SD 62.10b (Chakka) Duccarita Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Unwholesome Conduct | A 6.108

Theme: The 3 unwholesome conducts and the 3 wholesome conducts

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1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

The (Chakka) Duccarita Sutta (A 6.108) lists the 3 unwholesome <u>conducts</u> and their opposites. These are <u>the unwholesome conduct</u> of the "karmic doors," that is, those of *the body, of speech and of the mind*, those conducts rooted in *lust, hatred or delusion*; they are to be abandoned. Their opposites are <u>the wholesome conduct</u> of the body, of speech and of the mind, that is, those rooted in *non-lust, in non-hatred and non-delusion*—these are to be cultivated for a happy life and spiritual progress.

1.2 RELATED SUTTAS

There are numerous other suttas that relate to unwholesome karma and wholesome karma. Two very similar suttas are as follows:

(Iti) Duccarita Sutta	It 64/3.2.5/54 f	SD 59.10(3.1)	3 kinds of impure conduct.
(Iti) Sucarita Sutta	It 65/3.2.6/55	SD 59.10(3.2)	3 kinds of pure conduct.

These suttas (and others) describe practices suitable for the laity.¹

2 Key terms

2.1 THE KARMIC DOORS

2.1.1 The Sutta opens listing the wrong actions of the 3 karmic doors—

(1) wrong action of the body,
 (2) wrong action of speech,
 (3) wrong action of the mind.

kāya,duccarita,

 vācā,duccarita,
 mano,duccarita.

They are all to be abandoned for one's own good and the good of the many.

The 3 "karmic doors" ($kamma,dv\bar{a}ra$) are listed separately in the suttas² but are almost never so called therein. The term "karmic doors" ($kamma,dv\bar{a}ra$)³ or the "3 karmic doors" ($kamma,dv\bar{a}ra$ -t,taya)⁴

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¹ See SD 59.10 (3.0.1).

² Kamma,dvāra: eg **Upāli (Gaha,pati) S** (M 56,4/1:373,10 f), tiṇṇaṁ kammānaṁ, SD 27.1.

³ Comys: **CPD**: sattā kusalâkusala,kammaṁ āyūhamānā yehi dvārehi āyūhanti, tāni tīṇi ~āni dassento (VbhA 144,29); ~āni dassitāni (DhsA 88,12 f); tīṇi pi ~āni asuddhāni (DhsA 151,27); tad eva catubhūmaka,kusalaṁ tiṇṇaṁ ~ānaṁ vasena pariyādiyitvā (DhsA 345,9). **DP**: J 1:276,28 (kāya,dvār~ vacī,dvār~ mano,dvāran ti tīni -ani rakkha); 3:35,20 (tīhi -ehi duccaritaraṁ na carati); 4:179,20 (kāy'ādihi -ehi upasanto sīlava); ApA 110,18 (mayā kāyena vācāya manasā cā ti tīhi -ehi katan ti); DhsA 84,37* (-e caranti kammāni); 85,10 (kāya,dvārena kataṁ kammaṁ kāya,kamman ti -ena namaṁ labhati); 90,25 (micchā carantassa kammaṁ kāya,kammam eva hoti ~ pi kāya,dvāram eva).

⁴ Abhidhammâvatāra Nāma,rūpa,pariccheda 361+362+369/138.

are first used only in the Commentaries and later works. The karmic doors can be either <u>wholesome</u> (when rooted in non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion) or <u>unwholesome</u> (when rooted in greed, hatred and delusion). However, when the term *kamma,dvāra* appears by itself, it usually refers to <u>un</u>wholesome karma.

The 3 unwholesome karma-door actions are wrong bodily action (*kāya,duccarita*), wrong verbal action (*vācā,duccarita*) and wrong mental action (*mano,duccarita*). **The (Chakka) Duccarita Sutta** (A 6.108) states that the 3 unwholesome kinds of actions—since they bring bad fruits (especially suffering)—are to be abandoned. [§3]

2.1.2 In the second part of the Sutta, the Buddha declares that **the 3 wholesome conducts** (*sucarita*) are to be cultivated, that is:

(1) right action of the body, kāya, sucarita,
 (2) right action of speech, vācā, sucarita,
 (3) right action of the mind. mano, sucarita.

