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The Vepacitti Suttas
(Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta The (Sakka) Discourse on Vepacitti | S 11.4, SD 54.6a
Subhāsita, jaya Sutta The Discourse on the Victory by the Well-spoken | S 11.5, SD 54.6b
Theme: Victory by patience
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2016, 2018

1 Summaries and highlights

1.1 Duels

1.1.1 The Vepacitti Suttas, the discourses on Vepacitti, are 2 closely parallel suttas each recounting a duel between Sakra,¹ the lord of the devas, and Vepacitti,² the lord of the asuras:³

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<tr>
<th>(Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta</th>
<th>The Vepacitti Discourse (on patience)</th>
<th>S 11.4</th>
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<td>Subhāsita, jaya Sutta</td>
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1.1.2 The (Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta (S 11.4), SD 54.6a

1.1.2.1 The Vepacitti discourse on patience (S 11.4) [SD 54.6a] recounts a battle between the asuras, led by Vepacitti, and the devas, led by Sakra. The devas defeat the asuras and Vepacitti is bound arms, legs, and neck. As he is entering and leaving the Sudhamma hall in Tāvatiṁsa (to be judged before the deva council), he verbally abuses Sakra. [§§6-8]

1.1.2.2 Mātali, Sakra’s charioteer, questions Sakra regarding why he (Sakra) tolerates Vepacitti’s vile abuses, and that doing so only encourages Vepacitti to be bolder in his rudeness [872*]. Sakra replies that he fears not Vepacitti [873*]. When Mātali warns Sakra that this would only embolden a fool [874*], Sakra replies that knowing the mind of another makes one stronger [875*].

1.1.2.3 When Mātali still disapproves of Sakra’s gentleness (soracca) [876*], Sakra gives the following lesson:

[877*] Patience ultimately benefits oneself.
[878*] While to Sakra patience is a virtue, to Vepacitti (or one angry) patience in only a necessity.
[879*] Patience is one’s real strength.
[880*] The impatient only harms himself.
[881*] Patience benefits both sides.
[882*] Only those who lack Dharma think it foolish to heal both sides (of those in conflict).

1.1.3 The Subhāsita, jaya Sutta (S 11.5), SD 54.6b

1.1.3.1 Structurally, the Subhāsita, jaya Sutta (S 11.5) closely parallels the (Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta [1.1.2]. The account opens with an ongoing battle between the asuras and the devas, followed by a duel.

¹ On Sakra, see SD 54.2 (3.2.3.6). On his other qualities, see SD 54.21 (1.2.3.3).
² On Vepacitti, see SD 39.2 (2).
³ On the origins of the asuras, see SD 15.5 (3.7.1); SD 39.2 (1).
between their respective leaders, Vepa,citti and Sakra. In this case, it is a peaceful duel of words and wits: who proves himself to be the best “well-spoken” (subhāsīta) wins (jaya) [§3.2]. The duel closes with the council of judges of both asuras and devas declaring Sakra as the winner—he speaks of non-violence, peace and friendship [§19].

1.1.3.2 We must imagine this peaceful deva-asura gathering filling to capacity an ancient Greek amphitheatre or some commodious celestial hall, where the ambience is calm and quiet enough for all parties to hear both Vepa,citti and Sakra. Both the (Sakka) Vepa,citti Sutta (S 11.4) and the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5) share the same set of verses. There are only 2 differences:

(1) The opening verses 872* and 873* of S 11.4 are omitted from S 11.5. This is understandable because Mātali, Sakra’s confidant and charioteer actually asks Sakra why he tolerates Vepa,citti’s vile abuses [872*] and Sakra replies that he is wise enough not to engage with a foolish person [873*].

(2) Otherwise, the same verses spoken by Mātali in S 11.4, are also spoken by Vepa,citti in S 11.5. We will later discuss this interesting matter of the verses and who speaks them [2].

1.1.3.3 Here is a comparative table of the same set of verses that appear in the (Sakka) Vepa,citti Sutta (S 11.4) and the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S 11.4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Verses 1-2</td>
<td>872* 873*</td>
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<td>Verses 3-4</td>
<td>874* 875*</td>
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<td>Verses 5-6</td>
<td>876* 877*</td>
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<td>Verse 10</td>
<td>881*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verse 11</td>
<td>882*</td>
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</table>

The verses with italicized numbers are spoken by Mātali (S 11.4) and by Vepa,citti (S 11.5) respectively. They are identical verses that recur in the two Suttas spoken by the 2 speakers. The verses of the well-spoken are verses 886*-891* of S 11.5, but they also occur in S 11.4 [877*-882*]—spoken by Sakra on both occasions. [2.3]

1.1.4 The council of judges

1.1.4.1 The Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5), SD 54.6b, tells us that when Vepa,citti and Sakra agree to a duel of wits [1.1.3.1] to see who comes up with the best of the “well-spoken” (subhāsīta), they form a council of judges from both sides, the asuras and the devas [§4]. Understandably, these judges are unlikely to be warriors but are probably the older and wiser asuras and devas. [1.1.4.2]

1.1.4.2 The council of judges (comprising both asuras and devas) overseeing the duel of wits is likely to comprise what traditionally are called “the wise” (viññū). These wise ones are not only the morally virtuous but also understand and uphold universal values, that is, the respect for life, property, freedom, truth and goodness.5 As judges, they also have to be unbiased in terms of persons and able to evaluate the truth and quality of the presentations of both sides.

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4 These verses are not found in S 11.5.
5 On these 5 universal values, see SD 1.5 (2.7+2.8); SD 51.11 (2.2.3.4); SD 54.2e (2.3.2.5).
1.1.4.3 At the end of the duel the council declares that Vepacitti’s verses are “in the sphere of punishment and violence, of conflict, of dispute, of quarrel” (sa,dandāvacara satthā’vacara iti bhandanāmiti viggaho iti kalaho iti) while Sakra’s is that “in the sphere of non-punishment and non-violence, of non-dispute, of non-quarrel” (that is, of justice and compassion, of peace, harmony, friendship). They declare Sakra the champion of the “victory of the well-spoken” (subhāsita,jaya) [§§18+19].

2 Who is debating with Sakra?

2.1 The (Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta (S 11.4)

2.1.1 Friends. S 11.4 is an account of a friendly dialogue between Sakra and Mātali, his charioteer, confidant and junior. Mātali, it seems, plays “Māra’s advocate,” that is, reminding Sakra the consequences (as Mātali sees it) when Sakra takes such a patient, gentle and reconciliatory approach to a captured enemy who is spewing vile abuses at him.

2.1.2 The 3 verses

2.1.2.1 Mātali speaks only 3 verses [872* 874* 876*] but, coming from him, they sound rather awkward that such a close, loyal and junior (a charioteer) companion of Sakra, speaks in such an almost condescending tone to his master and lord of the devas himself. It also makes Mātali appear to be as foolish as Vepacitti in S 11.5.

2.1.2.2 It is, however, interesting that in 876b*, Mātali familiarly addresses Sakra as “Vāsava,” “lord of the Vasus.” Vasū another name for the 33 gods, as evident from the Mahā, samaya Sutta (D 20): “Vāsava, the best of the Vāsus” (vasūnām vāsavo seṭṭho). The Vāsū are so called because they built a rest-house (āvasatha) for the public and Vāsava is their leader.

“Vāsava,” is, however, a name of familiarity and endearment, which Vepacitti is either unfamiliar with or unlikely to use, except with a sense of irony or sarcasm [2.1.2.3]. We shall examine the significance of the name Vāsava below [2.3.3.2].

2.2 The Subhāsita,Jaya Sutta (S 11.5)

2.2.1 The duel of wits between Vepacitti and Sakra of S 11.5 is what we would today describe as a “political statement” by the Buddha. The duel, it seems, reflects a contest between the two prevalent political models of governance: kingly absolutism and republican tribalism. While Vepacitti represents the tyrant or king of absolute despotism of the central Gangetic plain, Sakra stands for that of the benevolent tribal ruler of the republics (Sakya, Vajjī, Assaka, etc). It is clear which model the Buddha favours, but as we well know, the days of empires had already well begun in ancient India.

