

evaṃ me sutam—
So I have heard.

ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā rājagahe viharati gijjhakūte pabbate.
At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain.

atha kho pañcasikho gandhabbaputto abhikkantāya rattiya abhikkantavaṇṇo kevalakappaṃ gijjhakūtaṃ pabbataṃ obhāsetvā yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi. ekamantaṃ ʈhito kho pañcasikho gandhabbaputto bhagavantaṃ etadavoca:

Then, late at night, the fairy Pañcasikha, lighting up the entire Vulture's Peak, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him,

“yaṃ kho me, bhante, devānaṃ tāvatiṃsānaṃ sammukhā sutaṃ sammukhā paṭiggahitaṃ, ārocehi taṃ bhagavato”ti.
“Sir, I would tell you of what I heard and learned directly from the gods of the Thirty-Three.”

“ārocehi me tvam, pañcasikhā”ti bhagavā avoca.
“Tell me, Pañcasikha,” said the Buddha.

1. devasabhā 1. The Council of the Gods

“purimāni, bhante, divasāni purimatarāni tadahuposathe pannarase pavāraṇāya punṇāya punṇamāya rattiya kevalakappā ca devā tāvatiṃsā sudhammāyaṃ sabhāyaṃ sannisinṇā honti sannipatitā;

“Sir, it was more than a few days ago—on the fifteenth day sabbath on the full moon day at the invitation to admonish held at the end of the rainy season—when all the gods of the Thirty-Three were sitting together in the Hall of Justice.

mahaṭi ca dibbaparisā samantato nisinnā honti, cattāro ca mahārājāno catuddisā nisinnā honti;

A large assembly of gods was sitting all around, and the Four Great Kings were there.

puratthimāya disāya dhataratṭho mahārājā pacchimābhimukho nisinno hoti deve purakkhatvā;

The Great King Dhataratṭha was seated to the east, facing west, in front of his gods.

dakkhināya disāya virūḷhako mahārājā uttarābhimukho nisinno hoti deve purakkhatvā;

The Great King Virūḷhaka was seated to the south, facing north, in front of his gods.

pacchimāya disāya virūpakkho mahārājā puratthābhimukho nisinno hoti deve purakkhatvā;

The Great King Virūpakkha was seated to the west, facing east, in front of his gods.

uttarāya disāya vessavaṇo mahārājā dakkhiṇābhimukho nisinno hoti deve purakkhatvā.

The Great King Vessavaṇa was seated to the north, facing south, in front of his gods.

yadā, bhante, kevalakappā ca devā tāvatiṃsā sudhammāyaṃ sabhāyaṃ sannisinṇā honti sannipatitā, mahaṭi ca dibbaparisā samantato nisinnā honti, cattāro ca mahārājāno catuddisā nisinnā honti, idaṃ nesaṃ hoti āsanasmim;

When the gods of the Thirty-Three have a gathering like this, that is how they are seated.

atha pacchā amhākaṃ āsanaṃ hoti.
After that come our seats.

ye te, bhante, devā bhagavati brahmacariyaṃ caritvā adhunūpapannā
tāvatiṃsakāyaṃ, te aññe deve atirocanti vaṇṇena ceva yasasā ca.

Sir, those gods who had been recently reborn in the company of the Thirty-Three after leading the spiritual life under the Buddha outshine the other gods in beauty and glory.

tena sudam, bhante, devā tāvatimsā attamanā honti pamuditā pītisomanassajātā;
The gods of the Thirty-Three were uplifted and overjoyed at that, full of rapture and happiness, saying,

‘dibbā vata bho kāyā paripūrenti, hāyanti asurakāyā’ti.
‘The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!’

atha kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ sampasādaṃ viditvā
imāhi gāthāhi anumodi:
Seeing the joy of those gods, Sakka, lord of gods, celebrated with these verses:

‘modanti vata bho devā,
‘The gods rejoice—

tāvatiṃsā sahindakā;
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—

tathāgataṃ namassantā,
revering the Realized One,

dhammassa ca sudhammatam.
and the natural excellence of the teaching;

nave deve ca passantā,
and seeing the new gods,

vaṇṇavante yasassine;
so beautiful and glorious,

sugatasmim brahmacariyaṃ,
who have come here after leading

caritvāna idhāgate.
the spiritual life under the Buddha!

te aññe atirocanti,
They outshine the others

vaṇṇena yasasāyunā;
in beauty, glory, and lifespan.

sāvakā bhūripaṇṇassa,
Here are the distinguished disciples

visesūpagatā idha.
of he whose wisdom is vast.

idaṃ disvāna nandanti,
Seeing this, they delight—

tāvatiṃsā sahindakā;
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—

tathāgataṃ namassantā,
revering the Realized One,

dhammassa ca sudhammatan’ti.
and the natural excellence of the teaching!’

tena sudam, bhante, devā tāvatimsā bhiyyoso mattāya attamanā honti pamuditā
pītisomanassajātā;
The gods of the Thirty-Three were even more uplifted and overjoyed at that, full of rapture and happiness, saying,

‘dibbā vata bho, kāyā paripūrenti, hāyanti asurakāyā’ ti.

‘The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!’

2. aṭṭhayathābhuccavaṇṇa

2. Eight Genuine Praises

atha kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ sampasādaṃ veditvā deve tāvatimse āmantesi:

Seeing the joy of those gods, Sakka, lord of gods, addressed them,

‘iccheyyātha no tumhe, mārīsā, tassa bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe sotun’ ti?

‘Gentlemen, would you like to hear eight genuine praises of the Buddha?’

‘icchāma mayāṃ, mārīsa, tassa bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe sotun’ ti.

‘Indeed we would, sir.’

atha kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe payirudāhāsi:

Then Sakka proffered these eight genuine praises of the Buddha:

‘taṃ kiṃ maññanti, bhonto devā tāvatimsā’

‘What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think

yāvaṇa so bhagavā bahujaṇahitāya paṭipanno bahujaṇasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ.

about how much the Buddha has acted for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans?’

evaṃ bahujaṇahitāya paṭipannaṃ bahujaṇasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva aṭṭamse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (1)

I don’t see any Teacher, past or present, who has such compassion for the world, apart from the Buddha.

svākkhāto kho pana tena bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi.

Also, the Buddha has explained the teaching well—visible in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.

evaṃ opaneyyikassa dhammassa desetāraṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva aṭṭamse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (2)

I don’t see any Teacher, past or present, who explains such a relevant teaching, apart from the Buddha.

‘idaṃ kusalan’ ti kho pana tena bhagavatā supaññattaṃ, ‘idaṃ akusalan’ ti supaññattaṃ.

Also, the Buddha has clearly described what is skillful and what is unskillful,

‘idaṃ sāvajjaṃ idaṃ anavajjaṃ, idaṃ sevitabbaṃ idaṃ na sevitabbaṃ, idaṃ hīnaṃ idaṃ paṇītaṃ, idaṃ kaṇhasukkasappaṭibhāgan’ ti supaññattaṃ.

what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what should be cultivated and what should not be cultivated, what is inferior and what is superior, and what is on the side of dark and the side of bright.

evaṃ

kusalākusalasāvajjānavajjasevitabbāsevitabbahīnapaṇītakanahasukkasappaṭibhāgānaṃ dhammānaṃ paññāpetāraṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva aṭṭamse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (3)

I don’t see any Teacher, past or present, who so clearly describes all these things, apart from the Buddha.

supaññattā kho pana tena bhagavatā sāvakānaṃ nibbānagāminī paṭipadā, saṃsandati nibbānaṇa paṭipadā ca.

Also, the Buddha has clearly described the practice that leads to extinguishment for his disciples. And extinguishment and the practice come together,

seyyathāpi nāma gaṅgodakam yamunodakena saṃsandati sameti;
as the waters of the Ganges come together and converge with the waters of the Yamuna.

evameva supaṇṇattā tena bhagavatā sāvakānaṃ nibbānagāminiṃ paṭipadā, saṃsandati nibbānaṃ paṭipadā ca.

evam nibbānagāminiyaṃ paṭipadāya paṇṇāpetāraṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgatam sathhāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetaraḥi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (4)
I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who so clearly describes the practice that leads to extinguishment for his disciples, apart from the Buddha.

abhinipphanno kho pana tassa bhagavato lābho abhinipphanno siloko, yāva maññe khattiyā sampiyāyamānarūpā viharanti, vigatamado kho pana so bhagavā āhāraṃ āhāreti.
Also, possessions and popularity have accrued to the Buddha, so much that you'd think it would thrill even the aristocrats. But he takes his food free of vanity.

evam vigatamadaṃ āhāraṃ āharayamānaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgatam sathhāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetaraḥi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (5)
I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who takes their food so free of vanity, apart from the Buddha.

laddhasahāyo kho pana so bhagavā sekhānaṃveva paṭipannānaṃ khīṇāsavānaṃca vusitavataṃ.
Also, the Buddha has gained companions, both trainees who are practicing, and those with defilements ended who have completed their journey.

te bhagavā apanujja ekārāmatam anuyutto viharati.
The Buddha is committed to the joy of solitude, but doesn't send them away.

