

SD 62.13**(Iti) Desanā Sutta****The (Iti,vuttaka) Discourse on Teaching**

It 39/2.2.2/33 f

Theme: The 2 steps for overcoming evil

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2025

1 Sutta summary

The (Iti) Desanā Sutta (It 2.2.2) records a brief teaching on knowing evil and fully rejecting it.

2 Meaning of *pariyāya***2.1 MEANINGS AND USES OF *PARIYĀYA* IN THE SUTTAS****2.1.1 Mūla,pariyāya Sutta (M 1)**

The term *pariyāya*, as used in the suttas,¹ has these 3 basic senses:

(1) exposition or teaching (*desanā*), (2) cause (*kāraṇa*), and (3) occasion, time or turn (*vāra*).

In the **Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1), *pariyāya*, such as in the phrase, *sabba,dhamma,mūla,pariyāya*, “the exposition on the root of all things,” which is the Sutta’s full title (MA 1:16 f), refers to the special condition that maintains the continuity of the process of cyclic existence (that is, craving, conceit and views).²

Ñāṇamoli’s *Pali-English Glossary* (1994:71) gives *pariyāya* the following definitions:

(1) metaphor, figure of speech (grammatical); [1994:132]

(2) manner, way, method;

(3) presentation, discourse [MA 1:18, 89];

(4) *p[accatta],vacana* [nominative case]—as paraphrased in the **Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary**.³

This list seems not to include the 3 senses of *pariyāya* as defined in the Commentaries, though we may include “teaching” in (3). Hence, we may add the remaining two commentarial senses as (5) cause or reason, and (6) turn. There are probably other senses which we need to explore and list, but we will properly do this in a separate study: ***Pariyāya nippariyāya*** (SD 68.2).

2.1.2 Three senses of *pariyāya*

2.1.2.1 The Brahma,jāla Sutta (D 1) opens with the wanderer Suppiya speaking “In many ways” (*aneka,pariyāyena*) (D 2,21-23) in dispraise of the Buddha, the Dharma and the sangha, while his pupil, Brahma,datta, speaks “in many ways” in praise of the 3 jewels.⁴ (D 2,23-3,3)

The Sutta Commentary explains that the term, *pariyāya*, is used in 3 senses in the suttas, that is, in the sense of “teaching” (*desanā*), of “reason” (*kāraṇa*), and “turn” (*vāra*). In the Sutta, *pariyāya* is used in the sense of “reason.” Thus, *aneka,pariyāyena* means “for many reasons.” (DA 1:36,21 f)

¹ See DA 36; MA 1:18.

² See M 1,2 nn (SD 11.6).

³ KhpA 16.

⁴ D 1,2/2 f.

2.1.2.2 Similarly, the **Iti,vuttaka Commentary** (UA 151 f) gives the term *pariyāya* as being used in these different contexts in the suttas, that is, as “teaching” (*desanā*), as “reason” (*kāraṇa*) and as “turn” (*vāra*). The following examples are quoted:

(1) The simplest meaning of *pariyāya* is “teaching or discourse,” as in “the teaching of the honey-ball” (*madhu,piṇḍika pariyāya*), that is, the **Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18)⁵ and so on.

(2) *Pariyāya* has the sense of “reason,” as stated in the **Verañjā Sutta** (A 8.11): “There is, indeed, this reason (*pariyāya*). By means of which reason (*pariyāyena*) one may, speaking rightly, say of me: ‘The recluse Gotama professes non-action’,”⁶ and so forth.

(3) *Pariyāya* has the sense of “turn,” as in “Now, whose turn (*pariyāya*) is it today, Ānanda, to exhort the nuns?” as the Buddha asks Ānanda in the **Nandak’ovāda Sutta** (M 146),⁷ and so on.

2.2 *PARIYĀYA* IN (ITI) DESANĀ SUTTA (It 2.2.2)

2.2.1 Two senses of *pariyāya* in It 2.2.2 (ItA 151 f)

2.2.1.1 In the (Iti) **Desanā Sutta** (It 2.2.2), *pariyāya* is used in 2 senses, that is, in the sense of “a turn,” that is, a series, and in the sense of “(for) a reason.” Thus it is said with these meanings in this connection: “**Bhikshus, there are two Dharma teachings of the tathagata,**” either by way of a reason or else in turn (serially).

