

SD 64.12

Sama,citta Vagga

The Chapter on the Same-minded

A 2.3.4.1-10/2.31-40

Theme: Wholesome minds exist harmoniously

Translated and annotated by Piya Tan, 2010, ©2026

1 Introduction

This chapter, **SD 64.12**—suffixed 64.12a to 64.12j—comprises the 10 suttas of **the Sama,citta Vagga**, “the chapter on the same-minded,” the 4th chapter of the Book of Twos (*duka,nipāṭa*) in the Aṅguttara Nikāya. The word, **sama,citta**, “same-minded,” comes from the title of the longest sutta in this vagga, that is, **the (Duka) Saṃyojana Sutta**, “the (Twos) Discourses on Fetters” (A 2.36), wherein the “same-minded deities” (*sama,citta devatā*) are prominently featured [SD 64.12e].

The remaining 9 suttas are mostly very short teachings.¹

2 The Suttas of the Sama,citta Vagga

The Sama,citta Vagga comprises 10 suttas, here listed according to *the SD (Sutta Discovery) number, by the traditional numbering, by the modern sutta referencing, by the sutta title, and by the key teachings*, as follows:

<u>SD no.</u>	<u>By vagga</u>	<u>Sutta ref.</u>	<u>Sutta title</u>	<u>Key teachings</u>
64.12a	A 2.3.4.1	A 2.31/1:61	(Duka) Sappurisa Sutta	true individuality and gratitude
64.12b	A 2.3.4.2	A 2.32/1:61 f	Na Suppatikāra Sutta	parenthood, gratitude, wealth
64.12c	A 2.3.4.3	A 2.33/1:62	Kiriya,vādī Sutta	karmic accountability
64.12d	A 2.3.4.4	A 2.34/1:62 f	(Duka) Dakkhiṇeyya Sutta	those truly worthy of offerings
64.12e	A 2.3.4.5 ²	A 2.35/1:63 f	(Duka) Saṃyojana Sutta	internal and external fetters
64.12f	A 2.3.4.6	A 2.36/1:65-67	(Duka) Vivāda Sutta	the root cause of quarrels
64.12g	A 2.3.4.7	A 2.37/1:67 f	Abhivāda Sutta	those truly worthy of respect
64.12h	A 2.3.4.8	A 2.38/1:68 f	Cora,rāja Sutta	wholesome and effective authority
64.12i	A 2.3.4.9	A 2.39/1:69	(Duka) Paṭipatti Sutta	true practice of Dharma
64.12j	A 2.3.4.10	A 2.40/1:69	Attha,vyañjana Sutta	Dharma as truth and teaching

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¹ The paragraph numberings in the 10 suttas of the Sama,citta Vagga here do not follow those of PTS.

² Ee breaks this sutta into no. 6 and starts no. 7 at §5.7-12; thus numbering the remaining suttas as nos. 8-11 respectively. Ee Suttas 6 + 7 actually form a single sutta.

SD 64.12a (Duka) Sappurisa Sutta

The (Twos) Discourse on the True Individual

A 2.31

Theme: True individuality and gratitude

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 SUMMARY NOTES

1.1.1 The (Duka) Sappurisa Sutta (A 2.31) teaches that a truly good person is both grateful and thankful for the good that he has gained. The terms “**gratefulness**” (*kataññū*) and “**thankfulness**” (*kata,veditā*) are explained more fully in the notes [2]. One who is *wisely grateful* and *joyfully thankful* is said to be a “true individual” (*sappurisa*) [3].

1.1.2 Many modern translators tend to render *kataññū kata,veditā* conveniently as “being grateful and thankful,” but the Pali sense of the phrase is much richer and deeper, invoking both mindfulness (wisdom) and joyful inspiration. The suttas also take the phrase as indicating an initiative in showing kindness to a good-doer; one who is grateful and thankful is also “the first in showing kindness (in return)” [1.2.1].

1.2 KĀTAÑÑŪ KATA,VEDĪ SUTTA (A 2.11.2)

1.2.1 The grateful and thankful

The **Kataññū Kata,vedī Sutta (A 2.11.2)** gives a succinct explanation of *kataññū kata,veditā* as “knowing kindness and joyfully reciprocating,” thus:

- 1 Bhikshus, there are these 2 persons that are **difficult to find in the world**. What are the two?
- 2 One who is the first to show kindness (*pubba,kārī*), and who knows kindness done and rejoices in the kindness done (*kataññū,kata,vedī*).³
- 3 These 2 persons, bhikshus, are difficult to find in the world.⁴ (A 2.11.2/1:87), SD 3.1(1.4.4)

For detailed notes, please refer to **the Kataññū Kata,vedī Sutta (A 2.11.2)**, SD 3.1(1.4.4). Only brief notes and supplementary comments will be made here.

³ The word **vedī** (from √VID, to know) can mean “to know”; but the context clearly shows that it comes from *vedā* (joy, inspiration), thus, as “one who rejoices.” See **(Agata,phala) Mahānāma S** (A 6.10), SD 15.3 (4).

⁴ I would like to thank Ajahn Brahmali (Perth, Australia), who writes of my tr of *kataññū,kata,vedī* above: “That sounds good to me. I think you are right about the connection between *veda* and feeling. This word is related both to *vedanā* and to *vijjā*, and as such it has both an emotive side and a cognitive side. I always thought “inspiration” was a good translation, since it seems to capture both aspects of this word. However, I think rejoicing is acceptable too.” (Email 23 March 2016)

2 Sutta notes

2.1 THE FIRST TO SHOW US KINDNESS

The first of the 2 persons difficult to find in the world is the one who is “**first to show kindness**” (*pubba,kārī*, literally, “the first doer”) to us. When this quality is taken as an action rather than *a person*, it has 3 important senses, that is:

- (1) Those who are the *first* to have shown us kindness are, as a rule, our own parents, that is, those who have given us *life*, nurtured us with *health*, humanized us with *love*, and *socialized* us with the world. In the absence of wholesome biological parents, loving guardians who have raised us in this way, too, are effectively “the first in showing kindness” to us.
- (2) “And having done good before” (*pubbe ca kata,puññatā*)⁵ means that much of the good we experience now is the result of our having habitually done good in the past, encouraged by our parents.
- (3) More importantly, it means that we should be doing good at the very first opportunity, that is, *right now*. Even as we say this, the moment has passed. In this sense “we have done good in the past.”⁶

2.2 ONE WHO KNOWS KINDNESS DONE AND REJOICES IN THE KINDNESS DONE

2.2.1 Knowing kindness done

2.2.1.1 *Katañ,ñū* (adj) means “(who) knows what is done,”⁷ that is, one is aware of a kindness done and acknowledges it. This is the wisdom aspect of good karma, that is, one mindfully notes, “This is an act of kindness.” This acknowledgement is in itself *good intention*, that is, a wholesome mental karma. Acknowledging kindness or good done by another for one’s benefit helps one understand and appreciate one’s existential and karmic interconnection with others. When one sees this dynamic and beautiful interactivity of good begetting good, one also gets a glimpse (at least) of the reality of selflessness and **nonself** (*anattā*).

