

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

The Canon of Discourses - Commentaries (Sutta
Piṭaka - Aṭṭhakathā)

5. The Collection of Minor Texts (5. Khuddaka Nikāya -
Aṭṭhakathā)

09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns (09. Therīgāthā-
aṭṭhakathā)

1. The Book of the Ones (1. Ekakanipāto)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One

In the Collection of Minor Texts

Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns

1. The Book of the Ones

1. Commentary on the Verses of a Certain Elder Nun

1. Now the occasion has arrived for the explanation of the meaning of the Therīgāthā. Therein, since by making known how the going forth and full ordination were first obtained by the nuns, when the explanation of meaning is being given, it becomes easy and clear to elucidate the origin of the verses here and there, therefore, to make that known, from the beginning, in brief, this is the progressive discourse -

For this Lord of the World, having combined the eight factors stated by the method beginning with "human existence, accomplishment of the male sex" and so on, having made the great resolution at the feet of the Blessed One Dīpaṅkara, fulfilling the thirty perfections, having received a declaration in the presence of twenty-four Buddhas, having gradually fulfilled the perfections, having reached the summit of the conduct for the welfare of relatives, the conduct for the welfare of the world, and the conduct for the welfare of Buddhahood, having been reborn in the Tusita realm, having remained there as long as life lasted, by the deities of the ten-thousand world-systems for the sake of Buddhahood -

"The time has come for you, O great hero, having been born in your mother's womb;

Helping the world with its gods to cross over, awaken to the Deathless state."

Being one whose rebirth among humans was requested, having given his acknowledgment to those deities, having made the fivefold great investigation, mindful and fully aware he descended into his mother's womb in the house of the Great King Suddhodana in the Sakyan royal family, having remained there for ten months mindful and fully aware, mindful and fully aware he emerged from there, having obtained his noble birth in the Lumbinī grove, beginning with various nurses, being properly attended to with great care, gradually having come of age, surrounded by various performers in three mansions, experiencing success like a god, with a sense of urgency arisen through seeing the aged, the sick, and the dead, because his knowledge had reached maturity, having seen the danger in sensual pleasures and the benefit in renunciation, on the day of the birth of Prince Rāhula, with Channa as companion, having mounted Kaṇḍaka the king of horses, through the door opened by the deities at the time of midnight, having gone forth in the great renunciation, by

that very remainder of the night having crossed over three kingdoms, having reached the bank of the river Anomā, having taken the banner of arahantship brought by the Great Brahmā Ghaṭikāra, he went forth, at that very moment becoming accomplished in deportment like an elder of sixty rains retreats, with an inspiring deportment gradually having reached Rājagaha, having walked for almsfood there, having eaten his almsfood on the slope of Mount Paṇḍava, being invited with the kingdom by the King of Magadha, having rejected that, having gone to the park of Bhaggava, having mastered his doctrine, then having mastered the doctrine of Āḷāra and Udaka, not being satisfied with all that, gradually having gone to Uruvelā, having performed austerities there for six years, having known by that the absence of penetration of the noble Teaching, thinking "This is not the path to enlightenment," taking gross food, having gained strength within a few days, on the full moon day of Vesākha having eaten the excellent food given by Sujātā, having cast the golden dish against the stream of the river, having made the determination "Today I shall become a Buddha," in the evening time, with his virtues praised by the serpent king Kāḷa, having ascended the ground of enlightenment, at the immovable spot, facing the eastern world-system, seated on the unconquered divan, having determined upon energy endowed with four factors, while the sun had not yet set, having scattered the forces of Māra, in the first watch having recollected past lives, in the middle watch having purified the divine eye, in the last watch having brought down knowledge into dependent origination, contemplating the mode of dependent conditions in forward and reverse order, having developed insight, having attained the perfect enlightenment attained by all Buddhas, not shared with any other, having spent seven days right there in the fruition attainment having Nibbāna as its object, having spent the other weeks too at the seat of enlightenment itself in the same manner, having eaten the honey-cake food at the foot of the rājāyatana tree, again seated at the foot of the goatherd's banyan tree, having reviewed the profundity of the Teaching by its nature, when his mind inclined to living at ease, being requested by the Great Brahmā, surveying the world with the Buddha-eye, having seen beings distinguished as those with sharp faculties, those with soft faculties, and so on, having given his acknowledgment to the Great Brahmā for expounding the Teaching, reflecting "To whom indeed should I first expound the Teaching?" having known the deceased state of Āḷāra and Udaka, having thought "The group of five monks have been of great service to me, they who attended on me when I was resolute in striving; what if I were to first expound the Teaching to the group of five monks," on the full moon of Āsāḷhī, having set out from the great Bodhi tree on the eighteen-yojana road towards Bārāṇasī, having conversed with the naked ascetic Upaka on the road, gradually having reached Isipatana, having convinced the group of five there, by the teaching of the Discourse on the Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Teaching beginning with "These two extremes, monks, should not be cultivated by one who has gone forth," having given the nectar of the Teaching to drink to eighteen crores of Brahmās headed by Aññāsikoṇḍañña, on the first day of the fortnight having established the Elder Bhaddiya, on the second of the fortnight the Elder Vappa, on the third of the fortnight the Elder Mahānāma, on the fourth the Elder Assaji, in the fruition of stream-entry, but on the fifth of the fortnight, by the teaching of the Discourse on the Characteristic of Non-self, having established all of them in arahantship, thereafter, the fifty-five men headed by the young man Yasa, about thirty of the Bhadda group in the cotton-tree jungle thicket, about a thousand former

