

19

(Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta

The (Sutta Nipāta) Discourse on Going-forth | Sn 3.1 (Sn 405-424)

Theme: The Bodhisattva meets Bimbisāra in Rājagaha

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1 Sutta significance

1.1 STRUCTURE

1.1.1 Summary

1.1.1.1 The (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta is the first text of the Mahāvagga, the 3rd chapter of the Sutta Nipāta. It is an early discourse recording Gotama’s first meeting with king Bimbisāra of Magadha. The Commentary tells us that Gotama was then still a Bodhisattva seeking buddhahood. Hence, it is appropriately called the “Meeting with Bimbisāra” (*bimbisāra,pratyudgama*) in the Sanskrit sources (the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, ch 24).¹

1.1.1.2 The meeting between king Bimbisāra and the Bodhisattva recorded in the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta is clearly very soon after the great renunciation. It is also probably before the Bodhisattva goes for tutelage under the two teachers—Ājāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta—and certainly before the 7 years of self-mortification, as recorded in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26) [1.1.1.2].

1.1.1.3 This conclusion is based on the fact that the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta gives other details beyond the Bodhisattva’s intention behind his renunciation. A clear hint of the timing is given in the last two lines of the last verse, where the Bodhisattva declares to Bimbisāra, “I will go on with striving: | my heart delights therein” [Sn 424cd].

1.1.2 Jayawickrama describes **the Pabbajjā Sutta** (Sn 3.1) as a “narrative ballad” (1950:181-184). Its verses are all in *śloka*,² except for Sn 423c which is *triṣṭubh* (with 11 syllables) [§19c n]. The language, style, syntax and metre of the sutta proper—the account of king Bimbisāra and his dialogue with the Bodhisattva—is generally consistent.

The Nālaka Sutta (Sn 3.11, especially the *vatthu,gāthā*, Sn 679-698), **the Pabbajjā Sutta** (Sn 3.1) and **the Padhāna Sutta** (Sn 3.2)³ form an ancient triad of sequential early narrative of the Bodhisattva leading to his buddhahood. As noted by Winternitz, these narrative discourses “are precious remnants of the ancient sacred ballad-poetry from which the later heroic epic grew out of the secular ballads or *ākhyāna*” (1933:96). In other words, these Suttas are the ancestors from which evolved the Buddha’s biography as we know it today.

1.1.3 The Pabbajjā Sutta (Sn 3.1) is given the prefix “Sutta Nipāta”—its full title being **the (Sutta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta**—so that we do not confuse it with its namesake, the (Dasaka) Pabbajjā Sutta (A 10.59) [1.3.3].

¹ See Jayawickrama 1976b:160 f + n 43.

² See SD 49.18 (2.2.3). On the *śloka* (quatrain of lines of 8 syllables), see SD 49.13 (2.2).

³ **Sn 3.11**/p131-139 = Sn 679-723 (SD 49.18); **Sn 3.1**/p72=74 = Sn 405-424 (SD 49.19); **Sn 3.2**/p74-78 = Sn 425-449 (SD 51.2).

1.2 CONTENTS

1.2.1 Gotama, after leaving home to renounce the world, enters Giri-bajja (Rājagaha) [§4 n], Bimbisāra's capital, for alms. King Bimbisāra sees him and at once recognizes Gotama's noble features. The king sends messengers to discover Gotama's whereabouts.

The messengers report back to Bimbisāra that Gotama is taking his meal in the shadow of Paṇḍava hill (*paṇḍava, pabbata*). Bimbisāra meets him and invites him to lead his army and share his kingdom. When asked, Gotama tells Bimbisāra of his origins, that he is a Sakya under Kosala and has renounced all pleasures and is seeking true happiness.

1.2.2 **Buddhaghosa** explains that the Sutta was given by **Ānanda** at Jetavana, outside Sāvattihī, because he wanted to give an account of the Gotama's renunciation, similar to that of Sāriputta and others (SnA 2:381). The Commentary adds (386) that at the end of the talk with the Bodhisattva, Bimbisāra asked him to visit Rājagaha as soon as he had attained buddhahood (*buddhatta*) (SnA 2:386).

1.2.3 The word *pabbajjā* as used in **the Pabbajjā Sutta** preserves its oldest sense, that is, leaving the crowdedness and restrictions of the household life for the open spaciousness of renunciation. However, as Buddhism became more institutionalized and settled, the word *pabbajjā* came to mean formal admission to the level of a novice (*sāmaṇera*). Whereas the full monastic admission or "ordination" (*upasampadā*) came to be known as the going-forth and ordination (*pabbajjā, upasampadā*).⁴

2 The Mahāvastu version

2.1 CLOSE PARALLEL

There is a Buddhist Sanskrit parallel to **the Nālaka Sutta** (Sn 3.11) in **the Mahāvastu**⁵ (Mvst 2:198 f). The two versions closely parallel, even overlap, one another—as we have noted.⁶ However, in the case of the Pabbajjā Sutta, although most of the text closely parallels those of the Mahāvastu, there are a few significant differences.

2.2 GOTAMA AS "BUDDHA"

2.2.1 The first divergence between the Pabbajjā Sutta and its Mahāvastu parallel is the occurrence of the term *buddha* at **Sn 408** [2 ad loc]. In the suttas, Gotama is rarely referred to as "Buddha," which at the time of early Buddhism seemed to be a common noun, simply meaning "one who has understood (true reality)," and was commonly used to refer to any religious teacher. The sense of "Buddha" as we are used to today evolved as its usage was lost to the other traditions, but was retained by the Buddhists.

⁴ See SD 45.16 (0.1; 3.3.3.2).

⁵ **Mahāvastu** (the "great story") describes itself as a book of the Vinaya Piṭaka, according to the Lokōttara, vāda (c 2nd cent BCE), one of the three main branches of the Mahā, saṅghika ("great or majority community"), an early non-Mahāyāna school that arose in conflict with the mainstream Buddhists after the 2nd council (Vesālī) about 100 years after the Buddha. It believes in the supramundane (esp his Bodhisattva career) and docetic nature of the Buddha (that the historical Buddha was only a "emanated" or phantom form of a "transcendental body"). Hence, it is the ancestor of the Mahāyāna schools. See SD 49.19 (2.2).

⁶ See SD 49.18 (4.1.4).

2.2.2 The Mahāvastu version (Mvst 2:198-200) does not refer to Gotama as “Buddha,” rather he is invariably referred to as the *Bodhisattva*, “the Buddha to be.” This may suggest that this version is older than the Pali account, or that the Mahāvastu version goes back to an even older narrative tradition. It is also understandable that the Mahāvastu uses *bodhisattva* for the Buddha-to-be because the Sanskrit term is popular with the Lokottara, vāda, who had compiled the Mahāvastu. In other words, by this divergence alone, we cannot be certain of the age of either accounts. However, both accounts probably go back to the same urtext or ancient source.

2.3 SAṄGHA

2.3.1 Jayawickrama thinks that “according to the Pabbajja Sutta, the Buddha had a following even at this early stage—*nāga, saṅgha, purakkhato*, Sn 421” (1978:5). However, here, he clearly errs, as he fails to read the phrase in proper context. He translated the phrase as “attended by a host of nobles,” or he might have misread it as meaning “at the head of a sangha of arhats (*nāga*).”

2.3.2 The phrase by itself is polysemous. *Nāga* can mean either “elephants,” especially war elephants,⁷ or “the best or most excellent of its kind, a mighty being” (DP), especially the arhats,⁸ but here the context is clear. From the verse (Sn 421) itself—which refers to the king’s army—the phrase should be translated as “at the head of a troop of noble elephants.” The troop of elephants, as is well known, is one of the limbs of the ancient Indian king’s fourfold army (*catu-r-aṅga senā*).⁹

2.3.3 Sn 420-421

2.3.3.1 It is interesting that neither the Mahāvastu account nor the prose version in the Jātaka Nidāna, kathā [5.6(11)] has the phrase, *nāga, saṅgha, purakkhato* [2.3.1]. In fact, **Sn 420-421** are represented by only one stanza in the Mahāvastu:

<i>Udagro tvam asi rajñah aśvāroho’va selako¹⁰</i>	Delightful are you, like Selaka, riding a royal steed!
<i>dadāmi bhogaṃ bhuñjāhi jātiraṃ cākhyāhi pṛcchito</i>	I give you wealth, enjoy! I ask you: tell us your birth. ¹¹
	(Mvst 2:199,11-12)

From the Sanskrit verse here and its Pali version, it is clear that Bimbisāra does not offer his kingdom to the Bodhisattva. At best, we can surmise that the king offers the young Bodhisattva the position of his general or commander-in-chief.

