

Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on Undertaking Things | M 45/1:305-309

Theme: Four types of behaviour in terms of moral virtue

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010

1 Comparative study

The **Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta** or Lesser Discourse on Undertaking Things,” which lists four ways of moral conduct, has a parallel in the Chinese **Madhyama Āgama**.¹ The two versions begin by listing four ways of undertaking things, which are either pleasant or else painful now, and each of which may result in future pleasure or in future pain.

The Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta and its Madhyama Āgama parallel agree in presenting what is pleasant now and painful in future as their first and what is pleasant both now and in future as their last alternative. They differ in as much as the Pali version treats the way that is painful now and ripens in pain as its *second* alternative, and the way that is painful now and ripens in pleasure as its *third* alternative, while in the Chinese version these middle two appear reversed.

Such sequential variations often occur between the Pali and their Chinese parallels. What makes this particular case noteworthy is that neither sequence corresponds to the pattern to be expected, since in the discourses such listings usually proceed from the most negative case to the most positive.

This is, in fact, the sequence found in **the Saṅgīti Sutta**’s (D 33) treatment of the same topic, which begins with the way of undertaking things that is painful in both respects; followed by what is painful only now; then, what is painful only in the future; and culminates in what is pleasant both now and in the future.² [2.2]

The next discourse in the Majjhima Nikāya, **the Mahā Dhamma Samādāna Sutta** (M 46), conforms to the same general pattern, as it also places what is painful in both respects first and treats what is pleasant in both respects as its last.³

Thus, in spite of the strong tendency of oral transmission to standardize enumerations, the Pali discourses show considerable differences in their listing in the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta. This is especially remarkable, as two discourses—the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta and the Mahā Dhamma Samādāna Sutta—follow one another immediately and belong to the same reciter corpus of *the Majjhima bhāṅakas*, where we would have expected to find the same sequence at least in these two consecutive discourses.

Unlike the Theravāda tradition here, the Sarvāstivāda tradition presents the four ways of undertaking things in a more uniform manner, since the Chinese parallels to the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta and the Mahā Dhamma Samādāna Sutta agree with each other and with the Saṅgīti, paryāya on the sequence of their presentation.⁴

¹ The parallel is MĀ 174/T1.711b-712c, which agrees with M 45 on the title, 受法 *shòufǎ*, “undertaking the Dharma,” though without the qualification “lesser” (*cūḷa*), and locates the discourse in Jeta’s grove near Sāvattṥi. The qualification “lesser” would, in fact, not have suited MĀ 174, as the counts of Chinese characters given at T1.712c3 and T1.713c16 indicate that MĀ 174 is longer than MĀ 175, the Madhyama Āgama parallel to the Greater Discourse on Undertaking Things (M 46). This sutta summary is based on **Analayo** 2006:188-190 (unpublished PhD thesis).

² D 33.1.11(24)/3:229,6.

³ M 46.5/1:310 f= SD 59.11, which, however, differs from D 33 in that it has what is pleasant now and painful in future as its second and what is painful now and pleasant in future as its third, whereas D 33 has these two in reverse.

⁴ MĀ 175/T1.712c13 agrees with the sequence found in MĀ 174/T1.711b21. The same sequence recurs in another parallel to M 46, ie T83/T1.902b15. The reconstruction of the relevant passage from the Skt fragments of **Saṅgīti Sūtra** in Stache-Rosen 1968a:115 may have suffered from a misprint, since its restoration presents the way that is pleasant in both respects twice. **Saṅgīti, paryāya** (T1536/T26.398c6), tr in Stache-Rosen 1968a:115, has the same sequence as MĀ 174, as does the Mahā, vyutpatti 1560 in Sakaki 1926:125. The Chinese parallel to the Saṅgīti Sūtra found in Dīrgha Āgama (DA 9/T1.50c2) agrees with the Pali Saṅgīti S, while another Chinese tr of the Saṅgīti Sūtra

2 Significance of the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta

2.1 TYPES OF PRACTICE. The Sutta Commentary glosses *dhamma* here as “the entanglements of what is grasped” (*gahita, gahanā*) (MA 2:371,17). In other words, *dhamma* here does not specifically refer to the Teaching, but to our general conduct. As such, it is translated simply as “things.”

The Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta and its Madhyama Āgama parallel explain in similar ways that the way of undertaking things that is *pleasant now but ripens in future pain* refers to recluses and brahmins who indulge in sexual pleasures, as a result of which they will experience rebirth in hell,⁵ comparable to the fate of a sal tree gradually overgrown by a creeper.

In relation to the simile that illustrates their fate, the Pali version indicates that the seed of such a creeper might become a “no-seed,”⁶ that is, unviable. Its Chinese parallel clarifies the implication of this expression, as it describes how this seed “might rot and not be a seed (any more),” 或剃鬚髮 *huòtìxūfà* (literally, “bereft of hair and beard”).⁷

The Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta and its Chinese parallel illustrate the way of undertaking that is *painful now and painful in future* with the example of various ascetic practices and self-mortifications in vogue in ancient India, practices that according to both versions tend to lead to a lower rebirth. The Chinese list of such practices treats not only the practice of pulling out the hair and beard, mentioned also in the Pali version [§5b], but also lists the practice of shaving the hair and beard.⁸ However, since Buddhist monks regularly shave the hair and beard, it is curious for the Madhyama Āgama discourse to include shaving the hair and beard among practices that lead to a lower rebirth.

