Snp 3.4 — Sundarikabhāradvāja Sutta

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Sutta-Nipta_Bhikkhu_Candana_2026-2ggf.pdf#page=152
Source revision: ff6fa85ebaed058886a2d52b1b0d3e1b29eeca3b26995a23bff6a50066e84495
License: Candana — free distribution, unaltered contents — https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Sutta-Nipta_Bhikkhu_Candana_2026-2ggf.pdf
Copyright © Bhikkhu Candana, 2023. Free distribution only; do not alter the contents.
Layout: Physical wraps reflowed; proven printed folios omitted; source wording retained.
Review: Full automatic text-layer comparison plus visual samples; not a complete human proofread.

Text

Snp. 3.4

Sundarikabhāradvāja Sutta

“The Brahmin

Sundarikabhāradvāja”

This is what I personally heard.

Once, when The Blessed One was staying near the bank of the river Sundarikā, the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja was busy engaged in his ritual of “aggihutta,” as he kept the sacrificial fire going, by the bank of the Sundarikā River.

Having lit up the fire, the brahmin then got up from it, as he looked around in the four directions, wondering to whom he should offer the leftovers of the sacrificial cake.

Then, the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja saw The Blessed One, not far from him, seated under a tree, having covered His head with His robe, to protect it from the Sun.

And by taking the sacrificial cake in his left hand and the sacrificial waterspout in his right hand, he went and approached The Blessed One.

The Blessed One, upon hearing the footsteps of the brahmin approaching, began uncovering His head.

On seeing this, the brahmin suddenly realized:

‘O! this recluse is one of those shaven heads! He is one of the shaven heads!’ and began thinking how it might be better to turn back.

But, soon enough, he started reflecting how there are brahmins, who also shave their heads, and he considered:

‘Why should I not approach and first ask this good sir about his lineage and birth?’

So, the brahmin continued walking as he approached The Blessed One and asked:

‘Good sir, what caste were you born in? What is your lineage?’

Then, The Blessed One replied to the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja in verse, by saying:

455. “I am no brahmin, nor the son of kings, neither am I a merchant, belonging to the household life. But having come to know and fully understand the ways of ordinary people and their ignorance, I now continue living this life with nothing, roaming the world with wisdom in my heart.

456. “Donning the three robes and with the head shaved, I wander without a place to call ‘my home,’ as I live this life, having become cool and quenched. Therefore, as I am not one looking for a certain type of people to call ‘my own’ or spend my time with, you asking the question as to, ‘which caste I was born into, or to which lineage I belong,’ is in itself quite inappropriate and unfitting, brahmin.”

457. “But it is customary for brahmins, friend, when meeting other people, to ask if they too are brahmins, or not,” replied the brahmin.

And The Blessed One said:

“If you claim to be a true brahmin while stating that I am not, then I shall question you on the ancient sāvittī (Gāyatrī Mantra), in its three lines and twenty-four syllables.

458. “Born as human beings, whether to warrior kingly families or brahmins, what is it that seers or sages rely upon or hope for, as they make their sacrifices and give offerings to the gods, as they go seeking a certain outcome, while being in the world?

“For the one who has reached the End itself, and attained to the Highest Knowing, if he were to receive such an offering, then surely that would be of much blessing to the one who is giving.”

459. The brahmin then said:

“Then, for sure our offering here would indeed become fruitful, for we see in You someone who has the Highest Knowledge. For not having seen anyone like you before, we do not offer this sacrificial cake to anyone else, except to You.”

460. “‘In that case, brahmin, you are now in the most suitable condition to approach and perhaps, you may truly find here the One, who is indeed cooled and quenched, passionless,

unperturbed; The Wise One, who has truly reached the End.”

461. “Good Gautama, my heart very much wishes to bestow an offering, by making you a sacrifice. Please, instruct me on the proper manner in conducting it, so that I may gain the best results from this action.”

