



Vāseṭṭhasuttam

**The Discourse concerning Vāseṭṭha
and its commentary (MN & MA 98)**

translated by
Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

Table of Contents

Preface

Texts

The Setting

The Question

The Classification of Species

The Classification of Humans

The True Brahmin

Summary of the Teaching

The Conclusion

Preface

The Vāseṭṭhasutta is an important discourse of the Buddha which is found in two places in the Pāli canon, the first as part of the Chapter concerning Brahmins in the Majjhimanikāya (MN 98), and again as part of the Suttanipāta (Sn 3.9), which suggests to me that it may be part of the earlier strata of Buddhist texts that were brought together in that collection.

It deals ostensibly with the claims of the brahmins to be a people apart from all others, but in the course of the explanation, we are given what is basically a manifesto of human equality, which was indeed one of the main messages of the early teaching.

The discourse is also of interest for its use of scientific reasoning, albeit ancient, to prove its claims, which still has value and holds its appeal today, as the Buddha presents clearly defined arguments as to why we cannot deal with one lineage of people differently from any other.

In the classification of species we can see that they have distinguishing features by which we identify them as different kinds of plants, trees, insects, quadrupeds, reptiles, birds, fish, etc. But when we come to human beings they are not divided in this way.¹

We can see that brahmins are born from their mother's womb just like any other humans, and not in any other way; they are also not distinguished in any feature of their bodies, and it is only through human designation that they are set off from others, just as is the case with their names.

The Buddha then shows that people are distinguished, not by birth, but by occupation: someone who protects his cattle is a farmer, another is a craftsman, a trader, etc. A brahmin, according to the Buddha, is therefore someone who has earned the distinction by cutting off the fetters, and attaining liberation.

There is a long section of twenty-eight verses which then deals with the qualities of the true brahmin, and it is worth noticing that this section is repeated verbatim at the end of the Dhammapada (vv. 396-423), in the Chapter about Brahmins (*Brāhmaṇavagga*).

After this section we get a summary of the teaching when the Buddha declares that:

One is not a brahmin by birth, nor by birth is one not a brahmin,
by deeds one is a brahmin, by deeds one is not a brahmin.

We see here that in redefining what a brahmin is, the Buddha has traced the word back to its origins as the word etymologically derives from Pāli root *brah*, and means, not a particular caste of people, but someone who has become great, superior. This was a

¹ In fact there have been species of hominids, such as the Neanderthal and others. This information was not available at the time, and in fact does not affect the argument, as brahmins are no different from any other *homo sapiens*.

ploy the Buddha used on many occasions to avoid the reified meanings of words, and to reinvigorate them by pointing out their true significance.

The interlocutors are the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja, two brahmin students who feature in a couple of other discourses in the canon. They appear in the Tevijjāsutta (DN 13), where they discuss right and wrong paths, and also in the Aggaññasutta (DN 27), where they are awaiting ordination, and where their questions lead the Buddha to give an alternative history of the world to that taught by the brahmins.²

Apart from the introduction and the conclusion, the main body of the discourse, which consists of the student Vāseṭṭha's questions and the Buddha's answers, is in verse, and it reminds one of other and similar exchanges with brahmins, such as the Way to the Beyond (*Pārāyaṇavagga*) which involves a discussion with sixteen brahmin meditation masters.

The discourse actually has two commentaries on it, the first is the commentary to the Majjhimanikāya, and the second to the discourse in Suttanipāta. As they differ from each other, I think this must call into question whether they were both written by Bhadanta Buddhaghosa, as is claimed by the tradition.

In any case I have translated the commentary as it is found in the Majjhima commentary, as it helps explain and clear up many matters which may otherwise have been doubtful in the text itself, and adds substantially to our understanding of the work. I believe this is the first English translation of the commentary.

I should add here that there is a very fine exposition of this discourse offered by the human rights activist Nalin Swaris in his book *Buddhism, Human Rights and Social Renewal*, which I have also published here: <http://www.buddhasasana.net/nalin-swaris/buddhism-human-rights/buddhism-human-rights.htm>.

I have divided the translation into two versions; the main one is the text and translation of both the discourse and its commentary, which is found in the Texts and Translation section of the website; in the English Only section is a translation of the discourse alone, but with a reading of the text to accompany it.

² This appears to be the first of the discussions they had with the Buddha; the Tevijjā records the second; and at the end of the third, according to the commentary, they are both given higher ordination.

In the presentation that follows the discourse and its translation are marked up in dark blue and dark red:

Evam me sutam:

Thus I heard:

The commentary and its translation is marked up in purple and green:

‘Evam me sutan,’-ti Vāseṭṭhasuttam.

‘Thus I heard’, this is the Discourse concerning Vāseṭṭha.

Repetition text, that was abbreviated as ...*pe*... in the text that has been filled in and is marked in black.

The translation of the commentary in particular posed many problems, and I once again record my great appreciation to Dr. Junko Matsumura who made many corrections and some very good suggestions for improvement which has greatly improved the translation. Any mistakes that remain, of course, are my own.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

February, 2016

Texts

BJT: Śrī Lamkan edition, from the Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series, Volume XI (Colombo, 1973/2508, reprinted with corrections 2005). This is for the text of the discourse itself.

SHB: Śrī Lamkan edition, from the Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series, Volume XLVII (Colombo, 1947/2491). This is for the commentary, with small corrections to bring it into line with the text, which are recorded in the notes.

Vāseṭṭhasuttam³
The Discourse concerning Vāseṭṭha
and its commentary

The Setting

Evam me sutam:

Thus I heard:

‘Evam me⁴ sutan,’-ti Vāseṭṭhasuttam.

‘Thus I heard’, this is the Discourse concerning Vāseṭṭha.

ekam samayaṃ Bhagavā Icchānaṅgale viharati,

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Icchānaṅgala,⁵

Icchānaṅgalavanasaṅḍe.

in the Icchānaṅgala jungle thicket.

Tattha, ‘Icchānaṅgalavanasaṅḍe’ ti⁶

Herein, ‘In the Icchānaṅgala jungle thicket’ means

Icchānaṅgalagāmassa avidūre vanasaṅḍe.

in the jungle thicket not too far from the village of Icchānaṅgala.

Tena kho pana samayena sambahulā abhiññātā

Then at that time many well-known

brāhmaṇamahāsālā Icchānaṅgale paṭivasanti, seyyathidam:

wealthy brahmins were living in Icchānaṅgala, such as:

Caṅkī brāhmaṇo, Tārukko brāhmaṇo, Pokkharasāti brāhmaṇo,

the brahmin Caṅkī, the brahmin Tārukko, the brahmin Pokkharasāti,

Jānussoni brāhmaṇo, Todeyyo brāhmaṇo,

the brahmin Jānussoni, the brahmin Todeyya,⁷

³ MN & MA 98.

⁴ SHB: *Evam-me*.

⁵ This brahmin village was in Kosala, and it appears the Buddha stayed there on many occasions, see DN 3, SN 54.11, AN 5.30, An 6.42, AN 8.86, etc.

⁶ SHB: *Icchānaṅkala-*, and similarly throughout.

⁷ This list of five brahmins is mentioned in other places in the canon, e.g. at the beginning of *Tevijjasuttam* (DN 13).

‘Caṅki’ ti ādayo pañca pi janā Rañño Pasenadissa Kosalassa purohitā eva.
‘Caṅki’ and so on means the five people who were religious advisors to King Pasenadi of Kosala.

aññe ca abhiññātā abhiññātā brāhmaṇamahāsālā.
and other well-known brahmins.

‘Aññe ca abhiññātā’ ti aññe ca bahū abhiññātā brāhmaṇā.
‘Other well-known (brahmins)’ means many other well-known brahmins.

Te kira chaṭṭhe chaṭṭhe māse dvīsu ṭhānesu sannipatanti.
It seems every six months they would assemble in (one of) two places.

Yadā jātim sodhetukāmā honti
When they desired to purify their caste⁸

tadā Pokkharasātissa santike jātisodhanattham ukkaṭṭhāyam sannipatanti.
then they would assemble near Pokkharasāti especially to purify their caste.

Yadā mante sodhetukāmā honti,
When they desired to purify the (Vedic) mantras,⁹

tadā Icchānaṅgale sannipatanti.
then they would assemble at Icchānaṅgala.

Imasmim kāle mantasamsodhanattham tattha sannipatimsu.
At this time they had assembled there for the purpose of completely purifying the (Vedic) mantras.

Atha kho Vāseṭṭha-Bhāradvājānam māṇavānam,
Then to the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja,

jaṅghāvihāram anucaṅkamamānam anuvicaramānānam,
while wandering and strolling around on a walk,

ayam-antarākathā udapādi:
this discussion arose:

‘Ayam-antarākathā’ ti
‘This discussion’ means

⁸ They would probably have bathed while reciting certain prayers to re-establish their caste status.

⁹ Purifying here means reciting together so as to check for mistakes.

yaṃ attano saḥāyakabhāvānurūpaṃ kathaṃ kathento anuvicarīṃsu,
they were discussing what was suitable in a friendly discussion as they strolled
around,

tassā kathāya antarā ayam-aññā kathā udapādi:
and this topic for discussion arose amongst other topics:

“Kathaṃ, bho, brāhmaṇo hotī?” ti
“How, dear friend, is one a brahmin?”