matted-hair ascetics on the flat rock at Gayāsīsa - thus having brought the great multitude down to the noble plane, having established eleven myriads headed by Bimbisāra in the fruition of stream-entry, one myriad in the Triple Refuge, having accepted the Bamboo Grove, while dwelling there, having asked leave of Sañcaya who had attained the first path through the utterance of the Elder Assaji, when Sāriputta and Moggallāna had come to his presence together with their following, having realised the highest fruition, having reached the summit of the perfections of a disciple, having established them in the position of chief disciples, at the invitation of the Elder Kāḷudāyī having gone to Kapilavatthu, having tamed the pride-stiffened relatives by the Twin Miracle, having established his father in the fruition of non-returning, Mahāpajāpati in the fruition of stream-entry, having given the going forth to Prince Nanda and Prince Rāhula, the Teacher returned again to Rājagaha.

Then at another time, while the Teacher was dwelling in dependence on Vesālī in the Pinnacled Hall, the Great King Suddhodana, right under the white parasol, having realised arahantship, attained final Nibbāna. Then the mind inclined towards going forth arose in Mahāpajāpati Gotamī; thereupon, at the conclusion of the teaching of the Kalahavivāda Suttanta on the bank of the river Rohinī, having gone forth, the wives of the five hundred princes who had gone forth, being of one intention, having gone to the presence of Mahāpajāpati, all of them, having made Mahāpajāpati the chief, saying "We shall go forth in the presence of the Teacher," wished to go to the Teacher's presence. And this Mahāpajāpati, having previously once requested the going forth from the Teacher, did not obtain it; therefore, having summoned a barber, having had her hair cut, having clothed herself in ochre robes, having taken all those Sakyan women, having gone to Vesālī, having had the One of Ten Powers requested by the Elder Ānanda, by the acceptance of the eight rules of respect, she obtained the going forth and full ordination. But all the others were fully ordained together. This is the summary here. But in detail, this story has come in the canonical text here and there.

Thus fully ordained, Mahāpajāpati, having approached the Teacher, having paid respect, stood to one side. Then the Teacher expounded the Teaching to her. She, having taken a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, attained arahantship. And the remaining five hundred nuns attained arahantship at the conclusion of Nandaka's exhortation. Thus, when the community of nuns was well established and widely spread, in the various villages, market towns, country districts, and royal cities, women of good families, daughters-in-law of good families, and young girls of good families, having heard of the Buddha's excellent enlightenment, the Teaching's excellent nature as Teaching, and the Community's excellent practice, having confidence in the Dispensation and with a sense of urgency arisen regarding the round of rebirths, having obtained permission from their own husbands, mothers and fathers, and relatives, having given their breast to the Dispensation, went forth. And having gone forth, accomplished in morality and good conduct, having received exhortation in the presence of the Teacher and of those elders, striving and endeavouring, before long they realised arahantship. The verses spoken by them here and there by way of inspired utterances and so on were afterwards collected together by the Elders who held the convocations and brought to rehearsal by way of

the Book of Ones and so on, as "These are the Therīgāthā." The division of those into Books and so on has been stated above. Therein, among the Books, the Book of Ones is the first. Therein too -

