 ch 5 esp §§24-25.

⁹ *Sāriputto bhikkhave paṇḍito bhikkhūnam anuggāhako sa,brahma,cārīnan’ti*.

4 Now, at that time, the venerable Sāriputta was sitting near a certain clump of candle bush,¹⁰ not far from the Blessed One.

5 Then, the monks, being satisfied, rejoiced in the Blessed One's word, rose from their seats, saluted the Blessed One, and keeping their right side to him, went to the venerable Sāriputta.

The monks approach Sāriputta

5.2 Having approached the venerable Sāriputta, the monks exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, they sat down at one side.

6 Sitting thus at one side, the monks said this to the venerable Sāriputta:

"We, bhante, wish to go to the west country. We are taking up residence in the west country. We have taken leave of the Blessed One."

Sāriputta's opening advice

7 "Avuso, there are those who would question¹¹ a monk who has gone to a different kingdom.¹² They are wise kshatriyas,¹³ wise brahmins,¹⁴ wise householders,¹⁵ wise recluses.¹⁶

For, avuso, wise humans are investigators who ask:

'What does the venerable's teacher say of this, what does he teach?'

7.2 I hope you venerables have learned the teachings well, grasped them well, attended to them well, remembered them well, penetrated them well with wisdom,¹⁷

¹⁸so that, when answering, you would explain what has been said by the Blessed One without misrepresenting him with what is contrary to reality, but would explain the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, so that no colleague in the Dharma, following what has been said, would find ground for censure?"¹⁹

¹⁰ "Clump of candle bush," *eḷagalā, gumbe* (S 3:6,4; J 3:223,3* with vii). Comy says that this is a shed (or awning) under a small tree (*gaccha, maṇḍapake*), and that the *eḷagala* is said to be a tree that grows by steady-flowing water (*dhuva, salila-ṭ, ṭhāne jāto*). It adds that people made a bower from 4 trunks (or posts), over which the bush grows, forming a pavilion. Below this was a seat of bricks, strewn over with sand. During the day, it was cool, with a breeze from the (flowing) water (SA 2:257,22). PED & DP identify it as *Cassia tora*; DP adds *Cassia alata* (the candle bush). This is prob the *Senna tora*, a wild weed-like medicinal herbal plant: see <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/cropfactsheets/cassia.html>.

¹¹ "Would question," *pañham pucchirāro*. For this use of *pucchitāro*, cf Sn p140,6.

¹² *Santi h'āvuso, nānā, verajja, gataṃ bhikkhuṃ pañham pucchitāro*. Comy explains *nānā, verajja, gata* at length: "Gone to a different kingdom, of one king's rule that differs from another. Just as a foreign realm (*virajja*) is a different realm, even so, a 'foreign region' (*videsa*) differs from where one usually resides. This is what is meant by 'a different kingdom'." (*Nānāverajjagatan'ti ekassa rañño rajjato nānā, vidham rajja, gataṃ. Virajjan'ti aññam rajjam. Yathā hi sa, desato añño videso, evaṃ nivuttha, rajjato aññam rajjam virajjam nāma, taṃ verajjan'ti vuttam*, SA 2:257).

¹³ Comy: Like king Bimbisāra, the king of Kosala (Pasenadi) and so on. (SA 2:257).

¹⁴ Comy: Like the brahmins Caṅkī, Tārukkha and so on. (SA 2:257). For a list of names, see Sn p115.

¹⁵ Comy: like the householders Citta, Sudatta (Anātha, piṇḍika) and so on. (SA 2:257). For a list, see A 1:24 -26.

¹⁶ Comy: like Sabhiya, Piloṭikā and so on. (SA 2:257). See Sn pp91-102; S 2:153, 4:401.

¹⁷ *Kacci vo āyasmantānaṃ dhammā sussutā suggahitā sumanasikatā sūpadhāritā suppaṭividdhā paññāya*.

¹⁸ This para is the "*saha, dhammika pericope*."

¹⁹ *Yathā vyākaramānā āyasmanto vutta, vādino ceva bhagavato assatha, na ca bhagavantaṃ abhūtena abbhācikkheyyātha, dhammassa cānudhammaṃ vyākareyyātha, na ca koci saha, dhammiko vādānuvādo* [Comy

8 “Indeed, avuso, we would come from afar to learn from the venerable Sāriputta the meaning of what has been said here. It would be good if the venerable Sāriputta would explain the meaning of what has been said here. Having heard it from venerable Sāriputta, the monks will remember it.”

9 “Then, avuso, listen and pay close attention: I will speak.”

“Yes, avuso,” the monks replied in assent to the venerable Sāriputta.

