

Ejā Sutta 1

Paṭhama Ejā Sutta

The First Discourse on Being Disturbed

[Not conceiving the senses in any way (abridged)]

(Saṃyutta Nikāya 35.90/4:64-66)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2009

Introduction

1 THE TWO EJĀ SUTTAS. There are two Ejā Suttas: the Ejā Sutta 1 (S 35.90) and the Ejā Sutta 2 (S 35.91). The first Ejā Sutta (S 35.90) does not have the “non-conceiving refrain,”¹ as such I have called it the “abridged” version.² I have given the refrain in full in the second Ejā Sutta (S 35.91); hence, it is the “full” version.³

For your spiritual exercise, choose whichever version you have a deeper *feel* for. One way to choose your preferred text is to first reflect on Ejā Sutta 1, and alternate it with Ejā Sutta 2. In due course, you will be drawn to one of them. If not, it is just as effective to reflect on both of them as you see fit.

2 EJĀ. The Saṃyutta Commentary says that *ejā* (the title word) means craving (*taṇhā*): it is called *ejā* because it “trembles”⁴ (SA 2:380). The word *ejā* comes from the root √EJ, “to stir, to be shaken,”⁵ and is synonymous with √iṆJ, “to shake, tremble.” In Pali, the verb *ejati*, “he trembles,” he always used figuratively (unlike in Sanskrit and other Prakrits). The Critical Pali Dictionary (CPD) defines *ejati* as “to be shaken, to be mentally perturbed by external factors; sometimes interchanged with *iñjati*.”⁶

The verbal noun *ejā* (the sutta title) seems to be found only in our Sutta titles (S 35/90-91), and is defined by CPD as “e-motion, spiritual perturbation, “passion” (Rhys Davids); lust, craving.” It is however common in the Commentaries, where it is consistently glossed with *taṇhā*.⁷ More common is its antonym, *aneja*, “unshaken, undisturbed,” which is often a epithet of the arhat.⁸

3 “CONCEIVING.” “Conceiving” (*maññanā*) refers both to the thought process that is perverted by craving, conceit and views, and the views that are “conceived” (*maññita*) or rooted in such modes of thought. Craving, conceit and views form the “threefold grasping” (*ti, vidha gāha*) manifested as the notions:

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) “This is mine” | (<i>etam mama</i>) | (arises through craving, | <i>taṇhā, gāha</i>), |
| (2) “This I am” | (<i>eso ’ham asmi</i>) | (arises through conceit, | <i>māna, gāha</i>), and |
| (3) “This is my self” | (<i>eso me attā</i>) | (arises through views, | <i>diṭṭhi, gāha</i>). ⁹ |

These three are also known as “latent tendencies to ‘I’-making, ‘mine’-making and conceit” (*ahaṇ, kāra, mamaṇ, kāra, mānānusaya*).¹⁰ These threefold graspings are the main factors behind conceptual thinking (M 1) and mental proliferation (M 18).¹¹ In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct reactions to reality.¹²

¹ See **Ejā S 2** (S 35.91/4:66 f) = SD 29.11 Intro (1).

² S 35.90/4:64-66 = SD 29.10.

³ S 35.91/4:66 f = SD 29.11.

⁴ *Ejā’ti taṇhā, sā hi calan’atṭhena ejā’ti vuccati.*

⁵ Sadd √195 (345,15); Dhātup 82 = Dhātum 75 (where √iṆJ has identical gloss)..

⁶ Occurrences: Sn 859; Nm 250.

⁷ Nm 91,23 = 353,27 = 441,11 = Nc 88,15 = SnA 508,3 (ad Sn 751); see CPD: *ejā*.

⁸ Sn 87, 372, 477, 646 (= Dh 422), 751, 935, 1043, 1101; Dh 414 (= Sn 638); Tha 38, 372, cf Sn 920; U 27; ThA 905: see CPD: *aneja*. Also see CPD: ¹*ejati*, *āneja*, *ānejja*, *āneñja*, *ijjana*, *iñjana*, or with √ing.

⁹ See **Anattā, lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59.12-21/3:68 f) = SD 1.2.

¹⁰ M 22.15, 72.15, 112.11 20; S 2:75, 3:236, 4:41; A 1:132, 133.

¹¹ See **Yavakalāpi S** (S 35.248/4:202) = SD 40a.3.

¹² See Bodhi, 1980:8-11; Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. See Intro (4) esp 4.2.

The Saṃyutta Commentary on the **Sārappa Sutta** (S 35.30)¹³ [4] explains the four conceiving, using “the eye” as an example, as follows.

