

# 3d

## Khattiya Sutta

The Discourse on the Kshatriya | S 1.14

Theme: The greatest of humans, animals, wives and sons

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2018

### 1 Sutta summary

**The Khattiya Sutta** (S 1.14) is a short discourse of 2 verses, the first spoken by a deity regarding 4 things of the highest value in the world in socioeconomic terms. The Buddha responds with another verse, stating that, on a spiritual level, what outshines their mundane counterparts.

Being a noble (kshatriya) is a social status that wield power and influence over a particular group, but the self-awakened (*sambuddha*)—here, referring to **the Buddha or an arhat**—is a liberated state attainable by anyone who follows the path.

While the ox is valuable as a beast of burden, for ploughing the field and so on, **the thoroughbred** is a horse of special good qualities valued by kings, nobles and breeders.

In marriage, in a patriarchal society (like ancient India), a maiden (a virgin) is highly prized, but a truly good wife is one who is **attentive** to her husband and family.

Wealthy families and those of high social status value the first-born son, but the best son or daughter is one who is **amenable**.

### 2 The deity's verse (S 26\*)

**2.1** The deity's verse (S 26\*) is probably a popular gnomic saying<sup>1</sup> put into a quatrain. The lines might have originally been separate sayings on their own, or they could have existed as a popular quatrain of slokas. They are uttered by the deity but the sayings, ironically, represent worldly or human proclivities.

**2.2** “The kshatriya [The warrior] is the best of the two-legged” [S 26a\*].

**2.2.1 Occurrences of the statement.** The Pali for the header sentence is *khattiyo dvi, padam seṭṭho*. The phrase *khattiyo seṭṭho* is well known, found in a number of suttas and also often quoted in the Commentaries. However, it is almost always attributed<sup>2</sup> to the Brahma Sanaṅkumāra [2.2.3.1], as shown here:

|  |                   |          | <u>sutta contexts</u>                  |
|--|-------------------|----------|--|
| <b>Ambaṭṭha Sutta</b>                  | D 3,1.28/1:99     | SD 21.3  | Buddha approves of the verse           |
| <b>Aggañña Sutta</b>                   | D 27,32/3:97 + 98 | SD 2.19  | Buddha approves of the verse           |
| <b>Sekha Sutta</b>                     | M 53,25/1:358     | SD 21.14 | Ānanda to Mahānāma who approves        |
| <b>Khattiya Sutta</b>                  | S 1.14/1:6        | SD 54.3d | Uttered by a deity to the Buddha       |
| <b>Sanaṅkumāra Sutta</b>               | S 6.11/1:153      |          | Sanaṅkumāra to the Buddha who approves |
| <b>Mahā Kappina Sutta</b> <sup>3</sup> | S 21.11/2:284     |          | Spoken by the Buddha, with Dh 387      |
| <b>Mora,nivāpa Sutta</b> <sup>4</sup>  | A 11.110/5:327 f  |          | The Buddha quotes Sanaṅkumāra          |

<sup>1</sup> On gnomic sayings, see SD 54.2a (3.2.2).

<sup>2</sup> But here (S 1.14), a deity utters the verse [S 26a\*].

<sup>3</sup> Or, **(Bhikkhu) Mahā Kappina S.**

<sup>4</sup> A 11.10 is a composite of A 3.143+144+145, with an additional dyad, making it an “eleven” item.

## 2.2.2 Sanañ,kumāra's statement

**2.2.2.1** The Brahma Sanañkumāra is recorded to have made his statement to the Buddha in **the Sanañkumāra Sutta** (S 6.11), of which the Buddha approves [2.2.1]. The ancient Indian theologians, thinkers and leaders made use of a well-known method of legitimizing social status, priestly power, religious teachings and rituals, or any statement or act by a “fiat,” especially a religious fiat, especially writing holy scriptures (putting words into the mouth of God, gods or some superhuman being).

The brahmins (high-caste priests) fabricated the myth that they issued forth from the mouth of Primal Man (*puruṣa*), the kshatriya (warrior caste) from his arms, the vaishyas (business caste) from his thighs, and the shudras (menial workers caste) from his feet.<sup>5</sup> The lower classes' duty was to serve and support those classes higher than them. Brahmā is often taken as synonymous with the Puruṣa.

Hence, **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27) and **the Assalāyana Sutta** (M 93) record the brahmins' false claim that: “Brahmins are Brahmā's own sons, the offspring from his mouth,<sup>6</sup> born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.”<sup>7</sup> To counter this false ideology, the suttas record the Buddha as turning the tables on the brahmins by giving the following responses, among others:

- (1) Mahā Brahmā masters the Buddha Dharma so well that he becomes a non-returner;<sup>8</sup>
- (2) Brahma Sanañ,kumāra declares that the kshatriyas are the best of “the two-legged.” [S 26a\*; 2.2.3]

**2.2.2.2** The idea behind the statement that “the kshatriya is the best of the two-legged” is found in the Pali canon in **the Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3), and the whole passage recurs in the conclusion of **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27 [2.2.1]). This passage (spoken by the Buddha) runs thus:

“Now, Ambaṭṭha, this verse was uttered by the brahma Sanañkumāra, thus:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>khattiyo seṭṭho jane tasmim</i> | The kshatriya is the best in this generation |
| <i>ye gotta,paṭisārino</i>         | for those who look up to clan.               |
| <i>vijjā,carāṇa,sampanno</i>       | The one endowed with wisdom and conduct:     |
| <i>so seṭṭho deva,mānuse.</i>      | he is the best amongst gods and humans.      |

This verse, Ambaṭṭha, is well-sung, not ill-sung, by the brahma Sanañkumāra, well-spoken, not ill-spoken, endowed with meaning, not without meaning—I approve of it. I, too, Ambaṭṭha, say thus:

The kshatriya is the best in this generation                      for those who look up to clan;  
The one endowed with knowledge and conduct:                      he is the best amongst gods and humans.”

