

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

2. The Great Chapter (2. Mahāvaggapāḷi)

6. The Great Discourse on Govinda (6. Mahāgovindasuttaṃ)

[DN 19. PTS 2.220–2.252]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

2. The Great Chapter

6. The Great Discourse on Govinda

293. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha on the Vulture's Peak mountain. Then Pañcasikha, the gandhabba's son, when the night was far advanced, with surpassing beauty, having illuminated the entire Vulture's Peak mountain, approached the Blessed One. Having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and stood to one side. Standing to one side, Pañcasikha, the gandhabba's son, said this to the Blessed One - "What I have heard face to face with the gods of the Thirty-three, what I have received face to face, that I report to the Blessed One." "Report it to me, Pañcasikha," said the Blessed One.

The Assembly of Gods

294. "Some days ago, venerable sir, earlier than that, on the uposatha day, the fifteenth, on the full moon night of the invitation ceremony to admonish, almost all the gods of the Thirty-three were seated together assembled in the Sudhammā assembly hall; and a great divine assembly was seated all around, and the four great kings were seated in the four directions; in the eastern direction the great king Dhataratṭha was seated facing west, with the gods in front; in the southern direction the great king Virūḷhaka was seated facing north, with the gods in front; in the western direction the great king Virūpakkha was seated facing east, with the gods in front; in the northern direction the great king Vessavaṇa was seated facing south, with the gods in front. When, venerable sir, almost all the gods of the Thirty-three were seated together assembled in the Sudhammā assembly hall, and a great divine assembly was seated all around, and the four great kings were seated in the four directions, this is their seating arrangement; then afterwards is our seat.

"Those gods, venerable sir, who, having lived the holy life under the Blessed One, have recently been reborn in the company of the Thirty-three, they outshine the other gods in beauty and glory. By that, venerable sir, the gods of the Thirty-three were delighted, greatly pleased, filled with joy and happiness: 'Indeed, sirs, the divine hosts are being filled, the titan hosts are diminishing.'

295. Then, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, having understood the satisfaction of the gods of the Thirty-three, gave thanks with these verses:

"The gods of the Thirty-three rejoice indeed, sirs, together with Indra,
paying homage to the Truth-finder and to the good nature of the Teaching.

And seeing the new gods, beautiful and glorious,
who, having lived the holy life under the Fortunate One, have come here.

They outshine the others in beauty, glory, and lifespan;
disciples of the one of extensive wisdom, who have attained distinction here.

Seeing this, they rejoice, the Thirty-three together with Indra,
paying homage to the Truth-finder and to the good nature of the Teaching."

By that, venerable sir, the gods of the Thirty-three were even more delighted, greatly pleased, filled with joy and happiness: "Indeed, sirs, the divine hosts are being filled, the titan hosts are diminishing."

The Eight Truthful Praises

296. "Then, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, having understood the satisfaction of the gods of the Thirty-three, addressed the gods of the Thirty-three - 'Would you wish, sirs, to hear the eight praises in conformity with the truth of that Blessed One?' 'We wish, sir, to hear the eight praises in conformity with the truth of that Blessed One.' Then, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, declared to the gods of the Thirty-three the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One - 'What do the venerable gods of the Thirty-three think? As far as that Blessed One has practised for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who has practised for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans, except for that Blessed One.

"Well proclaimed by that Blessed One is the Teaching, visible here and now, immediately effective, inviting one to come and see, leading onward, to be individually experienced by the wise. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who teaches a Teaching that leads onward, except for that Blessed One.

"'This is wholesome' has been well laid down by that Blessed One, 'this is unwholesome' has been well laid down. 'This is blameworthy, this is blameless, this should be cultivated, this should not be cultivated, this is inferior, this is superior, this partakes of both dark and bright' has been well laid down. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who declares teachings that are wholesome-unwholesome, blameworthy-blameless, to be cultivated-not to be cultivated, inferior-superior, partaking of both dark and bright, except for that Blessed One.

"Well laid down by that Blessed One for disciples is the practice leading to Nibbāna; Nibbāna and the practice flow together. Just as the water of the Ganges flows together and meets with the water of the Yamunā, just so, well laid down by that Blessed One for disciples is the practice leading to Nibbāna; Nibbāna and the practice flow together. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who declares the practice leading to Nibbāna, except for that Blessed One.