1. "Sleep happily, little elder nun, wrapped in a robe you have made;
For your lust is calmed, like dried-up vegetables in a pot."

This verse is the beginning. What is its origin? In the past, it is said, a certain daughter of a good family, in the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, having become devoted to the Dispensation, having invited the Teacher, on the second day, having had a branch-pavilion built, having spread sand, having tied a canopy above, having made an offering with scents, flowers, and so on, she announced the time to the Teacher. The Teacher, having gone there, sat down on the prepared seat. She, having paid homage to the Blessed One, having served him with superior solid and soft food, clothed the Blessed One who had finished eating and had removed his hand from the bowl with the three robes. The Blessed One, having given thanksgiving for her, departed. She, having performed meritorious deeds as long as life lasted, at the end of her life span, having been reborn in the heavenly world, wandering only in fortunate destinations for one interval between Buddhas, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, having been reborn in a householder's family, having reached discretion, with a sense of urgency arisen regarding the round of rebirths, having gone forth in the Dispensation, having received full ordination, having fulfilled the morality of a nun for twenty thousand years, having made a worldling's death, having been reborn in heaven, having experienced heavenly success for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, she was reborn in a wealthy warrior family at Vesālī. They called her Therikā because of the firmness and calmness of her body. She, having come of age, given by her mother and father to a warrior prince of the same birth by way of family, region, and so on, having become a devoted wife, while dwelling thus, during the Teacher's journey to Vesālī, having gained faith in the Dispensation, having become a female lay follower, at a later time, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Elder Nun Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having generated a preference for the going forth, she informed her husband "I shall go forth." Her husband did not give permission. She, however, because of having formed an aspiration in the past, having reviewed the Teaching as she had heard it, having comprehended material and immaterial phenomena, dwelt devoted to insight meditation.

Then one day, while vegetables were being cooked in the kitchen, a great flame of fire arose. That flame of fire burned the entire vessel, making it crackle. She, having seen that, having made that very thing her object, having reflected upon impermanence presenting itself most clearly, then having applied suffering, impermanence, and non-self therein, having developed insight, having gradually aroused zeal, became established in the fruition of non-returning by the succession of paths. She, from that time onwards, wore neither ornaments nor decorations. She, when asked by her husband "Why do you, dear lady, not now wear ornaments or decorations as before?" having declared her inability to remain in the lay life, obtained his permission for the going forth. He, like the lay follower Visākha with Dhammadinnā, having led her with great care to the presence of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, said "Lady, give this one the going forth." Then Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having

given her the going forth, having given her full ordination, having led her to the monastery, showed her to the Teacher. The Teacher too, making clear the very object seen by her naturally, spoke the verse "Sleep happily."

Therein, "happily" is a neuter expression denoting a state. "Sleep" is an imperative expression. "Little elder nun" is a term of address. "Wrapped in a robe you have made" is an urging towards fewness of wishes. "For your lust is calmed" is a praising of the practice. "Like dried-up vegetables" is an illustration of the unessential nature of the mental defilement to be appeased. "In a pot" is an illustration of the impermanent, hollow, and other nature of its container.