2.1.3 Word-formations

The key terms, *duccarita*, "wrong or bad conduct," and *sucarita*, "right or good conduct" are resolved as follows:

- **du-** (Skt **duṣ**),⁵ a prefix meaning "asunder, apart; difficult, bad," that is bringing painful fruits, suffering; it is also found in the word, **dukkha**, **du** + VKHA [1.2.1.4](NO SUCH REF); hence, "uneasiness, pain, sorrow, trouble, difficulty" (SED 483).
- su-, a prefix meaning "good, easy," that is giving pleasant feelings, comfort, and so on; it is also found in the word, sukha, su + VKHA [1.2.1.4](NO SUCH REF).
- carita, from VCAR, to move (in the sense of "to be active"), as in brahma, cariya (literally, "divine life"), the holy life (entailing celibacy).

It is helpful for us to study *duccarita* in its broader context as an expression of *dukkha* since both terms are closely related. Oddly, or perhaps, expectedly, such a universal word, *duccarita*, an ancient key Buddhist term, does not seem to have been given any detailed explanations of its origins. On the other hand, the sutta explanations of *dukkha*, as a rule, relate to its doctrinal and practical significance to help us in a better and fuller understanding of the 4 noble truths.

2.1.4 *Soceyya*

Another word for *sucarita*, "good conduct," is *soceyya*, "purity," that is, that of *body*, *speech and mind*, like that described in **the Soceyya Suttas** 1 and 2 (A 3.118 + 119).⁶ While both suttas describe the nature of karmic purity, there is an important difference between the 2 terms, *sucarita* and *soceyya*. While *sucarita* qualifies the actions themselves (meaning that the precept is not broken; hence, one is "pure" in that sense), *soceyya* refers to <u>the state</u> of such a person who keeps the precepts.

⁵ See **Webster's** 3rd New International Dict Unabridged, 2003: (ME) "do the opposite of; reverse (a specified action)." **1** *dis*join, *dis*establish, *dis*own *dis*qualify; **2** opposite of: contrary of: absence of *dis*union, *dis*affection; **3**: not: *dis*honest, *dis*loyal. **Oxford** Dict of English Etymology (ed Onions,1966): Following sandhi rules, Lat *dis* becomes *dif*, as in *difficult* (*dis* + *facilis*, "easy"); *sub-*, "under, below, bottom," becomes *suf* + *ferre*, "to bear," as in *suffer*, *suf*fering etc.

⁶ A 3.118/1:271 f (SD 59.103(3.5); A 3.119/1:272 f (SD 59.10(3.6)).

In an important way, we can say that one who is *sucarita* is pure in terms of keeping the precepts, and is thus <u>morally virtuous</u> ($s\bar{\imath}lav\bar{a}$). One who is *soceyya*, on the other hand, is not only *morally virtuous*, but also *mentally ready* for meditation or mental cultivation. In other words, the moral virtue of such a person is strong and consistent enough to be able to meditate well, even attain dhyana, or reach the path of streamwinning or higher.⁷

2.2 ETYMOLOGY AND MEANING OF DUKKHA

2.2.1 No etymology of dukkha?

Etymologically, the most fascinating of early Pali terms must surely be *dukkha*. The early Buddhist texts seem to assume that it was such a common-place term that it merited no etymology.⁸ However, it seems that no scholar seems to know its exact derivation or has given any satisfactory etymological study of the term; that is, not from the Pali texts or sources which do mention *dukkha* in its various forms.⁹

Since Pali is closely related to Sanskrit, we are able to learn etymology and meanings of the term dukkha. Monier Williams' Sanskrit-English Dictionary (SED) seems to be the best source for clues to the mysterious background of the key early Buddhist term, dukkha; it is spelt duḥkha in Sanskrit.