"Achieved indeed is the material gain of that Blessed One, achieved is the fame, so that even nobles, methinks, dwell showing affection, yet that Blessed One, free from vanity, takes food. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who is free from vanity while taking food, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One has obtained companions among both those practising as learners and those with mental corruptions eliminated who have fulfilled the holy life. Having dismissed them, the Blessed One dwells devoted to solitary delight. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who is devoted to solitary delight, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One speaks as he acts, acts as he speaks; thus he speaks as he acts, acts as he speaks. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who has practised in conformity with the Teaching, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One has crossed over doubt, is free from bewilderment, has fulfilled his intention, through the fundamentals of the holy life as his disposition. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who has crossed over doubt, is free from bewilderment, has fulfilled his intention, through the fundamentals of the holy life as his disposition, except for that Blessed One.'

297. "These, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, declared to the gods of the Thirty-three the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One. By that, venerable sir, the gods of the Thirty-three were even more delighted, greatly pleased, filled with joy and happiness, having heard the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One. There, venerable sir, some gods said thus - 'Oh indeed, sirs, if four Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise in the world and expound the Teaching just as the Blessed One does. That would be for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' Some gods said thus - 'Let alone four Perfectly Enlightened Ones, sirs; oh indeed, sirs, if three Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise in the world and expound the Teaching just as the Blessed One does. That would be for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' Some gods said thus - 'Let alone three Perfectly Enlightened Ones, sirs; oh indeed, sirs, if two Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise in the world and expound the Teaching just as the Blessed One does. That would be for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.'

298. "When this was said, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, said this to the gods of the Thirty-three - 'This is impossible, sirs, there is no chance, that two Worthy Ones, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, should arise simultaneously in one world system - this is impossible. Oh indeed, sirs, may that Blessed One be free from illness, free from disease, and remain for a long time, for a long duration. That would be for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' Then, venerable sir, for whatever purpose the gods of the Thirty-three were seated together assembled in the Sudhammā assembly hall, having considered that matter, having discussed that matter, the four great kings are also spoken to regarding that matter. The four great kings are also instructed in return regarding that matter, standing in their own seats, not having departed.

Those kings, having been spoken to, having received the instruction,

with serene minds, peaceful, stood in their seats.

299. "Then, venerable sir, in the northern direction an eminent light arose, radiance became manifest, surpassing even the divine power of the gods. Then, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty-three - 'As signs appear, sirs, an eminent light arises, radiance becomes manifest, Brahmā will appear; for this is the advanced sign of Brahmā's manifestation, namely that light arises and radiance becomes manifest.'

'As signs appear, Brahmā will appear;
For this is Brahmā's sign, the radiance vast and great.'

The Talk on Sanaṅkumāra

300. "Then, venerable sir, the gods of the Thirty-three sat down in their own seats - 'We shall know this light, what result it will have, having realised it we shall go. The four great kings also sat down in their own seats - 'We shall know this light, what result it will have, having realised it we shall go.' Having heard this, the gods of the Thirty-three became fully focused - 'We shall know this light, what result it will have, having realised it we shall go.'

"When, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-three, having created a gross individual existence, he appears. But, venerable sir, Brahmā's natural beauty is unattainable in the range of vision of the gods of the Thirty-three. When, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-three, he outshines the other gods in beauty and glory. Just as, venerable sir, a golden figure outshines a human figure, just so, venerable sir, when Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-three, he outshines the other gods in beauty and glory. When, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-three, no god in that assembly pays respect to him or rises up for him or invites him with a seat. All remain silent, with joined palms, sitting cross-legged - 'On whichever god's divan Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra now wishes, on that god's divan he will sit.' But, venerable sir, whichever god's divan Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra sits on, that god obtains a lofty attainment of inspiration, that god obtains a lofty attainment of pleasure. Just as, venerable sir, head-anointed king of the ruling cast, newly consecrated with kingship, obtains a lofty attainment of inspiration, obtains a lofty attainment of pleasure, just so, venerable sir, whichever god's divan Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra sits on, that god obtains a lofty attainment of inspiration, that god obtains a lofty attainment of pleasure. Then, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, having understood the satisfaction of the gods of the Thirty-three, having vanished, gave thanks with these verses -

"The gods of the Thirty-three rejoice indeed, sirs, together with Indra,
paying homage to the Truth-finder and to the good nature of the Teaching.

And seeing the new gods, beautiful and glorious,
who, having lived the holy life under the Fortunate One, have come here.

They outshine the others in beauty, glory, and lifespan;
disciples of the one of extensive wisdom, who have attained distinction here.

Seeing this, they rejoice, the Thirty-three together with Indra,
paying homage to the Truth-finder and to the good nature of the Teaching."