2.3.3.2 Jayawickrama thinks that: “It may be quite possible that in this instance [the Mahāvastu] preserves an older tradition while the two stanzas in Sn indicate an expansion on a different line.” (1978: 5). However, these two lines from the Mahāvastu version are corrupted, and need to be reconstructed. While Senart’s tentative reading actually agrees with the tenor of Sn 421, the MS version quotes an obscure name, Selaka, which is unknown to the early Buddhist texts and their Commentaries.

⁷ D 2:266,5*; M 1:415,2; A 2:116,24; Dh 329; Sn 29; Thī 49.

⁸ M 1:386,15*; A 3:347,15*; Sn 522.

⁹ See **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 16,6A), SD 36.10.

¹⁰ J J Jones notes a problematic reading here, “Adopting Senart’s very tentative conjecture of *rājyaṃ aśvarohaṃ saṅgyakam* for MS reading *rājña aśvarohaṃ vā selako*, which is untranslatable” (Mvst:J 2:199). BHSD defs *selako* as “of a (legendary) knight to whom King Śreṇiya compares the Bodhisattva.”

¹¹ Jones tr this verse as follows: “Happy art thou. I offer thee a kingdom with an army of cavalry. You can enjoy riches. I ask thee, tell me who are thy people.” (Mvst:J 2:190)

Hence, we cannot really say that the Mahāvastu version may be older. In fact, the shorter versification of the longer prose stock phrase in **Sn 421** is probably an older version of the phrase found in the suttas. We then have more evidence of the age of the Pabbajjā Sutta, that it is older than the Mahāvastu account.

2.4 OTHER COMPARISONS

Here we will continue with our comparative study of the Pabbajjā Sutta and its Mahāvastu parallel.

2.4.1 The *vatthu, gāthā*—the three introductory verses—of the Pabbajjā Sutta are clearly late. The Commentary attributes them to Ānanda. It is more likely that they were added much later after Ānanda's time. These verses are replaced by a brief prose sentence in the Mahāvastu simply stating that the Bodhisattva leaves Ārāḍa Kālāma (Skt) and heads for Rājgrha (P *rāja, gaha*) [5.5].

2.4.2 Of course, this does not mean that the Pabbajjā Sutta *vatthu, gāthā* are later than the Mahāvastu parallel. In fact, it is more probable that the Mahāvastu account is a later one. The Pabbajjā Sutta narrative clearly shows the Bodhisattva, for example, going on his alms-round for the first time and not used to eating that alms-food [J 1:66 = 5.6(6)], suggesting that this is his first alms-round.

Curiously, the Mahāvastu sandwiches the Bodhisattva's visit to Rājgrha between the accounts of the two teachers. In the Mahāvastu version, the Bodhisattva leaves Ārāḍa Kālāma and heads for Rājgrha, meets king Bimbisāra and so on (as recounted in the Pabbajjā Sutta), and then goes to Udraka Rāmaputra (Skt) to study under him.

The Jātaka Nidāna, kathā, however, states that it was only after his meeting with Bimbisārā—and promising to come and see the king first after his awakening that he leaves Rājagaha and goes to Āḷāra Kālāma, and after that, to Uddaka Rāmaputta. After all this, the Bodhisattva goes on to Uruvelā to undergo 6 years of self-mortification [J 1:66 f].

2.4.3 **Sn 413** is the most quoted of the Pabbajjā Sutta verses, as attested by this collation table:¹²

Sn 413	Recurrences
<i>Sapadānañ caramāno</i>	Tha 579; Pv 4.3.41. More commonly: <i>sapadānañ piṇḍāya caramāno</i> .
<i>gutta, dvāro susaṁvuto</i>	Tha 116, 579. 890; Ap 6.115; Pv 4.3.41; Miln 343
<i>khippaṁ pattaṁ apūresi</i>	
<i>sampajāno paṭṭisato</i>	D 2:286; S 3:143; It 10; Tha 20, 59, 196, 607, 1002, 1058; Vv 21, 11; Ap 10.17, 59.10, 394.23, 410.20, 467.3. Common in Nikāya prose passages.

The commonality of such lines (*pāda*) shows that they are popular; hence, they are likely to be late in a canonical sense. Despite their general lateness, they are likely to have originated from an early usage, such as the one in **Sn 413**.

Interestingly, however, there is nothing corresponding to **Sn 413** in the Mahāvastu. This verse describes the Bodhisattva's mindful almsround [4 ad loc].

2.4.4 The stanza **Sn 416**—describing how the Bodhisattva majestically sits on the east side of Paṇḍava hill, taking his almsfood—is expanded into two verses at **the Mahāvastu**, thus:

¹² This collation was done by E M Hare, *Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists* (Sn:H 1945:195).

<i>eṣa bhikṣuḥ mahārāja paṇḍavasmim puras tataḥ </i>	The monk, maharajah, is to the east of Paṇḍava,
<i>niṣaṇṇo vṛkṣa,mūlasmiṁ ekāgro susamāhitaḥ </i>	He sits well concentrated, one-pointed, at the foot of a tree
<i>dvīpīva sutanuṁ vittarṁ vyāghraṁ vā giri,sānu,gaṁ </i>	slender like a leopard or a wise tiger, gone into the hills,
<i>siṁham vā giri,durgasmim mahā,siṁho mṛgādhipaḥ </i>	or a lion in the southern hill, ¹³ a great lion, supreme lord of the beasts. (Mvst 2:198)

The general rule is that longer passages—and extended verses—are likely to be later than shorter ones. The profusion of imagery here also points to its ornate late style.

2.4.5 Sn 417 relates how Bimbisāra, upon hearing news that the Bodhisattva is residing on the eastern foothill of Paṇḍava, at once rushes there to meet him. The Mahāvastu parallel gives more details, laid out in four verses:¹⁴

<i>tato ca rājā tvaramāno amātyāṁ adhyabhāṣati </i>	Then, the king, in haste, spoke to his ministers,
<i>kṣipraṁ pantham viśodhetha drakṣyāma puruṣōttamaṁ </i>	“Hasten now, clear the roads. We will see the best of men!”
<i>tato ca te rāja,dūtā mahāmātrā yaśasvino </i>	Then, the royal messengers, ministers and the renowned,
<i>kṣipraṁ pantham viśodhensuḥ svayaṁ rājā iheṣyati </i>	hastily cleared the roads, “The king himself is coming through!”
<i>tato ca te rāja,dūtā mahāmātrā yaśasvino </i>	Then, the royal messengers, ministers and the renowned
<i>gatvā rājño nivedensuḥ śuddho te deva pāṇḍavo </i>	reported to the king, “The way is clear, your majesty!”
<i>tato ca niryāti rājā senā ca catur’āṅginī </i>	Then, the king set out with his fourfold army,
<i>mitrāmātya,parivrṭto jñāti,saṅgha,puraskṛto </i>	with an entourage of ministers, at the head of a host of relatives. (Mvst 2:198 f)

It is curious that, if the king is in a hurry—as described in Sn 417—he would have himself rushed off in his chariot, perhaps with a small escort to meet the Bodhisattva. Here again, we see the narrator’s elaborations, attesting to the verses’ lateness.

2.4.6 The Mahāvastu parallel verse (Mvst 2:200) to **Sn 418** is totally different from it. The Mahāvastu verse, however, simply says that the king gets down from his carriage or chariot and walks the rest of the way to meet the Bodhisattva.

2.4.7 Again, **Sn 424ab**¹⁵--the Bodhisattva’s declaration that he has nothing to do with pleasures and is bent on renunciation—has no parallel in the Mahāvastu. The Mahāvastu abridges the dialogue between Bimbisāra and the Bodhisattva (Sn 420-424). The Pabajjā Sutta ends here, but the Mahāvastu continues with two more stanzas in which Bimbisāra makes the Bodhisattva promise to visit him and teach him Dharma after attaining awakening:

¹³ On Paṇḍava and its location, see (4) Sn 416 n.

