

SD 63.11 (Tika) Sāraṇīya,dhamma Sutta

The (Threes) Discourse on What Should Be Remembered

A 3.12

Theme: The 3 most significant places in terms of renunciation

Translated by Piya Tan ©2016; 2025

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

1.1.1 The 3 places that should be remembered

The (Tika) Sāraṇīya,dhamma Sutta (A 3.12), “the (threes) discourse on what should be remembered,” is a brief teaching regarding a reflection on 3 significant places (*padesa*) in the life of a renunciant. Just as it is customary (in a worldly sense) to remember:

(1) where a king is born, (2) where he is crowned, and (3) where he triumphs over all his rivals and enemies;

even so we should recall:

(1) where a renunciant goes forth, (2) where he realizes true reality, and (3) where he gains awakening.

1.1.2 The 4 places that should be remembered

The Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) records the Buddha, during his last days, as instructing us to visit and reflect on the 4 holy places “so as to rouse samvega [a sense of spiritual urgency],”

(1) thinking, “Here the tathāgata was born”;

(2) thinking, “Here the tathāgata attained supreme awakening”;

(3) thinking, “Here the tathāgata turned the wheel of the Dharma”;

(4) thinking, “Here the tathāgata attained the nirvana-element without remaining substrate”;¹

Ānanda, these 4 places should be seen by the faithful son of family so as to rouse samvega.

(D 16,5.8/2:140), SD 9

The 4 holy places “that rouse samvega” (*saṃvejanīya-ṭ,ṭhāna*) that are worthy of pilgrimage are:

(1) Lumbinī (modern Rummindei, Nepal),

where the Buddha was born;

(2) Uruvela (Buddha Gayā),

where the Buddha attained supreme awakening;

(3) Isi,patana (modern Sarnath),

where the Buddha turned the Dharma-wheel; and

(4) Kusinārā (modern Kushinagar).

Where the Buddha passed away into nirvana.

1.2 THE DEVA SADDA SUTTA (IT 82)

1.2.1 Sutta summary and significance

1.2.1.1 The Deva,sadda Sutta (It 3.4.3), “the discourse of divine utterances,” records the Buddha as relating the 3 occasions (*samaya*) when devas exult at 3 significant events in the world, that is,

¹ “The nirvana-element without residue” (*anupādisesa nibbāna,dhātu*), ie the final passing away of an arhat without any remnants of the 5 aggregates, where all physical and mental processes truly do not further arise. Note esp the usage of *upadi* here: see SD 9 (15.2).

A 3.1.2.2
It 3.4.3

Aṅguttara Nikāya 3, Tika nipāta 1, Dutiya paṇṇāsaka 2, Rathakāra vagga 2
Iti vuttaka 3, Tika nipāta 4, Catuttha vagga 3

- (1) when someone renounces the world,
- (2) when the renunciant practises the 7 awakening factors, and
- (3) when the renunciant attains arhathood.

A basic level of practice for Dharma practitioners these 3 significant events are those of:

- (1) taking the 3 jewels as ideals of one's life;
- (2) focused study and practice of Dharma teaching; and
- (3) understanding the teaching, and accepting some level of true reality, especially impermanence.

1.2.1.2 The joyfulness of the devas' utterances is reflected in the style of the Sutta which is structured as **an udāna** (an inspired utterance), as evident from the opening line [§1], the prose statement [§§2-5], the closing verses [§§5-9] and the closing line [§10]. **The Udāna** is the 3rd book of the 5th Pali collection, the Khuddaka Nikāya.²

1.2.2 The 3 places and 3 times that should be remembered

The (Tika) Sāraṇīya, dhamma Sutta (A 3.12) and **the Deva, sadda Sutta** (It 3.4.3) are related and have complementary teachings. While **A 3.12** speaks of the 3 places (*padesa*) in a renunciant's life that should be reflected on, **It 3.4.3** speaks of the 3 occasions (*samaya*) in a renunciant's life. The difference and relationship of the key teachings of the 2 Suttas can be tabulated as follows:

The 3 significant places (A 3.12)

- (1) *where* the renunciant goes forth
- (2) *where* the renunciant realizes true reality
- (3) *where* the renunciant attains arhathood

the 3 significant times (It 3.4.3)

- when* the renunciant goes forth
- when* the renunciant realizes true reality
- when* the renunciant attains arhathood

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SD 63.11(1.2)

It 3.4.4 = Itivuttaka 3, Tikanipāta 4, Catutthavagga 3

Deva, sadda Sutta

The (Iti) Discourse on the Divine Utterances

It 82/3.4.3/75 f

- 1 This was indeed spoken by the Blessed One, spoken by the arhat, heard by me:³
- 2 "These 3, bhikkhus, are the divine utterances that issue forth amongst the devas, from time to time."⁴

² On **the udāna**, see SD 17.16 (1.2).