Bhāradvājo māṇavo evam-āha:
The student Bhāradvāja said this:

“Yato kho, bho, ubhato sujāto hoti mātito ca pitito ca,
“When, dear friend, one is well-born on both the mother’s and father’s side,

saṃsuddhagahaṇiko yāva sattamā pitāmahayugā,
of pure descent as far as the seventh generation,

akkhitto anupakkuṭṭho jātivādena,
not despised and blameless with regard to the matter of one’s birth,

ettāvatā kho brāhmaṇo hotī.” ti
to that extent one is a brahmin.”

Vāseṭṭho māṇavo evam-āha:
The student Vāseṭṭha said this:

“Yato kho, bho, sīlavā ca hoti vattasampanno ca,
“When, dear friend, one is virtuous and endowed with good conduct,

ettāvatā kho brāhmaṇo hotī.” ti
to that extent one is a brahmin.”

‘Sīlavā’ ti guṇavā.
‘Virtuous’ means having good qualities.

‘Vattasampanno’ ti ācārasampanno.
‘Endowed with good conduct’ means endowed with good practices.

Neva kho asakkhi Bhāradvājo māṇavo Vāseṭṭhaṃ māṇavaṃ saññāpetuṃ,
But neither was the student Bhāradvāja able to convince the student Vāseṭṭha,

na pana asakkhi Vāseṭṭho māṇavo Bhāradvājaṃ māṇavañ-ca saññāpetuṃ.
and nor was the student Vāseṭṭha able to convince the student Bhāradvāja.

Atha kho Vāseṭṭho māṇavo Bhāradvājaṃ māṇavaṃ āmantesi:

Then the student Vāseṭṭha addressed the student Bhāradvāja, (saying):

“Ayaṃ kho, Bhāradvāja, samaṇo Gotamo Sakyaputto Sakyakulā pabbajito,

“This ascetic Gotama, Bhāradvāja, a son of the Sakyas, having gone forth from the Sakyān clan,

icchānaṅgale viharati icchānaṅgalavanasaṅḍe,

is dwelling near Icchānaṅgala in the Icchānaṅgala jungle thicket,

taṃ kho pana bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abhuggato:

and about this dear Gotama this beautiful report has gone round:

‘Iti pi so, Bhagavā Arahāṃ Sammāsambuddho,

‘Such is he, the Fortunate One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Sambuddha,

vijjācaraṇasampanno Sugato lokavidū,

the one endowed with understanding and good conduct, the Happy One, the one who understands the worlds,

anuttaro purisadammasārathī,

the unsurpassed guide for those people who need taming,

Satthā devamanussānaṃ, Buddho Bhagavā.’

the Teacher of gods and men, the Buddha, the Fortunate One.’

Āyāma, bho Bhāradvāja, yena samaṇo Gotamo tenupasaṅkamissāma,

Come, dear Bhāradvāja, let us approach the ascetic Gotama,

upasaṅkamtivā samaṇaṃ Gotamaṃ etam-atthaṃ pucchissāma,

and having approached the ascetic Gotama let us ask him about this matter,

yathā no samaṇo Gotamo vyākariṣṣati tathā naṃ dhāressāmā.” ti

and in whatever way this ascetic Gotama will explain it so we will bear it in mind.”

“Evaṃ, bho,” ti kho Bhāradvājo māṇavo Vāseṭṭhassa māṇavassa paccassosi.

“Just so, dear friend,” the student Bhāradvāja replied to the student Vāseṭṭha.

Atha kho Vāseṭṭha-Bhāradvājā māṇavā yena Bhagavā tenupasaṅkamimsu,

Then the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja approached the Fortunate One,

upasaṅkamtivā Bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodimsu,

and after approaching they exchanged greetings with the Fortunate One,

sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sāraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā, ekamantaṃ nisīdimsu.

and after exchanging polite and courteous greetings, sat down on one side.

The Question

Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho Vāseṭṭho māṇavo

While sitting on one side the student Vāseṭṭha

Bhagavantaṃ gāthāhi ajjhabhāsi:

addressed the Fortunate One with a verse:

“Anuññātaṭṭapaṭiññātā Tevijjā mayam-asmubho,

“We are both (of us) acknowledged, sanctioned as knowing the three Vedas,

ahaṃ Pokkharasātissa Tārukkhassāyaṃ māṇavo. [1]

I am Pokkharasāti’s and this one is Tārukkha’s student.

‘Anuññātaṭṭapaṭiññātā’ ti sikkhitā tumhe ti evaṃ ācariyehi anuññātā:

‘Acknowledged, sanctioned’ means acknowledged as trained by their teachers, (saying):

“Āma ācariya sikkhitamaḥ,” ti evaṃ sayaṃ-ca ṭṭapaṭiññātā.¹⁰

“Yes, teacher, we have been trained,” thus they are sanctioned.

‘Asmā’ ti bhavāma.

‘We are’ means we are (alternative verb).

‘Ahaṃ Pokkharasātissa Tārukkhassāyaṃ māṇavo’ ti

‘I am Pokkharasāti’s and this one is Tārukkha’s student’ means

ahaṃ Pokkharasātissa jeṭṭhantevāsī aggasisso,

I am Pokkharasāti’s senior attendant, or chief pupil,

ayaṃ Tārukkhassā ti dīpeti.

this one is Tārukkha’s, so it is explained.

Tevijjānaṃ yad-akkhātaṃ, nanu kevalinosmase,

What is declared in the three Vedas, (in that) we are surely complete,

padakasma veyyākaraṇā, jappe ācariyasādisā. [2]

the words, the grammar, and in the chanting we are like our teachers.

‘Tevijjānaṃ’-ti tivedānaṃ brāhmaṇānaṃ.

‘The three Vedas’ means (knowledge of) the brahmins’ three Vedas.

‘Yad-akkhātaṃ’-ti yaṃ atthato ca byañjanato ca ekaṃ padam-pi akkhātaṃ.

‘What is declared’ means that which is declared in each word according to the meaning and syllables.

¹⁰ SHB: *paṭisaññātā*.

Tattha, ‘Kevalinosmase’ ti taṃ sakalaṃ jānāto, tattha niṭṭhāgatamhā ti attho.

Herein, ‘We are complete’, the meaning is knowing all this, we have come to completion.

Idāni taṃ kevalibhāvaṃ āvikaronto ‘Padakasmā...’ ti ādim-āha.

Now explaining completeness according to (the line) ‘The words...’ and so on, is what is said.

‘Tattha jappe ... ācariyasādisā’ ti kathanaṭṭhāne mayaṃ ācariyasadisā yeva.

‘Herein chanting ... like our teachers’ means we surely recite the same way as our teachers.

Tesaṃ no jātivādasmim vivādo atthi Gotama,

Concerning the matter of birth there is a dispute between us, Gotama,

jātiyā brāhmaṇo hoti Bhāradvājo iti bhāsati,

Bhāradvāja says one is a brahmin (just) by birth,

ahañ-ca kammanā brūmi, evaṃ jānāhi, Cakkhuma. [3]

I say it is according to (good) deeds, understand it in this way, O Visionary one.

‘Kammanā’ ti dasakusalakammamāyā.

‘According to deeds’ means according to the ten types of wholesome deeds.¹¹

Ayaṃ hi pubbe, sattavidhaṃ kāyavacīkammaṃ sandhāya,

Because formerly, in reference to the seven ways of bodily and verbal deeds,

“Yato kho, bho, sīlavā hotī” ti āha,

this was said: “When, dear friend, one is virtuous”,

tividhaṃ manokammaṃ sandhāya “vattasampanno” ti.

in reference to the three ways of mental deeds “good conduct” (is said).

Tena samannāgato hi ācārasampanno hoti.

Endowed with this there is good practice.

‘Cakkhumā’ ti pañcahi cakkhūhi Cakkhumabhāvena,

‘Visionary’ means having the five eyes of the Visionary,¹²

Bhagavantam ālapati.

he is addressing the Fortunate One.

¹¹ Specifically ruling out bad, or unwholesome, deeds.

¹² 1. the physical eye (*Māṃsacakkhu*); 2. the divine-eye (*dibbacakkhu*); 3. the eye of wisdom (*paññācakkhu*); 4. the eye of a Buddha (*Buddhacakkhu*); 5. the all-seeing eye (*samantacakkhu*).

Te na sakkoma saññāpetum aññamaññaṃ mayam ubho,
We are unable to convince one another concerning this,

Bhagavantam puṭṭhum-āgammā Sambuddham itī vissutam. [4]
we came to ask the Fortunate One, famed as being Fully Awake.

Candam yathā khayātītam, pecca pañjalikā janā,
Just as when the moon is full, the people approach with their hands raised in salutation,

vandamānā namassanti evam lokasmi' Gotamam. [5]
so, worshipping, they come to pay homage in the world to Gotama.

'Khayātītan'-ti unabhāvam atītam, paripuṇṇan-ti attho.
'Full' means having a state of deficiency (only) in the past, full is the meaning.

'Peccā' ti upagantvā.
'Approach' means come close to.

'Namassanti' ti namo karonti.
'Pay homage' means make homage.

Cakkhum loke samuppannam, mayam pucchāma Gotamam,
The Eye has arisen in the world, (and therefore) we ask Gotama,

jātiyā brāhmaṇo hoti, udāhu bhavati kammanā?
is one a brahmin through birth, or is it through deeds?

Ajānatam no pabrūhi, yathā jānemu brāhmaṇam." [6]
Tell us, who are ones who do not know, so that we may know who is the (true) brahmin."

