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Amba,laṭṭhikā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta

The Discourse on the Advice to Rāhula at Amba,laṭṭhikā | M 61 [MĀ 14, T1.436]

Theme: Dangers of lying and need for constant self-review

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003, 2016

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.0 Rāhula, the Buddha's only son, was only 7 days old on the day his father, the Bodhisattva, renounced the world to seek awakening. Apparently, the Bodhisattva never saw his new-born son even as he bade them farewell. They only met on the Buddha's 1st visit to Kapila,vatthu.¹

When the Buddha first returns to Kapila,vatthu after his awakening—probably during the 2nd year of the ministry²—Rāhula approaches him and asks for his “inheritance.” So, at the age of 7, he is initiated into the Order as a novice (*sāmaṇera*) by Sāriputta.³ He is declared by the Buddha to be the foremost of those monks desirous of training (*sikkhā,kāmānaṃ*) [1.4.1].

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

1.1.1 The Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta (M 61) is a short and delightful instruction by the Buddha on the unwholesomeness of lying [§§3-6], the practice of truth-telling and restraint in speech [§7]. The Buddha teaches Rāhula on mindful guarding of **the 3 doors of action**—the body, speech and mind—illustrating it with the parable of the mirror [§8]: we should review or reflect on all our actions, that is, before the deed, during the process, and after the deed.

1.1.2 The admonition begins with **3 parables**—those of the water-pot [§§3-6], the royal elephant [§7] and the mirror [§8]—with which the Buddha impresses on Rāhula the importance of not lying, even in jest [§§3-8]. From the use of imagery, the Buddha goes on to teach in terms of ideas (*dhamma*) regarding the 3 doors of action and how one should wisely attend to each *before*, *during* and *after* the deed [§§9-17]. The admonition significantly closes with a statement of the universality of the moral virtue of such actions.

1.1.3 The Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta (M 61) is mentioned in **the Bhābrū Rock Edict** of Asoka as being among those texts that all monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen should often listen to and reflect upon. This Sutta is a good example of using an “object lesson” in teaching Dharma to the young. The Sutta structure is very simple and systematic.

¹ See SD 10.16 (8.2.2).

² This would be the right date if Rāhula is 7 years old when he first meets the Buddha in Kapilavatthu. Jātaka **Nidāna Kathā** says that the Buddha spends the 1st rains at Isi,patana (Sarnath). Then, he goes to Uruvelā, staying there for 3 months, after which he stays in Rāja,gaha for 2 months. Then, he leaves for Kapila,vatthu, arriving there after a 2-month journey, teaching along the way (J 1:82, 85). The Chinese text, 方廣大莊嚴經 *Fāng guǎng dà zhuāngyán jīng*, fasc 7, says that after spending 6 years in ascetic practices, the Buddha attains awakening (T3.187.582a18). 方廣大莊嚴經 *Fāng guǎng dà zhuāngyán jīng*, adds that 6 years later, he meets his father again: “Twelve years after his renunciation, they met again.” (T3.-614a + 616a). 佛說十二遊經 *Fó shuō shí'èr yóu jīng* says that the Buddha leaves home at 29, gains awakening at 35, and meets his father again after 12 more years (T4.195.146c29-14a1). (Nakamura 2000: 327, 479 n50, with corrections.) See also Mv 1.53.1 (V 1:82 f); J 1:85-94.

³ For details, see SD 45.16 (2.2.1).

1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE

1.2.1 The Commentaries say that the Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta and **the Kumāra,pañha** (Khp 1) were taught to Rāhula when he was a 7-year-old novice (*satta,vassika,sāmaṇera,kāle*) (MA 3:126; AA 1:258). Once, when the 18-year-old Rāhula was following the Buddha on alms-round, he harboured carnal thoughts through being fascinated by the beauty of his body and that of the Buddha. The Buddha, noticing his unwholesome thoughts, gave him the teachings of **the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 62).

