

6

Sāḷha Sutta

The Discourse to Sāḷha | A 3.66

Theme: On the possibility of overcoming greed, hate and delusion

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2013

1 The Sutta protagonists

1.1 This is a discourse given by a not-so-well-known arhat, Nandaka,¹ but nevertheless a great teacher, the foremost monk instructor of nuns. Here, in **the Sāḷha Sutta** (A 3.66), the elder Nandaka teaches two laymen, “Sāḷha, Migāra’s grandson, and Rohaṇa, Pekhuṇiya’s grandson” [§1.2]. They are probably youths who have come to visit the monks. The instructions are on the avoiding of wrong view and cultivating the 3 wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion.

1.2 It should be noted that throughout the Sutta, Nandaka uses **the vocative plural** Sāḷhā or Sāḷhas, but properly refers to “Sāḷha and Rohaṇa.” This is an example of an elliptical dual vocation, unique to Pali. Another well known example is that of *sāriputtā*, meaning “Sāriputta and Moggallāna.”²

In a special case, three persons are addressed by the vocative plural, *anuruddhā*, meaning “Anuruddha and others (that is, Nandiya and Kimbila).”³ This, however, is an example of a triple vocative, or a multiple vocative. Then, there is the elliptical vocative is used to address a group by its leader or most prominent person, or more commonly by the vocative plural, *bhikkhave* or *bhikkhave*, “Bhikkhus!”⁴

2 Key teachings and highlights of the Sutta

2.1 KEY TEACHINGS

2.1.1 Similarities. The Sāḷha Sutta is, in fact, very similar in form to **the Kesa,puttiya Sutta** (A 3.-65),⁵ except that here, the teachings are addressed to Sāḷha and Rohaṇa. Both the Suttas deal with these teachings:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| • the 10 points of doubt | <i>*kaṅkhāniya-ṭ,thāna</i> | [§§2+n, 7, 13] |
| • the 3 unwholesome roots | <i>akusala mūla</i> | [§§3-6] |
| • the 3 wholesome roots | <i>kusala mūla</i> | [§§8-12] |
| • the 4 divine abodes | <i>brahma, vihāra</i> | [§14]. |

2.1.2 Differences. The two Suttas close differently. While the Kesa,puttiya Sutta speaks only of the benefits of not blindly accepting any teaching, closing with the 4 self-assurances (*assāsa*) (which essentially are arguments for why it is better for us to be morally virtuous), the Sāḷha Sutta closes with an enigmatic treatment of the 4 noble truths [§15], the attainment of arhathood [§16] and the arhat’s review knowledge [§§18-19].

The Kesa,puttiya Sutta, on the other hand, does not mention any spiritual attainments. In fact, it is more of a philosophical text, dealing mostly with the avoidance of wrong views and cultivating the divine abodes (which is also found in the Sāḷha Sutta). However, while the Kesa,puttiya Sutta closes with the Kālāma congregation going for refuge, the Sāḷha Sutta does not mention any refuge-going. Its teachings, however, are more advanced spiritually than those of the Kesa,puttiya Sutta.

2.2 SUTTA KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

2.2.1 The 4 noble truths

2.2.1.1 Towards its close, the Sutta alludes to the 4 noble truths with these words, given in meditation language, shown here with their connections:

There is this	<i>atthi idaṃ</i>	1 st truth: suffering
There is the lowly	<i>atthi hīnaṃ</i>	2 nd truth: craving

¹ See **Nandak’ovāda S** (M 146), SD 66.12 (1).

² For details, see SD 11.1 (3.2.2).

³ M 128,10.2 @ SD 5.18.

⁴ See SD 13.1 (3.1.1.4).

⁵ A 3.65 @ SD 35.4a.

There is the sublime	<i>atthi paṇītam</i>	4 th truth: the way
There is the <u>escape</u> beyond coming into this consciousness	<i>atthi imassa saññā, gatassa uttariṃ nissaraṇaṃ</i>	3 rd truth: nirvana

2.2.1.2 More commonly, **the 4 noble truths** are listed as: suffering, its arising, its ending, the way to its ending. This is a theoretical approach that motivates us to direct our efforts in personal cultivation. What actually happens when we begin cultivating is that we *live* the first three truths so that we will *realize* nirvana. Hence, this progressive listing [§15] makes good sense.