The two versions present the way of undertaking things that is *painful now and pleasant in the future* in similar ways, indicating that those who live the holy life in its purity, even though they suffer the strong influence of lust, anger or delusion, will be reborn in heaven.⁹ The way of undertaking things *pleasant both now and in future* then stands for the complementary case of someone who lives the holy life without being under the strong influence of lust, anger or delusion.

The Pali version treats the present and future pleasure experienced by this person by describing the attainment of the four dhyanas and heavenly rebirth.¹⁰ Its Chinese parallel instead describes how this person lives the holy life happily and eradicates *the five lower fetters*, thereby becoming a non-returner.¹¹ Here, the Madhyama Āgama version’s presentation of the fourth way of undertaking things evinces a more typically early Buddhist orientation, since for a discourse addressed to a group of monks the attainment of non-return would be a more appropriate prospect than heavenly rebirth.¹²

2.2 THE FOURKINDS OF INDIVIDUALS. The theme of the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta (M 45) is that of karmic fruition, thus:

- (1) conduct that is pleasant now, but resulting in future pain;
- (2) conduct that is painful now, and ripening in future pain;

(T12/T1.229a18), follows the sequence found in M 45 (on the school affiliation of Saṅgīti.paryāya cf also Tripathi 1985:198-199).

⁵ Judging from **Āpāyika S** (A 3.111/1:266,3) [4], the prospect of rebirth in hell awaits not only those who indulge in sex while pretending to be living a celibate life (*brahma, cariya*), but is also obtains in simply holding this view and acting accordingly, even if this is done *without* feigning celibacy.

⁶ M 45/1:306,12: *abījam vā pan’assa*.

⁷ MĀ 174/T1.711c11: 或敗壞不成種子.

⁸ MĀ 174/T1.712b15. The same ref to shaving the hair and beard recurs in listings of ascetic practices found in MĀ 18/T1.442a6 and in MĀ 104/T1.592b26, and also in a similar listing in DĀ 8/T1.47c29. M 45.5b/1:308,6 and MĀ 174/T1.712b12 agree, however, on incl another practice undertaken by Buddhist monks in their listing, namely, the wearing of rag-robos.

⁹ M 45/1:308,21 & MĀ 174/T1.712a20. (**Vitthāra**) **Paṭipadā S** (A 4.162) refers to the same situation under the heading *dukkha paṭipadā*, painful mode of practice. (A 4.162/2:149,18) = SD 18.3.

¹⁰ M 45.8-12/1:309.

¹¹ MĀ 174/T1.712b27.

¹² This section mostly is based on **Analayo** 2006:188-190 (unpublished).

- (3) conduct that is painful now, but ripening in future pleasure [happiness]; and
 (4) conduct that is pleasant now, and ripening in future pleasure [happiness]. [§2]

This these echoes that of such discourses as **the (Tamo,joti) Puggala Sutta** (S 3.21),¹³ which with a bit of re-arrangement would collate thus with the four types of individuals in terms of karmic progress, thus:

(Tamo,joti) Puggala Sutta

- (1) One in darkness faring into darkness,
 (2) One in darkness faring into light,
 (3) One in light faring into darkness,
 (4) One in light faring into light,

Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta

- (2) painful now, pain later (karmic stagnation);
 (3) painful now, pleasant later (karmic progress);
 (1) pleasant now, painful later (karmic descent); and
 (4) pleasant now, pleasant later (karmic ascent).

As such, the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta can be taken as a canonical commentary on the (Tamo,-joti) Puggala Sutta. The descriptions of the four kinds of individual by the (Tamo,joti) Puggala Sutta is complemented by the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta's instructive explanation of the four kinds of conduct and their fruits.

2.3 ON PĀTAVYĀTA. The word *pātvayata*, translated here as “indulgence,” is found both in the Āpāyika Sutta (A 3.111) [above] and in the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta [§3]. It is an important word here, as it describes how lust overpowers us. It is a free translation that tries to reflect the lexical as well as the commentarial definitions, to reflect the Sutta context.

The Pali-English Dictionary (PED) defines *pātvayata* as “downfall, bringing to fall, felling,” deriving it from *pātetī*, “to bring to fall, kill, destroy.” The usual verb that goes with it is *āpajjati*, “he falls” (a verb that commonly entails a fault or offence) and its various forms (*āpajjanti*, *āpajjimsu*, *mā...āppaji*, etc), that is, as *pātvayataṃ āpajjati*, etc.¹⁴

But the Commentaries derive it from √PIV, “to drink.” The Vibhaṅga Commentary, for example, says that *pātvayata* is the using or swallowing of a state which leads to downfall, and for one who asserts thus uses the sense-desire as a defilement among the sense-desires as an object like one who drinks, or who swallows (VbhA 499). In other words, sense-pleasures are seen to be enjoyed as we like.¹⁵