1.2.2 Besides **the Ambalaṭṭhika Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 61) and **the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 62), there are some 5 texts named “**Rāhula Sutta**.” They are as follows with their disambiguating prefixes:

(Catukka) Rāhula Sutta	A 4.177	the 4 elements	SD 3.11
(Anusaya) Rāhula S or (Māna) Rāhula S 1	S 22.91	the latent tendencies	SD 19.2a
Mānānusaya Sutta	S 18.21	the latent tendency of conceit	SD 19.2a(7.5)
Mānāpagata Sutta	S 18.22	conceit	
(Kalyāṇa,mitta) Rāhula Sutta	Sn 2.11	spiritual friendship	

One is in the Aṅguttara—**the (Dhātu) Rāhula Sutta** (A 4.177), a brief teaching on the emptiness of the 4 elements that is elaborated in the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta (M 62,8-17). The Khandha Vagga of the Saṃyutta contains a famous pair of Rāhula Suttas: **the (Anusaya) Rāhula Sutta** (or Rāhula Sutta 1) and **the (Apagata) Rāhula Sutta** (or Rāhula Sutta 2) (S 22.91-92), both on overcoming the notions of “I” and “mine,” which are repeated in the Nidāna Vagga respectively as **the Mānānusaya Sutta** (S 18.21) and **the Apagata Sutta** (S 18.22).

1.2.3 The short but instructive **(Kalyāṇa,mitta) Rāhula Sutta** (Sn 2.11) of the Sutta Nipāta is on **spiritual friendship**. It is a set of basic instructions on how Rāhula should prepare for his meditation.

1.3 THE RĀHULA SAṂYUTTA

1.3.1 The 18th section of the Saṃyutta Nikāya—or S 2.7, that is, the 7th collection of the Nidāna Vagga (the chapter on the links)—is called the **Rāhula Saṃyutta** (S 18). It contains teachings given to Rāhula by the Buddha on various occasions from the time Rāhula joined the order until his attainment of arhathood (MA 2:126). The 22 short suttas are arranged in two subchapters (*vagga*).

1.3.2 The first 10 suttas of **the Rāhula Saṃyutta** explain the 3 characteristics in relation to **20 groups of phenomena**: the 6 internal sense-bases; the 6 external sense-objects; the 6 classes each of consciousness, of contact, feeling, perception, volition and craving; the 6 elements; and the 5 aggregates. They are given to Rāhula in response to a request for instruction.

1.3.3 The first 10 suttas of the 2nd subchapter records the Buddha as speaking the same 10 suttas to Rāhula, but doing so on his own initiative (unprompted). This probably means that they are encores to ensure that Rāhula understands these topics. The two additional suttas instruct on how to abandon the conceptions of “I” and “mine,” and the tendency to conceit.

1.3.4 The arrangement of these suttas, in terms of the successive teachings, is significant, as it shows the progress from easier individual topics, to their presentation as a set (the 5 aggregates), then, an encore, and, finally, on non-self.

1.4 THE CŪḶA RĀHUL'OVĀDA SUTTA (M 147 = S 35.121)

1.4.1 The Commentaries say that Rāhula, rising early in the morning, and taking a handful of sand in his hand, would aspire, “May I today receive just as much advice from the Buddha, and my preceptor and teachers!”⁴ Understandably, it is on account of such diligence of Rāhula that the Buddha declares him as the foremost amongst those monks **desirous of training** (*sikkhā,kāmānam*) (A 1:24).

1.4.2 The Cūḷa Rāhul'ovāda Sutta (M 147 + S 35.121), given shortly after Rāhula's higher ordination (when he is 20 years old), recounts how he, after listening to a discourse by the Buddha on the development of insight, attains **arhathood**.⁵

1.4.3 Rāhula's Elder's Verses (**Thera,gāthā**) are at Tha 295-298.

1.5 The Apadāna and the Commentaries say that although Rāhula is the Buddha's own son, the Buddha shows the same **lovingkindness** to him and to his murderous cousin Devadatta, the bandit Aṅgulimāla, and the intoxicated elephant Dhanapāla (sent out by Devadatta to kill him).⁶

2 Related suttas

Other suttas related to the arhat **Rāhula** include:

			Notes
Kumāra,pañha	Khv 1		when he is a 7-year-old novice ⁷
Mahā Rāhul'ovāda Sutta	M 62	SD 3.11	when he is an 18-year-old
Cūḷa Rāhul'ovāda Sutta	M 147	SD 70.7	= S 35.121. His attaining of arhathood
Rāhula Saṃyutta	S 18		S 18.1-22 (S 2:244-253)
Cakkhu Sutta 1	S 18.1 ⁸		A reflection on impermanence: sense-organs
Rūpa Sutta 1	S 18.2		A reflection on impermanence: sense-objects
Viññāṇa Sutta	S 18.3		A reflection on impermanence: consciousness
Samphassa Sutta	S 18.4		A reflection on impermanence: sense-contacts
Vedanā Sutta	S 18.5		A reflection on impermanence: feelings
Saññā Sutta	S 18.6		A reflection on impermanence: perceptions
Sañcetanā Sutta	S 18.7		A reflection on impermanence: intentions
Taṇhā Sutta	S 18.8		A reflection on impermanence: craving
Dhātu Sutta	S 18.9		A reflection on impermanence: the elements
Khandha Sutta	S 18.10		A reflection on impermanence: the aggregates

⁴ MA 3:134; AA 1:258.

⁵ M 147/3:277-280 = S 35.121/4:105-107 (SD 70.7).

⁶ Ap 6.145/p47; MA 2:387; DhA 1:146,15-17; Miln 410.

⁷ These questions, however, are first recorded as being used as the going-forth procedure for the precocious 7-year-old novice, **Sopāka**, an arhat (Tha 480-486): see SD 45.16 (2.4).

⁸ For a similar series of 10 reflections on impermanence covering the same subjects as these 10 suttas, see S 25.1-10 (**Okkanti Saṃyutta**), or (**Anicca**) **CakkhuS** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

Cakkhu Sutta 2	S 18.11	}	The teachings of S 18.11-20 are identical to those of S 18.1.10 except that here the Buddha questions Rāhula.
Rūpa Sutta 2	S 18.12		
Viññāṇa Sutta 2	S 18.13		
Samphassa Sutta 2	S 18.14		
Vedanā Sutta 2	S 18.15		
Saññā Sutta 2	S 18.16		
Sañcetanā Sutta 2	S 18.17		
Taṇhā Sutta 2	S 18.18		
Dhātu Sutta 2	S 18.19		
Khandha Sutta 2	S 18.20		
Mānānusaya Sutta	S 18.21	SD 19.2a(7.5)	Overcoming self-centred tendencies.
Apagata Sutta	S 18.22		
(Māna) Rāhula Sutta 1	S 22.91		or (Anusaya) Rāhula Sutta; see SD 19.2a(7.5)
(Māna) Rāhula Sutta 2	S 22.92		or (Apagata) Rāhula Sutta; see SD 19.2a(7.5)
(Dhātu) Rāhula Sutta	A 4.177	SD 70.17	on the 4 elements, elaborated in M 62
(Kalyāṇa,mitta) Rāhula Sutta	Sn 2.11		Sn 335-342, on spiritual friendship

Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul'ovāda Sutta

The Discourse on the Advice to Rāhula at Amba,laṭṭhikā

M 61

1 [414] Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in the squirrels' feeding-ground in the Bamboo Grove near Rājagaha.

2 At that time, the venerable **Rāhula** was staying at **Amba,laṭṭhikā**.⁹

Then, the Blessed One, emerging from his evening retreat,¹⁰ went to where the venerable Rāhula was staying at Amba,laṭṭhikā. The venerable Rāhula saw him coming from afar and, on seeing him, prepared **a seat and water for washing the feet**.

The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat and, while seated, washed his feet. The venerable Rāhula then bowed down to the Blessed One and sat down at one side.