2.2.1.2 In significant ways, “**knowing kindness done**” (n, *katañ,ñutā*) means remembering kindness or assistance done for us. Thus, the Maṅgala Sutta (Sn 2.4 = Khp 3) says:

Reverence, humility, contentedness, gratefulness and timely listening to the Dharma—
this is the highest blessing.

*Gāraṇa ca nivāto ca santuṭṭhī ca kataññutā kālena dhamma,savaṇaṃ—etaṃ maṅgalaṃ
uttamaṃ.* (Sn 265 = Khp 3,8/3)

The Maṅgala Sutta Commentary explains **gratefulness** (*kataññutā*) as follows:

Gratefulness is knowing, by way of repeatedly remembering the kindness [assistance] done, whether small or great, by anyone. Moreover, gratefulness should be understood as remembering meritorious deeds, which are of great assistance to beings, since they free them from suffering such as that of the hells. Thus, gratefulness is the remembering of their kindness.

⁵ **Maṅgala S** (Khp 5,6/3 = Sn 260b), SD 67 (pending).

⁶ Further see **Kataññū Kaya,vedī S**, SD 3.1 (1.4.4.2 f). On parents, see **Na Suppatikāra S** (A 2.33), SD 64.12b.

⁷ Comy: *kata-ññu-tā tikata,jānanam* (SA 2:232,2 at S 2:272,16+17)

***Kataññutā** nāma appassa vā bahussa vā yena kenaci katassa upakārassa puna-p, punaṃ anussaraṇa, bhāvena jānanatā, api ca nerayik'ādi, dukkha, parittānato puññāni eva pāṇinaṃ bahūpakārāni, yato tesam pi upakārānussaraṇatā **kataññutā** ti veditabbā.*

(Khpa 1:147,18-+22)

From this explanation, we should understand that we express our **gratitude** by showing **reverence** for the Buddha as our awakened teacher; by showing humility in learning the suttas, we practise **contentment** as renunciants and as the laity who listen to the Dharma at the proper times. We thus act with wholesome intentions in body, speech and thought out of gratitude for such benefits we have in our lives.⁸

2.2.2 Joyfully reciprocating the kindness done

2.2.2.1 The terms **kata, vedī** (adj) and **kata, veditā** (n) have 2 important senses or aspects:

- (1) we rejoice in the good done by constantly recalling it, and
 - (2) we joyfully reciprocate that good or kindness done whenever the occasion arises.
- The 1st aspect has been explained by the Maṅgala Sutta Commentary above [2.2.1.2].

2.2.2.2 It is helpful to add another vital point, that is, recalling such good that is done can further benefit us as the subject of our lovingkindness cultivation (*mettā, bhāvanā*). This is especially helpful when this recalling empowers us to gain concentration. Otherwise, we may begin to cultivate our loving-kindness in ways more familiar to us, and then go on to cultivate **compassion** (*karuṇā, bhāvanā*) towards those who do not enjoy such blessing of being shown kindness in this way. In due course, we may go on to cultivate **joy** (*muditā, bhāvanā*) by rejoicing in the goodness of those who have been kind to us, or when the subject/s in our compassion cultivation have benefitted from such kindness. Finally, we cultivate **equanimity** or mental calm, knowing that no matter how much good we do, much remains to be done; we have done our part just as the sun has shone the day and will shine again with warmth and light.⁹

3 Sappurisa

3.1 A PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

3.1.1 Types of false persons

3.1.1.1 The Pali term **asappurisa** covers a broad range of senses ranging from one who is simply **ignorant** of true reality to one who is highly intelligent but is hindered by that very knowing, by an inability to see beyond words and ideas; the predominant root of suffering in this latter case is **craving**, that is, grasping and attachment to views, especially self-view. Hence, one is *asappurisa* either because one is *unable* to know, or is *unwilling* to know.

An **ignorant person** (*puṭhujjana*) is one who is neither wise nor well informed about the world; hence, such a one is unable to change and grow in accordance with true reality. He is caught up with the experiences of change and suffering, and does not like it. However, with proper instruction and guidance, such a person may be willing and able to change. To that extent, such a person is said to be a “good worldling.” [3.1.2]

⁸ Further see **Kataññū Kaya, vedī S**, SD 3.1 (1.4.4.4)

⁹ See the divine abodes, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

A **false person** (*asappurisa*), on the other hand, may be one who is intelligent or well informed about certain things. Such a one may notice change and suffering in the world. His “thinking” mind, however, thinks that only some things change. Surely, he guesses or hopes, there are some “things” that do not change. So he identifies with this “something” (*akiñcana*) and reasons since there is “something,” “someone” must have created it, and so on. Then he uses his reasoning and cleverness to weave a web of words and ideas to imagine this **something**, as some God, Cosmic Soul or some abiding essence.

A false person is one who is limited and trapped by his own knowledge and past conditioning. Since he neither understands nor accepts the reality of change and suffering, he is unable to see, much less understand the reality of **nonself**. He is caught in words, sounds and ideas about reality as “something.”

At the lowest depth of being a “false person” is one who is neither cultured socially nor cultivated personally—one who is both immoral and mentally unrestrained and confused—caught up in a violent love-hate perception of sense-experiences. When a person is both ignorant and false, he is said to be “an evil person” (*pāpa, purisa*).¹⁰

Such a person is the opposite of a **noble** individual (*ariya*), one on the path of awakening or an arhat.¹¹ [3.1.2.4]. However, the will to learn in the ignorant, false person will in due course transform him or her into a *sappurisa*, that is, a wise and true individual.

3.1.1.2 Whether we are ignorant in our understanding of true reality or false in our thoughts and actions depends on how we view ourselves and the world. Broadly speaking, **an ignorant person** tends to see himself as *helpless*, even *hopeless*, having fallen short of the glory or greatness of something or someone greater. This power-based attitude may have arisen from recurrent episodes of suffering in life, giving one a sense of inadequacy, or from one’s inability to fully or satisfactorily resolve such sufferings or lacks, or being repeatedly told by others of one’s worthlessness—this is often true in the case of the ignorant, one who is *blind* to true reality and lacks the ability to see or accept self-reliance and self-liberation.

On the other hand, a **false person** may think one knows a lot of things, especially technical knowhow or religious dogmas, and that one has a mind capable of intellectual reasoning and imagining. However, this rationality is basically rooted in childhood conditioning or some fixed views that one is caught up with due to one’s circumstances. For example, one may have the instinctive or reflexive view that “everything happens for a reason.”