(D 3,1.28/1:99), SD 21.3; D 27,32/3:97 f (SD 2.19)

<sup>5</sup> Ṛg,veda 10.90 (Puruṣa Śūkta); DAṬ 3:46. The brahmins also claimed recluses arose from Brahma's soles (DA 254 = MA 2:418).

<sup>6</sup> See Ṛg,veda 10.90 (Puruṣa Śūkta); DAṬ 3:46; also Gombrich 1992a:163 f, cf 167. The phrase *orasā mukhato jatā*, lit “the breast-born ‘sons’ born from the mouth,” is ironic as it suggests two different and incompatible places of origins.

<sup>7</sup> D 27,3/3:81 (SD 2.19) = M 93,5/2:148 (40a.2). On the Cosmic Man vs the great man, see SD 21.3 (2.2.1.3). On the Buddha's knowledge of the brahminical texts, see SD 1.8 (2.1.3).

<sup>8</sup> See SD 12.2 (2.3.4), esp (2.3.4.3).

### 2.2.3 Sanañ,kumara and his verse

**2.2.3.1 Sanañ,kumāra** (Skt *sanat,kumara*) is one of the great brahmas (*mahā,brahmā*), one of the High Gods of the 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana form realm.<sup>9</sup> The name *sanañ,kumāra* means “Ever Young” or “Forever Virgin.” Like the true brahmins of old, he practised “the celibate divine life” or “virginal celibacy” (*komāra,-brahma,cariya*, A 5.192),<sup>10</sup> a term, I think, better rendered as “living the celibate ever since he was just a boy” or “lifelong celibacy,” since *brahma,cariya* itself connotes celibacy.

Buddhaghosa says that in a former birth, Sanañ,kumāra practised dhyana while yet a boy (*kumāra*) at the stage where his hair was tied in 5 top-knots. He was reborn in the brahma world. Even as a brahma, he retained his youthful looks; hence, his name (MA 3:33; SA 1:219). Sanañ,kumāra, then, represents, to the early Buddhists, the ideal brahmin, one who is a spiritual exemplar, not the worldly status-conscious priest of latter-days. Such an ideal brahmin, ironically, is identical with **the ideal renunciant** of early Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

It should be understood that “Forever Virgin” (*sanañ.kumāra*) does not imply that sexuality is “unholy” or bad. Rather, **virginity** here represents closing the doors to the samsaric course of births and deaths, so that this dualistic cycle is broken forever. The name, then, is a foretaste of the necessity and possibility of self-awakening and nirvana, the liberation of the death-free.

**2.2.3.2** The oldest mention of **Sanat,kumāra** (Skt) is in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (ch 7). In the post-Buddha epic Mahābharata (3:185, Bombay ed), he expresses a sentiment very similar to that of his verse here. T W Rhys Davids<sup>12</sup> sees the Sanañkumāra story as the Indian counterpart of the Arthurian legend of Galahad.<sup>13</sup>

**2.2.3.3** One of the most successful skillful means of the Buddha is his use of brahminical categories. This is like using fire to fight fire: only that while the brahminical fire burns with heat, the Buddha’s fire shone with light. The suttas are spicily peppered with helpful brahminical terms in Buddhist guise—*brahma, brahma, brahma,cariya, brahma,vihara, brāhmaṇa, jhāna, uposatha, veda*, and so on. This is a profoundly potent skillful means known as **natural adaptation**.<sup>14</sup>

**2.2.3.4** The Buddha not only adapted brahminical and Jain terms to Buddhist advantage: he also converted the key Vedic gods, especially the highest of them and the most popular of them: Mahā Brahmā and Śakra. From a pompous status-conscious theistic Lord who thought he is Creator,<sup>15</sup> **Brahma** became the embodiment of a cosmic father-figure compassionately concerned with the welfare of all beings.<sup>16</sup>

If **Māra** is the demonic power of Death that entices us to remain in the world<sup>17</sup>—the antithesis of renunciation that the Buddha teaches—Brahmā is the divine presence that excitedly and immediately in-

<sup>9</sup> On his appearance to the devas of Tāva,timsa and teaching them Dharma, see **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18,12-20/2:-207-220), SD 62.3

<sup>10</sup> See **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192/3:224 f), SD 36.14.

<sup>11</sup> As described in **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192/3:224 f), SD 36.14.

<sup>12</sup> D:RD 2:292 n3, cf 1:121 n1.