'Cakkhum loke samuppannan'-ti
'The Eye has arisen in the world' means

avijjandhakāre loke tam andhakāram vidhamitvā,
having destroyed the darkness of blind-ignorance in the world,

lokassa diṭṭhadhammikādi-atthadassanena Cakkhu hutvā sampannam.
for showing the benefit of the world and what belongs to this world and so on he is endowed with the Eye.

The Classification of Species

“Tesam voham vyakkhissam,” Vāseṭṭhā ti Bhagavā,
“I will explain this to you,” said the Fortunate One to Vāseṭṭha,

“anupubbam yathātatham,
“in order, as it really is,

jātivibhāgam pāṇānam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [7]
a classification of the species of living beings, for the species are different.

Evam, Vāseṭṭhena thometvā, yācīto, Bhagavā,
Thus, having been praised by Vāseṭṭha, and being requested, the Fortunate One,

dve pi jane saṅgaṇhanto: ‘Tesam voham vyakkhissan...’-ti ādim-āha.
treating the two people kindly, (said): ‘I will explain this to you...’ and so on is what is said.

Tattha, ‘Vyakkhissan’-ti vyākarissāmi.
Herein, ‘I will explain’ means I will explain (alternate form).

‘Anupubban’-ti tiṭṭhatu tāva brāhmaṇacintā,
‘In order’ means, let’s leave the ideas of the brahmins,

tiṇarukkhakīṭapaṅgato paṭṭhāya anupaṭipāṭiyā ācikkhissāmī ti attho.
and I will explain to you successively beginning with plants, trees, arthropods and grasshoppers is the meaning.

‘Jātivibhaṅgan’-ti jātivitthāram.
‘A classification of the species’ means an exposition of the species.

‘Aññamaññā hi jātiyo’ ti
‘For the species are different’ means

tesam tesam hi pāṇānam jātiyo aññamaññā nānappakārā ti attho.
for the species of the various creatures are different, of many kinds, is the meaning.

Tiṇarukkhe pi jānātha, na cāpi paṭijānare,
Understand plants and trees, although they do not acknowledge it,

liṅgam jātimayam tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [8]
their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

‘Tiṇarukkhe’ ti, anupādiṇṇakajātim kathetvā,
‘Plants and trees’ means, not having spoken about grasping another species,

pacchā upādiṇṇakajātim kathessāmi,
(but) later grasping this species I will say,

“Evaṃ tassa¹³ jātibhedo pākaṭo bhavissatī,” ti imaṃ desanaṃ ārabhi.
“This will be his natural species differentiation,” and so this teaching is begun.

Mahāsīvalitthero pana:
But the Elder Mahāsīvali says:

“Kiṃ, Bhante, anupādiṇṇakaṃ bījanānatāya nānaṃ,
“Why is there non-grasping, venerable Sir, with the diversity of seeds,

upādiṇṇakaṃ kammanānatāyā?” ti
(but there is) grasping with a diversity of action?”

“Evaṃ vattum na vaṭṭatī.” ti
“What is said in this way is not right.”

Pucchito āma na vaṭṭati kammañ-hi yoniyam khipati.¹⁴
When asked (thus) it is certainly not right because an intentional deed despatches one to a womb.

Yonisiddhā ime sattā nānāvaṇṇā hontī ti.
There are various types of beings that occur in the womb.

‘Tiṇarukkhe,’ ti ettha, antopheggū bahisāro antamaso,
‘Plants and trees,’ herein, at the very least having pith on the inside, and wood on the outside,

tālanāḷikerādayo pi tiṇāneva;
(such as) palms, coconut and so on (these) are plants;

antosārā pana bahipheggū, sabbe rukkhā nāma.
but having heartwood on the inside and pith on the outside (these) are all known as trees.

‘Na cāpi paṭijānare’ ti
‘Although they do not acknowledge it’ means

“Mayaṃ tiṇā mayaṃ rukkhā” ti vā,
saying: “We are plants, we are trees,” or

“Ahaṃ tiṇaṃ, ahaṃ rukkho,” ti vā evaṃ na jānanti.
“I am a plant, I am a tree,” they do not know it in this way.

¹³ SHB: *Evam-assa.*

¹⁴ SHB: *khīpati.*

‘Liṅgaṃ jātimayan’-ti ajānantānam-pi ca
‘Sign of their species’ means without knowing it

tesaṃ jātimayam-eva, saṅghānaṃ attano,
there is the sign of their species, their own form,

mūlabhūtaṭiṇādisadisam-eva hoti.
like the root and body of the plant and so on are the same.

Kim kāraṇā?
Why is that?

‘Aññamaññā hi jātiyo.’
‘The species are different.’

Yasmā aññā ṭiṇajāti, aññā rukkhajāti.
Because plant species are one thing, tree species are another.

Ṭiṇesu pi aññā tālajāti, aññā nāḷikerajāti, evaṃ vitthāretabbaṃ.
In plants, palms are one species, and reeds are another species, thus it should be explained.

Iminā idaṃ dasseti yaṃ jātivasena nānā hoti,
Through this it is shown that on account of species there is diversity,

taṃ attano paṭiññāṃ, paresaṃ vā upadesaṃ vinā pi,
even without one’s own acknowledgment, or without another’s indication,

aññajātito visesena gayhati.
it is known¹⁵ by a distinction from other species.

Yadi ca jātiyā brāhmaṇo bhavye,
If there would be a brahmin by species,

so pi attano paṭiññāṃ, paresaṃ vā upadesaṃ vinā,
even without one’s own acknowledgment, or without another’s indication,

khattiyato vessato suddato vā visesena gayheyya, na ca gayhati.
he would be known as distinct from nobles, traders and workers, (but) he is not known.

Tasmā na jātiyā brāhmaṇo ti.
Therefore he is not a brahmin by birth.

¹⁵ See the Sanskrit dictionaries for this meaning of *gayhati*, s.v. *grah*.

Parato pana, ‘Yathā etāsu jātīsū...’ ti
But further, ‘Just as in these species...’¹⁶

gāthāya etam-attham vacībhedeneva āvikarissati.
through the words in the verse (below) the meaning will be explained.

Tato kīṭe paṭaṅge ca, yāva kunthakipillike,
Then arthropods and grasshoppers,¹⁷ up to ants (and other) insects,

liṅgam jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [9]
their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

Evaṃ anupādiṇṇakesu jātim dassetvā,
Having thus shown the species without grasping,

upādiṇṇakesu dassento, ‘Tato kīṭe...’ ti ādim-āha.
showing those with grasping, ‘Then arthropods...’ and so on is said.

‘Yāva kunthakipillike’, ti kunthakipillikaṃ pariyantaṃ katvā ti attho.
‘Up to ants (and other) insects’, the meaning is having made ants (and other) insects the limit.

Ettha, ca ye uppativā gacchanti, te ‘paṭaṅgā’ nāma.
Herein, after jumping in the air they proceed,¹⁸ (therefore) they are called ‘grasshoppers’.

‘Aññamaññā hi jātiyo’ ti
‘For the species are different’ means

tesam-pi nīlarattādi vaṇṇavasena jātiyo nānappakārā va honti.
because their colour is blue, red and so on there are species of diverse kinds.

Catuppade pi jānātha, khuddake ca mahallake,
Understand also quadrupeds, the small and the large,

liṅgam jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [10]
their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

‘Khuddake’ ti kālakādayo.
‘Small’ means squirrels and so on.

¹⁶ See verse 14 below, where the argument is taken up again.

¹⁷ Many of the words for species in this section are hard to identify as they are very obscure, and seem sometimes to be generics.

¹⁸ This is a so-called etymological definition, understanding the word as being *patam* + *ga*.

‘Mahallake’ ti biḷārādayo.

‘Large’ means cats and so on.

Pādudare pi jānātha, urage dīghapiṭṭhike,

Understand reptiles, snakes and pythons,

liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [11]

their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

‘Pādūdare’ ti udarapāde, udaram yeva yesam pādā ti vuttam hoti.

‘Reptiles’ means (they use their) stomach as feet, those whose stomach is their feet is what is said.

‘Dīghapiṭṭhike’ ti sappānam hi sīsato yāva naṅguṭṭhā piṭṭhi yeva hoti,

‘Pythons’ means because it is (like) snakes from its head as far as its back and tail,

tena te ‘dīghapiṭṭhikā’ ti vuccanti.

through that they say ‘pythons.’¹⁹

Tato macche pi jānātha, odake vārigocare,

Then understand the fish also, aquatics and amphibians,

liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [12]

their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

‘Odark’ ti²⁰ udake, udakamhi jāte.

‘Aquatics’ means belonging to water, born in the water.

Tato pakkhī pi jānātha, pattayāne vihaṅgame,

Then understand birds, flying creatures, those who go through the sky,

liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo. [13]

their sign is of their own species, for the species are different.

‘Pakkhī’ ti sakuṇe.

‘Birds’ means birds (alternative word).

Te va pattehi yantī ti ‘pattayānā.’

They fly with their wings (therefore) they are ‘flying creatures.’

Vehāsam gacchantī ti ‘vihaṅgamā.’

They go through the sky (therefore) they are ‘those who go through the sky.’

¹⁹ Literally, *long backs*. The exact identification is unsure, Abhidhānappadīpaka places it in its lists of names for snakes.

²⁰ SHB: *Udake ti*.

