

22

The Jaṭā Suttas

SD 50.22a: (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta The (Deity) Discourse on the Tangles | S 1.23 = S 55-58
SD 50.22b: Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja Sutta The Bhāra,dvāja Discourse on the Tangles | S 7.6 [Ee S 7.1.6]

SD 50.22c: Sīla Niddesa Description of moral virtue | Vism 1.1-1.8

Theme: Cutting away the inner tangle

Translated by Piya Tan ©2017

1 Significance of the (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta

1.1 THEME

Both the (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta (S 1.23) and the Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja Sutta (S 7.6) share the same verses—hence, the same theme. The theme of “tangles” (*jaṭā*) refers to “the ensnaring net of craving” (*taṇhāya jāliniyā*, SnA 1:49). There are four verses: the first is the question, while the remaining three contain the Buddha’s answer.

1.2 CONTENTS

In the (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta (S 1.23), the question is asked by a deity (*deity*), implying that it is an old riddle. In the Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja Sutta (S 7.6), it is a brahmin, Jaṭā (“matted-hair”) Bhāra,dvāja—probably a matted-hair wanderer—who asks the Buddha the same question. This supports the fact that the question or riddle is an ancient one.

1.3 STRUCTURE

The (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta presents the verses just as they are, without any narrative, except for the closing. The Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja Sutta, on the other hand, relates how a brahmin approaches the Buddha with a question, receives its answer, renounces the world and becomes an arhat. It is a sort of cameo presentation of the progress of discipleship—the seeker asks, the Buddha answers, the seeker responds to the answer, and finally finds the answer for himself.

2 (Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta teaching

2.1 Verse 1 [S 55 = S 625]

2.1.1 This verse and the next (S 55 f = 625 f) form the opening theme and the thesis for Buddhaghosa’s **Visuddhi,magga** and which he then elaborates into his classic tome (Vism 1.1-1.8/1-4). He includes his explanation of the verses’ “meaning in brief” (*saṅkhep’attha*) (Vism 1.2) in the Saṃyutta commentary (SA 1:49). He gives a much fuller explanation in his Visuddhi,magga. [22c]

2.1.2 The Vinaya Sub-commentary suggests that the words **anto,jaṭā bahi,jaṭā** should be taken as bahuvrihis¹ in apposition to *paja*, that is, as “having a tangle inside, having a tangle outside.”

2.1.3 However, the translation here follows the Saṃyutta Commentary, which takes them as tad-purusha.² The Commentary says: “‘Tangle’ (*jaṭā*) is a term for the network of craving, in the sense that it

¹ A **bahuvrihi** (Skt *bahu,vṛhī*, “having much rice”) is an adj cpd designating possession, eg, “white-washed.” On bahuvrihi (P *bahubbihī*), see SD 18.8 (2.1 n).

'laces together'; for, it arises repeatedly back and forth among the sense-objects such as forms. There is a tangle inside, a tangle outside, because craving arises with respect to one's own possessions and those of others; with respect to one's own body and the bodies of others; and with respect to the internal and external sense-bases." (SA 1:49)

2.1.4 The Buddha's reply is a succinct statement of the 3 trainings, with samadhi alluded to by the word *citta*. The Saṃyutta Commentary says that wisdom is mentioned thrice in the verse: first, as natural intelligence ("wise"); second, as insight-wisdom (*vipassanā,paññā*) which is to be cultivated; and third, as "discretion," the nurturing or pragmatic wisdom that takes the lead in all tasks (*sabba,kicca,parināyikī parihāriya,paññā*). [22c (7.5)]

2.1.5 The Commentary says: "Just as a man standing on the ground and taking up a well-sharpened knife might disentangle a great tangle of bamboos, so, this monk, standing on the ground of moral virtue and taking up with the hand of nurturing wisdom exerted by the power of effort, the knife of insight-wisdom well sharpened on the whet-stone of samadhi, might disentangle, cut away, and uproot all the tangle of craving that had overgrown his own mental continuity" (SA 1:50; abridged from Vism 1.7) [22c (7.6)].