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| (1) “He does not conceive the eye”
(<i>cakkhum na maññati</i>) | He does not conceive the eye as “I,” or “mine,” or as “another,” or as “another’s.” [He does not <i>identify</i> the self or soul with it.] |
| (2) “He does not conceive <i>in</i> the eye”
(<i>cakkhusmiṃ na maññati</i>) | He does not conceive, “I am in the eye, my impediments are in the eye; another is in the eye, another’s impediments are in the eye.” ¹⁴ [He does not view the self or soul as existing separately <i>in</i> it.] |
| (3) “He does not conceive <i>apart from</i> the eye” (<i>cakkhuto na maññati</i>) | He does not conceive, “I have emerged apart from the eye, my impediments have emerged apart from the eye, another has emerged apart from the eye, another’s impediments has emerged apart from the eye.” This means that he does not let arise any conceiving of craving, conceit, or views. [He does not view the self or soul as being <i>apart</i> from the body.] |
| (4) “He does not conceive. ‘The eye is mine.’” | He does not conceive the eye as belong to him, meaning he does not let arise any conceiving of craving brought into existence through ownership. ¹⁵ [He does not view that the self or soul is something else over which he has <i>control</i> .]
(SA 2:363) |

The four wrong views are also known as the “self-identity view” (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*). The **Paṭisambhīdā,magga** illustrates these four basic modes of self-identity view in connection with form (*rūpa*) in this manner:¹⁶

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| (1) One views <i>form as self</i> | an oil-lamp’s flame being the same the flame’s colour. |
| (2) One views <i>form as in self</i> | a flower’s scent being in the flower. ¹⁷ |
| (3) One views <i>self as in form</i> | a jewel in a casket. |
| (4) One views <i>self as possessing form</i> | a tree and its shadow. ¹⁸ |

The most extensive analysis of conceiving is famously found in the **Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1). The four modes of conceiving here—that is, he would not conceive *it*, *in it*, *from it*, or as “mine”—also form the framework for the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta, though it does not apply the pattern explicitly to the sense-bases, as is the case in the two Eja Suttas.¹⁹

¹³ S 35.30/4:21-23.

¹⁴ *Cakkhusmiṃ na maññati ti ahaṃ cakkhusmiṃ, mama kiñcana, palibodho cakkhusmiṃ paro cakkhusmiṃ, parassa kiñcana, palibodho cakkhusmiṃ ti na maññati.*

¹⁵ *Cakkhum me’ti na maññati ti mama cakkhū ti na maññati, mamatta, bhūtaṃ taṇhā, maññanaṃ na uppādeti’ti attho.*

¹⁶ The four have been rearranged to reflect the 4 conceivings; the Pm list has (4) in position (2).

¹⁷ Cf Plotinus’s view that the body was “in the soul,” is permeated by it as air is by fire (Enneads 4):

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.4.fourth.html>.

¹⁸ Pm 2.50, 74, 77, 90 = 1:144 f. See **Samanupassanā S** (S 22.47/3:46 f) = Intro (1) & **Is there a soul?** = SD 2.16.

¹⁹ For a detailed comy (with sub-comy) in English, see Bodhi (tr), *The Discourse on the Root of Existence*, 1980: 51-55.

4 RELATED SUTTAS. The two Ejā Suttas (S 35/90-91) are very similar to three other discourses in the **Saḷāyatana Saṃyutta** (S ch 35), with which they should be studied. The first is the **Samugghāta Sārūpa Sutta** (S 35.30), which is almost identical to both the Ejā Sutta 1 (S 35.90) and the Ejā Sutta 2 (S 35.91). One difference is their opening themes: while the Samugghāta Sārūpa Sutta opens by stating “the way that is appropriate for the uprooting of all conceiving” (*sabba,maññīta,samugghāta,sārūpa*), the two Ejā Suttas declare that “the dart” (*salla*) should be removed, and this is done by abandoning all conceiving.²⁰

Then there are the two **Samugghāta Sappāya Suttas** (S 35.31-32). **The Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 1** (S 35.31) is identical to the Ejā Sutta 1 except that the Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 1 uses the word “conducive” (*sappāya*), that is, it refers to the spiritual exercise as being “the way that is conducive for the uprooting of all conceiving” (*sabba,maññīta,samugghāta,sappāya paṭipadā*).²¹

The Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 2 (S 35.32) works on the same theme as the Samugghāta Sappāya Sutta 1, that of “the way that is conducive for the uprooting of all conceiving,” but it applies the “aggregate characteristics formula,” like the one found in the **Anatta,lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59),²² followed by the *nibbidā* (“revulsion”) formula²³ applied to the six senses.²⁴

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²⁰ S 35.30/4:21-23 = SD 29.19.

²¹ S 35.31/4:23 f = SD 19.20.