The Vibhaṅga itself gives the name “gratification view” (*assāda diṭṭhi*) to the notion that there is no fault (*dosa*; Skt *doṣa*) in sense-pleasures, so that we fall headlong (*āpajjati pātvayataṃ*) into it (Vbh 925/-368,26). Technically, this view refers to our inability to understand the nature of such an object, its arising (*samudaya*), its ending (*atthaṅgama*), its gratification (*assāda*), disadvantage [danger] (*ādīnava*), and escape (*nissaraṇa*) from it, often referred to in the Suttas.¹⁶

¹³ S 3.21/1:93-96 = SD 18.6. Other related discourses are: **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33.1.11(49)/3:233): a bare list of the four types of persons; **(Saṅkhitta) Puggala Sutta** (A 4.85/2:85 f): the sutta without similes and verses; **Puggala Paññatti** (Pug 4.19/51 f): the sutta without similes and verses; **Bāla,paṇḍita Sutta** (M 129.25/3:169 f): description of one “in darkness”; **Cha-ḷ-ābhijāti Sutta** (A 6.57/3:384-387): black and white birth, black and white dharmas. See SD 18.6 Intro (1.1).

¹⁴ V 4:34, 42; D 27.16/3:89; M 45.3/1:305,28, 307,11; A 3.111/1:266,3-5, 3.151/1:295,6; Vbh 368.

¹⁵ *Sevitabbam* (“to be associated with”), DA 869; *pivittabbatam*, *yathā,ruci paribhuñjitabbatam* (“to be drunk, to be consumed as one likes,” ie sensuality and its objects), MA 2:371; *pivittabbam paribhuñjitabbam* (“to be drunk, to be consumed”), AA 2:369; UA 351, 365; *pātabba,bhāvam paribhuñjanam ajjhoharaṇam* (“a consuming or partaking of, which is a state which must cause a fall”), VbhA 499.

¹⁶ See eg **Mahā,nidāna S** (D 15.34/2:69) = SD 5.17; **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.15/1:87) = SD 6.9; **Assāda S 1** (S 22.26/3:27 f) = SD 3.7. On the *assāda* formula, see **(Dhātu) Pubbe Sambodha S** (S 14.31/2:170 f) = SD 29.17 Intro (1).

3 The *māluvā* creeper

The maluva (*māluvā*; BHSD, *mālu(latā)*; AMg *māluvā*), often mentioned in early Buddhism, is a broad-leaved creeper, is also known as *pattra vallī* or *pattra latā* in Sanskrit.¹⁷ This plant is probably the *Bauhinia vahlii*, a giant climber and one of the most common *Bauhinia* species found in the sub-Himalayan region up to 3000 m. Its leaves vary in size from 20 to 40 cm in diameter, and are bilobed at the apex, and are used for making cups and plates and for wrapping food. [Fig 3]¹⁸

The maluva often figures in imageries of lust or sensuality, as in this verse from the **Sūci,loma Sutta** (S 810):

<i>Snehajā atta,sambhūtā</i> <i>Nigrodhass'eva khandhajā</i> <i>puṭhū visattā kāmesu</i> <i>māluvā'va vitatā</i> ¹⁹ vane	Arisen from affection, born of oneself, just like the trunk-shoots of the banyan, crowded, clinging to sensuality, just as the maluva spread across the woods. (S 810*/10.3/1:207) = Sn 272 ²⁰
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The Saṃyutta Commentary here explains the last line with the maluva figure as follows:

The maluva creeper grows in the forest, supporting itself on tree, weaving itself around that tree again and again, spreading over it from the tree's foot to its top, and from the top to its foot, so that it stands suspended and spread over.

Even so, the crowd of defilements of sensual desire cling to the objects of sensual desire, or the crowd of beings, on account of their defilements of sensual desire, cling to the objects of sensual desire.²¹ (SA 1:304; cf Nett 147; SnA 1:304)

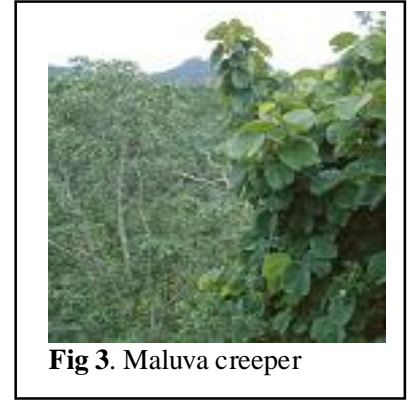


Fig 3. Maluva creeper

The point, notes **Bodhi**, “rather, seems to be that sensual desire spreads from object to object just as the creeper stretches itself out in the woods by spreading from tree to tree” (S:B 477 n568).

The Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta (M 45) has this well known maluva parable:

<i>seyyathā'pi...māluvā,sipāṭīkā phaleyya...</i> <i>māluvā,bījam aññatarasmim sāla,mūle</i> <i>nipateyya</i>	suppose...a maluva-creeper pod were to burst open...a maluva seed...would to fall at the foot of a certain sal tree [§4a; cf J 5:215]
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The following verses, too, use the maluva creeper as a figure for the reprobate (immoral person):

<i>Yassa accanta,dussīyam</i> <i>māluvā sālam iv'otatam</i> ²² <i>karoti so tathā'ttānam</i>	He who is excessively lacking moral virtue, like a sal tree spread over with maluva, does to himself just as
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¹⁷ For philological n on *māluvā*, see Luders, *Beobachten* §91; Dh:N 103 n162; Sn:N 201 n272.