"Happily" - and this is a designation for the desirable. Having become free from suffering through happiness - this is the meaning. "Sleep" - and this is an illustration of lying down among the four postures; therefore, conduct all four postures with happiness alone, dwell happily - this is the meaning. "Little elder nun" - although this is the mentioning of her name, yet because for the most part it is a designation according to meaning, one who has attained firmness in the firm Dispensation, endowed with firm qualities such as morality and so on - this is the meaning. "Wrapped in a robe you have made" means having made a robe from rag-cloths, with body covered, both dressed in and wrapped in that. "For your lust is calmed" - the word "for" has the meaning of cause. Because the sensual lust arising in your continuity is calmed, burnt by the fire of the knowledge of the path of non-returning, now having burnt the remaining lust by the fire of the knowledge of the highest path, sleep happily - this is the intention. "Like dried-up vegetables in a pot" means just as a small amount of vegetable curry being cooked in a fired vessel by a great flame of fire, having burned, drying up, is appeased; or just as when vegetable curry mixed with water, having been placed on an oven, while being cooked, while water is present, it hisses and sizzles, but when the water is exhausted, it becomes calmed; thus sensual lust in your continuity is calmed; having appeased the rest too, sleep happily.

The elder nun, because her faculties had reached maturity, and through the beauty of the Teacher's instruction, at the conclusion of the verse, together with the analytical knowledges, attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"For the Buddha Koṇāgamana, a pavilion was caused to be made by me;
Constantly I gave the three robes to the Buddha, the kinsman of the world.

"Whatever country I go to, to market towns and royal cities;
Everywhere I am venerated, this is the fruit of meritorious action.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, all existences have been
uprooted;
Like a she-elephant having cut the bond, I dwell without mental corruptions.

"Indeed welcome it was for me, in the presence of the Buddha, the foremost;
The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching has
been fulfilled.

"The four analytical knowledges, and these eight deliverances;

The six higher knowledges have been realised, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, the elder nun, uttering an inspired utterance, spoke that very same verse; therefore this verse became that elder nun's verse. Therein, in the verse spoken by the elder nun, lust without remainder is comprehended by the highest path, because the appeasement of that is intended. By the appeasement of lust alone here, the appeasement of all mental defilements too should be seen as stated, because of the accomplishment of the appeasement of all defilement-states due to their co-existence therewith. For thus it is said -

"The delusion that is considered born together with restlessness and sceptical doubt;

By being of one purpose with abandoning, it is conflicting with lust indeed."

Just as here the appeasement of all defilements is stated, so everywhere too their appeasement should be understood as stated. Because of the accomplishment of appeasement in the preliminary stage by way of substitution of opposites, at the moment of serenity and insight meditation by way of suppression, at the moment of the path by way of eradication, and at the moment of fruition by way of subsiding. By that, the accomplishment of the fourfold abandoning should be known. Therein, by abandoning by substitution of opposites, the accomplishment of accomplishment in morality; by abandoning by suppression, the accomplishment of accomplishment in concentration; by the others, the accomplishment of accomplishment in wisdom is shown, because of the succeeding of the full realisation of abandoning. Just as it establishes the full realisation of development, because of the absence of that in its absence, so it establishes the full realisation of direct experience and the full realisation of full understanding as well. It should be understood that by the accomplishment of the four full realisations, the three trainings, by the practice the threefold goodness, and the seven purifications are fully made known by this verse. "A certain elder nun" means unknown, not well-known by way of name and clan and so on; one elder nun endowed with the marks, a nun, spoke this verse - this is the intention.

The commentary on the verses of a certain elder nun is completed.

2. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Muttā

- 2.** "Muttā, be freed from the mental bonds, like the moon from Rāhu's grip;
With a free mind, free of debt, enjoy your almsfood."

This is the verse of the female trainee named Muttā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in the time of the Blessed One Vipassī, having been reborn in a family home, having attained discretion, one day, having seen the Teacher going along the road, with a gladdened mind, having paid homage with the fivefold prostration, through the force of joy, lay down face downward at the feet of the Teacher. She, by that meritorious action, having been reborn in the heavenly world, wandering again and again only in fortunate destinations, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in Sāvattihī in a wealthy

brahmin family; her name was Muttātissā. She, through the achievement of decisive support, at the time of twenty years, having gone forth in the presence of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, while still being a female trainee, having had a meditation subject spoken about, was doing the work of insight. She, one day, having done the meal duty, having returned from her alms round, having shown her duty to the elder nuns, having gone to her day-quarters, seated in a secret place, began attention to insight. The Teacher, while just seated in the fragrant perfumed chamber, having emitted a radiance, having shown himself as if seated before her, spoke this verse "Muttā, be freed from the mental bonds."