2.2.2 Sanskrit roots

SED says: "According to grammarians, [duḥkha is] properly written duṣ and kha [cf su-kha, qv]; but more probably a Prākritized form of duḥ-stha ("standing badly," SED 483)." The Sanskrit duḥstha is in Pali, duṭṭha (adjective/noun), the past participle of dussati, "to be corrupted, wicked, bad; to do wrong, to wrong (someone)." As an adjective, it means "spoilt, corrupt; bad, malignant, wicked." 10

The component *kha* of *du-k,kha* and *su-kha* is defined by SED thus:

kha 3 (n) (Vkhan) "a cavity, hollow, cave, cavern, aperture [a hole, sv sukha, SED 1220]; an aperture of the human body (of which there are 9, viz the mouth, the two ears, the two eyes, the two nostrils, and the organs of excretion and generation)." SED: "mfn (said to be from 5 su + 3 kha and to mean originally 'having a good axle-hole; possibly a Prakrit form of su-stha [good standing] (qv); cf duḥkha) running swiftly or easily (only applied to cars or chariots, superl[ative] sukha-tama), easy, pleasant, agreeable, gentle, mild, comfortable, happy, prosperous; virtuous, pious."

2.2.3 Possible explanations of the word dukkha

2.2.3.1 The meanings and usages of *dukkha* are well defined in the suttas. ¹¹ However neither text nor scholar has given any clear etymology of *dukkha*. **Buddhaghosa**, for example, had to resort to Sanskrit roots and folk etymology for his explanation of the origins of *dukkha*, as recorded in his Visuddhi, magga, thus:

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⁷ See SD 59.10 (3).

 $^{^8}$ See eg (Sāriputta) Dukkha S (S 38.14/4:259), SD 1.1(4.1); also SD 1.1 (4.1, 6.1) for definitions and descriptions of dukkha.

⁹ See **Sadda,nīti** for some textual sources and Pali grammatical nn (Sadd 397,25-398,3); sv dukkha (Sadd 1448). ¹⁰ V 3:118; S 3:259, 262, 4:339; A I 124, 127, 157 f; It 68 (*brāhmaṇa), 4.391 (*caṇḍāla); PvA 4 (*corā: rogues or thieves); Saddh 86, 367, 434.

¹¹ See eg **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (SD 56.11), SD 1.1 tr and nn.

As to derivation, analysis by character, and so on: here, however, firstly "as to derivation" [of the word dukkha,] the word du ("bad") is seen as having the sense of vile (kucchita); for, they are called "bad child" (du-putta). The word kham ("-ness"), however is seen as meaning "empty" (tuccha), since they call it "empty space" (Skt kham) [1.2.1.4]. And the first truth is vile because it is a place of numerous dangers, and it is empty because it is devoid of the constancy, beauty, pleasure and selfhood imagined by foolish people. So it is called dukkha ("badness" = suffering, pain), because of vileness and emptiness. 12 (Vism 16.16/494)

2.2.3.2 Buddhaghosa has given a Sanskrit-based and fanciful explanation of *dukkha*. Whereas Buddhaghosa's word analysis of *dukkha* is discursive and intellectual, **Upatissa's** related chapters on *dukkha* in **the Vimutti,magga** are succinct and text-based. In its word analysis of *dukkha*, the Vimutti,magga is not only reflective of the sutta teachings, but succinctly mentions only brief word-meanings of *dukkha* in its presentation of the 4 noble truths, thus:¹³

Vimm §68

• "'Suffering' has the meaning (attha) of hurting." 14

The Taishō edition here reads 果 with the variant 苦 dukkha, pīļana, ābādha, which matches mnar ba, meaning "affliction, torment, oppression" in the Tibetan parallel (192b) and pīļanaṭṭho in Pm 2:104. Tibetan mnar ba (194a) corresponds to 逼, "to harass, press" (Taishō 453a24).

• "Suffering has the characteristic (lakkhaṇa) of disadvantage (ādīnava)."

Then Upatissa continues with his text-based explanations of *dukkha* and the other noble truths. (Vimm ch 11 §J Skill in the noble truths; Vimm:Ñ 639-660).

It is likely that the Pali Commentaries have quoted these statements from Vimm, just as they often quoted from Vism.¹⁵ A helpful detailed explanation of *dukkha* is given in the Guide to "the compendium of feeling" (*vedanā,daṅaaha*) in **the Abhidhamattham,saṅaha** (Abhs 3.2; Abhs:BRS 115 f).