This view plays in one’s head like a looped recording, an incessant propaganda broadcast. The “**reason**” is simply a blanket term, even an excuse,¹² for “other-power” or something beyond our control. We are but pawns in a cosmic chess-game, like in the world of the ancient Greek gods, or the more sophisticated theology of power-driven God-faiths. Such a view invariably focuses tribal power hierarchically in a way that “disindividuates” the person; indeed, one has to totally submit to this higher power like slaves to an omnipotent master, or sheep to a caring shepherd, or a mere cog to a cosmic machine. This is an insidious self-doubting form of fatalism.

One remains forever dependent on a vision of *protection and succour* of a “parent-figure” (a father image or mother image), so that one remains but a *creature* or at best as a *child* in a dysfunctional cosmic or heavenly family. One *seeks “something”* (*akiñcana*) or *craves for someone* that one imagines to be desirable or special. One then imagines or rationalizes that this *something* must be real, or simply

¹⁰ MA 4:79,20.

¹¹ Sn 664 (SnA 479; DhA 353); J 2:281, 5:48, 87; DhA 4:3.

¹² “Excuse,” a reason, either true or invented, that you give to explain away or defend your behaviour based on ignorance, imagination, uncertainty or falsehood.

believes it to be so. Then there are those who reinforce these delusions: the theologians, preachers, believers and memes.¹³

3.1.1.3 One then stops seeking and inquiring; one stops growing. Yet, beneath the pious veneer and whimper of faith, one continues to *change* but in a negative way. Actually, one devolves, heaping one's hopes on the wrong views one has nursed, making them more sophisticated, more dominant; one infects others with them, too. One becomes more convinced with one's own views, one's self-view—one is caught up in one's gaze like **Narcissus**, cursed to fall in love with one's own reflection in a dark pool, ultimately pining away and turning into a flower-plant.¹⁴

Where such views or beliefs are profoundly held or enforced, one is likely to become **depersonalized**, in the sense that others are treated merely as extension of the tribe or the tribal leader, and that one is either “with” the tribe or “against” it, leaving no room for tolerance and human acceptance. In extreme cases, the “others” are alienated or marginalized, or may even be destroyed on account of tribal supremacy. In this sense, racism and nativism are symptoms of **depersonalization**.¹⁵

As for the person himself, one may become **deindividuated**, that is, driven by a state, episodic or habitual, of reduced self-awareness, even a lack of self-knowledge, resulting in one's conduct being induced or influenced by situational or group norms rather than by personal (psychological) or societal (moral) norms. In extreme situations, this may explain certain antisocial behaviours in individuals or in social groups.¹⁶

3.1.1.4 However, **deindividuation** in itself does not necessarily produce antisocial behaviour, and can lead to positive consequences if the group or situation creates positive standards for wholesome behaviour (like the early Buddhist sangha). Indeed, people sometimes deliberately seek out potentially deindividuating experiences such as parties, dances, games and religious gatherings in the hope of enhancing positive emotions and feelings of human closeness.¹⁷

Thus, in a positive sense, we have the case of **the bodhisattva's renouncing the world** as a deindividuating process whereby he rejected social norms to seek awakening out of the suffering world. The sangha then grows around the Buddha as the “wheel of Dharma” (*dharmma, cakka*) alongside the king's “wheel of power” (*āṇā, cakka*).¹⁸

During the Buddha's first visit to Kapila, vatthu, the first thing he did in the morning was to go on his usual almsround. When the rajah Suddhodāna found out about this, he at once confronted the Buddha, and asked, “Why are you putting me to shame?” The Buddha replied, “Maharajah, I am not putting you to shame; I am merely keeping up the tradition of my lineage,” that is, the Buddha lineage (*buddha, vaṃsa*). The Buddha then instructed Dharma to Suddhodāna and he became a streamwinner.¹⁹

¹³ See **Memes**, SD 26.3.

¹⁴ See SD 34.1 (2.5.2.2); SD 60.1d (7.7.5.4).

¹⁵ Psychologically, as def by the APA *Dictionary of Psychology* (2nd ed, 2015), **depersonalification** is “treatment of another person as something other than the unique individual that he or she really is. For example, parents may treat their child as an extension of themselves, which leads to the child having a distorted sense of self.” I'm using this word as a convenient term for not seeing others as unique individuals—the tendency to **depersonalify** others—without necessarily subscribing to any of the psychological technicalities that may interest or divide scholars. Such innovative terms—incl the foll, “**deindividuation**”—are for helping us better understand the early Buddhist teaching on self-reliance and self-awakening.

¹⁶ See eg CHONG Siow Ann, “Feel out of step with a group? That can be a good thing,” *Straits Times* 13 Apr 2026:

¹⁷ See A E Kazdin (ed), *APA Ency of Psychology*, 2000, in S Reicher, “crowd behavior,” 2:374-377; S J Karau, “deindividuation,” 2:457-459.

¹⁸ See SD 64.10 (2.3.1.2).

¹⁹ DhA 13.2/3:164 f, cf 1.9a; J 1:89 f

3.1.2 Types of the true and the good

3.1.2.1 The positive opposite of *asappurisa* [3.1.1] is *sappurisa*, derived from *sat* (= *sant*), “good, worthy” + *purisa*, “person,” that is, a good, worthy person.²⁰ The prefix *sant* can also take the sense of *sama*, “peaceful, calm” (of the mind), as in the term *sama,citta*, which also has the sense of “same-minded” [SD 64.12 (1)]. On the highest level, *sappurisa* refers to the Buddha or a noble individual (ariya), a saint of the path, including an arhat;²¹ such a person is said to be “the best person” (*uttama,purisa*),²² “a better person” than the ordinary good person (*sappurisa,tara*).²³ Hence, *asappurisa* refers generally to an “ignoble person” (*anariya*) or an ignorant unawakened person, while *sappurisa* refers to a “good person.”²⁴

3.1.2.2 A number of suttas and texts list the qualities of both the *asappurisa* and the *sappurisa*. **The Cinti Sutta** (A 3.3) thus defines the 3 characteristics of an *asappurisa* as one who thinks badly, acts badly and speaks badly; the *sappurisa*, on the other hand, is one who thinks wholesomely, acts wholesomely and speaks wholesomely. In short, it is the habitual intention of a person that defines one. Therefore, one should avoid the 3 characteristics of a bad or base person (asappurisa) (that is, unwholesome conduct through body, speech and mind), and cultivate the 3 characteristics of a good or superior person (sappurisa) (that is, wholesome conduct through body, speech and mind).²⁵

3.1.2.3 The Puggala,paññatti Commentary explains a bad or base person as one who breaks any of the 5 precepts, that is,

- (1) one kills living beings;
- (2) one takes the not-given;
- (3) one engages in sexual misconduct;
- (4) one speaks [communicates] falsely; and
- (5) one indulges in intoxicants.