³ *Vuttam h'etaṃ bhagavatā vuttam arahatā ti me sutarṃ*. Idiomatic tr: "This was indeed spoken by the Blessed One, heard by me spoken by the arhat." This is spoken by the lay disciple **Khujj'uttarā**: SD 57.26 (1.2.2.3): see SD 16.14 (1).

⁴ *Tayo'me bhikkhave devesu deva, saddā niccharanti samayā samayam upādāya*. "From time to time," *samaya samayam upādāya* is idiomatic: PED 684.

What are the three?

(1) Bhikshus, the time when the noble disciple shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the monastic robes, he is intent⁵ on **going forth from the household life into homelessness**,⁶ at that time, the divine utterance resounds amongst the devas,⁷ ‘This noble disciple is intent on battling against Māra!’⁸— this, bhikshus, is **the 1st divine utterance** that resounds amongst the devas, from time to time.

3 (2) Furthermore,⁹ bhikshus, the time when the noble disciple dwells devoted to the practice of **the 7 awakening factors**,¹⁰ at that time, the divine utterance resounds amongst the devas, ‘This noble disciple is intent on battling against Māra!’¹¹— this, bhikshus, is **the 2nd divine utterance** that resounds amongst the devas, from time to time.

4 (3) Furthermore, bhikshus, the time when the noble disciple, with the destruction of the influxes,¹² realizes for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the influx-free freedom of mind,¹³ freedom by wisdom, and having entered upon it, dwells in it,¹⁴ at that time, the divine utterance resounds amongst the devas, ‘This noble disciple, having triumphed in battle, victorious, settles at the head of the battlefield!’¹⁵— this, bhikshus, is **the 3rd divine utterance** that resounds amongst the devas, from time to time.

5 These 3, bhikshus, are the divine utterances that resound amongst the devas, from time to time.”

⁵ “Is intent (on),” *ceteti* (also below). In meaning, *ceteti* (Class I verb) overlaps with *cinteti* (Class X verb); while both have the sense of “is intent (on),” *ceteti* has a slight broader compass, such as “think about.” They differ mainly in the way each is formed. On the Classes of verbs, see K L Dhammajoti, *Reading Buddhist Pali Texts*, 2018:21 f (§2.4 f); on Class X verbs: Geiger & Norman, *A Pāli Grammar*, 1994:§139.

⁶ *Yasmim bhikkhave samaye ariya, sāvako kesa, massuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajjāya ceteti, tasmim samaye devesu devasaddo niccharati* “*eso ariyasāvako mārena saddhim saṅgāmāya ceteti ti*. Lit, “Bhikshus, the time when the noble disciple, having shaved off hair and beard, having worn the monastic robe, thinks”

⁷ By “devas” here is meant the sense-world gods (*kāmāvacara, deva*, ItA 2:75,32 f).

⁸ *Eso ariya, sāvako mārena saddhim saṅgāmāya ceteti ti*. On *ceteti*, see above.

⁹ Be Ee *puna c’aparaṃ*; Ce Se *puna ca paraṃ*.

¹⁰ “The 7 awakening factors” (*satta bojjhaṅga*) are (1) mindfulness (*sati sambojjhaṅga*), (2) investigation of states (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*), (3) effort (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*), (4) zest (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*), (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*), (6) concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*), and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*). This septad refers to both calm and insight meditation leading to dhyana and seeing true reality: **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3), SD 10.15.

¹¹ See **Māra** SD 61a.

¹² In the early suttas, there are only 3 “influxes” (*āsava*), ie, those of (1) sensual desire, (2) existence and (3) ignorance: **D 2**,99.1 n (SD 8.10); **M 11**,9 n (SD 7.13). In later canonical lists, a 4th influx—that of views—is added between 2 and 3: **Cūḷa Gopālaka S** (M 34,6) n SD 61.3; SD 9 (10.4.2.2) n; SD 70.18 (2.4.1 n).

¹³ “Freedom of mind [mental liberation], freedom through wisdom” (*ceto, vimutti paññā, vimutti*). In an arhat, this serves as a single cpd, referring to the mental attainment and wisdom of the fruition of arhathood: SD 30.2 (3); **Jhānābhīññā S** (S 16.9,29+30), SD 50.7.

¹⁴ This 3rd case, the destruction of the influxes, is the attainment of arhathood.

¹⁵ *Eso ariya, sāvako vijita, saṅgāmo tam eva saṅgāma, sīsaṃ abhivijaya ajjhāvasatī ti*.

6 This is the matter [meaning]¹⁶ of what the Blessed One said, concerning which he said thus:¹⁷
[76]

7 Having seen the one victorious in battle,
the disciple of the fully self-awakened,
the devatas salute
the great one, morally fearless.