2.2.1.3 The term *saññāgata* in the last phrase is very interesting. Apparently only in one other place—that is, **the Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7)⁶—is it used in the same way, where *saññā* (which usually means “perception”) means “consciousness,” or more specifically, “rebirth consciousness.” In other words, this line speaks of ending rebirth and suffering—to “escape beyond coming into this consciousness.”⁷

2.2.2 The closing words

2.2.2.1 The ending of the Sālha Sutta is very interesting. It says, “**Thus, in this very life itself he dwells hungerfree, quenched, cooled, enjoying bliss, become divine himself**” (*iti so diṭṭh’eva dhamme nicchāto nibbuto sīti, bhūto sukha-p, paṭisaṃvedī brahma, bhūtena attanā viharatīti*) [§19].

This remarkable passage is found in the following discourses:

Kandaraka Sutta	M 51,5	SD 32.9
Apaṇṇaka Sutta	M 60,35	SD 35.5
Sālha Sutta	A 3.66,18	SD 43.6
Attan Tapa Sutta	A 4.198	SD 56.7

and also in **the Niddesa** (a collection of two ancient commentaries on the Sutta Nipāta) and **the Puggala Paññatti** (an Abhidhamma book).⁸

2.2.2.2 The last line [§19] uses various rich figures. The words, “**hunger-free**” (*nicchāta*) and “**quenched**” (*nibbuta*), are food or health imageries, while “**cooled**” (*sīti, bhūta*) and “**enjoying bliss**” (*sukha-p, paṭisaṃvedī*) are imageries of the physical body and comfort. In other words, even here and now, the saint lives happily. The phrase “**become divine himself**” (*brahma, bhūtena attanā*) refers to the saint’s spiritual state even while living. Awakening, even heaven, in other words, are not posthumous states, but can be attained by us in this life itself.

2.2.2.3 The Majjhima Commentary explains this passage as meaning that the practitioner experiences the bliss of the dhyanas, the paths, the fruits and nirvana (MA 3:10). The Commentaries explain the very last line, “**By having become divine himself,**” *brahma, bhūtena attanā*, as meaning “by becoming perfect [supreme] himself” (*seṭṭha, bhūtena attanā*, MA 3:10,9 = PugA 234,9). This is a clear statement that we do not need to rely on any external agent for awakening or salvation. [2.3.2.3]

2.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUTTA

2.3.1 Relevance today. **The Sālha Sutta** has great significance and relevance in our spiritual lives and social harmony, especially today. In our own times, the greatest menace to global peace, safety and survival, is the nuclear bomb, but no sane world leader or government is likely to ever use this “mad” weapon, as it is mutually assured destruction. So it is used like one bully holding up his clenched fist to one another, warning him to keep his distance without any real fight.

Even more destructive than the nuclear weapon is religion, whose dogmas and dreams, when fully believed and put into action, on a community or global scale, can only bring about massive and protracted exploitation, suffering and destruction. As history has shown, religions that are God-based are the most destructive. Even non-theistic religions like Buddhism, when its falls into theistic notions (such as treat-

⁶ M 7,17/1:38 @ SD 28.12.

⁷ On *saññāgata*, see SD 17.4 (7.1.3).

⁸ Nm 1:159, 204, 211, 246, 441; Nc:Be 37, 42, 88, 142, 203; and Pug 4.24/7.

ing the nation—often meaning a particular race—as “sacred,” as God), can become intolerant and violent.⁹

2.3.2 Destructive religion

2.3.2.1 **The Sāḷha Sutta** lays down clear instructions for avoiding wrong views, working towards right views, and freeing ourselves from all views. Firstly, the 10 doubtful points [§2]—which is then reprised thrice [§§7.1, 7.3, 13], reminds us that all our opinions and judgements, if based on sense-experience, including thinking and reasoning (the mind, the 6th sense), are not always reliable. This is especially true in religious ideas and actions where belief and faith predominate. In short, all views, especially religious views, are provisional. *Religion should help man*, not man help religion, or worse, help themselves to religion.