Yathā etāsu jātīsu liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ puthu,
Just as in these species the sign of the species is various,

evaṃ natthi manussesu liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ puthu, [14]
so in humans there is no sign that the species is various,

Evam, thalajalākāsagocarānaṃ paṇānaṃ jātibhedam dassetvā,
Thus, having shown that there is a species differentiation of living beings on the ground, in the water and in the air,

idāni yenādhippāyena taṃ dasseti,
now with the intention of showing where,

taṃ āvikaronto, ‘Yathā etāsū...’ ti²¹ gātham-āha.
explaining this the verse, ‘Just as in these...’ was spoken.

Tassattho saṅkhepena, vutto va.
That is the meaning in short, is what was said.

Vitthārato panettha yaṃ vattabbaṃ,
But here is what should be spoken about in extension,

taṃ sayam-eva dassento, ‘Na kesehī...’ ti ādim-āha.
showing it oneself, ‘Not with the hair...’²² and so on is said.

Tatrāyaṃ yojanā, yaṃ vuttaṃ,
Herein this is how to construe it, that which is said,

“Natthi manussesu liṅgajātimayaṃ²³ puthū,” ti
“In humans there is no sign that the species is various,”

“Taṃ evaṃ natthī,” ti veditabbaṃ.
should be known: “This is not so.”

Seyyathidaṃ?
In what way?

‘Na kesehī...’ ti
‘Not with the hair...’

²¹ SHB: *etāhū ti.*

²² See the next verse below.

²³ SHB: *liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ.*

Na hi: “Brāhmaṇānaṃ edisā kesā honti, khattiyānaṃ edisā” ti niyamo atthi,
There is no limitation (saying): “The hair of brahmins is such-like, of nobles is such-like.”

yathā hatthi-assamigādīnan-ti iminā nayena sabbaṃ yojetabbaṃ.
as it could be construed of all the elephants, horses, deer and so on in similar ways.

na kesehi na sīsena, na kaṇṇehi na akkhihi,
not with the hair, not with the head, not with the ears, not with the eyes,

na mukhena na nāsāya, na oṭṭhehi bhamūhi vā, [15]
not with the mouth, not with the nose, not with the lips, not with the brows,

na gīvāya na aṃsehi, na udarena na piṭṭhiyā,
not with the neck, not with the shoulders, not with the belly, not with the back,

na soniyā na urasā, na sambādhe na methune, [16]
not with the waist, not with the chest, not with the vagina, not with the testicles,²⁴

na hatthehi na pādehi, naṅgulīhi nakhehi vā,
not with the hands, not with the feet, not with fingers, not with the nails,

na jaṅghāhi na ūruhi, na vaṇṇena sarena vā,
not with the calves, not with the thighs, not with the complexion, not with the voice,

liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ neva yathā aññāsu jātisū. [17]
there is no sign of a species as there is in other species.

‘Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ neva yathā aññāsu jātisū,’ ti
‘There is no sign of a species as there is in other species,’

idaṃ pana vuttassevatthassa nigamanan-ti veditabbaṃ.
it should be known that this is the explanation of what is said, it is the conclusion.

Tassa yojanā, evaṃ yasmā imehi kesādīhi natthi
This is how to construe it, because there is nothing through this hair and so on

manussesu liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ puthu,
that is a different sign of species in humans,

tasmā veditabbaṃ-etam:
therefore this is to be known:

²⁴ This meaning is inferred from *methuna* meaning *a pair*; it is not recorded in the dictionaries, and the *ṭīkā* is no help.

“Brāhmaṇādi bhedesu manussesu liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ neva,

“There is no sign of a species that differentiates brahmins from (other) humans and so on,

yathā aññāsu jātisū.” ti

as there is in other species.”

Paccattaṃ ca sarīresu, manussesvetam na vijjati,

There is divergence in bodies, but in humans this (divergence) is not found,

vokāraṇ-ca manussesu samaññāya pavuccati. [18]

the difference in humans is through designation it is said.

Idāni evaṃ jātibhede asati pi, brāhmaṇo, khattiyo,

Although now differentiation of species is not found, as brahmin, noble,

idaṃ nānattaṃ yathā jātaṃ,

this diversity is according to birth,

taṃ dassetuṃ ‘Paccattan...’-ti gātham-āha.

it is said this is to be shown in the ‘There is divergence...’ verse.

Tattha ‘Vokāran’-ti nānattaṃ.

Herein ‘Difference’ means diversity.

Ayaṃ panettha saṅkhepattho,

Herein, this is, however, the meaning in short,

yathā hi tiracchānānaṃ yonīnaṃ siddham-eva kesādi saṅghānena nānattaṃ,

because, for animals, diversity in the composition of hair and so on happens in the womb,

tathā brāhmaṇādīnaṃ attano attano sarīre taṃ natthi.

(but) for brahmins and so on there is no (such diversity) in their bodies.

Evaṃ sante pi, yad-etaṃ, “brāhmaṇo khattiyo” ti vokāraṃ,

Even this being so, with this designation of “brahmin, noble”,

taṃ vokāraṇ-ca manussesu samaññāya pavuccati,

the difference in humans is said to be through designation,

voḥāramatteneva pavuccatī ti.

is said to be only through the designation.

The Classification of Humans

Yo hi koci manussesu gorakkhaṃ upajīvati,
Whoever amongst humans makes his living protecting cattle,

evam Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: kassako so na brāhmaṇo. [19]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a farmer and not a brahmin.

Ettāvatā Bhagavā Bhāradvājassa vādaṃ niggaṇhitvā,
Thus far the Fortunate One has censured Bhāradvāja's view,

idāni yadi jātiyā brāhmaṇo bhaveyya,
now if one can be a brahmin by birth (only),

ājīvasīlācāravipanno pi brāhmaṇo bhaveyya.
one can be a brahmin even though lacking good livelihood, virtue and practices.

Yasmā pana porāṇā brāhmaṇā tassa brāhmaṇabhāvaṃ na icchanti,
Because the brahmins of old did not desire this brahmin status,

loke ca aññe pi paṇḍitamanussā tasmā Vāseṭṭhassa vādaṃ paggaṇhanto,
other wise humans in the world therefore were supporting Vāseṭṭha's view,

'Yo hi koci manussesū...' ti aṭṭha gāthā āha.
and he spoke the eight verses (beginning): 'Whoever amongst humans...'

Tattha, 'Gorakkhaṇ'-ti khettarakkhaṃ, "kasikammaṇ"-ti vuttaṃ hoti.
Herein, 'Protecting cattle' means protecting the fields, "husbandry" is what is said.

'Go' ti hi pathaviyā nāmaṃ, tasmā evam-āha.
'Cattle' is a name for the earth,²⁵ therefore this was said.

Yo hi koci manussesu puthu sippena jīvati,
Whoever amongst humans lives by a craft of a certain kind,

evam Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: sippiko so na brāhmaṇo. [20]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a craftsman and not a brahmin.

'Puthu sippena' ti tantavāyakammādi nānāsippena.
'By a craft of a certain kind' means by a craft such as weaving work and so on.

²⁵ A meaning attested in the Sanskrit dictionaries, see e.g. SED, s.v. *pythivī*.

Yo hi koci manussesu vohāraṃ upajīvati,
Whoever amongst humans makes his livelihood through business,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: vāṇijo so na brāhmaṇo. [21]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a trader and not a brahmin.

‘Vohāraṇ’-ti vaṇijjāṃ.
‘Business’ means trading.

Yo hi koci manussesu parapessena jīvati,
Whoever amongst humans lives by way of service to others,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: pessiko so na brāhmaṇo. [22]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a servant and not a brahmin.

‘Parapessenā’ ti paresaṃ veyyāvaccakamma.
‘By way of service to others’ means through being another’s agent.

Yo hi koci manussesu adinnaṃ upajīvati,
Whoever amongst humans makes his livelihood through thievery,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: coro eso na brāhmaṇo. [23]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a robber and not a brahmin.

Yo hi koci manussesu issatthaṃ upajīvati,
Whoever amongst humans makes his living as an archer,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: yodhājīvo na brāhmaṇo. [24]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a soldier and not a brahmin.

‘Issatthan’-ti āvudhajīvikāṃ, “usuñ-ca sattiñ-cā” ti vuttaṃ hoti.
‘Aa archer’ means a weapon-bearer, “an arrow or a spear” is what is said.

Yo hi koci manussesu porohiccena jīvati,
Whoever amongst humans makes his livelihood by advising,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: yājako eso na brāhmaṇo. [25]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a cleric and not a brahmin.

‘Porohiccenā’ ti purohitakamma.
‘By advising’ means by working as a religious advisor.

Yo hi koci manussesu gāmaṃ raṭṭhañ-ca bhuñjati,
Whoever amongst humans lives off a village or a kingdom,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi: rājā eso na brāhmaṇo. [26]
know it thus, Vāseṭṭha: he is a monarch and not a brahmin.

The True Brahmin

Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ brūmi yonijaṃ mattisambhavaṃ,
I do not call one a brahmin simply because of being born from the womb of a
(certain) mother,

bhovādī nāma so hoti sace hoti sakiñcano,
that is just one who says ‘bho’²⁶ if he is attached,

akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [27]
having nothing and unattached, that one I say is a brahmin.

