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PALI POETRY

Buddha in the Forest  
*Samyutta Nikaya 7:18*

Brahmin:

gambhīrarūpe bahubherave vane  
suññam araññaṃ vijanaṃ vigāhiya  
anīṅjamānena ṭhitena vaggunā  
[sundararūpaṃ] vata bhikkhu jhāyasi

na yattha gītaṃ na pi yattha vāditam  
eko araññe vanavasito muni  
accherarūpaṃ paṭibhāti mam idaṃ  
yad ekako piṭṭimano vane vase

maññe-haṃ lokādhipati-sahavyataṃ  
ākaṅkhamāno tīdivam anuttaram  
kasmā bhavam vijanam araññaṃ assito  
tapo idha kubbaṃ brahmapattiyā ti

Buddha:

yā kāci kaṅkhā abhinandanā vā  
anekadhātūsu puthū sadā sitā  
aññānamūlappabhovā pajjappitā  
sabbā mayā vyantikatā samūlikā

so ham akaṅkho apiho anupayo  
sabbesu dhammesu visuddhadassano  
pappuyya sambodhim anuttaram sivaṃ  
jhāyam-ahaṃ brāhmaṇa raho visārado ti

Brahmin:

Deep in the bowels of the terror-filled forest,  
Immersed in the empty and desolate woods,  
Without flinching at all, steadfast, compelling  
—You meditate, monk, in an exquisite way.

Where nothing is sung and nothing is sounded,  
Alone in the forest, a wood-dwelling sage,  
This appears to me something remarkable:  
That you live in the woods—alone—glad-minded!

I'm guessing you're longing for the three highest  
Heavens, there to befriend the Lord of the World.  
Why else, Sir, dwell in this desolate jungle,  
Except to do penance for reaching Brahmā?

Buddha:

Every kind of delighting or longing,  
So often attaching to all kinds of stuff,  
Yearned for because of deep-rooted confusion  
—All these, with their roots, have been vanquished by me.

I'm devoid of attachment, longing, or thirst,  
And see clearly amidst all phenomena.  
Having gained the sublime, highest awakening,  
I meditate, priest, in ripened seclusion.

—A. Olendzki