¹⁸ See **Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna S** (M 45) = SD 32.4 Intro (3). Picture credit: http://online-media.uni-marburg.de/biologie/nutzpflanzen/bilder/vs/12a24_bauhinia_vahlii.jpg.

¹⁹ So Ee; Se Ke *vitthatā*.

²⁰ Eg **Sūci,loma S** (S 810*/10.3/11:207). Majjhima Comy says it has a long shape (MA 2:371). See also AA 2:319. Cf *malu'va vilada vaṇi* (Dh:G 339).

²¹ **Māluvā'va vitatā vaneti** *yathā vane māluvā latā yaṃ rukkham nissāya jāyati, taṃ mūlato yāva aggā, aggato yāva mūlā punappunam saṃsibbitvā ajjhottharivā otata,vitatā tiṭṭhati. Evaṃ vatthu,kāmesu puṭhū kilesa,kāmā vi-sattā, puṭhū vā sattā tehi kilesa,kāmehi vatthu,kāmesu visattā.*

²² Cp ab with *ratta,cittam ativeṭhayanti nam |sālam māluva,latā,va kānane* (**Kuṇāla J**, J 4181cd* at J 536/5:-452,26*-27*). Cp bd with *malutā sālam ivo'tatā* (Dh:Pkt 306b) & *yathā nam biṣam icchati* (306d).

yathā nam icchati diso

wishes to do to him.

(Dh 162; DhA 3:153,10 f; J 5:452,26*-27*; cf Dh:G 330)²³

*Manujassa pamatta, cārino
taṅhā vaḍḍhati māluvā viya
so palavati hurā, huram²⁴
phalam iccham'va vanasmim²⁵ vānaro*

For a man who lives heedlessly,
craving grows like the maluva:
he bounds about here and there
like a monkey seeking fruit in a forest.

(Dh 334 = Tha 399; Uv 3.4)²⁶

In a rare positive imagery, **the Khadira Sutta** (M 56.32) allude to the leaves of the maluva, apparently large and useful enough for making baskets that can bear water.²⁷ **The Kathā, vatthu** similarly uses the maluva in a positive sense in reference to how merit grows (*puññam...māluvā viya vaḍḍhati*, Kvu 343) and how moral virtue grows (*sīlam...māluvā viya vaḍḍhati*, Kvu 439).²⁸

4 The Āpāyika Sutta (A 3.111)

SD 32.4 (4)

Āpāyika Sutta

The Discourse on the Downfall-bound | A 3.111/1:265

A 5.3.2.1 = Aṅguttara Nikāya 5, Pañcaka Nipāta 3, Tatiya Paññāsaka 2, Āpāyika Vagga 1

Theme: How we live now moulds how we will live hereafter

Bhikshus, there are these three who are downfall-bound, hell-bound, if they do not abandon it. Which are the three?

- (1) He, not living the holy life, claims to be living it.
- (2) He who, without basis, accuses one who is living the pure holy life of not doing so.
- (3) He who holds such a doctrine, such a view, that *there is no fault in sensuality*, and falls headlong into sensuality.²⁹

These, bhikshus, are the three who are downfall-bound, hell-bound, if they do not abandon it.

— evaṃ —

The underlying notion here is that of spiritual falsehood, of not being true to oneself and to others. Here are a few examples of them:

²³ **Patna Dh:** *Yassa accanta, doṣṣillam | malutā sālam ivo'tatā | karoti sotathāttānam | yathā nam biṣam icchati* (Dh:Ptn 306). **Gandhārī Dh:** *Yasa acada-druṣili'a | malu'a va vilada vaṇi | kuya so tadha [a]tvaṇa | yadha ṇa viṣamu ichadi* (Dh:G 330 &n); **Udāna, varga:** *yo asāv atyanta, duḥśīlah | sālavan māluta yathā | karoty asau tath'ātāmānam | yatha enam dviṣad icchati* (Uv 11.10).

²⁴ Lines cd: ...h]oru | phalam icho va vaṇasma vaṇaru (Dh:G 91).

²⁵ Brough says this is unmetrical; “the original verse doubtless had *vanasmi*.” (Dh:G 205 n91). Tha 399 correctly scans *vanasmi*, but while ThaA reads *vanasmi*, the lemma reads *vanasmim* (ThaA 2:170). See also DhA 4:44; UA 237. See Tha:N 188 n399.

²⁶ **Udāna, varga:** *manujasya pramatta cārinā | tṛṣṇā vardhati mālutā iha hi [v]l māluteva hī | sa hi sāmsare punaḥ phalam | icchann iva vānaro vane* (Uv 3.4); **Patna Dh:** *manujassa pramatta, cārino | taṅhā vaddhati mālutā iva | sā prāplavate hurāhuram | phalam eṣī va vanamhi vānnaro* (Dh:Ptn 137).

