

34. Parābhava Sutta: Discourse on Downfall

Evaṃ me sutāṃ. Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā Sāvattiyāṃ viharati Jetavane Anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Atha kho aññatarā devatā abhikkantāya rattiyaṃ abhikkantavaṇṇā kevalakappaṃ Jetavanaṃ obhāsetvā yena Bhagavā tenupasāṅkami. Upasāṅkamtīvā Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi. Ekamantaṃ ʈhitā kho sā devatā Bhagavantaṃ 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 – Mayaṃ pucchāma Gotamaṃ

Bhagavantaṃ puṭṭhumā'gaṃma – Kiṃ 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 – Paṭhama so parābhavo

Dutiyaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ 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 piyaṃ

Asataṃ dhammaṃ roceti – Taṃ 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 – Dutiyo so parābhavo

Tatiyaṃ Bhagavā brūhi – Kiṃ 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 – Tam parābhavato mukham

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

Pañcamam Bhagavā brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukham?

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 – Tam parābhavato mukham

If one by falsehood deceives ♦ either a brāhmana, or a recluse, ♦ or any other homeless one ♦ this is the cause of his downfall.

11. Iti h'etaṃ vijānāma – Pañcama so parābhavo

Chaṭṭhamam Bhagavā brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukham?

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 – Tam parābhavato mukham

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 – Chaṭṭhamo so parābhavo

Sattamam Bhagavā brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukham?

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

Saññātiṃ atimaññeti – Tam parābhavato mukham

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

Aṭṭhamam Bhagavā brūhi – Kim parābhavato mukham?

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

Laddham laddham vināseti – Tam parābhavato mukham

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 – Aṭṭhamo 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
 Issariyasmiṃ 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!