Therein, "Muttā" is a vocative addressing her. "Be freed from the mental bonds" means be freed by the succession of paths from the four mental bonds beginning with the bond of sensuality; become one with a mind liberated from them. Like what? "Like the moon from Rāhu's grip" means be freed from impurity, like the moon from the grip called Rāhu. "With a free mind" means with a mind well liberated by the noble path through liberation by eradication; and this is an instrumental expression in the sense of indicating a state. "Free of debt, enjoy your almsfood" means having abandoned the debt of mental defilements, having become free of debt, you should eat food obtained from the people. For whoever, without abandoning the mental defilements, consumes the requisites permitted by the Teacher, he is called one who consumes with conflict. As the Venerable Bākula said - "For only seven days indeed, friend, did I, with conflict, eat food obtained from the people." Therefore, one who has gone forth in the Dispensation, having become free of debt through the abandoning of the debt of sensual desire and so on, should consume offerings given in faith. "Almsfood" is merely the heading of the teaching; the meaning is the four requisites as well. "Repeatedly exhorts" means purifying the impurities for the attainment of the noble path, he gives exhortation repeatedly.

She, having stood firm in that exhortation, before long attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"To the Blessed One Vipassī, the foremost of the world, such a one;
Proceeding along the road, helping living beings to cross over.

"Having gone out from the house, I lay down face downward;
The compassionate Lord of the World stepped upon my head.

"Having stepped upon my head, the leader of the world went;
By that confidence of mind, I went to Tusita.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, she uttered that very same verse as an inspired utterance. Having completed her training and received full ordination, at a later time, even at the time of final Nibbāna, she spoke that very same verse in reply.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Muttā is completed.

3. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Puṇṇā

3. "Puṇṇā, be filled with qualities" is the verse of the female trainee named Puṇṇā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in a world devoid of a Buddha, was reborn in the realm of kinnaras on the bank of the river Candabhāgā. One day, having seen there a certain Individually Enlightened One, with a gladdened mind, having venerated him with a garland of reeds, she stood with raised joined palms. She, by that meritorious action, wandering only in fortunate destinations, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in Sāvattihī in a wealthy householder family. Her name was Puṇṇātissā. She, through the achievement of decisive support, while living for twenty years, having heard the Teaching in the presence of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having gained faith, having gone forth, while still being a female trainee, began insight meditation. The Teacher, while just seated in the perfumed chamber, having emitted a radiance to her -

3. "Puṇṇā, be filled with qualities, like the moon on the fifteenth day;
With complete wisdom, shatter the mass of darkness." He spoke this verse.

Therein, "Puṇṇā" is a vocative addressing her. "Be filled with qualities" means become full with the thirty-seven qualities pertaining to enlightenment. "Like the moon on the fifteenth day" - the letter "ra" serves as a word-connector. Like the moon full with all its phases on the fifteenth day, the full moon day. "With complete wisdom" means with the wisdom of the path of arahantship, complete through the fulfilment of the sixteen functions. "Shatter the mass of darkness" means break and eradicate the mass of delusion without remainder. Together with the shattering of the mass of delusion, all mental defilements too are shattered.

She, having heard that verse, having developed insight, attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"On the bank of the Candabhāgā river, I was a kinnara woman then;
I saw the stainless Buddha, the Self-Become One, the unconquered.

"With a confident mind, glad, filled with joy, with joined palms;
Having taken a reed garland, I venerated the Self-Become One.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the kinnarī body, I went to the destination among the deities.

"I attained the status of chief queen of thirty-six kings of gods;
I attained the status of chief queen of ten universal monarchs;
Having caused agitation in my mind, I went forth into homelessness.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, all existences have been uprooted;
With all mental corruptions eliminated, there is now no more rebirth.