2.3.2.2 Ironically, although a religion may claim to help all man or pray for world peace, the painful reality is that each is only caring for itself, and even working to decimate and exterminate, or at least incapacitate, non-believers.¹⁰ This mutually assured destructiveness is unavoidable because all religions are based on feeling (*vedanā*), that is, how we react to our feeling-based needs and wants.¹¹ As a rule, such feelings—especially when rooted in religion, or expressed through it—are unwholesome because they are projected by the 3 unwholesome roots: greed, hate, delusion [§2]. To this dreadful trio, we can add fear (which often fuels a religion), making them **the 4 “biases”** (*agati*), so called because we tend to unwholesome conduct on such biases.¹²

2.3.2.3 A religion is especially harmful to itself and to others when it claims to help man but is really focused on something outside of man, on something “higher.” Instead of focusing on self-help—which entails understanding the mind—it distracts and demeans our humanity by looking up to an external agency, to the gods or God. Simply put, if we say, for example, that the highest love is for God or is God-centred, surely this is a limited and conditional love. We will return to this point in a moment. [2.3.4.1]

2.3.3 Wholesome religion

2.3.3.1 A wholesome religion (as far as religions and faiths go), if it claims to promote human well-being, must at least have human values. A “**value**,” simply put, is what is universally and naturally good, what we *are* (against what we “have” which is really external to us), which empowers us to bring out the best in us and in others. What is of the highest value to us right now is **life** itself. For, without life, nothing else, even religion or God, matters. This is our true beginning point for any useful human dialogue on spirituality.

2.3.3.2 Next, we must ask what sustains this life, what keeps us alive. We need food, clothing, shelter and health. If our life is what we *are*, then this second value concerns what we *have* that sustains our being. This is not merely a juxtaposing of goods and services, but a *quality* of life; in short, **happiness**. Life is even more valuable when we are happy.

2.3.3.3 We should then ask ourselves *how* our lives are different from other life-forms around us. Unlike other beings, especially animals and subhuman beings, we are capable of independent thoughts and feelings. We are *free* to think and feel, and we need to be free to do so. Clearly, the third human value is that of **freedom**. We are truly happy when we are free individuals able to express truth and beauty as we see them, especially when they reflect true reality and its significance.

2.3.3.4 What further differentiates us from the animal is that we are capable of discerning reality from falsehood, even discerning between virtual reality and true reality. We are capable of seeing the **truth**, and working with such a truth—which makes our happiness and freedom truly *meaningful*. Our life has a conscious purpose, and we can discern that true purpose of life.

⁹ In our own times (the early 21st century), we see numerous religion-based conflicts in many parts of the world, and in south Asia, we see such bad conflicts between Sinhala Buddhists and Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka, and some Buddhist zealots against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

¹⁰ On the abandoning of views, see **The notion of *diṭṭhi***, SD 40a.1.

¹¹ See esp **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,105-117), SD 25.2.

¹² On the 4 biases (*agati*), see **Sigal’ovāda s** (D 31,5/3:182), **Saṅgīti S** (D 22,1.11(19)/3:228, *agata, gamana*); **Agati S 1** (A 4.17/2:18, **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4/4:364), SD 2.21; Vism 22.55/683, 22.69/685.

2.3.3.5 **Our true purpose in life** can only be discerned with a calm and clear **mind**. Knowledge, knowing the *what* and *when* of life is essential to the working of the four values we have mentioned. This fifth value—that of the mind—is also the *why* and *how* of life. While we use our knowledge to deal with things (*what* make our lives worth living and how we spend our *time*), wisdom helps us understand *why* we are so conditioned, *how* we can move forward, and *moves* us to even higher and deeper levels of awareness and liberation.