¹⁴ Jayawickrama mentions only “three” Mvst verses (1978:6).

¹⁵ Cf Tha 458, Thī 226, etc.

[Bimbisāra:]

*taṃ kho tathā bhotu spr̥śāhi nirvṛtiṃ
bodhiṃ ca prāpto punar āgimesi |
mayhaṃ pi dharmāṃ kathayesi gautama
yam ahaṃ śrutvāna vrajeya svargatiṃ ||*

“So be it, then, sir, go on to touch nirvana!
And please return after attaining awakening,
O Gautama, then teach me the Dharma.
so that hearing it, I will go to heaven.”

bodhisattva āha

*taṃ kho mahārāja tathā bhaviṣyati
bodhiṃ spr̥śiṣyāmi na me tra saṃśayo |
prāpto ca bodhiṃ punar āgamisyāṃ
dharmāṃ ca te deśayiṣyāṃ pratiśṛṇomīti ||*

The Bodhisattva said:
“So be it, maharajah, that will be so!
I shall touch awakening: let there be no doubt!
Having attained awakening, I shall return
to teach you the Dharma—that I promise.”

(Mvst 2:199 f)

2.4.8 Mahāvastu developments

2.4.8.1 Such details show the growth in the Buddha epic, showing how the early friendship between the Buddha and Bimbisāra was forged. The Mahāvastu henceforth diverges from the Pali. Immediately following this, the Mahāvastu says, in a single sentence, that the Bodhisattva goes to study under the Jain teacher, Udraka Rāmaputra. Then, dissatisfied, the Bodhisattva leaves him, and goes to Gayā.

2.4.8.2 The Mahāvastu narrative then moves away from the Pali account to closely parallel the narrative of **the Lalita Vistara** (Mvst 2:200). The Mahāvastu then only very briefly—in a few sentences—says:

“And on Mount Gayaīrsa the three parables arose in him. From there, he went to Uruvilvā, where he entered on almsround. Kāśyapa Pūraṇa had also come there for alms.” The story here relates how Kāśyapa received little almsfood, while the Bodhisattva’s bowl was full.

Inserted between the mention of Kāśyapa and the almsfood incident is a long account of the Bodhisattva’s meeting with the lady Sujātā who falls in love with him. Then, The Bodhisattva undergoes 6 years of self-mortification, at the end of which Sujātā gives him a bowl of milkrice. The chapter closes with king Suddhodana sending his men to invite the Buddha to return to Kapila, vastu (Mvst 2:200-209).

2.4.8.3 The Mahāvastu, however, has a **second account** parallel to those of the Pabbajjā Sutta and the Pali accounts of the Buddha’s biography (Mvst 2:115-133). Here is a collation of sources and parallels between the Mahāvastu and the key Pali accounts (Table 2):

Mahāvastu		M 26¹⁶	M 12	M 36	M 75	A 3.38
1:115-117	Siddhattha’s delicate youth; the 3 palaces ¹⁷				10	1
1:118-119	Veśālī, studying under Āḷāra Kālāma	15		14		
1:120	Rājgrha, studying under Udraka Rāmaputra	16		15		
1:121	Gayā,śīrsa (Gayā,sīsa): the 3 parables			17-19		
1:123-131	Uruvilvā: 6 years of self-mortification	17 ¹⁸	44-63	20-30		
1:130 f	Recall of 1 st meditation: the middle way			31-33		
1:131-133	The Bodhi tree: the great awakening			34-44		

¹⁶ Refs here are to sections (§) in the Suttas.

¹⁷ The account of the 3 palaces is also found in **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,1.42/2:21), SD 49.8a, but there the account relates to the past buddha Vipassī.

¹⁸ M 26 only mentions his stay there and the conditions there, all in one short section.

M 26	Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta	(SD 1.11)
M 12	Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta	(SD 49.1)
M 36	Mahā Saccaka Sutta	(SD 49.4)
M 75	(Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta	(SD 31.5)
A 3.38	Sukhumāla Sutta	(SD 63.7)

Table 2. A comparison of the sources on the Buddha’s life between the Suttas and the Mahāvastu

2.4.8.4 From this table, we can deduce that **the Mahāvastu account** of the Bodhisattva’s life up to the great awakening parallels most with the accounts of **the Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), and, secondly, with parts of **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26). This first account of the Buddha’s life (Mvst 1:115-133) is thus closer to the Pali version than the second one (Mvst 2:198-209), which is also the shorter of the two. This second account which has an episode that parallels the Pabbajjā Sutta, is, on the whole, later or based on later sources than the Pali accounts of the Buddha’s life listed in Table 2.

3 Related texts

3.1 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26) is the earliest canonical biography of the Buddha, recording the events surrounding the Bodhisattva up to the great awakening. It opens with the Buddha showing the difference between the two kinds of quests (*pariyesanā*)—the ignoble (a quest for worldly things) and the noble quest (which leads to awakening). The Sutta then recounts the key events following the Pabbajjā Sutta account, that is, the episodes of the two teachers, the striving at Uruvelā (briefly), the great awakening, the “hesitation,” Brahma’s invitation, the Buddha’s decision to teach, the journey to Uruvela, the 5 monks, the first discourse, and, finally, an embedded Pāsārāsī Sutta. The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, then, follows up from where the Pabbajjā Sutta ends.¹⁹

3.2 The Satta Vassa Sutta (S 4.24) records how Māra dogs the Bodhisattva for 6 years of his striving, and then the Buddha for another year after his awakening. Despite Mara’s various temptations and pleas, neither the Bodhisattva gives up his spiritual quest nor the Buddha his decision to live on to teach the Dharma. This leaves Māra deeply frustrated and defeated.²⁰

3.3 The (Dasaka) Pabbajjā Sutta (A 10.59) is not historically related to the (Suta Nipāta) Pabbajjā Sutta, but they both share the same title and a similar theme. The (Dasaka) Pabbajjā Sutta records the Buddha’s instructions to monastics on the proper meditation practices to promote their renunciation. They should constantly cultivate 10 kinds of meditation, including the perception of impermanence, the perception of non-self, and the perception of the foul.²¹

¹⁹ M 26/1:160-175 (SD 1.11).

²⁰ S 4.24 (SD 36.5).

²¹ A 10.56/5:107 f (SD 103.9).

4 Sutta commentary

4.1 BIMBISĀRA SEES THE BODHISATTVA

[Sn 405-407] The Sutta Nipāta Commentary says that the narrator is Ānanda (SnA 381). These first 3 verses function as the “narrative introduction” or “story verses” (*vatthu, gāthā*), as in **the Nālaka Sutta** (Sn 3.11).²² The first line is famous, as it is quoted by the Commentary [5.6(13); 2.4.1].

[Sn 405] This verse clearly hints at what is to follow. It deals with not just renunciation, but the Buddha’s going forth and its benefit. On the significance of the usage of “the one with vision” (*cakkhumā*), see the comment at **Sn 407** below.

[Sn 406] This verse gives the essence for the reason for renunciation. Its fuller expression is found in the well known “renunciation pericope,” which can be found in **the Sāmañña, phala Sutta** (D 2),²³ and where an expansion of Sn 406 is given as follows: “The household life is stifling, a dusty path. The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy life fully, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell.” (D 2,41.2)²⁴

[Sn 407] The first thing that should strike us here is the usage of the term *buddha* even though this meeting between Bimbisāra and Gotama occurs before the great awakening.²⁵ We also see Gotama being referred to as “the one with vision” (*cakkhumā*), an attribute of awakening in **Sn 405b**.

This is not surprising as the narrators are relating events that have occurred, and this is a respectful way of addressing the Buddha.²⁶ The simple term *buddha*, especially in a personal reference probably goes back to the earliest times. As the Buddhist community grows, so does respect for the Buddha, so that he is addressed as “Lord” (*bhagavā*) and various other titles.