⁹ Amba,laṭṭhikā: *amba* is “mango”; *laṭṭhikā* or *laṭṭhi* means “sapling, a plant sprout”, but *laṭṭhi* can also mean “a stick of sugarcane” (PvA 257), and is found in place-names, eg Laṭṭhi,vana (J 1:83). Hence, *amba,-laṭṭhikā* is tr as “the grove of mango saplings (or sprouts)” (DA 1:41). Vinaya Comy explains it as “palmra or talipot-palm pleasance” (*tāl'uyyāna*, VA 972). It was a royal park on the highway between Rājagaha and Nālandā. From this account, it appears that the squirrels' feeding ground (*Kalandaka,nivāpa*) was within walking distance of Amba,laṭṭhikā.

¹⁰ “Retreat,” *paṭisallāṇā*, alt tr “seclusion.”

Parable of the water in a pot

3 Then, the Blessed One, having left a **little bit of water in the water-vessel**, said to the venerable Rāhula,

“Rāhula, do you see this little bit of water remaining in the water vessel?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Even so, Rāhula, **little** is the recluseship¹¹ of those who have no shame in telling a deliberate lie.”

4 Having **thrown away the little bit of water**, the Blessed One said to the venerable Rāhula,

“Rāhula, do you see how this little bit of remaining water is thrown away?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Even so, Rāhula, **thrown away** is the recluseship of those *who have no shame in telling a deliberate lie.*”

5 Having turned the water vessel **upside down**, the Blessed One said to the venerable Rāhula,

“Rāhula, do you see how this water vessel is turned upside down?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Even so, Rāhula, **upside down** is the recluseship of those *who have no shame in telling a deliberate lie.*”

6 Having turned the water vessel **right side up**, the Blessed One said to the venerable Rāhula,

“Rāhula, do you see how **empty and hollow** this water vessel is?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Even so, Rāhula, **empty and hollow** is the recluseship of *those who have no shame in telling a deliberate lie.*”

Parable of the royal elephant

7 Suppose, Rāhula, there is this **royal elephant**:¹²

its tusks (long) like chariot poles, fully grown [fit to carry a burden], of good pedigree, accustomed to battles, and in battle, it uses its forefeet and hindfeet, its forequarters and hindquarters, its head and ears, and its tusks and tail, **[415]** but it **protects its trunk**.¹³

7.2 Noticing this, the elephant-rider thinks,

‘This royal elephant, *its tusks (long) like chariot poles, fully grown [fit to carry a burden], of good pedigree, accustomed to battles, and in battle, it uses its forefeet and hind feet, its forequarters and hindquarters, its head and ears, and its tusks and tail, but protects its trunk: it has not given up its life.*’

7.3 But, Rāhula, when the royal elephant—*its tusks (long) like chariot poles, fully grown [fit to carry a burden], of good pedigree, accustomed to battles, and in battle uses its forefeet and hindfeet, its forequarters and hindquarters, its head and ears, and its tusks and tail—*

uses its trunk, too—

noticing this, the elephant-rider thinks,

¹¹ “Recluseship,” *sāmañña*; cf *samaṇa* (n), “recluse.”

¹² *Rañño nāgo*, alt tr “royal tusker.”

¹³ By putting it in its mouth (MA 3:128). This obviously alludes to not speaking falsehood and being mindful of one’s speech. Cf (**Nāga**) **Sota S** (A 5.140) where the war-elephant guards *all* its limbs mentioned here (A 5.140,4/3:162), SD 46.9.

‘This royal elephant—its tusks (long) like chariot poles, fully grown [fit to carry a burden], of good pedigree, accustomed to battles, and in battle uses its trunk, too—it has given up its life. Now there is nothing it will not do.’

7.4 Rāhula, it is the same with anyone *who has no shame in telling a deliberate lie*: there is no bad, I say, he will not do.

Therefore, Rāhula, you should train yourself, thus: ‘**I will not tell a deliberate lie even in jest.**’¹⁴

Parable of the mirror

8 What do you think, Rāhula, what is **a mirror** for?”

“For reviewing [reflecting],¹⁵ bhante.”