A worse or baser person (*sappurisa,tara*) is one who breaks any of the precepts and encourages others to do so, too. Thus, one is also heir of “half” (*upaḍḍha*) of the “induced” karma.

A good and true person (*sappurisa*) is one who abstains from breaking any of the precepts and encourages others to abstain from breaking the precepts, too. As a result, one is also heir “by half” to the karma “inspired” in others. In this sense, one is a “superior person.” (PugA 221,16-30)

The Dhammika Sutta (Sn 2.14/394-399) and **the Dhammapada** (Dh 130) gives broader teachings on cultivating moral virtue more fully, that is, one should neither break a precept, nor cause others to do so, nor speak in praise of breaking any precept. That is to say:

One should neither oneself **kill a living being**, nor cause another or others to kill, not should one speak in praise of killing (including suicide).

²⁰ M 110,15/3:23; D 34,1.4(1)/3:274, 1.5(1)/3:276; A 4.201/2:217 f, 4.243/2:239; Dhs 259 = 1003; V 1:56; Dh 54; Pv 2.98, 2.945, 4.187; J 1:202.

²¹ M 2,9/1:8; S 22.1/3:4.

²² PugA 221,27.

²³ S 45.26/5:20; A 4.201/2:217-222; Pug 4.1/5,31 f; *sappurisā ti supurisā*, “good man” (DhA 2:156 at Dh 83).

²⁴ SnA 479.

²⁵ A 3.3/1:102.

One should neither oneself **take the not given**, nor cause another to take the not-given, nor speak in praise of taking the not-given.²⁶

One should neither **commit sexual misconduct**, nor cause another to commit sexual misconduct, nor speak in praise of sexual misconduct.

One should neither speak **falsehood**, nor cause another to speak falsehood, nor speak in praise of speaking falsehood. Furthermore, one should not withhold the truth, especially when doing so will harm the other party that is deprived of the truth.

One should neither take **intoxicants** and get intoxicated, nor cause others to do so, nor praise the indulgence in intoxicants and intoxication.²⁷

3.1.2.4 Both the Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33) and the Das'uttara Sutta (D 34) list the 7 qualities of a true individual (*sappurisa, dhamma*) as follows:

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) one knows the Dharma, | <i>dhamma-ññū</i> |
| (2) one knows the meanings, | <i>attha-ññū</i> |
| (3) one knows the self [oneself], | <i>atta-ññū</i> |
| (4) one knows moderation, | <i>matta-ññū</i> |
| (5) one knows the right time, | <i>kāla-ññū</i> |
| (6) one knows groups [the crowd], | <i>parisa-ññū</i> |
| (7) one knows the person. | <i>puggala-ññū</i> |

(D 33,2.3(6)/3:252 = D 34,1.8(7)/3:283)

According to **the Dīgha Commentary**, these “qualities of true individuals” (*sappurisānaṃ dhammā*) are explained as follows:

- (1) They know **the Dharma** (teachings), that is, the suttas in their various categories (*aṅga*).²⁸ Dharma (*dhamma*) here refers to the early Buddhist texts handed down to us to this day, that is, the Pali Sutta Piṭaka.
- (2) They know **the meaning** of whatever that was spoken, heard or read (whether of the Dharma or of what is meant by others). This means that they are able to distinguish between the word of the teaching, which needs to be drawn out (*neyy'attha*), and the spirit of Dharma (*nīt'attha*), that is, the drawn-out truth, and gives priority to the spirit.²⁹
- (3) They know **themselves**, thinking, “I am of such and such level in moral virtue, in mental concentration, and in wisdom.” They learn Dharma not to “know” things or for status, but for self-realization.
- (4) They know moderation in receiving (gifts from others) and using (what they have, especially the supports of life). Understanding renunciation, they reflect on all actions of body, speech and mind as efforts in letting go of greed, hatred and delusion, and seeing impermanence.
- (5) They know **the time**, thinking, “This is the time for learning, this is the time for questioning, this is the time for practice and attainment.” In the spiritual life, such as monastic training, 5 years is the time for learning (*uddesa*), 10 for questioning [investigating] (*paripucchā*)—but this is too restricted and

²⁶ This is esp the case with monastics. With the laity, one may take or use as needed and in moderation what is freely available, when that does not harm anyone (incl oneself).

²⁷ Certain intoxicants may however, with proper care, be taken as medicine in limited amounts without bringing on any intoxication.

²⁸ The 9 limbs of the teacher's teaching (*nav'aṅga satthu, sāsana*), viz, *sutta geyya veyyakaraṇa gāthā udāna iti, vuttaka jātika abbhuta, dhamma vedalla*: SD 51.16 (2). For defs: SD 3.2 (1.4); SD 26.11 (3.2.1.3); SD 30.2 (2.1); SD 30.10 (4).

²⁹ See **Neyy'attha Nīt'attha S** (A 2.3.5+6), SD 2.6b.

crowded (*atisambādha*). Thus, (a minimum of) 10 years is the time for learning, 20 for questioning. After that, one should work on the practice.

- (6) They know **the 8 assemblies** (*aṭṭha parisa*): those of nobles (ruling elites), the priests (religious elites), houselords (wealthy elite), recluses (Buddhist sangha members), the 4 great kings, the 33, Māra's host (the toxic elite) and brahmas (advanced celestial aliens).³⁰
- (7) They know **the person** who should be associated with and those who should be avoided. They associate with those who are wise, or who are able or willing to learn Dharma, and keep away from those who are immorally inclined or emotionally toxic. Otherwise, they still attempt to teach Dharma to those who are unable or unwilling to learn, since they may recall such teachings in due time.

3.1.2.5 In their fullest wholesome manifestation, **the 7 qualities of the true individual** [3.1.2.4] are found only in the Buddha and his awakened disciples, the arhats. The Commentaries, however, include the individual buddhas (*pacceka, buddha*), too, as amongst those who are true individuals with the fullest extent of the 7 qualities of the sappurisa. Hence, it is said that “Here, individual buddhas, fully self-awakened buddhas, and disciples are to be understood as true individuals.”³¹

3.1.2.6 Now since we have used the term “**true individual**” to refer to individual buddhas, fully self-awakened buddhas and arhats, we should not use this translation for unawakened disciples, followers and practitioners in general. This means that a term like *sappurisa* can be applied in different ways or that it has a number of meanings, related or unrelated, which may (or may not) apply to the same context. In other words, we have to be familiar with a range of meanings of *sappurisa* and their application—it is polysemic.³²

The term ***sappurisa*** can thus be translated as follows depending on the context or usage:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| (1) true individual | individual buddhas, fully awakened buddhas and arhats; | [3.1.2.4 f] |
| (2) good individual | learners of the path (streamwinners, once-returns, nonreturners and arhats to be); ³³ | |
| (3) true person | those who live charitably, lead habitually moral lives, cultivate their minds for developing wisdom; | [3.1.3.1, 3.1.4] |
| (4) good person | anyone who keeps to the 5 precepts, at least in the spirit. | [3.1.2.3, 3.1.4] |