<sup>13</sup> Further see **Aggañña S** (D 27,32) n, SD 2.19. Cf Collins, “The Discourse on What is Primary,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 21, 1993a:376 n31.1.

<sup>14</sup> On the early buddhicization of brahminical terms, see SD 12.1 (6).

<sup>15</sup> See **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,39-44/1:17-19), SD 25.2.

<sup>16</sup> See SD 52.1 (10.3.4).

<sup>17</sup> See SD 52.1 (9.1).

vites the newly awakened Buddha to declare his Dharma to all.<sup>18</sup> Brahma is present at almost every key event in the Buddha's life: his birth, renunciation, awakening, teaching the first discourse, when he dismisses noisy monks, and so on.<sup>19</sup>

**2.2.3.5** Brahma represents the divine *parent-figure* who cares for the welfare of the world, who reminds the faithful that He need no worshipping. He advises worshippers to rightly direct their faith to the more deserving, the arhats.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to such a sedate figure, there is **Sakka** (Skt *śakra*), the mercerial, almost world-loving, counter-archetype of divine playfulness and goodness.<sup>21</sup>

Sakra was known as **Indra** (P *inda*, "leader") in the Vedas. In the R̥gveda, Indra's title of *purandara*, "destroyer of cities," is mentioned at least 11 times.<sup>22</sup> As a Buddhist, he is now known more amicably as **purindada**, "the one who gave offerings before" (*pure pure dānaṃ adāsi*).<sup>23</sup> He is also mentioned with this title in **the Mahā,samaya Sutta** (D 20,42f\*).<sup>24</sup>

Like brahma Ghaṭikara, Sakra is often present at the key events in the Buddha's life. In fact, both Brahma and Sakra, being so close to the Buddha, listening to the Dharma and practising it, have themselves attained the path of awakening. Brahmā is a non-returner; Sakra (Indra) a streamwinner.<sup>25</sup> Clearly, then, this explains why these erstwhile greatest of the Vedic gods never returned to their old ways in the old religion. [3.5]

**2.3 "Of the four-legged, it is the ox (that is the best)"** [S 26b\*]. This line from the deity's verse is similar in theme to another deity's verse in **the N'atthi Putta,sama Sutta** (S 1.13), SD 54.3c: "No wealth equals that of cattle" (*n'atthi go,samitaṃ dhanam*) (S 24b\*). "Cattle" (*go*) is a broader term and includes the "ox(en)" (*balivaddo*). We have elsewhere discussed in some detail how cattle serves as wealth amongst the ancient Indians, such as the 5 bovine products (*pañca go,rasa*)<sup>26</sup> and so on and mentioned Dhaniya's wealth.<sup>27</sup> [3.2]

**2.4 "A maiden is the best of wives"** [S 2.6c\*]

**2.4.1** This statement by the deity may today be viewed by many as being patriarchal and masculinist. The deity's narrow view is not surprising since Indian society, dominated by the patriarchal brahmins, is "masculinist." The injustice of such a view is that the men do not have to be virgins or even moral! This is where sexuality has been politicized, and used as a means of propagating the family, keeping the family lineage "pure" (a pedigree) and holding the pride of social status.

The deity's verse represents the prevalent ancient Indian (and ancient Chinese) view of women as merely objects of pleasure for men or as baby-makers. For these very reasons, there are Vinaya rules that clearly separate monastics from any kind of sexual engagement so that they are not caught in this objectifying of the body.

<sup>18</sup> On Brahma inviting the Buddha to teach, see **Āyacana S** (S 6.1), SD 12.2.

<sup>19</sup> See **Cātumā S** (M 67/1:456-462), SD 34.7.

<sup>20</sup> See **Brahma,deva S** (S 6.3/1:140-142), SD 12.4.

<sup>21</sup> On the derivation of *deva* from √DIV, "to play," see SD 54.3a (3.2.3).

<sup>22</sup> R̥gV 1.102.7c, 1.109.8a, 2.20.7a, 3.54.15c, 5.30.11c, 6.16.14c, 7.6.2c, 8.1.7c, 8.1.8a, 8.61.8c, 8.61.10a.

<sup>23</sup> **Sakka,nāma S** (S 11.12/1:229,8); DhA 1:264,9.

<sup>24</sup> D 20,14 (42f\*), SD 54.4. The term *inda,nāmā*, "those with Indra's names (Sakra's followers) is mentioned 4 times: SD 54.4 (1.2.1.4).

<sup>25</sup> Understandably, from the Puranic period, both these gods stopped being worshipped by the brahmins to forestall Buddhist influence.

<sup>26</sup> SD 54.3c (2.3.1.1).

<sup>27</sup> SD 54.3c (2.3.1.2).

**2.4.2** Instead, we should see it as a vehicle for bringing us to the path of awakening. Reflecting on the impurity of the body is recommended for practice by monks or nuns who are attracted to the physical body. The constant reflection on the impermanence of the body helps us see it in proper perspective so that we are neither attracted to it, nor hate it in an unhealthy way. We respect our body: see it for what it is and keep it healthy to serve us optimally in our Dharma practice. [3.3]

## 2.5 “Of sons, it is the first-born (who is the best)” [S 26d\*]

**2.5.1** This verse is related to the one in **the N’atthi Putta,sama Sutta** (S 1.13), which says: “There is no love like that for a son” (*n’atthi putta,samaṃ pemaṃ*) (S 24a\*). The verse here (S 26d\*) is more specific, that is, the “first-born” (*pubba,ja*). He is said to be “the best of sons (or children)” because he will take over from his father as the family head and carry on the main line of the family. This is as far as the worldly family and society go.