2.2.2 The 2 preliminary verses of Mātali (874* = 883*; 876* = 885*; 872* is not found in S 11.5) seem to sound more natural when spoken by Vepacitti [§§7.2, 12.3]. The tone of these 2 verses are unfriendly,
even condescending: he is telling Sakra what to do, something inappropriate even from a charioteer to his lord. Further, he also addresses Sakra by name, as Vāsava [2.1.2.2], in the 2nd verse [885b*]. [2.3.3]

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MĀTALI/VEPA,CITTĪ VERSES

2.3.1 The preliminary verses with italicized numbers—872* 874* 876*—are spoken by Mātali (S 11.4), and 874* 876* by Vepa,citti (S 11.5), too. They are identical verses that recur in the two Suttas but spoken by the two different speakers, by Mātali [2.1.2] and by Vepa,citti [2.2.2] respectively in different circumstances. We can only surmise that the recurrence of the same verses in two disparate incidents has a didactic purpose.

2.3.2 Vepacitti’s verses and Sakra’s response

2.3.2.1 Firstly, the recurrence of the preliminary verses [2.3.1] in the two Suttas (S 11.4 + 11.5) implies a mythical element in both the accounts. The mythical, in early Buddhism, is, as a rule, didactic. These verses are instructive in presenting to us, often in profound terms, the qualities of patience (khanṭi). Since they are spoken by Sakra, the lord of the devas himself, they carry an element of divinity. [2.3.2.3]

2.3.2.2 The Sutta verses are organized in two sections in each of the Suttas:

(1) The 5 preliminary verses of S 11.4 [872*-876*]: Mātali debates with Sakra that he should not be lenient with Vepa,citti [872* 874*]. Sakra explains the nature of patience [873* 875*-876*]. Then, follows Sakra’s full teaching on patience [877*-882*].

(2) The 3 preliminary verses of S 11.5 [883*-885*]: Vepa,citti [883* 885*] opening gambit on the use of force on one’s opponent [883* 885*]. Sakra diplomatically invites Vepa,citti to make the opening remark, asserting that he “is the senior deva” [§6]. Sakra shrewdly sizes up Vepacitti with the opening verse [883*].

After Vepacitti’s 2nd verse [885*], Sakra confidently delivers his full volley of wisdom, which Vepa,citti is unable to rebut. These are the “well-spoken” verses (subhāsita) [886*-891*] which seals his victory (jaya).

2.3.2.3 Although Sakra is only a sense-world deva, not a dhyanic-world brahma, we can see elements of the 4 divine abodes (brahma, vihāra)12 in his verses, thus: 886* (lovingkindness), 887*-889* (compassion), 890* (equanimity) and 891* (gladness) [3.2.1.3(4)]. Sakra’s virtue is remarkable and saintly, which is clearly because he is a streamwinner.13

2.3.3 Mātali and his verses

2.3.3.1 We have already noted that the 3 preliminary verses of Mātali (872* 874* 876*) seem out of place in the (Sakka) Vepa,citti Sutta (S 11.4), and, even with the omission of 872* [2.2.2], spoken by Vepacitti (S 11.5), fit better in the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5). The tone of these verses is unfriendly,
even condescending. Spoken by Mātali, it seems as if he is telling Sakra what to do, something inappropriate for a charioteer to say to his master and lord of the devas. At least, this is how it all appears to be.

2.3.3.2 Furthermore, he addresses Sakra by name, as Vāsava [2.1.2.2] in the 2nd verse [885b*]. Vāsava, “lord of the Vasūs,” the builders of a resthouse (āvasatha) as a public act in their previous life.14 This title is not as glorious as many of his many other names, as listed in the Sakka, nāma Sutta (S 11.12)15 but it is deeply significant for his followers.

Mātali is Sakra’s constant companion and accompanies him everywhere, often more as his confidant than a servant. Mātali’s deep respect for Sakra is recorded in the Gahaṭṭha Vandanā Sutta (920* 924*)16 and the Pīta Vimāna, vatthu (Vv 4.9,8-13).17 These verses also attest to Sakra’s respect and love for Mātali.

Applying the logic of lectio difficilior potior (the more difficult reading is the stronger),18 we may argue that the unusualness of the Mātali verses [872* 874* 876*] only attests to the fact it is the original reading. This argument is further supported by the explanation given here, of the warm friendship between Sakra and Mātali.

The dialogue between Mātali and Sakra in the (Sakka) Ve, p, citti Sutta (S 11.4) testifies to the openness and respect that these loving friends, despite their being servant and lord respectively. Mātali seems to be deeply concerned over a captured enemy whom they often battle with, but whom Sakra treats honourably; Sakra, however, explains why to Mātali by way of a lesson.

3 Related verses

3.1 Self-benefit

3.1.1 The lines, “Of benefits, self-benefit is supreme. | Nothing surpasses patience” (sad-atth, paramā atth | khantyā bhiyyo na vijji) [877cd* = 886cd*], which is quoted in the Netti-p, pakaraṇa19 (Nett 173,11) and elsewhere [3.3.1; 3.3.2], needs some explanation. I have taken lines cd as two separate sentences, just as Nāṇamoli has taken them as separate clauses in the Netti-p, pakaraṇa quote, thus: “One’s own good is the best of all, | And there is none surpasses patience” (Nett:Ñ 227).

These important lines are found elsewhere in the suttas, too. But first, we will examine them a little closer.

3.1.2 “Of benefits, self-benefit is supreme” (sad-atth, paramā atth)

3.1.2.1 Sad-atth, paramā atthā can be translated as “of benefits, self-benefit is supreme,” or “self-benefit is the supreme benefit.” The word “benefit” or “purpose, goal” (atthā) here refers to both whole-

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14 I have interpreted vāsava to include the qualities of both Sakra (āvasathā adāsi, S 11.12/1:229,12, SD 54.19) and his group of 33 friends, whom he leads (vasūnaṁ vāsavo settho, D 20,260 @ 42e*, SD 53.4) [2.1.2.2].
15 S 11.12/1:229 (SD 54.19).
16 S 11.18/1:234 (SD 86.2).
17 Vv 4.9/47,8-13/69.
18 In textual criticism and translation, lectio difficilior potior is the key principle where there are a number of conflicting readings, the more unusual one is more likely to be the original. In the case of Mātali’s verses in S 11.4, its unusualness suggests that it may well be the original reading.
some happiness in this world, that is, long life, beauty, happiness, strength (āyu, vānṇa, sukhā, bala); and to happiness hereafter, that is, a blessed rebirth that conduces to spiritual training that can lead to the path.

3.1.2.2 Of course, the greatest benefit in this life itself is that of awakening to arhathood itself, if not at least to be able to aspire to the path, that is, attaining streamwinning in this life itself. This point can never be over-stressed, since without attaining the path, we are likely to fall into any of the subhuman states and spend an interminably long period amongst asuras, animals, pretas or hell-beings.

Even when we are, on account of some good karma, reborn in the heavens, no matter how long we remain there, with the exhaustion of our karma, we will surely fall straight down into the subhuman realms, especially amongst the hell-beings. Samsara is the reality on which is based the ancient Indian game of Snakes-and-Ladders.

Only the saints who are reborn in the heavens, when they fall from those states, do not fall into any subhuman realms or suffering states. When born amongst humans, the unawakened saint finds himself in states conducive to Dharma living. The arhats are, of course, not reborn any more.