Both the “true person” and the “good person” may be said to be “good worldlings” (*kalyāṇa puthujjana*).³⁴

3.1.3 Other categories of *sappurisa* and *asappurisa*

3.1.3.1 The **Puṇṇa Thera, gāthā** opens with the phrase *sabbhi-r-eva*, explained thus by the Commentary:

³⁰ **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.21-23/2:109 f), SD 9; **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12,29/1:72), SD 49.1; **Parisa S** (A 8.69-/4:307 f). Specifically, *sappurisa* here refers the individual buddha, the fully awakened buddha and any of his disciples (esp the arhats). In broad terms, one knows how to conduct oneself before any kind of person or social group, or even crowds with ill intentions, and also aliens. For an evidently older listing, see **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64,9/4:116), SD 30.10

³¹ *Sappurisa ti ettha pana pacceka, buddhā tathagata, sāvakā ca sappurisa ti veditabbā* (MA 1:21; SA 2:251; NcA 76; PmA 2:446; DhsA 349).

³² On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4); SD 62.10d (2.2.2.1).

³³ On the 7 kinds of learners (*sekha*): SD 21.14 (2); SD 59.10 (3.4.1); SD 64.12d (2.1.1).

³⁴ On *kalyāṇa puthujjana*, see SD 56.13a (7.1.1.2).

“Therein, **sabbhi-r-evā** (Tha 4) means ‘only with true individuals.’ Here, the noble ones beginning with the Buddha are intended. For they, having completely abandoned bad qualities and having attained eminence in the true qualities, and being exceedingly praiseworthy, are therefore called especially ‘peaceful and true individuals.’”³⁵ (ThaA 1:40)

The **Asappurisa Suttas 1 & 2** (S 45.25 f) defines the false person (*asappurisa*) and the true individual (*sappurisa*) as follows:

a false person

- (1) holds wrong view,
- (2) has wrong thought [intention],
- (3) speaks wrong speech,
- (4) does wrong action,
- (5) engages in wrong livelihood,
- (6) makes wrong effort,
- (7) has wrong mindfulness,
- (8) has wrong samadhi.

a true individual

- (1) holds right views,
- (2) has right intention,
- (3) speaks right speech,
- (4) does right action,
- (5) engages in right livelihood,
- (6) makes right effort,
- (7) has right mindfulness,
- (8) has right samadhi. (S 45.25 f)³⁶

In simple terms, a true individual is **morally virtuous**: he is mindful and measured in his speech, actions and livelihood (limbs 3-5 of the path). In other words, he keeps the 5 precepts and earns a living without harming himself or others, including the environment, in any way.

With moral virtue as the foundation of his life, the true individual goes on to **develop his mind** to attain and grow in calm and insight; calm brings joy (happiness here and now) and insight gives wisdom (seeing the present; understanding the past and leaving the future where it is) (limbs 6-8 of the path).

Habitually living a moral life (in terms of speech and body) and keeping his mind focused and joyful, he sees directly into true reality. With this vision, the true individuals—here meaning the Buddha and the arhat—are liberated from ignorance and craving, the roots of suffering. They are fully freed from the cycle of rebirth and redeath. When they die, they are, so to speak, at peace like a fire that has gone out and cooled down, never to arise again.

3.1.3.2 Those who are still unawakened are caught up with ignorance and craving. **Ignorance** here means that they will not know what’s true, what’s false since, not understanding it, they ignore reality. Since they are ignorant, they need to carefully examine truth and falsehood in their lives. The fundamental truth is that whatever happens neither just happens *for any reason* nor happens *for a reason*.

No one is really doing anything *to* us despite our attempts to find reasons for it. Rather, **conditions** arise and we are caught up in them. When we try to “reason” this process, we only see causes, that is, conditions that lead to effects. When these effects lead to other effects, they are *recalled* as causes. So we have an interminable series of *causes and effects*, whenever we examine our life.

This does not mean that there is no karmic significance when someone actually intends an unwholesome action towards another. It means that the evil doer inherits the fruit of their bad intentions; but how we react to that same action depends on our own understanding of karma and conditionality. We

³⁵ *Tattha sabbhi-r-evā ti sappurisehi eva. Santo ti panettha buddh’ādayo ariyā adhippetā. Te hi anavasesato asatam dhammaṃ pahāya saddhamme ukkaṃsa, gatattā sātisaṃ pasamsiyattā ca viśesato “santo sappurisa ti ca vuccanti.* (ThaA 1:40,29 f)

³⁶ A 45.25 f/5:19 f (SD 47.3a + SD 47.3a(3)).

do feel the pain, but we wisely leave it at the body level; we work to free the mind of any karmic pain.³⁷ Our mind suffers, too, when we harbour any craving for self or other.

3.1.3.3 Craving means we do not understand what “other” means. We may see “other” merely as a person rather as our intention towards that person. A good intention brings good fruits; a bad intention brings bad fruits. The person or doer, so to speak, always becomes *other*; people change, our idea of others change, too. What we think that “other” seems to remain the same because we see “I” or “we” as the “victim.”

Hence, the Buddha advises us:³⁸

<i>Akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ</i>	“He abused me! He beat me!	
<i>ajini maṃ ahāsi maṃ</i>	He defeated me! He stole from me!”	
<i>ye taṃ upanayhanti</i>	those who harbour such thoughts	
<i>veraṃ tesāṃ na sammati</i>	their enmity [anger] does not subside.	(Dh 3)

<i>Akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ</i>	“He abused me! He beat me!	
<i>ajini maṃ ahāsi maṃ</i>	He defeated me! He stole from me!”	
<i>ye taṃ na upanayhanti</i>	those who harbour <i>not</i> such thoughts	
<i>veraṃ tenūpasammati</i>	their enmity as such subsides.	(Dh 4) ³⁹

These verses do not mean that we should simply dismiss the gravity of any bad karmic deed; rather, we should not hold such thoughts with hatred, but try to understand the conditions that made the perpetrator commit the misdeed and the conditions that attend such a misdeed. When we see the bigger picture of how karma occurs and affects us, we do not have to play any “victim” role. Instead, we work to understand the nature of karma, along with *feeling, perception and formations*.

3.1.3.4 In most unawakened people, when they perceive something as giving pleasure, they want it to remain “the same.” When they perceive something as unpleasant, they want it to be “other.” But any pleasure which we want to remain the same, ends, and in doing so becomes *other* (something we do not like). In this sense, pleasure is the cause of pain. This happens because of the way we **reason** things. This is the wrong kind of reasoning; it is called **craving**, that is, wanting things to be permanent or to be the way we reason them. There is *no* reasoning in samsara (the cycle of life), only rising and falling of events, only things becoming other.