In short, these are the 5 values embodied in the 5 precepts [§3], that should be understood and kept to [§8] so that we have a truly “value-added” life, one that is both meaningful and purposeful. [2.3.5]

2.3.4 Truly and beautifully living

2.3.4.1 Before we can usefully examine the meaning and purpose of life, we need to be in the right frame of mind. Notice how a religion that is rooted in an ancient culture of war and violence tends to speak in similar figures and act in a “power mode.” Wars are always between groups over some claim to power. Our social and political environment shape how we think, even when we think of religion.

2.3.4.2 To rise above such tribalism, intolerance and insecurity, we need to experience a higher and deeper mind, or we might say, a broader and more spacious heart. This is the joy of unconditional love, that is, lovingkindness. A broad hint the Sālha Sutta gives us is that we, only we ourselves, can cultivate this unconditional love, that is, accepting ourselves just as we are, and others just as they are. If we conceive God or divinity as love, then this is the practice we should ourselves emulate, that is, **the divine abodes** [§14].

2.3.4.3 True love or full spirituality begins with unconditional self-acceptance and acceptance of others. When this right and ready love is moved to action for those who need it, especially the less fortunate, it is called compassion. When others are healed and healthy, even when we have not helped them, we rejoice in their happiness: this is gladness, where joy fuels joy. The reality of life is such that no matter how loving we may be, even the more loving we are, the more we will be tested, or we will see that our work of love is never done.

2.3.4.4 We would think in terms of success and failure if we see love as power or dominance over others. True love is a liberating joy: it frees us, it frees those whom we love, it frees even those who do not love us because they simply lack love. In other words, **to love is to learn**. In our loving others, we begin to see our inner strengths as well as our latent weakness.

2.3.4.5 As we let the world turn its rounds of love and loss—this is the nature of the world—we see ourselves in better light, and in that light we become better at understanding the world and healing it. Even though we might not change the world out there, we have changed our inner world, and so we view the external world with better understanding and wisdom. This is equanimity.

2.3.5 Sutta closing. The Sālha Sutta closes on a profound liberating note. It presents **the 4 truths** [§15] in a profound way. When we see true reality in terms of the world, we then free ourselves from the grasp of our senses (the world, after all, is our senses);¹³ we take existence (birth and death) for what it is, without being enticed or terrified by it; and, above all, we get out of the blinding ignorance that prevents us from seeing all this, in the first place [§16].

We begin to understand the meaning of life as “**There is this**” [§15] or “This is it”: what we *seem* to be what we get in life, and this is unsatisfactory. The Buddha points to what is right before us, what the real problem is and where (or when) it is. He does not conjure and confound others with some imaginative external agency like God, or a divine or cosmic being in some fabulous paradise or distant afterlife.

“**There is the lowly**,” the inferior things, what do not really matter to us which we misplaced at centre-stage in our lives: no wonder we feel unsatisfied, suffering. It is in the kind of things we want, the way we want things: our craving. This is our meaning of life: each of us has to face this demon before we can exorcise it.

To understand the meaning of life, especially of our own, is itself a liberating experience. Life becomes meaningful when we understand suffering, that we are still incomplete and imperfect processes.

¹³ See **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

Life becomes purposeful when we understand that to suffer is to learn, and the more we learn and understand suffering, the closer we are to awakening. Then, we realize that “**There is the sublime**” [§15]

This awakening is something to truly rejoice in [§17]. For, all the great values of life have been sublimated into this liberating moment when we begin to truly live “ **dwell hungerfree, quenched, cooled, enjoying bliss, become divine himself**” [§19]. We do not need heaven at all: for heaven and godliness are now truly within us. [2.2.2.2]

— — —

The Discourse to Sālha

A 3.66

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the venerable Nandaka was staying in the Mansion of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery outside Sāvattthī.

1.2 Then Sālha, Migāra’s grandson, and Rohaṇa, Pekhuṇiya’s grandson,¹⁴ approached the venerable Nandaka. Having gone up to the venerable Nandaka, they saluted him, and then sat down at one side.