3.2 Patience

3.2.1 The one Dharma: heedful diligence

3.2.1.1 The one quality (eka, dharmma), that is, a singularly significant teaching for practice, that the Buddha holds foremost is not patience but diligence or heedfulness, that is, heedful diligence (appamāda). The (Ekaka) Appamāda Sutta (A 1.6.9) preserves this seminal declaration by the Buddha on diligence:

I do not see a single thing on account of which unarisen unwholesome states arise and arisen unwholesome states decline, that is to say diligence. For one who is diligent [heedful], bhikkhus, unarisen wholesome states arise and arisen unwholesome states decline. (A 1.6.9/1:11,18-23)

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20 Dh 190: vaḍḍhantī āyu vāṇṇa sukhām balaṁ, “life, beauty, happiness and strength will grow”: SD 22.13 (1.1) for details. Also aggām āyu ca vāṇṇa ca yaso kitti sukhām balaṁ, “the foremost blessings of longevity, beauty, fame, glory, happiness and strength [power]”: (Catukka) Agga-p, pasāda S (A 4.34,5/2:35), SD 45.13 = Cundi S (A 5.32/-3.34), SD 66.4 = (Tika) Agga-p, pasāda S (It 90,10/89), SD 45.17. Also: Suppavāsā S (A 4.57,2/2:63), SD 22.13; (Catukka) Sudatta S (A 4.58/2:64), SD 87.11a; (Catukka) Bhojana S (A 4.59/2:64), SD 87.11b; (Pañcaka) Bhojana S (A 5.37/3:42), SD 87.14; Latā Vv (Vv 32,7*/41); Mahā,ratha Vv (Vv 64,32*/97); Vinaya (the 10 benefits of giving porridge, yūgu, V 1:221,22-26 + 221,29-30*); Sivi J (J 499/4:405,22*). See also Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda S (D 26,28/3:77), SD 36.10; Lakkhaṇa S (D 30,1.4.2/3:146, etc), SD 36.9; Sakkha S (S 40.10/4:275-280 passim); Deva,loka S (A 3.18/-1:115); Sumanā Rāja,kumāri S (A 5.31/3:33 f), SD 22.14; (Pañcaka) Iṭṭha S (A 5.43,2/3:47), SD 47.2; Puṇṇa,kiriya, vatthu S (A 8.36.5.2/4:242, etc), SD 22.17; Ankura Pu (Pv 21,60*/36) @ Pv 316*; Pilinda,vaccha ThaAp (Ap 388,-140*/1:311, 200*/316), Gotamī ThīAp (Ap 17,108*/2:537), Abhirūpa,nāndā ThīAp (Ap 36,7*/608). Cf (Brahmā) Tissa S (A 7.53,11.2/4:76), SD 54.5, brahma Tissa’s blessings; Tiṭṭhāna S (A 9.21/4:396, āyu vāṇṇa sukhā of humans and devas).

21 See eg (Anicca) Cakku S (S 25.1), SD 16.7.
22 On these subhuman states, see SD 54.3f (2.2.4).
23 See (Nānā,karaṇa) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123), SD 23.8a.
24 SD 48.1 (6.3.1.5).
25 See eg an embedded quote (KhpA §172/151).
26 Be A 1.59. See SD 2.13 (1).
In the (Ekaka) Pamāda Sutta (A 1.6.9), the opposite case is stated: non-diligence or heedlessness (pa-māda) is the one thing (eka, dhāma) “on account of which unarisen unwholesome states arise and arisen wholesome states decline,” and so on.  

Diligence in wholesome states, says the Das’uttara Sutta (D 34), is the one thing of great help (bahu-, kāra).  

3.2.1.2 Is there any contradiction in the seeming declaration that both diligence [3.2.1] and patience [3.2.2] are the supreme spiritual qualities? Technically, diligence, or “heedful diligence,” to be exact, is the underpinning quality for all spiritual actions and good efforts. In other words, diligence has both a supramundane (lok’uttara) dimension (pertaining to the teachings of the Buddha and the arhats), and a mundane (lokiya) aspect. [3.2.2.0(4)]  

As unawakened beings, our understanding of a supramundane teaching like heedful diligence is, as a rule, understood only on a mundane level—unless, we at once attain the path as we listen to it. This brings us to another problem. Sakra is probably already a streamwinner [2.3.2.3] when he speaks the verses on patience [877*-882*; 886*–891*]. Hence, his words are not “worldly” since he is a “learner” (sekhā), one who has attained the path of awakening but not yet won arahathood.  

In other words, Sakra’s verses reflect a supramundane truth, even though he is not yet an arhat. However, since he is not an arhat (he is still unawakened), we may, for convenience, say that his teachings on patience are “mundane-spiritual,” the supramundane teachings of a learner saint. [3.3.1.2].  

3.2.1.3 What are the qualities or characteristics of patience that make it spiritually supreme, indeed, the foremost virtue amongst humans and gods?  

(1) In the two related Suttas—the (Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta (S 11.4) and the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5)—Sakra is addressing (in the very same verses), the topic of patience [S 886*–891*]. In the latter Sutta, they are auspiciously called “the victory by the well-spoken” (subhāsita,jaya) [877*–882*]. While the asura Vepacitti advocates the rod and sword to win the crowd and tame his enemies [883*–885*], Sakra champions the use of non-violence to win others. In our own times, we would see Sakra as advocating that “the pen is mightier than the sword.”  

(2) Sakra’s patience flows in the same vein as that of his natural sense of leadership and love—his humanity and humanness in the most Apollo-like divinity in Buddhist mythology. His marriage to the most beautiful asura woman, Sujā, is no mere divine mischief, but, when we recall the nature of kingly alliances in the growing empires of the central Gangetic plain, this has advantages in preventing future conflicts between the asuras and the devas—since Sujā is the daughter of Vepacitti, seniormost of the asuras and Sakra’s bitter enemy.  

Accordingly, Sakra is empowered by reasons of the heart, too, to uphold patience as the supreme virtue of the gods: he is the lord of the devas and son-in-law of the lord of the asuras.

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27 A 1.6.9 = A 1.59 (SD 2.13(4)); see SD 2.13 (1) for list of suttas.  
28 D 34.1.2(1) (SD 42.22, opening quote).  
29 (Chakka) Appamāda S (A 6.53) @ SD 42.22 (2); Pamāda Vihārī S (S 35.97), SD 47.6; (Dasaka) Appamāda S (A 10.15), SD 42.23; Sāra,gandha S (S 45.143), SD 42.24; Paṭisallāna S (It 45), SD 41.4; Dh 21, SD 46.15 (2.7.2); SD 46.15 (2.7.2); SD 47.1 (1.1.2.5); SD 47.17 (2.3.4.1).  
30 On how Sakra steals Sujā from the asuras and her acquiescence, see DhA 1:275-278.  
31 On royal alliances by marriage in the Buddha’s time, see SD 52.1 (2.2.1.15); J 1:205 f.  

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(3) Since Sakra is a streamwinner, we can at once understand how he is able to naturally uphold the practice of patience, especially as a divine figure of power and pleasure. He was guided by love (mettā), the 5 precepts, and advocates others to keep them, too. As a streamwinner, Sakra is selfless; hence, he is able to naturally champion patience as the supreme virtue. He does not fall for superstition—he well knows that his heavenly birth is the result of his earthly diligence as Magha and his 33 friends. He has no doubts whatsoever in the 3 jewels.

(4) From all this and the teachings of the 2 Suttas (§ 11.4 +§ 11.5) here, we can reflect on patience as a term for the practice of the 4 divine abodes. Sakra, even as Magha (as we have noted above) is famed for his love (mettā). His ruth (karunā) is illustrated by the Kulāvaka Sutta (§ 11.6) where he would rather lose the battle with the asuras than let his chariot destroy a bird’s nest on the tree-top. His joy (muditā) at the good of others is seen in his rejoicing in giving alms to good monks.