evam ekārāmatam anuyuttam imināpaṅgena samannāgatam sathhāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetaraḥi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (6)
I don't see any Teacher, past or present, so committed to the joy of solitude, apart from the Buddha.

yathāvādī kho pana so bhagavā tathākārī, yathākārī tathāvādī, iti yathāvādī tathākārī, yathākārī tathāvādī.
Also, the Buddha does as he says, and says as he does, thus: he does as he says, and says as he does.

evam dhammānudhammapaṭipannaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgatam sathhāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetaraḥi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (7)
I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who so practices in line with the teaching, apart from the Buddha.

tiṇṇavicikiccho kho pana so bhagavā vigatakathaṅkatho pariyositasāṅkappo ajjhāsayam ādibrahmacariyaṃ.
Also, the Buddha has gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision. He has achieved all he wished for regarding the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life.

evam tiṇṇavicikicchaṃ vigatakathaṅkathaṃ pariyositasāṅkappaṃ ajjhāsayam ādibrahmacariyaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgatam sathhāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetaraḥi, aññatra tena bhagavatā'ti. (8)
I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who has achieved these things, apart from the Buddha.'

ime kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ bhagavato attha yathābhucce vaṇṇe payirudhāsi.
These are the eight genuine praises of the Buddha proffered by Sakka.

tena sudaṃ, bhante, devā tāvatimsā bhiyyoso mattāya attamanā honti pamuditā pītisomanassajātā bhagavato attha yathābhucce vaṇṇe sutvā.
Hearing them, the gods of the Thirty-Three were even more uplifted and overjoyed.

tatra, bhante, ekacce devā evamāhaṃsu:
Then some gods thought,

‘aho vata, mārisā, cattāro sammāsambuddhā loke uppajjeyyum dhammañca
deseyyum yathariva bhagavā.

*‘If only four fully awakened Buddhas might arise in the world and teach the Dhamma, just like
the Blessed One!’*

tadassa bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya
devamanussānan’ti.

*That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for
the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!’*

ekacce devā evamāhaṃsu:

Other gods thought,

‘tiṭṭhantu, mārisā, cattāro sammāsambuddhā, aho vata, mārisā, tayo
sammāsambuddhā loke uppajjeyyum dhammañca deseyyum yathariva bhagavā.

‘Let alone four fully awakened Buddhas; if only three fully awakened Buddhas,

tadassa bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya
devamanussānan’ti.

ekacce devā evamāhaṃsu:

‘tiṭṭhantu, mārisā, tayo sammāsambuddhā, aho vata, mārisā, dve sammāsambuddhā
loke uppajjeyyum dhammañca deseyyum yathariva bhagavā.

*or two fully awakened Buddhas might arise in the world and teach the Dhamma, just like the
Blessed One!’*

tadassa bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya
devamanussānan’ti.

*That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for
the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!’*

evam vutte, bhante, sakko devānamindo deve tāvatimse etadavoca:

When they said this, Sakka said,

‘atthānaṃ kho etaṃ, mārisā, anavakāso, yaṃ ekissā lokadhātuyā dve arahanto
sammāsambuddhā apubbaṃ acarimaṃ uppajjeyyum, netam tñānaṃ vijjati.

*‘It’s impossible, gentlemen, for two perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas to arise in the
same solar system at the same time.*

aho vata, mārisā, so bhagavā appābādho appātaṅko ciraṃ dīghamaddhānaṃ
tiṭṭheyya.

May that Blessed One be healthy and well, and remain with us for a long time!’

tadassa bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya
devamanussānan’ti.

*That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for
the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!’*

atha kho, bhante, yenatthena devā tāvatimsā sudhammāyaṃ sabhāyaṃ sannisinnā
honti sannipatitā, taṃ atthaṃ cintayitvā taṃ atthaṃ mantayitvā vuttavacanāpi taṃ
cattāro mahārājāno tasmim atthe honti.

*Then the gods of the Thirty-Three, having considered and deliberated on the matter for which
they were seated together in the Hall of Justice, advised and instructed the Four Great Kings
on the subject.*

paccānusiṭṭhāvacaṇāpi taṃ cattāro mahārājāno tasmim atthe honti, sakesu sakesu
āsanesu ṭhitā avipakkantā.

And each stood at their own seat without departing.

te vuttavākyaṃ rājāno,

The Kings were instructed,

paṭiggayhānusāsaniṃ;

and heeded good advice.

vippasannamanā santā,
With clear and peaceful minds,

aṭṭhaṃsu samhi āsaneti.
they stood by their own seats.

atha kho, bhante, uttarāya disāya uḷāro āloko sañjāyī, obhāso pāturahosi
atikkammeva devānaṃ devānubhāvaṃ.
*Then in the northern quarter a magnificent light arose and radiance appeared, surpassing the
glory of the gods.*

atha kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo deve tāvatimse āmantesi:
Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three,

‘yathā kho, mārīsā, nimittāni dissanti, uḷāro āloko sañjāyati, obhāso pātubhavati,
brahmā pātubhavissati;
*‘As indicated by the signs—light arising and radiance appearing—Brahmā will appear. For
this is the precursor for the appearance of Brahmā, namely light arising and radiance
appearing.’*

brahmuno hetam pubbanimittam pātubhāvāya, yadidaṃ āloko sañjāyati obhāso
pātubhavaṭṭi.

yathā nimittā dissanti,
As indicated by the signs,

brahmā pātubhavissati;
Brahmā will appear.

brahmuno hetam nimittam,
For this is the sign of Brahmā:

obhāso vipulo mahā’ti.
a light vast and great.

3. sanaṅkumārakathā *3. On Sanaṅkumāra*

atha kho, bhante, devā tāvatimṣā yathāsakesu āsanesu nisīdiṃsu:
Then the gods of the Thirty-Three sat in their own seats, saying,

‘obhāsametaṃ ñassāma, yaṃvipāko bhavissati, sacchikatvāva naṃ gamissāmā’ti.
‘We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.’

cattāropi mahārājāno yathāsakesu āsanesu nisīdiṃsu:
And the Four Great Kings did likewise.

‘obhāsametaṃ ñassāma, yaṃvipāko bhavissati, sacchikatvāva naṃ gamissāmā’ti.

idaṃ sutvā devā tāvatimṣā ekaggā samāpajjiṃsu:
Hearing that, the gods of the Thirty-Three agreed in unison,

‘obhāsametaṃ ñassāma, yaṃvipāko bhavissati, sacchikatvāva naṃ gamissāmā’ti.
‘We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.’

yadā, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro devānaṃ tāvatimṣānaṃ pātubhavati, oḷārikaṃ
attabhāvaṃ abhinimminivā pātubhavati.
*When Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he does so after
manifesting in a solid corporeal form,*

yo kho pana, bhante, brahmuno pakativaṇṇo, anabhisambhavanīyo so devānaṃ
tāvatimṣānaṃ cakkhupathasmim.
for the gods of the Thirty-Three aren’t able to see a Brahmā’s normal appearance.

yadā, bhante, brahmā sanañkumāro devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ pātubhavati, so aññe deve atirocati vaṇṇena ceva yasasā ca.

When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he outshines the other gods in beauty and glory,

seyyathāpi, bhante, so vaṇṇo viggaho mānusaṃ viggahaṃ atirocati;
as a golden statue outshines the human form.

evameva kho, bhante, yadā brahmā sanañkumāro devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ pātubhavati, so aññe deve atirocati vaṇṇena ceva yasasā ca.

yadā, bhante, brahmā sanañkumāro devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ pātubhavati, na tassam parisāyaṃ koci devo abhivādeti vā paccuṭṭheti vā āsanaena vā nimanteti.

When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, not a single god in that assembly greets him by bowing down or rising up or inviting him to a seat.

sabbeva tuṇhībhūtā pañjalikā pallaṅkena nisīdanti:

They all sit silently on their couches with their joined palms raised, thinking,

‘yassadāni devassa pallaṅkaṃ icchissati brahmā sanañkumāro, tassa devassa pallaṅke nisīdissati’ ti.

‘Now Brahmā Sanañkumāra will sit on the couch of whatever god he chooses.’

yassa kho pana, bhante, devassa brahmā sanañkumāro pallaṅke nisīdati, uḷāraṃ so labhati devo vedapaṭilābhaṃ, uḷāraṃ so labhati devo somanassapaṭilābhaṃ.

