Snp 1.6 — Parabhava Sutta: Downfall

English translation by Narada Thera.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: UNKNOWN. Entire protected source unit, including notes and verses, preserved; canonical completeness has not been independently established.

Text

Translator's note: While the Mangala Sutta deals with the way of life conducive to progress and happiness, the Parabhava Sutta supplements it by pointing out the causes of downfall. He who allows himself to become tarnished by these blemishes of conduct blocks his own road to worldly, moral and spiritual progress and lowers all that is truly noble and human in man. But he who is heedful of these dangers keeps open the road to all those thirty-eight blessings of which human nature is capable.

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Anathapindika's monastery, in the Jeta Grove, near Savatthi.

Now when the night was far spent a certain deity whose surpassing splendor illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse:

The Deity:

Having come here with our questions to the Exalted One, we ask thee, O Gotama, about man's decline. Pray, tell us the cause of downfall!

The Buddha:

Easily known is the progressive one, easily known he who declines. He who loves Dhamma progresses; he who is averse to it, declines.

The Deity:

Thus much do we see: this is the first cause of one's downfall. Pray, tell us the second cause.[1]

The Buddha:

The wicked are dear to him, with the virtuous he finds no delight, he prefers the creed of the wicked — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Being fond of sleep, fond of company, indolent, lazy and irritable — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Though being well-to-do, not to support father and mother who are old and past their youth — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To deceive by falsehood a brahman or ascetic or any other mendicant — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one's luxuries alone — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and to despise one's own kinsmen — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be a rake, a drunkard, a gambler, and to squander all one earns — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Not to be contented with one's own wife, and to be seen with harlots and the wives of others — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Being past one's youth, to take a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To place in authority a woman given to drink and squandering, or a man of a like behavior — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be of noble birth, with vast ambition and of slender means, and to crave for rulership — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the noble sage endowed with insight shares a happy realm.

Note

1.

These lines are repeated after each stanza, with the due enumeration.