[Sn 408] This verse gives us the geographical and historical context of the Pabbajjā Sutta. **Magadha** (modern south Bihar), ruled by Bimbisāra, is one of the 4 chief kingdoms in the Central Gangetic Plain in the Buddha’s time, the others being Kosala (ruled by Pasenadi), Vamsā or Vatsā (under Udena) and Avantī (under Caṇḍa Pajjota).²⁷

The Sn Commentary says the Magadha country is called “the Magadhas” (*magadhā’ti magadhā, -raṭṭhaṃ nāma*); and the country’s royal princes are called the Magadhas (*magadhā nāma janapadino raja, kumārā*). It is also popularly called a single country, the Magadhas, that is in the plural sense of those settled there (*tesaṃ nivāso eko pi janapado rūlhi, vasena magadhā tv-eva bahu, vacana, vasena vuccati*) (ThaA 2:74). In Sanskrit, *magadhā* (pl) means “the inhabitants of Magadha” (SED).²⁸

²² Sn 3.11 @ SD 49.19 (1.2.1).

²³ D 2,40-42 (SD 8.10).

²⁴ On this verse, cf (**Pañcāla, caṇḍa**) **Sambādha S** (A 9.42,1.2), SD 33.2 = (**Gāthā**) **Pañcāla, caṇḍa S** (S 2.7/1:48), SD 33.1b (2.1).

²⁵ SnA 382 f; J 1:66; DhA 1:85.

²⁶ On the early use of *buddha* as “awakened” or “the awakened,” see, eg, S 1:35, 60; A 4:449; Sn 622, 643, 646. The stem *buddha* occurs in its various grammatical form in Sn a total of 58 times, 39 of these are in the verses (*gāthā*). Some 25 of them refer to the personal Buddha, and 14 of them used in an impersonal sense. The term *sambuddha* occurs 19 times. This number is done with a wildcard search: “buddh*” in the CSCD.

²⁷ For details on these names and places, see DPPN svv.

²⁸ See Tha:N 165 n208.

Rāja,gaha (Skt *rājgir*)—meaning “the king’s house”—is the capital of Magadha.²⁹ It is also known as Giri-b,baja (Skt *giri,vraja*, “mountain-fenced”) because it is surrounded by 5 ancient hills. The Commentary explains: “Of the 5 hills called Paṇḍava, Gijjhā,kūṭa (Vulture’s Peak), Vebhāra, Isigili, and Vepulla, it is as if nobly located in the middle; hence, it is called *giri-b-baja*.”³⁰ and the one mentioned in the Pabbajjā Sutta—Paṇḍava hill—lies to the south of the capital [Sn 416 n here].

[Sn 409] King Bimbisāra, from the terrace above his palace, sees the Bodhisattva who has all the 32 marks of the great man. It does not take much imagination to figure out that the Buddha would look very grotesque indeed if he had all the 32 marks on him!³¹ The marks should be understood in their symbolic sense, and the context of their origins and functions understood.³²

[Sn 410-411] Sn 410 records king Bimbisāra noticing the Bodhisattva’s charisma. The sharp-eyed king suspects that the Bodhisattva is no ordinary man—he is good-looking with a noble bearing. We can sense that the king is deeply interested in meeting and knowing the Bodhisattva—like an expert jeweler recognizing a most precious gem.

These two verses describe the Bodhisattva demeanour revealing him to be no ordinary man. Sn 410d presents him as walking and “looking merely a plough’s length” (*yuga,mattañ ca pekkhati*)—just like a proper monk would. The description flows into the next verse. Sn 411a continues by noting that he walks “with downcast eyes, mindful” (*okkhita,cakkhu stima*). However, the king reads through all these monastic demeanour, and senses that there is more than meets the eye, suspecting that he is “from no low family” (Sn 411b).

By right, the correct Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit form for the Pali *okkhita,cakkhu*, “with downcast eyes,” should be *avakṣipta,cakṣur*. But the Mahāvastu has *utkṣipta,cakṣur* (Mvst 2:198), which Jones translated as “uplifted gaze”³³ (Mvst:J 2:189). Although this rendition seems to fit the Bodhisattva’s noble bearing, it is not congruous with his spiritual state of mind then. The Bodhisattva’s extraordinary bearing spurs the king to know more about him. So he orders his men to follow the Bodhisattva and find out where he is staying.

4.2 BIMBISĀRA INVESTIGATES THE BODHISATTVA

[Sn 412-413] The king’s men follow the Bodhisattva as instructed. Sn 413 recounts him going to every house in the street in an unbroken sequence, that is without showing any preference for going where there are better or more alms-food. This unbroken manner of alms-round (*sapadāna*) is later instituted as one of the 13 ascetic rules (*dhut’aṅga*).³⁴ However, from the Bodhisattva’s conduct, we can surmise that the practice is already common amongst renunciants even in pre-Buddhist times.

Sn 413 is the most quoted of the Pabbajjā Sutta verses, but, curiously, it is not found in the Mahāvastu [2.4.3]. It is possible—from this interesting clue—that the *sapadāna* practice is an ascetic practice that is only later instituted in Buddhist monasticism. This means that this verse was interpolated later. The common older source for both the Pabbajjā Sutta and its Mahāvastu version probably does not have this verse. However, this can only be a surmise.

²⁹ On Rājagaha, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajgir>, and her hills: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajgir_hills. See also B R Mani, “Rajagriha,” in (edd) D K Chakrabarti & Makkhan Lal, *History of Ancient India*, New Delhi, 2014.

³⁰ *Taṃ hi paṇḍava,gijjhakūṭa,vebhāra,isigili,vepulla,nāmakānaṃ pañcannaṃ girīnaṃ majjhe varo viya ṭhitam,tasmā giribbajaṃ vuccati* (SnA 2:382,23-25).

³¹ See SD 36.9 (3.3.4).

³² For details on the 32 marks, see **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) + SD 36.9.

³³ BHSD notes this problem and labels it as “false Skt” for *okkhitta,cakkhu*: BHSD *utkṣipati*.

³⁴ On the 13 *dhut’aṅga* practices, see **Bakkula S** (M 124) & SD 3.15 (2).

[Sn 414] The Bodhisattva heads for Paṇḍava hill, which is on the south side of Rājagaha [Sn 408 n here].

[Sn 415] The king’s men follow him. Apparently, from the Pabbajjā Sutta, there are only two of them. One of them sits down not far from the Bodhisattva to watch him, while the other rushes back to the palace to inform the king.

[Sn 416] The Bodhisattva sits mindfully and majestically on the east side of Paṇḍava hill, taking his almsfood. Paṇḍava hill is located to the south of Rājagaha, today called Ratna [2.4.4]. It is one of the 5 ancient hills surrounding the city: Vebhāra, Vepulla, Paṇḍava, Gijjhā,kūṭa and Isi,gili—today they are known respectively as Vaibhara, Vaipula, Ratna, Sona and Udaya.

The Mahāvastu expands this verse into two [2.4.4].

[Sn 417] The Pabbajjā Sutta simply states that king Bimbisāra, upon receiving news that the Bodhisattva is staying in the eastern foothill of Paṇḍava hill, at once rushes there in his royal carriage (*bhadda,yāna*).

The Mahāvastu expands this verse into three, and says that the king brings his army and court along, too [2.4.5].

4.3 BIMBISĀRA VISITS THE BODHISATTVA

[Sn 418] The Pabbajjā Sutta says that the king, as he approaches the Bodhisattva’s residence, goes as far as his carriage can take him, and then walks the rest of the way.

The Mahāvastu parallel, however, only says that, upon arriving with his army and court, gets down from his carriage or chariot, and walks on [2.4.6].

[Sn 419] Bimbisāra then sits down, and greeted the Bodhisattva, and they exchanged friendly greetings. The Mahāvastu version combines this mention with its preceding verse (Mvst 1:200).

[Sn 420-421] These two verses are represented by only one in the Mahāvastu [2.3.3].

[Sn 420] The first two lines are a versification of the stock prose formula, “young, a black-haired young lad endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life” (*daharo hoti, yuva susu kāḷa,keso*³⁵ *bhadrena yobbanena samannāgato*).³⁶ These two lines highlight his youth. The last two lines describe his beauty, strength and class—that he is from the kshatriya or warrior (*khattiya*) class.

[Sn 421] Sn 420 runs into Sn 421, which highlights the reason for Bimbisāra’s interest in the Bodhisattva. Apparently, Bimbisāra is preparing to expand his kingdom, and sees in the Bodhisattva a great general or commander-in-chief to lead his army. He wants to recruit the Bodhisattva into his royal service. This notion is confirmed by Bimbisāra usage of the term *vijita* in the Nidāna,kathā account [5.7.4.2].