2.2.3.3 The fanciful Sanskrit stem **kham** [1.2.3.1], as we have noted, may impress an intellectual guru and his audience, but with at best only a whiff of relevance in Dharma practice (if any). Any teacher or student who cares for Dharma practice and the place of the 4 truths in it will recognize the salient quality of **kham** from **khamati** ("to tolerate") in our efforts to internalize a practical sense of **dukkha**.

Although the key component -kha(m) of the word dukkha (as noun and adjective) seems identical with the stem khama (mfn), ¹⁶ "patient, enduring; able to put up with; forbearing; amenable to; adequate, fit for; appropriate" (DP), they are differently derived; they come from different roots. Kha(m) of dukkha comes from VKHAM [1.2.3.1]; Khama of Khamati comes from VKSAM, "to endure."

¹² Nibbacana,lakkhaṇ'ādi-p,pabhedato ti ettha pana **nibbacanato** tāva: idha **du** iti ayam saddo kucchite dissati; kucchitam hi puttam dupputto ti vadanti. **Kham**,saddo pana tucche; tuccham hi ākāsam khan ti vuccati. Idañ ca paṭhama,saccam kucchitam aneka,upaddavâdhiṭṭhānato, tuccham bāla,jana,parikappita,dhuva,subha,sukh'atta-bhāva,virahitato. Tasmā kucchitattā tucchattā ca **dukkhan** ti vuccati. (Vism 16.16/494)

¹³ See Vimm ch 11 §J "Skill in the noble truths" (Vimm 639-660).

¹⁴ On these terms, cp Vism 22.99-102/691 f. Cf. Vism 21.7/640: abhiṇha,paṭipīḷanā,kāro dukkha,lakkhaṇaṁ. Cf Vism 16.50 f: Dukkhaṁ nāma kāyikaṁ dukkhaṁ, taṁ kāya,pīḷana,lakkhaṇaṁ, ... Domanassaṁ nāma mānasaṁ dukkhaṁ. Taṁ citta,pīḷana,lakkhaṇaṁ, ...

¹⁵ Cf AA 5:21: Ādīnavam addasā ti dukkha,saccam addasa. Pm 2:242: Ādīnavato ti dukkhânupassanā. UA 282: Appassādā kāmā bahu,dukkhā bah'upāyāsā, ādīnavo ettha bhiyyo ti ādinā nayena kāmānam ādīnavam okāram samkilesam kathesi. Tattha ādīnavan ti dosam. J 4:312: Ādīnavan ti evarūpam dosam.

¹⁶ "Mfn" means "masculine, feminine, neuter," ie, a universal adjective, applicable to almost any noun.

The verb *khamati* has a primary meaning, "bears patiently, puts up with; submits to; is capable of bearing, stands up (to)" (DP) and several other senses (see DP). Their overlapping between the stem *khama* of *khamati* and the root *kha(m)* of *dukkha* is remarkable. We may imagine that perhaps in the mist of ancient Indian languages, *khamati* and *dukkha* had the same root. For us today, the stems of the Pali words—*khamati* and *dukkha*—practically overlap that we may well speak of their having the same "stem derivation."

In fact, the negative form of *khamati* has a special form—*na-k,khamati*—which is used in at least 2 interesting contexts, as follows:

(Tika) Mitta Sutta (A 3.133), SD 34.1(3.2.4)

"He patiently endures what is hard to endure." (dukkhamam khamati). (A 3.135/1:286)

Peṭakopadesa (Peṭk) (the older version of the Netti-p,pakaraṇa). (Peṭk 188)

"In the 3 cultivations [trainings] dukkha is not tolerated for the sake of the mind's development." (tīsu bhavanāsu dukkham na-k,khamati cittam citta,bhāvanāya ca). (Peṭk 188)

In short, it makes good sense and practical use to explain *dukkha* by way of *na-k,khamati; dukkha* is something "difficult to tolerate or endure." One thus needs great <u>patience</u> (*khanti*), the supreme quality of the teaching (DhA 3:237,19-21).