In very simple terms, this is called **impermanence**. When we are unable to see that things *change*, or we want them to be *permanent*, **suffering** (or painful conflict) arises in us. We suffer because we *identify* with this suffering: “I am suffering.” Since we “own” this suffering—with a wrong understanding of “I,” “me,” “mine” and so on—we fail to see the nonself nature of all being and existence. There is only arising and passing away, causes and effects, every time we look into life. When we really see this and understand it, then we are turning in the direction of the path of awakening.⁴⁰

3.1.3.5 A very effective way of correcting or removing our **wrong view** of reality—of blindly reasoning our way through samsara nose-led by craving—is to “see,” that is, to learn from and emulate those

³⁷ On the 2 kinds of pain, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20), SD 1.12; **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6), SD 5.5; **Nakula, pitā S** (S 22.1,4), SD 5.4.

³⁸ On Dh 3 f, see also SD 32.12 (1.3); SD 5.18 (Dh 3-6); SD 60.1f (5.3.3.2) victim complex.

³⁹ See also SD 26.9 (4.1); SD 32.12 (1.3).

⁴⁰ On “pain is natural, suffering is optional,” see SD 63.9 (2.5.2.4).

who have freed themselves from wrong view. Such people are, of course, the Buddha and the arhats. Hence, we are advised to see and follow these **noble individuals**, which is another translation of *sappurisa*; here referring to the Buddha and the arhats.

The technical phrase used here is “**seer of the noble ones**” (*ariyānaṃ dassāvī* or *sappurisānaṃ dassāvī*), that is, those who approach noble individuals, that is, the Buddha or an arhat, and listen to their teachings so that their lives are changed for the better and they become more “skillful in the good” (*kovidā*).⁴¹ The key word here is “**changed**,” that is, we should not merely hear or merely remember teachings, but to reflect on them and practise the instructions properly so that we are able to see true reality for ourselves and become free from ignorance, even from suffering itself in due course.

Even though we are not able to see the Buddha, or even an arhat today, we have access to their teachings preserved in the early Buddhist texts. Our task here is to carefully tease out the Buddha’s teaching on impermanence, suffering and nonself, so that we are not blinded or misled by contrary and private teachings of Gurus and worldly teachers that will only bring more suffering and loss in due course.

The opposite term, *adassāvī*, refers to one who disregards the noble ones and their teachings.⁴² Such people tend to be drawn to or be misguided by cult teachings, superstitious beliefs and ritual practices that only reinforce their wrong views and practices. They thus end up merely as dark shadows of teachers and teachings that they believe in. Such wrong practices are negative because they prevent us from really knowing ourselves and from empowering us with self-effort for self-awakening to at least become good persons or true persons. [3.1.2.6]

3.1.4 How to be a *sappurisa*

3.1.4.1 In significant ways, the practical purpose of Buddhist training is for us to become some kind of *sappurisa*, beginning with at least being a **good person**, that is, one who keeps the 5 precepts [3.1.2.3]. Then, it only takes just a little bit more effort to make us “**true**” to ourselves, that is, in asserting self-reliance to understand our “self,” that is, our own body and mind, especially the mind.

When the term “**true person**” (*sappurisa*) is used amongst the laity, it refers to a person who cultivates **the 3 grounds of merit-making** (*puñña, kiriya, vatthu*), that is:⁴³

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| (1) giving or generosity, | <i>dāna, maya puñña, kiriya, vatthu;</i> |
| (2) moral virtue, and | <i>sīla, maya puñña, kiriya, vatthu;</i> |
| (3) mental cultivation. | <i>bhāvanā, maya puñña, kiriya, vatthu.</i> |

In practical terms, a true person is thus said to be one who is *wholesomely generous and charitable, morally upright and compassionate, and enjoys cultivating his mind and heart*, keeping them calm and clear, ever ready to watch and learn from others and from experiences to see true reality.

3.1.4.2 By way of giving and generosity, the *asappurisa* (false person) has 5 characteristics as stated in **the (Pañcaka) Asappurisa Dāna Sutta** (A 5.147), while the *sappurisa* (the good person or true person) has the following 5 or 8 qualities, as stated in **the (Pañcaka) Sappurisa Dāna Sutta** (A 5.148) and **the (Aṭṭhaka) Sappurisa Dāna** (A 8.37), summarized as follows:

⁴¹ M 2,9/1:8 (SD 30.3), S 22.1/3:4 (SD 5.4).

⁴² M 109,10/3:17 (SD 17.11); S 22.1/3:3 (SD 5.4), S 22.85/3:113 (SD 21.12); Dh 1003 (cf Dh 350).

⁴³ See **Puñña, kiriya, vatthu S** (A 8.36) SD 22.17; **(Iti) Puñña, kiriya, vatthu S** (It 60) SD 22.17(2.1). In **Mā Puñña Bhāyī S** (It 22) the triad is called (1) giving (*dāna*), (2) taming (*tama*) and (3) restraint (*saññama*) (It 22), SD 2.11b, where moral virtue = “restraint,” and mental cultivation = “taming.” For **10 puñña, kiriya, vatthu**, see DA 3:999; Abhs 5.24/146; SD 22.17 (5.1.2).

the 5 wrong ways of giving

(A 5.147/3:171 f) one gives:

- (1) casually;
- (2) without respect;
- (3) not with one's own hands;
- (4) what is to be discarded;
- (5) without view of karma.

the 5 right ways of giving

(A 5.148/3:172 f) one gives:

- (1) out of faith;
- (2) respectfully;
- (3) a timely gift;
- (4) unreservedly;
- (5) neither harming self nor others.

the 8 right ways of giving

(A 8.37/4:243 f) one gives:

- (1) what is pure;
- (2) what is excellent;
- (3) a timely gift;
- (4) what is allowable;
- (5) after investigation;
- (6) often;
- (7) doing so in faith;
- (8) after which one is joyful.

These 3 Suttas give a list of wrong ways and of right ways of giving. Although the giving here was originally intended for those “worthy of offerings” (*dakkhiṇeyya*), the guidelines apply to giving to those who live Dharma-spirited lives and to the needy.

Only “a timely gift” in A 5.148 and A 8.37 is worded in the same way. The other qualities are related, even overlapping, altogether giving us a broad perspective on how giving is *not* properly done, that is, as **a false person**, and how it is *properly* done, as **a good or true person**. [3.1.2.6].

3.1.4.3 On a public or popular level, **the sappurisā** are well-regarded by the many, as being “**good and peaceful people**.” They are thus regarded by the many as being morally good (*sādhū*) and spiritually beautiful (*sundara*).⁴⁴ Living by the 5 precepts [3.1.2.3]—keeping one’s speech and actions wholesome and mindful—is thus a vital quality of the good or true person.