301. "This meaning, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. This meaning, venerable sir, when Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke, his voice was endowed with eight factors: it was distinct and intelligible and charming and pleasant to hear and compact and euphonious and deep and resonant. And when, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra informs the assembly with his voice, the sound does not go outside the assembly. But whoever, venerable sir, has a voice thus endowed with eight factors, he is called 'one with a voice like Brahmā.' Then, venerable sir, the gods of the Thirty-three said this to Brahmā Sanañkumāra: 'Excellent, Great Brahmā, we rejoice having understood this very thing; and eight praises in conformity with the truth of that Blessed One have been spoken by Sakka, the lord of the gods; and we rejoice having understood those.'

The Eight Truthful Praises

302. "Then, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra said this to Sakka, the lord of the gods - 'Good, lord of the gods, we too would hear the eight praises in conformity with the truth of that Blessed One.' 'Yes, Great Brahmā,' venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, declared to Brahmā Sanañkumāra the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One.

"What does the venerable Great Brahmā think? As far as that Blessed One has practised for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who has practised for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans, except for that Blessed One.

"Well proclaimed by that Blessed One is the Teaching, visible here and now, immediately effective, inviting one to come and see, leading onward, to be individually experienced by the wise. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who teaches a Teaching that leads onward, except for that Blessed One.

"'This is wholesome' has been well laid down by that Blessed One, 'this is unwholesome' has been well laid down, 'this is blameworthy, this is blameless, this should be cultivated, this should not be cultivated, this is inferior, this is superior, this partakes of both dark and bright' has been well laid down. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who declares teachings that are wholesome-unwholesome, blameworthy-blameless, to be cultivated-not to be cultivated, inferior-superior, partaking of both dark and bright. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, except for that Blessed One.

"Well laid down by that Blessed One for disciples is the practice leading to Nibbāna; Nibbāna and the practice flow together. Just as the water of the Ganges flows together and meets with the water of the Yamunā, just so, well laid down by that Blessed One for disciples is the practice leading to Nibbāna; Nibbāna and the practice

flow together. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who declares the practice leading to Nibbāna, except for that Blessed One.

"Achieved indeed is the material gain of that Blessed One, achieved is the fame, so that even nobles, methinks, dwell showing affection. Yet that Blessed One, free from vanity, takes food. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who is free from vanity while taking food, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One has obtained companions among both those practising as learners and those with mental corruptions eliminated who have fulfilled the holy life; having dismissed them, the Blessed One dwells devoted to solitary delight. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who is devoted to solitary delight, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One speaks as he acts, acts as he speaks; thus he speaks as he acts, acts as he speaks. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who practises in conformity with the Teaching, except for that Blessed One.

"That Blessed One has crossed over doubt, is free from bewilderment, has fulfilled his intention, through the fundamentals of the holy life as his disposition. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, who has crossed over doubt, is free from bewilderment, has fulfilled his intention, through the fundamentals of the holy life as his disposition. We do not see in the past, nor indeed at present, a Teacher endowed with this factor, except for that Blessed One."

303. "These, venerable sir, Sakka, the lord of the gods, declared to Brahmā Sanañkumāra the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One. By that, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra was delighted, greatly pleased, filled with joy and happiness, having heard the eight praises in conformity with the truth of the Blessed One. Then, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra, having created a gross individual existence, having become one with the appearance of a youth, with five crests, appeared to the gods of the Thirty-three. He, having risen up into the sky, sat cross-legged in the air, in the atmosphere. Just as, venerable sir, a strong man might sit cross-legged on a well-spread divan or on a level piece of ground, just so, venerable sir, Brahmā Sanañkumāra, having risen up into the sky, having sat cross-legged in the air, in the atmosphere, addressed the gods of the Thirty-three -

The Story of the Brahmin Govinda

304. "What do the venerable gods of the Thirty-three think, for how long a time that Blessed One was of great wisdom. Once upon a time, friend, there was a king named Disampati. King Disampati had a brahmin chaplain named Govinda. King Disampati had a son, a prince named Reṇu. The brahmin Govinda had a son, a young man named Jotipāla. Thus Reṇu the prince and Jotipāla the young man and six other nobles - these eight were companions. Then, friend, with the passing of days and nights, the brahmin Govinda died. When the brahmin Govinda had died, King Disampati lamented - "Alas, friend, at the very time when we, having properly handed over all duties to the brahmin Govinda, were indulging ourselves endowed and furnished with

the five types of sensual pleasure, at that very time the brahmin Govinda has died." When this was said, friend, Reṇu the prince said this to King Disampati - "Do not, Sire, lament too much over the death of the brahmin Govinda. There is, Sire, the brahmin Govinda's son, a young man named Jotipāla, who is wiser than his father, and more capable of seeing what is beneficial than his father; and those matters in which his father gave instruction, those too are for the instruction of the young man Jotipāla." "Is it so, prince?" "It is so, Sire."

