

34. Parābhava Sutta: Discourse on Downfall

Evam me sutam. Ekam samayam Bhagava Sāvattiyam viharati Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Atha kho aññatarā devatā abhikkantāya rattiya abhikkantavaṇṇā kevalakappam Jetavanam obhāsetvā yena Bhagava tenupasaṅkami. Upasaṅkamtivā Bhagavantam abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi. Ekamantaṃ ṭhitā kho sā devatā Bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi.

Thus have I heard: On one occasion ♦ the Blessed One was living in Sāvatti, ♦ at Jeta's Grove, at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now when the night was far advanced, ♦ a certain deity whose surpassing radiance ♦ illuminated the whole of Jeta's Grove, ♦ came to the presence of the Blessed One, ♦ respectfully saluted him, and stood beside him. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

1. Parābhavantaṃ purisaṃ – Mayam pucchāma Gotamaṃ

Bhagavantaṃ puṭṭhumā'garāma – Kim parābhavato mukhaṃ?

About the declining man we question you, ♦ Gotama, the great teacher ♦ we have come to ask the Blessed One: ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

2. Suvijāno bhavaṃ hoti – Suvijāno parābhavo

Dhammakāmo bhavaṃ hoti – Dhammadessī parābhavo

Easily known is the progressing one. ♦ Easily known is the declining one. The lover of Dhamma prospers. ♦ The hater of Dhamma declines.

3. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Paṭhamo so parābhavo

Dutiyam Bhagava brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the first cause of his downfall. Tell us the second, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

4. Asant'assa piyā honti – Sante na kurute piyam

Asataṃ dhammaṃ roceti – Tam parābhavato mukhaṃ

The vicious are dear to him. ♦ He likes not the virtuous. He approves the teachings of the ill taught. ♦ This is the cause of his downfall.

5. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Dutiyō so parābhavo

Tatiyam Bhagava brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the second cause of his downfall. Tell us the third, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

6. Niddāsīli sabhāsīli – Anuṭṭhātā ca yo naro
 Alaso kodhapaññāṇo – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ
 The fondness of sleep and company, ♦ being inactive and lazy, ♦ and displaying anger ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.
7. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Tatiyo so parābhavo
 Catutthaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?
 We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the third cause of his downfall. Tell us the fourth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?
8. Yo mātaram vā pitaram vā – Jiṇṇakam gata yobbanam
 Pahūsanto na bharati – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ
 If someone being affluent, ♦ does not support his mother and father ♦ who are old and past their prime ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.
9. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Catuttho so parābhavo
 Pañcamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?
 We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the fourth cause of his downfall. Tell us the fifth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?
10. Yo brāhmaṇam vā samaṇam vā – Aññam vā'pi vaṇibbakam
 Musāvādena vañceti – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ
 If one by falsehood deceives ♦ either a brāhmaṇa, or a recluse, ♦ or any other homeless one ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.
11. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Pañcama so parābhavo
 Chaṭṭhamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?
 We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the fifth cause of his downfall. Tell us the sixth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?
12. Pahūtavitto puriso – Sahirañño sabhojano
 Eko bhuñjati sādḥūni – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ
 If someone who is possessed of much wealth, ♦ who has gold and abundance of food, ♦ but enjoys these delicacies by himself ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.
13. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Chaṭṭhama so parābhavo
 Sattamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?
 We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the sixth cause of his downfall. Tell us the seventh, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?
14. Jātitthaddho dhanatthaddho – Gottatthaddo ca yo naro
 Saññātim atimaññeti – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

If one, proud of his birth, ♦ of his wealth, and of his clan, ♦ despises his relations ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.

15. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Sattamo so parābhavo

Aṭṭhamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the seventh cause of his downfall.
Tell us the eighth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

16. Itthidhutto surādhutto – Akkhadhutto ca yo naro

Laddhaṃ laddhaṃ vināseti – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

If one is addicted to women, ♦ is a drunkard, a gambler, ♦ and wastes all of his earnings ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.

17. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Aṭṭhamaṃ so parābhavo

Navamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the eighth cause of his downfall.
Tell us the ninth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

18. Sehi dārehi'santuṭṭho – Vesiyāsu padissati

Dissati paradāresu – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

Not satisfied with his own wife, ♦ he is seen among prostitutes ♦ and the wives of others. ♦ This is the cause of his downfall.

19. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Navamo so parābhavo

Dasamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the ninth cause of his downfall.
Tell us the tenth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

20. Atītayobbano poso – Āneti timbarutthaniṃ

Tassā issā na supati – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

A person past his youth ♦ takes as wife, a girl in her teens, ♦ and sleeps not, being jealous of her. ♦ This is the cause of his downfall.

21. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Dasamo so parābhavo

Ekādasamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the tenth cause of his downfall.
Tell us the eleventh, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

22. Itthi soṇḍiṃ vikiraṇiṃ – Purisaṃ vā'pi tādisaṃ

Issariyasmīṃ ṭhāpeti – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

If one appoints authority ♦ to a woman or a man ♦ who is a drunkard ♦ and spends carelessly, ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.

23. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Ekādasamo so parābhavo

Dvādasamaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ?

We understand this as explained by you; ♦ this is the eleventh cause of his downfall.
Tell us the twelfth, oh Blessed One. ♦ What is the cause of his downfall?

24. Appabhogo mahātaṇho – Khattiye jāyate kule

So'dha rajjaṃ patthayati – Taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ

One is born in the kings' cast ♦ but having little wealth and great ambitions, ♦
wishes selfishly to become the king. ♦ This is the cause of his downfall.

25. Ete parābhave loke – Paṇḍito samavekkhiya

Ariyo dassanasampanno – Sa lokaṃ bhajate sivaṃ'ti.

Fully realizing these twelve causes ♦ of downfall in the world, ♦ the sage, endowed
with noble insight, ♦ enters the realm of Nibbāna.

Etena saccena suvatthi hotu!

By this truth, may there be well-being!