SD 65.11

Isi,datta Sutta 2

Dutiya Isidatta Sutta
The Second Isi,datta Discourse | **S 41.3**
Theme: Wrong views and why they arise
Translated and annotated by Piya Tan 2009, ©2026

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

The Isi,datta Sutta 2 (S 41.3) relates the houselord Citta hosting some monks for alms offering. He asks the elder monk a question about the "various views that arise in the world" [§7], that is, the 10 undeclared questions, on why they arise at all. The elder monk is unable to reply, and the answer comes from the most junior of the monks present, Isi,datta, who explains that these views arise on account of **identity view** (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*) [§12.2]. On being further asked how identity view arises, Isi,datta replies that when one sees any of the 5 aggregates—*form, feeling, perception, formations or consciousness*—as "I, me, mine."

Technically, one sees the self-idea in any of 4 ways (the 4 kinds of identity views)—one sees *the aggregate* as the self, as *having* the self, or as *in the self*, or the self as *in the aggregate*—thus giving a total of 20 self-identity views [§13]. Isi,datta is praised by the elder monk.

1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE

1.2.1 The 2 Isi,datta Suttas (S 41.2 f)

1.2.1.1 The Isi,datta Sutta 1 (S 41.2) and **the Isi,datta Sutta 2** (S 41.3) are two accounts, located in the wild mango grove at Macchikā,saṇḍa of the houselord. There Citta asks a Dharma question and the monk Isi,datta answers it to Citta's satisfaction each time. The 2 accounts probably refer to events on consecutive days or not too many days apart. Both the eponymous Suttas present the monk Isi,datta as being adept in the Dharma, as evident from his answers to Citta's questions.

1.2.1.2 Both the Isi,datta Suttas record Citta the houselord asking a Dharma question that only Isi,-datta, the newest of the monks present, was able to answer. In **the Isi,datta Sutta 1** (S 41.2) Citta asks about "the various elements" (*dhatu,nānatta*), which Isi,datta explains are the 18 sense-bases [SD 65.10 (1.1)]. In **the Isi,datta Sutta 2** (S 41.3) Citta asks about the 10 undeclared points, why they arise; Isi,datta replies that they arise on account of the identity view, which in turn arises on account of the self view.

1.2.2 Isi,datta in Isi,datta Sutta 2

1.2.2.1 The same Isi,datta—the newest of the monks present—appears in both Isi,datta Sutta 1 and Isi,datta Sutta 2, wherein he answers a Dharma question asked by Citta the houselord [1.2.1.2]. Isi,datta answers both questions properly, to Citta's satisfaction and earns the praise of the sangha elder. Citta joyfully serves the monks present the alms meal.

1.2.2.2 At the end of the Sutta, Citta learns that **Isi,datta** is his "unseen friend" (*adiṭṭha,sahāya*) of Avantī, with whom Citta had been corresponding about the 3 jewels in their teenage days. On account of Citta's explanations in his mails, Isi,datta gains faith in the 3 jewels, and goes on to renounce to join the

sangha. Delighted, Citta invites Isi,datta to reside in his wild mango grove, promising to provide him with all the monastic requisites.

1.2.2.3 However, on that very same day, Isi,datta left Macchikā,saṇḍa and never returned. Neither the Commentaries (eg, SA 3:92, ThaA 1:248 f) nor the Subcommentary (SAṬ) tell us why the Isi,datta quietly left for good. If we are to read this event in the sutta spirit, we may say that Isi,datta saw the danger in gains, honour and praise (*lābha,sakkāra,siloka*) as often warned by the Buddha (**Bhindi S**, S 17.33, SD 46.24). So he chose to dwell in solitude and anonymity.

2 "The various views that arise in the world" [§7]

2.1 THE 10 UNDECLARED POINTS[1]

2.1.1 Why the Buddha has set them aside[2]

2.1.1.1 The 10 undeclared points (*avyākata vatthu*) are those speculative ideas that have been "set aside" (*ṭhapanīya*) by the Buddha—he is silent on them—since they have nothing to do with the process of spiritual development or awakening. The universe is so vast both in time and in space that it is beyond the capability of the human mind to fathom it.

Speculating on the nature of the universe, including its origin or first cause, will not free one from suffering. The Buddha's teachings focus only on understanding one's own mind for the sake of ending suffering and finding true peace.