And the god on whose couch Brahmā sits is overjoyed and brimming with happiness,

seyyathāpi, bhante, rājā khattiyo muddhāvasitto adhunābhisitto rajjena, uḷāraṃ so labhati vedapaṭilābhaṃ, uḷāraṃ so labhati devo somanassapaṭilābhaṃ;

like a king on the day of his coronation.

evameva kho, bhante, yassa devassa brahmā sanañkumāro pallaṅke nisīdati, uḷāraṃ so labhati devo vedapaṭilābhaṃ, uḷāraṃ so labhati devo somanassapaṭilābhaṃ.

atha, bhante, brahmā sanañkumāro devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ sampasādaṃ viditvā antarahito imāhi gāthāhi anumodi:

Seeing the joy of those gods, Brahmā Sanañkumāra celebrated with these verses:

‘modanti vata bho devā,

‘The gods rejoice—

tāvatimsā sahindakā;

the Thirty-Three with their Lord—

tathāgataṃ namassantā,

revering the Realized One,

dhammassa ca sudhammataṃ.

and the natural excellence of the teaching;

nave deve ca passantā,

and seeing the new gods,

vaṇṇavante yasassine;

so beautiful and glorious,

sugatasmim brahmacariyaṃ,

who have come here after leading

caritvāna idhāgate.

the spiritual life under the Buddha!

te aññe atirocanti,

They outshine the others

vaṇṇena yasasāyunā;

in beauty, glory, and lifespan.

sāvakā bhūripaṇṇassa,
Here are the distinguished disciples

visesūpagatā idha.
of he whose wisdom is vast.

idaṃ disvāna nandanti,
Seeing this, they delight—

tāvatimsā sahindakā;
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—

tathāgataṃ namassantā,
revering the Realized One,

dhammassa ca sudhammatan'ti.
and the natural excellence of the teaching!'

imamatthaṃ, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro abhāsitha.
That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra spoke.

imamatthaṃ, bhante, brahmuno sanaṅkumārassa bhāsato aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato saro hoti viṣṣaṭṭho ca viññeyyo ca mañju ca savaṇṇiyo ca bindu ca avisārī ca gambhīro ca ninnādī ca.
And while he was speaking on that topic, his voice had eight qualities: it was clear, comprehensible, charming, audible, rounded, undistorted, deep, and resonant.

yathāparisaṃ kho pana, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro sarena viññāpeti, na cassa bahiddhā parisāya ghoso niccharati.
He makes sure his voice is intelligible as far as the assembly goes, but it doesn't extend outside the assembly.

yassa kho pana, bhante, evaṃ aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato saro hoti, so vuccati 'brahmassaro'ti.
When someone has a voice like this, they're said to have the voice of Brahmā.

atha kho, bhante, devā tāvatimsā brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ etadavocum:
Then the gods of the Thirty-Three said to Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra,

'sādhu, mahābrahme, etadeva mayaṃ saṅkhāya modāma;
'Good, Great Brahmā! Knowing this, we rejoice.

atthi ca sakkena devānamindena tassa bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhuccā vaṇṇā bhāsītā;
And there are the eight genuine praises of the Buddha spoken by Sakka—

te ca mayaṃ saṅkhāya modāmā'ti.
knowing them, too, we rejoice.'

4. aṭṭhayathābhuccavaṇṇa
4. Eight Genuine Praises

atha, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro sakkam devānamindaṃ etadavoca:
Then Brahmā said to Sakka,

'sādhu, devānaminda, mayampi tassa bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe suneyyāmā'ti.
'It would be good, lord of gods, if I could also hear the eight genuine praises of the Buddha.'

'evaṃ, mahābrahme'ti kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo brahmuno sanaṅkumārassa bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe payirudāhāsi.
Saying, 'Yes, Great Brahmā,' Sakka repeated the eight genuine praises for him.

'taṃ kiṃ maññati, bhavaṃ mahābrahmā?

yāvaṇca so bhagavā bahujanahitāya paṭipanno bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ.

evaṃ bahujanahitāya paṭipannam bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (1)

svākkhāto kho pana tena bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhi.

evaṃ opaneyyikassa dhammassa desetāraṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (2)

“idaṃ kusalan”ti kho pana tena bhagavatā supaṇṇattam, “idaṃ akusalan”ti supaṇṇattam, “idaṃ sāvajjaṃ idaṃ anavajjaṃ, idaṃ sevittabbaṃ idaṃ na sevittabbaṃ, idaṃ hinaṃ idaṃ paṇītaṃ, idaṃ kaṇhasukkasappaṭibhāgaṃ”ti supaṇṇattam.

evaṃ kusalākusalasāvajjānavajjasevittabbāsevittabbahīnapaṇītakāṇhasukkasappaṭibhāgānaṃ dhammānaṃ paṇṇāpetāraṃ.

imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (3)

supaṇṇattā kho pana tena bhagavatā sāvakānaṃ nibbānagāminī paṭipadā saṃsandati nibbānaṇca paṭipadā ca.

seyyathāpi nāma gaṅgodakaṃ yamunodakena saṃsandati sameti;

evameva supaṇṇattā tena bhagavatā sāvakānaṃ nibbānagāminī paṭipadā saṃsandati nibbānaṇca paṭipadā ca.

evaṃ nibbānagāminiyā paṭipadāya paṇṇāpetāraṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (4)

abhinipphanno kho pana tassa bhagavato lābho abhinipphanno siloko, yāva maññe khattiyā sampiyāyamānarūpā viharanti.

vigatamado kho pana so bhagavā āhāraṃ āhāreti.

evaṃ vigatamadaṃ āhāraṃ āharayamānaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (5)

laddhasahāyo kho pana so bhagavā sekhānaṇceva paṭipannānaṃ khīṇāsavānaṇca vusitavataṃ, te bhagavā apanujja ekārāmataṃ anuyutto viharati.

evaṃ ekārāmataṃ anuyuttaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (6)

yathāvādī kho pana so bhagavā tathākārī, yathākārī tathāvādī;

iti yathāvādī tathākārī, yathākārī tathāvādī.

evaṃ dhammānudhammappaṭippannaṃ imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā. (7)

tinnavicikiccho kho pana so bhagavā vigatakathaṅkatho pariyositasāṅkappo
ajjhāsayam ādibrahmacariyam.

evam tinnavicikiccam vigatakathaṅkatham pariyositasāṅkappam ajjhāsayam
ādibrahmacariyam.

imināpaṅgena samannāgataṃ satthāraṃ neva atītaṃse samanupassāma, na
panetarahi, aññatra tena bhagavatā'ti. (8)

ime kho, bhante, sakko devānamindo brahmuno sanaṅkumārassa bhagavato aṭṭha
yathābhucce vaṇṇe payirudāhāsi.

tena sudaṃ, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro attamano hoti pamudito
pītisomanassajāto bhagavato aṭṭha yathābhucce vaṇṇe sutvā.

Hearing them, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra was uplifted and overjoyed, full of rapture and happiness.

atha, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro oḷārikam attabhāvaṃ abhinimminivā
kumāravaṇṇī hutvā pañcasikho devānaṃ tāvatimsānaṃ pāturahosi.

*Then Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra manifested in a solid corporeal form, taking on the appearance of
the youth Pañcasikha, and appeared to the gods of the Thirty-Three.*

so vehāsaṃ abbhuggantvā ākāse antalikkhe pallaṅkena nisīdi.

Rising into the air, he sat cross-legged in the sky,

seyyathāpi, bhante, balavā puriso supaccatthate vā pallaṅke same vā bhūmibhāge
pallaṅkena nisīdeyya;

like a strong man might sit cross-legged on a well-appointed couch or on level ground.

evameva kho, bhante, brahmā sanaṅkumāro vehāsaṃ abbhuggantvā ākāse
antalikkhe pallaṅkena nisīditvā deve tāvatimse āmantesi:

There he addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

5. govindabrāhmaṇavatthu

5. The Story of the Steward

‘taṃ kiṃ maññanti, bhonto devā tāvatimsā, yāva dīgharattaṃ mahāpañño so
bhagavā ahosi.

‘What do the gods of the Thirty-Three think about the extent of the Buddha’s great wisdom?

bhūtapubbaṃ, bho, rājā disampati nāma ahosi.

Once upon a time, there was a king named Disampati.

disampatissa rañño govindo nāma brāhmaṇo purohito ahosi.

He had a brahmin high priest named the Steward.

disampatissa rañño reṇu nāma kumāro putto ahosi.

Disampati’s son was the prince named Reṇu,

govindassa brāhmaṇassa jotipālo nāma māṇavo putto ahosi.

while the Steward’s son was the student named Jotipāla.

iti reṇu ca rājaputto jotipālo ca māṇavo aññe ca cha khattiyā iccete aṭṭha sahāyā
ahesuṃ.

*There were Reṇu the prince, Jotipāla the student, and six other aristocrats; these eight became
friends.*

atha kho, bho, ahorattānaṃ accayena govindo brāhmaṇo kālamakāsi.

In due course the brahmin Steward passed away.

govinde brāhmaṇe kālaṅkate rājā disampati paridevesi:

At his passing, King Disampati lamented,

“yasmim vata, bho, mayam samaye govinde brāhmane sabbakiccāni sammā vossajjitvā pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappitā samaṅgibhūtā paricārema, tasmim no samaye govindo brāhmaṇo kālaṅkato”ti.

“At a time when I have relinquished all my duties to the brahmin Steward and amuse myself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, he passes away!”

evam vutte, bho, reṇu rājaputto rājānaṃ disampatiṃ etadavoca:

When he said this, Prince Reṇu said to him,

“mā kho tvaṃ, deva, govinde brāhmaṇe kālaṅkate atibālhaṃ paridevesi.

“Sire, don’t lament too much at the Steward’s passing.

atthi, deva, govindassa brāhmaṇassa jotipālo nāma māṇavo putto paṇḍitataro ceva pitarā, alamattadasataro ceva pitarā;

He has a son named Jotipāla, who is even more astute and expert than his father.

yepissa pitā atthe anusāsi, tepi jotipālasseva māṇavassa anusāsaniyā”ti.