However, as an unawakened deva with divine powers, he often resorts to psychic powers to get his way. Moreover, he does not tolerate holy men practising asceticism (such as performing rituals and observing vows). He would send apsaras to distract, even seduce, them with divine pleasures so that they fall from their religiosity—which shows that they are not really diligent in their practice. Anyway, he’s only a streamwinner, not yet an arhat. [3.3.1.2]

Sakra’s patience is likely to be rooted in his confidence in his divine powers. His equanimity is unlikely to be as developed as his first two divine abodes. We must imagine that he does have a mundane kind of equanimity that is expressed in his remarkable quality of patience. The point remains that he is the most virtuous of all the gods and non-humans in his realms for him to have been able to attain such a level of lordship.

3.2.2 “Nothing surpasses patience” (khantyā bhiyyo na vijjati)

3.2.2.0 (1) Patience (khanti) is highly praised in the suttas, although not as often as heedful diligence (appamāda). Patience is defined as “endurance” (adhiyāsana), as in the famous Dhammapada line: “Forbearing patience is the highest austerity” (khanti paramānī tapo titikkhā) (Dh 184a). This Dhammapada verse has an almost identical sense as “Nothing surpasses patience” (khantyā bhiyyo na vijjati) [87d* = 886d*].

3. DhA 1:266-268 :: DhA:B 1:315-317. See also his 7 vows (which are the basis for his attaining rebirth as Sakra):
Vata,pada S (§ 11.11/1:228), SD 54.12.
Kulāvaka S (§ 11.6/1:224 f), SD 86.22.
DhA 2.7/1:275-278 :: DhA:B 1:320-323.
DhA 2.7b/1:266-272 :: DhA:B 1:315-319; J 1:199-206. A long account is also found in Comy to Satipaṭṭhāna Ss (D 22; M 10): DA 3:710,22-718,21.
37 See Buddha Vandanā S (§ 11.17/1:233 f), SD 86.1; Vata,pada S (§ 11.11/1:228), SD 54.12; Saṅgha Vandanā S (§ 11.20/1:236), SD 86.4; Dhajagga S (11.3/1:218-220), SD 15.5.
Kulāvaka S (§ 11.6/1:224 f), SD 86.22.
38 Such as giving alms to Mahā Kassapa: U 3.7/29 f; DhA 4.10.1:424-430. See Beggars can be choosers, SD 71.2.
39 See SD 54.3a (2.3.2.5).
41 Khanti is the verbal n from khamati, “to tolerate; accept (to bear), hence, prefer.” It has 2 distinct meanings: (1) “patience,” ie, as “endurance” (adhiyāsana) (Dh 184; DhA 3:237,19-21+24 f); (2) “preference” = “liking” (ruci) (eg M 95,14/2:170,28, ditthi, nībhānā, khamati). PED gives only (1), but sv khamati: nībhānām khamati. For refs, see DP sv khanti, where (2) is “receptivity, predilection, preference, preferred view.”

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Both S 877d* = 886d* are preceded by a very significant line: *sad-attha, paramā atthā*, here translated as “Of benefits, self-benefit is supreme” [877* = 886c*]. The word *sad-attha* is found in Dh 166, where the context clearly gives it the sense of “self-benefit”.

*Sad-attha, pasuto siyā* let one be intent on one’s own spiritual good [goal].

*(Dh 166)*

(3) However, *sad-attha* used in this way is rare, apparently, occurring only in poetic verses. It more often occurs in the sense of “the highest good: summum bonum,” that is, derived from: *sat (= sant, “good, holy”) + attha*, “goal, good.”

The highest good in early Buddhism is, of course, arhatthād. However, sometimes, we find both sense being applied, that is, with the meanings of “self-good” and “arhatthād.”

(4) We can take *sad-attha* in 877c* = 886c* (in Sakra’s verse) as a wordplay (ślesa), since “self-benefit” can have both the worldly as well as the spiritual senses: we benefit from good both in this life and those to come, and also attain the path [3.2.1.2]. In fact, the two may overlap: we can even attain the path, even awakening, in this life itself, too. Such *polysemy* is not only common but characteristic of Pali teachings.

### 3.2.2 The Maṅgala Sutta (Khp 5)

**(Khp 5)** lists *patience* (khandi) as a “supreme blessing” (maṅgala uttama), since it is a cause for various spiritual qualities mentioned below (KhpA 150,1 f). It is listed as blessing number 27, in the “spiritual training” section (9th verse, Sn 266), near the end of the Sutta—attesting to its significance in spiritual training.

The Khuddaka, pātha Commentary on the Maṅgala Sutta (Khp 5), commenting on *patience* gives a list of cases where it is well exemplified, as follows.

### 3.2.2.1 The Maṅgala Sutta (Khp 5)

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The Khuddaka, pātha Commentary on the Maṅgala Sutta (Khp 5), commenting on *patience* gives a list of cases where it is well exemplified, as follows.

### 3.2.2.2 The Khanti, vādi Jātaka (J 313)

Here, *patience* is forbearing (khamanam); it is a name for endurance (adhibhāsa). A monk possessing *patience*, when abused with any of the 10 instances of abuse, or threatened with torture, etc, responds as if he neither hears nor sees them, remaining impassive as does the ascetic Khanti, vādi, of whom it is said:

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43. Explained as “one’s own good” (sake attha, DhA 3:160,1); CA 139; J 4:26.
44. Also at 24.6 (b.4).
45. D 16.5.10/2:141 (SD 9); M 1.51f/1:4 etc (SD 11.8); S 12.21/2:29, considering the good of both self and others, we should strive on diligently (cf S 6.15/1:157,34-158,2 + D 16.6.7/2:156-157,19), SD 9; A 10.99,9.2/5:207 f, SD 30.9.
47. Dasa,bala S 2 (S 12.22/2:29 :: SA 2:49), SD 63.15; Culla,bodhi J (J 443/4:26,27-29).
48. On ślesa, see Bāla Pāṇḍita S (M 129,35), SD 2.22; SD 10.6 (8.7); SD 54.2a (3.2.2); SD 24.10b (2.1.6.4) App 2.1.7.
49. See SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1.1-3.2.2); 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).
50. KhpA 148-151 :: KhpA:N 161-165. The nn here are a paraphrased tr of KhpA = SnA refs.
51. The 10 instances of abuse (dasa akkosa, vatthu): “You are a robber (cora), a fool (bala), an idiot (mūha), a camel (otṭha), an ox (gonā), an ass (gadrabha), you belong to a state of loss (āpāyika), you are from hell (nerayika), you are an animal (tiracchāna, gata), there is no happy destiny for you (n’atti tuyāhā sugati), only a suffering one for you! (duggati yeves tuyham).” (VbhA 340,29-341,2). Or, they abuse him based on birth, name, race, age, work, craft, sickness, sex, defilement and Vinaya offence (Samanga-p, pasadini (a tīkā) on Khudda, sikkhā 129).
52. On Khanti, vādi, see KhpA 148-151 [here]; DhA 1:149,5; J 1:46,17, 3:178,4, 6:257,26; BA 60,21. The J shows how a person’s anger can grow towards an unoffending victim (J 4:11) and how one who is angry loses all his prosperity (J 5:113, 119).
A long time ago, there was a recluse, a beacon of patience.

He remained patient even when the king of Kāsī murdered him. (KhpA 148,24-149,6 = SnA 1:300)

3.2.2.3 The Puṇṇ'ovāda Sutta (M 145 = S 35.88). Or, patience is regarded in an auspicious (bhadraka) manner well beyond its afflictive state, as in the case of the elder Puṇṇa. He says:

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to abuse me, or were to insult me, then, I shall think thus: ‘These people of Sunāparanta are good (bhaddaka), truly good, in that they do not punch me with their fists!’ What if they were to punch you ... hit you with clods of earth ... beat you with rods ... attack you with sharp knives ... take your life. Finally, he says:

“Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to take my life with sharp knives, then I shall think thus: ‘There have been disciples of the Blessed One, who being repelled and disgusted by the body and by life, have resorted to a knife-bringer. But I have not sought the knife: it is the knife that seeks me!’"  