For the Blessed One, in teaching Dharma conforming with the disposition of those capable of being guided,⁸ does so clearly distinguishing unwholesome states from wholesome states, classifying whether states are wholesome or unwholesome by way of “these states are wholesome; these states are unwholesome. These states are blameworthy; these states are blameless. These are to be indulged in; these are not to be indulged in,” and so on. Then, he says: “You should see that which is evil as evil.”⁹

2.2.1.2 At other times, the Buddha teaches Dharma urging them by way of being revulsed with evil (*pāpato nibbidā*) and so forth, the dangers of which are clarified in the **Sabba,lahusa Sutta** (A 8.40), thus:

Bhikshus, **the killing of living beings**, resorted to, cultivated, often done,¹⁰
brings about hell, the animal womb, the preta realm.¹¹

The lightest fruit of *the killing of living beings*,

for a human being, conduces to a short life,¹² (and so on.)¹³ (A 8.40,1/4:147,8-10), SD 6.5

⁵ M 18/1:114 (SD 6.14).

⁶ A 8.11/4:174.

⁷ M 146,3/3:270 (SD 66.12).

⁸ “Conforming ... guided,” *veneyy’ajjhāsayanurūpaṃ*.

⁹ ItA 151 f.

¹⁰ *Pāṇātipāto bhikkhave āsevito bhāvito bahulī,kato*.

¹¹ This sentence: *Niraya,samvattaniko tiracchāna,yoni,samvattaniko, pitti,visaya,samvattaniko*. (A 8.40/4:247,8-10), SD 6.5 = ItA 1:152,8-10.

¹² This sentence: *Yo sabba,lahuso pāṇātipātossa vipāko manussa,bhūtassa app’āyuka samvattaniko hoti* (A 4:247,10 f). “Lightest,” *sabba,lahusa* = *sabba,lahuka* (AA:Be+Se). Comy glosses as *parittaka*, “small.”

¹³ **A 8.40** goes on to say the same for each of the remaining precepts against wrong action, wrong speech, and the basis for wrong mindfulness, ie, against (2) stealing, (3) sexual misconduct, (4) false speech, (5) divisive speech, (6) harsh speech, (7) frivolous speech, and (8) taking intoxicants. (A 8.40, SD 6.5)

The Itivuttaka Commentary quotes the above passage, but it reads the second sentence as follows:

“The lightest of all, the killing of living beings conduces to a short life” (*yo sabba,lahuso pāṇātipāto so app’āyuka,samvattaniko ti*),¹⁴ omitting the phrase “the lightest karmic fruit ... for a human being” (*vipāko manussa,bhūtassa*). (ItA 1:152,10-13)

The lemma (headword) in the Aṅguttara Commentary (on A 8.40) similarly omits the phrase, *vipāko manussa,bhūtassa*, reading only as *sabba,lahuso app’āyuka,samvattaniko ti*. The lemma is explained as follows:

One comes to be short-lived through that deed’s small fruition, perishing either as soon as there is rebirth-relinking, or else as soon as one emerges from the mother’s womb. For that which is of such a form is the outcome of no other (deed); this is just the destiny taken by one who has killed living beings.¹⁵ (AA 4:128,13-17)

Hence, we can see that, even in the absence of the phrase *vipāko manussa,bhūtassa*, this passage, the Itivuttaka Commentary and the lemma of the Anguttara Commentary all refer to the same karmic fruition of one who indulges in killing living beings.

The only difference in the two passages—from A 8.40 and the ItA passage quoting it—is that while in A 8.40 and its Commentary, *sabba,lahusa* qualifies *vipāka* (the fruition), the ItA quote qualifies *pāṇātipāta* (the karma itself). Either way, the fact remains that the karma of killing brings upon its perpetrator a short life, since one has been depriving others of life.¹⁶

2.2.2 Revulsion towards evil

2.2.2.1 “You should see evil as evil” (*pāpaṃ pāpākato passatha*). You should see all evil states, both in the present conditions and in the future, as bringing in non-well-being and suffering; see it as wretched. These states bring suffering and hinder personal growth and spiritual progress even. And after that, it brings further rebirth, which repeats the whole cycle of suffering, without end. Hence, it is said: “**one should thereby be revulsed, dispassionate, fully freed.**”¹⁷[§3]

2.2.2.2 The Dharma teaching is twofold here in the sense of “**exposition**” (*pariyāya*), that is, there is first the teaching (*desanā*): “See evil as evil.” This insight is then followed up in turn (*pariyāyena*) by being “revulsed, dispassionate, fully freed.” In other words, by seeing true reality, one is able to free oneself from suffering.