The Story of the Great Steward

305. "Then, friend, King Disampati addressed a certain man - "Come, my good man, go to where the young man named Jotipāla is; having approached, say thus to the young man Jotipāla - 'May there be prosperity for the venerable Jotipāla, King Disampati addresses the venerable young man Jotipāla, King Disampati wishes to see the venerable young man Jotipāla.'" "Yes, Sire," friend, that man, having assented to King Disampati, approached the young man Jotipāla; having approached, he said this to the young man Jotipāla - "May there be prosperity for the venerable Jotipāla, King Disampati addresses the venerable young man Jotipāla, King Disampati wishes to see the venerable young man Jotipāla." "Yes, sir," friend, the young man Jotipāla, having assented to that man, approached King Disampati; having approached, he exchanged friendly greetings with King Disampati; having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, he sat down to one side. To the young man Jotipāla seated to one side, friend, King Disampati said this - "Let the venerable Jotipāla instruct us, let not the venerable Jotipāla refuse the instruction. I will establish you in your father's position, I will consecrate you in the office of steward." "Yes, sir," friend, the young man Jotipāla assented to King Disampati. Then, friend, King Disampati consecrated the young man Jotipāla in the office of steward, and established him in his father's position. The young man Jotipāla, consecrated in the office of steward, established in his father's position, instructed in those matters in which his father had instructed, and also instructed in those matters in which his father had not instructed; he accomplished those tasks which his father had accomplished, and also accomplished those tasks which his father had not accomplished. People said thus about him - "A steward indeed, friend, is the brahmin, a great steward indeed, friend, is the brahmin." In this way, friend, by this method, the designation 'Steward, Great Steward' arose for the young man Jotipāla.

The Division of the Kingdom

306. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those six nobles; having approached, he said this to those six nobles - "The king Disampati, friend, is old, aged, elderly, one who has traversed the span of life, advanced in years; who indeed, friend, knows about life? Now there is this possibility, that when King Disampati has died, the king-makers might consecrate the prince Reṇu in the kingdom. Come, sirs, approach the prince Reṇu; having approached, say thus to the prince Reṇu - 'We are the venerable Reṇu's friends, dear, agreeable, not disagreeable; whatever happiness you have, that happiness we have; whatever suffering you have, that suffering we have. The king Disampati, friend, is old, aged, elderly, one who has traversed the span of life, advanced in years; who indeed, friend, knows about life? Now there is this possibility, that when King Disampati has died, the king-makers might consecrate the venerable Reṇu in the kingdom. If the venerable Reṇu should obtain the kingdom,

may he share the kingdom with us.'" "Yes, sir," friend, those six nobles, having assented to the brahmin Mahāgovinda, approached the prince Reṇu; having approached, they said this to the prince Reṇu - "We are the venerable Reṇu's friends, dear, agreeable, not disagreeable; whatever happiness you have, that happiness we have; whatever suffering you have, that suffering we have. The king Disampati, friend, is old, aged, elderly, one who has traversed the span of life, advanced in years; who indeed, friend, knows about life? Now there is this possibility, that when King Disampati has died, the king-makers might consecrate the venerable Reṇu in the kingdom. If the venerable Reṇu should obtain the kingdom, may he share the kingdom with us.'" "Who else, friends, would be happy in my realm, apart from you? If I, friends, obtain the kingdom, I will share the kingdom with you."

307. "Then, friend, with the passing of days and nights, King Disampati died. When King Disampati had died, the king-makers consecrated the prince Reṇu in the kingdom. Reṇu, consecrated with kingship, endowed and furnished with the five types of sensual pleasure, indulged himself. Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those six nobles; having approached, he said this to those six nobles - "King Disampati, friend, has died. Reṇu, consecrated with kingship, endowed and furnished with the five types of sensual pleasure, indulged himself. Who indeed, friend, knows, sensual pleasures are intoxicating? Come, sirs, approach King Reṇu; having approached, say thus to King Reṇu - King Disampati, friend, has died, the venerable Reṇu has been consecrated with kingship, does the venerable one remember that promise?"