“In that case, brahmin, listen carefully, and I will instruct you,” said The Blessed One.

462. “‘Do not go asking others about their birth or lineage, to find out as to who they are. Instead, look at their very behavior, the way they conduct themselves. That will tell you much more. Remember: fire comes out of firewood. After all, unshakable sages are to be found even within the lowest rungs of society, True Thoroughbreds who are born through restraint; the results of having constant wise moral shame.’

463. “Using Truth to tame and discipline themselves, one becomes supported by one’s own self-restraint; thus, the One possessing the Highest Knowledge lives while having completed the Goal of the Holy Life - it is to such a superior being that all those brahmins seeking to gain blessings must go, making their offerings at the appropriate time, at the feet of such Noble Ones. In this manner, the sacrifices they make, become truly fruitful.

464. “Those who give up sensual pleasures and go through life homeless, with their thoroughly restrained behavior and unblemished character, living their lives as straight as the shuttle – it is to such superior beings that all those brahmins

seeking to gain blessings must go, making their offerings at the appropriate time at the feet of such Noble Ones. In this manner, the sacrifices they make, become truly fruitful.

465. “Those, who, by guarding their sense doors have freed themselves from the handcuffs of lust, just like the full moon is freed from the grip of Rāhu – it is to such superior beings that all those brahmins seeking to gain blessings must go, making their offerings at the appropriate time at the feet of such Noble Ones. In this manner, the sacrifices they make, become truly fruitful.

466. “Traveling the world, they are always mindful; unblemished wherever they are; neither cherishing nor trying to hold on to anything they experience – it is to such superior beings that all those brahmins seeking to gain blessings must go, making their offerings at the appropriate time at the feet of such Noble Ones. In this manner, the sacrifices they make, become truly fruitful.

467. “The Tathāgata, having given up sensual pleasures, wanders thus, spotless and victorious, wherever He goes, having directly known and realized Himself, the very end of birth and death. As the epitome of being utterly quenched and cooled, He is like a deep, cool pond – it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

468. “With equals, He is equal, yet remains far removed from those who are un-equal to Him, The Tathāgata is of incomparable wisdom. Unblemished, whether in this or any other world – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

469. “In whom there cannot be found any evil or cunningness, who dwells without delusion, conceit, or possessiveness; such a True Brahmin is desireless, for He has pulled out greed and anger from their roots, and thus become extinguished, and having abandoned the stain of grief from His heart – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

470. “With all the mind’s fixations relinquished, He has nothing to take up nor call His ‘own,’ whether in this world or anywhere beyond – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

471. “With a collected heart, He has crossed the floods. And having fully understood the depth of the Dhamma by means of His Supreme Vision, He has destroyed the defilements of the heart, and as such, He bears His very last body – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

472. “The heart’s contaminant of wanting to re-become (bhavāsava), as well as to use destructive and mean speech, are abandoned and finally finished in Him. By possessing Perfect Knowledge, He is now liberated in every way, therefore – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

473. “Having unshackled Himself from all bonds, He lives with no attachments whatsoever, while among those who are attached to conceit, He stands free and untouched by any chains that bind. And having fully understood the nature of suffering itself, in all its aspects, with its sphere of function and foundation – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

474. “No more supported by any hopes or expectations, experiencing only the reality of seclusion, He has gone far beyond the confines of any views, doctrines, or ideas adhered to and followed by others. And with no more objects to identify with or lean on, He rests in serene tranquility – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

475. “Whether above or below, whatever phenomena there might be, there now remains nothing, for He is over and done with all things, having fumigated and cleared them all through His penetrative understanding. In this way, He remains at peace, having ended that primal drive to want to grab, and thereby, gained freedom – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

476. “Seeing the end of the fetter of birth, with lust having been thoroughly uprooted, and left without any remainder, He is the One called pure, undefiled, stainless, and flawless – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

477. “Not seeing any signs of a substantial or independent self anywhere, his mind has come to a unified coherence, thoroughly collected, and stilled. With no more movements taking place, He continues undeterred; the embodiment of kindness, having let go of all doubts and uncertainties – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.