²⁷ S 56.32/5:438 f = SD 21.8.

²⁸ Kvu 8.5.1/343, 10.9.2/439.

²⁹ *N'atthi kāmesu dosō ti, so tāya kāmesu pātavyatam āpajjati*. As at Vbh 368, where Comy def this as “a consuming or partaking of, which is a state that must cause a fall” (*pātabba, bhāvaṃ paribhuñjanam ajjhoharaṇam*, VbhA 499).

- (1) **Kukkura,vaṭṭika Sutta** (M 57), about two ascetics, one behaving as a dog, the other as a cow, thinking that this is “holy.” The Buddha replies as they habitually act, so will they be reborn. (M 57/1:387-392) = SD 23.11.
- (2) **Bāhiṭṭika Sutta** (M 88). The female wanderer Sundarī, instigated by wanderers jealous of the Buddha, has her accuse him of having an affair with her. The wanderers then murder her and accuses the Buddha of it, but the truth is revealed in due course. (M 88/2:112-117; U 4.8/43-45; J 2:415-417) = SD 49.12.
- (3) **Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22). The monk Ariṭṭha wrongly thinks that since a streamwinner can indulge in sense-pleasures, a monastic too could do so (MA 2:103). The Buddha declares that he has constantly taught against just such a wrong view (M 22/1:130-142) = SD 3.1.3.

It should be noted here that the prospect of rebirth in hell awaits not only those who indulge in sex while pretending to be living a celibate life (*brahma, cariya*), but also obtains for those who merely hold this view and acting accordingly, even if this is done *without* feigning celibacy.

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The Lesser Discourse on Undertaking Things

M 45/1:305-309

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove³⁰ near Sāvathī.³¹

There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus,

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

Four ways of undertaking things

2 The Blessed One said this:

“Bhikshus, there are these four ways of undertaking things. What are the four?”

- (1) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus,
that is pleasant now, but ripening as pain in the future.
- (2) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus,
that is painful now, and ripening as pain in the future.
- (3) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus,
that is painful now, but ripening as pleasure in the future.
- (4) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus,
that is pleasant now, and ripening as pleasure in the future.

Pleasant now, painful later

3 (1) And what, bhikshus, is the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now, but ripening as pain in the future?

There are, bhikshus, certain recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine, such a view, that
“There is no fault in sensuality.”³²

They fall into the indulgence in sense-pleasures.³³ They solicit the top-knotted female wanderers.
They spoke thus:

“Seeing what future fear [danger] in sense-pleasures do these good recluses and brahmins speak of the abandoning of sense-pleasures, and declare a full understanding of sense-pleasures?”³⁴

Saying, ‘Blissful is the touch of the arm and soft hair of these young female wanderers,’ they fall into the indulgence in sense-pleasures.

Having fallen into the indulgence in sense-pleasures, with the body's breaking up, after death, they are reborn in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell. There, they suffer sensations of sharp, piercing, racking pains. They spoke thus:

“This is the future fear [danger] that these good recluses and brahmins see in sense-pleasures when they speak of the abandoning of sense-pleasures, and declare a full understanding of sense-pleasures!

For, it is because of these sense-pleasures, [306] on account of these sense-pleasures that we suffer these sensations of sharp, piercing, racking pains.’

³⁰ *Jeta, vana*, so called, says Comy, because it is “grown, maintained and guarded by prince Jeta” (*tañ hi Jetena rāja, kumārena ropitaṃ samvaddhitaṃ paripālitaṃ*) (MA 1:60; KhpA 111; PmA 3:533). As such, it is not an ordinary wild forest, but a cultivated grove.

³¹ On *tr sāvathīyaṃ* as “near (*samīpe*) Sāvathī,” rather than “*in* Sāvathī,” see Comys, eg SA 1:13; AA 1:15; KhpA 112; UA 57; PmA 3:534.

³² *N'atthi kāmesu doso ti*, ie *dosa* as Skt *doṣa*: cf A 3.111/1:266. Opp *adosa*: A 1:112,21. See **Āpāyika S** (A 3.-111/1:265) = SD 32.4 Intro (4) above.

³³ *Te kāmesu pātavyataṃ āpajjanti*. On *pātavyata*, see Intro (2.3).

³⁴ *Kiṃsu nāma te bhonto samaṇa, brāhmaṇā kāmesu anāgata, bhayaṃ sampassamānā kāmānaṃ pahānaṃ āhaṃsu, kāmānaṃ pariñānaṃ paññapenti?*

The parable of the strangled sal tree

4a Bhikshus, suppose that in the last month of the hot season, a maluva-creeper³⁵ pod were to burst open.

Then, bhikshus, a maluva seed would fall at the foot of a certain sal tree.