Seated thus at one side, the venerable Nandaka said this to Sālha, Migāra’s grandson;

The 10 doubtful points¹⁵

2 “Come now, Sālha.¹⁶

(1) Do not go¹⁷ by tradition [aural tradition].

mā anussavena

(2) Do not go by lineage [received wisdom].

mā paramparāya

(3) Do not go by hearsay.

mā iti, kirāya

(4) Do not go by scriptural authority.

mā piṭaka, sampadānena

(5) Do not go by pure reason.

mā takka, hetu[, gāhena]

(6) Do not go by inference [by logic].

mā naya, hetu[, gāhena]

(7) Do not go by reasoned thought [by specious reasoning].

mā ākāra, parivittakkena

(8) Do not go by acceptance of [being convinced of] a view after pondering on it.

mā diṭṭhi, nijjhāna-k, khantiyā

(9) Do not go by (another’s) seeming ability.

mā bhavya, rūpatāya

(10) Do not go by the thought, ‘This recluse [holy man] is our teacher.’ [‘This recluse is respected by us.’]

mā samaṇo no garū ti

The 3 unwholesome roots¹⁸

2.2 When you, [194] Sālha, know for yourselves,¹⁹

‘These things are **unwholesome**. These things are **blamable**. These things are **censured by the wise**. These things, when undertaken and practised, bring about **harm and suffering**.’

—Then, Sālha, you should **abandon** them.

¹⁴ Ce Ee Se *rohaṇo ca pekhuniya, nattā*; Be *sāṇo ca sekhuniya, nattā*.

¹⁵ **Kaṅkhāniya-ṭ, thāna*. (Here the prefixed asterisk * means that the term is a neologism, not found in the ancient texts). Recurs mutatis mutandis in **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65,3), SD 35.4a. For detailed comments on each of these 10 points, see **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65), SD 35.4a, esp Commentarial Notes, under §3.1 (1)–(10).

¹⁶ *Sālha*: this is 3 voc pl, a **dual vocative**, meaning “Sālha and Rohaṇa”: see Intro (1.2).

¹⁷ Comy interprets as *mā gaṇhiṭṭha*, “Do not take hold of (a notion)” throughout (AA 2:305).

¹⁸ Recurs mutatis mutandis in **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65,4), SD 35.4a.

¹⁹ For comments on this whole section, see **Kesa, puttiya S** (A 3.65), SD 35.4a, in Commentarial Notes under §3.2 (1) + §3.2 (2).

3 (1) What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **greed** [does greed exist]?”

“There is, bhante. [It does, bhante.]”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘covetousness,’²⁰ I say!

This **greedy one**, Sāḷhā, being covetous,²¹

destroys life,²²

and steals,

and goes after the women of others,

and utters falsehood,

and encourages others to do likewise.

This leads to his harm and suffering for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

4 (2) What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **hate**?”

“There is, bhante.”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘ill will,’ I say!

This **hateful one**, Sāḷhā, with a heart of ill will,

destroys life,

and steals,

and goes after the women of others,

and utters falsehood,

and encourages others to do likewise.

This leads to his harm and suffering for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

5 (3) What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **delusion**?”

“There is, bhante.”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘ignorance,’ I say!

This **deluded one**, Sāḷhā, gone to ignorance,²³

destroys life,

and steals,

and goes after the women of others,

and utters falsehood,

and encourages others to do likewise.

This leads to his harm and suffering for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

Reaffirmation²⁴

6 “What do you think, Sāḷhā, are these things wholesome or unwholesome?”

“Unwholesome, bhante.”

“Blamable or not blamable?”

“Blamable, bhante.”

“Censured or praised by the wise?”

“Censured by the wise, bhante.”

“These things, when undertaken and practised, do they bring about harm and suffering?”

²⁰ Covetousness (*abhojjhā*), along with ill will (*vyāpāda*) [§4] and ignorance (*avijjā*) [§5], are the 3 basic latent tendencies (*anusaya*). See *Anusaya*, SD 31.3.

²¹ *Luddho kho ayam sāḷhā abhijjhālu.*

²² These are an early reference to the lay person’s precepts, but without the fifth precept (against taking intoxicants). These 4, being shorter, are likely to be earlier than the 5 precepts. See SD 47.3b (2.1).