"Ninety-four cosmic cycles ago from now, the flower that I honoured;
I do not know of an unfortunate realm, this is the fruit of flower-offering.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, that elder nun uttered that very same verse as an inspired utterance. And this itself was her verse of declaration of final liberating knowledge.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Puṇṇā is completed.

4. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Tissā

4. "Tissā, train in the training" - this is the verse of the female trainee Tissā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, through the condition of stored-up wholesome action, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in the Sakyan royal family at Kapilavatthu, having come of age, having become a harem-lady of the Bodhisatta, afterwards having gone forth together with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having gone forth, was doing the work of insight. The Teacher, having emitted a radiance by the method already stated above for her -

4. "Tissā, train in the training, let not the mental bonds overcome you;
Unbound from all mental bonds, wander in the world without mental
corruptions." He spoke this verse.

Therein, "Tissā" is a vocative addressing her. "Train in the training" means train in the threefold training beginning with the training in higher morality; the meaning is accomplish the three trainings associated with the path. Now he states the reason for accomplishing them by saying "let not the mental bonds overcome you" - human existence, completeness of faculties, the arising of a Buddha, the attainment of faith - these mental bonds, right times, rare moments, let them not pass you by. Or alternatively, the four mental bonds beginning with the bond of sensuality - let them not overcome you, let them not overpower you. "Unbound from all mental bonds" means liberated from all mental bonds beginning with the bond of sensuality, thereby having become without mental corruptions, wander in the world - the meaning is dwell with the pleasant abiding of the seen.

She, having heard that verse, having developed insight, attained arahantship - the method beginning thus should be understood by the method already stated above.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Tissā is completed.

5-10. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Tissā and So On

5-10. "Tissā, engage in the teachings" - this is the verse of the Elder Nun Tissā. Her story is similar to the story of the female trainee Tissā. But this one, having become an elder nun, attained arahantship. And just as this one, so too from here onwards the stories of the five elder nuns - Dhīrā, Vīrā, Mittā, Bhadrā, and Upasamā - are exactly alike. All these, dwelling in Kapilavatthu, having been harem-ladies of the Bodhisatta, having gone forth together with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, attained arahantship through a verse of radiance, except for the seventh. She, however, without a verse of

radiance, how much more so in dependence on the exhortation received in the presence of the Teacher, having aroused zeal in insight, having attained arahantship, by way of an inspired utterance spoke the verse "A heroine with heroic." The others too, having attained arahantship -

5. "Tissā, engage in the teachings, let not the moment pass you by;
For those who have missed the moment grieve, consigned to hell.
6. "Wise one, experience cessation, the happiness of the appeasement of perception;
Attain Nibbāna, the unsurpassed freedom from bondage.
7. "A heroine with heroic qualities, a nun with developed faculties;
Bears her final body, having conquered Māra with his army.
8. "Having gone forth through faith, be one delighting in friends among friends;
Develop wholesome mental states, for the attainment of freedom from bondage.
9. "Having gone forth through faith, be one delighting in good among the good;
Develop wholesome mental states, the unsurpassed freedom from bondage.
10. "Upasama, cross the flood, the realm of Death so hard to cross;
Bear your final body, having conquered Māra with his army." They spoke these verses.

Therein, "engage in the teachings" means engage, make exertion in the qualities of serenity and insight and in the noble qualities conducive to enlightenment. "Let not the moment pass you by" means whoever does not thus make exertion in meditation, this moment - the moment of birth in a suitable place, the moment of non-deficiency of the six sense bases, the moment of a Buddha's arising, the moment of attaining faith - all this moment passes by that person. Let not that moment pass you by. "Those who have missed the moment" means those who have passed beyond the moment, and those persons whom that moment has passed beyond, they, having been consigned to hell, grieve; having been reborn there, they experience great suffering - this is the meaning.

"Experience cessation" means touch, obtain the cessation of mental defilements. "The happiness of the appeasement of perception, attain Nibbāna" means attain Nibbāna, the perpetual happiness that has the sign of the appeasement of evil perceptions such as perception of sensuality and so on.

