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Bhindi Sutta

or **Chindi Sutta** (Ee), The Discourse on the Severed | S 17.31

Theme: The dangers of gain, honour and praise for a monastic

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2014

1 Introduction

1.1 The Bhindi Sutta (S 17.31) belongs to a group of suttas that recount how Devadatta brought about a schism in the order. The impression we are given here is that Devadatta is partial to “gain, honour and praise” (*lābha, sakkāra, siloka*) [§3]. A more detailed version of this sutta is found in **the Acira Pakkanta Sutta** (S 17.35), with three parables and the same closing stanza.¹

1.2 Discourses like **the Acira Pakkanta Sutta** (S 17.35) and **the Pañca, ratha, sata Sutta** (S 17.36) (which follows it) serve as reminders that even monastics can fail in their training and spirituality if they fall into the rut of luxury. Such suttas admonish us, both monastic and lay, on the dangers of luxury and licence, that unwholesomeness is to be avoided so that we can direct our energies to the wholesome effort towards self-liberation.² The importance of the Acira Pakkanta Sutta is reflected in the fact that it is found, with interesting variations, in a number of other texts and Commentaries.

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The Discourse on the Severed

S 17.31

1 (The Buddha was) staying at Sāvattihī.

2 “Bhikshus, dreadful are gain, honour and praise.”³

bitter, vile, an obstruction to attaining the unsurpassed security from the yoke.⁴ [240]

3 Mentally overwhelmed and obsessed with gain, honour and praise, bhikshus, Devadatta brought schism into the sangha.⁵

4 So dreadful, bhikshus, are gain, honour and praise, bitter and, vile, that it is an obstruction to the attaining of the unsurpassed security from the yoke.

5 Therefore, bhikshus, you should train yourselves, thus:

‘We will abandon gain, honour and praise that have arisen,

and we shall not let the arisen gain, honour and praise remain to overwhelm our minds!’⁶

Thus, bhikshus, you should train yourselves.”

— evaṃ —

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¹ S 17.35/2:241 (SD 22.6a), where see Intro for more detailed nn.

² See eg **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

³ *Dāruṇo bhikkhave lābha, sakkāra, siloko*. Comy: Gain (*lābha*) is the gain of the 4 supports (of almsfood, robes, shelter and medical supplies); honour (*sakkāra*) is the gain of what are well made and well produced; praise (*siloka*) is voiced approval [acclaim] (*vaṇṇa, ghosa*) (SA 2:205). This whole para is stock, recurring in all the 43 suttas of **Lābha, sakkāra Saṃyutta** (S 17/2:225-243).

⁴ *Kaṭṭuko pharusō antarāyiko anuttarassa yoga-k, khemassa adhigamāya*.

⁵ *Lābha, sakkāra, silokena abhibhūto pariyādīṇṇa, citto bhikkhave devadatto saṅgham bhindi*. On Devadatta’s schism, see **Saṅgha, bheda S** (It 18) + SD 46.19 (1.2).

⁶ *Uppannaṃ lābha, sakkāra, silokaṃ pajahissāma | na ca no uppanno lābha, sakkāra, siloko cittaṃ pariyādāya ṭhassatīti*.