2.1.6 [Verse 57] While the previous verse shows the learner (*sekha*), who is *capable* of disentangling the tangle, this verse shows the arhat, the one beyond training (*asekha*), who has *finished* disentangling the tangle.

2.1.7 [Verse 58] The Saṃyutta Commentary says that this verse shows the opportunity (or region) for the disentangling of the tangle (*jaṭāya vijaṭan'okāsa*). Here, **name** (*nāma*) represents the 4 mental aggregates. The Commentary treats impingement (*paṭigha*) as metrical shorthand for perception of impingement (*paṭigha,saññā*).

2.1.8 According to the Saṃyutta Subcommentary, in **line c**, we should read a compressed dvandva (twin compound), *paṭigha,rupa,saññā* ("perceptions of impingement and of form"), the first part of which has been truncated, split off, and nasalized to fit the metre. (SA 1:50)

2.1.9 Impingement, that is, the impact of the 5 sense-objects on the 5 sense-bases, "perception of impingement" (*paṭigha,saññā*) is defined as the fivefold sense-perception.³

2.1.10 Perception of form (*rūpa,saññā*) has a wider range, comprising also the perceptions of form visualized in the dhyanas [SAPṬ: perception of the form of the earth-kasiṇa, etc (SAPṬ:Be 1:93)]. The Saṃyutta Commentary explains that the former implies sense-sphere existence, the latter form-sphere existence, and the two jointly imply formless-sphere existence, thus completing the 3 realms of existence. It is here that this tangle is cut. (SA 1:50)

2.1.11 According to the Saṃyutta Commentary: The tangle is cut in the sense that the round (*sam-sara*) with its 3 planes is terminated. It is cut and ceases in dependence on (the vision of) nirvana.

— — —

² A **tadpurusha** (Skt *tad,puruṣa*; P *tappurisa*, "that person"), a dependent cpd whose first component is a noun or noun stem that "possesses, creates, etc" the second component, eg, "Dharma-wheel," "mind-made." See A K Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, 2nd ed, 1974:71 f.

³ See Vbh 261,31-34 and Vism 10.16/329,22-24.

22a

(Devatā) Jaṭā Sutta

The (Deity) Discourse on Tangles | S 1.23 = S 55-58

Theme: Cutting away the inner tangle

[Deity:]

- | | | |
|--|------|--|
| <p>1 <i>Anto, jaṭā bahi, jaṭā
jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā.
Taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi
ko imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭan'ti.</i></p> | S 55 | <p>A tangle within, a tangle without,
beings are entangled in a tangle.
This I ask of you, Gotama,
who disentangles this tangle?</p> |
|--|------|--|

[The Blessed One:]

- | | | |
|--|------|--|
| <p>2 <i>Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño
cittam paññañ ca bhāvayaṃ,
ātāpī nipako bhikkhu
so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭan'ti.⁴</i></p> | S 56 | <p>A man, wisely established in moral virtue,
and cultivating the mind in wisdom,
as a monk, ardent and adept—
he is the one who disentangles this tangle.</p> |
| <p>3 <i>Yesaṃ rāgo ca doso ca
avijjā ca virājitā.
Khīṇ'āsavā arahanto
tesaṃ vijaṭitā jaṭā.</i></p> | S 57 | <p>For whom lust and hate,
and ignorance, too, have been overcome,
the arhats who have destroyed the influxes—
for them the tangle is disentangled.</p> |
| <p>4 <i>Yattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca
asesaṃ uparujjhati
paṭighaṃ⁵ rūpa, saññā ca
ettha sā⁶ chijjate⁷ jaṭā'ti.</i></p> | S 58 | <p>Where name and form
end without remainder,
and impaction and perception of form—
it is here that this tangle is cut.</p> |

— evaṃ —

3 Significance of the Jaṭā (Bhāra, dvāja) Sutta

3.1 THE BHĀRA, DVĀJAS

3.1.1 The very first chapter of the Brāhmaṇa Saṃyutta—the **Arahanta Vagga**—contains 10 suttas (S 7.1-10) recording the conversion and arhathood of various members of the Bhāra, dvāja clan. **The Jaṭā (Bhāra, dvāja) Sutta** (S 7.6) is the sixth of these suttas.⁸

⁴ Only Ee *jaṭan'ti*; all MSS *jatan'.*

⁵ Only Se *paṭigha-*.