308. "Yes, sir," friend, those six nobles, having assented to the brahmin Mahāgovinda, approached King Reṇu; having approached, they said this to King Reṇu - "King Disampati, friend, has died, the venerable Reṇu has been consecrated with kingship, does the venerable one remember that promise?" "I remember, friend, that promise. But who, friend, is able to divide this great earth, extended to the north and narrow like a cart's front to the south, into seven equal well-distributed portions?" "Who else, friend, is able, apart from the brahmin Mahāgovinda?" Then, friend, King Reṇu addressed a certain man - "Come, my good man, go to where the brahmin Mahāgovinda is; having approached, say thus to the brahmin Mahāgovinda - 'King Reṇu, venerable sir, summons you.'" "Yes, Sire," friend, that man, having assented to King Reṇu, approached the brahmin Mahāgovinda; having approached, he said this to the brahmin Mahāgovinda - "King Reṇu, venerable sir, summons you." "Yes, sir," friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda, having assented to that man, approached King Reṇu; having approached, he exchanged friendly greetings with King Reṇu. Having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, he sat down to one side. To the brahmin Mahāgovinda seated to one side, friend, King Reṇu said this - "Let the venerable Govinda come and divide this great earth, extended to the north and narrow like a cart's front to the south, into seven equal well-distributed portions." "Yes, sir," the brahmin Mahāgovinda, having assented to King Reṇu, divided this great earth, extended to the north and narrow like a cart's front to the south, into seven equal well-distributed portions. He established all the cart-front shaped portions. There in the middle was the country of King Reṇu.

309. Dantapura for the Kaliṅgas, and Potana for the Assakas.

Mahissati for the Avantis, and Roruka for the Sovīras.

Mithilā for the Videhas, and Campā was created among the Aṅgas;
And Bārāṇasī for the Kāsis, these were created by Govinda.

310. "Then, friend, those six nobles were delighted with their respective gains, with their thoughts fulfilled - 'What was indeed wished for by us, what was desired, what was intended, what was longed for - that has been obtained by us.'

Sattabhū and Brahmadatta, Vessabhū together with Bharata;
Reṇu and the two Dhātaraṭṭhas - these were the seven burden-bearers then."

The first recitation section is concluded.

The Rising of the Sound of Fame

311. "Then, friend, those six nobles approached the brahmin Mahāgovinda; having approached, they said this to the brahmin Mahāgovinda - "Just as the venerable Govinda is a friend of King Reṇu, dear, agreeable, and not disagreeable, just so the venerable Govinda is also our friend, dear, agreeable, and not disagreeable. Let the venerable Govinda instruct us; let not the venerable Govinda refuse the instruction." "Yes, sir," the brahmin Mahāgovinda assented to those six nobles. Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda instructed the seven noble kings, properly anointed, in kingship, and taught the sacred verses to seven great brahmin householders and seven hundred bathed ones.

312. "Then, friend, at a later time such a good reputation arose concerning the brahmin Mahāgovinda - 'The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' Then, friend, this occurred to the brahmin Mahāgovinda: 'Such a good reputation has arisen concerning me - "The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." But I do not see Brahmā, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā. I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - "Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." What if I were to go into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditate on the meditation of compassion.'

313. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached King Reṇu; having approached, he said this to King Reṇu - "Such a good reputation has arisen concerning me, friend - "The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." But I do not see Brahmā, friend, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā. I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - 'Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' I wish, friend, to go into seclusion for the four months

of the rainy season, to meditate on the meditation of compassion; I should not be approached by anyone except for one bringing food." "Now let the venerable Govinda do as he thinks fit."

314. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those six nobles; having approached, he said this to those six nobles - "Such a good reputation has arisen concerning me, friend - "The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." But I do not see Brahmā, friend, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā. I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - 'Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' I wish, friend, to go into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, to meditate on the meditation of compassion; I should not be approached by anyone except for one bringing food." "Now let the venerable Govinda do as he thinks fit."

315. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those seven great brahmin householders and seven hundred bathed ones; having approached, he said this to those seven great brahmin householders and seven hundred bathed ones - "Such a good reputation has arisen concerning me, friend -"The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." But I do not see Brahmā, friend, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā. I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - 'Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' If so, friends, recite the sacred verses in detail as you have heard them, as you have learned them, and teach each other the sacred verses; I wish, friend, to go into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, to meditate on the meditation of compassion; I should not be approached by anyone except for one bringing food." "Now let the venerable Govinda do as he thinks fit."

316. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached his forty wives of equal status; having approached, he said this to his forty wives of equal status -"Dear ladies, such a good reputation has arisen concerning me - "The brahmin Mahāgovinda sees Brahmā face to face, the brahmin Mahāgovinda converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā." But I do not see Brahmā, dear ladies, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā. I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - 'Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' I wish, dear ladies, to go into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, to meditate on the meditation of compassion; I should not be approached by anyone except for one bringing food." "Now let the venerable Govinda do as he thinks fit."

317. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda, having had a new assembly hall built

to the east of the city, went into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditated on the meditation of compassion; no one approached him there except for one bringing food. Then, friend, after the elapse of four months, there arose dissatisfaction in the brahmin Mahāgovinda, there arose agitation: 'I have heard this from brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - 'Whoever goes into seclusion for the four months of the rainy season, and meditates on the meditation of compassion, he sees Brahmā, converses with Brahmā, talks with Brahmā, consults with Brahmā.' But I do not see Brahmā, I do not converse with Brahmā, I do not talk with Brahmā, I do not consult with Brahmā.'"

The Discussion with Brahmā

318. "Then, friend, Brahmā Sanañkumāra, having known with his mind the reflection in the mind of the brahmin Mahāgovinda, just as a strong man might extend his bent arm or bend his extended arm, even so, having vanished from the Brahma world, appeared before the brahmin Mahāgovinda face to face. Then, friend, there arose fear in the brahmin Mahāgovinda, there arose trepidation, there arose terror, as one who had seen a form never seen before. Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda, frightened, agitated, with hair standing on end, addressed Brahmā Sanañkumāra in verse:

'Beautiful, glorious, splendid, who indeed are you, sir?
Not knowing you, we ask, how may we know you?'

'They know me indeed as the Youth, eternal in the Brahma world;
All the gods know me, thus know me, Govinda.'

'A seat, water, foot-ointment, and honey-vegetables for Brahmā;
We ask you concerning the guest-offering, may you accept our guest-offering.'

'We accept your guest-offering, which you, Govinda, speak of;
For the welfare and benefit in this present life, and for happiness in the future;
The opportunity has been made, ask whatever you wish for.'

319. "Then, friend, this occurred to the brahmin Mahāgovinda: 'The opportunity has been created for me by Brahmā Sanañkumāra. What indeed should I ask Brahmā Sanañkumāra - a matter pertaining to the present life or pertaining to the future life?' Then, friend, this occurred to the brahmin Mahāgovinda: 'I am skilled in matters pertaining to the present life, and others also ask me about matters pertaining to the present life. What if I were to ask Brahmā Sanañkumāra only about a matter pertaining to the future life.' Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda addressed Brahmā Sanañkumāra in verse:

"I ask Brahmā Sanañkumāra,
One with uncertainty asks one without uncertainty about what is to be known
by others;
Standing where and training in what,
Does a mortal attain the deathless Brahma-world?"

"Having abandoned selfish attachment among humans, O Brahmā,
Having become unified, intent on compassion;

Free from the odour of flesh, abstaining from sexual intercourse,
Standing here and training here;
Does a mortal attain the deathless Brahma-world?"

320. "'Having abandoned selfish attachment' - I understand this of you, sir. Here a certain one, having abandoned a small or a large mass of wealth, having abandoned a small or a large circle of relatives, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on ochre robes, and goes forth from home into homelessness - thus 'having abandoned selfish attachment' - I understand this of you, sir. 'Having become unified' - I understand this of you, sir. Here a certain one resorts to a secluded lodging - a forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a grotto, a mountain cave, a cemetery, a deep forest, an open space, a heap of straw - thus 'having become unified' - I understand this of you, sir. 'Inclined to compassion' - I understand this of you, sir. Here a certain one dwells having pervaded one direction with a mind accompanied by compassion, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere, and in every respect, he dwells having pervaded the entire world with a mind accompanied by compassion, extensive, exalted, limitless, without enmity, without ill-will. Thus 'inclined to compassion' - I understand this of you, sir. But when you speak of verminous odour, I do not understand you, sir.

"What are the verminous odours among humans, O Brahmā?
Not knowing these, tell me here, O wise one;
By what are people hindered so that they stink,
Bound for the realm of misery, hindered from the Brahmā world?"

"Wrath and untruth and fraud and treachery,
Niggardliness and arrogance and envy;
Desire and selfishness and harassing others,
And greed and hate and vanity and delusion;
Those engaged in these are not free from verminous odour,
Bound for the realm of misery, hindered from the Brahmā world?"

"As I understand what you say about verminous odour, These are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house. I shall go forth, sir, from home into homelessness." "Now let the venerable Govinda do as he thinks fit."

The Addressing of King Reṇu

321. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached King Reṇu; having approached, he said this to King Reṇu - "Let the venerable one now seek another chaplain, who will advise the venerable one on the kingdom. I wish, friend, to go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house. I shall go forth, sir, from home into homelessness."

"I address the king, Reṇu the lord of the earth, I;
You should manage with the kingdom, I do not delight in the chaplaincy."

"If you are lacking in sensual pleasures, I will fulfil them for you;
Whoever harms you, I will prevent, I am lord of the earth and army;

You are the father, I am the son, do not abandon us, Govinda."

"There is no lack for me in sensual pleasures, no one who harms me is found;
Having heard the words of a non-human, therefore I do not delight in the house."