He should manage the affairs that were managed by his father.”

“evam, kumārā”ti?

“Is that so, my prince?”

“evam, devā”ti.

“Yes, sire.”

6. mahāgovindavatthu

6. The Story of the Great Steward

atha kho, bho, rājā disampati aññataraṃ purisaṃ āmantesi:

So King Disampati addressed one of his men,

“ehi tvaṃ, ambho purisa, yena jotipālo māṇavo tenupasaṅkama; upasaṅkamitvā jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ evaṃ vadehi:

“Please, mister, go to the student Jotipāla, and say to him,

‘bhavamatthu bhavantaṃ jotipālaṃ, rājā disampati bhavantaṃ jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ āmantayati, rājā disampati bhoto jotipālassa māṇavassa dassanakāmo”’ti.

‘Best wishes, Jotipāla! You are summoned by King Disampati; he wants to see you.’”

“evam, devā”ti kho, bho, so puriso disampatissa rañño paṭissutvā yena jotipālo māṇavo tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ etadavoca:

“Yes, Your Majesty,” replied that man, and did as he was asked.

“bhavamatthu bhavantaṃ jotipālaṃ, rājā disampati bhavantaṃ jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ āmantayati, rājā disampati bhoto jotipālassa māṇavassa dassanakāmo”ti.

“evam, bho”ti kho, bho, jotipālo māṇavo tassa purisassa paṭissutvā yena rājā disampati tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā disampatinā raññā saddhiṃ sammodi;

Then Jotipāla went to the king and exchanged greetings with him.

sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ saraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. ekamantaṃ nisinnaṃ kho, bho, jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ rājā disampati etadavoca:

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and the king said to him,

“anusāsatu no bhavaṃ jotipālo, mā no bhavaṃ jotipālo anusāsaniyā paccabyāhāsi.

“May you, Jotipāla, manage my affairs—please don’t turn me down!

pettike taṃ thāne thapessāmi, govindiye abhisiṅcissāmi”ti.

I shall appoint you to your father’s position, and anoint you as Steward.”

“evam, bho”ti kho, bho, so jotipālo māṇavo disampatissa rañño paccassosi.

“Yes, sir,” replied Jotipāla.

atha kho, bho, rājā disampati jotipālaṃ māṇavaṃ govindiye abhisiṅci, taṃ pettike thāne thapesi.

So the king anointed him as Steward and appointed him to his father’s position.

abhisitto jotipālo māṇavo govindiye pettike thāne thapito yepissa pitā atthe anusāsi
tepi atthe anusāsati, yepissa pitā atthe nānūsāsi tepi atthe anusāsati;

After his appointment, the Steward Jotipāla managed both the affairs that his father had managed, and other affairs that his father had not managed.

yepissa pitā kammante abhisambhosi tepi kammante abhisambhoti, yepissa pitā
kammante nābhisambhosi tepi kammante abhisambhoti.

He organized both the works that his father had organized, and other works that his father had not organized.

tamenam manussā evamāhamsu:

When people noticed this they said,

“govindo vata, bho, brāhmaṇo, mahāgovindo vata, bho, brāhmaṇo”ti.

“The brahmin is indeed a Steward, a Great Steward!”

iminā kho evam, bho, pariāyena jotipālassa māṇavassa govindo mahāgovindotveva
samaññā udapādi.

And that’s how the student Jotipāla came to be known as the Great Steward.

6.1. rajjasamvibhajana

6.1. Dividing the Realm

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te cha khattiyā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamitvā te cha khattiye etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said,

“disampati kho, bho, rājā jīṇṇo vuddho mahallako addhagato vayoanuppatto, ko nu
kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitam?”

“King Disampati is old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life. Who knows how long he has to live?”

thānam kho panetaṃ vijjati, yaṃ disampatimhi raññe kālaṅkate rājakattāro reṇuṃ
rājaputtam rajje abhisinṇeeyuṃ.

It’s likely that when he passes away the king-makers will anoint Prince Reṇu as king.

āyantu, bhonto, yena reṇu rājaputto tenupasaṅkamatha; upasaṅkamitvā reṇuṃ
rājaputtam evam vadetha:

Come, sirs, go to Prince Reṇu and say,

‘mayam kho bhoto reṇussa sahāyā piyā manāpā appaṭikūlā, yaṃsukho bhavaṃ
taṃsukhā mayam, yaṃdukkho bhavaṃ taṃdukkhā mayam.

‘Prince Reṇu, we are your friends, dear, beloved, and cherished. We have shared your joys and sorrows.

disampati kho, bho, rājā jīṇṇo vuddho mahallako addhagato vayoanuppatto, ko nu
kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitam?”

King Disampati is old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life. Who knows how long he has to live?”

thānam kho panetaṃ vijjati, yaṃ disampatimhi raññe kālaṅkate rājakattāro
bhavantam reṇuṃ rajje abhisinṇeeyuṃ.

It’s likely that when he passes away the king-makers will anoint you as king.

sace bhavaṃ reṇu rajjam labhetha, samvibhajetha no rajjena””ti.

If you should gain kingship, share it with us.””

“evam, bho”ti kho, bho, te cha khattiyā mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa paṭissutvā
yena reṇu rājaputto tenupasaṅkamimsu; upasaṅkamitvā reṇuṃ rājaputtam
etadavocuṃ:

“Yes, sir,” replied the six aristocrats. They went to Prince Reṇu and put the proposal to him.

“mayam kho bhoto reṇussa sahāyā piyā manāpā appaṭikūlā;

yaṃsukho bhavaṃ taṃsukhā mayam, yaṃdukkho bhavaṃ taṃdukkhā mayam.

disampati kho, bho, rājā jinno vuddho mahallako addhagato vayoanuppatto, ko nu kho pana bho jānāti jīvitaṃ?

thānaṃ kho panetaṃ vijjati, yaṃ disampatimhi raññe kālaṅkate rājakattāro bhavantaṃ reṇuṃ rajje abhisinṇeeyyaṃ.

sace bhavaṃ reṇu rajjaṃ labhetha, saṃvibhajetha no rajjena”ti.

“ko nu kho, bho, añño mama vijite sukho bhavetha, aññatra bhavantebhi?
The prince replied, “Who else, sirs, in my realm ought to prosper if not you?

sacāhaṃ, bho, rajjaṃ labhissāmi, saṃvibhajissāmi vo rajjena”ti.
If I gain kingship, I will share it with you all.”

atha kho, bho, ahorattānaṃ accayena rājā disampati kālamakāsi.
In due course King Disampati passed away.

disampatimhi raññe kālaṅkate rājakattāro reṇuṃ rājaputtaṃ rajje abhisinṇiṃsu.
At his passing, the king-makers anointed Prince Reṇu as king.

abhisitto reṇu rajjena pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappito samaṅgībhūto paricāreti.
But after being anointed, King Reṇu amused himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te cha khattiyā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamtivā te cha khattiye etadavoca:
Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said,

“disampati kho, bho, rājā kālaṅkato.
“King Disampati has passed away.

abhisitto reṇu rajjena pañcahi kāmaguṇehi samappito samaṅgībhūto paricāreti.
But after being anointed, King Reṇu amused himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

ko nu kho pana, bho, jānāti, madanīyā kāmā?
Who knows the intoxicating power of sensual pleasures?

āyantu, bhonto, yena reṇu rājā tenupasaṅkamatha; upasaṅkamtivā reṇuṃ rājānaṃ evaṃ vadetha:
Come, sirs, go to Prince Reṇu and say,

‘disampati kho, bho, rājā kālaṅkato, abhisitto bhavaṃ reṇu rajjena, sarati bhavaṃ taṃ vacanaṃ”ti?
‘Sir, King Disampati has passed away, and you have been anointed as king. Do you remember what you said?’”

“evaṃ, bho”ti kho, bho, te cha khattiyā mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa paṭissutvā yena reṇu rājā tenupasaṅkamiṃsu; upasaṅkamtivā reṇuṃ rājānaṃ etadavocaṃ:
“Yes, sir,” replied the six aristocrats. They went to Prince Reṇu and said,

“disampati kho, bho, rājā kālaṅkato, abhisitto bhavaṃ reṇu rajjena, sarati bhavaṃ taṃ vacanaṃ”ti?
“Sir, King Disampati has passed away, and you have been anointed as king. Do you remember what you said?”

“sarāmahaṃ, bho, taṃ vacanaṃ.
“I remember, sirs.

ko nu kho, bho, pahoti imaṃ mahāpathaviṃ uttarena āyataṃ dakkhiṇena sakatamukhaṃ sattadhā samaṃ suvibhattaṃ vibhajitun”ti?
Who is able to neatly divide into seven equal parts this great land, so broad in the north and narrow as the front of a cart in the south?”

“ko nu kho, bho, añño pahoti, aññatra mahāgovindena brāhmaṇena”ti?
“Who else, sir, if not the Great Steward?”

atha kho, bho, reṇu rājā aññataraṃ purisaṃ āmantesi:

So King Reṇu addressed one of his men,

“ehi tvam, ambho purisa, yena mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo tenupasaṅkama;
upasaṅkamitvā mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ evaṃ vadehi:

“Please, mister, go to the brahmin Great Steward and say that

‘rājā taṃ, bhante, reṇu āmanteti’”ti.