²² On the “aggregate characteristics formula,” see S 22.59.12+17/3:67 f = SD 1.2 nn (see notes at §§12 & 17).

²³ Cf S 22.59.22/3:68.

²⁴ S 35.32/4:24-26 = SD 29.21.

The First Discourse on Being Disturbed

(S 35.90/4:64-66)

How to live undisturbed

2 Bhikshus, being disturbed is a disease, being disturbed is a boil, being disturbed is a dart.²⁵

Therefore, bhikshus, the Tathagata dwells undisturbed, with the dart removed. [65]

3a Therefore, bhikshus, if a monk were to wish, “May I dwell undisturbed, with the dark removed,”

How to avoid eye-based conceivings²⁶

3b he would not conceive the eye;
 he would not conceive in the eye;
 he would not conceive from the eye;
 he would not conceive, “The eye is mine.”²⁷

4a he would not conceive form;
 he would not conceive in form;
 he would not conceive from form;
 he would not conceive, “Form is mine.”

4b he would not conceive eye-consciousness;
 he would not conceive in eye-consciousness;
 he would not conceive from eye-consciousness;
 he would not conceive, “Eye-consciousness is mine.”

4c he would not conceive eye-contact;
 he would not conceive in eye-contact;
 he would not conceive from eye-contact;
 he would not conceive, “Eye-contact is mine.”

4d And as to whatever that here arises dependent on eye-contact, whether it is felt as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful,

he would not conceive it;
 he would not conceive in it;
 he would not conceive from it;
 he would not conceive, “It is mine.”

How to avoid ear-based conceivings

5a He would not conceive the ear;
 he would not conceive in the ear;
 he would not conceive from the ear;
 he would not conceive, “The ear is mine.”

5b he would not conceive sound;
 he would not conceive in sound;
 he would not conceive from sound;

²⁵ “Conceiving” (*maññanā*) is a synonym for “mental proliferation” (*papañca*), that is, a “thought-explosion,” a maelstrom of conceiving, all of which are “a disease, a boil, a dart”: that is, “a disease” by way of illness; “a boil,” because it hurts within”; “a dart,” it cuts (*sāva ābāadhan’atthena rogo, anto dussan’atthena gaṇḍo, nikantan’atthena sallam*, SA 2:380). See **Yava,kalāpi S** (S 35.248/4:202 f) = SD 40a.3; also in **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140.31/3:-246) = SD 4.17 & **Samanupassanā Sutta** (S 22.47/ 3:47) = SD 26.12. For an analysis, see SD 19.1(5.3). On *papañca*, see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18) = SD 6.14 Intro (2).

²⁶ The fourfold pattern of conceiving here also underlies **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1/1-6) = SD 11.8, which however does not apply this pattern explicitly to the sense-bases.

²⁷ See Intro (3).

- he would not conceive,
5c he would not conceive ear-consciousness;
 he would not conceive in ear-consciousness;
 he would not conceive from ear-consciousness;
 he would not conceive,
5d he would not conceive ear-contact;
 he would not conceive in ear-contact;
 he would not conceive from ear-contact;
 he would not conceive,
5e And as to whatever that here arises dependent on ear-contact, whether it is felt as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful,
 he would not conceive it;
 he would not conceive in it;
 he would not conceive from it;
 he would not conceive,
 “It is mine.”

How to avoid nose-based conceivings

- 6a** He would not conceive the nose;
 he would not conceive in the nose;
 he would not conceive from the nose;
 he would not conceive,
 “The nose is mine.”
6b he would not conceive smell;
 he would not conceive in smell;
 he would not conceive from smell;
 he would not conceive,
 “Smell is mine.”
6c he would not conceive nose-consciousness;
 he would not conceive in nose-consciousness;
 he would not conceive from nose-consciousness;
 he would not conceive,
 “Nose-consciousness is mine.”
6d he would not conceive nose-contact;
 he would not conceive in nose-contact;
 he would not conceive from nose-contact;
 he would not conceive,
 “Nose-contact is mine.”
6e And as to whatever that here arises dependent on nose-contact, whether it is felt as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful,
 he would not conceive it;
 he would not conceive in it;
 he would not conceive from it;
 he would not conceive,
 “It is mine.”

