

## 8

## The Kūṭāgāra Suttas

A 3.105/1:261 f &amp; A 3.106/1:262 f

1 Introduction

**1.1 THE SUTTAS' THEME.** Both the **Arakkhita Sutta** (A 3.105), also called the Kūṭāgāra Sutta 1, and the **Vyapanna Sutta** (A 3.106), also called the Kūṭāgāra Sutta 2, deal with the notion that “the mind affects all our activities.” They both might as well be an expansion or reflection of the famous twin verses that opens the Dhammapada:

The mind (*mano*) precedes all mental states;  
The mind is supreme; mind-made are they:  
If, with a defiled mind (*paduṭṭhena*), one speaks or acts,  
Suffering follows one like a wheel that dogs a draught ox's foot. (Dh 1)

The mind (*mano*) precedes all mental states;  
The mind is supreme; mind-made are they:  
If, with a pure (*pasannena*) mind, one speaks or acts,  
Happiness follows one like a shadow that leaves not. (Dh 2)

**1.2 THE SUTTAS' OCCASION.** Both the suttas are addressed to Anātha,piṇḍika, but they are treated as if given on two different occasions—which might well be the case. However, it is also possible that the two suttas record *separately* what originally constituted a single consecutive pair of teachings, but which became separated during transmission.

Either way, each of the two suttas give a coherent teaching, each opening with a thesis. In **A 3:105**, the thesis is “When the mind, houselord, is unguarded (*arakkhita*),” and in **A 3.106**, it is “When the mind is defiled (*vyapanna*).”

Both the suttas, each has a parable [1.3], and deals with a happy death. Hence, it is possible that these teachings are given to Anātha,piṇḍika late in his life, or on the occasion of the death of his near or dear one. The first sutta is the longer one, with 19 paragraphs, while the latter is shorter with only 11 paragraphs.

**1.3 THE PARABLE**

**1.3.1** Both the Suttas use the same parable, but each in a different way. In **A 3.105**, the ill-thatched pinnacled house refers to an unguarded mind [§§6-7] and the well-thatched pinnacled house refers to a guarded mind [§§4-5]. In **A 3.106**, the same first parable refers to a defiled mind [§§4-5], and the same second parable refers to an undefiled mind [§§9-10].

**1.3.2** The parables on the ill-thatched and the well-thatched are well known in the suttas. The best known, perhaps the most beautiful, with its rustic charm, are surely the rain imagery of the **Dhaniya Sutta** (Sn 1.2). The ancient poem has 8 pairs of contrapuntal stanzas, the first spoken by Dhaniya the cowherd, and the second a rejoinder by the Buddha.

The sutta opens with these two memorable stanzas:

*Pakkôdhano duddha,khīro 'ham asmi*  
(*iti dhaniyo gopo*)  
*anutīre mahiyā samāna,vāso*  
*channā kuṭi āhito gini—*  
*atha ce patthayasi, pavassa devo*

Boiled in my rice, done is the milking,  
(said Dhaniya the cowherd,)  
With my family, I stay on Mahī's bank.  
My hut is thatched, my fire's well a-blazing—  
Fall, rain, fall, if you must! (Sn 18)

*Akkodhano vigata,khīlo 'ham asmi*  
(*iti bhagavā*)  
*anutīre mahiy'eka,ratta,vāso*  
*vivaṭā kutī nibbuto gini—*  
*atha ce patthayasi, pavassa devo*

Anger-free, barrenness gone, am I!  
(said the Blessed One,)  
On Mahī's bank I dwell but a night,  
Uncovered is my hut, my fire quenched—  
Fall, rain, fall, if you must! (Sn 19)

Note here, however, that it is Dhaniya who boasts of a “thatched or covered roof,” that is, he enjoys worldly comfort and wealth. The Buddha, on the other hand, sings of the open air (probably living under a shady tree), and is just passing through, as it were, for Dhaniya’s benefit.

We see the roof parable of the Kūṭāgāra Suttas used here in reverse, thematically. Both Dhaniya (in his well thatched house) and the Buddha (unroofed, in the open) have no fear of the falling rain, as they are both safe: Dhaniya in a worldly sense, but the Buddha in a spiritual sense. In the end, Dhaniya sees the Buddha and benefits from his teaching. All the 17 verses, except the last, close with this refrain:

*Atha ce patthayasi, pavassa devo*

Fall, rain, fall, if you must!