3 Significance of duccarita

3.1 COURSES OF KARMA

3.1.1 Unwholesome courses of karma

3.1.1.1 The terms *duccarita* and *sucarita* are important terms for <u>foundational Dharma practice</u> for both monastics (keeping to the Vinaya) and the laity (keeping to the 5 precepts at least). The significance of these practices is highlighted in the famous "admonition code" (*ovāda pātimokkha*) that the Buddha proclaimed even before the Vinaya rules were introduced, that is, those that were taught to the 1,250 arhats who gathered for the first Māgha Pūja or Sangha Day full moon conclave.¹⁷

The Ovāda Pātimokkha and its practice today go like this:

	The Buddha's advice	The practice to be done
sabba,pāpassâkaraṇaṁ	Not doing any bad,	(1) keeping the precepts;
kusalass'upasampadā	attaining the good [the wholesome],	(2) cultivating the 10 good actions;
sacitta,pariyodapanaṁ	purifying one's own mind—	(3) developing the mind;
etam buddhāna sāsanaṁ	this is the teaching of the buddhas.	(4) attaining the path.
	(Dh 183)	

3.1.1.2 The Buddha's 1st advice—"not doing any bad" or avoiding all evil refers to the avoidance of any <u>unwholesome conduct</u> of body, speech and mind [§2].

The unwholesome bodily conduct to be avoided, listed in **the 1**st **column [Table 3]**, are those of (1) *killing* (taking life, condoning killing, and approving of suicide), (2) *stealing*, and (3) *sexual misconduct*.

The unwholesome verbal conduct to be avoided are those of (4) false speech, (5) divisive speech, (6) harsh speech, and (7) frivolous chatter.

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¹⁷ SD 16.1 (6).

The unwholesome mental conduct to be avoided are those of (8) *covetousness*, (9) *ill will* and (10) *wrong view*. As a set these are **the 10 unwholesome courses of action** (*dasa akusala kamma,patha*).

3.1.1.3 In **Table 3**, From the 2nd column, we can learn how **to do good** (Dh 183b), that is, the various actions mentioned form the limbs of the noble eightfold path, that is, (1-3) <u>right action</u> and (4-7) <u>right speech</u>, which together form the limb for <u>right livelihood</u>. In terms of the **10 wholesome courses of action** (*dasa kusala kamma,patha*), that is, (1) *not killing* and practising <u>compassion</u>; (2) *not stealing* and showing <u>charity</u>; (3) *not committing sexual misconduct*, and showing restraint and respect for the person of others, that is, practising contentment—this is <u>right action</u>.

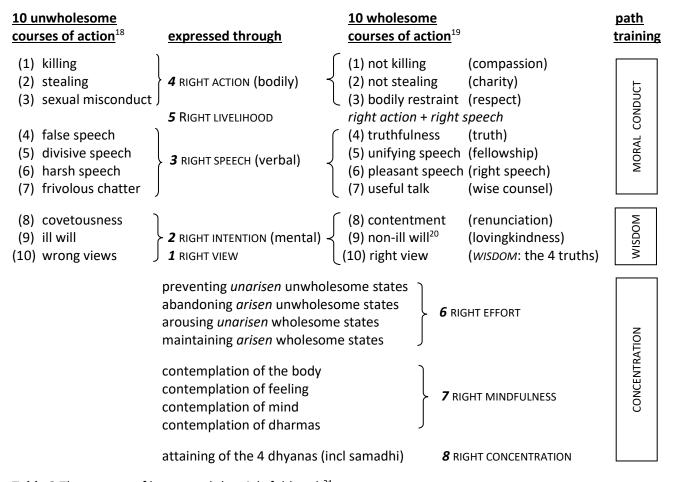


Table 3 The courses of karma and the eightfold path²¹

[The noble eightfold path is numbered in **bold** *italicized* numbers 1-8.]

¹⁸ See Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S (M 136,8(1)/3:209), SD 4.16.

¹⁹ The wholesome courses of action are usu stated in apophatic (negative) language: **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136,11/3:211), SD 4.16. This 3rd upper column refers to the 10 <u>wholesome</u> actions to be practised: **(Tad-āh') Uposatha S** (A 3.70), SD 4.18, and the "5 values" (*pañca,dhamma) [SD 1.5 (2)].

²⁰ Incl non-violence (compassion).

²¹ See also SD 59.10, Tables 2.3 + 3.5; SD 60.1d (3.2.6.4).