³⁵ Also *susu,kāḷa,keso*, which Comy glosses as “with very black hair” (DA 1:284; MA 2:51, 170; SA 1:42; AA 2:41; cf J 2:57).

³⁶ **Soṇa,daṇḍa S** (D 4,6(4)/1:115+n), SD 30.5; **Mahā Sīha.nāda S** (M 12,62/1:82), SD 48.1; **Uruvelā S 2** (A 4.22/2:22), SD 96.14; **Samaya S** (A 5.54/3:66), SD 51.9.

[Sn 422] When Bimbisāra asks about his origins, the Bodhisattva replies that he is from Sakya and a Kosala subject, “domiciled in Kosala” (*kosalesu nīketino*). Scholars like Caillat, think that this verse implies resent of a vassal or dependent status.³⁷ However, it should be noted that Pasenadi of Kosala has never conquered the Sakyas, but has sought alliance with them through marrying Vasabha, khattiyā.³⁸ Pasenadī is also one of the most devoted followers of the Buddha.³⁹

Jayawickrama says that the use of *ujum* as an adverb is “archaic,” which shows that this verse at least is old (1978:4).

[Sn 423] Gotama’s introduction of himself to Bimbisāra continues from Sn 422. Here, Gotama says that his gotra (*gotta*) is called *Ādicca* (Solar). Since we generally know that Gotama is, in fact, his clan (*gotta*), this term is clearly used poetically in this verse to mean “lineage.” Essentially, this means that Gotama has come from the most ancient lineage known then. The point here is perhaps that Gotama has renounced the world for no other reason than “not wishing for any sensual pleasures” (Sn 423d).

[Sn 424] This last verse of the Pabbajjā Sutta confirms Gotama’s avowed purpose—he wishes to go forth in quest of awakening (*padhānāya gamissāmi*) so that he is fully free from the world’s suffering [2.4.7]. This narrative continues in **the (Sutta Nipāta) Padhāna** (Sn 3.2) which immediately follows it in the Mahā, vagga of the Sutta Nipāta (SD 51.11).

5 Jātaka Nidāna, kathā

5.0 The Nidāna, kathā (“origin-talk”) or Introduction to the Jātaka Commentary⁴⁰ gives a continuous account of the Bodhisattva from the time of Dīpaṅkara Buddha right up to the donation of Jeta’s grove to the sangha. The account is divided into three parts:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “The distant epoch” | (<i>dure, nidāna</i>), | or distant origins; |
| “The intermediate epoch” | (<i>anidure, nidāna</i>), | or not-too-distant origins; and |
| “The recent epoch” | (<i>santike, nidāna</i>), | or the present origins. |

5.1 The Distant Epoch (*dure, nidāna*), or distant origins, starts after a brief preamble. It contains two sections:

(1) How Gotama, in a previous life, as the ascetic Sumedha, makes a vow before the Buddha Dīpaṅkara to become a buddha himself, rather than go forth as a monk in Dīpaṅkara’s sangha⁴¹ and attain nirvana in that life. Then follows brief explanations of the 10 perfections (*dasa pāramī*) to be fulfilled on the path to buddhahood.

(2) An account of the past buddhas who prophesize Gotama’s future buddhahood, with brief accounts of Sumedha’s (Gotama’s) rebirths, each exemplifying a perfection.

5.2 “The Intermediate Epoch” (*anidure, nidāna*), or not-too-distant origins, relates events from the Bodhisattva’s descent from Tusita and birth as Siddhattha Gotama up to the great awakening (here called “omniscience,” *sabbaññutā*).

³⁷ Caillat 974:48 n43.

³⁸ See **Viḍūḍabha Vatthu** (DhA 4.3 esp 1:345-349).64.10.

³⁹ See eg **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89/2:118-125), SD

⁴⁰ Fully tr as *The Story of Gotama Buddha: The Nidānā-kathā of the Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, translated by N A Jayawickrama. Oxford: The Pali text Society, 1990:87-88.

⁴¹ Steven Collins, in his Preface, errs in saying “Sumedha’s Buddhist community (*saṅgha*)” here (J:J 1990:vii).

5.3 “The Recent Epoch” (*santike, nidāna*), or the present origins, recounts the Buddha’s temptation by Māra and then by his daughters, the Buddha’s decision to teach, and the events leading up to the donation of the Jetavana by Anātha, piṇḍika.

5.4 The following is a translation of a short episode from the “Intermediate Epoch [5.2] when “the Bodhisattva having gone forth” (*bodhisatto pabbajitvā rājagahaṃ pāvisi*). Like the rest of the Jātaka Commentary—attributed to Buddhaghosa (fl c370-450 CE)—this account draws from old materials and is retold in a sequential narrative prose. The story essentially follows that of **the Pabbajjā Sutta** and its commentary, which are mentioned by name at the end of the account.

5.5 The Jātaka Nidāna, kathā parallel to the Pabbajjā Sutta is preceded by the Bodhisattva’s great renunciation beside the river Anomā, Mahā Brahmā’s presentation of the 8 requisites to the renunciant Gotama, and the death of Siddhattha’s horse, Kaṇṭhaka.

Unlike the Mahāvastu, there is no mention of the Bodhisattva going to Vesāli, and there learning under Ārāḍa Kālāma, and then leaving him for Rājgrha (Mvst 2:198). In the Nidāna, kathā account, the episode of the 2 teachers, and then the 6 years of self-mortification at Uruvelā (J 1:66 f), follow immediately after the following account:

SD 49.19(5.6)

Jātaka Nidāna, kathā

(*Bodhisatto pabbajitvā rājagahaṃ pāvisi*) | J 1:65,29-66,33

The Jātaka Introduction (The Bodhisattva, having gone forth, enters Rājagaha)

Theme: The Bodhisattva’s visit to Rāja,gaha

1 The Bodhisattva, having gone forth, spent a week in the Anupiya mango grove, located in that region, enjoying the bliss of renunciation. [66]

2 Then, covering on foot the distance of 30 yojanas, he reached Rājagaha in a single day. He entered the city on his almsround from door to door without a break.

3 The whole city was excited at the very sight of the Bodhisattva. It was like when Dhana, pālaka⁴² entered Rājagaha, or when the asura king entered the celestial city of the devas.⁴³

4 The king’s men went before him, saying: “Your majesty, such and such a being is going on alms-round in the city. We do not know whether he is a deva, a human, a naga,⁴⁴ or a suparna⁴⁵?”

5 Standing on the terrace of his palace, the king saw the great man⁴⁶ and awe and wonder arose in him. He summoned his men, saying:

⁴² Or, Dhana, pāla (J 3:293), another name for Nālā, giri, a royal elephant of Rājagaha. Devadatta intoxicates the elephant with toddy (coconut-palm wine) when the Buddha is walking on a narrow street, but is tamed by the Buddha’s lovingkindness (V 2:194 f; J 5:333-337; Avadāna, śataka 1:177). On the past karma that fruited in Nālāgiri charging at the Buddha, see UA 265, Ap 1:300.

⁴³ See eg **Khanti Vepa, citti S** (S 11.4), SD 54.17 & **Yavakalāpi S** (S 35.248), SD 40a.3.

⁴⁴ A naga (*nāga*) is a serpent-being, inhabiting the depths of the earth. The most famous naga in Buddhist mythology is Mucalinda who appears to the Buddha during the 6th week after the great awakening: see SD 27.5a (6.2.1.1); SD 63.1.

⁴⁵ A suparna (*supaṇṇa*) is a fabulous harpy-like being with bird-like lower torso, with wings, and a human upper torso. Historically, they were prob the falcon-worshipping or falcon-rearing Iranians who conquered the Naga territories of north-west India. See SD 27.6a (6.2.0) n.

⁴⁶ “Great man,” *mahā, purisa*, see **Mahā, purisa S** (S 47.11), SD 19.16; **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) + SD 36.9 (2.1.1.2).

“Go, men, and investigate! If he is a non-human, he will disappear on leaving the city. If he is a deity, he will go through the sky. If he is a naga, he will dive into the ground and disappear. If he is a human, he will eat the alms that he has collected.”

6 As for the great man, he collected a mixed meal, and when he knew he had collected enough, he left the city by the gate through which he had entered.