— — —

## 8a

## Arakkhita Sutta

The Discourse on the Guarded | A 3.105 = A:B 3.109  
or, **Kūṭāgāra Sutta 1** The First Discourse on the Pinnacled House  
Theme: The mind affects all our actions  
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2014

### 1 Introduction

**1.1** The first sutta is the longer of the two, with 19 paragraphs. In the first section, the Buddha speaks of **the unguarded mind**, how it similarly affects the 3 doors of action (body, speech and mind) [§§2-3]. Actions of the 3 doors that are *unguarded* are also *defiled* (*avassuta*) [§4]. Defiled actions are also *rotten* (*pūṭika*) actions [§§5-6], that is, generates about bad karma. Such rotten actions brings us an unhappy death [§§7-8], resulting in rebirth in the subhuman planes of suffering. [1.3]

The Sutta then turns to the parable of the ill-thatched pinnacled house. An ill-thatched pinnacled house will leave its pinnacle, rafters and walls unprotected, too [§9], so that they are also drenched when it rains [§10]. The teaching on the *unguarded mind* is the refrained [§§11-17].

The Sutta closes with the teaching on **the guarded mind**, which keeps the body, speech and mind guarded, too [§18]. When the 3 doors of action are guarded [§19], they are *undefiled* [§20], that is, untouched by the 3 unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion. When the 3 doors are undefiled [§21], they are not rotten [§22], that is, do not bring about bad karma. Such a person [§23] enjoys a happy rebirth [§24], that is, attains at least streamwinning at death. [1.3]

**1.2** The term *arakkhita*, “unguarded” is well known, referring to mastery of the sense-faculties through restraint.<sup>1</sup> It appears negatively both in a literal sense [§§9] and in a figurative sense [§§2, 3, 18, 19]. Its positive opposite, *rakkhita*, appears both figuratively [§§18, 19, 27] and literally, as “protected” [§§25].

**1.3** A key word *avassuta*, “defiled” (adj) [§§10, 13, 14], is the past participle of *ava* (“down”) + √SRU, to flow, meaning, (1) (literal) “leaking, letting in water” (J 4:20,22\*); (2) letting out (humidity), oozing (Tha 279); (3) (said to ruttish elephants) under the influence of sexual excitement (V 4:213,34, 214,14).<sup>2</sup> Its positive opposite, *anavassuta*, “undefiled,” also occurs in the Sutta [§§20, 21, 29, 30].

(4) “**drenched, moist, wet**” (A 1:261,32) figurative sense [§§10, 13, 14], where Commentary glosses it as “wet” (*tinta*, AA 2:368). It is used *metaphorically* to mean “defiled, corrupt”<sup>3</sup> [§§13, 14], Its positive opposite follows, *anavassuta*, “undefiled” [§§20, 21, 29, 30].

<sup>1</sup> See *Nimitta & anuvyañjana*, SD \*\*\*.

<sup>2</sup> See CPD, sv *ava-ssuta*.

<sup>3</sup> S 4:184,25-186,11; A 1:261,24, 281,3\*; Nc 85,9 f.

In its metaphorical sense, *avassuta* is used especially as a complement to *pūti*, “rotten” (A 4:171,9). *Pūti*, “rotten,” is used negatively both in a figurative sense [§§5, 6] and a literal sense [§§15, 16, 22, 23]. And, positively, both in a literal sense [§26] and a literal sense [§§30, 31].

**1.3** The Aṅguttara Commentary explains that by “**unhappy death**” (*na bhaddaka kāla, kiriya*) [§8, 17] is rebirth in the states of loss (*apāya*) or suffering (*vinīpāta*), that is, the 4 subhuman planes of the violent and exploitative asuras, the ever dissatisfied pretas, the ignorant and fearful animals, and the painfully suffering hell-beings.<sup>4</sup> These are states where it is almost impossible to think of good, much less generate good karma.