We then practise RIGHT SPEECH, that is, practising (4) *truthfulness*, by telling helpful truth at the right time; (5) *unifying speech*, keeping family, friends and others beneficially together in fellowship; (6) *pleasant speech*, words that are kind, measured, timely and joyful; and (7) *useful talk*, beneficial, timely, wise and worth treasuring.

Altogether this is RIGHT ACTION and RIGHT SPEECH, both of which constitute <u>the training in moral conduct</u>. These 2 along with RIGHT LIVELIHOOD constitute <u>the moral conduct training</u>.

3.1.1.4 The 3rd line of Dh 183—purifying one's own mind—refers to purifying one's mind of the 5 mental hindrances²²—meaning the attaining of dhyana, with which one sees true reality to reach the path; if not, one at least lives happily here and now with the joy of samadhi. This in fact refers to the path of <u>concentration-training</u>, listed at the bottom of **Table 3**, comprising *right effort*, *right mindfulness and right concentration*.

RIGHT EFFORT consists of the fourfold efforts

- (1) to prevent unarisen unwholesome states from arising;
- (2) to abandon arisen unwholesome states that have arisen;
- (3) to arouse unarisen wholesome states; and
- (4) to maintain wholesome states that have arisen.

The next limb here is that of RIGHT MINDFULNESS, that is,

- (1) the contemplation of the body (body-based meditation, such as breath meditation);
- (2) the contemplation of feelings (feeling-based meditation);
- (3) the contemplation of the mind (mind-based meditation); and
- (4) the contemplation of dharmas (reality-based meditation).

The limbs of <u>concentration training</u> fruit in the 4 dhyanas, the 4 formless attainments, and the cessation of perception and feeling (the latter is for arhats). For the unawakened practitioners, this includes the attaining of samadhi which helps with progress on the path.

3.1.1.5 Finally, there is THE WISDOM TRAINING, comprising the path limbs of *right intention* and *right view*. RIGHT INTENTION comprises *contentment* (fruiting in renunciation), *non-ill will* (along with loving-kindness) and *non-violence* (with compassion).

The foundation as well as the goal of the noble eightfold path is RIGHT VIEW, that is, the direct seeing of the 4 noble truths, which has been discussed in some detail in the conclusion of the notes to **the (Chakka) Rāga Sutta** (A 6.107) translation, SD 62.10a (3.4). Basically, this is as follows:

- (1) one understands the 1st truth, that is suffering;
- (2) one *abandons* <u>craving</u>, that is the arising of suffering;
- (3) one cultivates the path to the ending of suffering; and
- (4) one attains the ending of suffering, that is, <u>nirvana</u>.

²² DhA 3:237,17 f. See *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1.

(Chakka) Duccarita Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Unwholesome Conduct

A 6.108

- 1 (Originating in Sāvatthi.)
- **2** There are, bhikshus, these 3 states. What are the three?
 - (1) Unwholesome bodily conduct;
 - (2) unwholesome verbal conduct;
 - (3) wrong mental conduct.

These, bhikshus, are the 3 states.

- **3** These 3 states, bhikshus, are to be abandoned.
- **4** Three (other) states are to be cultivated. What are the three?
- (1) For the abandoning of *unwholesome* bodily conduct wholesome bodily conduct should be cultivated.
- (2) For the abandoning of *unwholesome* <u>verbal conduct</u> **wholesome verbal conduct** should be cultivated.
- (3) For the abandoning of *unwholesome* mental conduct wholesome mental conduct should be cultivated.
- **5** These, bhikshus, are the 3 states to be abandoned.

These are the 3 (other) states to be cultivated.

(sāvatthī,nidānam)

tayo'me bhikkhave dhammā katame tayo

kāya,duccaritam vacī,duccaritam mano,duccaritam

ime kho bhikkhave tayo dhammā imesam kho bhikkhave tiṇṇam dhammānam pahānāya

tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā katame tayo

kāya,duccaritassa pahānāya kāya,sucaritam bhāvetabbam vacī,duccaritassa pahānāya vacī,sucaritam bhāvetabbam mano,duccaritassa pahānāya mano,sucaritam bhāvetabbam

imesam kho bhikkhave tinnam dhammānam pahānāya ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā ti

—evaṁ—

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