SN 6.2 — SN 6:2 Reverence | Gārava Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN6_2.html

Source revision: sha256:06db98f11dbe5b66e3b290b0f8bcaa44ec5f2fe3d1e1b74062fcf0baea044036

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Text

Reverence

Gārava Sutta (SN 6:2)

I have heard that on one occasion, when the Blessed One was newly self-awakened, he was staying near Uruvelā on the bank of the Nerañjarā River, at the foot of the Goatherd’s Banyan Tree. Then, while he was alone & in seclusion, this line of thinking arose in his awareness: “One suffers if dwelling without reverence or deference. Now on what contemplative or brahman can I dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him?”

Then the thought occurred to him: “It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of virtue that I would dwell in dependence on another contemplative or brahman, honoring & respecting him. However, in this world with its devas, Māras, &

Brahmās, in this generation with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk, I do not see another contemplative or brahman more consummate in virtue than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him.

"It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of concentration that I would dwell in dependence on another contemplative or brahman, honoring & respecting him. However, in this world with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, in this generation with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk, I do not see another contemplative or brahman more consummate in concentration than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him.

"It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of discernment that I would dwell in dependence on another contemplative or brahman, honoring & respecting him. However, in this world with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, in this generation with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk, I do not see another contemplative or brahman more consummate in discernment than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him.

"It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of release that I would dwell in dependence on another contemplative or brahman, honoring & respecting him. However, in this world with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, in this generation with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk, I do not see another contemplative or brahman more consummate in release than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him.

"It would be for the sake of perfecting an unperfected aggregate of knowledge & vision of release that I would dwell in dependence on another contemplative or brahman, honoring & respecting him. However, in this world with its devas, Māras, & Brahmās, in this generation with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk, I do not see another contemplative or brahman more consummate in knowledge & vision of release than I, on whom I could dwell in dependence, honoring & respecting him.

"What if I were to dwell in dependence on this very Dhamma to which I have fully awakened, honoring & respecting it?"

Then, having known with his own awareness the line of thinking in the Blessed One's awareness—just as a strong man might extend his flexed arm or flex his extended arm—Brahmā Sahampati disappeared from the Brahmā world and reappeared in front of the Blessed One. Arranging his upper robe over one shoulder, he saluted the Blessed One with his hands before his heart and said to him: "So it is, Blessed One! So it is, One-Well-Gone! Those who were arahants, Rightly Self-awakened Ones in the past—they, too, dwelled in dependence on the very Dhamma itself, honoring & respecting it. Those who will be arahants, Rightly Self-awakened Ones in the future—they, too, will dwell in dependence on the very Dhamma itself, honoring & respecting it. And let the Blessed One, who is at present the arahant, the Rightly Self-awakened One, dwell in dependence on the very Dhamma itself, honoring & respecting it."

That is what Brahmā Sahampati said. Having said that, he further said this:

“Past Buddhas,
future Buddhas,
& he who is the Buddha now,
removing the sorrow of many—
all have dwelt,
will dwell, he dwells,
revering the true Dhamma.
This, for Buddhas, is a natural law.

Therefore one who desires his own good,
aspiring for greatness,
should respect the true Dhamma,
recollecting the Buddhas’ Teaching.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: SN 11:3; AN 7:56; AN 8:2; Khp 6; Iti 90