

7

Salla Sutta

The Discourse on the Dart | Sn 3.8

Theme: Rejoice in life by seeing true reality

Translated & annotated by TAN Beng Sin ©2023

1 ORIGIN OF STORY

According to the Sutta's Commentary, the Buddha once knows about a lay supporter whose son had died. Overcome by grief for his son, he could not eat for a week. The Buddha, out of compassion for me, went to his house and teaches him this Sutta to dispel his sorrow. (SnA 2:457,9-13)

Salla Sutta

The Discourse on the Dart

Sn 3.8

- | | | |
|--|------------|---|
| <p>1 <i>Animittam anaññātaraṃ
maccānaṃ idha jīvitaraṃ
kasiraṇ ca parittaṇ ca
taṇ ca dukkhena saṃyutaraṃ¹</i></p> | <p>574</p> | <p>Without a sign, with no knowing,
is the life of mortals here:
difficult and brief it is
and ever joined with suffering.</p> |
| <p>2 <i>Na hi so upakkamo atthi
yena jātā na miyyare
jaram pi patvā maraṇaraṃ
evaṃ,dhammā hi pāṇino.</i></p> | <p>575</p> | <p>For there is no means by which
those who are born do not die.
Having reached old age, there's death, too.
Such is the nature of living beings.</p> |
| <p>3 <i>Phalānaṃ iva pakkānaṃ
niccaṃ² patanato³ bhayaraṃ.
evaṃ jātāna maccānaṃ
niccaṃ maraṇato bhayaraṃ.</i></p> | <p>576</p> | <p>Just as for fruits, when ripened,
are in always in <i>danger</i> of falling,
even so, for mortals who are born
there is always the <i>fear</i> of death.</p> |
| <p>4 <i>Yathā'pi kumbha,kārassa
katā mattika,bhājanā
sabbe bhedana,pariyantā⁴
evaṃ maccāna jīvitaraṃ.</i></p> | <p>577</p> | <p>Just as vessels of clay
made by a potter
all break up in the end—
so is the life of mortals.</p> |

¹ Ce *saññātaraṃ*; Se *saññūtaṃ* (alt spelling).

² Comy, noting the wordplays, explains the verse in terms of *niccaṃ*, *pāto* ("morning"; "falling"), and *bhayaraṃ* ("fear"; "danger"): "With that (the stalk being warmed by the sun), the fruits keep falling, morning after morning, they always fall. There is the danger of those fruits falling in the morning: the meaning is that there is the fear of falling" (which is related to beings) (*Tena tāni phalāni pāto pāto nicca,kālaṃ patanti, nesaṃ pāto patanato bhayaraṃ hoti, patanā bhayaraṃ hoti ti attho*, SnA 2:459,32-34). Norman takes *pāto* here as "a mistake for *niccaṃ*, which occurs as a vl [variant reading]." (*Group of Discourses*, 2001:282 f). Comy seems to explain Sn 576 on the basis of both *pāto* and *niccaṃ*; I feel there is good reason for, esp taking the Sutta as it is. Norman points out *phalānaṃ iva pakkānaṃ, niccaṃ patanato bhayaraṃ*, "just as ripe fruits are always in the danger of falling" (J 4:127,3). He notes paraphrase its Comy "clearly supports" reading *pāto as niccaṃ: pakkānaṃ phalānaṃ pakkakālaṃ paṭṭhāya "idāni vaṇṭā chijjivā patissanti, idāni patissantī ti patanato bhayaraṃ niccaṃ dhuvaraṃ ekamsikaṃ eva bhavati.* (J 4:128,6-8). I think this insightful interpretation works for **Bāveru J** (J 339) but not **Salla S** (Sn 576).

³ Be Ce so; Ee *papatanā*; Se *patanato*.

⁴ Be Ce so; Se *bhedana,pariyantā*.