Speculating on the nature of the universe, arguing over unprovable points, without knowing the facts, only leads to stress, anxiety, and doubt. One's time and energy are better directed to training the mind and freeing it from defilements.[3]

2.1.1.2 The 10 questions are "**wrongly put**" (*na upeti,* "do not apply"), that is, they are based on false assumptions, that a "self" or "being" exist in the way that the questions are asked. For example, it is assumed that there is a permanent "self" or "soul"; or that there is a "being" (*tathāgata*)[4] in the first place. The Buddha teaches that nothing is permanent; whatever exists must change.[5]

2.1.2 The 10 points and the 62 bases for wrong view[6]

2.1.2.1 The main teaching of **the Brahma,jāla Sutta** (D 1) is the set of 62 grounds upon which all wrong views, actual and potential, arise. This set is divided into 2 large sections: speculations about the

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[1] See **Silence of the Buddha**, SD 44.1 (5). These 10 theses are mentioned in: **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72 *passim*), SD 6.15; **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63 *passim*), SD 5.8 (2); **Vacchagotta Saṁy** (S 33); **Nānā Titthiyā S 1** (U 6.4), SD 40a.14; **Titthā S** (U 6.5), SD 5.8 (2+4). See Y Karunadasa, "The Unanswered Questions, Why were they unanswered? A re-examination of the textual data," *Pacific World*, 3rd ser 9 2007:3-31. 15 July 2026.

[2] On the *avyākata* theses and the 62 grounds for wrong views, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1/1-46), SD 25.1 (6.1); SD 5.8 (4). For **D 1** tr with comy and subcomy excerpts, see Bodhi, *The All Embracing Net of Views*, Kandy, 1978.

[3] Early Buddhism is however not against scientific study of the nature of the universe for the betterment of human life and the environment, and the advancement of knowledge.

[4] On the meaning of ***tathagata*** here, see SD 5.8 (3).

[5] On the 4 ways of asking questions and answering them, see **Pañha Vyākaraṇa S** (A 4.42/2:46), SD 46.12; SD 46.11 (2.2). In **(Catukka) Ānanda S** (A 4.174b/2:162 f), Ānanda wrongly puts his questions to Mahā Koṭṭhita who does not answer them (SD 57.37).

[6] On the grounds for views: SD 5.8 (4). **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,1.29-31), SD 25; **Mahāli S** (D 6,16-19) only on "the self" (*jīva*); **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,25-30), SD 7.14; **Pāsādikā S** (D 29,30-33) only on the tathāgata's state.

past (18 grounds) [Section A][7] and speculations about the future (44 grounds) [Section B].[8] Section A (speculations about the past) is, except for the last standpoint (grounds 17-18), presented in sets of 4 propositions. But this is not the famous tetralemma (*catu,koṭi,* Skt *catuṣ,koṭi,* the 4 points) of ancient Indian logic, which is actually used in Section B (speculations about the future) where applicable.

Section A, speculations about the past, comprises 5 standpoints or subsets of views (*diṭṭhi-ṭ,ṭhāna*), namely:

I	eternalism	1-4	§§30-37	4 views
II	partial eternalism	5-8	§§38-52	4 views
III	extensionism	9-12	§§53-60	4 views
IV	endless hedging	13-16	§§61-66	4 views
V	fortuitous arising	17-18	§§67-70.	2 views

And **Section B**, speculations about the future, comprises only 3 standpoints or subsets of views, namely,

VI	immortality (afterlife or survival)			
	(1) conscious survival	19-34	§§75-77	16 views
	(2) non-conscious survival	35-42	§§78-80	8 views
	(3) neither conscious nor non-conscious survival	43-50	§§81-83	8 views
VII	annihilationism	51-57	§§84-92	7 views
VIII	supreme nirvana here and now	58-62	§§93-99.	5 views

2.1.2.2 The Brahmā,jāla Sutta (D 1) deals with the 10 undeclared points in these sections:[9]

The world

(1) The world is eternal;
(2) The world is not eternal;
(3) The world is finite;
(4) The world is infinite;

} eternalist views (D 1,1.30-35)

} extensionist views (D 1,2.16-21)

The Self (or Soul)

(5) The self is the same as the body;
(6) The self and the body are separate;

} theism / polytheism[10]

} partial eternalism

The *tathāgata* [a being][11]

(7) … exists after death;
(8) … does not exist after death;
(9) … both exists and does not exist after death;
(10) … neither exists nor not exist after death.

— polytheism[12]

} spatial views [SD 5.8 (4.6)]

[7] D 1,28-73/1:12-30.

[8] D 1,74-104/1:30-39.

[9] D 1/1:1-46, SD 25 (4); SD 5.8 (4).

[10] Polytheism of beings who were gods defiled by play (*khiḍḍa,padosikā*). SD 54.3a (3.4.4.2).

[11] Comys generally def *tathāgata* as "being" (*satta*): in a speculative view, clearly, *tathāgata* more broadly refers to a "saint," in a general sense of someone liberated, *not* necessarily only a buddha or an arhat. For a canonical def of *tathāgata,* see **Pāsādika S** (D 29,28 f/3:135 f); also Toshiichi ENDO 1997:195-206 (ch V). On the ineffability of the *tathāgata*, see Harvey 1995:235-245. See foll §3.