Then, bhikshus, a certain deity living in that sal tree would fall into fear, awe and trembling³⁶

4b But, bhikshus, the deity's friends and companions, relative by blood and marriage—park deities, forest deities, tree deities, and deities dwelling in medicinal herbs, grass and forest trees—gathered and assembled together, and would give comfort, thus:³⁷

‘Fear not, sir! Fear not, sir! Perhaps a peacock will swallow it, or a wild beast [deer] will eat it, or forest-fire will burn it, or woodsmen [forest workers] will carry it off, or termites will devour it, or it might even not be viable!’³⁸

But, bhikshus, no peacock swallowed it, nor a wild beast [deer] ate it, nor forest-fire burnt it, nor woodsmen [forest workers] carried it off, nor termites devoured it, but it was in fact viable.

Then, indeed, having been rained upon by a downpour from a rain-cloud, it would fully sprout,³⁹ so that the maluva creeper, its soft creeping hairy tendrils would cling around that sal tree.⁴⁰

4c Then it occurs to the deity dwelling in that sal tree, thus:

‘Seeing *what* future fear [danger] in sense-pleasures do my good friends and companions, relative by blood and marriage—park deities, forest deities, tree deities, and deities dwelling in medicinal herbs, grass and forest trees—gathered and assembled together, and would give comfort, thus:

‘Fear not, sir! Fear not, sir! Perhaps a peacock will swallow it, or a wild beast [deer] will eat it, or forest-fire will burn it, or woodsmen [forest workers] will carry it off, or termites will devour it, or it might even not be viable!’?—

4d Pleasant is the touch of this maluva creeper, its soft creeping clinging hairy tendrils!

The creeper would envelope the sal tree.

Having enveloped the sal tree, it would make a canopy over it.

Having made a canopy above it, it would weigh downwards with its denseness.⁴¹

Weighing down with its denseness, it splits one big branch after big branch of the sal tree.

4e Then, bhikshus, this occurs to that deity dwelling in the sal tree,

‘It is about *this* that those good friends and companions, relative by blood and marriage—park deities, forest deities, tree deities, and deities dwelling in medicinal herbs, grass and forest trees—had gathered and assembled together, and gave comfort, thus:

‘Fear not, sir! Fear not, sir! Perhaps, a peacock will swallow it, [307] or a wild beast [deer] will eat it, or forest-fire will burn it, or woodsmen [forest workers] will carry it off, or termites will devour it, or it might even not be viable!’

³⁵ On the *māluvā*, see Intro (3).

³⁶ *Atha kho, bhikkhave, yā tasmim sāle adhiatthā devatā sā bhūtā saṁviggā santāsam āpajjeyya.* Comy: (The deity is terrified) at the thought that the creeper, sprouting from a seed, would envelope the tree with its leaves, and because of its great weight the great tree would fall to the ground in a gale or downpour and shatter, killing the deity (MA 2:371 f).

³⁷ *Atha kho, bhikkhave, tasmim sāle adhiatthāya devatāya mitt’āmaccā ñāti, sālohita ārāma, devatā vana, devatā rukkha, devatā osadhi, tiṇa, vana-p, patīsu adhiatthā devatā saṅgamma samāgamma evaṁ samassāseyyuṁ.*

³⁸ *Mā bhavaṁ bhāyi, mā bhavaṁ bhāyi; app’eva nāmetam māluvā, bījam moro vā gileyya, mago vā khādeyya, dāva, dāho vā dāheyya, vana, kammikā vā uddhareyyuṁ [v l udrabheyyuṁ], upacikā vā utṭhaheyyuṁ, abījam vā pan’-assā ti.*

³⁹ *Bījañ ca pan’assa tam pāvussakena meghena abhippavutṭham samma-d-eva viruheyya.*

⁴⁰ *Sā’ssa māluvā, latā taruṇā mudukā lomasā vilambinī, sā tam sālāṁ upaniseveyya.* Note the word-play. **Upa-niseveyya** is optative tense of *upa-ni-sevati*, “he pursues, follow, go up after, cling to”; hence, “would cling around” here.

⁴¹ *Upaṇi viṭabhiṁ karitvā oghanaṁ janeyya.* Comy explains *oghanaṁ janeyya* as that “it would create a denseness below (*heṭṭha ghanam janeyya*). Climbing upwards and encircling the whole tree, then falling downwards again so that it might touch the earth.” (MA 2:372). **Oghana** = “a pushing downwards, downwards pressure; a thick or dense entanglement” (DP sv): foll this I have rendered it freely.

And it is because of these sense-pleasures, on account of these sense-pleasures that I suffer these sensations of sharp, piercing, racking pains.’

4f Even so, bhikshus, there are certain recluses and brahmins who hold such a doctrine, such a view, that

‘There is no fault in sensuality.’

They fall into the indulgence in sense-pleasures. They solicit the top-knotted female wanderers. They spoke thus:

‘Seeing what future fear [danger] in sense-pleasures do these good recluses and brahmins speak of the abandoning of sense-pleasures, and declare a full understanding of sense-pleasures?’

Saying, ‘Blissful is the touch of the arm and soft hair of these young female wanderers,’ they fall into the indulgence in sense-pleasures.

Having fallen into the indulgence in sense-pleasures, with the body’s breaking up, after death, they are reborn in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell. There, they suffer sensations of sharp, piercing, racking pains. They spoke thus:

‘This is the future fear [danger] that these good recluses and brahmins see in sense-pleasures when they speak of the abandoning of sense-pleasures, and declare a full understanding of sense-pleasures!

