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Preface

Progress report

The editing process of SD 2 took the whole of the rains retreat (*vass'āvāsa*) of 2010 to complete. With the publication of *Sutta Discovery* volume 1 (SD 1), an important milestone was made in the history of Dharmafarer work not only in Singapore, but globally, as the *Sutta Discovery* (SD) series is used by Buddhists, monastic and lay, wherever the Internet is available. Feedback we get shows that a growing number of academics in various universities and institutions use the SD materials or recommend them to their students.

SD 1 (the book) is now being used the regular (fortnightly) classes at the Poh Ming Tse, Dunearn Road (Singapore), and monthly at the Singapore Buddhist Mission. It is also freely donated to monastics, institutions, libraries and to those who cannot afford it. Some of the books have been put on sale to generate some funds for other volumes and projects. However, due to the small print volume (only 1500 copies), we have not been able to put them on the open market as much as we would like to (and which is also due to lack of manpower).

SD 2 has been very thoroughly edited and a number of the suttas fully revised, now that we have access to the World Tipiṭaka and other related materials. Chinese Āgama and Sanskrit references have been added where relevant. The “**full header**” (for each chapter), besides the staple Pali title, its translation, citation and theme, now includes alternate titles, the traditional citation, and also the Chinese Āgama and Sanskrit references where relevant (which is to promote a comparative study of such texts).

Much of the hard work in updating and preparing the fair copy has been single-handedly and patiently done by my loving wife, Ratna. Her deep interest in the Suttas is truly heart-warming.

Indeed, if we have more assistance from local Buddhists, especially those with a flair for language and editing work, or trained Buddhist academics, we would have come up with a much better work in faster time. But we are in a time when Buddhist work relies so much on foreign missions, and where numerous foreign teachers have pockets of friendship chapters here. Surely, the generations to come would see more focus in an indigenous sutta tradition for the benefit of a greater number.

36 SD volumes completed

The low output of SD volumes is also because to date we have completed a total of 36 volumes, that is, volumes 1-16, 17ab, 18-34, and 40b. The double volume SD 17ab is on the five aggregates (2007), while the advance volume SD 40b is entitled, “How Buddhism Became Chinese” (2008).

To save paper and cut down costs, we have not included “Abbreviations” section (9 pages), which can be found in SD 1 and online (<http://dharmafarer.org>). In fact, all the contents of SD 1, this volume (SD 2) and completed volumes are available online. The main usefulness of an SD book version is in a study class as it provides a visual and tactile means of learning the Suttas, and making notes.

SD users are advised to use the SD series as “study notes” that are, in a number of ways, still in “draft” form. For as long as the translator lives, he would be updating, expanding, even revising, the translations and essays, as new materials or studies or information are available. Information of such updates is usually available on the Dharmafarer website, or by communicating with the Minding Centre. The author and editor would be deeply grateful for any feedback on improving the SD works, including the correction of errors and omissions.

Funds for future printing SD books

Having launched SD volumes 1 and 2, now we need to raise funds to print SD volume 3 (earmarked the first half of 2011), and the other completed SD volumes in due course. Much of our funds also go to mailing costs, which is very high. We also give many copies away free of charge as mentioned.

Hopefully, from the sales of the available SD books we will be able to fund the printing of future volumes. This is where we welcome your kind support in encouraging more of your friends and colleagues to individually or jointly help in this effort to propagate and preserve the Teachings.

As the number of pages for SD 2 (the book) has exceeded our estimate, chapter 20 (Ajātasattu & Pasenadi) of the old edition have been transferred to SD 38 and 55, where they will be treated in full.

Sutta Title Listing

While the sutta translation is progressing, another important project—the Sutta Title Listing—is also going on even at the time of writing. So far all the sutta titles as given in the World Tipitaka,¹ which is the Siamese online and digital version of the Chattha Saṅgīti Tipitaka. Efforts now are being made to also list alternate sutta titles from other versions, and to disambiguate suttas that have identical titles. This disambiguation process is done by affixing a “disambiguator,” usually a parenthesized word as a prefix.

We have, for example, a number of Jāṇussoṇi Suttas. As such, we have added the prefix *Saddha* (Skt *Śrāddha*), as the (*Saddha*) Jāṇussoṇi Sutta (A 10.177/5:269-273) = SD 2.6a. (This particular Sutta has also been fully revised.)

Once the Sutta Title Listing project is completed, we will go on to index them (Sutta Title Indexing). The tasks of sutta title listing have been done by Ng Yeow Foo, Amala Chew and Ratna Lim. Amala must be given most of the credit as she has worked on most of the listings. Ratna has put in much effort in checking and standardizing the listings.

Dictionary of Buddhist Terms

While working on the sutta translation and annotation, I have opened a file entitled “Dictionary of Buddhist Terms” (DBT) where I have listed substantial definitions of various doctrinal terms. In the SD volumes to date, I have made it a point to list footnotes on key doctrines and names in each chapter to expedite readers and teachers in understanding them.

Once the DBT is ready and online, we will not be repeating these footnotes. In due course, we will publish the DBT in book form. However, the progress of this particular project depends on the availability of time, but can be expedited if we have qualified volunteers who will be instructed on how to do it.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Clement Tan of Malaysia for patiently rechecking on the translations against the Pali. Veron Lien designed the spaciously beautiful covers.

It is rare that a family can be so single-mindedly supportive of Dharma work: for that I am grateful to my family. My multi-tasking wife, Ratna, has spent countless effort editing and updating the files for the fair copy. She has singlehandedly prepared the materials for printing.

A small band of regular (and occasional) supporters have not only kept the Minding Centre going, but also in making the printing of this SD 2 possible. There are also many others who attend my Sutta classes, making regular donations that support our daily work and lives. All these compassionate people, I thank not only for their support, but also rejoice in their fervent interest in the Suttas and wise faith in the Buddha Dharma.

Our willingness to learn from others, even those vastly different in opinion from us, can only be advantageous to our educational and spiritual development, but most of all we must learn from the Suttas. May our Dharma-moved compassion and Dharma-inspired wisdom bring us closer to self-awakening, and transmute our community and society into divine abodes.

All this I do as a support for my mind so that it is adorned with calm clarity in my daily life, and the attaining of streamwinning in this life itself. May you, too, see your own remarkable goodness and attain spiritual liberation here and now.

Piya Tan

¹ <http://studies.worldtipitaka.org/content/view-and-quote>.