3.2.2.4 The Sarabhaṅga Jātaka (J 522). The seers praise such an accomplishment of patience, as the seer Sarabhaṅga declares:

Who has slain anger sorrows no more.
The seers praise the abandonment of contempt.
This patience is supreme, says the one at peace.

3.2.2.5 The (Sakka) Vepa,citti Sutta (S 11.4). The devas praise the patient, too: Sakra, the lord of the devas, speaks thus:

When, indeed, one who is strong endures the weak, that patience is supreme, they say.
The weak (must) always show patience.

This verse recurs in the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5,15.3/1:223 @ S 887*), SD 54.6.

3.2.2.6 The Vāseṭṭha Sutta (M 98 = Sn 623; Dh 399). The buddhas, too, praise patience; hence, the Blessed One says:

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53 J addhāne.
54 J hitam.
55 Bhadra,kato vā manasikaroti tato uttariṁ aparādhel,bhāvena (KhpA 149,7).
56 On this “graduated scale of ill-treatment,” see (3.2).
57 M 145/3:268 = Puñña S, S 35.88/4:60-63 (SD 20.15).
58 Note that dubbalo in nom, and subject of khamati. This verse recurs at Khp A 149,21-23, where Nānamoli helpfully notes that the tr “seeks to bring out that patience is a necessity rather than a virtue in the weak, but appears as a virtue in the forbearance of the strong” (KhpA 162) n94.
3.3 Patience and Related Virtues

Here we shall examine selected verses related to patience, that is, S 897* [3.3.1], S 853*-854* [3.3.2] and the parable of the saw [3.3.3].

3.3.1 Verocana Asur’inda Sutta (S 11.8), SD 87.13

3.3.1.1 The Verocana Asur’inda Sutta (A 11.8) is a brief record of a debate between Verocana (Skt vairocana), an asura lord, and Sakra, the lord of the devas. Verocana holds the view that one should attain one’s goal or ambition no matter what, and that goal is to bond and network with others. This sentiment, in fact, succinctly describes the psychological mindset of a typical asura—titans (erstwhile devas) who enjoy the pleasures of celestial society, partying and fighting.

While Sakra, himself a pleasure-loving deva but well-tempered by a good sense of the spiritual, has a clear sobre idea of the supremacy of patience, especially as the supreme lord of two earth-based heavens, that is, the realm of the 4 great kings and of Tāvatīṁsa itself. Hence, he replies:

[Sakka:]

\[
\begin{align*}
sabbo satthā atthā, jātā & \quad \text{All beings have some purpose of their own,}
satto satthā yathārahaṁ & \quad \text{now here, now there, as they see fit.}
samyoja, paratā tv-eva & \quad \text{Bonding is supreme indeed:}
sambhogaṁ sabba, pāṇināṁ & \quad \text{all beings enjoy one another.}
nipphanna, sobhino atthā & \quad \text{Of goals that shine when attained,}
khantā bhiyyo na vijjati & \quad \text{nothing surpasses patience.}
\end{align*}
\]

(S 11.8/1:226 @ S 897*), SD 87.13

3.3.1.2 Being only a streamwinner, Sakra can only speak of patience in a mundane manner. However, he does this in a profoundly spiritual way, when we consider that he is admonishing his sworn enemy, Vepacitti, the eldest and lord of the asuras, who holds violently opposite ideas [874* = 883*, 876* = 885*]. But then, again, who is the real audience, here: we are! The Buddha is instructing us through Vepacitti and Sakra, on the disadvantages of violence and animosity, and the benefits of non-violence and patience.

We may not be talking about arhathood here but the Suttas are addressing something more real and more urgent to us right now. These teachings and stories are reminding us of the conduct and environment that are conducive to reaching the path, to the attaining of at least streamwinning. [3.2.1.3]

\[59\] Bal‘ānikāṁ = bala, “strength, power, force,” + anika, “array, army, troops” (Sn 623; Dh 399; cf DhA 4:164).
\[60\] See Mahā,samaya S (D 20,12/38a*/2:259,11), SD 53.4, mentions “Bali’s 100 sons, all named Veroca” (sataṁ ca bali, putthānāṁ sabbe veroca, nāmakā), of which Comy says that they all bore the name of their uncle Rāhu (DA 2:689,26 f). This suggests that Verocana and Rāhu are prob identical.
\[61\] On the general nature of an asura, see SD 39.2 (1.3); SD 40a.1 (11.2.2).
\[62\] See SD 54.3b (3.5.1).
\[63\] On S 897cd*, see Dh 204c, which says “the trustworthy are the best of relatives” (vissāsa, paratā ṇāṭi); SD 38.4 (4.2); SD 34.1 (2.2.3); SD 37.8 (4.4.3). On the meaning of samyoja as “socializing,” see Saññoga S (A 7.48/4:57 f), SD 8.7; Dasa,ratha J (J 461/J 4:127,14 f).
3.3.2 (Yakkha) Āḷavaka Sutta (S 10.12 = Sn 1.10), SD 114.12

3.3.2.1 Āḷavaka is a yaksha, a tutelary nature spirit; and a cannibal, too.²⁴ He lives in a cave in the Himalayas, and if anyone has the misfortune of crossing his path, he will seize him. He would then give him riddles to solve—as in the Greek myth of the sphinx⁶⁵—failing which he will devour him, drive him mad or hurl him over the Ganges river.⁶⁶

3.3.2.2 The (Yakkha) Āḷavaka Sutta (S 10.12) is about the Buddha, noticing Āḷavaka’s readiness for spiritual transformation, approaches him, and lets him threaten and question him with his riddles. His riddles are:

“What here is a man’s greatest treasure? | What habitually done brings happiness? | What truly is the sweetest of tastes? | How, as they say, does one live the best life?”⁶⁷ The Buddha answers that they are faith, righteousness [the Dharma], truth and living by wisdom. (S 847*)

After two more sets of questions and their answers, the Buddha instructs Āḷavaka, from which these two verses are taken:

Yass’ete caturo dhammā
saddhassa ghamaram esino
saccaṁ dhammo
sa ve pecca na socati

ināgha aṁñe pi puchassu
puthu,samaṇa,brāhmaṇe
yadi saccā damā cāgā
khantyā⁷² bhiyyo ‘dha vijjati

These four things are found⁶⁸ in the faithful house-seeker:
truth, righteousness, steadfastness, charity.

Indeed, (with these) he sorrows not hereafter.⁷⁰ (Sn 188)

Come now! Ask others, too,
of the many recluses and brahmans,
whether truth, discipline [self-control], charity,⁷¹ are found to surpass patience here.⁷²

(S 10.12 @ S 853*+854* = Sn 188 f)³³

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⁶⁴ See Mahā,samaya S (D 20.7 n), SD 54.4.
⁶⁵ In Greek mythology, a sphinx is a creature with the head of a human and the body of a lion. Sometimes, he is depicted with a human head, the haunches of a lion and the wings of a bird. This deadly version of a sphinx is found in the Oedipus story. See Martin Kallich, “Oedipus and the Sphinx,” in (eds) Kallich, MacLeish & Schoenbohm, Oedipus: Myth and Drama, NY: Odyssey Press, 1968.
⁶⁶ See DPPN: Āḷavaka (2).
⁶⁷ Kiṁsud’ha vittam purissassa seṭṭham | kiṁsu sucīṇṇam sukham āvahāti | kiṁsu have sādutaram rasānām | kathāṁ jīvīṁ jīvitaṁ āhu seṭṭham | |
⁶⁸ A more idiomatic tr would be: “A faithful house-seeker who has these four things…” SnA glosses ghamaram esino (“house-seeker”) as one who seeks the fivefold sense-pleasures (pañcā kāma,guna) (SnA 237). However, from the sutta context—and also ItA 2:163—it clearly refers to a lay person who, while living the household life, keeps to the lay precepts. Cf A 3:377; PVA 124. Norman: “It is possible to interpret –m- as a sandhi consonant (see n on [Sn] 132), or to take ghamaram-esin as an aluk-samāsā, ie a tatpuruṣa compound with the case ending of the first element retained” (Sn:N 185 n188).
⁶⁹ All MSS (incl Sn) read dhammo, except PTS: damo.
⁷⁰ S:Eu lists 2 MSS that here has these additional lines: asamā lokā paraṁ lokāṁ | evam pecca na socati, “passing from this world to the next, | in this way, he sorrows not.”
⁷¹ Norman: “It is possible that the ending of khantyā is due to the omission of a svarabhakti vowel by a scribe who knew Sanskrit. The same reading occurs at S 1:215,7*.” (Sn:N 186 n189)
⁷² Norman: “Whether one can find here anything better than truth, discipline, charity, patience.”
⁷³ S 10.12/1:215 @ S 853*+854* = Sn 188 f (SD 114.12); for excerpts, SD 15.12 (1.2).
3.3.2.2 Usually, S 854cd* is translated somewhat like this: “Whether there is found here anything better | Than truth, self-control, generosity, and patience” (S:B). However, when we consider the primacy given to patience, it is here listed as merely one of a set of 4 qualities. Secondly, if we look closely at S 854d, we can see that primacy is, after all, given to patience. From our translation above [854d], we see the primacy of patience that is highlighted in both the (Sakka) Vepacitti Sutta (S 11.4) and the Subhāsita,jaya Sutta (S 11.5).