King Reṇu summons him.”

“evaṃ, devā”ti kho, bho, so puriso reṇussa rañño paṭissutvā yena mahāgovindo
brāhmaṇo tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ etadavoca:

“Yes, Your Majesty,” replied that man, and did as he was asked.

“rājā taṃ, bhante, reṇu āmanteti”ti.

“evaṃ, bho”ti kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo tassa purisassa paṭissutvā yena
reṇu rājā tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā reṇunā raññā saddhiṃ sammodi.

Then the Great Steward went to the king and exchanged greetings with him.

sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ saraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. ekamantaṃ
nisinnaṃ kho, bho, mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ reṇu rājā etadavoca:

*When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and the king
said to him,*

“etu, bhavaṃ govindo imaṃ mahāpathaviṃ uttarena āyataṃ dakkhiṇena
sakaṭamukhaṃ sattadhā samaṃ suvibhattaṃ vibhajatū”ti.

*“Come, let the good Steward neatly divide into seven equal parts this great land, so broad in
the north and narrow as the front of a cart in the south.”*

“evaṃ, bho”ti kho bho mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo reṇussa rañño paṭissutvā imaṃ
mahāpathaviṃ uttarena āyataṃ dakkhiṇena sakaṭamukhaṃ sattadhā samaṃ
suvibhattaṃ vibhaji.

“Yes, sir,” replied the Great Steward, and did as he was asked.

sabbāni sakaṭamukhāni paṭṭhapesi.

All were set up like the fronts of carts,

tatra sudaṃ majjhe reṇussa rañño janapado hoti.

with King Reṇu’s nation in the center.

dantapuram kalingānaṃ,

Dantapura for the Kalingas;

assakānañca potanaṃ;

Potana for the Assakas;

mahesayaṃ avantīnaṃ,

Mahissati for the Avantis;

sovīrānañca rorukaṃ.

Roruka for the Sovīras;

mithilā ca videhānaṃ,

Mithila for the Videhas;

campā aṅgesu māpitā;

Campā was made for the Aṅgas;

bārāṇasī ca kāsīnaṃ,

and Varanasi for the Kāsīs:

ete govindamāpitāti.

these were laid out by the Steward.

atha kho, bho, te cha khattiyā yathāsakena lābhena attamanā ahesuṃ
paripuṇṇasāṅkappā:

Then those six aristocrats were delighted with their respective gains, having achieved all they wished for,

“yaṃ vata no ahosi icchitaṃ, yaṃ ākaṅkhitāṃ, yaṃ adhippetāṃ, yaṃ abhipatthitaṃ,
taṃ no laddhaṃ”ti.

“We have received exactly what we wanted, what we wished for, what we desired, what we yearned for.”

sattabhū brahmadatto ca,
Sattabhū and Brahmadatta,

vessabhū bharato saha;
Vessabhū and Bharata,

reṇu dve dhataratthā ca,
Reṇu and the two Dhataratthas:

tadāsuṃ satta bhāradhātī.
these are the seven Bhāratas.

paṭhamabhāṇavāro niṭṭhito.
The first recitation section is finished.

6.2. kittisaddaabbhuggamana 6.2. A Good Reputation

atha kho, bho, te cha khattiyā yena mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo tenupasaṅkamimsu;
upasaṅkamitvā mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ etadavocuṃ:

Then the six aristocrats approached the Great Steward and said,

“yathā kho bhavaṃ govindo reṇussa rañño sahāyo piyo manāpo appaṭikūlo.
“Steward, just as you are King Reṇu’s friend, dear, beloved, and cherished,

evameva kho bhavaṃ govindo amhākampi sahāyo piyo manāpo appaṭikūlo,
anusāsatu no bhavaṃ govindo;
you are also our friend.

mā no bhavaṃ govindo anusāsaniyā paccabyāhāsī”ti.
Would you manage our affairs? Please don’t turn us down!”

“evaṃ, bho”ti kho mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo tesāṃ channaṃ khattiyānaṃ paccassosi.
“Yes, sirs,” replied the Great Steward.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo satta ca rājāno khattiye muddhāvasitte rajje
anusāsi, satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsāle satta ca nhātakasatāni mante vācesi.

Then the Great Steward managed the realms of the seven kings. And he taught seven well-to-do brahmins, and seven hundred bathed initiates to recite the hymns.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa aparena samayena evaṃ kalyāṇo
kittisaddo abbhuggacchi:

After some time he got this good reputation,

“sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo
brāhmaṇo brahmunā sācaccheti sallapati mantetī”ti.

“The Great Steward sees Brahmā in person! The Great Steward discusses, converses, and consults with Brahmā in person!”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa etadahosi:
The Great Steward thought,

“mayhaṃ kho evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato:
“I have the reputation

‘sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo
brāhmaṇo brahmunā sācaccheti sallapati mantetī”ti.
of seeing Brahmā in person, and discussing with him in person.

na kho panāhaṃ brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi, na brahmunā sallapāmi, na brahmunā mantemi.

But I don't.

sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ
ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānānaṃ:

I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said:

‘yo vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati brahmunā sākaccheti brahmunā sallapati brahmunā mantetī’ti.

‘Whoever goes on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practices the absorption on compassion sees Brahmā and discusses with him.’

yannūnāhaṃ vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyeyyaṃ, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyeyyaṃ”ti.

Why don't I do that?"

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena reṇu rājā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamitvā reṇuṃ rājānaṃ etadavoca:

So the Great Steward went to King Reṇu and told him of the situation, saying,

“mayhaṃ kho, bho, evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato:

‘sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo
brāhmaṇo brahmunā sākaccheti sallapati mantetī’ti.

na kho panāhaṃ, bho, brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi, na brahmunā sallapāmi, na brahmunā mantemi.

sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ
ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānānaṃ:

‘yo vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati, brahmunā sākaccheti brahmunā sallapati brahmunā mantetī’ti.

icchāmaṃ, bho, vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyituṃ, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyituṃ;

“Sir, I wish to go on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practice the absorption on compassion.

namhi kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo aññatra ekena bhattābhīhārenā”ti.

No one should approach me, except for the one who brings my meal.”

“yassadāni bhavaṃ govindo kālaṃ maññatī”ti.

“Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te cha khattiyā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamitvā te cha khattiye etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats to put the same proposal, and received the same reply.

“mayhaṃ kho, bho, evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato:

‘sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo
brāhmaṇo brahmunā sākaccheti sallapati mantetī’ti.

na kho panāhaṃ, bho, brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi, na brahmunā sallapāmi, na brahmunā mantemi.

sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ
ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānānaṃ,

‘yo vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati brahmunā sākaccheti brahmunā sallapati brahmunā mantetī’ti.

icchāmaṃ, bho, vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyituṃ, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyituṃ;

namhi kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo aññatra ekena bhattābhihārenā’ti.

“yassadāni bhavaṃ govindo kālaṃ maññatī”ti.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsālā satta ca nhātakasatāni tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā te satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsāle satta ca nhātakasatāni etadavoca:

He also went to the seven well-to-do brahmins and seven hundred bathed initiates and put to them the same proposal, adding,

“mayhaṃ kho, bho, evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato:

‘sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmunā sākaccheti sallapati mantetī’ti.

na kho panāhaṃ, bho, brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi, na brahmunā sallapāmi, na brahmunā mantemi.

sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānānaṃ:

‘yo vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati, brahmunā sākaccheti, brahmunā sallapati, brahmunā mantetī’ti.

tena hi, bho, yathāsute yathāpariyatte mante vitthārena sajjhāyaṃ karoṭha, aññamaññaṃ mante vācetha;

“Sirs, recite the hymns in detail as you have learned and memorized them, and teach each other how to recite.”

icchāmaṃ, bho, vassike cattāro māse paṭisallīyituṃ, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyituṃ;

namhi kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo aññatra ekena bhattābhihārenā’ti.

And they too said,

“yassadāni bhavaṃ govindo kālaṃ maññatī”ti.

“Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena cattārīsā bhariyā sādisiyo tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā cattārīsā bhariyā sādisiyo etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward went to his forty equal wives to put the same proposal to them, and received the same reply.

“mayhaṃ kho, bhotī, evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato:

‘sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ passati, sakkhi mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmunā sākaccheti sallapati mantetī’ti.

na kho panāhaṃ, bhotī, brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi, na brahmunā sallapāmi, na brahmunā mantemi.

sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānānaṃ

‘yo vassike cattāro mase paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati, brahmunā sākacchēti, brahmunā sallapati, brahmunā mantetī”ti,

icchāmaṃ, bhotī, vassike cattāro mase paṭisallīyituṃ, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyituṃ;

namhi kenaci upasaṅkamitabbo aññatra ekena bhattābhihārenā”ti.

“yassadāni bhavaṃ govindo kālaṃ maññati”ti.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo puratthimena nagarassa navaṃ sandhāgāraṃ kārapetvā vassike cattāro mase paṭisallīyi, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyi;

Then the Great Steward had a new meeting hall built to the east of his citadel, where he went on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practiced the absorption on compassion.

nāssudha koci upasaṅkamati aññatra ekena bhattābhihārena.