⁶ Be Ce *etth'esā*; Ee Se so.

⁷ Be:Ka *vijate*.

⁸ For the whole list of “Bhāra, dvāja” suttas, see SD 50.10 (2.2).

3.1.2 There is no further information, neither in the suttas nor in the Commentaries, on Jaṭā Bhāra,-dvāja of Sāvattthī. He does not seem to be one of the famous Bhāra,dvāja brothers of Rājagaha, all of whom renounce the world and become arhats.⁹

— — —

22b

Jaṭā (Bhāra,dvāja) Sutta

The (Bhāra,dvāja) Discourse on Tangles | S 7.6/1:165 [Ee S 7.1.6]

Theme: Cutting away the inner tangle

1 Originating in Sāvattthī.

Then, the brahmin Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja approached the Blessed One.

Having approached, he exchanged greetings with the Blessed One.

2 When the courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the brahmin Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja sat down at one side.

Sitting at one side, the brahmin Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja said this to the Blessed One:

Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja's verse

[Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja:]

3 *Anto,jaṭā bahi,jaṭā
jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā.
Taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi
ko imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭan'ti.*

S 625

A tangle within, a tangle without,
beings are entangled in a tangle.
This I ask of you, Gotama,
who disentangles this tangle?

[The Blessed One:]

4 *Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño
cittam paññañ ca bhāvayaṃ,
ātāpī nipako bhikkhu
so imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭan'ti.¹⁰*

S 626

A man, wisely established in moral virtue,
and cultivating the mind and wisdom,
as a monk, ardent and adept—
he is the one who disentangles this tangle.

5 *Yesaṃ rāgo ca doso ca
avijjā ca virājitā
khīṇ'āsavā arahanto
tesaṃ vijaṭitā jaṭā.*

S 627

For whom lust and hate,
and ignorance, too, have been overcome,
the arhats who have destroyed the influxes—
for them the tangle is disentangled.

6 *Yattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca
asesaṃ uparujjhati
paṭighaṃ¹¹ rūpa,sañña ca
ettha sā¹² chijjate¹³ jaṭā'ti.*

S 628

Where name and form
end without remainder,
and the impaction and perception of form—
it is here that this tangle is cut.

⁹ See SD 50.10 (2.2).

¹⁰ Only Ee *jaṭan'ti*; all MSS *jataṃ*.

¹¹ Only Se *paṭigha-*.

Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja joins the order

7 When this was said, the brahmin Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja said this to the Blessed One:

“Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! Master Gotama!

Just as if one

were to place upright what had been overturned,

were to reveal what was hidden,

were to show the way to one who was lost, or

were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,

in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the Blessed Gotama.

I go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.

May the Blessed Gotama give me the going-forth (*pabbajjā*), give me the ordination (*upasampadā*).”

8 And the brahmin Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja received the going-forth and the ordination in the Blessed One’s presence.

Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja becomes an arhat

THE FULL ARHATHOOD PERICOPE¹⁴

9 Then, not long after he was ordained, the venerable Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja, dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute,

in no long time at all, right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge, attained and dwelled in the supreme goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

THE ARHAT’S REVIEW KNOWLEDGE

10 He directly knew:

“Birth is destroyed,

the holy life has been lived,

done what is to be done,

there is no more of this state of being.”¹⁵

And the venerable Jaṭā Bhāra,dvāja became one of the arhats.