[12] Polytheism of beings who were gods defiled by mind (*mano,padosikā*). SD 54.3a (3.4.4.3).

2.2.2 The purpose of the spiritual life

The Cūḷa Māluṅkya,putta Sutta (M 63) records the Buddha's famous parable of the man wounded with a poisoned dart (or arrow) to highlight the urgency of freeing oneself from suffering rather than merely speculating about the various questions on the nature of the universe, the existence of the Soul, or the nature of the after-life [2.1.2.2].

The parable goes like this (abridged): suppose a man was badly wounded by a poisoned dart, and his relatives and friends brought a physician to remove the dart. However, the man refuses to get the dart removed until he has known:

what social class the person who shot the poisoned dart is from;

what that person looks like;

what the bow and dart are made of; and so on—

the wounded man would sooner have died a painful death than have any of the above questions answered.

Similarly, when we are taken up with speculating any of 10 undeclared points, we would continue to suffer and die, and we will still never know any of their answers, since there are really none.[13]

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Isi,datta Sutta 2

The 2nd Isi,datta Discourse

S 41.3

1 At one time, some elder monks were dwelling in the wild mango grove at Macchikā,saṇḍa.[14]

2 Then Citta the houselord approached those elder monks, saluted them, and sat down at one side.

3 Sitting at one side, Citta the houselord said to them:

"Bhantes, let the elders consent to accept tomorrow's meal from me."

The elder monks consented by their silence.

4 Then Citta the houselord, having understood that the elders had consented, rose from his seat, saluted them and, keeping them on his right, departed.

5 When the night had passed, in the morning, the elder monks dressed, took their bowls and outer robes, and went to the residence of Citta the houselord. There they sat down on the seats that had been laid out.

6 **[286]** Then Citta the houselord approached the elder monks, saluted them and sat down at one side.

7 Sitting at one side, he said to the venerable elder:

"Bhante, there are various **views** that arise in the world, namely: [2.1]

(1) the world is eternal; or

(2) the world is not eternal; or

[13] See also SD 65.9 (1.2.2.3).

[14] On the place-names here, see **Isi,datta S 1** (S 41.2,1) nn (SD 65.10).

(3) the world is finite; or
(4) the world is infinite; or
(5) the soul and the body are the same; or
(6) the soul is one thing, the body is another; or
(7) the tathagata exists after death; or
(8) the tathagata does not exist after death; or
(9) the tathagata both exists and does not exist after death; or
(10) the tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death—

these, and the 62 views mentioned in the Brahma,jāla.[15] [2.2]

Now, bhante, when what exists do these views come to be?
When what does not exist do these views not come to be?"
When this was said, the venerable elder was silent. [§9]

8 A second time Citta the houselord said to the venerable elder:
"*Bhante, there are various **views** that arise in the world:*
the world is eternal; or
the world is not eternal; or
the world is finite or
the world is infinite; or
the soul and the body are the same; or
the soul is one thing, the body is another; or
the tathagata exists after death; or
the tathagata does not exist after death; or
the tathagata both exists and does not exist after death; or
the tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death—

these, and the 62 views mentioned in the Brahma,jāla.
Now, bhante when what exists do these views come to be?
When what does not exist do these views not come to be?"
A second time the elder was silent.

9 A third time Citta the houselord said to the elder monk:
"*Bhante, there are various views that arise in the world:*
the world is eternal; or
the world is not eternal; or
the world is finite or
the world is infinite; or
the soul and the body are the same; or
the soul is one thing, the body is another; or
the tathagata exists after death; or
the tathagata does not exist after death; or
the tathagata both exists and does not exist after death; or
the tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death—

these, and the 62 views mentioned in the Brahma,jāla.
Now, bhante, when what exists do these views come to be?
When what does not exist do these views not come to be?"
A third time the venerable elder was silent.

[15] *Yāni c'imāni dvā.saṭṭhi,diṭṭhi.gatāni brahma,jāle bhaṇiṭṭāni.*

10 Now at that time, the venerable **Isi,datta** was the most junior monk in that sangha.

11 Then the venerable Isi,datta said to the venerable elder:

"Allow me, bhante, to answer Citta the houselord's question."

"Answer it, avuso Isi,datta." **[287]**

12 "Now, houselord, are you asking thus:

'*Bhante, there are various **views** that arise in the world:*

the world is eternal; or
the world is not eternal; or
the world is finite or
the world is infinite; or
the soul and the body are the same; or
the soul is one thing, the body is another; or
the tathagata exists after death; or
the tathagata does not exist after death; or
the tathagata both exists and does not exist after death; or
the tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death—

these, and the 62 views mentioned in the Brahma,jāla.