And no one approached him except the one who brought him meals.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa catunnaṃ māsānaṃ accayena ahudeva ukkaṇṭhanā ahu paritassanā:

But then, when the four months had passed, the Great Steward became dissatisfied and anxious,

“sutaṃ kho pana metaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ vuddhānaṃ mahallakānaṃ ācariyapācariyānaṃ bhāsamānaṃ:

“I have heard that brahmins of the past said that

‘yo vassike cattāro mase paṭisallīyati, karuṇaṃ jhānaṃ jhāyati, so brahmānaṃ passati, brahmunā sākacchēti brahmunā sallapati brahmunā mantetī”ti.

whoever goes on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practices the absorption on compassion sees Brahmā and discusses with him.

na kho panāmaṃ brahmānaṃ passāmi, na brahmunā sākacchemi na brahmunā sallapāmi na brahmunā mantemī”ti.

But I neither see Brahmā nor discuss with him.”

6.3. brahmunāsākacchā

6.3. A Discussion With Brahmā

atha kho, bho, brahmā sanaṅkumāro mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa cetasā cetoparivitakkamaññāya—seyyathāpi nāma balavā puriso samīñjitaṃ vā bāhaṃ pasāreyya, pasāritaṃ vā bāhaṃ samīñjeyya; evameva—brahmaloke antarahito mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa sammukhe pāturahosi.

And then Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, knowing what the Great Steward was thinking, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in the Great Steward’s presence.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa ahudeva bhayaṃ ahu chambhitattaṃ ahu lomahaṃso yathā taṃ adiṭṭhapubbaṃ rūpaṃ disvā.

At that, the Great Steward became frightened, scared, his hair standing on end, as he had never seen such a sight before.

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo bhīto saṃviggo lomahaṭṭhajāto brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ gāthāya ajjhabhāsi:

So he addressed Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra in verse:

“vaṇṇavā yasavā sirimā,

“Who might you be, sir,

ko nu tvamasi mārisa;

so beautiful, glorious, majestic?

ajānanā taṃ pucchāma,

Not knowing, I ask—

kathaṃ jānemu taṃ mayan”ti.

how am I to know who you are?”

“maṃ ve kumāraṃ jānanti,
“In the Brahmā realm they know me

brahmaloke sanantanam;
as ‘The Eternal Youth’.

sabbe jānanti maṃ devā,
All the gods know me thus,

evaṃ govinda jānahi”.
and so you should know me, Steward.”

“āsanam udakaṃ pajjam,
“A Brahmā deserves a seat and water,

madhusākaṇḍa brahmuno;
foot-salve, and sweet cakes.

agghe bhavantam pucchāma,
Sir, I ask you to please accept

aggham kurutu no bhavam”.
these gifts of hospitality.”

“paṭigganḥāma te aggham,
“I accept the gifts of hospitality

yaṃ tvaṃ govinda bhāsasi;
of which you speak.

diṭṭhadhammahitatthāya,
I grant you the opportunity

samparāya sukhāya ca;
to ask whatever you desire—

katāvakāso pucchassu,
about welfare and benefit in this life,

yaṃ kiñci abhipatthitan”ti.
or happiness in lives to come.”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa etadahosi:
Then the Great Steward thought,

“katāvakāso khomhi brahmunā sanaṅkumārena.
“Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra has granted me an opportunity.

kiṃ nu kho ahaṃ brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ puccheyyaṃ diṭṭhadhammikaṃ vā
atthaṃ samparāyikaṃ vā”ti?
Should I ask him about what is beneficial for this life or lives to come?”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa etadahosi:
Then he thought,

“kusalo kho ahaṃ diṭṭhadhammikānaṃ atthānaṃ, aññepi maṃ diṭṭhadhammikaṃ
atthaṃ pucchanti.
“I’m a skilled in what is beneficial for this life, and others even ask me about it.

yannūnāhaṃ brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ samparāyikaññeva atthaṃ puccheyyaṃ”ti.
Why don’t I ask Brahmā about the benefit that specifically applies to lives to come?”

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ gāthāya
ajjhabhāsi:
So he addressed Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra in verse:

“pucchāmi brahmānaṃ sanaṅkumāraṃ,
“I’m in doubt, so I ask Brahmā—who is free of doubt—

kañkhī akañkhim paravediyesu;
about things one may learn from another.

katthattthito kimhi ca sikkhamāno,
Standing on what, training in what

pappoti macco amatam brahmalokan”ti.
may a mortal reach the deathless Brahmā realm?”

“hitvā mamattam manujesu brahme,
“He among men, O brahmin, has given up possessions,

ekodibhūto karuṇedhimutto;
become one, compassionate,

nirāmagandho virato methunasmā,
free from the stench of decay, and refraining from sex.

etthattthito ettha ca sikkhamāno;
Standing on that, training in that

pappoti macco amatam brahmalokan”ti.
a mortal may reach the deathless Brahmā realm.”

“hitvā mamattan’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
“Sir, I understand what ‘giving up possessions’ means.

idhekacco appam vā bhogakkhandham pahāya mahantam vā bhogakkhandham
pahāya appam vā ñātiparivattam pahāya mahantam vā ñātiparivattam pahāya
kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyam pabbajati,
*It’s when someone gives up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They
shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.*

iti ‘hitvā mamattan’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
That’s how I understand ‘giving up possessions’.

‘ekodibhūto’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
Sir, I understand what ‘oneness’ means.

idhekacco vivittam senāsanam bhajati araṇṇam rukkhāmūlam pabbatam kandaram
giriguham susānam vanapattham abbhokāsam palālapuñjam,
*It’s when someone frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a
ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.*

iti ‘ekodibhūto’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
That’s how I understand ‘oneness’.

‘karuṇedhimutto’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
Sir, I understand what ‘compassionate’ means.

idhekacco karuṇāsahagatena cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ,
tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catuttham. iti uddhamadhotiriyam sabbadhi sabbattatāya
sabbāvantam lokaṃ karuṇāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena
averena abyāpajjena pharitvā viharati.
*It’s when someone meditates spreading a heart full of compassion to one direction, and to the
second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere,
all around, they spread a heart full of compassion to the whole world—abundant, expansive,
limitless, free of enmity and ill will.*

iti ‘karuṇedhimutto’ti aham, bhoto, ājānāmi.
That’s how I understand ‘compassionate’.

āmagandhe ca kho aham, bhoto, bhāsamānassa na ājānāmi.
But I don’t understand what you say about the stench of decay.

ke āmagandhā manujesu brahme,
What among men, O Brahmā, is the stench of decay?

ete avidvā idha brūhi dhīra;
I don't understand, so tell me, wise one:

kenāvaṭā vāti pajā kurutu,
wrapped in what do people stink,

āpāyikā nivutabrahmalokā”ti.
headed for hell, shut out of the Brahmā realm?”

“kodho mosavajjaṃ nikati ca dubbho,
“Anger, lies, fraud, and deceit,

kadariyatā atimāno usūyā;
miserliness, vanity, jealousy,

icchā vivicchā parahethanā ca,
desire, stinginess, harassing others,

lobho ca doso ca mado ca moho;
greed, hate, pride, and delusion—

etesu yuttā anirāmagandhā,
those bound to such things have the stench of decay;

āpāyikā nivutabrahmalokā”ti.
they're headed for hell, shut out of the Brahmā realm.”

“yathā kho ahaṃ, bhoto, āmagandhe bhāsamānassa ājānāmi. te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā.
“As I understand what you say about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmaṃ, bho, agāraṃ anagāriyaṃ”ti.
I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness!”

“yassadāni bhavaṃ govindo kālaṃ maññatī”ti.
“Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

6.4. reṇurājaāmantanā *6.4. Informing King Reṇu*

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena reṇu rājā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamitvā reṇuṃ rājānaṃ etadavoca:
So the Great Steward went to King Reṇu and said,

“aññaṃ dāni bhavaṃ purohitaṃ pariyesatu, yo bhoto rajjaṃ anusāsissati.
“Sir, please now find another high priest to manage the affairs of state for you.

icchāmaṃ, bho, agāraṃ anagāriyaṃ pabbajitūṃ.
I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā.
As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmaṃ, bho, agāraṃ anagāriyaṃ”ti.
I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

“āmantayāmi rājānaṃ,
I announce to King Reṇu,

reṇuṃ bhūmipatiṃ ahaṃ;
the lord of the land:

tvaṃ pajānassu rajjena,
you must learn how to rule,

nāhaṃ porohicce rame”.
for I no longer care for my ministry.”

“sace te ūnaṃ kāmehi,
“If you’re lacking any pleasures,

ahaṃ paripūrayāmi te;
I’ll supply them for you.

yo taṃ hiṃsati vāremi,
I’ll protect you from any harm,

bhūmisenāpati ahaṃ;
for I command the nation’s army.

tuvaṃ pitā ahaṃ putto,
You are my father, I am your son!

mā no govinda pājahi”.
O Steward, please don’t leave!”