Evam brāhmaṇasamayena ca lokavohārena ca
Thus through the brahmin view and through wordly usage

ājīvasīlācāravipannassa abrāhmaṇabhāvaṃ sādhetvā,
we have concluded that a brahmin lacking a good livelihood, virtue and practices, has
no brahmin status,

evam sante, na²⁷ jātiyā brāhmaṇo, guṇehi pana brāhmaṇo hoti.
as that is the case, one is not a brahmin by birth, but one is a brahmin through good
qualities.

Tasmā, yattha katthaci kule jāto yo guṇavā,
Therefore, the one who is endowed with good qualities in whatever family,

so brāhmaṇo, ayam-ettha ñāyo, ti
he is a brahmin, herein this is the right method,

evam-etam ñāyaṃ atthato āpādetvā,
thus this is the right method produced from the meaning,

idāni nam vacībhedena pakāsentō:
now explaining the words:

‘Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ’-ti ādim-āha.
‘I do not (call) one a brahmin’ and so on was said.

Tassattho:
The meaning of this is:

ahaṃ hi yvāyaṃ catunnaṃ yonīnaṃ yattha katthaci jāto,
from whichever of the four wombs he is born,

²⁶ It was a way for brahmins to address others, implying their inferiority.

²⁷ SHB: *santena na*; seeming haplography.

tatrāpi vā visesena yo brāhmaṇassa saṁvaṇṇitāya mātari sambhūto,

the one who has the distinction of being arisen in a mother who is praised as a brahmin,

taṁ: ‘Yonijaṁ mattisambhavaṁ,’

(but) he is: ‘Simply ... born from the womb of a (certain) mother,’

yā cāyaṁ ubhato sujāto ādinā nayena brāhmaṇehi,

whoever is well-born on both sides and so on through the brahmins’ method,

brāhmaṇassa parisuddha-uppattimaggasaṅkhātā yoni vuttam,

it is said a brahmin’s womb is reckoned as a pure birth canal,

saṁsuddhagahaṇiko ti iminā ca māṭisampatti,

and there is a pure gestation through the excellency of the mother,

tato pi jātasambhūtattā yoniyo,

even so the fact is the birth has been produced in a womb,

mattisambhavo ti vuccati,

it is said he is simply born from a (certain) mother,

taṁ, ‘Yonijaṁ mattisambhavaṁ’

that, ‘Simply ... born from a (certain) mother’

iminā ca yonijamattisambhavamattena na brāhmaṇaṁ brūmi.

I say from simply being born through the womb of a (certain) mother one is not a brahmin.

Kasmā?

Why?

Yasmā, “bho bho” ti, vacanamattena,

Because, saying “bho bho” is merely words,

aññehi sakiñcanehi pi viṣiṭṭhattā,

he has distinction through his other attachments,

‘Bhovādi nāma so hoti, sace hoti sakiñcano,’ sapalibodho.

‘That one is just one who says ‘bho’ if he is attached’, having impediments.

Yo panāyaṁ, yattha katthaci jāto pi,

But the one who, wherever he is born,

rāgādikiñcanābhāvena akiñcano,

having nothing through the state of not having passion and so on,

sabbagahaṇapaṭinissaggena anādāno,
unattached through the giving up of all graspings,

‘Akiñcanam-anādānam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam.’
‘Having nothing and unattached, that one I say is a brahmin.’

Kasmā?
Why?

Yasmā bāhitapāpo ti.
Because he has removed bad things.²⁸

Sabbasaṃyojanam chetvā yo ve na paritassati,
Whoever has cut off all the fetters surely does not tremble,

saṅgātigam visaṃyuttam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [28]
surmounting attachments, detached, that one I say is a brahmin.

Kiñcabhiyyo, ‘Sabbasaṃyojanam chetvā’ ti ādi sattavīsati gāthā.
Moreover, ‘(Whoever) has cut off all the fetters’ and so on (for) twenty-seven verses.

Tattha, ‘Sabbasaṃyojanan’-ti sabbam dasavidham-pi saṃyojanam.
Herein, ‘All the fetters’ means all the ten kinds of fetters.²⁹

‘Na paritassati’ ti taṇhāparitassanāya na paritassati.
‘Does not tremble’ means he does not tremble through the trembling caused by craving.

‘Saṅgātigan’-ti rāgasāṅgādayo atikkantaṃ.
‘Surmounting attachments’ means overcoming attachment to passion and so on.

‘Visaṃyuttan’-ti³⁰ catūhi yonīhi sabbakilesehi vā visaṃyuttam.
‘Detached’ means detached from the four (lower) births³¹ or (detached) from all the defilements.

²⁸ This is an untranslatable play on words, as elsewhere it is said that a person is a *brāhmaṇa* from removing bad things: *bāhitapāpa*.

²⁹ 1. embodiment view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*); 2. uncertainty (*vicikicchā*); (3) grasping at virtue and practices (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*); 4. passion for sense pleasures (*kāmarāga*); 5. ill-will (*vyāpāda*); 6. passion for form (*rūparāga*); 7. passion for the formless (*arūparāga*); 8. conceit (*māna*); 9. agitation (*uddhacca*); 10. ignorance (*avijjā*).

³⁰ SHB: *Visaññuttan-ti*; spelling difference.

³¹ Birth in hell (*niraya*), the animal realm (*tiracchānayani*), the hungry ghosts (*petayoni*) and the world of the demons (*asuraloka*).

Chetvā naddhim varattañ-ca, sandānaṃ sahanukkamaṃ,
(Whoever) has cut off the thong, the strap, the rope together with the bridle,

ukkhittapalighaṃ buddhaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [29]
who has thrown off the obstacle and is awakened, that one I say is a brahmin.³²

‘Naddhin’-ti upanāhaṃ.

‘Thong’ means enmity.

‘Varattan’-ti taṇhaṃ.

‘Strap’ means craving.

‘Sandānaṃ’-ti yottapāsaṃ, diṭṭhipariyuṭṭhānassetamā adhivacanaṃ.

‘Rope’ means a yoke-sling, this is a designation for possession by views.

‘Sahanukkamaṃ’-ti anukkamo vuccati, pāse pavesanagaṇṭhi,

‘Bridle’ means a rein it is said, the knot that enters over a sling,

diṭṭhānusayassetamā nāmaṃ.

this is a name for the underlying tendency to views.

‘Ukkhittapalighan’-ti ettha paligho ti avijjā.

‘Thrown off the obstacle’, herein, ignorance is an obstruction.

‘Buddhan’-ti catusaccabuddhaṃ.

‘Awakened’ means awakened to the four noble truths.

Akkosaṃ vadhabandhañ-ca aduṭṭho yo titikkhati,

Whoever, being pure, forebears with punishment, bondage and abuse,

khantibalaṃ balānikaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [30]

having the strength of endurance, having the strength of might, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Titikkhatī’ ti khamatī.

‘Forebears’ means has patience.

‘Khantibalan’-ti adhivāsanakhantibalaṃ.

‘Strength of endurance’ means strength of endurance and perseverance.

Sā pana sakiṃ uppannā ‘balānikaṃ’³³ nāma na hoti,

But once arisen it is known as the ‘strength of might’,

³² The commentary to the Dhammapada interprets the meaning as follows: *Whoever has cut off hatred, craving, the sixty-two views together with the latent tendencies, and thrown off ignorance, that one I say is a brahmin.*

³³ SHB: *balānikan-*; different sandhi.

punappunam̐ uppannā pana hoti.

it arises again and again.

Tassā atthitāya ‘balānīkam̐’.

Because of the presence (of endurance) there is ‘strength of might’.

Akkodhanam̐ vatavantam̐, sīlavantam̐ anussutam̐,

(Whoever is) controlled of mind, dutiful, virtuous, taint-free,

dantam̐ antimasārīram̐, tam-aham̐ brūmi brāhmaṇam̐. [31]

well-trained and in his last body, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Vatavantam̐’-ti dhutaṅgavantam̐.

‘Dutiful’ means endowed with the ascetic duties.

‘Sīlavantam̐’-ti guṇavantam̐.

‘Virtuous’ means endowed with good qualities.

‘Anussadanam̐’-ti rāgādi-ussadavirahitam̐.

‘Taint-free’ means fully free of the taint of passion and so on.

‘Anussutanam̐’-ti pi pāṭho, anavassutanam̐-ati attho.

‘Lust-free’ is another reading, the meaning is free of desire.

‘Dantam̐’-ti nibbisevanam̐.

‘Well-trained’ means not being self-indulgent.

Vāri pokkharapatte va, āragge-r-iva sāsapo,

Like water on the lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on a needle,

yo na lippati kāmesu, tam-aham̐ brūmi brāhmaṇam̐. [32]

whoever is not smeared by sensual desires, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Na lippati’ ti na alliyati.

‘Not smeared’ means one isn’t clinging.

‘Kāmesū’ ti kilesakāmatthukāmesu.

‘By sensual desires’ means by the defilement of sensual desires and sensual object.³⁴

Yo dukkhassa pajānāti idheva khayam-attano,

Whoever knows right here the destruction of his suffering,

pannabhāram̐ visamyuttam̐, tam-aham̐ brūmi brāhmaṇam̐. [33]

putting down the burden, detached, that one I say is a brahmin.

³⁴ *Kāma* is traditionally divided into its subjective and objective states, sensual desire and sensual object.

‘Dukkassa pajānāti idheva khayan,’-ti

‘Whoever knows right here the destruction of ... suffering’,

ettha, Arahattaphalaṃ, dukkhassa khayō ti adhippetam.

herein, the fruit of Arahatsip, the destruction of suffering is what is intended.