Sāriputta’s instruction

9.2 The venerable Sāriputta said this: [7]

10 THE BUDDHA TEACHES THE RIDDING OF LUSTFUL DESIRE

“Avuso, there are those who would question a monk who has gone to a different kingdom.

They are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins, wise houselords, wise recluses.

For, avuso, wise humans who are investigators who ask:

10.2 ‘What does the venerable’s teacher say of this, what does he teach?’²⁰

When you are asked thus, avuso, you should answer thus:

‘Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire [ridding of lust and desire].’²¹

11 THE RIDDING OF LUSTFUL DESIRE IN THE AGGREGATES

When you have answered thus, avuso, there are still those who will question you further—

they are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins, wise houselords, wise recluses.

For, avuso, wise humans are those who investigators who ask:

11.2 ‘In what connection does your teacher teach the ridding of lustful desire?’

When you are asked thus, avuso, you should answer thus:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ‘(1) Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire towards | form. |
| (2) Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire towards | feeling. |
| (3) Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire towards | perception. |
| (4) Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire towards | formations. |
| (5) Our teacher, avuso, teaches the ridding of lustful desire towards | consciousness.’ |

12 SEEING THE DISADVANTAGE IN THE AGGREGATES

When you have answered thus, avuso, there are still those who will question you further—

they are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins, wise houselords, wise recluses.

For, avuso, wise humans are those who investigators who ask:

12.2 ‘But,

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| (1) seeing what disadvantage does the venerables’ teacher teach | |
| the ridding of lustful desire towards | form, |
| (2) <u>seeing what disadvantage</u> does the venerables’ teacher teach | |
| the ridding of lustful desire towards | feeling, |
| (3) <u>seeing what disadvantage</u> does the venerables’ teacher teach | |
| the ridding of lustful desire towards | perceptions, |
| (4) <u>seeing what disadvantage</u> does the venerables’ teacher teach | |
| the ridding of lustful desire towards | formations, |
| (5) <u>seeing what disadvantage</u> does the venerables’ teacher teach | |
| the ridding of lustful desire towards | consciousness?’ |

vādānupāto] gārayhaṃ ṭhānaṃ āgaccheyyāti.. Cf saha, dhammikā vādānupātā garayhā ṭhānā āgacchanti (A 2:31 ×2, 3:4 ×2). See Intro (2).

²⁰ *Kim, vādī pan’āyasmantānaṃ* [Be:Ka Ee *kim vād’āyasmantānaṃ*] *sattā kim-akkhāyī’ti*.

²¹ *Chanda, rāga, vinay’akkhāyī kho no āvuso sattā’ti*.

12.3 When you are asked thus, avuso, you should answer thus:

(1) If, avuso, one is *not* free of lust, not free of desire, not free of love, not free of thirst, not free of fever, not free of craving for form,

when there is change and becoming other in *form*,

there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.²²

(2) If, avuso, one is *not* free of lust, not free of desire, not free of love, not free of thirst, not free of fever, not free of craving for feeling,

when there is change and becoming other in *feeling*,

there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.

(3) If, avuso, one is *not* free of lust, not free of desire, not free of love, not free of thirst, not free of fever, not free of craving for perception,

when there is change and becoming other in *perception*,

there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.

(4) If, avuso, one is *not* free of lust, not free of desire, not free of love, not free of thirst, not free of fever, not free of craving for formations,

when there is change and becoming other in *formations*,

there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.

(5) If, avuso, one is *not* free of lust, not free of desire, not free of love, not free of thirst, not free of fever, not free of craving for consciousness,

when there is change and becoming other in *consciousness*,

there arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.

12.4 REFRAIN

(1) Having seen this disadvantage, avuso, our teacher teaches the ridding of lustful desire [lust and desire] for

form.

(2) Having seen this disadvantage, avuso, our teacher teaches the ridding of lustful desire for

feeling.

(3) Having seen this disadvantage, avuso, our teacher teaches the ridding of lustful desire for

perception.

(4) Having seen this disadvantage, avuso, our teacher teaches the ridding of lustful desire for

formations.

(5) Having seen this disadvantage, avuso, our teacher teaches the ridding of lustful desire for

consciousness.

13 SEEING THE ADVANTAGE OF THE LETTING GO OF THE AGGREGATES

When you have answered thus, avuso, there are still those who will question you further—

they are wise kshatriyas, wise brahmins, wise householders, wise recluses.