²³ *Mūḷho kho ayam, sāḷhā, avijjāgato.*

²⁴ Recurs mutatis mutandis in *Kesa,puttiya S* (A 3.65,7), SD 35.4a, where see Commentarial Notes under §4.

“These things, bhante, when undertaken and practised, bring about harm and suffering for a long time.

So indeed it is to us in this matter.”

7 ²⁵“It is because of this, Sāḷhā, that I say:

‘Come Sāḷhā:

Do not go by tradition [aural tradition].

Do not go by lineage [received wisdom].

Do not go by hearsay.

Do not go by scriptural authority.

Do not go by pure reason.

Do not go by inference [by logic].

Do not go by reasoned thought [by specious reasoning].

Do not go by acceptance of [being convinced of] a view after pondering on it.

Do not go by (another’s) seeming ability.

Do not go by the thought, “This recluse is our teacher.” [“This recluse is respected by us.”]

7.2 When you know for yourselves, Sāḷhā,

“*These things are unwholesome. These things are blamable. These things are censured by the wise.*

These things, when undertaken and practised, bring about harm and suffering.”

—Then Sāḷhā, **you should abandon them.**’

—So I have spoken; it is for this reason that I have spoken.

7.3 Come Sāḷhā.²⁶

Do not go by tradition [aural tradition].

Do not go by lineage [received wisdom].

Do not go by hearsay.

Do not go by scriptural authority.

Do not go by pure reason.

Do not go by inference [by logic].

Do not go by reasoned thought [by specious reasoning].

Do not go by acceptance of [being convinced of] a view after pondering on it.

Do not go by (another’s) seeming ability.

Do not go by the thought, ‘This recluse is our teacher.’ [‘This recluse is respected by us.’]

Wholesome roots

7.4 When you know for yourselves, Sāḷhā,

‘These things are **wholesome**. These things are not blamable. These things are praised by the wise.

*These things, when undertaken and practised, bring good and happiness.*²⁷

—Then Sāḷhā, you should live **cultivating** them.

8 (1) “What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **non-greed** [does non-greed exist]?”

“There is, bhante.”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘non-covetousness,’ I say!

This person **without greed**, Sāḷhā, one *free of covetousness*,²⁸

does not destroy life,

n’eva pāṇam hanti

does not steal,

na adinam pi ādiyati

²⁵ From here to §8.2 mutatis mutandis in **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,8-9), SD 35.4a, where see Commentarial Notes, under §8.

²⁶ Note that the “doubtworthy points” passage is repeated only here (for the unwholesome roots), but not after the statement of the wholesome roots [§14], where it is merely stated once. This clearly shows these doubtful points are related to the unwholesome roots and as such should be rejected.

²⁷ For comments here, see **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65), SD 35.4a, in Commentarial Notes under §9.2.

²⁸ *Aluddho kho ayam, sāḷhā, anabhijjhālū.*

**does not go after the women of others,
does not utter falsehood,
and encourages others to do likewise.**

*na para,dāram pi gacchati
na musā bhaṇati
param pi tathattāya samādapeti*

This leads to his good and happiness for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

9 (2) “What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **non-hate**?”

“There is, bhante.”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘non-ill-will,’ I say!

This person **without hate**, Sāḷhā, whose heart is free of ill will,²⁹

does not destroy life,

does not steal,

does not go after the women of others,

does not utter falsehood,

and encourages others to do likewise.

This leads to his good and happiness for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

10 (3) “What do you think, Sāḷhā, is there **non-delusion**?”

“There is, bhante.”

“Indeed, Sāḷhā, its meaning is ‘knowledge,’ I say!

This person **without delusion**, Sāḷhā, endowed with *knowledge*,³⁰

does not destroy life,

does not steal,

does not go after the women of others,

does not utter falsehood,

and encourages others to do likewise.

This leads to his good and happiness for a long time.”

“Yes, bhante.”