Patience, as a primary quality, like diligence [3.2.1], underlies truth, discipline and charity. Whether it is to seek the truth or to teach it, we need patience. To tame ourself (to overcome defilements) and lead a disciplined spiritual life, we need patience. To practise charity, giving, helping and healing, we need a great amount of patience to muster the givers, the gifts, the occasions, and to do so in a manner that will benefit both givers and recipients, we need much patience.

3.3.3 The Kakacūpama Sutta (M 21), SD 38.1

3.3.3.1 The locus classicus on the teaching on patience, significantly paired with non-violence (ahimsa), is the Kakacūpama Sutta (M 21), the discourse on the parable of the saw. Interestingly, the occasion for the Buddha’s teaching this Sutta is not about the dangers or challenges of a missionary monk, which is the theme of a related Sutta: the Puṇṇ’ovāda Sutta (M 145) [3.2.2.3]. For M 21, the Buddha’s instruction is on account of the lack of restraint and patience in the monk Moliya Phagguna, who was infatuated with nuns, so that he reacts angrily like a layman, should anyone speak ill of the nuns.

The Buddha begins his teaching by reminding Phagguna that he is a monk. As such, whenever anyone speaks ill of the nuns or were even to strike them in anyway, he should not react angrily as if he were a layman. Similarly, if anyone were to do all this to him, he should not react angrily as if he were a layman, but to cultivate lovingkindness towards them, too.

3.3.3.2 The parable of the saw is one of the most famous and fearsome Buddhist parables, and its significance is highlighted by the fact that it closes the discourse after which it is named, the Kakacūpama Sutta (M 21), where the Buddha declares:

Bhikshus, even if low-down thieves were to cut you up from limb to limb with a double-handled saw, if you were ever to defile your mind with anger, you are thereby not a doer of my teaching. (M 21,20/1:129), SD 38.1

The reasons for this are not difficult to fathom. Assuming such a terrible predicament were to occur, the victim would surely die. Then, he should fill his mind with lovingkindness so that his dying moments are wholesome. Hence, he would attain a good rebirth; and if he were to have regularly reflected on impermanence, he would even attain streamwinning.74

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74 See Entering the stream, SD 3.3.
At one time, the Blessed One was residing in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park monastery in Jeta’s grove outside Sāvatthī.

There, the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Bhikshus!” “Bhante!” the monks replied.

The battle between the devas and the asuras

“Once upon a time, bhikshus, the devas and the asuras were in the thick of battle.

Then, bhikshus, Vepa,citti, the lord of the asuras, addressed the asuras, thus: ‘Sirs, in the thick of battle, should the asuras be victorious over the devas, the devas defeated, then, having bound Sakra, lord of the devas, fivefold, bound hand, foot and neck, let him be brought before me in Asura city.’

Bhikshus, Sakra, lord of the devas, too, address the devas, thus: ‘Should, sirs, in the thick of battle, the devas be victorious over the asuras, the asuras defeated, then, having bound Vepa,citti, lord of the devas, fivefold, bound hand, foot and neck, let him be brought before me in the Sudhammā Hall.’

The asuras were defeated

Now, bhikshus, in that battle, the devas won, the asuras were defeated.

S 1.11.1.4 = Saṁyutta Nikāya 1, Sagāthā Vagga 11, Sakka Saṁyutta 1, Paṭhama Vagga 4

Theme: To answer anger with anger is to fail twice

125
7 Then, bhikshus, having bound Vepa,citti, lord of the devas, fivefold, bound hand, foot and neck, he was brought before Sakra, lord of the devas, in the Sudhammā Hall.

8 Now, bhikshus, Vepa,citti, the lord of the asuras, bound fivefold, reviled Sakra, lord of the devas, with vile, harsh words, when he was entering and leaving the Sudhammā Hall.87

Mātali-Sakra88 verses

9 Then, bhikshus, Mātali, charioteer to Sakra, the lord of the devas, uttered in verse, thus:

9.2 Bhayā nu maghava sakka
dubbalyā no titikkhasi
sunanto pharusam vācām
sammukhā vepe, cittino’ti

Is it from fear, Maghava Sakra, or from weakness that you endure listening to the harsh words of Vepa,citti, face to face?

[Sakra:] 10 Nāharī bhayā na dubbalyā
khamāmi vepe, cittino
kathāṁ hi mādiso viṇṇū
bālena paṭisammyuje’ti

Neither from fear nor weakness that I endure Vepa,citti. How can a wise one like me engage himself with a fool?

[Mātali:] 11 Bhiyyo bālā pabhijjeyyu
no c’assa paṭisadhako
tasmā bhusena doṇḍena
dhiro bālam nisedhayeti

But fools only get bolder if they are not put to a stop. Therefore, with harsh punishment let the wise restrain the fool.

[Sakra:] 12 Etad eva ahaṁ maṇñe
bālassa paṭisedhanaṁ
paramā sankupitāṁ ṭatvā
yo sato upasammatīti

This is just the way, I think, for stopping the fool: knowing the anger in another one mindfully stays calm.

[Mātali] 13 Etad eva titikkhāya
vajjam passāmi vāsava
yādā nam maṇṇati bālo
bhayā myāyoṇ titikkhati

To endure thus, indeed, I see as faulty, Vāsava—when the fool thinks of you: ‘This one endures me out of fear!’

86 On the fivefold bonds and Vepa,citti’s reaction, see Yavakalāpi S (S 35.248) + SD 40a.3 (1.2.2)
87 Tatra sudāṁ bhikkhave vepe, citti asur’indo kaṇṭha, paṇcamehi bandhanehi baddho sakkaṁ devānam indaṁ sudhamma, sabaṁ pavisantaṁ ca nikkhamantaṁ ca asabhāḥi pharusāhi vācāḥi akkosati paribhāsati. On Sudhammā hall, see §5 n.
88 Instead of Mātali, Nett attr his verses to Vepa,citti throughout (Nett 172 f).
89 From hereon, internal number sequence does not follow PTS.
90 Be Se maghava; Ce Ee mathavā (wr).
91 Be Ce Ee2 Se pabhijjeyum, “to be bold”; Ee Nett 172,20 pakujheyyum, “become angry,” which Comy recognizes as a variant reading (pakujheyyun’ti pi pātho, SA 1:342,28). The former, however, fits the context better.
92 These italicized running numbers denotes 875*-882* recurring in Subhāsītajaya S (S 11.5) [884*-891*].
93 Vāsava, of Sakra’s many names [2.1.2.2; 2.3.3.2]. See Sakka,nāma S (S 11.12,4.4) + SD 54.19 (1.2.4.2).
Sakra's verses on patience

*Sakka khanti gāthā

14 Kāmaṁ maññatu vā mā vā bhayaṁ myāyaṁ titikkhāt
sad-atthā, paramā atthā
khantyā bhiyyo na vijjati

Let him think what he wants.
This one endures me out of fear!
Of benefits, self-benefit is supreme.
Nothing surpasses patience.