Since being morally wholesome is the foundation of a good society, the basis of which is **the family**, clearly then parents and guardians who raise their children in wholesome ways and humanize them are themselves regarded as good or true people (at least when they are doing so).⁴⁵

Those who respect such good parents will themselves, too, be regarded as good people. Even where the parenting is unwise, manipulative or worldly, as children who mature and are independent in wisdom and success, we should forgive the bad parenting so that the vicious cycle is broken, and we do not continue the legacy of pain and hate. In this connection, it is said that “parents are our (true) creators” (*brahmā ti mātā, pitāro*).⁴⁶ In modern lingo, we may reflect that: there is no bad parent, only bad parenting and good parenting. We should ensure that bad parenting does not persist through us.

3.1.4.4 **A sappurisa** is one who sees the value and urgency of a healthy body with a healthy mind. A healthy body here refers to not only physical health and wellbeing, but to moral health [3.1.4.3]. **A healthy mind** is one that is calm and clear, and we need to train the mind to be thus; hence, it is called **mindfulness**. Such wholesome mindfulness arises from habitually keeping the mind fully focused on a suitable meditation object (such as the breath) or subject (such as a happy thought)—this is called **mental cultivation** (*bhāvanā*). The Majjhima reciters say, “Friends, repeatedly attend to the meditation-sign; thus (you are) said to be *sappurisā*, **true persons**.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *Sādhū, sammata bahu, janassā ti “sādhavo ete santo sappurisā ti evaṃ bahu, janassa sammata* (SnA 2:422); cf *sādhū, sammato ti ayaṃ sādhū, sundaro, sappuriso ti eva sammato* (DA 1:143).

⁴⁵ *Santo sappurisā ti imasmiṃ thāne mātā, pitūsu sammā paṭipattiyā santo sappurisā ti veditabbā* (AA 3:251).

⁴⁶ **Sa, brahmaka S** (A 3.31), SD 90.2; SD 3.1 (1.4.4.2) n; SD 38.2 (4.4.1.2).

⁴⁷ *Majjhima, bhāṇakā paṇ’āhu nimittam idaṃ, āvuso, kammaṭṭhānaṃ puna-p, punaṃ manasi karoḥi sappurisā ti vattabbo ti* (VA 2:428).

3.2 SAPPURISA AS “TRUE INDIVIDUAL”

3.2.1 True individuality

3.2.1.1 A true individual (*sappurissa*) is one who knows the true teaching, who knows true reality, who truly knows oneself, who knows moderation, who knows timeliness, who knows groups, and who knows the individual [3.1.2.4]. What is that one special quality that gives a true individual—the Buddha and the arhat—all these remarkable qualities? An awakened person as a teacher is characterized in these 8 ways. The 8th characteristic of the awakened mind is that of non-identification (*atammayatā*). This teaching and related ones are found in **the Bāla Paṇḍita Sutta** (M 129)⁴⁸ and **the (Majjhima) Sappurisa Sutta** (M 113).⁴⁹

3.2.1.2 The arhat is said to be *a-tam,mayo*, “not made of that,” in the sense that he does not identify himself with anything.⁵⁰ Like a streamwinner, an arhat is emotionally independent; he identifies with no feelings or emotions, but simply sees each and every process of experience as arising and passing away. Like a once-returner, an arhat identifies with neither liking nor disliking. Like a nonreturner, an arhat does not identify with even the highest dhyanas. An arhat has transcended all rebirth and is freed from suffering.

Having dhyana, the arhat’s mind is clear, and “not made of that” (*atammaya*). He does not see “something” (*kiñcana*) in anything, whether in a thought, a state or a thing. **The (Majjhima) Sappurisa Sutta**’s key sentence, “**in whatever way they⁵¹ conceive it, it turns out to be otherwise**” (*yena yena hi maññanti, tato taṃ hoti aññatha ti*),⁵² refers to the process of conception (*maññana*) explained in detail in **the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1); this is fully understood by the arhat.⁵³ This important line recurs elsewhere,⁵⁴ such as in **the Salla Sutta** (Sn 3.8) (which expresses the delusion of permanence) thus:

*Yena yena hi maññanti
tato taṃ hoti aññatha
etadiso vinā,bhavo
passa lokassa pariyāya*

For, however they conceive it to be,
it turns out to be otherwise;
such is the difference:
look at the way of the world! (Sn 588)

3.2.1.2 Non-identification (*atammayatā*) is the natural state of an arhat’s mind.⁵⁵ However, we do not need to be an arhat to practise non-identifying with things, though we need to put in more effort and mindfulness. Even when we have been unmindful, we can reflect on that state, examining why we had been unmindful, and learn to see things without identifying with them.

This practice is best done after we have understood, at least in a simple way, the universality of **impermanence**, and to be able to habitually see *impermanence in everything*. When we understand and accept impermanence, it is easy to see how **suffering** arises. Suffering is easier to see but the vision may be harder to hold. We need to cultivate a lot of lovingkindness and much compassion to reflect on such a vision.

⁴⁸ M 129,27-30/3:170 f, (SD 2.22).

⁴⁹ M 113/3:37-45 + SD 23.7 (3.1.3).

⁵⁰ Ñāṇananda, “Nibbana—the Stilled Mind” vol 3. “The Nibbana Sermons” 11-15. Colombo, 2005:316 f.

⁵¹ “They” here refers to an unawakened person.

⁵² M 113,21.4 etc (SD 23.7). See UA 209 f = UA:M 504 f.

⁵³ M 1,51-146/1:4-6 @ SD 11.8.

⁵⁴ U 3.10/32,30; Sn 757.

⁵⁵ See *Atam,maya S* (A 6.104), SD 19.13(2.4); *Atam,mayatā* (essay), SD 19.13.

When we understand and accept *both impermanence and suffering*, we are ready to see **nonself** by way of *non-identification*. Since whatever we experience—whatever we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think—are conditioned, they all arise and then pass away. Even a material object—like this computer—is conditioned, made up of parts, all functioning together connected with some kind of power and input by various people. Nothing that is put together has a single cause or creator; there is **no single watchmaker**.⁵⁶ “Watch” is just a concept for a timepiece made up of so many parts, made up by so many different people. Even then we may see it as a “watch,” but someone who has never known a watch before would not know what it is, much less how it works. A cat or an animal would not know what a watch is. And so on.⁵⁷

3.2.1.3 The Sappurisa Sutta teaches how “non-identification” or *atammayatā* takes the practitioner beyond even equanimity (*upekkhā*).⁵⁸ The Buddha is saying that even *upekkhā* is a state that can be clung to, thus hindering liberation. *Atammayatā* frees *upekkhā*, as well as the other 6 awakening-factors and any wholesome *dhamma* that aids liberation, from clinging. Even in relation to such attainments, “the Blessed One has spoken of *non-identification* (*atammayatā*), as in whatever way one may conceive (an attainment), it turns out to be otherwise.”⁵⁹

3.2.2 Something changes, nothing changes

3.2.2.1 The universal rule or characteristic of **impermanence** is simply this: **whatever exists must change**. Conversely, existence *is* change. Change means becoming other, a cause arises only to become an effect, which then turns into a cause, and so on, *ad infinitum*. This is **the uroboros**⁶⁰ that is samsara, a serpent that devours itself with neither beginning nor end.⁶¹ In this metaphor, the serpent is curled up like a horizontal number 8, thus: ∞, the “lazy eight,” symbol for infinity.⁶²

Thus, to make “something” of anything that is imagined is to make *more* of what it really *is*. If it exists, it must change; if it does not exist, there is no issue at all. For example, God—whether as an idea or as a “necessary being” [3.2.2.2]—must exist in space and time; hence, it is impermanent. In this sense, even **something changes**.