8.2 “In the same way, Rāhula,

bodily action should be done only after repeated reviewing [constant reflection],

verbal action should be done only after repeated reviewing [constant reflection],

mental action should be done only after repeated reviewing [constant reflection].¹⁶

THE 3 DOORS

REVIEWING BODILY ACTION

(1a) CONSIDER WISELY BEFORE DOING

9 Rāhula, **whenever you want to do** an action with **the body**, you should review that bodily action, thus:¹⁷

‘This action I want to do with **the body**—**will it** harm me, will it harm others, will it harm both?¹⁸
Will it be an unwholesome *bodily action* with painful outcome, painful result?’

¹⁴ *Tasma-t-ihā te rāhula, h’assā pi na musā bhaṇissāmīti*. Comy: The Buddha thinks that young boys say things both proper and improper, and are called *piya, musā.vādā* (“lovable fibs”; “fond of lying”); for they would say that they saw something when they did not, or would say they did not when they did (MA 3:125).

¹⁵ *Paccavekkhana* has both these senses here.

¹⁶ “Repeated review,” *paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā* is an example of a reduplicative (a verb repeating itself to show repeated or continuous action). Although the verb *paccavekkhati* usually means “he reviews” in the sense of an examination of conscience after the fact, here it is used as a synonym for *yoniso manasikāroti*, “he wisely considers,” that is, before the deed, during the deed and after the deed as clearly evident from the 3 phases of each of the 3 doors of action: “when you want to do an action” [§§9, 12, 15], “while you are doing an action” [§§10, 13, 16] and “after you have done an action” [§§11,14,16].

¹⁷ *Yad eva tvaṃ rāhula kammaṃ kattu.kāmo hosi tad eva te kāya.kammaṃ paccavekkhitabbarṃ*.

¹⁸ “Will it harm me, or harm others, or harm both?” *atta, vyābādāya pi ... para, vyābādāya pi ... ubhaya, vyābādāya pi samvatteyya*. The common key word here, *vyābādāya*, means “distress, pain, affliction.” This phrase constitutes the golden rule: see **Veḷu, dvāreyya S** (S 55.7) for a broader application, where a wholesome action should be “purified” in three ways, ie by observing them oneself, by exhorting others to observe them, and by praising (thus encouraging other to practise) such deeds (S 55.7,6-12/5:354 f).

9.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I want to do* with the body, will harm me, will harm others, will harm both:
it will be an **unwholesome** bodily action with painful outcome, painful result,’
then, certainly,¹⁹ Rāhula, you should **not** do such an action with the body. [416]

9.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I want to do* with the body,
will not harm me, will not harm others, will not harm both,
it will be a **wholesome** bodily action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’
then, Rāhula, you should do such an action with the body.

(1b) CONSIDER WISELY WHILE DOING

10 Rāhula, **while doing** an action with the body, you should review that bodily action, thus:

‘This action *I am doing* with **the body**—is it harming me, is it harming others, is it harming both?
Is it an unwholesome bodily action with painful outcome, painful result?’

10.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I am doing* with the body, is harming me, is harming others, is harming both:
it is an **unwholesome** bodily action with painful outcome, painful result,’
then, Rāhula, you should **give up** such an action with the body.

10.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I am doing* with the body,
is not harming me, is not harming others, is not harming both:
it is a **wholesome** bodily action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’
then, Rāhula, you should **pursue**²⁰ such an action with the body.

(1c) CONSIDER WISELY AFTER DOING

11 Rāhula, **having done** an action with the body, you should review that bodily action, thus:

‘This action *I have done* with the body—
was it a bodily action that has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed harm both?
Was it an unwholesome bodily action with painful outcome, painful result?’

CONFESSION & CONTRITION

11.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I have done* with the body, has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed both:
it was an **unwholesome** bodily action with painful outcome, painful result,’
then, Rāhula, you should **confess it**, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life.²¹

¹⁹ “Certainly,” *sasakkam* [also at §§12.2, 15.2]. Comy glosses with *ekamsena*, “surely, definitely, certainly” (MA 3:128). If taken as *sa,sakkam*, it means “with ability” or perhaps “to the best of one’s ability.”