By “**happy death**” (*bhaddaka kāla, kiriya*) is meant rebirth as a streamwinner or one of the other three paths [§24, 32].<sup>5</sup> (AA 2:368). A happy death bring us rebirth as a wholesome being in an environment conducive for spiritual practice and growth. Such a rebirth can also be in the heavens. If we are at least streamwinners, then when the karma supporting such a life is exhausted, we will reborn as a wholesome human in an environment that conducted for spiritual growth.<sup>6</sup>

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## The Discourse on the Guarded

or, The First Discourse on the Pinnacled House

A 3.105

**1** Then the houselord Anātha, piṇḍika approached the Blessed One. Having gone up to him, he saluted him, and sat down at one side.

### The unguarded mind

**2** As Anātha, piṇḍika sat thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to him:

“Houselord, when **the mind** is unguarded,

bodily action, too, is *unguarded*,  
verbal action, too, is *unguarded*,  
mental action, too, is *unguarded*.

**3** For one

whose bodily action is *unguarded*,  
whose verbal action is *unguarded*,  
whose mental is *unguarded*,

**4** his bodily action is defiled,<sup>7</sup> too,  
his verbal action is defiled, too,  
his mental action is defiled, too.

**5** For one

whose bodily action is *defiled*,

<sup>4</sup> See (**Pañca**) **Gati S** (A 9.68), SD 2.20. “The 4 states of misery are hell, the animal womb, the ghost realm, the demon world” (*cattāro apāyā nāma niraya, tiracchāna, pettivisaya, asurakāyā*, KhA 189); cf Sn 377.:SnA368. See also D 3:234, 264; M 1:73; A 4:459; Nc 550; cf S 5:474-77; Vism 552. For their location in Buddhist cosmology and other details, see SD 1.7 (Table 1.7).

<sup>5</sup> See eg (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>6</sup> The celestial beings, when their supportive karma is exhausted, would “fall” (*cuti*) into the subhuman planes incl the hells. See (**Nānā, karaṇa**) **Puggala S 1** (A 4.123/2:126-128), SD 23.8a.

<sup>7</sup> “Defiled,” *avassuta*, see [1.2].

whose verbal action is *defiled*,  
whose mental action is *defiled*,

- 7 For one  
whose bodily action is *rotten*,  
whose verbal action is *rotten*,  
whose mental action is *rotten*,

- 6 his bodily action is rotten, too,  
his verbal action is *rotten*, too,  
his mental action is *rotten*, too.

- 8 there is no happy death, no happy end of time.<sup>8</sup>

### The parable of the ill-thatched pinnacled house

- 9 Houselord, just as when a pinnacled house is **ill-thatched**,  
its pinnacle is unprotected, too,  
its rafters are unprotected, too,  
its walls are unprotected, too,
- 10 the pinnacle is drenched [rotten], too,  
the rafters are drenched [rotten], too,  
the walls are drenched [rotten], too—
- 11 even so, houselord,  
when **the mind**, houselord, is **unguarded**,  
bodily action, too, is unguarded,  
verbal action, too, is unguarded,  
mental action, too, is unguarded.
- 12 For one  
whose bodily action is unguarded,  
whose verbal action is unguarded,  
whose mental is unguarded,
- 13 his bodily action is defiled, too,  
his verbal action is defiled, too,  
his mental action is defiled, too.
- 14 For one  
whose bodily action is *defiled*,  
whose verbal action is *defiled*,  
whose mental action is *defiled*,
- 15 his bodily action is rotten, too,  
his verbal action is rotten, too,  
his mental action is rotten, too.
- 16 For one  
whose bodily action is *rotten*,  
whose verbal action is *rotten*,  
whose mental action is rotten,
- 17 there is no happy death, no happy end of time.

### The guarded mind

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<sup>8</sup> *Na bhaddakam maraṇam hoti na bhaddikā kāla.kiriyā*. Comy says that the “unhappy death” means rebirth in the suffering states (*apāta*) (AA 2:369). Cf §14 on the happy death.

**18** Houselord,  
when **the mind**, houselord, is guarded,  
bodily action, too, is *guarded*,  
verbal action, too, is *guarded*,  
mental action, too, is *guarded*.

**19** For one  
whose bodily action is *guarded*,  
whose verbal action is *guarded*,  
whose mental is *guarded*,

**20** his bodily action is undefiled, too,  
his verbal action is undefiled, too,  
his mental action is undefiled, too.

**21** For one  
whose bodily action is *undefiled*,  
whose verbal action is *undefiled*,  
whose mental action is *undefiled*,

**22** his bodily action is *not* rotten, too,  
his verbal action is *not* rotten, too,  
his mental action is *not* rotten, too.

