

SN 23.2
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Khandhavagga Saṃyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to the Aggregates
Rādhā Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses to the Venerable Rādhā
Paṭhama Māra Vagga
(Section on Māra – Part 1)

Satta Sutta
“What Is a Sentient Being?”

Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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Once, while The Blessed One was residing at Sāvattihī’s Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery, in Jeta’s Park, the Venerable Rādhā went and approached The Blessed One, and after respectfully paying homage to The Teacher, he sat to one side, and began asking a question:

“Bhante, people keep exclaiming: ‘*Sentient being! Sentient being!*’ But, Bhante, what exactly is being referred to here by the term ‘sentient being’? How is one to clearly define what a ‘sentient being’ really is?”

And The Blessed One replied by saying:

a. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of form (*rūpa*), whenever the person experiences any kind of desire or longing for that form; any kind of delighting in or wanting to grab and cherish that form in any way; or thirst for more of the experience pertaining to that form, then one would be correct in referring to such a person as a ‘sentient being.’

b. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of feeling (*vedanā*), whenever the person experiences any kind of desire or longing for that feeling; any kind of delighting in or wanting to grab and cherish that feeling in any way; or thirst for more of the experience pertaining to that feeling, then one would be correct in referring to such a person as a ‘sentient being.’

c. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of perception or memory (*saññā*), whenever the person experiences any kind of desire or longing for that perception or memory; any kind of delighting in or wanting to grab and cherish that perception or memory in any way; or thirst for more of the experience pertaining to that perception or memory, then one would be correct in referring to such a person as a ‘sentient being.’

d. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of *saṅkhāra* or habitual tendency, whenever the person experiences any kind of desire or longing for that habitual tendency; any kind of delighting in or wanting to grab and cherish that habitual tendency in any way; or thirst for more of the experience pertaining to that habitual tendency, then one would be correct in referring to such a person as a ‘sentient being.’

e. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of *viññāṇa* or consciousness, whenever the person experiences any kind of desire or longing for that consciousness; any kind of delighting in or wanting to grab and cherish that consciousness in any way; or thirst for more of the experience pertaining to that consciousness, then one would be correct in referring to such a person as a ‘sentient being.’

“Imagine, Rādhā, a group of boys and girls sitting and playing by the seashore, while also building sandcastles.

“Now, so long as those children have not dropped that passion and desire; the longing and greed towards those sandcastles, then, they will continue to delight in them, or want to grab onto and cherish them, while still having the thirst for more of the experience of building those sandcastles, relating to them as things that belong to them.

“However, the moment those children *do* go ahead and drop that passion and desire; the longing and greed towards those sandcastles, then all delighting and cherishing for those creations is obliterated in them, as their relationship with those sandcastles comes to an abrupt end.

“And as a result, they so easily and without any hesitation dismantle and smash those constructions that they built, as they destroy them with their tiny hands and feet; turning those sandcastles back into the piles of sandy grains they once were!

a. “Now, in just the same way, Rādhā, your mission should be to go ahead and drop any passion and desire; the longing and greed towards all kinds of forms, whereby all delighting and cherishing of form is obliterated in you, as you too dismantle and smash form and your identification with form, destroying it into smithereens.

“You must do this by practicing constantly, as you completely smash and destroy that thirst and craving in you, for more forms.

b. “Similarly, Rādhā, you should drop any passion and desire; the longing and greed towards all kinds of feelings, whereby all delighting and cherishing of feeling is obliterated in you, as you

too dismantle and smash feelings and your identification with feelings, destroying them into smithereens.

“You must do this by practicing constantly, as you completely smash and destroy that thirst and craving in you, for more feelings.

c. “Similarly, Rādhā, you should drop any passion and desire; the longing and greed towards all kinds of perceptions and memories, whereby all delighting and cherishing of perception is obliterated in you, as you too dismantle and smash perception and your identification with perception, destroying it into smithereens.

“You must do this by practicing constantly, as you completely smash and destroy that thirst and craving in you, for more perceptions.

d. “Similarly, Rādhā, you should drop any passion and desire; the longing and greed towards all kinds of *saṅkhārā* or habitual tendencies, whereby all delighting and cherishing of habitual tendencies is obliterated in you, as you too dismantle and smash habitual tendencies and your identification with habitual tendencies, destroying them into smithereens.

“You must do this by practicing constantly, as you completely smash and destroy that thirst and craving in you, for more habitual tendencies.

e. “Also, Rādhā, you should drop any passion and desire; the longing and greed towards all kinds of consciousness, whereby all delighting and cherishing of consciousness is obliterated in you, as you too dismantle and smash consciousness and your identification with consciousness, destroying it into smithereens.

“You must do this by practicing constantly, as you completely smash and destroy that thirst and craving in you, for more consciousnesses.

“This, Rādhā, because Nibbāna itself is none other than that very destruction and complete elimination of the constant thirst and craving for more!”

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