

# Paṭhamapuññābhisanda Sutta

AN IV 51 First Discourse on Overflowing River of Goodness

Translated by Ānanda

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*I*n Sāvatti.

Monks,  
There are four overflowing [rivers] of goodness  
Overflowing [rivers] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness,  
Heavenly,  
Ripening in what is good,  
Leading to the happy states;

Which bring what is desirable,  
Lovely,  
Delightful,  
Beneficial and blissful.<sup>1</sup>

What four?

(1) Monks,  
For a monk who only wears robes that are offered to him,  
Who abides practicing the unlimited collectedness<sup>2</sup> of mind,<sup>3</sup>

This is an unlimited overflowing [river] of merit,  
Overflowing [river] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness,  
Leading to the happy states;

That bring what is desirable,  
Lovely,  
Delightful,  
Beneficial and blissful.

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<sup>1</sup> “Cattārome, bhikkhave, puññābhisandā kusalābhisandā sukhassāhārā sovaḅḅikā sukhaṅṅipākā saggasaṅṅvattanikā iṅṅhāya kantāya manāpāya hitāya sukhāya saṅṅvattanti.

<sup>2</sup> Appamāṅṅaṅ cetosamādhinṅ: Usually ascribed to the four brāhṅmavihāras but also associated with any mental unity which is free from greed, hate and delusion, the makers of limits.

<sup>3</sup> Yassa, bhikkhave, bhikkhu cīvaraṅṅ paribhuṅṅjamāno appamāṅṅaṅ cetosamādhinṅ upasampajja viharati,

(2) Monks,

*For a monk who only eats alms food that is offered to him<sup>4</sup>  
Who abides practicing the unlimited collectedness of mind,*

*This is an unlimited overflowing [river] of merit,  
Overflowing [river] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness,  
Leading to the happy states;*

*That bring what is desirable,  
Lovely,  
Delightful,  
Beneficial and blissful.*

(3) Monks,

*For a monk who only stays in residences that is offered to him,<sup>5</sup>  
Who abides practicing the limitless collectedness of mind,*

*This is an unlimited overflowing [river] of merit,  
Overflowing [river] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness,  
Leading to the happy states;*

*That bring what is desirable,  
Lovely,  
Delightful,  
Beneficial and blissful.*

(4) Monks,

*For a monk who only uses medicines and medical treatments that is offered to him,<sup>6</sup>  
Who abides practicing the limitless collectedness of mind,*

*This is an unlimited overflowing [river] of merit,  
Overflowing [river] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness,  
Leading to the happy states;*

*That bring what is desirable,  
Lovely,  
Delightful,  
Beneficial and blissful.*

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<sup>4</sup> piṇḍapātaṃ paribhuñjamāno

<sup>5</sup> senāsanaṃ paribhuñjamāno

<sup>6</sup> gilānappaccayabhesajjaparikkhāraṃ paribhuñjamāno

*These are the four overflowing [rivers] of merit  
Overflowing [rivers] of wholesomeness,  
Nourishing happiness [...]*

*When an awakened student is endowed  
with these four overflowing [rivers] of merit,  
It is not easy to grasp the amount of merit thinking:<sup>7</sup>*

*“‘Just this much’ is the overflowing [river] of merit...”*

*It can only be understood as an incalculable,  
Immeasurable great mass of merit.<sup>8</sup>*

### *[The Water in the Ocean]*

*Just as it is not easy to grasp  
the amount of water in the great ocean thinking:<sup>9</sup>*

*“There are just this many buckets of water, or  
this many hundreds of buckets of water, or  
this many thousands of buckets of water, or  
this many hundreds of thousands buckets of water.”*

*It can only be understood as an incalculable,  
Immeasurable great mass of merit.*

*When an awakened student is endowed  
with these four overflowing [rivers] of merit,  
It is not easy to grasp the amount of merit thinking:*

*‘Just this much’ is the overflowing [river] of merit...*

*It can only be understood as an incalculable,  
Immeasurable great mass of merit.*

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<sup>7</sup> *catūhi puññābhisandehi kusalābhisandehi samannāgatassa ariyasāvakaṃ na sukaraṃ puññassa pamāṇaṃ gahetuṃ:*

<sup>8</sup> *Atha kho asaṅkhyeyyo appameyyo mahāpuññakkhandhotveva saṅkhyāṃ gacchati.*

<sup>9</sup> *Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, mahāsamudde na sukaraṃ udakassa pamāṇaṃ gahetuṃ:*

*Just as the boundless sea, the great ocean,  
Is the majestic repository of precious wonders;<sup>10</sup>  
And just as all the rivers of this earth,  
Which sustain entire nations, all flow to the ocean.<sup>11</sup>*

*Likewise, to those who give food, beverages and robe cloth,  
Givers of beds, places to sit and coverings;<sup>12</sup>  
Those rivers of goodness flow to that wise person,  
Just as the rivers carry their water to the sea.<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> *Mahodadhiṃ aparimitaṃ mahāsaraṃ, Bahubheravaṃ ratanavarānamālayaṃ;*

<sup>11</sup> *Najjo yathā naragaṇasaṅghasevitā, Puthū savantī upayanti sāgaraṃ.*

<sup>12</sup> *Evaṃ naraṃ annadapānavatthadaṃ, Seyyānisajjattaraṇassa dāyakaṃ;*

<sup>13</sup> *Puññassa dhārā upayanti paṇḍitaṃ, Najjo yathā vāriwahāva sāgaran"ti.*