15 yo have balavā santo
dubbalassa titikkhāt
tam āhu paramaṁ khantiṁ
niccāṁ khamati dubbalo

When, indeed, one who is strong
endures the weak,
that patience is supreme, they say.
The weak (must) always shows patience.

16 abalan taṁ balam āhu
yassa bāla, balam bālam
balassa dhamma, guttassa
pativattā na vijjati

What one sees as strength is not strength,
but a fool's foolish strength.
For the strong restrained by good,
there is no striking back.

17 tass'eva tena pāpiyo
yo kuddham patikujjhati

One only worsens things for oneself
who replies the angry with anger.

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94 Be ajjhāruhati; Ce Ee Se ajjhāruhati; Se ajjhoroṭhati. See foll n.
95 “Bully one,” ajjhāruhati (adhi-ā + VRUH, to ascend), lit, “to grow in and up over (as a parasite plant splitting and choking a tree, J 3:208,18 f, 398,4 f) part past ajjhāruha (CPD); to tyrannize, bully (S 1:221,34* = 233,19* vl ajjhoroṭhati); Comy glosses as ajjhottharati (sometimes spelt ottarati: adhi-ava + VSTR, to strew; see CPD), SA 1:343,2; qu at Nett 173.3*. See prec n.
96 These 5 verses of “Sakra’s verses on patience” (S 877*-882*) recur in Subhāśita Jaya S (S 11.5/1:223 f) as the “victory by the well-spoken word” [886*-891*].
97 On this verse, cf S 854d* + 897d* [3].
98 Cf Ass'ājānīya S (A 8.13): kāmaṁ maññe [Be kāma'ānā] āsas vahantu vā mā vā, “Let the horses pull or not ... ” (A 8.13/4:189,5) ... kāmaṁ maññe bhikkhu sikkhantu vā mā vā, “Let the monks train or not, (I will train)” (4:90,4).
99 Comy: “Amongst the highest benefits (goals) for oneself, there is no benefit (goal) better than patience” (tesu sak'attha, paramesu atthesu khantito uttaritaro añño attho na vijjati, SA 1:343,8 f). Although sadattha, paraṭṭhā (877c*) is pl, the verb vijjati (877d) is sg: it is either poetic licence or refers to “nothing” (from na) which is sg. On the significance of Sakra's statement, see (3.2.1.3).
100 On line d, cf S 854d* + 897d* [3.3.1].
101 Lit, “there is naught more than patience”: see Nett 173,10 f :: Nett:Ñ 227. Bodhi disagrees with Ñañamoli: S:B 492 n616, but Bodhi is unconvinced.
102 Note that dubbalo in nom, and subject of khanti. This verse recurs at Khp A 149,21-23, where Ñañamoli helpfully notes that the tr “seeks to bring out that patience is a necessity rather than a virtue in the weak, but appears as a virtue in the forbearance of the strong” (KhpA 162) n94.
103 Be abalāṁ taṁ balam āhu; Ce abalāṁ taṁ balam āhu; Ee abalāṁ taṁ balam āhu.
104 Comy takes gutta as related to “to protect” (rakkhati), thus explaining it as either “to one protected by the Dharma, or to one who is protecting the Dharma” (dhammena rakkitissa, dhammāṁ vā rakkhantassa, SA 1:343,10-13). I have taken gutta figuratively (with dhamma in loc) in the common sutta usage of “restrained, guarded, watchful” which fits very well here: S 4:70; A 3:6; Sn 250, 971; Dh 63.
105 Lit, “there is no countering,” ie, he is not predictably reactive.

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kuddham appati kujhanto
sangamaṁ jeti dui jayaṁ 9 (880)

Not replying the angry with anger,
one wins a battle hard to win.

ubhinnam athaṁ carati
attano ca parassa ca
param saṁkupitam čātvā
yo sato upasammati. 10 (881)

Who lives for the good of both,
that of oneself and of others,
knowing that another is angry,
he mindfully keeps his peace.

ubhinnam tikicchantanam
attano ca parassa ca
janā maṁanti bālo’ti
ye dharmassa akovidā’ti 11 (882)

The one healing both,
oneself and others, too—
the people who think him a fool,
are not skilled in the Dharma.106

Conclusion

20 Now, bhikshus, Sakra, lord of the devas,
fed by the fruit of its own merit, reign
in supreme lordship over the 33,
will be one who praises patience and gentleness. 107

21 So here, bhikshus, beautify this well-taught Dharma-Vinaya, into which you have gone forth,
becoming patient and gentle.”108

— evaṁ —

6b

Subhāsita,jaya Sutta

The Discourse on the Victory by the Well-spoken • S 11.5/1:222-224

Traditional: S 1.11.1.5 = Sarṇyutta Nikāya 1, Sagāthā Vagga 11, Sakka Saṁyutta 1, Paṭhama Vagga 5

Theme: The word is mightier than the sword

1 Originating in Sāvatthī.109

The Vepa,citti-Sakka debate

2 “Once upon a time,110 bhikshus, the devas and the asuras were in the thick of battle.111

3 Then, bhikshus, Vepa,citti,112 the lord of the asuras, addressed Sakka, the lord of the devas,
thus:113

106 Nett adds that when Sakra has spoken this verse, the deva applauds but the asuras are silent (Nett 173,23 f).
107 So hi nāma bhikkhave sakko devānam indo sakaṁ puñña, phalam upajivamāno devānam tāватīmsānam
issariya’dhipaccam rajam kārento kham, soraccassa vanna, vādi bhavissati.
108 Idha kho taṁ bhikkhave sobhetha, yam tumhe evaṁ svākkhāte dhamma, vinaye pabbajitā samāna khamā
cē bhaveyyathā soratā cātī. The close quote here marks the end of the 1st person narration by the Buddha
that begins at §3.
109 This Sutta (S 11.5) is fully qu in Nett 172 f :: Nett:Ñ §895/226-228
110 Bhūta, pubba, lit “It happened in the past.”
111 Bhūta, pubbaṁ bhikkhave devā’sura, sangāmo samupabbūḷho* aho. *Be samapabyūḷho; Ee samupabbūḷho.
112 Vepa,citti is the eldest of the asuras. See [SD 54.6a] ad loc.
‘Lord of devas, let there be a victory by the well-spoken!’
‘Vepa, citti, let there be a victory by the well-spoken!’

4 Then, bhikshus, the devas and the asuras appointed a council of judges, saying:
‘They will decide [understand] what is well spoken and what is ill spoken by us.’

5 Then, Vepa, citti, lord of the asuras, said to Sakra, lord of the devas:
‘Speak a verse, lord of devas!’

6 When this was said, Sakra, lord of the devas, said to Vepa, citti, lord of the asuras:
‘You, Vepa, citti, are the senior deva.117 Speak, Vepa, citti, a verse.’118 [223]

7 When this was said, Vepa, citti, lord of the asuras, uttered this verse:119

[Vepa, citti:]120

7.2 Bhiyyo bālā pabhijeyyyum121
no c’assa patissēdako
tasmā bhusena dānēna
dhīro bālam nisedhayeti

[Verses 872* - 884*]

8 But, bhikshus, when the verse was spoken by Vepa, citti, the lord of the asuras, only the asuras applauded. The devas remained silent.

9 Then, bhikshus, Vepa, citti, lord of the asuras, said to Sakra, lord of the devas:
‘Speak a verse, lord of devas!’

10 When this was said, Sakra, lord of the devas, uttered this verse:

[Sakra:]

10.2 Etad eva ahaṃ maññe
bālāssa patissēdhanām
paramā saṅkupitām ṅatvā
yo sato upasammatīti

This is just the way, I think,
for stopping the fool,
knowing the anger in another
one mindfully stays calm.