— evaṃ —

¹² Be Ce *etth’esā*; Ee Se so.

¹³ Be:Ka *vijate*.

¹⁴ For details, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2+56.3), SD 7.14.

¹⁵ On this para and the next (the attainment of arhathood), see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2/1:203) n, SD 7.14.

22c

Sīla Niddesa

Description of moral virtue | **Vism 1.1-1.8**

Theme: Buddhaghosa's explanation of S 55-58 = S 625-628

- 1 A man, established wisely in wisdom, and cultivating the mind in wisdom;
as a monk, ardent and adept— he is the one who disentangles this tangle.**
(S 56 = 626)

So this was said. But why was it said?

It is said that while the Blessed One was living in Sāvattihī, a certain devaputra¹⁶ approached him in the night. To dispel his own doubt, he asked this question:

- A tangle within, a tangle without, beings are entangled in a tangle.
This I ask of you, Gotama, who disentangles this tangle?** (S 55 = 625)

- 2** This is its meaning in brief.¹⁷

“**Tangle**” (*jaṭā*) is a term for this net that is craving. It is a tangle by way of lacing together like the tangle of a network of branches in bamboo thickets and so on; because it goes on arising again and again, above and below,¹⁸ among the sense-objects beginning with form.

2.2 But it is called **a tangle within, a tangle without** (*anto, jaṭā bahi, jaṭā*) because it arises (as craving) for one's own person or another's, what appertains to one or to another,¹⁹ and for the internal and external sense-bases (sense-faculties and their objects).

2.3 Since it arises in this way, **beings are entangled in a tangle** (*jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā*). As the bamboos, etc, are entangled by the bamboo tangle, etc, so, too, all that are this multitude of living beings, is all entangled by the tangle of craving—meaning that it is intertwined, interlaced by it. **[2]**

2.4 And because it is thus entangled, **this I ask of you, Gotama** (*taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi*), that is why I ask this. He addressed the Blessed One by his gotra [clan-name] as **Gotama**.

2.5 **Who disentangles this tangle?** (*ko imam vijaṭaye jaṭam*) Who may unravel this tangle that keeps the 3 kinds of existence entangled in this way?—What he asks is, who is able to unravel it?

3 However, when questioned thus, the Blessed One, whose knowledge of all things is unimpeded, the God of gods, Sakka (“capable”) beyond Sakka, Brahma (“perfect”) beyond Brahma, fearless by way of the 4 kinds of moral courage, bearer of the 10 powers, knower with unhindered knowledge, the universal eye, said this to explain the meaning, uttered this verse:

- A man, established wisely in wisdom, and cultivating the mind in wisdom;
as a monk, ardent and adept— he is the one who disentangles this tangle.**
(S 56 = 626)

- 4** Of this very verse spoken by the great seer,
my task is to explain true reality divided into moral virtue and other parts

¹⁶ A young deva, one arisen in that heaven relatively recent.

¹⁷ The whole of §2 recurs at SA 1:49,13-27 (on **(Devatā) Jaṭā S**, S 1.3.3), SD 50.22a.

¹⁸ “Above and below,” *heṭṭh'upariya*: see Sadd 747,9. VismMṬ: “From above” refers to a visible form, and so on, up to thought, or vice versa; “from below” means as they occur (*pavatti, vasena*), as given in the teaching (VismMṬ 5; see Vism:Ñ 15.1). VismMṬ = Paramattha, mañjūsa (Mahā, ṭikā or “great commentary” on Vism).

¹⁹ “What appertains to one or to another,” *saka.parikkhāra, para.parikkhāresu*, ie, related characteristics or objects.

that those who have obtained going-forth so hard to obtain in the Conqueror’s teaching, the straight and secure path of purification, comprising moral virtue and the rest.