"What was the appearance of the non-human, what matter did he speak to you;
Having heard which you abandon us, the house and us entirely?"

"When I had observed before, when I was wishing to sacrifice;
The fire was blazing, surrounded by kusa grass leaves."

"Then Brahmā appeared to me, the eternal one from the Brahmā world;
He answered my question, having heard that I do not delight in the house."

"I believe you, sir, what you, Govinda, speak;
Having heard the words of a non-human, how could one act otherwise?"

We will follow you, may the venerable Govinda be our teacher;
Like a lapis lazuli gem, flawless, spotless, beautiful;
Thus pure we will live, in Govinda's instruction."

"If the venerable Govinda will go forth from home into homelessness, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

The Addressing of the Six Warriors

322. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those six nobles; having approached, he said this to those six nobles - "Let the venerable sirs now seek another chaplain, who will advise the venerable sirs on the kingdom. I wish, friend, to go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house. I shall go forth, sir, from home into homelessness." Then, friend, those six nobles, having withdrawn to one side, considered thus - "These brahmins are indeed greedy for wealth; what if we were to entice the brahmin Mahāgovinda with wealth." They approached the brahmin Mahāgovinda and said thus - "There is, friend, abundant property in these seven kingdoms; from that, let as much as the venerable one needs be brought." "Enough, friend, I too have abundant property owing to the venerable sirs. Having abandoned all that, I shall go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness." Then, friend, those six nobles, having withdrawn to one side, considered thus - "These brahmins are indeed greedy for women; what if we were to entice the brahmin Mahāgovinda with women." They approached the brahmin Mahāgovinda and said thus - "There are, friend, abundant women in these seven kingdoms; from that, let as many as the venerable one needs be brought." "Enough, friend, I too have these forty wives of equal status. Having abandoned all of them, I

shall go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness."

323. "If the venerable Govinda will go forth from home into homelessness, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

"If you give up sensual pleasures, where the worldling is attached;
Make effort, be firm, endowed with the power of patience.

"This is the path, the straight path, this is the path unsurpassed;
The Good Teaching protected by the virtuous, for rebirth in the Brahma world."

"Then let the venerable Govinda wait for seven years. After the elapse of seven years, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

"Too long indeed, friend, are seven years. I am not able, venerable sirs, to wait for seven years. Who indeed, friend, knows about life! The next world must be gone to; this should be understood with wisdom; wholesome deeds should be done; the holy life should be lived; there is no deathlessness for one who is born. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness." "Then let the venerable Govinda wait for six years... etc. wait for five years... wait for four years... wait for three years... wait for two years... wait for one year. After the elapse of one year, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

"Too long indeed, friend, is one year. I am not able, venerable sirs, to wait for one year. Who indeed, friend, knows about life! The next world must be gone to; this should be understood with wisdom; wholesome deeds should be done; the holy life should be lived; there is no deathlessness for one who is born. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness." "Then let the venerable Govinda wait for seven months. After the elapse of seven months, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

"Too long indeed, friend, are seven months. I am not able, venerable sirs, to wait for seven months. Who indeed, friend, knows about life! The next world must be gone to; this should be understood with wisdom; wholesome deeds should be done; the holy life should be lived; there is no deathlessness for one who is born. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness."

"Then let the venerable Govinda wait for six months... etc. wait for five months... wait for four months... wait for three months... wait for two months... wait for one month... wait for a fortnight. After the elapse of a fortnight, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

"Too long indeed, friend, is a fortnight. I am not able, venerable sirs, to wait for a fortnight. Who indeed, friend, knows about life! The next world must be gone to; this should be understood with wisdom; wholesome deeds should be done; the holy life should be lived; there is no deathlessness for one who is born. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness." "Then let the venerable Govinda wait for a week, while we instruct our own sons and brothers in the kingdom. After the elapse of a week, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination." "Not long indeed, friend, is a week. I will wait, venerable sirs, for a week."

The Addressing of the Wealthy Brahmins and Others

324. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached those seven great brahmin householders and seven hundred bathed ones; having approached, he said this to those seven great brahmin householders and seven hundred bathed ones - "Let the venerable sirs now seek another teacher, who will teach the venerable sirs the sacred verses. I wish, friend, to go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house; I shall go forth, friend, from home into homelessness." "Let not the venerable Govinda go forth from home into homelessness. Going forth, friend, is of little influence and of little gain; being committed to holy life is influential and of great gain." "Do not speak thus, venerable sirs - 'Going forth is of little influence and of little gain, being committed to holy life is influential and of great gain.' Who indeed, friend, apart from me, is more influential or of greater gain! For I, friend, am now like a king among kings, like Brahmā among brahmins, like a deity among householders. Having abandoned all that, I shall go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house. I shall go forth, sir, from home into homelessness." "If the venerable Govinda will go forth from home into homelessness, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