‘Pajānātī’ ti adhigamavasena jānāti.

‘Knows’ means he knows through attainment.

‘Pannabhāran’-ti ohitabhāram,

‘Putting down the burden’ means laying down the burden,

khandhakilesa-abhisāṅkhārakāmaguṇabhāre otāretvā ṭhitam.

standing (firm) after lowering the burden of the accumulated strands of sensual desire and the mass of defilements.

‘Visamyutta’-padaṃ vuttattham-eva.

The word ‘detached’ has the meaning already given (previously).

Gambhīrapaññaṃ medhāvinṃ, maggāmagassa kovidaṃ,

The deeply wise sagacious one, skilled in what is path and not path,

uttamattham anuppattam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [34]

who has reached the ultimate good, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Gambhīrapañnan’-ti gambhīresu ārammaṇesu pavattapañnam.

‘Deeply wise’ means being in a state of wisdom in regard to deep subjects.

‘Medhāvin’-ti pakatipaññāya pañnavantam.

‘Sagacious’ means endowed with wisdom regarding natural wisdom.

Asamsaṭṭham gahaṭṭhehi anāgārehi cūbhayanṃ,

(Whoever) doesn’t mix with either householders or the houseless,

anokasāriṃ appiccham, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [35]

wandering homeless, with few desires, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Anāgārehi cūbhayan’-ti anāgārehi ca visamsaṭṭham ubhayañ-ca,

‘With ... either the houseless’ means doesn’t mix with either (householders or) the houseless,

dvihi pi cetehi visamsaṭṭham-evā ti attho.

doesn’t mix these two (kinds of people) is the meaning.

‘Anokasārin,’-ti okam vuccati pañcakāmaguṇālayo,

‘Wandering homeless’, home it is said means clinging to the five strands of sense pleasure,

taṃ analliyamānan-ti attho.

having a non-clinging mind is the meaning.

‘Appicchān’-ti anicchāṃ.

‘Few desires’ means without desire.

Nidhāya daṇḍaṃ bhūtesu tasesu thāvaresu ca,

(Whoever) has laid down the stick (used) against fearful and fearless beings,

yo na hanti na ghāteti, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [36]

who neither hurts nor kills, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Tasesū’ ti sataṇhesu.

‘Against fearful’ means against those having craving.

‘Thāvaresū’ ti nittaṇhesu.

‘Against ... fearless’ means against those without craving.

Aviruddhaṃ viruddhesu, attadaṇḍesu nibbutaṃ,

Being friendly with the hostile, calm amongst those holding weapons,

ādānesu anādānaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [37]

not attached amongst those attached, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Attadaṇḍesū’ ti gahitadaṇḍesu.

‘Amongst those holding weapons’ means amongst those with weapons held high.

‘Nibbutān’-ti kilesanibbānena nibbutaṃ.

‘Calm’ means calm through the emancipation from defilements.

‘Ādānesū’ ti sa-upādānesu.

‘Amongst those attached’ means amongst those still with attachments.

Yassa rāgo ca doso ca māno makkho ca pātito,

For whoever has thrown aside passion, hatred, conceit and anger,

sāsapo-r-iva āraggā, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [38]

like a mustard seed on a needle, that one I say is a brahmin.

Akakkasaṃ viññapaniṃ giraṃ saccaṃ udīraye,

(Whoever) speaks a word of truth that is informed and is not coarse,

yāya nābhisaje kañci, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [39]

through which no one will be angry, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Akakkasan’-ti niddosaṃ.

‘Not coarse’ means without hatred.

Sadoso hi rukkho pi sakakkaso ti vuccati.

It is with hatred, (like) a tree is coarse it is said.

‘Viññāpanin’-ti atthaviññāpikam̐ apisuṇam̐.

‘Informed’ means informed with meaning, and not slanderous.

‘Saccan’-ti avisam̐vādikam̐.

‘Truth’ means actual.

‘Udīraye’ ti bhaṇati.

‘Speaks’ means says.

‘Yāya nābhisajje’ ti

‘Through which no one will be angry’ means

yāya girāya parassa sajjanam̐ vā lagganam̐ vā na karoti,

through another’s word no one has clinging or sticking,

tādisam̐ aphaṇusam̐ giram̐ bhāsati ti attho.

the one who speaks words that are not harsh is the meaning.

Yodha dīgham̐ va rassam̐ vā aṇum̐-thūlam̐ subhāsubham̐,

* Whoever here in the world does not take what is not given, be it long or short,

loke adinnam̐ nādiyati, tam-aham̐ brūmi brāhmaṇam̐. [40]

small or large, attractive or unattractive, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Dīghan’-ti suttaṛuḥhabhaṇḍam̐.

‘Long’ means goods such as strings of ornaments.³⁵

‘Rassan’-ti vippakiṇṇabhaṇḍam̐.

‘Short’ means goods such as are strewn around.³⁶

‘Aṇun’-ti khuddakam̐.

‘Small’ means minor.

‘Thūlan’-ti mahantam̐.

‘Large’ means major.

³⁵ This appears to be a reference to the Vinaya Suttavibhaṅga, where we find that *suttāruḥham̐*, *strings of ornaments*, is listed as one of the things not to be stolen (PTS Vin III 47).

³⁶ This may be a reference to the stealing of *bindings of sticks that were strewn around* (*bandhane chinne kaṭṭhāni vippakiṇṇāni*) that is mentioned in the Suttavibhaṅga (PTS Vin III 62).

‘Subhāsubhan’-ti sundarāsundaram.

‘Attractive or unattractive’ means lovely or unlovely.

Dīghabhaṇḍañ-hi appaggham-pi hoti mahaggham-pi.

For long goods are valuable or not valuable.

Rassādīsu pi eseva nayo.

For short and so on this is also the method.

Iti ettāvatā na sabbam pariyādiṇṇam,

So far not all are overpowered,

‘subhāsubhan’-ti iminā pana pariyādiṇṇam hoti.

but he is overpowered by this ‘attractive or unattractive’.

Āsā yassa na vijjanti asmiṃ loke paramhi ca,

For the one who has no longings in this world or in the next world,

nirāsasam viṣaṃyuttam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [41]

being without longings, detached, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Nirāsayan’-ti nittaṇham.

‘Without longings’ means without craving.

Yassālayā na vijjanti, aññāya akathaṅkathī,

For the one who has no desires, who, through knowledge, is without doubt,

amatogadham anuppattam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [42]

who has attained immersion in the deathless, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Ālayā’ ti taṇhālayā.

‘Desires’ means desire because of craving,

‘Aññāyā’ ti jānitvā.

‘Through knowledge’ means having knowledge.

‘Amatogadhan’-ti amatabbhantaram.

‘Immersion in the deathless’ means internally deathless.

‘Anuppattan’-ti anuppaviṭṭham.

‘Has attained’ means has reached.

Yodha puññañ-ca pāpañ-ca ubho saṅgam upaccagā,

Whoever here has overcome clinging to both merit and demerit,

asokam virajam suddham, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇam. [43]

who is griefless, dustless and pure, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Ubho saṅgan’-ti ubhayam-petaṃ saṅgaṃ.

‘Clinging to both’ means clinging to both of these.

‘Puññaṃ’ hi sagge laggāpeti, apuññaṃ apāye,

‘Merit’ because of adhering to heaven, demerit (because of adhering) to the underworld,

tasmā ubhayam-petaṃ saṅgan-ti āha.

therefore clinging to both of these is said.

‘Upaccagā’ ti atīto.

‘Overcome’ means got past.

Candaṃ va vimalaṃ suddhaṃ, vippasannaṃ-anāvilaṃ,

(Whoever) just like the moon is stainless, pure, clear and undisturbed,

nandibhavaparikkhīṇaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [44]

has destroyed joy in existence, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Anāvilan’-ti āvilakāra-kakilesavirahitaṃ.

‘Undisturbed’ means being free from the disturbance caused by defilements.

‘Nandibhavaparikkhīṇan’-ti parikkhīṇanandiṃ, parikkhīṇabhavaṃ.

‘Has destroyed joy in existence’ has destroyed joy, has destroyed existence.

Yo imaṃ palipathaṃ duggaṃ saṃsāraṃ moham-accagā,

Whoever has crossed this difficult and dangerous path through births and deaths and delusion,³⁷

tiṇṇo pāragato jhāyī, anejo akathaṅkathī,

the meditator who has crossed over to the further side, the one who is lust-free and doubt-free,

anupādāya nibbuto, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [45]

who is unattached, is cooled down, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Yo iman,’-ti gāthāya avijjā yeva visaṃvādakaṭṭhena palipatho,

‘Whoever ... this,’ in this verse ignorance is the dangerous path through being deceptive,

mahāviduggatāya ‘duggaṃ’,

the ‘dangerous path’ through the great and difficult passage,

³⁷ The commentary to the Dhammapada says: *Whoever has overcome the difficult path of passions and so forth, the inaccessible defilements, the round of saṃsāra, the delusion of not having penetrated the four noble truths.*

sāmsaranaṭṭhena sāmsāro,
births and deaths through transmigrating,

mohanaṭṭhena moho ti vutto.
delusion is said because of being lost in delusion.

‘Tiṇṇo’ ti caturoghatiṇṇo.
‘Crossed over’ means crossed over the four floods.

‘Pāragato’ ti Nibbānaṃ gato.
‘To the further side’ means having gone to Nibbāna.

