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Samādhi Mūlaka Sātacca, kārī Sutta

The Discourse on the Samadhi-rooted Commitment | S 34.9

Theme: Commitment to samadhi assures the success of our meditation

Translated by Piya Tan ©2013

Introduction

1 THE JHĀNA SĀMYUTTA, the last of the 13 chapters (*vagga*) of Khandha Vagga (the chapter on the aggregates), is a set of 55 connected discourses on meditation (*jhāna*).¹ Its first chapter and only chapter, actually a “subchapter” (*vagga*), **the Jhāna Vagga**, so that it is its alternate title. This *sāmyutta* is also the last of the 13 chapters (*vagga*) of Khandha Vagga (the chapter on the aggregates).

The Jhāna Sāmyutta is a cycle of teachings on meditation, like a wheel (*cakka*), listing all the possible twinning of 11 skills related to meditation. Each pair is then listed by way of 4 possibilities, that is, one who has only one of the skills, one who has only the other skill, one who has neither, and one who is skilled in both. The last is always declared to be the best, the “cream” (*maṇḍa*) [§9].²

The Sāmyutta commentary tells us that the entire Jhāna Sāmyutta deals with mundane dhyana, that is, only the process of deep meditation without mentioning the results of such a practice (with neither path nor fruition).

2 THE SUTTA TYPOLOGY. This sutta and those in the rest of the Jhāna Sāmyutta seems to be artificially put together for the sake of Abhidhamma-like completion. This could reflect a time when the suttas were given great prominence as a scriptural canon, perhaps during on the early Buddhist councils before Asoka’s time, that is, between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE.

As sutta students, we should be curious about such developments for a broader perspective of sutta history and significance. Having said that, we can still reflect on such a sutta as an effort in directing our attention to specific qualities we need to cultivate in meditation. In this sutta, we should not only know *about* meditation, but we should also learn to commit ourself to samadhi, that is, live Dharma-centred life with the right priority given to the 3 trainings (in moral virtue, mental concentration and wisdom).³

As we persevere and progress in our meditation, such suttas become more meaningful to us. They become like a checklist reminding us to ensure that our practice is properly done. The unawakened mind easily becomes bored with repetitiveness, but an awakening mind, or one that love solitude, will notice even the passing daily, seemingly uneventful, as peaceful and meaningful as the measured moments of our own breathing.

3 THE SAMĀDHI MŪLAKA SĀTACCHA, KĀRĪ SUTTA (S 34.9), as the title suggests, gives this list of 4 kinds of meditators, in of samadhi, in a broad sense of mental concentration, especially *the commitment to dhyana*, thus:

- (1) skilled about samadhi in regard to samadhi, but not skilled in *the commitment* to samadhi.⁴ [§4]
- (2) skilled in the commitment to samadhi,⁵ but unskilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi.⁶ [§5]
- (3) neither skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi, nor skilled in *the commitment* to samadhi.⁷ [§6]

¹ On this meaning, see **Samādhi Samāpatti S** (S 34.1) @ SD 41.12 (1.1).

² For details, see SD 41.12 (1.3.5).

³ SD 41.15 (1.5).

⁴ *Idha bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim sātacca, kārī, kusalo.*

⁵ SD 41.15 (1.5).

⁶ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim sātacca, kārī, kusalo hoti, na samādhismim samādhi, kusalo.*

(4) both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *the commitment* to samadhi.⁸[§7]

The last is the best, the “cream” (*maṇḍa*) [§9].⁹

The last is the best, the “cream” (*maṇḍa*) [§9].¹⁰ This pattern reflects that of **the Samādhi Samāpatti Sutta** (S 34.1), the first discourse in the Jhāna Saṃyutta itself. This Sutta has been fully translated and annotated elsewhere, and should be referred to for other detailed notes.¹¹

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Samādhi Mūlaka Sātacca,kārī Sutta

The Discourse on Samadhi-rooted Commitment

S 34.9

1-3 Originating in Sāvattthī.

Bhikshus, there are these 4 kinds of meditators.

What are the four?

4 (1) Here, bhikshus, some meditators are skilled about samadhi [mental concentration] in regard to samadhi, but not skilled in *commitment* in samadhi.¹²

5 (2) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are skilled in commitment in samadhi,¹³ but not skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi.¹⁴

6 (3) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are neither skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi, nor skilled in *commitment* in samadhi.¹⁵

7 (4) But, here, bhikshus, some meditators are both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *commitment* in samadhi.¹⁶

8 Here, bhikshus, this meditator who is both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *commitment* in samadhi—

of these four kinds of meditators, he is the foremost, the best, the leader, the highest, and most excellent.¹⁷

9 Bhikshus, just as from **a cow** comes milk; from milk, cream; from cream, butter; from butter ghee; and from ghee, the cream of ghee: here the cream of ghee is the foremost¹⁸—

10 even so, bhikshus, this meditator who is both skilled *about* samadhi in regard to samadhi and also skilled in *commitment* in samadhi—

⁷ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī n’eva samādhismim samādhi,kusalo hoti, na ca samādhismim sātacca,kārī,-kusalo.*

⁸ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi,kusalo ca hoti, samādhismim sātacca,kārī,kusalo ca.*

⁹ For details, see SD 41.12 (1.3.5).

¹⁰ For details, see SD 41.12 (1.3.5).

¹¹ S 34.1/3:263 f, SD 41.12.

¹² *Idha bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi,kusalo hoti, na samādhismim sātacca,kārī.*

¹³ SD 41.15 (1.5).

¹⁴ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim sātacca,kārī hoti, na samādhismim samādhi,kusalo.*

¹⁵ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī n’eva samādhismim samādhi,kusalo hoti, na ca samādhismim sātacca,kārī.*

¹⁶ *Idha pana bhikkhave ekacco jhāyī samādhismim samādhi,kusalo ca hoti, samādhismim sātacca,kārī ca.*

¹⁷ *Ayaṃ imesaṃ catunnaṃ jhāyīnaṃ aggo ca seṭṭho ca makkho [Ke Se pāmakkho] ca uttamo ca pavaro ca.*

¹⁸ *Seyyathā’pi bhikkhave gavā khīraṃ khīramhā dadhi dadhimhā nava,nītaṃ nava,nītamhā sappi sappimhā sap-pi,maṇḍo tatra aggam akkhāyati. See Samādhi Samāpatti S, SD 41.12 (1.3.5).*

of these four kinds of meditators, he is the foremost, the best, the leader, the highest, and most excellent

11 These, bhikshus, are these 4 kinds of meditators.

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