They here who desire purity

yogis [meditators] who, striving, fail to attain purification,

For them I shall expound the joy-giving explanation that is truly purifying, relying on the teaching of the dwellers of the Mahā, vihāra.²⁰

Let all those good men who desire purity

closely heed me regarding what I respectfully speak the Path of Purification.

5 Herein, **purification** (*visuddhi*) should be understood as nirvana, which is rid of all stains, utterly pure. **The Visuddhi, magga** is the path to that purification. The means of approach that is called **the path** (*magga*). The meaning is that I shall expound that **path of purification**.

6 At times, this path of purification is taught by insight (*vipassanā*) alone,²¹ of which it is said:

Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccāti

yadā paññāya passati

atha nibbindati dukkhe

esa maggo visuddhiyā.

All formations [conditioned things] are impermanent:

When one sees this with wisdom,

then, one is revulsed at suffering—

this is the path to purity. [3]

(Dh 277)

6.2 And, at times, by dhyana (*jhāna*) and wisdom (*paññā*), of which it is said:

yamhi jhānañ ca pañña ca

sa ve nibbāna, santike

In whom there is both stillness and wisdom,

he indeed is in the presence of nirvana.

(Dh 372)

6.3 And, at times, by deeds (*kamma*), etc, of which it is said (in **the Anātha, piṇḍik’ovāda Sutta**):

Kammaṃ vijjā ca dhammo ca

sīlaṃ jīvitam uttamaṃ,

etena maccā sujjhanti

na gottena dhanena vā.

By action, knowledge and truth,

by a life supreme in moral virtue:

by these are mortals purified,

not by clan, not by wealth.

(M 143, 17/3:262), SD 23.9

6.4 And, at times, by moral virtue (*sīla*), etc, of which it is said:

Sabbadā sīla, sampanno

Who is ever accomplished in moral virtue,

²⁰ This is the “Great Monastery,” founded by king Devanampiya Tissa (247-207 BCE) at his capital, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, originally for the use of Asoka’s missionaries. The monastery is traditionally said to have preserved the Theravāda in Sri Lanka, though, in time, they tended towards scholasticism, which influenced much of Sinhala Buddhism today. The monastery was abandoned in the 13th cent, and so ended the history of the Mahāvihāra. For details, see Ency Bsm, Oxford Dictionary of Buddhism & Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism, svv.

²¹ “By ‘insight alone’ is meant to exclude what is not moral virtue, etc, but also calm (ie dhyana), which is the opposite component in the pair, calm and insight (*samatha, vipassanā*). This is for the sake of emphasis. The word ‘alone’ excludes only that concentration with a distinction (of dhyana). For, concentration (*samādhi*) is classed as both access (*upacara*) and full concentration (*appanā*) (Vism 4.32). Taking this verse as the teaching for one whose vehicle is insight (*vipassanā, yānika*) [SD 41.1 (2.1)] does not imply that there is no concentration. For, no insight arises without momentary concentration. Further, insight should be understood as the 3 contemplations (*anupassanā*) of impermanence, suffering and non-self, and not the contemplation of impermanence alone. For, no breakthrough into wisdom arises without any vision of impermanence.” (VismMT 9 f).

paññavā susamāhito

who is wise, well concentrated in mind,

āraddha, viriyo pahitatto

who asserts effort, resolute,

*ogham tarati duttaram*will cross the flood so difficult to cross. (S 2.2.5/1:53 = S 299)²²

6.5 And, at times, by the focus of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), etc, of which it is said:

Ek'āyano ayam bhikkhave maggo

Bhikshus, this is the one-going path,

sattānam visuddhiyā ...

for the purification of beings, ...

nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya

for realizing nirvana,

yad idam cattāri satipaṭṭhānā

that is to say, the 4 focuses of mindfulness. (D 2:290), SD 13.2

6.6 And so, too, in the case of right striving (*samma-p, padhāna*), and so on. In the answer to this question it is taught by moral virtue and so on.