For, it is because of these sense-pleasures, on account of these sense-pleasures that we suffer these sensations of sharp, piercing, racking pains.’

This, bhikshus, is called the way of undertaking things that is pleasant now, but ripening as pain in the future.⁴²

Painful now, painful later

5a (2) And what, bhikshus, is the way of undertaking things, bhikshus, that is painful now, and ripening as pain in the future?

5b⁴³ Here, bhikshus, someone is a naked ascetic,⁴⁴ of loose habits [flouting conventions],⁴⁵ licking his hands;⁴⁶

not coming when invited, not stopping when invited;

not accepting food that is brought nor food specially prepared nor a meal invitation;

accepting nothing from a pot, from a bowl, across a threshold, among the firewood, among the rice-pounders, from two eating together, from a pregnant woman, from a woman giving suck, from a woman in the midst of men,⁴⁷ from a food-distribution centre, from where a dog is waiting, from where flies are swarming;

accepting neither fish nor meat; drinking no wine nor beer nor cereal brew.⁴⁸

⁴² On types of practice, see Intro (2).

⁴³ This whole section is, *mutatis mutandis*, at **Kassapa Sīha, nāda S** (D 8.14/1:165-167 = SD 77.1) = **Udumbarikā Sīha, nāda S** (D 25.8b/3:41 = SD 1.4), with 6 additional observances) = **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12.45/1:77 f = SD 49.1, the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification) = **Kandaraka S** (M 51.8/1:342 f = SD 32.9) = **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60.-36/1:412 = SD 35.5, with 6 additional observances) = **Ghoṭa, mukha S** (M 94.10/2:161 = SD 77.2) = **Paṭipadā Accelaka S** (A 3.141/1:295 = SD 78.1) = **Atta, danḍa Sutta Nd** (Nm 15/416 f).

⁴⁴ “Naked ascetic” (*acelaka*), *a-celaka* = *acela*, “unclothed”: (m) V 4:92,14; J 5:18,25; M 1:281,33, DhA 1:309,3, 400,13, 4:489,17; J 3:246.18, 6:229,7; (adj) M 1:307,23 = 342,25 = 412,4 = 2:161,26 = D 1:166,2 = 3:40,27 = A 1:295,8 = 2:206,7; (pl) M 1:238,15 (cf A 3:384,5); (titles) *~vagga* A 1:295-299 = SD 72.4, V 4:91-108, 5:19-21, 39 f; *~laddhi* J 3:246,19, 39 f; *~sāvaka* (m pl) A 3:384,2; *~sikkhāpada* = Pāc 41 (V 4:91 f).

⁴⁵ *Mutt’ācāro*.

⁴⁶ *Haṭṭhāpalekhano*. Cf Sekh 52 (V 4:98) which proscribes hand-licking; D 1:166, 3:40; M 1:77, 238, 307; A 1:295; Pug 55.

⁴⁷ *Puris’antara’gatā*. This phrase is used to define *gihi,gata*, “gone gone to a layperson” (V 4:322); defines *itthi*, “woman” at MA 2:209, DA 78. Comys say that this is a danger to their pleasure (as such putting the ascetic at a disadvantage).

⁴⁸ *Na suraṃ, na merayāṃ, na thus’odakāṃ pivāti*. “Rice-wine,” *thus’odaka* (Skt *tuṣodaka*, “rice chaff”) “sour rice- or barley-gruel” (SED, sv *tuṣāmbu*). Comys: “a drink called *Sovīraka* made from (the husk of) all kinds of grain” (*sabba,sassa,sambhārehi katam sovīrakam*, DA 2:355 = NmA 431 = PugA 232; *sabba,sassa,sambhārehi*

He keeps himself to one house, to one morsel [when collecting alms]; he keeps himself to two houses, to two morsels... keeps to seven houses, to seven morsels;

He lives on one small serving (of food) a day; on two small servings a day... on seven small servings a day.⁴⁹

He takes food once a day; once every two days... once every seven days—thus even up to a fortnight, he dwells pursuing the practice of taking of food at such regular intervals.

He is an eater of greens, [308] or of millet, or of wild rice, or of hide-parings, or of water-lettuce,⁵⁰ or of rice-bran, or of rice-remnants,⁵¹ or of sesamum flour, or of grass, or of cow-dung.

He lives on forest roots and fruits, a windfall-eater.

He clothes himself in hemp, in hemp-mixed cloth, in shrouds,⁵² in refuse rags, in tree bark, in antelope hide, in strips of antelope hide, in kusa-grass fabric, in bark fabric, in wood-shaving fabric, in head-hair wool, in animal wool, in owl's wings.

He pulls out (his) hair and beard, and is devoted to this practice.

He stands continuously, rejecting seats.

He squats continuously, and is devoted to such a posture.

He uses a bed of spikes, making it his bed.

He engages in (the ritual of) bathing in water three times a day, including the evening.⁵³

Thus in these various ways he dwells keeping to the practice of tormenting himself and mortifying the body.⁵⁴

5c With the body's breaking up, after death, he is reborn in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.