### 2.5.2 Mother’s love for a child

**2.5.2.1** The above perception is likely to be that of a father’s or a patriarchal figure’s mindset [2.5.1]. A mother, on the other hand, will love all of her children, as stated in **the N’atthi Putta,sama Sutta** (S 1.13): “There is no love like that for a child” (S 24a\*). The only metaphor in **the (Karaṇīya) Metta Sutta** (Sn 1.8 = Khp 9) says:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Just as a mother would guard her own child—<br>even so, towards all beings | <b>her one and only child</b> , with her own life—<br>let one cultivate a boundless heart! |
|  | (Khp 9,7 = Sn 149), SD 38.3  |

**2.5.2.2** Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga**, gives the parable of a mother with 4 children: a young child, a sick child, an adolescent, and one busy with his own affairs. “She wants the young child to grow up; she wants the sick child to get well; she wants the adolescent to long enjoy the benefits of youth, but is not at all bothered about the one busy with his own affairs.” (Vism 9.108/321)

Buddhaghosa explains **the 4 divine abodes** (*brahma,vihāra*) in terms of this same parable: lovingkindness is the mother-to-be’s care and hope for the child in her womb; compassion is the mother’s concern and response to her infant’s needs; gladness is the mother’s pride and confidence in her youthful child; and equanimity is the mother’s “loving unconcern” for her grown-up married son (AA 2:204).<sup>28</sup> [3.4]

## 3 The Buddha’s verse (S 27\*)

### 3.1 CONTRASTS

**3.1.1** While the deity sings of the greatest blessings of **socioeconomic life** [S 26], the Buddha replies with a more sublime truth of greater spiritual significance. There are no directly deep teachings here. Dharma teachings are only found in **S 27a**, which declares that the sambuddha—a term for the Buddha and the arhats—as the best of the two-legged, here presumably referring to humans [3.4].

**3.1.2** In **the deity’s verse** [S 26] is patently mundane. The quatrain addresses class (the kshatriya), wealth (the ox), wife or family (the maiden) and family (the first-born son). These are the greatest blessing we

<sup>28</sup> On the 4 sevens, see SD 38.3 (7.2).

should have, declare the deity. However, being mundane, these blessings do not bring real or lasting happiness.

Countering each of the lines of the quatrain, **the Buddha** declares that the true and best blessings are, respectively, those of the self-awakened, the thoroughbred, an attentive wife or partner, and children who are amenable. The most significant of these blessings is, of course, the arising of the Buddha, included in the “self-awakened” [S 27a].

On account of the greatest significance of **the self-awakened**, compared to all the other blessings, which are worldly, it should be placed last. In our discussion below, we have thus listed the self-awakened last [3.5].

### 3.2 “Of the four-legged, it is the thoroughbred (that is the best)” [S 27b\*]

**3.2.1** We may think that the Buddha, coming from the kshatriya class [2.2], would naturally favour the thoroughbred (*ājānīya*) horse, that is not only the best of race-horses but also a peerless war-horse because of its intelligence, endurance, besides its beauty and elegance, which makes it fitting to be the steed of a noble or warrior. It should be remembered that the kshatriya (P *khattiya*) we also accomplished agriculturalists who depend on the oxen to plough their fields and as beasts of burden.

**3.2.2** The Pali for “thoroughbred” is *ājānīya*, *ājāniya* (with variant *ājāniyya*), *ājāneya* (variant *ājaneyya*); and also the form *ājāñña* (a poetic variant). All these function as either a noun or and an adjective (mfn). It is usually used to refer to a noble pure-bred horse (*ass’ājānīya*), and less frequently about a bull or an elephant.

The form *ājānīya* is sometimes used in the suttas to refer to a person who is the son of a noble family, a nobleman. The Buddha often uses *ājānīya* about his “noble” (*ariya*) disciples, especially the arhats, but here in **the Khattiya Sutta** [S 27b\*], he uses it for a thoroughbred horse.<sup>29</sup> The meaning of this allusion is that upon entering the path of awakening, we become “noble” through rising and leaving the crowd of greed, hate and delusion. Our lives are happily regulated by the joy and truth of the Buddha Dhamma, the vision of true reality and liberation. In that sense, we have become one of the spiritual “thoroughbreds” of the noble sangha, not through biological pedigree, but through our own spiritual effort.

### 3.3 “An attentive woman is the best of wives” [S 27c\*]

**3.3.1** To the deity’s statement that “a maiden is the best of wives” [S 2.6c; 2.4], the Buddha replies that “**an attentive woman**” (*sussūsā*) is the best of wives [S 2.7c]. The word *sussūsā* (an adjective, from *su-*, suggesting something good, amenable, + *śru*, “to hear” + *sā*, adjectival ending), “wishing to hear or learn, obedient.”<sup>30</sup>

Here, *sussūsā* does *not* mean “docile, fawning”<sup>31</sup> but suggests a disposition of the desire to learn for the sake of wisdom. This wholesome attitude is clearly stated **the Āḷavaka Sutta** (Sn 1.10): “one gains wisdom through the willingness to listen [to learn]” (*sussūsā labhate paññam*, Sn 186). It is elaborated

<sup>29</sup> For refs, sv: CPD, DP.