Reaffirmation³¹

12 “What do you think, Sāḷhā, are these things wholesome or unwholesome?”³²

“Wholesome, bhante.”

“Blamable or not blamable?”

“Not blamable, bhante.”

“Censured or praised by the wise?”

“Praised by the wise, bhante.”

“These things, when undertaken and practised, do they bring good and happiness?”

“These things, bhante, when undertaken and practised, bring good and happiness.

So indeed it is to us in this matter.”

13 “It is because of this, Sāḷhā, that I say:³³

‘Come Sāḷhā:

Do not go by tradition [aural tradition].

Do not go by lineage [received wisdom].

Do not go by hearsay.

Do not go by scriptural authority.

Do not go by pure reason.

²⁹ *Aduṭṭho kho ayam, sāḷhā, avyāpanna,citto.*

³⁰ *Amūḷho kho ayam, sāḷhā, vijjāgato.*

³¹ From here to §§12-13 mutatis mutandis in **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,13-14), SD 35.4a.

³² For detailed nn on this section, see **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,13-14), SD 35.4a, in Commentarial Notes under §7.

³³ For nn here, see **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65), SD 35.4a, in Commentarial Notes under §14.

Do not go by inference [by logic].

Do not go by reasoned thought [by specious reasoning].

Do not go by acceptance of [being convinced of] a view after pondering on it.

Do not go by (another's) seeming ability.

Do not go by the thought, "This recluse is our teacher." ["This recluse is respected by us."]

When you know for yourselves, Sālhā,

'These things are wholesome. These things are not blamable. These things are praised by the wise. These things, when undertaken and practised, bring good and happiness.'

—Then Sālhā, you should live [192] cultivating them.

—So I have spoken; it is for this reason that I have spoken.

The divine abodes³⁴

14 Then, Sālhā, that noble disciple—

thus free of covetousness, free of ill will, without delusion,
fully aware [circumspect], ever mindful.³⁵

(1) dwells pervading one quarter with a mind of **lovingkindness**:

likewise the second quarter, the third quarter and the fourth quarter.

Thus above, below, in between, everywhere

and to everyone as well as to himself,³⁶

he dwells pervading the whole world with *lovingkindness*

that is vast, great, boundless, free from enmity, free from ill will.

(2) He dwells pervading one quarter with a mind of **compassion**:

likewise the second quarter, the third quarter and the fourth quarter.

Thus above, below, in between, everywhere

and to everyone as well as to himself,

he dwells pervading the whole world with *compassion*

that is vast, great, boundless, free from enmity, free from ill will.

(3) He dwells pervading one quarter with a mind of **gladness**:

likewise the second quarter, the third quarter and the fourth quarter.

Thus above, below, in between, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself,

he dwells pervading the whole world with *gladness*

that is vast, great, boundless, free from enmity, free from ill will.

(4) [EQUANIMITY] He dwells pervading one quarter with a mind of **equanimity**:

likewise the second quarter, the third quarter and the fourth quarter.

Thus above, below, in between, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself,

he dwells pervading the whole world with *equanimity*

that is vast, great, boundless, free from enmity, free from ill will.³⁷

³⁴ This whole section on the 4 divine abodes is stock, mutatis mutandis in **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,15), SD 35.4a: for n, see Commentarial Notes there, under §15.1 (1).

³⁵ *Sa kho so, sālhā, ariyasāvako evaṃ vigatābhijjho vigatavyāpādo asammūḷho sampajāno* [Ce *asampajāno*, wr] *patissato*. This describes the saint's mind; cf description of the ordinary mind in **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,15.2 etc), SD 35.4a.

³⁶ *Iti uddham adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabb'attatāya*. The underscored is a better reading than *sabbatthatāya* (PED "on the whole") since *sabbadhi* ("everywhere") precedes it. It is resolved as *sabba* + *atta* + the suffix *-tā* (making it an abstract noun), giving the sense of "all-and-self-ness." The word *sabbattatāya* is dative, giving the sense, "to all-and-selfness," or as **Bodhi** translates it: "to all as to himself" (2005:90).