“namatthi ūnaṃ kāmehi,
“I’m lacking no pleasures,

hiṃsitā me na vijjati;
and no-one is harming me.

amanussavaco sutvā,
I’ve heard a non-human voice,

tasmāhaṃ na gahe rame”.
so I no longer care for lay life.”

“amanusso kathaṃvaṇṇo,
“What was that non-human like?

kiṃ te atthaṃ abhāsatha;
What did he say to you,

yañca sutvā jahāsi no,
hearing which you would abandon

gehe amhe ca kevaḷī”.
our house and all our people?”

“upavutthassa me pubbe,
“Before entering this retreat,

yitthukāmassa me sato;
I only liked to sacrifice.

aggi pajjalito āsi,
I kindled the sacred flame,

kusapattaparitthato.
strewn about with kusa grass.

tato me brahmā pāturahu,
But then Brahmā appeared to me,

brahmalokā sanantano;
the Eternal Youth from the Brahmā realm.

so me pañhaṃ viyākāsi,
He answered my question,

taṃ sutvā na gahe rame”.
hearing which I no longer care for lay life.”

“saddahāmi ahaṃ bhoto,
“I have faith, O Steward,

yaṃ tvaṃ govinda bhāsasi;
in that of which you speak.

amanussavaco sutvā,
Having heard a non-human voice,

kathaṃ vattetha aññathā.
what else could you do?

te taṃ anuvattissāma,
We will follow your example,

satthā govinda no bhavaṃ;
Steward, be my Teacher!

maṇi yathā veḷuriyo,
Like a gem of beryl—

akāco vimalo subho;
flawless, immaculate, beautiful—

evaṃ suddhā carissāma,
that’s how pure we shall live,

govindassānusāsaneti.
in the Steward’s dispensation.

sace bhavaṃ govindo agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissati, mayampi agārasmā
anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma.

If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissatī”ti.

6.5. chakhattiyaāmantanā

6.5. Informing the Six Aristocrats

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te cha khattiyā tenupasaṅkami;
upasaṅkamtivā te cha khattiye etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said,

“aññaṃ dāni bhavanto purohitaṃ pariyesantu, yo bhavantānaṃ rajje anusāsissati.

“Sirs, please now find another high priest to manage the affairs of state for you.

icchāmaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitum.

I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā.

As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it’s not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness!”

atha kho, bho, te cha khattiyā ekamantaṃ apakkamma evaṃ samacintesum:

Then the six aristocrats withdrew to one side and thought up a plan,

“ime kho brāhmaṇā nāma dhanaluddhā;

“These brahmins are really greedy for wealth.

yannūna mayaṃ mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ dhanena sikkheyyāma”ti.

Why don’t we try to persuade him with wealth?”

te mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ upasaṅkamtivā evamāhaṃsu:

They returned to the Great Steward and said,

“saṃvijjati kho, bho, imesu sattasu rajjesu pahūtaṃ sāpateyyaṃ, tato bhoto yāvatakena attho, tāvatakaṃ āharīyatan”ti.

“In these seven kingdoms there is abundant wealth. We’ll get you as much as you want.”

“alaṃ, bho, mamaṇḍaṃ pahūtaṃ sāpateyyaṃ bhavantaṇaṃyeva vāhasā.

“Enough, sirs. I already have abundant wealth, owing to my lords.

tamaṃ sabbāṃ pahāya agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāmi.

Giving up all that, I shall go forth.”

yathā kho pana me sutāṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

pabbajissāmaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

atha kho, bho, te cha khattiyā ekamantaṃ apakkamma evaṃ samacintesum:

Then the six aristocrats withdrew to one side and thought up a plan,

“ime kho brāhmaṇā nāma itthiluddhā;

“These brahmins are really greedy for women.

yannūna mayaṃ mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ itthiṃhi sikkheyyāma”ti.

Why don’t we try to persuade him with women?”

te mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ upasaṅkamtivā evamāhaṃsu:

They returned to the Great Steward and said,

“saṃvijjanti kho, bho, imesu sattasu rajjesu pahūtā itthiyo, tato bhoto yāvatikāhi attho, tāvatikā ānīyatan”ti.

“In these seven kingdoms there are many women. We’ll get you as many as you want.”

“alaṃ, bho, mamaṇḍaṃ cattārīsā bhariyā sādisiyo.

“Enough, sirs. I already have forty equal wives.

tāpāhaṃ sabbāṃ pahāya agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāmi.

Giving up all them, I shall go forth.”

yathā kho pana me sutāṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

pabbajissāmaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyanti”.

“sace bhavaṃ govindo agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissati, mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissati”ti.

“If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

“sace jahatha kāmāni,

“If you all give up sensual pleasures,

yattha satto puthujjano;

to which ordinary people are attached,

ārambhavho dāḥā hotha,

exert yourselves, being strong,

khantībalasamāhitā.

and possessing the power of patience.

esa maggo ujumaggo,

This path is the straight path,

esa maggo anuttaro;
this path is supreme.

saddhammo sabbhi rakkhito,
Guarded by the good, the true teaching

brahmalokūpapattiyā”ti.
leads to rebirth in the Brahmā realm.”

“tena hi bhavaṃ govindo satta vassāni āgāmetu.
“Well then, sir, please wait for seven years.

sattannaṃ vassānaṃ accayena mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha
yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissatī”ti.
When seven years have passed, we shall go forth with you.”

“aticiraṃ kho, bho, satta vassāni, nāhaṃ sakkomi, bhavante, satta vassāni
āgāmetuṃ.
“Seven years is too long, sirs. I cannot wait that long.

ko nu kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitānaṃ.
Who knows what will happen to the living?

gamaṇīyo samparāyo, mantāyaṃ boddhabbaṃ, kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ, caritabbaṃ
brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.
*We are heading to the next life. We must think about this and wake up! We must do what's good
and live the spiritual life, for no-one born can escape death.*

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

pabbajissāmahaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.
I shall go forth.”

“tena hi bhavaṃ govindo chabbassāni āgāmetu ... pe ...
“Well then, sir, please wait for six years,

pañca vassāni āgāmetu ...
five years,

cattāri vassāni āgāmetu ...
four years,

tīṇi vassāni āgāmetu ...
three years,

dve vassāni āgāmetu ...
two years,

ekaṃ vassaṃ āgāmetu, ekassa vassassa accayena mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ
pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissatī”ti.
one year,

“aticiraṃ kho, bho, ekaṃ vassaṃ, nāhaṃ sakkomi bhavante ekaṃ vassaṃ
āgāmetuṃ.

ko nu kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitānaṃ.

gamaṇīyo samparāyo, mantāyaṃ boddhabbaṃ, kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ, caritabbaṃ
brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

pabbajissāmaḥaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

“tena hi bhavaṃ govindo satta māsāni āgometu, sattannaṃ māsānaṃ accayena mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissati”ti.

seven months,

“aticiraṃ kho, bho, satta māsāni, nāhaṃ sakkomi bhavante satta māsāni āgometuṃ.

ko nu kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitānaṃ.

gamaṇīyo samparāyo, mantāyaṃ boddhabbaṃ, kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ, caritabbaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

pabbajissāmaḥaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

“tena hi bhavaṃ govindo cha māsāni āgometu ... pe ...

six months,

pañca māsāni āgometu ...

five months,

cattāri māsāni āgometu ...

four months,

tīṇi māsāni āgometu ...

three months,

dve māsāni āgometu ...

two months,

ekaṃ māsam āgometu ...

one month,

addhamāsaṃ āgometu, addhamāsassa accayena mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissati”ti.

or even a fortnight. When a fortnight has passed, we shall go forth. Your destiny shall be ours.”

“aticiraṃ kho, bho, addhamāso, nāhaṃ sakkomi bhavante addhamāsaṃ āgometuṃ.

“A fortnight is too long, sirs. I cannot wait that long.

ko nu kho pana, bho, jānāti jīvitānaṃ.

Who knows what will happen to the living?

gamaṇīyo samparāyo, mantāyaṃ boddhabbaṃ, kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ, caritabbaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, natthi jātassa amaraṇaṃ.

We are heading to the next life. We must think about this and wake up! We must do what's good and live the spiritual life, for no-one born can escape death.

yathā kho pana me suttaṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmaḥaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“tena hi bhavaṃ govindo sattāhaṃ āgāmetu, yāva mayaṃ sake puttabhātaro rajjena anusāsissāma, sattāhassa accayena mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissatī”ti.

“Well then, sir, please wait for a week, so that we can instruct our sons and brothers in kingship. When a week has passed, we shall go forth. Your destiny shall be ours.”

“na ciraṃ kho, bho, sattāhaṃ, āgāmessāmahaṃ bhavante sattāhan”ti.

“A week is not too long, sirs. I will wait that long.”

6.6. brāhmaṇamahāsālādīnaṃmantanā

6.6. Informing the Brahmins

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena te satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsālā satta ca nhātakasatāni tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā te satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsāle satta ca nhātakasatāni etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward also went to the seven well-to-do brahmins and seven hundred bathed initiates and said,

“aññaṃ dāni bhavanto ācariyaṃ pariyesantu, yo bhavantānaṃ mante vācessatī.