<sup>30</sup> S 1:6; J 4:134. As a n, *sussūsā*, “amenability, obedience,” occurs at D 3:189; A 5:136; Tha 588; Sn 186; J 3:526; Miln 115.

<sup>31</sup> Cf the Confucian notion of the “3 obediences” (*sanjū*; Chin *sancong* 三從) of women, ie, she has to obey her father before marriage, her husband during marriage, and her son after her husband’s death (禮記 *Li ji*, “Book of Rites”). See SD 66.13 (3.7.1.3).

by the **Iṭṭha Dhamma Sutta** (A 10.73) as: “The willingness to listen and (the habit of) asking questions are food for wisdom” (*sussūsā paripucchā paññāya*).<sup>32</sup>

The best context for the practical senses of *sussūsā* (n) is found in the **Sigāl’ovāda Sutta** (D 31) [3.3.2] and its Dharma senses are listed in the **Sussūsā Sutta** (A 6.88) [3.3.2.2].

### **3.3.2 Contexts for *sussūsā***

**3.3.2.1 The Sigāl’ovāda Sutta** (D 31) not only gives the best context for the usage of *sussūsā*, “the willingness to listen, amenability,” but also lays down the reciprocal conduct and duties of husband and wife, thus:

In 5 ways, young houselord, the wife<sup>33</sup> as *the west* [the back quarter], should be ministered to by **the husband**, thus:<sup>34</sup>

- (a) By treating her with respect.
- (b) By not showing her discourtesy.
- (c) By not being unfaithful to her.
- (d) By handing over authority to her.<sup>35</sup>
- (e) By providing her with adornments.<sup>36</sup>

**The wife**, young houselord, as *the west*, having been ministered thus by the husband shows him compassion in these 5 ways:<sup>37</sup>

- (f) She manages her work very well.
- (g) She is hospitable to those around her [such as servants and husband’s relatives].<sup>38</sup>
- (h) She is not unfaithful to him.
- (i) She looks after the household stores [and property].<sup>39</sup>
- (j) She is skillful and diligent in all her duties.

In these 5 ways, young houselord, the wife, as the west, having been ministered thus by the husband, shows him her compassion.

Thus the west is covered by him and made safe and secure. (D 31,30/3:190), SD 4.1

Notice that in the list of duties of a wife, there is no mention of “obedience, amenability” (*sussūsā*), but which is listed in the duties of the good student, described in the Sigāl’ovāda Sutta, thus:

<sup>32</sup> A 10.73/5:136,24 (SD 105.14).

<sup>33</sup> “Wife,” *bharyā*, but above (D 31,27) given as “wife and children,” *putta,dārā*, lit “son and women,” which reflects the social and family values in the Buddha’s days. In our own times, it would be appropriate to contextualize this to “family.” Similarly, “husband,” *sāmika*, lit “owner,” should here be properly contextualized in a gender-neutral way (“spouse”) to reflect the current situation.

<sup>34</sup> On the ideal couple, see **Sama,jīvi S** (A 4.55/2:61 f). On compatibility of couples, see **Saṃvāsa S** (A 4.54/2:59-61), SD 5.1.

<sup>35</sup> *Issariya,vossaggena*, lit “surrendering over lordship,” ie, giving her authority concerning the food and meals of the house (*bhatta,geha*, DA 3:955). Cf (**Cira-ṭ,ṭhita**) **Kula S** (A 4.255/2:249), SD 39.10 on the successful family life.

<sup>36</sup> *Alaṅkāraṇuppādāna* = *alaṅkāra* + *anuppādāna*. The verb for *alaṅkāra* is *alaṅ,karoti*, meaning (a) to adorn; (b) to dress oneself, to put on; (c) to content oneself with (CPD); here appears to be a wordplay connoting that the husband should keep his wife happy and contented.

<sup>37</sup> **Nakula,mātā S** (A 8.48) lists 8 virtues of a woman that would bring her rebirth amongst the Manāpa,kāyikā devas (A 8.48/4:268 f), SD 5.3. These virtues are an elaboration of the 5 given here.

<sup>38</sup> “The servants [and husband’s relatives],” *parijana*, lit “the people around,” ie, “attendants, servants, retinue, suite” (PED) but Comy explains as “husband’s relatives” (DA 3:955).

<sup>39</sup> Incl goods brought back by her husband.