³⁷ On how this practice can lead to spiritual liberation, see **Brahma,vihāra S** (A 10.208/5:299), SD 2.10.

The awakening process

15 THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS. He understands thus:³⁸

‘There is this.

atthi idaṃ

There is the lowly.

atthi hīnaṃ

There is the sublime.

atthi paṇītaṃ

There is the escape beyond coming into
this consciousness.³⁹

atthi imassa saññā, gatassa uttari nissaraṇaṃ

16 DESTRUCTION OF THE INFLUXES. When he knows thus and sees thus,⁴⁰ then

the mind is freed from the influx of sense-desire;

the mind is freed from the influx of existence, too;

the mind is freed from the influx of ignorance, too. [197]

17 When it⁴¹ is liberated, there arises the knowledge: “It (the mind) is liberated!”

Destroyed is birth. The holy life has been lived. What needs to be done has been done. There is (for me) no more of arising in any state of being.’

18 REVIEW KNOWLEDGE. He understands thus:

‘Previously there was greed in me—that was unwholesome.

Now there is none—this is wholesome.

Previously there was *hatred* in me—that was unwholesome.

Now there is none—this is wholesome.

Previously there was *delusion* in me—that was unwholesome.

Now there is none—this is wholesome.’

19 Thus, in this very life itself, **he dwells hunger-free, quenched, cooled, enjoying happiness, become divine himself.**⁴²

³⁸ Also at **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,17), SD 28.12, where it also follows the divine abodes. Here, **the arhat’s knowledge** is def as the full understanding of the 4 noble truths: “There is this” (*atthi idaṃ*) refers to the 5 aggregates, ie, the noble truth that is suffering; “there is the lowly” (*atthi hīnaṃ*) to the noble truth that is the arising of suffering; “there is the sublime” (*atthi paṇītaṃ*) to the noble truth that is the path leading to the end of suffering; and “There is the escape beyond the occurrence of this perception” (*atthi imassa saññā, gatassa uttari nissaraṇaṃ*) to the noble truth that is the ending of suffering, nirvana. (Note the switch in the last pair of truths.) Comy, however, says that this shows the non-returner’s cultivation of insight aimed at arhathood, followed by the next section on his attainment of arhathood. (MA 1:176 f). I think the verb *pajānāti* (“he understands (thus)”) is clear that he already has the knowledge. It is interesting here that the prec and this passage suggest that the practice of the divine abodes can lead to awakening.

³⁹ *Atthi idaṃ, atthi hīnaṃ, atthi paṇītaṃ, atthi imassa saññā, gatassa uttari nissaraṇaṃ ti pajānati*. This whole passage (from “He understands thus...” to “escape beyond coming into this consciousness”) recurs in **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,17/1:38), SD 28.12. The allusion here is clearly to the abandoning of rebirth. Hence, here *saññā* means “consciousness”: on this, see SD 17.4 (7.1.3). See Intro (2.3.2.3).

⁴⁰ Here, the arhat’s liberation is traditionally formulated as the destruction (*khīṇa*) of these 3 mental influxes (*āsava*). This is perhaps the oldest set of **3 influxes**—of sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), of existence (*bhava’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijjā’sava*)—which are essentially the same as **the 3 graspings** (*ti, gaha*) of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on account of which they arise, respectively, the notions, “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”: see **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,17/1:38), SD 28.12. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 āsavas**, which is also found in the Nikāyas: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhava’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭhi’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjā’sava*) (D 16,1.12/2:82, 16,2.4/-2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The set of 3 influxes is older, and found more frequently in the suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). See BDict: āsava.

⁴¹ “It” here refers to the arhat’s mind mentioned in the prec para. Note that the person is not referred to here. This line simply reads: *vimuttasmim vimuttam iti ñāṇaṃ hoti*.

— evaṃ —

130830 130901 131216 141214 150201 160716

⁴² *Iti so diṭṭh'eva dhamme nicchāto nibbuto sīti, bhūto sukha-p,paṭisaṃvedī brahma, bhūtena attanā viharatīti.* See Intro (2.2.2).