**23** For one  
whose bodily action is *not* rotten,  
whose verbal action is *not* rotten,  
whose mental action is *not* rotten,

**24** **there is a happy death, a happy end of time.**<sup>9</sup>

### The parable of the well-thatched pinnacled house

**25** Houselord, just as when a pinnacled house in **well thatched**,  
its pinnacle is protected, too,  
its rafters are protected, too,  
its walls are protectd, too,

**26** the pinnacle is not rotten, too,  
the rafters are not rotten, too,  
the walls are not rotten, too—

**27** even so, houselord,  
when **the mind**, houselord, is guarded,  
bodily action, too, is *guarded*,  
  
mental action, too, is *guarded*.

verbal action, too, is *guarded*,

**28** For one  
whose bodily action is *guarded*,  
whose verbal action is *guarded*,  
whose mental is *guarded*,

**29** his bodily action is undefiled, too,  
his verbal action is undefiled, too,

<sup>9</sup> *Bhaddakaṃ maraṇaṃ hoti bhaddikā kāla.kiriya*. Comy says that the “happy birth” is the attaining of streamwinning or one of the other 3 paths at time of dying (AA 2:368). Cf §5 on the unhappy death.

his mental action is undefiled, too.

- 30 For one  
whose bodily action is *undefiled*,  
whose verbal action is *undefiled*,  
whose mental action is *undefiled*,

- 30 his bodily action is *not* rotten, too,  
his verbal action is *not* rotten, too,  
his mental action is *not* rotten, too.

- 31 For one  
whose bodily action is *not* rotten,  
whose verbal action is *not* rotten,  
whose mental action is *not* rotten,

- 32 *there is a happy death, a happy end of time.*

— evaṃ —

## 8b

## Vyāpanna Sutta

The Discourse on the Defiled | A 3.106 = A:B 3.110  
or, **Kūṭāgāra Sutta 2** The Second Discourse on the Pinnacled House

Theme: The mind affects all our actions

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2014

### 1 Introduction

**1.1** This second sutta is the shorter one, with only 11 paragraphs. This Sutta’s theme is the same as that of the preceding **Arakkhita Sutta** (A 3.105), that is, that the mind affects all our actions. In other words, how we think affects all our actions, bodily, verbal and mental. It is a shorter version of A 3.105, with the same parables, but using a different pair of key words [1.2].

The gist of **Dh 1 and 2** is that “as we think, so we act,” in the sense that our intention (*cetanā*) defines the moral tone of our deeds. If our intention is unwholesome, that is, filled with greed, hate or delusion, then, our action is also unwholesome. If our intention is wholesome, that is, filled with charity, loving-kindness or wisdom, then our action is wholesome, too.

#### **1.2 Key words**

**1.2.1** The key words of the Vyapanna Sutta are “defiled” (*vyapanna*) and “undefiled” (*avyapanna*). The word **vyapanna** (adj) is the past participle of *vyāpajjati*, which comes from *vi-*, denoting separation, disturbance + *āpajjati*, “to undergo, commit, fall into (figurative).” The word *vyapanna* means “spoilt, disagreeing, gone wrong, faulty; defiled, corrupt, perverted.”

**1.2.2** In the suttas, it is apparently used only with in connection with *citta*, that is, in **vyapanna, citta**, that is, a defiled mind, a malicious heart, a malevolent intention, a bad thought. Thus, as an adjective, it means “malevolent” (D 1:139, 3:82; A 1:262,23), “warped” (A:W 1:241; A 299,2). Its opposite is **avyāpanna**, “not deranged, free from disorder; free from malice (*vyāpāda*).”<sup>10</sup>

**1.2.3** The verb, **vyāpajjati** means “to go wrong, to fail, disagree; to be troubled; also (as a transitive verb) “to do harm, to injure” (S 3:119, 4:184 = Nc 40 *byāpajjati*; A 3:101 *bhattaṃ me vyāpajjeyya*, “(it) disagrees with me, makes me ill”; Sn 1065 *ākāso avyāpajjamāno*, “not troubled, not getting upset”; Nc 74 (*byāpajjamāna*).

<sup>10</sup> D 1:71,23 = M 3:3,29; D 3:82,15 = 83,1 ≈ A 1:271,35; A 1:262,34, 2:31.26\*.