7 Here is a brief commentary (on the verse).

Wisely established in moral virtue (*sīle patitṭhāya*): standing in moral virtue. It is only when one is actually fulfilling virtue that one is here said to “established in moral virtue.” The meaning here is this: being well established in moral virtue by fulfilling virtue.

7.2 **A man** (*naro*): a being. **Wisely** (*sapañño*): having the kind of wisdom that is born of karma by means of a rebirth-linking with triple root-cause.²³

7.3 **And cultivating the mind and wisdom** (*cittam paññāñ ca bhāvayam*): cultivates²⁴ both samadhi and insight. For, it is samadhi (*samādhi*) that is described here under the heading of “mind [consciousness]” (*citta*), and insight (*vipassanā*) under that of “wisdom” (*paññā*).

7.4 **Ardent** (*ātāpī*): asserting effort (*viriya*). For, it is effort (*viriya*) that is called “ardour” (*ātāpa*) in the sense of burning up and consuming (*ātāpana, paritāpana*) defilements. Since he is accomplished in *that*, he is ardent.

7.5 **Adept** (*nipako*): it is wisdom (*paññā*) that is called “adeptness” [adroitness] (*nepakka*), meaning, being accomplished in that. This word shows nurturing wisdom (*pārihāriya, paññā*). For, wisdom is mentioned three times in the answer to the question. Herein, the first is natural wisdom (*jāti, paññā*), the second is insight wisdom (*vipassanā, paññā*), and the third is the nurturing wisdom that guides all affairs (*sabba, kicca, pariñāyikā pārihāriya, paññā*).

7.6 He sees danger [fear] (*bhayaṃ ikkhati*) in the round of rebirths [samsara]; thus, he is a *bhikkhu* [monk].

He is the one who disentangles this tangle (*so imam vijaṭitā jaṭā*): **[4]** just as a man standing on the ground and taking up a well-sharpened knife might disentangle a great tangle of bamboos, so, too, he—this *bhikkhu* (the meditator) accomplished in these 6 qualities, namely, this *moral virtue*, and this *sama-*

²² = S:B 1.15 (S 299).

²³ “Triple root-cause” (*ti, hetuka*), here meaning rooted in the wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion.

²⁴ “Cultivates” applies to both “mind” and “wisdom.” But are they mundane or supramundane? They are supramundane, because the sublime goal is described. For one cultivating them is said to disentangle the tangle of craving by cutting it off at the path-moment, and that is not mundane. But the mundane are included here because they immediately precede, since supramundane [Vism:Ñ ch 3 n5] samadhi and insight are impossible without mundane concentration and insight to precede them. For, without the access and full concentration in one whose vehicle is calm, or without the momentary concentration in one whose vehicle is insight, and without the gateways to liberation [Vism 21.66 f], the supramundane can never in either case be reached. (VismMT 13)

dhi described under the heading of mind, and this *threefold wisdom*, and this *ardour*—standing on the ground of moral virtue and picking up with the hand of nurturing-wisdom exerted by the power of effort the knife of insight-wisdom, well-sharpened on the whet-stone of samadhi, may disentangle, cut away and uproot all the tangle of craving that has overgrown his own life’s continuity (*santāna*).

7.7 But, it is at the moment of the path that he is said to be disentangling that tangle; at the moment of fruition that he has disentangled the tangle, and is worthy of the foremost gifts in the world with its gods. That is why the Blessed One said:

A man, wisely established in moral virtue, as a monk, ardent and adept—	and cultivating the mind and wisdom, he is the one who disentangles this tangle.
--	---

8 Herein, there is nothing for him to do about the (natural) wisdom on account of which he is called **wise**. For, that has been established in him simply by the power of past karma.

But the words **ardent and adept** mean that by persevering with effort of the kind here described and by acting in full awareness with wisdom, he should, having become well established in moral virtue, cultivate the calm and insight that are described as **samadhi and wisdom**.

This is how the Blessed One shows the path of purification under the headings of moral virtue, samadhi and wisdom here.

170323 170325 170614