‘Jhāyī’ ti ārammaṇalakkhaṇūpaniṃjhānavasena jhāyī.
‘The meditator’ means the one who meditates on account of meditation on the objects and characteristics (of existence).

‘Anejo’ ti nittaṇho.
‘Lust-free’ means without craving.

‘Anupādāya nibbuto’ ti kiñci gahaṇaṃ agahetvā,
‘Who is unattached, is cooled down’ means not having grasped anything,

sabbakilesanibbānena nibbuto.
cooled down through emancipation from all defilements.

Yodha kāme pahatvāna anāgāro paribbaje,
Whoever would wander homeless here, giving up sensual desires,

kāmabhavaparikkhīṇaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [46]
destroying desires and existence, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Kāme’ ti duvidhe pi kāme.
‘Sensual desires the two kinds of sensual desires.’³⁸

‘Anāgāro’ ti anāgāro hutvā.
‘Homeless’ means having become homeless.

‘Paribbaje’ ti paribbajati.
‘Would wander’ means he wanders about.

‘Kāmabhavaparikkhīṇaṃ’-ti khīṇakāmaṃ khīṇabhavaṃ.
‘Destroying pleasures and existence’ means having destroyed pleasures, having destroyed existence.

³⁸ Objective and subjective.

Yodha taṇhaṃ pahatvāna, anāgāro paribbaje,
Whoever would wander homeless here, giving up (all of his) craving,

taṇhābhavaparikkhīṇaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [47]
destroying craving and existence, that one I say is a brahmin.

Hitvā mānusaṃ yogaṃ, dibbaṃ yogaṃ upaccagā,
Abandoning the human yoke, overcoming the divine yoke,

sabbayogavisamūyuttaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [48]
being unattached to all yokes, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Mānusaṃ yogan’-ti mānusaṃ pañcakāmaguṇayogaṃ.
‘The human yoke’ means the yoke of the five strands of human sense-pleasures.

‘Dibbaṃ yogan’-ti dibbaṃ pañcakāmaguṇayogaṃ.
‘Divine yoke’ means the yoke of the five strands of divine sense-pleasures.

‘Sabbayogavisamūyuttan’-ti sabbakilesayogavisamūyuttaṃ.
‘Being unattached to all yokes’ means being unattached to the yokes of all the defilements.

Hitvā ratiñ-ca aratiñ-ca, sītibhūtaṃ nirūpadhiṃ,
Abandoning delight and aversion, cooled off and free from (all) cleaving,

sabbalokābhibhuṃ vīraṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [49]
a hero who vanquished the whole world, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Ratin’-ti pañcakāmaguṇaratim.
‘Delight’ means delight in the five strands of sense pleasure.

‘Aratin’-ti kusalabhāvanāya ukkaṇṭhitam.
‘Aversion’ means dissatisfaction with the cultivation of the wholesome.

‘Vīran’-ti viriyavantaṃ.
‘A hero’ means one endowed with heroism.

Cutiṃ yo vedi sattānaṃ upapattiñ-ca sabbaso,
Whoever knows in every way the passing and rebirth of beings,

asattaṃ sugataṃ buddhaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [50]
unattached, fortunate, awake, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Sugatan’-ti sundaraṃ ṭhānaṃ gataṃ, sundarāya vā paṭipattiyā gataṃ.
‘Fortunate’ means having gone to a lovely place, or having gone to a lovely practice.

Yassa gatiṃ na jānanti, devā gandhabbamānūsā,
For the one whose destiny is unknown to gods, gandhabbas and men,

khīṇāsavaṃ arahantaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [51]
destroying pollutants, worthy, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Gatin’-ti nipphattiṃ.
‘Destiny’ means the result.

Yassa pure ca pacchā ca majjhe ca natthi kiñcanaṃ,
For whom there is nothing in the past, the future or the present,

akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [52]
having nothing and unattached, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Pure’ ti atīte.
‘In the past’ means in the former time.

‘Pacchā’ ti anāgate.
‘In the future’ means in the later time.

‘Majjhe’ ti paccuppanne.
‘In the present’ means in the present time.

‘Kiñcana’-ti kiñcanakāraṅko kilesa.
‘Nothing’ means doing nothing defiled.

Usabhaṃ pavaraṃ vīraṃ, mahesiṃ vijitāvinaṃ,
A noble leader, heroic, a great seer, victorious,

anejaṃ nhātaṃ buddhaṃ, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [53]
lust-free, cleansed, awakened, that one I say is a brahmin.

‘Mahesin’-ti mahante guṇe pariyesanaṭṭhena mahesiṃ.
‘A great seer’ means because of seeking great qualities he is a great seer.

‘Vijitāvina’-ti vijitavijayaṃ.
‘Victorious’ means triumphant through victory.

Pubbenivāsaṃ yo vedī, saggāpāyaṅ-ca passati,
Whoever knows their former lives, and sees heaven and the lower worlds,

atho jātikkhayaṃ patto, tam-ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ. [54]
and has attained birth’s destruction, that one I say is a brahmin.

Summary of the Teaching

Samaññā hesā lokasmiṃ nāmagottaṃ pakappitaṃ,

These designations in the world have been made about name and clan,

samuccā samudāgataṃ tattha tattha pakappitaṃ. [55]

arisen through common consent they have been made here and there.

Evaṃ Bhagavā, guṇato khīṇāsavaṃ yeva brāhmaṇaṃ dassetvā,

Thus the Fortunate One, having shown that the pollutant-free brahmin is (such) from good qualities,

ye jātito brāhmaṇo ti abhinivesaṃ karonti,

those who have adhered (to the idea) that a brahmin is from birth,

te idam-ajānantā, sā ca nesaṃ diṭṭhi duddiṭṭhī ti dassento,

not knowing this, and showing that their view is a wrong view,

‘samaññā hesā’ ti gāthādvayam-āha.

spoke the two verses, ‘these designations’.

Tassattho:

The meaning of this is:

yad-idaṃ, brāhmaṇo khattiyo Bhāradvājo Vāseṭṭho, ti

that is, brahmin, noble, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha,

‘Nāmagottaṃ pakappitaṃ’ kataṃ abhisāṅkhataṃ,

‘Name and clan ... have been made’, made up and prepared,

‘Samaññā hesā lokasmiṃ’, vohāramattan-ti attho.

‘These designations in the world’, are only expressions is the meaning.

Kasmā?

Why?

Yasmā ‘Samuccā samudāgataṃ’³⁹ samanūññāya āgataṃ.

Because ‘through common consent’ they have found approval.

Etaṃ hi ‘tattha tattha’ jātakāle yevassa ñātisālohitehi ‘pakappitaṃ’ kataṃ.

This ‘here and there’ means at the time of birth relatives and kin ‘have made’, have made it up.

No ce naṃ evaṃ pakappeyyuṃ,

If they hadn’t made them,

³⁹ SHB: *Samuccasamudāgataṃ*.

na koci kiñci disvā ayam brāhmaṇo ti vā Bhāradvājo ti vā jāneyya.
no one seeing them would know this is a brahmin or this is Bhāradvāja.

Dīgharattam-anusayitaṃ, diṭṭhigatam-ajānataṃ,
Lying latent for a long time, this false view of the ignorant,

ajānantā no pabruvanti jātiyā hoti brāhmaṇo. [56]
indeed only the ignorant say one is a brahmin by birth.

Evam, pakappitaṃ-cetaṃ ‘dīgharattam-anusayitaṃ, diṭṭhigatam-ajānataṃ’,
Thus, having made this ‘lying latent for a long time, this false view of the ignorant’,

pakappitaṃ nāmagottaṃ,
name and clan have been made,

“nāmagottamattaṃ-etaṃ, saṃvohāratthaṃ pakappitaṃ,” ti
“this is just his name and clan, it is only an designation that has been made up,”

ajānantānaṃ sattānaṃ hadaye dīgharattaṃ diṭṭhigatam-anusayitaṃ.
for ignorant beings this view has been lying latent for a long time in the heart.

Tassa anusayitattā taṃ nāmagottaṃ ajānantā no pabruntī,
For those who are ignorant in a latent state say to us about his name and lineage,

“jātiyā hoti brāhmaṇo,” ti
“one is a brahmin by birth,”

ajānantāva evaṃ vadantī, ti vuttaṃ hoti.
without knowing they say this, is what is said.

Na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti, na jaccā hoti abrāhmaṇo,
One is not a brahmin by birth, nor by birth is one not a brahmin,

kammaṇā brāhmaṇo hoti, kammaṇā hoti abrāhmaṇo. [57]
by deeds one is a brahmin, by deeds one is not a brahmin.

Evam, ye ‘jātito brāhmaṇo’ ti abhinivesaṃ karonti,
Thus, those who have adhered (to the idea) “a brahmin is from birth”,

te idaṃ vohāramattaṃ ajānantā,
are ignorant that this is only a designation,

sā ca nesaṃ diṭṭhi duddiṭṭhī, ti dassetvā,
and that their view is a wrong view, having shown this,

idāni nippariyāyam-eva jātivādam paṭikkhipanto,
and now rejecting and making no distinction based on birth,

kammavādañ-ca paṭiṭṭhapento, ‘Na jaccā...’ ti ādim-āha.
but establishing the view of deeds, ‘Not ... by birth...’ and so on was said.