3.2.2.2 Some theologians try to invent or defend their God’s existence by claiming that He is a “necessary being,” that is, one that exists *independently and eternally*. When we examine the various

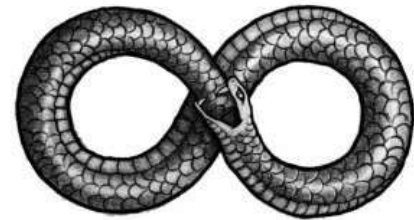


Figure 3.2.2.1. Uroboros

<https://mythologian.net/ouroboros-symbol-of-infinity/>.

⁵⁶ This was one of the well-known “proofs” of God’s existence, one formulated by William Paley (1743-1805), an English clergyman and philosopher, best remembered for *Natural Theology* (1802). He is most famous for popularizing the **teleological argument** (the argument from design) and the **watchmaker analogy**, which heavily influenced a young Charles Darwin. [PhilVideos] 8 June 2026.

⁵⁷ On the watchmaker argument, see SD 62.10a (3.3.1.4(1a) n).

⁵⁸ See SD 23.7 (1.3.1).

⁵⁹ *Atammayatā vutta bhagavatā, yena yena hi maññanti tato taṃ hoti aññatha* (M 113/3:42,28).

⁶⁰ The symbol of a snake devouring its own tail is first seen in the Pyramid of Unas (the 9th and last pharaoh of the Fifth Dynasty, 24th cent BCE); *Oxford Ency of Ancient Egypt*, v2 2001:597-601. [Linsteadt] 14 Mar 2026

⁶¹ In *the uroboros*, see SD 23.3 (1); SD 49.2 (4.3.2.3).

⁶² This symbol was invented by English mathematician John Wallis, *De sectionibus conicis*, 1655:4. Three main typers of infinity are distinguished: the mathematical (called “lemniscate,” M J Erickson, *Beautiful Mathematics*, 2011:1-3), the physical and the metaphysical. The idea however goes back to the Greek philosopher and mathematician, *Pythagoras* (580-500 BCE), regarding the ratio between the diagonal and the side of a square. Here it is a metaphysical infinity, a symbol for *samsāra*. 14 Mar 2026.

God-ideas that exist today, we will notice that each of these views tries to claim that only *it* is true and all the rest *false*. They cannot all be true; in fact, *none* of them is true. Each God-idea is clearly the result or essence of the God-creator's⁶³ **desire** for power over others; often it is a manifestation of the male attempt to dominate others, especially the female. In short, *man* has created God in *his* own image.

When we carefully examine to see what really exists or can exist as “necessary,” that is, independently and eternally (with neither beginning nor end), we can only truly conclude that they are **causes and effects**. Although we speak of “causes” and “effects,” they are both really one and the same thing. It is simply what we see as preceding the other, as what comes first in time and what follows. For example, we like something (a cause), it brings us pleasure (an effect); when it ends (a cause), we feel pain (effect), and so on.

We have thus made **something** (*kiñcana*) an event or a person by flooding it with some past pleasurable memory of a similar event or person or thought. This “something” then becomes causes and effects in our minds, and we suffer the fruits of this by creating something out of nothing. The God-idea is the clearest example of creating something out of nothing. A disastrous and widespread effect of such an invention and belief is religious war, which is basically one group's desire to exert its power over others.⁶⁴

3.2.2.3 In very significant ways, our sufferings arise simply because we keep making **something** out of nothing. In our ignorance, we are unable to see that there is really **nothing** but causes and effects arising in our own minds which we project into the world, and make something of them. We fail to see that all these causes and effects are mind-made; thus, they are *conditioned*; they rise and pass away, becoming new causes and new effects. What we should do is to see how we can re-direct, adjust, or end such negative causes or negative effects to become wholesome causes or wholesome effects, and build on them a mind of calm and clarity.

When we say that “there is nothing but causes and effects,” it means that no matter what we think of them, they remain so. The pleasure or the pain arises not from these causes or effects, but from our own thinking. When we quip that “there is a reason for everything” (or something to that effect), in a wholesome sense, this is all that we can and are doing: we are reasoning out the cause of the effect *for ourselves*.

In this sense, too, there is really nothing out there except arising and falling away of states, and what we make of them. In other words, **even “nothing” changes**. When we understand that “what we make of them” is really “nothing,” then they have neither cause nor effect on us. This is the end of suffering.

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⁶³ Notice the ambiguity of this word, which actually means “the creator of the God idea's.”

⁶⁴ On religious wars, see SD 60.1c (15.2.1); SD 64.6 (2.1.4).

(Duka) Sappurisa Sutta

The (Twos) Discourse on the True Individual

A 2.31

1 “Bhikshus, I will teach you **the ground of the bad person** and **the ground of the good person**.⁶⁵

Listen and attend closely. I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” those bhikshus replied.

The Blessed One said this:

2 “And what is **the ground**⁶⁶ **of a bad person** [a false individual] (*asappurisa, bhūmi*)?

A bad person knows not kindness done for him (*akatañ, ñū*) and rejoices not in kindness done for him (*akata, vedī*). For **ingratitude** and **unthankfulness** are extolled by the bad. *Ingratitude* and *unthankfulness* belong entirely to the ground of the false person.

3 And what is **the ground of a good person** [a true individual] (*sappurisa, bhūmi*)?

A good person knows kindness done for him (*katañ, ñū*) and rejoices in kindness done for him (*kata, vedī*). For **gratitude** and **thankfulness** are extolled by the good. Gratitude and thankfulness belong entirely to the ground of the good person.”

—evaṃ—

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⁶⁵ *Asappurisa, bhūmiñ ca vo bhikkhave desessāmi sappurisa, bhūmiñ ca.*

⁶⁶ Comy glosses *bhūmi* (n) as “establishing, setting up, foundation, fixing, support, help” (*patiṭṭhānam*, AA 2:121, 2 f).