7 Sitting down facing the east, in the shadow of Paṇḍava hill, he began his meal. Then, his belly turned and he felt like throwing up.⁴⁷

8 Being disgusted with such loathsome food, the likes of which he had never seen before, he then admonished himself:

“Siddhattha, you have come from a family in which food and drink are abundant, and you are used to eating meals prepared from fragrant *sāli* rice that takes three years to grow⁴⁸ and various choice savours. Then, seeing a recluse in dust-heap rags, you wondered:

‘When will I be able to go out to collect food-scrap and eat them?’ You have gone forth wondering when is the time to do this. And what are you doing now?”

9 Having thus admonished himself, he was free of disgust and ate his meal.

10 The king’s men, having seen what had occurred, returned and reported to the king. Having heard the words of his messengers, the king left the city in haste and arrived in the Bodhisattva’s presence.

11 Being pleased at his deportment, the king offered him all supremacy.⁴⁹ The Bodhisattva replied: “Maharajah, I have wish for neither objects of pleasure nor defilements of pleasure.⁵⁰ I have gone forth aspiring for supreme awakening.”

12 The king, unable to win over his mind despite his various pleas, then said:

“Surely you will be the Buddha! On attaining buddhahood, you must come first to my realm [to the realm that I have conquered].”⁵¹

13 This is given in brief. For the full account, it should be known that **the Pabbajjā Sutta**, beginning with *Pabbajjāṃ kittayissāmi | yathā pabbaji cakkhumā*, and its Commentary, should be consulted.

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5.7 ANALYSIS OF THE NIDĀNA, KATHĀ VERSION

5.7.1 Context

The Nidāna, kathā (J 1:66 f) version does not give us much useful new information, as it is even later than the Sutta Nipāta Commentary (SnA) which it mentions. It does, however, give us the historical, or at least traditional, context of the Pabbajjā Sutta, situating it before the episodes of the two teachers and the 6 years of self-mortification [5.5].

⁴⁷ *Ath’assa antāni parivattitvā mukhena nikkhaman’ākāra-p, pattāni ahesuṃ*, lit, “His intestines turned, and reached a point when it acted as if it would come out of the mouth.”

⁴⁸ Cf Be Ce Ee *gandha, sāli, bhattarṃ ...*; Se *gandha, sāli, taṇḍula, bhattarṃ ...* (DhA 2:9,22); cf MA 3:283,10 f.

⁴⁹ “All supremacy,” *sabbarṃ issariyaṃ*.

⁵⁰ *Bodhisatto mayhaṃ mahā, rāja vatthu, kāmehi vā kilesa, kāmehi vā attho n’atthi*.

⁵¹ *Addhā tvarṃ buddho bhavissasi. Buddha, bhūtena pana te paṭhamarṃ mama vijitarṃ āgantabarṃ*.

5.7.2 Dramatic details

The Nidāna,kathā version is, in fact, based on the Pabbajjā Sutta, but it adds three dramatic details:

(1) The Bodhisattva is referred to as **the “great man”** (*mahā, purisa*) [5.5(5)]. This shows that the narrators were aware of the *mahā, purisa* myth, which attests to the lateness of the account.

(2) The Bodhisattva at first **feels disgusted with his almsfood**, but then admonishes himself [5.5(8)]. This detail is important in giving us a vital clue attesting to the fact that the Pabbajjā Sutta records the very first day of the Bodhisattva’s renunciation and almsround—and this is in Rājagaha.

(3) The king is certain that the Bodhisattva would attain **buddhahood** [5.5(12)]. Here, we see Bimbisāra reprising the role of Asita.⁵² However, unlike Asita, Bimbisāra will meet the future Buddha in due course.

5.7.3 Mythical details

The Nidāna,kathā account adds the following symbolic or mythical⁵³ details:

(1) When the king is informed about the Bodhisattva, he speculates whether the Bodhisattva is a deva, human being, a naga or a suparna [5.5(4)]. These categories give us some ideas about how the people in the story or at the time of its composition saw the supernatural. We see a similar set of categories in **the (Pada) Doṇa Sutta** (A 4.36), where the Buddha is asked by the brahmin Doṇa whether he (the Buddha) is a deva, a gandharva (a divine minstrel), a yaksha (natural spirit), or a human.⁵⁴

(2) The narrator uses two allusions to highlight the excitement of the people of Rājagaha when they see the Bodhisattva, that is, the case of the drunken elephant, Dhanapāla and the story of the deva’s capture of the asura leader [5.5(3)]. The mention of the elephant Dhanapāla is interesting as it will be a future event in the Buddha’s life, when Devadatta makes an attempt on his life.

5.7.4 The Bodhisattva’s charisma

5.7.4.1 We see the Nidāna,kathā story highlighting the Bodhisattva’s **charisma**. While in the Pabbajjā Sutta, the king is reported to be impressed by the Bodhisattva at the very first look, in the Nidāna,kathā account, he is first impressed by the Bodhisattva when he sees him from atop his terrace. Bimbisāra is again impressed by the Bodhisattva’s bearing—*iriya, pathasmim pasīditvā*—and offers him all positions of power in this kingdom.

5.7.4.2 There is an interesting clue regarding why Bimbisārā is so keen to recruit the Bodhisattva to lead his army. In the king’s last words to the Bodhisattva, he says, “On attaining buddhahood, you must come first to my realm” (*buddha, bhūtena pana te paṭhamam mama vijitam āgantabbam*) [5.6 §12]. The king uses the word *vijita* for “realm.” The word *vijita* usually translates as “conquest.” In other words, the king is referring to his future conquest. He is, in fact, able to unify Magadha and the neighbouring country of Aṅga to form his realm (*vijita*) of Aṅga, Magadha.⁵⁵ [4 ad Sn 421].

⁵² See Sn 688-694 in **Nālaka S** (Sn 3.11), SD 49.18.

⁵³ On the meaning of “mythical” and significance of mythology in sutta studies, see SD 2.19 (1).

⁵⁴ A 4.36 (SD 36.13).

⁵⁵ Aṅga, Magadha. **Aṅga** was one of the 16 great states (*mahā jana, pada*) [SD 4.18 App] of ancient north central India, and located east of Magadha, separated by the river Campā, with their capital at Campā (near modern Bhagalpur). Its territory extended westward to the Son river, corresponding approximately to the present Patnā and Gayā districts of South Bihar. During the Buddha’s time, Aṅga was part of Magadha, ruled by Bimbisāra, and they were known as Aṅga, magadha (V 1:27×2, 28, 179; D 2:202, 203; M 2:2; J 2:211, 6:272; MA 2:196; SA 1:351; AA 3:313; DhA 3:242; SnA 2:384; CA 126). See Finegan 1989:85-90.

5.7.5 The promise

5.7.5.1 Before taking leave, king Bimbisāra solicits a promise from the Buddha to visit him in Rājagaha first after the great awakening. It is this promise that brings the Buddha back to Magadha after his awakening to fulfill his promise to Bimbisāra. After that historic meeting, where the king becomes a streamwinner, he then donates the Bamboo Grove to the sangha, which marks a significantly successful start to the Buddha's public ministry.

5.7.5.2 In the Nidāna,kathā, the Bodhisattva then goes to practise under Ājāra Kālāma, and then under Uddaka Rāmaputta, and finally to practise austerities. The Nidāna,kathā continues with accounts of the subsequent events of the Buddha's life up to Anāthapiṇḍika's donation of Jeta's grove to the sangha.

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The (Sutta Nipāta) Discourse on Going-forth

Sn 3.1 (Be: Sn 407-426)

[For commentaries on these verses, see (4)]

[Narrator:]⁵⁶

<p>1 <i>Pabbajjam kittayissāmi</i>⁵⁷ <i>yathā pabbaji cakkhumā</i> <i>yathā vīmaṃsamāno so</i> <i>pabbajjam samarocayi</i></p>	<p>405</p>	<p>I will sing praises of going-forth, just as the one with vision went forth, just as he, carefully examining, delighted in going forth.</p>	
<p>2 <i>Sambādhō'yaṃ gharā,vāso</i> <i>rajass'āyatanam itī</i> <i>abbhokāso'va pabbajjā</i> <i>itī disvāna pabbaji.</i></p>	<p>406</p>	<p>This house-life is a crowd,⁵⁸ what a dusty realm it is. Going forth is the open: seeing this, he went forth.</p>	
<p>3 <i>Pabbajitvāna kāyena</i> <i>papa,kammaṃ vivajjayi</i>⁵⁹ <i>vacī,duccaritam hitvā</i> <i>ājīvaṃ parisodhayi</i></p>	<p>407</p>	<p>Having gone forth, he refrained from bad deeds of the body; giving up bad conduct of speech— he purified his livelihood.</p>	<p><i>ab</i> <i>ba</i></p>

⁵⁶ Comy says that the narrator is Ānanda (SnA 381). See (4).