Kassako kammanā hoti, sippiko hoti kammanā,
It’s by deeds one is a farmer, and by deeds one is a craftsman,

vāṇijo kammanā hoti, pessiko hoti kammanā, [58]
and by deeds one is a trader, and by deeds one is a servant,

Tattha, ‘Kammanā,’ ti upaḍḍhagāthāya vitthāraṇattham,
Herein, ‘By deeds’, in this half verse the meaning is explained,

‘Kassako kammanā’ ti ādi vuttam.
‘By deeds one is a farmer’ and so on is said.

Tattha, ‘Kammanā’ ti
Herein, ‘By deeds’ means

paccuppannaena kasikammādi nibbattakacetanā kammanā.
at the present time agriculture and so on is brought forth through intentional deeds.

coro pi kammanā hoti, yodhājīvo pi kammanā,
by deeds one is a robber, by deeds one is a soldier,

yājako kammanā hoti, rājā pi hoti kammanā. [59]
by deeds one is a cleric, by deeds one is a monarch.

Evam-etam yathābhūtam kammaṃ passanti paṇḍitā,
Thus the wise, seeing this deed as it really is,

paṭiccasamuppādadasā, kammavipākakovidā. [60]
seeing conditional origination, are skilled in deeds and results.

‘Paṭiccasamuppādadasā’ ti iminā paccayena evaṃ hotī ti
‘Seeing conditional origination’ it is through this condition thus,

evaṃ paṭiccasamuppādadasāvino.
that he is one seeing conditional origination.

‘Kammavipākakovidā’ ti
‘Skilled in deeds and results’

sammānāvamānārahe kule kammavasena uppatti hoti,
a family is worthy of respect and disrespect because of the production of deeds,

aññā pi hīnapaṇītātā hīnapaṇīte kamme vipaccamāne hotī ti.

through knowing what is despicable and excellent there is a ripening of despicable and excellent deeds.

Evam kammavipākakusalā.

Thus there is skill in deeds and results.

Kammanā vattati loko, kammanā vattati pajā,

By deeds the world goes round, by deeds this generation goes round,

kammanibandhanā sattā, rathassāṇīva yāyato. [61]

beings are bound fast by deeds, as chariots roll on their linchpin.

‘Kammanā vattatī,’ ti

‘By deeds ... goes round,’

gāthāya pana ‘loko’ ti vā ‘pajā’ ti vā ‘sattā’ ti vā eko yevattho,

in this verse ‘the world’ and ‘this generation’ and ‘beings’ have one single meaning,

vacanamattabhedo.⁴⁰

it is only the words that differ.

Purimapadena cettha, “atthi brahmā mahābrahmā ... seṭṭho sajjitā,” ti⁴¹

Herein, through the first foot, “this is brahmā, mahābrahmā, ... the highest, the creator,”⁴²

diṭṭhiyā paṭisedho veditabbo.

it should be known as a warding off of these (sorts of) views.

Kammanā hi tāsu tāsu gatisu vattati loko, tassa ko sajjitā? ti

Through deeds there are various destinies and the world goes round, (so) who is his creator?

Dutiyapadena, “evam kammanā nibbatto pi ca,

Through the second foot, “there is thus rebirth through deeds,

pavatte pi atītapaccuppannabhedena kammanā vattati,

the circle of existence goes round by the different kinds of past and present deeds,

⁴⁰ SHB: *vacanamatte bhedo?*

⁴¹ SHB: *sañjitā ti*; here and below.

⁴² This refers to a passage in Kevaṭṭhasutta (DN 11): *Atthi kho, bhikkhu, brahmā mahābrahmā abhībhū anabhībhūto aññadatthudaso vasavattī issaro kattā nimmātā seṭṭho sajjitā vasī pitā bhūtabhabyānaṃ; there is, monastics, brahmā, mahābrahmā, the conqueror, the unconquered, the all-seeing, who wields power, the master, the maker, the unborn, the controller, the father of the born and to be born.*

sukhadukkhāni paccañubhonto,
experiencing happiness and suffering,

hīnapaṇītādibhedañ-ca āpajjanto pavattatī” ti dasseti.
undergoing the different kinds of what is despicable and excellent and so on” is shown.

Tatiyena tam-evaṭṭhaṃ nigameti:
With the third (foot) this concludes the meaning:

“Evaṃ sabbathā pi ‘kammanibandhanā sattā’
“Thus in every way ‘beings are bound by deeds’

kammeneva baddhā hutvā pavattanti, na aññathā” ti.
they carry on, having been bound by deeds, and not otherwise.”

Catutthena tam-etthaṃ upamāya vibhāveti.
With the fourth (foot) the meaning is made clear with a simile.

Yathā hi rathassa yāyato āṇi nibandhanaṃ hoti,
As the chariots roll on bound by their linchpin,

na tāya anibandho yāti,
and do not go when not bound by it,

evaṃ lokassa nibbattato ca pavattato ca kammanibandhanaṃ,
so for the world there is rebirthing and existing (because of) the bondage of deeds,

tena anibaddho na nibbattati nappavattatī ti.
and without that bondage there is no rebirthing or existing.

Tapena brahmacariyena, saṃyamena damena ca,
Through austerity, celibacy, restraint and control,

etena brāhmaṇo hoti, etaṃ brāhmaṇam-uttamaṃ. [62]
through these one is a brahmin, this is the brahmin supreme.

Idāni yasmā evaṃ kammanibandhanaṃ loko,
Now because the world is bound by deeds in this way,

tasmā seṭṭhena kammanā seṭṭhabhāvaṃ dassento
therefore showing the state of excellence through excellent deeds

‘Tapenā’ ti gāthādvayam-āha.
the ‘Through austerity’ pair of verses were spoken.

Tattha, ‘Tapenā’ ti dhutaṅgatapena.

Herein, ‘Through austerity’ means through the austere practices.

‘Brahmacariyenā’ ti methunaviratiyā.

‘Through celibacy’ means through abstaining from sexual intercourse.

‘Saṃyamenā’ ti sīlena.

‘Through restraint’ means through virtue.

‘Damenā’ ti indriyadamanena.

‘Through control’ means through control of the sense faculties.

‘Etenā’ ti etena

‘Through these’

seṭṭhena parisuddhena brahmabhūtena kammanā brāhmaṇo hoti.

means through these best and pure and most excellent deeds one is a brahmin.

Kasmā?

Why?

Yasmā ‘Etaṃ brāhmaṇam-uttamaṃ’,

Because ‘This is the brahmin supreme’,

yasmā etaṃ⁴³ kammaṃ uttamo brāhmaṇaguṇo ti vuttaṃ hoti.

because this deed is said to be the supreme brahmin quality.

“Brahmānan”-ti pi pāṭho.

“Brahmās” is a reading also.

Ayaṃ panettha vacanattho:

However, this is the meaning of the words herein:

“brahmaṃ anatī” ti Brahmānaṃ,

“living the best” they are Brahmās,

“brāhmaṇabhāvaṃ āvahaṭī” ti vuttaṃ hoti.

“bringing about the state of brahmin” is what is said.

Tīhi vijjāhi sampanno, santo khīṇapunabbhavo,

Endowed with the three knowledges, peaceful and with rebirth destroyed,

evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi, Brahmā Sakko vijānatan.”-ti [63]

know thus, Vāseṭṭha, that one is Brahmā and Sakka to those who know.”⁴⁴

⁴³ SHB: *evamī*.

⁴⁴ I.e. that one is the highest of beings.

Dutiyagāthāya ‘santo’ ti santakilesō.

In the second verse ‘peaceful’ means pacifying the defilements.

‘Brahmā Sakko’ ti Brahmā ca Sakko ca, yo evarūpo,

‘Brahmā and Sakka’ means Brahmā and Sakka, whoever is such,

so na kevalaṃ brāhmaṇo,

he is not only a brahmin,

atha kho Brahmā ca Sakko ca so ‘vijānataṃ’, paṇḍitānaṃ,

but he is also Brahmā and Sakka ‘to those who know’, to the wise ones,

‘evaṃ Vāseṭṭha, jānāhī’, ti vuttaṃ hoti.

‘know thus, Vāseṭṭha,’ is what is said.

Sesaṃ sabbattha uttānam-evā ti.

All the rest is clear.

The Conclusion

Evam vutte, Vāseṭṭha-Bhāradvājā māṇavā

When this was said, the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja

Bhagavantaṃ etad-avocum:

said this to the Fortunate One:

“Abhikkantaṃ, bho Gotama! Abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama!

“Excellent, dear Gotama! Excellent, dear Gotama!

Seyyathā pi, bho Gotama, nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya,

Just as, dear Gotama, one might set upright what has been overturned,

paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūlhassa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya,

or open up what has been closed, or show a path to one who is lost,

andhakāre vā telappajjotaṃ dhāreyya: ‘cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintī’ ti,

or carry an oil lamp into the darkness, (thinking): ‘those with vision will see forms’,

evam-evaṃ bhotā Gotamena anekapariyāyena Dhammo pakāsito.

just so has the Dhamma been explained by the dear Gotama in countless ways.

Ete mayaṃ bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāma,

We go to the dear Gotama for refuge,

Dhammañ-ca Bhikkhusaṅghañ-ca.

and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks.

Upāsike no, bhavaṃ Gotamo, dhāretu

Please bear it in mind, dear Gotama, that we are lay followers

ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gate.” ti

who have gone for refuge from today forward for as long as we have the breath of life.”

Vāseṭṭhasuttaṃ Niṭṭhitaṃ

The Discourse concerning Vāseṭṭha is Finished