²⁰ “Pursue,” *anupadajjeyyāsi*, alt tr “should continue (with an action).” Comy: *upatthambheyyāsi punapunaṃ kareyyāsi*, “should support and do it often” (MA 3:128).

²¹ “Wise companions in the holy life,” *viññū sa,brahma,cārī*, that is, spiritual friends (*kalyāṇa,mittā*).

11.3 Having *confessed it, revealed it, laid it open to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life*, [417] you should show **restraint** in the future.²²

11.4 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,
‘This action *I have done* with the body
has *not* harmed me, has *not* harmed others, has *not* harmed both:
it was a **wholesome** bodily action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’
then, Rāhula, you should, with zest and joy,²³ **train** night and day in wholesome things.

REFLECTING ON VERBAL ACTION

(2a) CONSIDER WISELY BEFORE SPEAKING

12 Rāhula, **whenever you want to do** an action with **speech**, you should review that verbal action, thus:

‘This action I want to do with **speech**—**will it** harm me, will it harm others, will it harm both?
Will it be an unwholesome verbal action with painful outcome, painful result?’

12.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,
‘This action *I want to do* with speech, will harm me, will harm others, will harm both,
it will be an **unwholesome** verbal action with painful outcome, painful result,’
then, certainly, Rāhula, you should **not** do such an action with speech.

12.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,
‘This action *I want to do* with speech,
will not harm me, will not harm others, will not harm both, [418]
it will be a **wholesome** verbal action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,
then, Rāhula, you should **do** such an action with speech.

(2b) CONSIDER WISELY WHILE SPEAKING

13 Rāhula, **while you are doing** an action with **speech**, you should review that verbal action, thus:
‘This action I am doing with **speech**—**is it** harming me, is it harming others, is it harming both?
Is it an unwholesome verbal action with painful outcome, painful result?’

13.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,
‘This action *I am doing* with speech, is harming me, is harming others, is harming both:
it is an **unwholesome** verbal action with painful outcome, painful result,’
then, Rāhula, you should **give up** such an action with speech.

13.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,
‘This action *I am doing* with speech
is not harming me, is not harming others, is not harming both:

²² To acknowledge a wrong deed with contrition, confess it, and observe restraint in it leads to growth in the noble disciple. Cf the cases of king Ajātasattu (D 2,99-100/1:85), the monk Bhaddalī (M 65,13/-1:440) and the wanderer Nigrodha (D 25,22/3:55).

²³ “With zest and joy,” *pīti, pāmujjena*, ie with bodily joyful energy and mental joy.

it *will be* a **wholesome** verbal action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,
then, Rāhula, you should **pursue** such an action with speech.

(2c) CONSIDER WISELY AFTER SPEAKING

14 Rāhula, **having done** an action with speech, you should review that verbal action, thus:

‘This action I have done with speech—

was it a verbal action that has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed harm both?

Was it an unwholesome verbal action with painful outcome, painful result?’

CONFESSION & CONTRITION

14.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I have done with speech* has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed both:

it was an **unwholesome** verbal action with painful outcome, painful result,’

then, Rāhula, you should **confess it**, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life.

14.3 Having *confessed it, revealed it, laid it open to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life*, you should show **restraint** in the future.

14.4 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I have done* with speech

has not harmed me, has not harmed others, has not harmed both:

it was a **wholesome** verbal action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’

then, Rāhula, you should, with *zest and joy*, **train** night and day in wholesome things.

REFLECTING ON MENTAL ACTION

(3a) CONSIDER WISELY BEFORE THINKING

15 Rāhula, **whenever you want to do** an action with **the mind**, you should review that mental action, thus:

‘This action I want to do with **the mind**—**will it** harm me, will it harm others, will it harm both?

Will it be an unwholesome *mental action* with painful outcome, painful result?’

15.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I want to do* with the mind, will harm me, will harm others, will harm both,

it will be an **unwholesome** mental action with painful outcome, painful result,’

then, certainly, you should **not** do such an action with the mind.