For, avuso, wise humans are those who investigators who ask:

13.2 'But,

(1) **seeing what advantage** does the venerables' teacher teach the ridding of lustful desire towards

form,

(2) seeing what advantage does the venerables' teacher teach the ridding of lustful desire towards

feeling,

(3) seeing what advantage does the venerables' teacher teach

²² The whole para: *Rūpe kho āvuso avigata, rāgassa [Ke Se avīta, rāgassa] avigata-c, chandassa avigata, pemassa avigata, pipāsassa avigata, pariāhassa avigata, taṇhassa tassa rūpassa vipariṇāṃ-aññathā, bhāvā uppajjanti soka, -parideva, dukkha, domanass'upāyāsā.* Comy says that "lust" (*rāga*), "desire" (*chanda*), "love" (*pema*), "thirst" (*pipāsa*), "fever" (*pariāha*), and "craving" (*taṇhā*) are all synonyms of craving (*taṇhā*) (SA 2:257).

- the ridding of lustful desire towards* perception,
- (4) *seeing what advantage does the venerables' teacher teach*
the ridding of lustful desire towards formations,
- (5) *seeing what advantage does the venerables' teacher teach*
the ridding of lustful desire towards consciousness?'
- 13.3 When you are asked thus, avuso, you should answer thus:
'(1) If, avuso, one *is* free of lust, free of desire, free of love,
free of thirst, free of fever, free of craving for form,
when there is change and becoming other in *form*,
there do not arise
sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.²³
- (2) If, avuso, one *is* free of lust, free of desire, free of love,
free of thirst, free of fever, free of craving for feeling,
when there is change and becoming other in *feeling*,
there do not arise
sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.
- (3) If, avuso, one *is* free of lust, free of desire, free of love,
free of thirst, free of fever, free of craving for perception,
when there is change and becoming other in *perception*,
there do not arise
sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.
- (4) If, avuso, one *is* free of lust, free of desire, free of love,
free of thirst, free of fever, free of craving for formations,
when there is change and becoming other in *formations*,
there do not arise
sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.
- (5) If, avuso, one *is* free of lust, free of desire, free of love,
free of thirst, free of fever, free of craving for consciousness,
when there is change and becoming other in *consciousness*,
there do not arise
sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure and despair.
- 13.4 REFRAIN
- (1) *Having seen this advantage, avuso, our teacher teaches*
the ridding of lustful desire [lust and desire] for form.
- (2) *Having seen this advantage, avuso, our teacher teaches*
the ridding of lustful desire for feeling.
- (3) *Having seen this advantage, avuso, our teacher teaches*
the ridding of lustful desire for perception.
- (4) *Having seen this advantage, avuso, our teacher teaches*
the ridding of lustful desire for formations.
- (5) *Having seen this advantage, avuso, our teacher teaches*
the ridding of lustful desire for consciousness. [8]

²³ Rūpe kho āvuso avigata, rāgassa [Ke Se avīta, rāgassa] avigata-c, chandassa avigata, pemassa avigata, pipāsassa avigata, pariāhassa avigata, taṇhassa tassa rūpassa vipariṇāṃ-aññathā, bhāvā uppajjanti soka, parideva, dukkha, -domanass'upāyāsā.

The unwholesome states

- 14** ²⁴Avuso, if one who attains and dwells in **unwholesome states** were to dwell happily here and now, without vexation, without despair, without fever,²⁵ and, with the body's breaking up, after death, could expect a happy destination, the Blessed One would *not* have praised this abandoning of unwholesome states.
- 15** But, avuso, because one who attains and dwells in **unwholesome states**, dwells in suffering here and now, with vexation, with despair, with fever,²⁶ and, with the body's breaking up, after death, could expect an unhappy destination, the Blessed One *praises* the abandoning of unwholesome states.

The wholesome states

- 16** Avuso, if one who attains and dwells in **wholesome states** were to dwell unhappily here and now, with vexation, with despair, with fever, and, with the body's breaking up, after death, could expect an unhappy destination, the Blessed One would *not* have praised this attaining of wholesome states.²⁷
- 17** But, avuso, because one who attains and dwells in **wholesome**²⁸ **states** dwells in happiness here and now, without vexation, without despair, without fever, and, with the body's breaking up, after death, could expect a happy destination, the Blessed One *praises* the attaining of wholesome states."
- 18** The venerable Sāriputta said this. The monks joyfully approved of the venerable Sāriputta's word.

— evaṃ —

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²⁴ Comy" This passage is to show the danger that awaits one who is not free of lustful desire for the 5 aggregates, and the benefits for one who is free of lustful desire (SA 2:258).

²⁵ *Akusale c'āvuso dhamme upasampajja viharato diṭṭhe c'eva dhamme sukho vihāro abhavissa avighāto anupāyāso aparilāho.*

²⁶ Prec line and this: *Yasmā ca kho, āvuso, akusale dhamme upasampajja viharato diṭṭhe ceva dhamme dukkho vihāro savighāto saupāyāso saparilāho.*

²⁷ *Na-y-idaṃ bhagavā kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ upasampadaṃ vaṇṇeyya*

²⁸ PTS wrongly has *akusale* here.