113 See Yavakalāpi S (S 35.248/4:201 f), SD 40a.3, which tells us of the painful effects on Vepa, citti whenever he has hateful thoughts.

114 Hotu devānām inda subhāsītena jato’ti.

115 Ājānissati (pl), usu “they will understand”; as ājānissati (sg), M 1;169,33, J 1:81,15; āañaska(s) (sg), Sn 909b.

116 Ime no subhāsītām dubbhāsitaṃ ājānissantīti.

117 “Senior deva,” pubba, deva, which can also tr as “the first devas,” as in mātā, pitara pubb’ācariyā’ti vuccare, “Parents are called ‘the first teachers.’” But here in S 11.4, the asuras are “former devas” (in times before Sakra).

118 Tumhe khv-attha veṣa, citti pubba, devā. Bhana veṣa, citti gāthān’ti. Comy alludes the asuras’ past: “You are the ancient masters, having long lived in the deva world, tell us what has come down by tradition to you” (Pubba, devāti deva, lāke cira, nīvāsino pubba, sāmikā. Tumhākām tāva paveni, āgatam bhānathāti, SA 1:344,1-2). Subcomy explains that they are “senior devas” (also “former devas”) (pubba, devā), but Sakra addresses Vepa, citti in the royal pl as an external show of respect (SAT:Be 1:334,1-5). Note a tinge of Sakra’s sarcasm suggested by Comy. Also note that Sakra addresses Vepa, citti by name, thus subtly asserting his superiority over Vepa, citti and the asuras. Cf Kvu 360; J 5:19.

119 Verses 872* - 873*, ie, the 1st + 2nd verses, do not recur here.

120 In [Sakka] Vepa, citti S (S 11.4), Mātali speaks this verse [SD 54.6b].

121 Be Ce Ez2 pabhijeyyyum, “to be bold”; Ee Nett 172, 20 pakujjhēyyum, “become angry,” which Comy recognizes as a variant reading (pakujjhēyyun’ti pi pātho, SA 1:342,28). The former, however, fits the context better.

122 These italicized running numbers for 884* - 891* denote the recurrent verses in [Sakka] Vepa, citti S (S 11.41) [875* - 882*].
11 But, bhikshus, when the verse was spoken by Sakra, the lord of the devas, only the devas applauded. The asuras remained silent.

12 Then, bhikshus, Sakra, lord of the devas, said to Vepacitti, lord of the asuras: ‘Speak a verse, Vepacitti!’

12.2 When this was said, Vepacitti, lord of the asuras, uttered this verse: [Vepacitti:] 124

12.3 *Etad eva titikkhāya* To endure thus, indeed,
   *vajjām passāmī vāsava* I see as faulty, Vāsava—
   *yadā naṁ maññati bālo* when the fool thinks of you:
   *bhayā myāyām titikkhati* ‘This one endures me out of fear!’
   *ajjhāruhati dummedho* The dimwit will bully one
   *go'va bhīyyo palāyinan'ti* like a cow (chasing) at one fleeing.

13 But, bhikshus, when the verse was spoken by Vepacitti, the lord of the asuras, only the asuras applauded. The devas remained silent.

14 Then, bhikshus, Vepacitti, lord of the asuras, said to Sakra, lord of the devas: ‘Speak a verse, lord of devas!’

15 When this was said, Sakra, lord of the devas, uttered these verses:

**Verses on Victory by the Well-spoken** 126

Subhasita,jaya Gāthā

15.2 *Kāmaṁ maññatu vā mā vā* Let him think what he wants; 128
   *bhayā myāyām titikkhati* ‘This one endures me out of fear!’
   *sad-attha,paramā atthā* Of benefits, self-benefit is supreme.
   *khantyā bhīyyo na vijjati* Nothing surpasses patience. 130

15.3 *yo have balavā santo* When, indeed, one who is strong
   *dubbalassa titikkhati* endures the weak,
   *tam āhu paramā khamati* that patience is supreme, they say.
   *nicca maṁ khamati dubbalo* The weak (must) always shows patience.

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123 Ee omits this line.

124 In *Sakka* Vepacitti S (S 11.4), Mātali speaks this verse [SD 54.6b].

125 Vāsava: see (2.1.2.2; 3.2.2.3). See Sakka,nāma S (S 11.12,4.4) + SD 54.19 (1.2.4.2).

126 These 6 verses on “the victory by the well-spoken” (S 886-882*) recur in *Sakka* Vepacitti S (S 11.4/1:223 f) [886*-891*].

127 On this verse, cf S 854d* + 897d*; [3.3.1].


129 Comy: “Amongst the highest benefits (goals) for oneself, there is no benefit (goal) better than patience” (tesu sak’āttha,paramesu atthesu khamtito uttaritato añño attho na vijjatu, SA 1:343,8 f). Although sadattha,paraṇa atthā (877c*) is pl, the verb vijjati (877d) is sg: it is either poetic licence or refers to “nothing” (from na) which is sg.

130 Lit, “there is naught more than patience”: see Nett 173,10 f :: Nett:Ñ 227. Bodhi disagrees with Nāṇamoli: S:B 492 n616, but Bodhi is unconvincing.
15.4 abalāṁ tam balam āhu\textsuperscript{132} 
\textit{yassa bālo, balam balaṁ balassa dhamma, guttassa pativattā na vijāti} 8 (888)
What one sees as strength is not strength, but a fool’s foolish strength.
For the strong restrained by good,\textsuperscript{133} there is no striking back.\textsuperscript{134}

15.5 tass’eva tena pāpiyo 
yo kuddham paṭikujjhati kuddham appaṭikujjhanto saṅgāmāṁ jeti dujjayāṁ 9 (889)
One only worsens things for oneself who replies the angry with anger.
Not replying the angry with anger, one wins a battle hard to win.

15.6 ubhinnam attham carati 
atanno ca parassa ca param sankupitam ṇatvā yo sato upasammati. 10 (890)
Who lives for the good of both, that of oneself and of others, knowing that another is angry, he mindfully keeps his peace.

[224]
15.7 ubhinnam tikicchantānaṁ 
atanno ca parassa ca janā maññanti bālo’ti ye dhammassa akovidā’ti 11 (891)
The one healing both, oneself and others, too—the people who think him a fool, are not skilled in the Dharma.\textsuperscript{135}

16 But, bhikshus, when the verse was spoken by Sakra, the lord of the devas, only the devas applauded. The asuras remained silent.

The victory of the well-spoken

17 Then, bhikshus, the council of devas and asuras said this:
18 “The verses spoken by Vepa, citti, lord of the asuras, are in the sphere of punishment and violence, of conflict, dispute, quarrel.
19 The verses spoken by Sakra, lord of the devas, are in the sphere of non-punishment and non-violence, of non-conflict, non-dispute, non-quarrel.\textsuperscript{136}

To Sakra, the lord of the devas, is the victory of the well-spoken \textit{(subhāsita,jaya)!}’
20 Thus, bhikshus, to Sakra, lord of the devas, was the victory of the well-spoken.”

— evam —

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\textsuperscript{131} Note that \textit{dubbalo} in nom, and subject of \textit{khamati}. This verse recurs at Khp A 149,21-23, where Ňānamoli helpfully notes that the tr “seeks to bring out that patience is a necessity rather than a virtue in the weak, but appears as a virtue in the forbearance of the strong” (KhpA 162) n94.
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\textsuperscript{134} Lit, “there is no countering,” ie, he is not predictably reactive.
\textsuperscript{135} Nett adds that when Sakra has spoken this verse, the devas applaud but the asuras are silent (Nett 173,23 f).
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Bhāsitā kho sakkena devānam indena gāthāyo. Tā ca kho adaññavacarā iti asatthāvacarā iti abhandañnam iti aviggaho iti akalaho iti}. 

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