This, bhikshus, is the way of undertaking things that is painful now, and ripening as pain in the future.⁵⁵

Painful now, pleasant later

6a (3) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus, that is painful now, but ripening as pleasure in the future?

Here, bhikshus, someone,

is by nature strongly *lustful*, and he constantly feels bodily and mental suffering born of lust;

is by nature strongly *hateful*, and he constantly feels bodily and mental suffering born of hate;

is by nature strongly *delusive*, and he constantly feels bodily and mental suffering born of delusion.

kataṃ loṇa,sovīrakam, MA 2:44); *sabba,sassa,sambhārehi kata,sovīrakam*, AA 2:385: all add that *thusodaka* is a strong drink and as such blamable (*ettha ca surā,pānam eva sāvajjam*). On “salted Sovīraka (sour gruel)” (*loṇa,sovīraka*); see Vinaya, where it is mentioned as a cure for stomach wind, and allowed as a beverage if mixed with water (Mv 6.16.3/V 1:210); mentioned in a list of drinks given to monks (Vv 177/2.2.6/23). **Suśruta Saṃhita** describes preparation of *tuṣodaka* as a medicine (SuśSaṃ 44, 40cd-44ab). It is said to be sour gruel prepared with unhusked cereals; in SuśSaṃ it refers to “fermented liquors of barley with husks” used as a purgative (GJ Meulenbeld (tr), *Mādhvanidāna*, Leiden, 1974:408 f). When boiled with pulse and barley, it becomes an acetous fermentation called *tuṣāmbu*. D:RD 3:38, “gruel”; M:ÑB 1:104 “rice gruel.” See D:RD 1:229 n2, D:W n196. My tr is contextual which suggests some kind of fermented drink.

⁴⁹ “Small serving,” *datti*. Comy says that a *datti* is a small bowlful from which they leave out the main food (MA 2:45).

⁵⁰ “Water-lettuce,” *haṭa*, a kind of water-plant, *Pistia stratiotes* (PED) of the Arales order.

⁵¹ “Rice-remnants,” *ācāma*, “the moisture of boiled rice, rice-scum, rice-water (without condiments, a mean un-savoury food—hence, prob interpreted as the burnt crust sticking to the pot” (CPD): DA 356,15 = MA 2:45,12 = AA 2:355,17 = PugA 232,25; ie “burnt rice remnants in a pot,” or “kerak nasi” in Malay.

⁵² Shrouds collected from corpses in a charnel ground.

⁵³ Apparently to wash away his “sins” as related in (**Udaka Suddhika**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 7.2I.11/1:182) = SD 79.3.

⁵⁴ This passage [§5b] is at **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60.36), where this last sentence is replaced by “This is called the person who torments himself and is intent on tormenting himself.” (M 60.36/1:412) = SD 35.5.

⁵⁵ On types of practice, see Intro (2).

6b And yet, despite his pain, despite his grief, weeping with tearful face,⁵⁶ he lives the holy life fully and perfectly.⁵⁷

With the body's breaking up, after death, he is reborn in a happy state, in a heavenly world.

This, bhikshus, is a way of undertaking things that is painful now, but ripening as pleasure in the future.⁵⁸

Pleasant now, pleasant later

7 (4) There is a way of undertaking things, bhikshus, that is pleasant now, and ripening as pleasure in the future.

Here, bhikshus, someone,

is by nature is *not* strongly lustful, and does not constantly feel bodily and mental suffering born of lust;

is by nature *not* strongly hateful, and does not constantly feel bodily and mental suffering born of hate;

is by nature *not* strongly delusive, [309] and does not constantly feel bodily and mental suffering born of delusion.

8 Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in the **first dhyana**,⁵⁹ accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of seclusion.

9 With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind, he enters and remains in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.

10 With the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body, he enters and remains in **the third dhyana**, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.'

11 With the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,⁶⁰ and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁶¹

12 With the body's breaking up, after death, he is reborn in a happy state, in a heavenly world.

This, bhikshus, is a way of undertaking things that is pleasant now, and ripening as pleasure in the future.⁶²

These, bhikshus, are the four ways of undertaking things.

13 The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved of the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

100317; 100418; 101116

⁵⁶ Comy: His teachers and preceptor inflict upon him punishments, whose frequency causes him pain and grief, or on account of his karma, he is full of attachment and so on, while another does not (MA 2:373).

⁵⁷ *So sahāpi dukkhena, sahāpi domanassena, assu, mukho'pi rudamāno paripuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahma, cariyāṃ carati.*

⁵⁸ On types of practice, see Intro (2).

⁵⁹ For a more detailed description of the *jhāna* with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 1:73-76=2.75-82).

⁶⁰ "Joy...pain," *sukha...dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—"pleasure and displeasure," *domanassa...somanassa*—refers to *mental* feelings, transcended earlier. Mental feelings must be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall'atthena S** (S 36.6/4:207-210) = SD 5.5.

⁶¹ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—equanimity (*upekhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek'aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See also **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2.83/1:75) = SD 8.10 & **Dhyana** = SD 8.4 (5.4).

⁶² On types of practice, see Intro (2).