How to avoid tongue-based conceivings

- 7a** He would not conceive the tongue;
 he would not conceive in the tongue;
 he would not conceive from the tongue;
 he would not conceive,
 “The tongue is mine.”
7b he would not conceive taste;
 he would not conceive in taste;
 he would not conceive from taste;
 he would not conceive,
 “Taste is mine.”
7c he would not conceive tongue-consciousness;
 he would not conceive in tongue-consciousness;

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| he would not conceive | from tongue-consciousness; |
| he would not conceive, | “Tongue-consciousness is mine.” |
| 7d he would not conceive | <u>tongue-contact</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in tongue-contact; |
| he would not conceive | from tongue-contact; |
| he would not conceive, | “Tongue-contact is mine.” |
| 7e And as to whatever that here arises dependent on tongue-contact, whether it is <u>felt</u> as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful, | |
| he would not conceive | it; |
| he would not conceive | in it; |
| he would not conceive | from it; |
| he would not conceive, | “It is mine.” |

How to avoid body-based conceivings

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| 8a He would not conceive | <u>the body</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in the body; |
| he would not conceive | from the body; |
| he would not conceive, | “The body is mine.” |
| 8b he would not conceive | <u>touch</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in touch; |
| he would not conceive | from touch; |
| he would not conceive, | “Touch is mine.” |
| 8c he would not conceive | <u>body-consciousness</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in body-consciousness; |
| he would not conceive | from body-consciousness; |
| he would not conceive, | “Body-consciousness is mine.” |
| 8d he would not conceive | <u>body-contact</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in body-contact; |
| he would not conceive | from body-contact; |
| he would not conceive, | “Body-contact is mine.” |
| 8e And as to whatever that here arises dependent on body-contact, whether it is <u>felt</u> as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful, | |
| he would not conceive | it; |
| he would not conceive | in it; |
| he would not conceive | from it; |
| he would not conceive, | “It is mine.” |

How to avoid mind-based conceivings

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| 97a He would not conceive | <u>the mind</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in the mind; |
| he would not conceive | from the mind; |
| he would not conceive, | “The mind is mine.” |
| 9b he would not conceive | <u>mind-object</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in touch; |
| he would not conceive | from mind-object; |
| he would not conceive, | “Mind-object is mine.” |
| 9c he would not conceive | <u>mind-consciousness</u> ; |
| he would not conceive | in mind-consciousness; |
| he would not conceive | from mind-consciousness; |
| he would not conceive, | “Mind-consciousness is mine.” |
| 9d he would not conceive | <u>mind-contact</u> ; |

he would not conceive in mind-contact;
 he would not conceive from mind-contact;
 he would not conceive, “Mind-contact is mine.”

9e And as to whatever that here arises dependent on mind-contact, whether it is felt as pleasant, or painful, or neither pleasant nor painful,

he would not conceive it;
 he would not conceive in it;
 he would not conceive from it;
 he would not conceive, “It is mine.”

Not conceiving “the all”

10 He would not conceive “every thing” [the all] (*sabba*);²⁸
 he would not conceive in every thing;
 he would not conceive from every thing;
 he would not conceive, “Every thing is mine.”

11 THE NON-CONCEIVING REFRAIN.

Thus not conceiving anything, he clings not to anything in the world.

Not clinging, he is not agitated.²⁹

Not agitated, he himself personally [66] attains nirvana.

He understands, “Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done. There is no more of this state of being.”³⁰

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²⁸ See **Sabba S** (S 35.23/4:15) = SD 7.1. *Sabba* here is used as “the all,” but sound semi-technical. Here, the practice is not to conceive *all* the senses as a set, as it were. If you are comfortable with the tr “the all,” and knows it senses well, you may use it. If you are not sure, then, it is better to stick to “every thing.” Note that there is a difference a significant difference btw “every thing” (*sabbe saṅkhārā*) and “everything” (*sabbe dhammā*): see **Dhamma-niyāma S** (A 3.134/1:285) = SD 26.8.

²⁹ “Not agitated,” *paritassati*, Skt *paritṛṣyati*. ‘to crave, to thirst for,’ and is connected etymologically with *taṇhā*. Comy on **Pari,vīmaṅsana S** (S 12.51) explains that such a one is not agitated with the agitation of craving (*taṇhā,paritassanā*) nor with the agitation of fear (*bhaya,paritassanā*); meaning that he neither craves nor fears (SA 2:78). See **Pari,vīmaṅsana S** (S 12.51.14/2:82) = SD 11.5.

³⁰ Comy on **Samugghāta Sārappa S** (S 35.30), which applies here, says that here, insight culminating in arhat-hood is discussed in 40 cases (SA 2:363), which Sub-comy explains as follows: 7 in the eye-door: eye, forms, eye-consciousness, eye-contact, and pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling; so too the other 5 doors, making 42; in the passage regarding “self-identity,” thus, “he conceives not the all, etc,” makes 43, and the phrase “he clings not to anything in the world,” totals 44 (SAṬ:VRI 2:9). For details on the arhat-hood pericope, see **Brahma,deva S** (S 6.3) = SD 12.4 Intro (5).