“Sirs, please now find another teacher to teach you to recite the hymns.

icchāmahaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitūṃ.

I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

yathā kho pana me sutāṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa. te na sunimmadaya āgāraṃ ajjhāvasatā,

As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmahaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“mā bhavaṃ govindo agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbaji.

“Please don't go forth from the lay life to homelessness!

pabbajjā, bho, appesakkhā ca appalābhā ca;

The life of one gone forth is of little influence or profit,

brahmaññaṃ mahesakkhañca mahālābhañcā”ti.

whereas the life of a brahmin is of great influence and profit.”

“mā bhavanto evaṃ avacuttha: ‘pabbajjā appesakkhā ca appalābhā ca, brahmaññaṃ mahesakkhañca mahālābhañcā’ti.

“Please, sirs, don't say that.

ko nu kho, bho, aññatra mayā mahesakkhataro vā mahālābhataro vā.

Who has greater influence and profit than myself?

ahañhi, bho, etarahi rājāva raññaṃ brahmāva brāhmaṇaṇaṃ devatāva gahapatikānaṃ.

For now I am like a king to kings, like Brahmā to brahmins, like a deity to householders.

tamahaṃ sabbam pahāya agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāmi.

Giving up all that, I shall go forth.

yathā kho pana me sutāṃ brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadaya āgāraṃ ajjhāvasatā.

As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmahaṃ, bho, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“sace bhavaṃ govindo agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissatī, mayampi agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissatī”ti.

“If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

6.7. bhariyānaṃāmantanā

6.7. Informing the Wives

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo yena cattārīsā bhariyā sādisiyo
tenupasaṅkami; upasaṅkamitvā cattārīsā bhariyā sādisiyo etadavoca:

Then the Great Steward went to his forty equal wives and said,

“yā bhotīnaṃ icchati, sakāni vā nātikulāni gacchatu aññaṃ vā bhattāraṃ pariyesatu.

“Ladies, please do whatever you wish, whether returning to your own families, or finding another husband.

icchāmaṃ, bhotī, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitūṃ.

I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

yathā kho pana me sutam brahmuno āmagandhe bhāsamānassa, te na sunimmadayā
agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā.

As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home.

pabbajissāmaṃ, bhotī, agārasmā anagāriyaṃ”ti.

I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“tvaññeva no nāti nātikāmānaṃ, tvaṃ pana bhattā bhattukāmānaṃ.

“You are the only family we want! You are the only husband we want!

sace bhavaṃ govindo agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajissati, mayampi agārasmā
anagāriyaṃ pabbajissāma, atha yā te gati, sā no gati bhavissati”ti.

If you are going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

6.8. mahāgovindapabbajjā

6.8. The Great Steward Goes Forth

atha kho, bho, mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo tassa sattāhassa accayena kesamassuṃ
ohāretvā kāsāyaṇi vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbaji.

When a week had passed, the Great Steward shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

pabbajitaṃ pana mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ satta ca rājāno khattiyā muddhāvasittā
satta ca brāhmaṇamahāsālā satta ca nhātakasatāni cattārīsā ca bhariyā sādisiyo
anekāni ca khattiyasahassāni anekāni ca brāhmaṇasahassāni anekāni ca
gahapatisahassāni anekehi ca itthāgārehi itthiyo kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyaṇi
vatthāni acchādetvā mahāgovindaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitaṃ
anupabbajimsu.

And when he had gone forth, the seven anointed aristocrat kings, the seven brahmins with seven hundred initiates, the forty equal wives, and many thousands of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and many harem women shaved off their hair and beards, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

tāya suḍaṃ, bho, parisāya parivuto mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo gāmanigamarājadhānīsu
cārikaṃ carati.

Escorted by that assembly, the Great Steward wandered on tour among the villages, towns, and capital cities.

yaṃ kho pana, bho, tena samayena mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo gāmaṃ vā nigamaṃ vā
upasaṅkamati, tattha rājāva hoti raññaṃ, brahmāva brāhmaṇaṃ, devatāva
gahapatikānaṃ.

And at that time, whenever he arrived at a village or town, he was like a king to kings, like Brahmā to brahmins, like a deity to householders.

tena kho pana samayena manussā khipanti vā upakkhalanti vā.

And whenever people sneezed or tripped over

te evamāhaṃsu:

they'd say:

“namatthu mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa, namatthu satta purohitassa”ti.

“Homage to the Great Steward! Homage to the high priest for the seven!”

mahāgovindo, bho, brāhmaṇo mettāsahagatena cetasā ekam disaṃ pharitvā vihāsi, tathā dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā catutthaṃ. iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjena pharitvā vihāsi.

And the Great Steward meditated spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

karuṇāsahagatena cetasā ... pe ...

He meditated spreading a heart full of compassion ...

muditāsahagatena cetasā ... pe ...

rejoicing ...

upekkhāsahagatena cetasā ... pe ... abyāpajjena pharitvā vihāsi.

equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

sāvākānañca brahmalokasahabyatāya maggaṃ desesi.

And he taught his disciples the path to rebirth in the company of Brahmā.

ye kho pana, bho, tena samayena mahāgovindassa brāhmaṇassa sāvakā sabbenasabbaṃ sāsaṇaṃ ājāṇiṃsu.

Those of his disciples who completely understood the Great Steward’s instructions,

te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ brahmalokaṃ upapajjiṃsu.

at the breaking up of the body, after death, were reborn in the Brahmā realm.

ye na sabbenasabbaṃ sāsaṇaṃ ājāṇiṃsu, te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā appekacce paranimmitavasavattīnaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

Of those disciples who only partly understood the Great Steward’s instructions, some were reborn in the company of the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others,

appekacce nimmānaratīnaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

while some were reborn in the company of the Gods Who Love to Create,

appekacce tusitānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

or the Joyful Gods,

appekacce yāmānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

or the Gods of Yama,

appekacce tāvatimsānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

or the Gods of the Thirty-Three,

appekacce cātumahārājikānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjiṃsu;

or the Gods of the Four Great Kings.

ye sabbanihīnaṃ kāyaṃ paripūresuṃ te gandhabbakāyaṃ paripūresuṃ.

And at the very least they swelled the hosts of the fairies.

iti kho, bho, sabbesaṃyeva tesāṃ kulaputtānaṃ amoghā pabbajjā ahoṣi avaññhā saphalā saudrayā’ti.

And so the going forth of all those gentlemen was not in vain, was not wasted, but was fruitful and fertile.

sarati taṃ bhagavā’ti?

Do you remember this, Blessed One?”

“sarāmaḥaṃ, pañcasikha.

“I remember, Pañcasikha.

aham tena samayena mahāgovindo brāhmaṇo ahoṣiṃ.

I myself was the brahmin Great Steward at that time.

aham tesam sāvakanam brahmalokasahabyatāya maggam desesiṃ.

And I taught those disciples the path to rebirth in the company of Brahṃā.

taṃ kho pana me, pañcasikha, brahmacariyaṃ na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya na nibbānāya saṃvattati, yāvadeva brahmalokūpapattiyaṃ.

But that spiritual path of mine doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the Brahṃā realm.

idaṃ kho pana me, pañcasikha, brahmacariyaṃ ekantanibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.

But this spiritual path does lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

katamañca taṃ, pañcasikha, brahmacariyaṃ ekantanibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati?

And what is the spiritual path that leads to extinguishment?

ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo.

It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is:

seyyathidaṃ—sammāditṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi.

right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

idaṃ kho taṃ, pañcasikha, brahmacariyaṃ ekantanibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya upasamāya abhiññāya sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati.

This is the spiritual path that leads to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

ye kho pana me, pañcasikha, sāvakā sabbenasabbaṃ sāsanaṃ ājānanti, te āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharanti;

Those of my disciples who completely understand my instructions realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. And they live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements.

ye na sabbenasabbaṃ sāsanaṃ ājānanti, te pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyaṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātikā honti tattha parinibbāyino anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā.

Of those disciples who only partly understand my instructions, some, with the ending of the five lower fetters, become reborn spontaneously. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world.

ye na sabbenasabbaṃ sāsanaṃ ājānanti, appekacce tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā rāgadosamohānaṃ tanuttā sakadāgāmino honti sakideva imaṃ lokam āgantvā dukkhassantaṃ karissanti.

Some, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, become once-returners. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.

ye na sabbenasabbaṃ sāsanaṃ ājānanti, appekacce tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā sotāpannā honti avinipātadhammā niyatā sambodhiparāyaṇā.

And some, with the ending of three fetters, become stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.

iti kho, pañcasikha, sabbesaṃyeva imesaṃ kulaputtānaṃ amoghā pabbajjā avañjhā saphalā saudrayā”ti.

And so the going forth of all those gentlemen was not in vain, was not wasted, but was fruitful and fertile.”

idamavoca bhagavā.

That is what the Buddha said.

attamano pañcasikho gandhabbaputto bhagavato bhāsitam abhinanditvā anumoditvā
bhagavantam abhivādetvā padakkhiṇam katvā tatthevantaradhāyīti.

*Delighted, the fairy Pañcasikha approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He bowed
and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.*

mahāgovindasuttam niṭṭhitam chaṭṭham.