*disvā vijita,saṅgāmaṃ
sammā,sambuddha,sāvakaṃ
devatā pi namassanti
mahantaṃ vīta,sāradaṃ.*

8 Homage to you, thoroughbred of men,
who has overcome what is hard to defeat,
having routed Death's army
with unfettered freedom.

*namo te purisa,jaññā
yo tvaṃ dujjayam ajjhabhū
jetvāna maccuno senaṃ
vimokkhena anāvaram¹⁸*

9 Thus the devas salute this one
who has gained the mind's goal;
for they see not in him
one who would go under death's power.

*iti h'etaṃ namassanti
devatā patta,mānasam
tañ hi tassa na passanti,
yena maccu,vasam vaje ti*

10 This matter, too, was spoken by the Blessed One. Thus I have heard.¹⁹

— — —

(Tika) Sāraṇīya,dhamma Sutta

The (Threes) Discourse on What Should Be Remembered

A 3.12

1 Bhikshus, there are these 3 [places] of a **head-anointed**²⁰ **kshatriya rajah** that should be remembered all one's life. What are the three?

2 THE 3 PLACES OF A KSHATRIYA RAJAH THAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

(1) Bhikshus, the place where the head-anointed rajah was born—
this, bhikshus, is the 1st (place) of the head-anointed rajah that should be remembered all one's life.

(2) Further, bhikshus, the place where the kshatriya rajah was head-anointed (as king)—
this, bhikshus, is the 2nd (place) of the head-anointed rajah that should be remembered all one's life.

¹⁶ *Attha* is polysemic: we can take “matter” as referring to the preceding, and “meaning” as given in the foll.

¹⁷ 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*).

¹⁸ Comy however takes **anāvaram** as meaning “irresistible”: “Others are capable of resisting or rejecting Māra's army,” *aññehi āvaritum paṭisedhetum asakkuṇeyyattā ~am māraṣṣa senam* (Ita 2:75,8-13).

¹⁹ *Etam attham bhagavā avoca, tatth'etaṃ iti vuccati.*

²⁰ “Head-anointed” (*muddh'āvasitta*), a properly anointed or crowned king: D 3:60 f, 69; Pug 56; Miln 234.

(3) Further, bhikshus, the place where, having triumphed in battle, victorious, the kshatriya rajah settled at the head of the battlefield²¹—

this, bhikshus, is the 3rd (place) of the head-anointed rajah that should be remembered all one's life.

3 These, bhikshus, are the 3 (places) of the head-anointed kshatriya rajah that should be remembered all one's life. **[107]**

4 So, too, bhikshus, there are these 3 [places] of **a monk** that should be remembered all one's life. What are the three?

5 THE 3 PLACES OF A RENUNCIANT THAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

(1) Bhikshus, the place where the monk shaved off his hair and beard, put on the monastic robes, and went forth from the household life into homelessness²²—

this, bhikshus, is the 1st (place) of the monk that should be remembered all one's life.

(2) Further, bhikshus, the place where the monk understood as it really is:²³

“This is suffering,” and

“This is the arising of suffering,” and

“This is the ending of suffering,” and

“This is the way leading to the ending of suffering”²⁴—

this, bhikshus, is the 2nd (place) of the monk that should be remembered all one's life.

(3) Further, bhikshus, the place where, with the destruction of the influxes, the monk realized for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the influx-free liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, dwelled in it²⁵—

this, bhikshus, is the 3rd (place) of the monk that should be remembered all one's life.

6 These, bhikshus, are the 3 (places) of the monk that should be remembered all one's life.

—evaṃ—

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²¹ *Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave yasmim padese rājā khattiyo muddh'āvasitto saṅgāmaṃ abhivijinitvā vijita, saṅgāmo tam eva saṅgāma, sīsaṃ ajjhāvasati.* This same metaphor is used in **Deva Sadda S** for the noble disciple who, having overcome Māra, destroys his influxes (becomes an arhat) (It 82/3.4.3/75 f). See (1.2).

²² *Yasmim bhikkhave padese bhikkhu kesa, massuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajito hoti, idaṃ bhikkhave paṭhamāṃ bhikkhussa yāva, jīvaṃ sāraṇīyaṃ hoti.*

²³ On the 4 noble truths, see SD 1.1 (4).

²⁴ Comy: This 2nd case, the understanding of the 4 (noble truths), is said to be the path of streamwinning, ie, “the path based on spiritual knowledge (*ñāṇa*) arising from kasina practice and insight knowledges” (A 2:30). The quote reflects a Comy view; the sutta teaching is broader, where the cultivation of wisdom arises from both mindfulness practice and meditation. See **Bhāvanā** (SD 15.1); **Samadhi** (SD 33.1a).

²⁵ This 3rd case, the destruction of the influxes, is the attainment of arhathood.