- 5 *Daharā ca mahantā ca
ye bālā ye ca paṇḍitā
sabbe maccu,vasaṃ yanti
sabbe maccu,parāyaṇā* **578** Young and old,
both the foolish and the wise,
all fall into the power of death,
all have death as their goal.
- 6 *Tesaṃ maccu,paretānaṃ
gacchataṃ para,lokito.⁵
na pitā tāyate puttāṃ
ñātī vā pana ñātaka* **579** When they are overcome by death,
going from here to the next world,
no father protects his son,
nor can relative protect relatives.
- 7 *Pekkhatāṃ yeva ñātīnaṃ
passa lālapataṃ puthu
ekam eko va maccānaṃ
go,vajjho viya nīyati⁶* **580** Even as relatives look on,
weeping and wailing away—
see, how, one by one., mortals are led away
like a cow to the slaughter.
- 8 *Evam abbhāhato loko
maccunā ca jarāya ca
tasmā dhīrā na socanti
viditvā loka,pariyāyaṃ* **581** Thus is this world smitten with
by death and by decay.
Therefore, the wise sorrow not,
knowing the way of the world.
- 9 *Yassa maggaṃ na jānāsi
āgatassa gatassa vā
ubho ante asampassaṃ
niratthaṃ paridevasi* **582** Whose path you do not know,
whether come or gone,
seeing not either end,
you lament uselessly.
- 10 *Paridevayamāno ce
kiñcid atthaṃ udabbahe
sammūjho hiṃsam attānaṃ,
kayirā ce naṃ vicakkhaṇo* **583** If lamenting,
the confused person, harming himself,
could gain any benefit,
the wise, too, would do the same.
- 11 *Na hi ruṇṇena sokena
santiṃ pappoti cetaso
bhiyyass'uppajjate dukkhaṃ
sarīraṃ c'upahaññati* **584** For neither by weeping nor by grief,
that one gains peace of mind.
One's misery grows all the more,
one's body is harmed, too.
- 12 *Kiso vivaṇṇo bhavati
hiṃsam attānaṃ attanā
na tena petā pārenti
niratthā paridevanā* **585** One become thin, one loses colour,
harming oneself by oneself.
Nor do the departed fare well by that.
Lamentation is useless.
- 13 *Sokam appajahaṃ jantu
bhiyyo dukkhaṃ nigacchati
anutthunanto kālaṃ,kataṃ⁷
sokassa vasam anvagū.* **586** Not abandoning grief,
one falls deeper into sorrow.
Bewailing the one who has died
one goes under sorrow's power.

⁵ Reading *para,lok'ito* for text's *para,lokato*, as Norman suggests (*Group of Discourses* 2001 283 n579). *Paralokato* seems to make no sense here. *Para,lok'ito* = *paralokaṃ* + *ito* (as tr above).

⁶ Be so; Ce *niyati*; Ee Se *niyyati*.

⁷ Be so; Ce Ee Se *kāla,kataṃ*.

- 14 *Aññe pi passa gamine
yathā,kamm’upage nare
maccuno vasam āgamma
phandante v’idha pāṇino*⁸ 587 Look at others too going on their way,
people who fare according to their karma.
living beings trembling right here,
having fallen under the power of death.
- 15 *Yena yena hi maññanti
tato taṃ hoti aññathā
etādiso vinābhāvo
passa lokassa pariyāyaṃ* 588 For in whatever way they think,
it turns out to be other than that.
Such is separation!
See the way of the world!
- 16 *Api vassa,sataṃ jive
bhiyyo vā pana māṇavo
ñāti,saṅghā vinā hoti
jahāti idha jīvitaṃ* 589 Even if a man [a human] were to live
a hundred years or even more,
there’s separation from kith and kin:
one gives up life here.
- 17 *Tasmā arahato sutvā
vineyya paridevitaṃ
petarṃ kālaṃ,kataṃ disvā
na so labbhā⁹ mayā iti* 590 Therefore having heard the arhat,
one should give up lamentation.
seeing one departed, done his time,
(one reflects:) “It’s impossible to see him alive.”¹⁰
- 18 *Yathā saraṇam ādittaṃ
vārinā parinibbāye
evam pi dhīro sapañño
paṇḍito kusalo naro
khippam uppatitaṃ sokaṃ
vāto tūlaṃ va dhamśaye* 591 Just as one would put out with water
a fire burning a shelter,
even so a steady learned
wise and skilled person
would quickly remove grief
just as the wind blows away a piece of cotton.
- 19 *Paridevaṃ pajappaṃ ca
domanassaṃ ca attano
attano sukham esāno
abbahe sallam attano* 592 Lamentation and yearnings,
and one’s own sorrow:
one seeks happiness for oneself—
let one then draw out one’s dart!
- 20 *Abbūjha,sallo asito
santiṃ pappuyya cetaso
sabba,sokaṃ atikkanto
asoko hoti nibbuto ti* 593 With the dart drawn out, independent,
having gained peace of mind,
gone beyond all grief—
sorrowfree, one is quenched.

— evaṃ —

230229 230330 230406

⁸ Be Ee so; Ee paṇine.⁹ *Labbhā* is gerundive (vb *labhati*, “to gain, obtain,” used as adj, esp pl, *labbhā*), “obtainable, attainable, possible” (used passively like *sakkā*, “able, possible.”)¹⁰ Comy: “Clearly understanding, ‘It is **impossible for me** to bring the departed back to life,’ **one gives up lamentation.**” (SnA 2:461)