**1.2.4** A related word is *avyāpajja* (also *avyāpajjha*, or *abyāpajjha*), meaning “harmless” (M 1:90,1). The adjective is also spelt as *byāpanna* (S:Ee 2:168) or *viyāpanna* (Sn:Ee 314).

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## The Discourse on the Defiled

or, The Second Discourse on the Pinnacled House

A 3.106

**1** Then Anātha,piṇḍika the houselord approached the Blessed One. Having come up to the Blessed One, he saluted him, and then sat down at one side.

As Anātha,piṇḍika was sitting at one side, the Blessed One said this to him:

### The defiled mind

- 2** “Houselord, when **the mind** is defiled,  
bodily action is defiled, too;  
verbal action is defiled, too;                      mental action is defiled, too.<sup>11</sup>
- 3** For one whose *bodily action* is defiled,  
 whose *verbal action* is defiled,  
 whose *mental action* is defiled,                      **4** **there is no happy death, no happy end of time.**<sup>12</sup>

### The parable of the ill-thatched pinnacled house

- 5** Suppose, houselord,  
 when a pinnacled house<sup>13</sup> is ill-thatched,  
 its pinnacle is defiled, too;  
 its rafters are defiled, too;  
 its walls are defiled, too.<sup>14</sup>
- 6** Even so, houselord, *when the mind is defiled,*  
*bodily action is defiled, too;*  
*verbal action is defiled, too;*  
*mental action is defiled, too.*
- 7** *For one who bodily action is defiled,*  
*whose verbal action is defiled,*  
*whose mental action is defiled,*                      **8** *there is no happy death, no happy end of time.*

### The undefiled mind

- 9** “Houselord, when **the mind** is undefiled,

<sup>11</sup> *Citte gaha,pati vyāpanne kāya,kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, vacī,kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, mano,kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti.*

<sup>12</sup> *Tassa vyāpanna,kāya,kammantassa vyāpanna,vacī,kammantassa vyāpanna,mano,kammantassa na bhaddakaṃ maraṇaṃ hoti na bhaddikā kāla,kiriyā.* “Happy,” *bhadda*, here also means “auspicious, blessed.”

<sup>13</sup> “A gabled house,” *kūṭāgāra*, from *kūṭa* (“gable, pinnacle”) + *āgāra* (“building, house”): see SD 45.2 (2).

<sup>14</sup> *Seyyathā’pi gahapati kūṭāgāre ducchanne kūṭam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, gopāna,siyo’pi vyāpannā honti, bhitti’pi vyāpannā hoti.*

*bodily action* is undefiled, too;  
*verbal action* is undefiled, too;  
*mental action* is undefiled, too.<sup>15</sup>

- 10 For one who bodily action is *undefiled*,  
whose verbal action is *undefiled*,  
whose mental action is *undefiled*, 11 there is a happy death, happy end of time.<sup>16</sup>

### The parable of the well-thatched pinnacled house

- 12 Suppose, houselord,  
when a pinnacled house<sup>17</sup> is well-thatched,  
its pinnacle is undefiled, too;  
its rafters are undefiled, too;  
its walls are undefiled, too.<sup>18</sup>
- 13 Even so, houselord, *when the mind is undefiled*,  
*bodily action is undefiled, too*;  
*verbal action is undefiled, too*;  
*mental action is undefiled, too*.
- 14 For one who *bodily action is undefiled*,  
*whose verbal action is undefiled*,  
*whose mental action is undefiled*, 15 there is happy death, happy end of time.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>15</sup> *Citte gaha, pati vyāpanne kāya, kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, vacī, kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, mano, kammam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti.*

<sup>16</sup> *Tassa vyāpanna, kāya, kammantassa vyāpanna, vacī, kammantassa vyāpanna, mano, kammantassa na bhaddakam maraṇaṃ hoti na bhaddikā kāla, kiriyā.*

<sup>17</sup> “A gabled house,” *kūṭāgāra*, from *kūṭa* (“gable, pinnacle”) + *āgāra* (“building, house”): see SD 45.2 (2).

<sup>18</sup> *Seyyathā ’pi gahapati kūṭāgāre ducchanne kūṭam pi vyāpannaṃ hoti, gopāna, siyo ’pi vyāpannā honti, bhitti ’pi vyāpannā hoti.*