In 5 ways, young houselord, teachers as *the south* [the right quarter], should be ministered to by **the student**, thus:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (a) By rising (in salutation).   | <i>uṭṭhānena</i>  |
| (b) By waiting upon them.  | <i>upaṭṭhānena</i>  |
| (c) By eagerness to listen [to learn].                                 | <i>sussūsāya</i>  |
| (d) By personal service.   | <i>pāricariyāya</i>   |
| (e) By learning the arts [and professions] <sup>40</sup> with respect. | <i>sakkaccaṃ sippa,paṭiggahaṇena</i><br>(D 31,29/3:189), SD 4.1 |

Note that the word *sussūsāya*, the instrumental form of *sussūsā* appears in the 3<sup>rd</sup> duty of the good student, as described above. In other words, *sussūsā* is used in the suttas (certainly in S 27c\* in S 1,14) with the meaning of “willing to learn” skills and attaining wisdom. Of course, we may also include amenability in the daily sense of household life, too, which contributes to the happiness of married life.

**3.3.2.2** The practical senses of the term *sussūsā* is fully laid out by the Buddha in **the Sussusā Sutta** (A 6.88), where the Buddha declares that through **deep listening**, we are certain to attain the wholesome states, that is, non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion, thus:

Bhikshus, one accomplished in 6 ways when listening to the true Dharma is able to plunge into the certainty of wholesome states. What are the six?

When the Dharma-Vinaya declared by the Tathagata is being taught,

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) he wishes to listen;   | <i>sussūsati</i>   |
| (2) he listens attentively;  | <i>sotaṃ odahatti</i>  |
| (3) he applies his mind to final knowledge (that leads to liberation); | <i>aññā,cittaṃ upaṭṭhapeti</i>   |
| (4) he holds on to what is profitable (to spiritual development);      | <i>atthaṃ gaṇhati</i>  |
| (5) he lets go of what is not profitable (to spiritual development);   | <i>anatthaṃ riñcati</i>  |
| (6) he is endowed with mental receptivity that goes with the grain.    | <i>anulomikāya khantiyā saman-</i><br><i>nāgato hoti</i><br>(A 6.88/3:437), SD 4.5 |

This means that his desire to listen to the Buddha Dharma keeps his mind focused on the teaching. Then he applies what he has learned to the attaining of the path of awakening. He promotes whatever is connected with non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion, and abandons what is connected with greed, hate and delusion. He progressively knows and sees true reality leading to his liberation.

### 3.4 “Of sons, one who is amenable (is the best)” [S 27d\*]

**3.4.1** The 4<sup>th</sup> and last statement of the deity is that the first-born is the best of sons [2.5]. The Buddha retorts that the best of sons is one **amenable** (*assava*) [S 27d\*]. The word **assava** (Skt *āśrava*, Sadd 636,-19-24) means “docile, compliant, obedient, biddable, amenable”; the last sense best fits the context here. The Sutta commentary glosses **assava** with *āsuṇamāno*, “not listening” (SA 1:34,16).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Here *sippa* apparently refers to “education” in general. Cf n to §28h.

<sup>41</sup> Opp **anassavā** *avacana,karā* (lit, “not doing what was said”), “not obedient,” NmA 1:114,32.



### 3.4.2 Occurrences of *assava*

From a study of these occurrences of *assava* in the suttas and the Milinda,pañha, we will have a better idea of its range of meanings and how it is used in **the Khattiya Sutta** [S 27d].

**3.4.2.1** The word *assava* famously occurs thrice in **the Dhaniya Sutta** (Sn 1.2), that is Sn 22a, 23a and 32a (the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> verses respectively). In the 1<sup>st</sup> verse, after Dhaniya sings about his wife, thus: “Obedient is my wife [Gopī], not wanton” (*gopī mama assavā alolā*, Sn 22a), the Buddha replies with this line: “Obedient is my mind, liberated” (*cittam mama assavam vimuttam*, Sn 23a). This is helpful, since we can see how *assava* is used both to qualify a person (Sn 22a) and also the mind (Sn 23a).

Then, towards the end of the Sutta, Dhaniya declares that “my wife [Gopī] and I are ready to listen” (*gopī ca ahañ ca assavā*, Sn 32a), that is, they are ready listen to the Dharma, which probably marks the original ending of the Dhaniya Sutta.<sup>42</sup> Here, we see an interesting use of *assava* to refer to spiritual maturity. (Sn 1.2), SD 50.20

**3.4.2.2** A synonym of *assava* is *vidheyya*, but both appear together in a verse in **the Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (D 30) on the qualities of a wheel-turning monarch (*cakka,vatti*): “amenable and obedient are his followers” (*bhavati pariñāṇaṃ assava vidheyyo*) (D 30\*).<sup>43</sup> Its Commentary glosses *assava* with *vacana,karo*, “obedient” (DA 3:929,12).

**3.4.2.3** In **the Yassaṃ Disaṃ Sutta** (A 5.134), we see another synonym of *assava*, occurring alongside it, that is, *ovāda,paṭikara*, “responsive to admonition, amenable.” The 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 qualities of a “head-anointed kshatriya rajah” (*rājā khattiyo muddhā,vasitto*), is that “he possesses a powerful army that is amenable, responsive to his admonition” (*catur-aṅginiyā senāya samannāgato assavāya ovāda,-paṭikarāya*) (A 5.134).<sup>44</sup>

**3.4.2.4** In **the Milinda,pañha**, the monk Nāgasena explains to king Milinda: “The arhat’s mind, maharajah, is developed, well developed, it is tamed, well tamed, docile and obedient” (*arahato cittam mahārāja cittam bhavitam hoti subhavitam dantam sudantam assavam vacana,karam*, Miln 254,6 f). Interestingly, in this context, the arhat’s mind can be said to be “docile” (*assava*) in a wholesome way. It means that his mind is both “ready and willing to be taught” (although he is an adept with regards to the 4 noble truths) and “easily handled and managed,” since he is free from all defilements.