15.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know,

‘This action *I want to do with the mind,*

will not harm me, nor harm others, nor harm both,

it will be a **wholesome** mental action with pleasant outcome, pleasant [419] result,’

then, Rāhula, you should **do** such an action with the mind.

(3b) CONSIDER WISELY WHILE THINKING

16 Rāhula, **while doing** an action with the mind, you should review that mental action, thus: ‘This action I am doing with the mind—*is it* harming me, is it harming others, is it harming both? Is it an unwholesome mental action with painful outcome, painful result?’

16.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know, ‘This action *I am doing with the mind, is harming me, is harming others, is harming both:*’ it is an **unwholesome** mental action with painful outcome, painful result,’ then, Rāhula, you should **give up** such an action with the mind.

16.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know, ‘This action *I am doing with the mind, is not harming me, is not harming others, is not harming both:*’ it is a **wholesome** mental action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’ then, Rāhula, you should **pursue** such an action with the mind.

(3c) CONSIDER WISELY AFTER THINKING

17 Rāhula, **having done** an action with the mind, you should review that mental action, thus: ‘This action I have done with the mind—*was it* a mental action that has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed both?’ Was it an unwholesome mental action with painful outcome, painful result?’

DISOWNING THE PAIN

17.2 If, Rāhula, on reviewing, you know, ‘This action *I have done with the mind, has harmed me, has harmed others, has harmed both,*’ it was an **unwholesome** mental action with painful outcome, painful result,’ then, you should be **concerned, ashamed, disgusted**²⁴ regarding that mental action.²⁵ Rāhula, feeling *concerned, ashamed, disgusted*, you should **show restraint** from then on.

17.3 But, Rāhula, if, on reviewing, you know, ‘This action *I have done with the mind, has not harmed me, has not harmed others, has not harmed both:*’ it was a **wholesome** mental action with pleasant outcome, pleasant result,’ then, Rāhula, you should, with *zest and joy*, **train** night and day in wholesome things. [420]

²⁴ “Should be concerned, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyitabbam harāyitabbam jigucchitabbam*. MA glosses *aṭṭiyitabbam* as *aṭṭena pīlitenā bhavitabbam*, “one should be distressed, (feel) harassed”; *harāyitabbam* = *lajjitabbam*, “one should be ashamed”; *jigucchitabbam* = *gūtham disvā viya jigucchā uppādetabbā*, “one should arouse disgust (in oneself) as if looking at excrement” (MA 3:129). See **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11): *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*, “I feel concerned, ashamed, disgusted” (D 11,5/1:213), SD 1.7.

²⁵ This sentence differs from both the preceding pericopes (stock repetitions) in connection with actions of the body and of speech. This is because unwholesome thoughts, unlike bodily and verbal transgressions, do not entail confession as a means of expiation. Both Horner (M:H 2:90) and Ñāṇamoli (M:ÑB) missed this variation.

PURITY OF THE 3 DOORS²⁶

18 Rāhula, all those recluses and brahmins of **the past** who
 purified their **bodily actions,**
 purified their **verbal actions,**
 purified their **mental actions,**
had done so
 through repeated reviewing on their *bodily actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *verbal actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *mental actions.*

18.2 Rāhula, all those recluses and brahmins of **the future** who
 will purify their *bodily actions,*
 will purify their *verbal actions,*
 will purify their *mental actions,*
will do so
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *bodily actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *verbal actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *mental actions.*

18.3 Rāhula, all those recluses and brahmins of **the present** who
 are purifying their *bodily actions,*
 are purifying their *verbal actions,*
 are purifying their *mental actions,*
are doing so
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *bodily actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *verbal actions,*
 through *repeated reviewing* on their *mental actions.*

18.4 Therefore, Rāhula, thinking thus:
 ‘I will purify my bodily actions through *repeated reviewing*;
 I will purify my verbal actions through *repeated reviewing*;
 I will purify my mental actions through *repeated reviewing*’—
 this is how, Rāhula, you should train yourself.”

The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the venerable Rāhula rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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²⁶ This conclusion impresses on Rāhula the universality of the moral virtues taught to him.