Now, bhante, when what exists do these views come to be?
When what does not exist do these views not come to be?'"

"Yes, bhante."

12.2 "As to the various views that arise in the world, houselord,

'*the world is eternal; or*
the world is not eternal; or
the world is finite or
the world is infinite; or
the soul and the body are the same; or
the soul is one thing, the body is another; or
the tathagata exists after death; or
the tathagata does not exist after death; or
the tathagata both exists and does not exist after death; or
the tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death';

these, and the 62 views mentioned in the Brahma,jāla—

when there is **identity view**,[16] these views come to be;

when there is *no* identity view, these views do *not* come to be."

13 "But, bhante, how does **identity view** arise?"

"Here, houselord, the uninstructed worldling, who has no regard for the noble ones and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma, who has no regard for the true individuals and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma,[17]

regards **form** as self, or self as possessing form, or form as in self, or self as in form.

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[16] See **"I": the nature of identity,** SD 19.1 esp (2.2) on the 20 kinds of self identity views. On the 10 kinds of identity view, see SD 55.9 (2.2.2.2(86)).

[17] Here, the 4 self-centred or self identity views are applied to each of the 5 aggregates making a total of 20 kinds of self-centred views (*attā'nudiṭṭhi*): **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81,14-24) + SD 6.1 (4.2); SD 53.5 (2.2.1).

He regards **feeling** as self,
or self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling.
He regards **perception** as self,
or self as possessing perception, or perception as in self, or self as in perception.
He regards **formations** as self,
or self as possessing formations, or formations as in self, or self as in formations.
He regards **consciousness** as self,
or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness.
It is in such a way that identity view comes to be."

14 "But, bhante, how does **identity view** not come to be?"

"Here, houselord, the instructed noble disciple, who has regard for the noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dharma, who has regard for the true individuals and is skilled and disciplined in their Dharma,

does *not* regard **form** as self, or self as possessing form, or form as in self, or self as in form.
He does *not* regard **feeling** as self,
or self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in self, or self as in feeling.
He does *not* regard **perception** as self,
or self as possessing perception, or perception as in self, or self as in perception.
He does not regard **formations** as self,
or self as possessing formations, or formations as in self, or self as in formations.
He does not regard **consciousness** as self,
or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness.
It is in such a way that identity view does *not* come to be."

15 [288] "Bhante, where does master[18] Isi,datta come from?"

"I come from Avantī,[19] houselord."

15.2 "There is, bhante, a clansman from Avantī named Isi,datta, an unseen friend of ours, who has gone forth. Has the venerable one ever met him?"

"Yes, houselord."

"Where is that venerable one now dwelling, bhante?"

When this was said, the venerable Isi,datta was silent.

15.3 "Is the master Isi,datta?"

"Yes, houselord."

"Then let master Isi,datta delight in the pleasant wild mango grove at Macchikā,saṇḍa. I will diligently provide master Isi,datta with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicinal requisites."

"That is well said, houselord."[20]

16 Then Citta the houselord, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Isi,datta's words, with his own hands served and satisfied the elder monks with the various kinds of delicious food.

17 When the elder monks had finished eating and had put away their bowls, they rose from their seats and departed.

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[18] "Master," *ayyo* (Skt, *arya/ārya,* ind voc), a noble or venerable person, lord, master; usu vocative.

[19] One of the 4 great monarchies in the time of the Buddha, the other 3 being Magadha, Kosala, and Vaṁsa (or Vatsa). Avanti is also mentioned among the 16 great states (*mahā,janapadā*). Its capital was Ujjenī. See DPPN sv.

[20] *Kalyāṇaṁ vuccati gahapatī ti.*

18 Then the venerable elder said to the venerable Isi,datta:

"It is good, avuso Isi,datta, that the answer to this question occurred to you. The answer did not occur to me.[21]

Therefore, avuso Isi,datta, whenever a similar question arises at any time, you should explain just like that."

19 Then the venerable Isi,datta, having set his lodging in order and, taking bowl and robe, left Macchika,saṇḍa. When he left Macchika,saṇḍa, he left for good and never returned.[22]

— evaṁ —

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[21] This is a case of the silence of ignorance: see **Isi,datta S 1** (S 41.2,9) n (SD 65.10).

[22] Neither SA nor SAṬ tell us why the elder Isi,datta quietly left for good. If we are to read this event in the sutta spirit, we may say that Isi,datta sees the danger in gain, honour and praise (*lābha,sakkāra,siloka*) as often warned by the Buddha (**Bhindi S**, S 17.31, SD 46.24). So he chooses to dwell in complete anonymity.