### 3.4.3 Forms related to *assava*

**3.4.3.1** The opposite of *assava* is *anassava*, “disobedient, not biddable.”<sup>45</sup> It occurs in **the Lūkha,-pāpurāṇa Sutta** (S 7.14)<sup>46</sup> where an old father, driven out of his own home by his sons and their wives, praises his own walking-stick:

9 *Daṇḍo’va kira me seyyo  
yañ ce puttā anassavā.*<sup>47</sup>

Better to me is this staff  
than such disobedient sons.

<sup>42</sup> See **Dhaniya S** (Sn 1.2) n at Sn 32 numbering.

<sup>43</sup> D 30,1.18(2)/3:154,1\*, SD 36.9.

<sup>44</sup> A 5.134/3:151,20 (SD 103.4) :: AA 3:285,14.

<sup>45</sup> S 1:176,18\* (qu at Sadd 636,20) +31\*; A 3:151,20 (AA 3:58,13); Nm 37,22 = 195,10; AA 3:285,15; DhA 1:7,7.

<sup>46</sup> Also called (Be) **Mahā,sāla S** (S 7.15/1:176,18\*), SD 50.35.

<sup>47</sup> Opp *assavā*, “obedient” (of the army of a head-anointed kshatriya, **Yassaṃ Disaṃ S** (A 5.134/3:151.20), SD 103.4. Qu at Sadd 636,20.

|  |       |   |
|--|-------|---|
| <p><i>Caṇḍam pi goṇaṃ vāreti<br/>atho caṇḍam pi kukkuram.</i></p>  | S 682 | It keeps away a fierce cow<br>or a fierce dog, too.   |
| <p><b>10</b> <i>Andha,kāre pure hoti<br/>gambhīre gādam edhati.<br/>Daṇḍassa ānubhāvena<br/>khalitvā patitiṭṭhatīti.</i></p> | S 683 | <p>In the dark, it goes before me;<br/>in the deep, it gives me a footing—<br/>by the power of this staff,<br/>after stumbling, I stand again.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(S 7.15/1:176,18*+31*), SD 50.35</p> |

**3.4.3.2** The 9<sup>th</sup> verse of **the Khagga,visāṇa Sutta** (Sn 1.3) goes like this:

|   |         |  |
|---|---------|--|
| <p><i>Dussaṅgahā pabbajitā'pi eke<br/>atho gahaṭṭhā gharam āvasantā<br/>appōssukko para,puttesu hutvā<br/>eko care khagga,visāṇa,kappo<sup>48</sup></i></p> | (Sn 43) | <p>Some wanderers are unkindly disposed [unfriendly]<br/>and (some) householder in their houses, too.<br/>Unconcerned with the children of others—<br/>wander alone like the rhinoceros.</p> |
|---|---------|--|

The canonical commentary, **Cūḷa,niddesa**, explaining *dussaṅgahā pabbajitā eke*, notes, amongst their “unkindly disposition” (*dussaṅgaha*) as being “not biddable, not compliant” (*anassavā avacana,karā*, Nc:Be 253). **The Saddhamma,pajjotika** volume 3, Subcommentary to the Cūḷa,niddesa (NcA) explains *anassava* as “not listening to what was said” (*anassavāti vacanaṃ assavanakā*,” NcA 127,6).

Note the rare adjective used by NcA: **assavanaka** (*na + savana*, “listening,” + *ka*, “suffix forming a diminutive”), “not hearing, not listening.” This adjective is probably only found only here in NcA, and was probably coined by the subcommentator, Upasena of Sri Lanka.<sup>49</sup>

**3.4.3.3** Another rare Pali word is the abstract noun, **assavanatā**, “not hearing,” which occurs in **the Mahā'padāna Sutta** (D 14): “There are beings, who perish through not hearing the Dharma” (*santi sattā ... assavanatā dhammassa parihayanti*, D 2:38,15).<sup>50</sup> The abstract noun, *assavanatā*, seem to occur in the suttas only in this context (that is, Mahā Brahmā's inviting the Buddha to teach), that is:

(Mahā Brahmā:)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 <i>Desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ<br/>desetu sugato dhammaṃ.</i></p>                | <p>Bhante, may the Blessed One teach the Dharma!<br/>May the wellfarer [<i>sugata</i>] teach the Dharma!</p>           |
| <p>2 <i>Santi sattā appa,raj'akkha,jātikā<br/>assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti.</i></p> | <p>There are beings with little dust in their eyes<br/>who are falling away <u>through not hearing</u> the Dharma.</p> |
| <p>3 <i>Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro'ti.</i></p>                                      | <p>There will be those who will understand the Dharma.<sup>51</sup></p>  |

This passage, in full, spoken by Mahā Brahmā, or in part (1+2), spoken (or thought) by the Buddha, etc, is found in the following texts:

<sup>48</sup> Here, *-kappa* means “having the same form, resembling, like” (Sn 35d; SnA 65.10; Miln 105,3; Vism 234,8).