⁵⁷ *Kittayissāmi* (fut 1 sg D 2:155,16;Sn 405, 935, 1053; Nm 406,15; Ap 22,6); also *kittayissam*. Pres 3 sg *kitteti*, *kit-tayati*, “mentions; relates, recites; describes; celebrates, praises (with acc or gen): see DP sv.

⁵⁸ I've taken *sambādhō* as a noun; PED takes it as an adj: cf D 1:63,2 (DA 180,13), 250,11; S 2:219,25, 5:350,23. See Sn:N 245 n406.

⁵⁹ There's no need to read *-ī* in *vivajji*: see Sn:N 245 n407.

THE DIALOGUE⁶⁰

- | | | |
|---|------------|---|
| <p>4 <i>Agamā rāja,gahaṃ buddho
magadhānaṃ⁶¹ giri-b,bajaṃ⁶²
piṇḍāya abhihāresi
ākiṇṇa,vara,lakkhaṇo</i></p> | <p>408</p> | <p>The Buddha went [came] to Rāja,gaha,
Giri-b,baja of the Magadha people
he visited for alms—
he who is blessed⁶³ with the noble marks.</p> |
| <p>5 <i>Tam addasā bimbisāro
pāsādasmiṃ patiṭṭhito
disvā lakkhaṇa,sampannaṃ
imam atthaṃ abhāsatha</i></p> | <p>409</p> | <p>Standing atop his palace, b
Bimbi,sāra saw him. a
Seeing him bearing the marks,
he uttered his wish:</p> |
| <p>6 <i>Imaṃ bhonto nisāmetha
abhirūpo brahā⁶⁴ suci
caraṇena ca sampanno
yuga,mattañ ca pekkhati</i></p> | <p>410</p> | <p>“Observe him, sirs!
He’s truly handsome, great in frame, pure,
accomplished in demeanour
looking merely a plough’s length ahead.</p> |
| <p>7 <i>Okkhitta,cakkhu satimā
nāyaṃ nīca,kulā-m-iva⁶⁵
rāja,dūtā vidhāvantu⁶⁶
kuhiṃ bhikkhu gamissati</i></p> | <p>411</p> | <p>With downcast eyes, mindful,
from no low family is this one.
Let the royal messengers run after him,
to see where the monk will go.”</p> |
| <p>8 <i>Te pesitā raja,dūtā
piṭṭhito anubandhisuṃ⁶⁷
kuhiṃ gamissati bhikkhu
kattha vāso⁶⁸ bhavissati</i></p> | <p>412</p> | <p>Those royal messengers sent out
followed closely behind him,
wondering, “Where will the monk go?
Where will his dwelling be?”</p> |

⁶⁰ The remaining 17 verses [Sn 4-20] form the Sutta proper or “dialogue ballad” (Jayawickrama 1978:3).

⁶¹ On Magadha, see (4) ad loc.

⁶² On Giri-b,baja, see (4) ad loc.

⁶³ Comy glosses *ākiṇṇa,vara,lakkhaṇo*, thus: “For, *ākiṇṇa* is said to be ‘abundant,’ the noble marks are established, the noble marks are abundant, as if drenched all over the body; just as it is said, ‘When a person is rough and fierce, like soiled swaddling cloth’ (*sarīre ākiritvā viya ṭhapita,vara,lakkhaṇo vipula,vara,lakkhaṇo va, vipulaṃ pi hi ākiṇṇan’ti vuccati, yath’āha ākiṇṇa,luddo puriso dhāti,celaṃ ca makkhito* (SnA 383,2-6 re: S 1:205,1* = J 3:309,8* = 539,9*)’*ti, vipula,luddo’ti attho*). The allusion here “soiled like swaddling cloth” is admittedly rather odd. PED notes that *ākiṇṇa,luddo* is glossed differently at SA 1:298,15-16 (= “greatly bad, strongly bad,” *bahu,pāpo gāḷha,pāpo*). Norman notes that this “this arises from the fact that *ākiṇṇa* can stand for **akhiṇṇa* [DP: *ākhīṇa*; also CPD sv]” (see SnA 198 n158-59 & Norman 1979a:327).

⁶⁴ Be Ce Ee so; Se *brahmā*.

⁶⁵ The phrase *kulā-m-iva* = *kulā iva* with a euphonic infix (*ma-kāra pada,sandhi,karo*). For sandhi infix *-m-*, see Geiger, *Pali Grammar*, 1994: §73.2. For refs, see Sn:N 193 n132.

⁶⁶ Be Se *rāja,dūtābhidhāvantu*; Ee so.

⁶⁷ Ce vl *anubandhimsu*.

⁶⁸ Be Ce Se so; Ee *kattha,vāso*. Norman notes that the Ee reading “can only make sense if we take this as a *bahu-vrīhi* [adj cpd designating possession] ... : ‘he will be a having-a-dwelling-where person.’ Even if this is possible, it is very clumsy, and it seems far simpler to divide the two words, as in Be and Ce,” and tr as above. Cf Sn 414.

- 9 *Sapadānañ⁶⁹ caramāno
gutta,dvāro susaṁvuto
khippaṁ pattaṁ apūresi
sampajāno paṭissato⁷⁰* **413** Walking on an unbroken alms-round,
sense guarded, well restrained,
his bowl was quickly filled,
fully attentive, fully mindful.
- 10 *Piṇḍa,cāraṁ caritvāna⁷¹
nikkhamma nagarā muni
paṇḍavaṁ abhihāresi
ettha vāso⁷² bhavissati* **414** Having walked on his alms-round,
the sage left the city, and
headed for Paṇḍava, thinking,
“Here will my dwelling be.”
- 11 *Disvāna vāsūpagataṁ
tato⁷³ dūtā upāvisuṁ⁷⁴
eko ca duto⁷⁵ āgantvā
rājino paṭivedayi⁷⁶* **415** Seeing that he has reached his dwelling,
the messengers then sat down,
but one messenger returned
and informed the king.
- 12 *Esa bhikkhu mahā,rāja
paṇḍavassa puratthato⁷⁷
nisinno vyaggh’usabho’va⁷⁸
sīho’va giri,gabbhare* **416** “That monk, maharajah,
is on the east of Paṇḍava,
sitting like a tiger, a lordly bull,
or a lion in a mountain cave.
- 13 *Sutvāna dūta,vacanaṁ
bhadda,yānena khattiyo
taramāna,rūpo niyyāsi
yena paṇḍava,pabbato* **417** Hearing the messenger’s word,
the kshatriya [noble king] took a fine carriage,
he set out as fast as he could,
heading for Paṇḍava hill.
- 14 *Sa yāna,bhūmiṁ yāyitvā
yānā oruyha khattiyo
pattiko upasaṅkamma
āsajja⁷⁹ naṁ⁸⁰ upāvisi* **418** Going as far as the ground allowed a vehicle,
the kshatriya descended from his carriage.
He approached on foot,
and when he reached him, sat down.

⁶⁹ Be Ce *sapadānaṁ*; Ee so; Se *samadānaṁ*. The purpose of this practice is to ensure that every house has the chance of gaining the merit of giving, and to prevent monks from going straight to houses where they know they can get almsfood. See BHSD: sāvadāna.; also Mvst:J 1:250 n; Tha:N 212 n579.

⁷⁰ Be Ee Se so; Be:Phayre *satimato*.

⁷¹ Be so; Ee Se *sa piṇḍa,cāraṁ caritvā*.

⁷² Be Ce Se so; Ee *ettha,vāso*. Just as for *kattha,vāso* [Sn 412d], it should be two words here, as in Be, Ce, Se and the lemma in SnA 2:384,3.

⁷³ Ee Ce so; Be Se *tayo*; Ce *eko’va*.

⁷⁴ Be Ee so; Be:Phayre *upāviṁsu*.

⁷⁵ Ce Ee so; Be *tesu eko’va*; Se *eko ca*.