The Addressing of the Wives

325. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached his forty wives of equal status; having approached, he said this to his forty wives of equal status - "Whichever of you ladies wishes, let her go to her own family of relatives or seek another husband. I wish, dear ladies, to go forth from home into homelessness. For as I have heard from Brahmā speaking about verminous odour, these are not easily subdued by one dwelling in a house. I shall go forth, dear ladies, from home into homelessness." "You yourself are our relative for those of us who desire relatives, and you are our husband for those of us who desire a husband. If the venerable Govinda will go forth from home into homelessness, we too will go forth from home into homelessness. Then whatever is your destination, that will be our destination."

The Going Forth of the Great Steward

326. "Then, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda, after the elapse of that week, having shaved off his hair and beard, having put on ochre robes, went forth from home into homelessness. And when the brahmin Mahāgovinda had gone forth, seven noble

kings, properly anointed, and seven great brahmin householders, and seven hundred bathed ones, and forty wives of equal status, and many thousands of nobles, and many thousands of brahmins, and many thousands of householders, and women from many women's quarters, having shaved off their hair and beards, having put on ochre robes, went forth following the brahmin Mahāgovinda who had gone forth from home into homelessness. Surrounded by that assembly, friend, the brahmin Mahāgovinda wandered on a journey through villages, market towns, and royal cities. And, friend, whenever at that time the brahmin Mahāgovinda approached a village or a market town, there he was like a king among kings, like Brahmā among brahmins, like a deity among householders. Now at that time, when people sneezed or stumbled, they said thus - "Homage to the brahmin Mahāgovinda, homage to the chaplain of the seven!"

327. "The brahmin Mahāgovinda, friend, dwelt having pervaded one direction with a mind accompanied by friendliness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere, and in every respect, he dwelt having pervaded the entire world with a mind accompanied by friendliness, extensive, exalted, limitless, without enmity, without ill-will. With a mind accompanied by compassion... etc. with a mind accompanied by altruistic joy... etc. With a mind accompanied by equanimity... etc. Without ill-will, having pervaded, he dwelt, and he expounded the path to companionship with the Brahma world to his disciples.

328. "Now, friend, at that time those disciples of the brahmin Mahāgovinda who understood the teaching in every way, upon the body's collapse at death, were reborn in a fortunate realm, in the Brahma world. Those who did not understand the teaching in every way, upon the body's collapse at death, some were reborn in the company of the gods who control what is created by others; some were reborn in the company of the gods who delight in creation; some were reborn in the company of the Tusita gods; some were reborn in the company of the Yāma gods; some were reborn in the company of the Thirty-three gods; some were reborn in the company of the gods ruled by the four great kings; those who filled up the lowest class of all, they filled up the class of gandhabbas. Thus indeed, friend, for all those sons of good family, the going forth was not empty, not barren, fruitful, and yielding growth."

329. "Does the Blessed One remember that?" "I remember, Pañcasikha. At that time I was the brahmin Mahāgovinda. I expounded the path to companionship with the Brahma world to those disciples. But that holy life of mine, Pañcasikha, did not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna, but only to rebirth in the Brahma world.

But this holy life of mine, Pañcasikha, leads exclusively to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna. And what is that holy life, Pañcasikha, that leads exclusively to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna? It is just this noble eightfold path. That is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, Pañcasikha, is that holy life that leads exclusively to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

330. "Now, Pañcasikha, those disciples of mine who understand the teaching in every way, with the elimination of the mental corruptions, in this very life, having realised by direct knowledge themselves, having attained, they dwell in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are without mental corruptions; those who do not understand the teaching in every way, with the utter elimination of the five lower mental fetters, become ones of spontaneous birth, attaining final nibbāna there, not subject to return from that world. Those who do not understand the teaching in every way, some, with the utter elimination of the three mental fetters and with the reduction of lust, hate, and delusion, become once-returners, who, having come to this world only once more, will make an end of suffering. Those who do not understand the teaching in every way, some, with the utter elimination of the three mental fetters, become stream-enterers, no longer subject to fall into lower realms, fixed in destiny, heading for the highest enlightenment. Thus indeed, Pañcasikha, for all these sons of good family, the going forth is not empty, not barren, fruitful, and yielding growth."

This is what the Blessed One said. Delighted, Pañcasikha, the gandhabba's son, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Blessed One had said, paid respect to the Blessed One, circumambulated him keeping him on his right, and disappeared right there.

The Discourse on the Great Steward is concluded as sixth.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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