<sup>49</sup> NcA's original title is Saddhammatthitikā, but the Sāsana,vaṃsa (p69) calls it Saddhamma,pajjotikā, by which it is known in Sri Lanka. See also Gandhavaṃsa (p61); Malalasekera, *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, 1909:117.

<sup>50</sup> See also Sadd 636,19-24.

<sup>51</sup> V 1:5,25 = 6,13 = 21,7 (SD 12.1); D 14/2:37,16 = 38,15 = 46,4+29 = 47,16+37 = 48,13 (SD 49.8); M 26,20/1:168,-22 (SD 1.11), 143,15.3/3:261,27 (SD 23.9); S 4.5/1:105,32 (SD 61.19) = 6.1/137,16 (SD 12,2).

|   |   | <u>spoken by</u>                     |  |                    |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| <b>Vinaya (Mahā,vagga)</b>              | Mv 1.5.6 (V 1:5,25) =<br>Mv 1.6.12 (V 6,13)<br>Mv 1.11.1 (V 21,7) | Brahma<br>(The Buddha)<br>The Buddha | } SD 12.1<br>(2.1.2, 2.3.4.6, 3.1,3.3) |                    |
| <b>Mahā'padāna Sutta (D 14)</b>         | 2:37,16 = 38,15×2<br>= 46,4+29 = 47,16+37<br>= 48,13 (SD 49.8)    | Brahma<br>The Buddha                 |  | SD 49.8<br>SD 49.8 |
| <b>Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26)</b>    | M 26,20.3/1:168,22  | Brahma                               |  | SD 1.11            |
| <b>Anāthapiṇḍik'ovāda Sutta (M 143)</b> | M 143,15.3/3:261,27   | Anāthapiṇḍika                        | SD 23.9                                |                    |
| <b>(Māra) Pāsa Sutta 2 (S 4.5)</b>      | S 4.5/1:105,32  | The Buddha                           | SD 61.19                               |                    |
| <b>Āyācana Sutta (S 6.1)</b>            | S 6.1,8/137,16  | Brahma                               | SD 12.2 (2)                            |                    |

### 3.5 “The self-awakened is the best of the two-legged” [S 27a\*]

#### 3.5.1 The kshatriya

**3.5.1.1** The deity's opening statement is “**The kshatriya [The noble] is the best of the two-legged**” (*khattiyo dvi,padam seṭṭho*) [S 26a]. We have already noted the social background to this statement [2.2]. This statement reflects the social conditions in the central Gangetic plain during the Buddha's time: that the kshatriya class were dominant, and that the brahmins were only influential to the far west.<sup>52</sup>

**3.5.1.2** Like the rest of the deity's verse (S 26\*), which is mundane, this line deals with the social reality of the times, uttered by a deity. This legitimizes the statement as coming from some superhuman level.

#### 3.5.2 The self-awakened

**3.5.2.1** By declaring: “**The self-awakened is the best of the two-legged**” (*sambuddho dvi,padam seṭṭho*) [S 27a\*], the Buddha asserts two vital truths. The first is that even when a statement comes from a divine or divinely inspired source, it is still mundane, especially in this case of the kind of class that is the “best” of humans (“the two-legged”). Of course, we may assume that the “two-legged” here include the gods (although some of them are formless). But then, the ancient Indians seemed to imagine that the gods were above such classes.

**3.5.2.2** The second truth of the Buddha's utterance is that even a human, like the Buddha, can make such a universally valid and significant statement. Anyone, human or divine, through self-effort, can be self-awakened (*sambuddha*). But one self-awakened transcends both the human and the divine since he has destroyed all his defilements and is fully liberated from suffering. Hence, the Buddha's statement deserves to have the last say here.

— — —

<sup>52</sup> Such as Kosambī and beyond: SD 2.19 (6.1).

# Khattiya Sutta

## The Discourse on the Kshatriya

S 1.14

1 At Sāvattthī.

2 Standing at one side, the deity uttered this verse before the Blessed One:

- 3 *Khattiyo dvi,padaṃ seṭṭho  
balīvaddo<sup>53</sup> catu-p,padaṃ  
komārī<sup>54</sup> seṭṭhā bhariyānaṃ  
yo ca puttāna pubbajo'ti* (S 26)      The kshatriya [The noble] is the best of the two-legged,  
of the four-legged, it is the ox;  
a maiden is the best of wives,  
of sons, it is the first-born.

(Bhagavā:)

- 4 *Sambuddho dvi,padaṃ seṭṭho  
ājānīyo catu-p,padaṃ  
sussūsā seṭṭhā bhariyānaṃ  
yo ca puttānam assavo'ti* (S 27)      The self-awakened is the best of the two-legged,  
of the four-legged, it is the thoroughbred;  
an attentive woman is the best of wives,  
of sons, one who is amenable.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>53</sup> Ce Ee *balivaddo*; Be:Ka Ke Se *balibaddo*. Be tend to labialize the semi-vowel -v- throughout.

<sup>54</sup> Be Ee *kumārī*; Ce Se *komārī*. The latter is the better reading mc: cf S 27c.