478. “With no delusion left, with true understanding and penetrative insight, He sees through all things with the highest clarity, while carrying along His final body. Having

reached Full Awakening, He now enjoys the supreme bliss of ultimate safety. This, after all, defines the real meaning of purity for beings – indeed, it is The Tathāgata, The Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake.”

479. Then, the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja exclaimed:

“‘For certain, I now see how my offering is to become a true offering, indeed! I find myself to be fortunate beyond measure, for I have come across a genuine teacher, with such vast knowledge. Let Mahā Brahmā Himself be my witness, as I make this offering of the sacrificial cake to You. Kindly accept and enjoy it, O! Blessed One!”

480. “It is inappropriate for me, brahmin, to eat food that has been chanted over with mantras and spells. After all, this itself is not the Teaching of the Noble Ones, who have the eyes to see. Thus, food gained by reciting verses or spells is not suitable for Buddhas to consume. And so long as this principle remains across endless time, the Awakened Ones will adhere to it, and live by it.

481. “But instead, you may offer the Tathāgata other kinds of food or drinks, which We could consume; that way you will truly benefit by having made your offering to someone, who has destroyed the heart’s contaminants and overcome all doubts. For it is such a rare person indeed: the true field of merits, who is to be sought after by those wanting to make offerings.”

482. “It is such a gain! Such a wonderful opportunity for me to have come to see and meet The Blessed One, while at the same time, learning from Him, as to whom gifts of offering

should be appropriately made. Thus, I came and gained immensely from Your advice.”

483. “With the mind now free from disturbances, one remains free of anger and impulsivity. Thus, by getting liberated from the drive to pursue sensual pleasures, one does not allow the mind to drift here and there, and instead, is fully aware of what exactly it is engaged in, all the time.

484. “Having removed existing boundaries and gone beyond all mental limitations, one tames oneself and thus comes to finally understand the process of rebirth and death. Such a Sage who is well accomplished in his virtuous character, truly is worthy of honor, and of the best offerings to be placed at his feet.

485. “By training in the instructions given, and thus, having removed the conceit in one’s heart, one comes to offer homage with clasped hands at the heart, bowing in veneration, offering wholeheartedly whatever one can with food and drinks. It is in this way, that your gifts become fruitfully rewarding.”

486. “Truly, the Buddha, in whose presence I now stand, is the Sublime and Ideal Receiver of the sacrificial cake! For You are the incomparable field of merit, since whatever offerings are brought to Your Presence, become fruitfully rewarded, granting the giver many merits, indeed!”

Then, the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja added by saying this to The Blessed One:

“It is excellent, Master Gautama! It is marvelous, O! Blessed One! The Blessed Lord has clarified the Dhamma for me in many ways, as though He were to turn upright what had been turned upside-down, revealing what was hidden; showing the way to one who was lost, holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see. Bhante, I go to The Blessed One for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of Bhikkhus.” Bhante, may I receive the Going Forth, and be granted the Higher Ordination in the presence of The Blessed One.”

Thus, the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja received his full admission and the Higher Ordination as a Bhikkhu in this Dispensation, from The Blessed One Himself.

Soon after his Higher Ordination, now the Venerable Sundarikabhāradvāja, while living alone and secluded from the crowd, living heedfully and with resolution, practicing diligently, before long, he here and now realized for himself the noble end of the Holy Life; experiencing that unsurpassed knowledge for which sons of good families rightfully leave the household life, by becoming homeless.

And the Venerable Sundarikabhāradvāja knew with direct knowledge and certainty unparalleled:

‘Birth is finally destroyed. Now the Holy Life is fully lived; what should have been done is finally done, and there is no more coming to any state of becoming, ever again.’

And the Venerable Sundarikabhāradvāja became one of the Arahants.