⁷⁶ Be Ee Se so; Ce *paṭivedasi*.

⁷⁷ Be *puratthato*; Be:Ka Se so. Cf BHS *purasthataḥ*: see BHSD sv.

⁷⁸ Be has *by-* instead of *vy-* throughout.

⁷⁹ All MSS *āsajja*, which Comy glosses as “having reached” (*patvā*, SnA 384,9). *Āsajja* (abs of *āsādeti*, “to hit, strike”) has the sense of “attacking” (CPD: *āsajja*), it is better read as *āpajja*, “reaching.” For a similar ambiguity about *āsajjānaṁ* (Tha 1204), see Tha:N 287 n1204. For the p/s alternation, see Sn:N 134 n49; also 334 n353.

⁸⁰ So Be Ee Se; Ce *taṁ*.

- 15 *Nisajja rājā sammodi
katham sārāṇiyam⁸¹ tato
katham so vītisāretvā
imam attham abhāsatha* 419 Having sat down, the king greeted him,
and they exchanged friendly greetings.
And when that was done, he
uttered this concern:
- 16 *Yuvā ca daharo cāsi
paṭham'uppattiko⁸² susu⁸³
vaṇṇ'ārohana⁸⁵ sampanno
jātimā viya khattiyo* 420 “Young and tender are you,
a lad in youth’s first flush,⁸⁴
fair-faced, well-built,
of good birth⁸⁶—like a kshatriya—
- 17 *Sobhayanto anīk'aggam⁸⁷
Nāga,saṅgha,purakkhato
dadāmi bhoge bhuñjassu
jātim akkhāhi pucchito* 421 adorning the army’s van,
at the head of a troop of noble elephants.
I’ll give you wealth, enjoy it!
You who’s asked, pray tell your birth.”

[The Buddha:]

- 18 *Ujum⁸⁸ janapado rāja⁸⁹
himavantassa passato
dhana,viriyena sampanno
kosalesu⁹¹ niketino* 422 Straight on, O king, there is a country,
at the foot of the Himalayas,
endowed with wealth and heroism,⁹⁰
settled amongst the Kosalas.⁹²

⁸¹ Be Se so; Ce sārāṇiyam; Ee sārāṇiyam. For sārāṇiya < samrāganīya, with g > y and the contraction of -āya- > -ā-, see Lüders, *Beobachtungen* §101 & BHS sārāyaṇīya. (Sn:N 223 n p50,17.)

⁸² Be Ee so (preferred); Ce paṭham'uppattiyā; Se paṭham'uppattito. For the t/k alternation, see Sn:N 157 n22-23.

⁸³ Be Ee so; Ce Se susū.

⁸⁴ This line recurs with *paṭham'uppattito* at J 3:218.9* & 6:25,23*. See SnA 384,11.

⁸⁵ SED def *āroha* as meaning “heap or mountain,” and prob connotes “heap, mass, size, stature” here. Norman notes that “there is, however, evidence for the sense ‘pride’ (also in SED), although neither PED nor CPD gives this meaning, eg, J 5:299,9* f.” (Sn:N 246 n420). *Vaṇṇ'āroha*, as an epithet of the Buddha, prob has the same or similar sense as *vīr'āṅga,rūpa*, “heroic in limb and form” (Sn p106,16), appearing in BHS as *var'āṅga,rūpiṇ* (Mvst 1:49, 2:158, 3:197, where *vīra-* is changed to *vara-*, “noble”). Comy glosses it as “a body like that of a young deva” (*deva-putta,sadisa,kāya*) (DA 1:250,25; SnA 450,15-19).

⁸⁶ *Jātimā*, “of good birth,” alluding to the Buddha’s kshatriya (*khattiya*) “class,” which is also one of its senses.

⁸⁷ *Anīk'aggam* = *anīka* (“an array of troops, army”) + *agga* (“foremost; tip”), here, “van, vanguard, at the head.” PED (sv anīka) wrongly takes *anīk'agga* as “a splendid army.” Fausboll wrongly takes *agga* as “house,” and renders it as “army house” (Sn:F).

⁸⁸ *Ujum*, “straight on” (adv). Comy, however, reads *ujū* in its lemma and its explanation. It prob takes -u and -um as alternative ways of lengthening -u, metri causa, to keep the opening – U – – (– is a long (2 counts) syllable; U, a short (1 count) syllable). On *rju* (Skt) as an adv, “straight on,” see SED sv.

⁸⁹ Be Ee Se so; Be:vl Ce *rājā*.

⁹⁰ The context hints at a wordplay on *virīya*, “effort, energy,” which is the abstract n of *vīra*, “hero.” Cf n on *vaṇ-ṇ'āroha* (Sn 420c) re: *vīr'āṅga,rūpa*.

⁹¹ Be Ee so; Be:Ka Ce Se *kosalassa*.

⁹² Caillat makes an interesting n: “From ‘vassal’ *stricto sensu* to ‘dependant,’ with various scornful implications, the transition is easy. That this status was sometimes resented seems to result from Sn 422 (SnA); also DPPN 2:971 f” (1974:48 n43, ref standardized). In *Aggañña S* (D 27), the Buddha states that the Sakyas are vassals of Kosala (D 27/3:83), SD 2.19—which is what is hinted at in *kosalassa niketino* here. On the “marriage alliance” between Pasenadi and the Sakyas, see *Viḍūḍabha Vatthu* (DhA 4.3/1, esp p346-357362; J 4:146-152). Any resentment, however subtle, is not reflective of the Buddha, but rather how we interpret the passage.

- 19 *Ādiccā*⁹³ *nāma gottena*
*sākiyā*⁹⁴ *nāma jātiyā*
*tamhā kulā pabbajito'mhi rāja*⁹⁵
na kāme abhipatthayaṃ 423 Called Ādicca [Solar] by clan [lineage],
called Sakya by birth,
From that family, have I gone forth,
not wishing for any sensual pleasures.
- 20 *Kāmesv-ādīnavam*⁹⁶ *disvā*
*nekkhammaṃ daṭṭhu*⁹⁷ *khemato*
padhānāya gamissāmi
*ettha*⁹⁹ *me rañjati*¹⁰⁰ *mano'ti* 424 Having seen the peril in pleasures,
seeing renunciation as security,
I will go on with striving:⁹⁸
here, my heart delights.

— evaṃ —

[For **Bibliography**, see the end of SD 49c]

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⁹³ Be Ce Ee Se so; Be:Ka *ādicco*. On *ādicca*, see Tha:N 127 n26 & Brough 1953:xv. *Gotta*, although usu meaning “clan,” here has the sense of “lineage, ancestry,” since we are certain that the Buddha’s *gotta* is Gotama: see Comy ad Tha 367 & 1080: *gotamena buddhena, gotama, gottena sammā, sambuddhena, “gotamena buddhena* is the fully self-awakened one who is Gotama by clan” (ThaA 1:201,27; 3:143,12) & *gotamo’ti bhagavantam gottena kitteti*, “the Blessed One is proclaimed by the gotra [clan-name] Gotama”.

⁹⁴ Be Ce Ee Se so; Be:Ka *sākiyo*.

⁹⁵ So Ce Ee; Be Se omit *’mhi rāja* (thus making the line śloka). This is the odd verse, which—as above—is triṣṭubh, while the rest are all in śloka.

⁹⁶ Note the sandhi of *-u + ā-* > *-vā-*. On this euphonic change of *-u* > *-v*, see Sn:N 195 n144.

⁹⁷ Clearly we have *daṭṭhu* < *daṭṭhum* (Skt *draṣṭum*), ie, an infinitive being used as an absolutive, with the loss of final *-m*, metri causa. It can also be a case of an absolutive in *-tu*, ie, < **drṣṭu*: cf Sn 681, 1098 (Sn:N 247 n424).

⁹⁸ This “striving” (*padhāna*)—the Bodhisattva’s meditations under the 2 teachers, followed by the 7 years of self-mortification—is mentioned in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26) [1.1.1.2]. The final meditative efforts made by the Bodhisattva just before the great awakening is briefly recorded in (**Sutta Nipāta**) **Padhāna S** (Sn 3.2), which continues with the account of the Bodhisattva’s struggle for awakening [1.1.2].

⁹⁹ Be Ee so; Ce *tattha*.

¹⁰⁰ Be Ee Se so; Ce *rajjati*.