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¹⁴ ItA 1:152,8-10.

¹⁵ *Sabba,lahuso app’āyuka samvattaniko ti tena parittakena kamma,vipākena app’āyuko hoti, dinna,mattāya vā paṭisandhiyā vilīyati mātu,kucchito mikkhanta.matte vā; evarūpo hi na aññena kassaci nissando pāṇātipātass’ eva gata,maggo eso ti.* (AA 4:128,13-17)

¹⁶ Peter Masefield (in his ItA tr) notes this but seems to think that the two passages have different senses, which is unwarranted (ItA:M 1:380 n2).

¹⁷ For a detailed study, see *Pariyāya nipariyāya*, SD 68.2.

(Iti) Desanā Sutta

The (Iti,vuttaka) Discourse on Teaching

It 2.2.2

1 This was indeed heard by me spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the arhat, thus have I heard:¹⁸

2 “Bhikshus, there are two Dharma teachings of the tathagata, arhat, fully self-awakened one that come into being in turn.¹⁹

What are the two?

3 **See evil as evil**²⁰—this is the first Dharma teaching.

Having seen evil as evil, **one should thereby be revulsed, dispassionate, fully freed**²¹—this is the second Dharma teaching.

4 Bhikshus, there are two Dharma teachings of the tathagata, arhat, fully self-awakened one that has come into being in turn.

5 The Blessed One said this matter [meaning]²²; therein [of that matter] he says this:²³

<p>6 <i>Tathāgatassa buddhassa sabba,bhūtānukampino pariyāya,vacanāṃ passa dve ca dhammā pakāsītā.</i></p>	<p>It 70</p>	<p>See the sequential word of the Tathagata Buddha, the two teachings [dharma] declared, out of compassion for all beings.</p>	<p><i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>b</i></p>
<p>7 <i>Pāpakāṃ passatha c’etaṃ²⁴ tattha cāpi virajjatha tato viratta,cittāse dukkhass’antaṃ karissathā ti.</i></p>	<p>It 71</p>	<p>See this evil (as it is), and therein just let it go! Thereby let the mind be lust-free, and make an end of suffering.</p>	

8 This matter, too, was spoken by the Blessed One. Thus I have heard.

— evaṃ —

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¹⁸ *Vuttaṃ h’etaṃ bhagavata, vuttam arahatā’ti me sutam.* This is said to be spoken by the laywoman **Khujj’uttarā**: see SD 57.2 (1.2.2.3); SD 16.14 (1).

¹⁹ “In turn” (*pariyāyena*). On the various uses and aspects of *pariyāya*, see ***Pariyāya nippariyāya***, SD 68.2.

²⁰ *Pāpaṃ pāpakato passatha.*

²¹ *Tattha nibbindatha virajjatha vimuccatha.* Through revulsion (*nibbidā*) (the n of v *nibbindati*, pl *nibbindatha*), one *sees evil for what it is* and is revulsed with it; like a burnt child, one will never put one’s hand into the fire again. Thus one frees oneself from lust (*virajjati*; pl *virajjatha*); this is called detachment from lust (*virāga*) or dispassion. This detachment brings full freedom (*vimutti*); one frees oneself (*vimuccati*; pl *vimuccatha*) from suffering. On **revulsion**, see ***Nibbidā***, SD 20.1.

²² *Attha* is polysemic: we can take “matter” as referring to the preceding, and “meaning” as given in the foll.

²³ *Etam atthaṃ bhagavā avoca, tatth’etaṃ iti vuccati.* This may be seen thus: the former phrase refers to the teaching in meaning (*attha*) (true reality), reflecting the 1st 2 noble truths; the latter is its purpose (*attha*).

²⁴ Ee so; Ce Ee c’ekaṃ; Se *chekā*.