"A heroine with heroic qualities" means a nun with developed faculties, with faculties of faith and so on increased, a heroine through the predominance of energetic striving, having conquered the Māra of mental defilements together with his army by means of heroic noble path qualities abundant in power, bears the final body because of the absence of renewed existence in the future - thus the elder nun shows herself as if another.

"Mittā" - she addresses her thus. "Delighting in friends" means delighting in good friends. Therein, be one who shows honour and respect to them. "Develop wholesome mental states" means increase the noble path qualities. "Of freedom from bondage" means for the attainment, for the achievement of arahantship and Nibbāna.

"Bhadrā" - she addresses her thus. "Delighting in the good" means be one who delights, takes delight in good qualities such as morality and so on. "The unsurpassed freedom from bondage" means Nibbāna, which is secure from the four mental bonds, free from danger, unsurpassed; the meaning is "develop the wholesome qualities conducive to enlightenment for the attainment of that."

"Upasamā" - she addresses her thus. "Cross the flood, the realm of Death so hard to cross" - Death is borne here, thus it is the realm of Death; very difficult to cross for those who have not accumulated the requisites of merit, thus it is so hard to cross; cross the great flood of the round of rebirths - you would cross by the boat of the noble path. "Bear the final body" means by that very crossing, you will become a bearer of the final body - this is the meaning.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Tissā and so on is completed.

The commentary on the first chapter is completed.

11. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Muttā

11. The verse of the Elder Nun Muttā beginning with "Well released, truly well released am I." This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn as the daughter of a poor brahmin named Oghātaka in the Kosala country; when she came of age, her mother and father gave her to a certain humpbacked brahmin. She, finding the household life disagreeable with him, having obtained his permission, having gone forth, was doing the work of insight. Her mind ran about towards external objects; she, restraining it, while uttering the very verse "Well released, truly well released am I," having aroused zeal in insight, together with the analytical knowledges, attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna

-

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, having vision regarding all phenomena;
Compassionately caring for living beings, entered the city for almsfood.

"As that Teacher was approaching, all the city-dwellers;
Full of mirth, having assembled together, they scattered sand.

"Having swept the streets, with plantain and full-pot banners;
Incense and bath powder and beans, having done honour to the Teacher.

"Having prepared a pavilion, having invited the Guide;
Having given a great gift, she aspired for the highest enlightenment.

"Padumuttara, the great hero, the carrier away of all living beings;
Having given the rejoicing, the foremost person made the declaration.

"When a hundred thousand have passed, there will be a fortunate cosmic

cycle;

Having obtained happiness from existence to existence, you will attain enlightenment.

"Whatever manual labour, men and women have done;
In the future time, all will be face to face.

"By the result of that action, and by volition and aspirations;
Arisen in the divine abode, those attendants of yours.

"Divine happiness incalculable, and human happiness incalculable;
They experience for a long time, we transmigrated from existence to existence.

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the action which I did then;
Delicate among human beings, and also in the celestial cities.

"Beauty, wealth, fame, life span, and also fame-happiness and dearness;
I constantly obtain all, the accomplishment of well-done action.

"When the final existence was attained, I was born in a brahmin family;
With delicate hands and feet, in a delightful dwelling.

"At all times the earth, I do not see undecorated;
Muddy ground, impure, I never see.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, uttering an inspired utterance -

11. "Well released, truly well released am I, freed from three crooked things;
From the mortar, from the pestle, and from my humpbacked husband;
I am freed from birth and death, the conduit to existence has been uprooted." -
she spoke this verse;

Therein, "well released" means well freed. "Truly well released am I" means truly, properly freed am I. But from what is she well released, truly well released? She said "freed from three crooked things"; the meaning is completely freed from three bent things. Now showing those in their own form, she said "from the mortar, from the pestle, and from my humpbacked husband." For when putting grain into the mortar, turning it over, and pounding it with the pestle, the back has to be bent; therefore, because of being a cause for making one humpbacked, both of those are called "crooked." But her husband was indeed humpbacked. Now, the freedom from three crooked things was stated by way of illustration of the freedom from which she was freed. Showing that very thing, having said "I am freed from birth and death," therein she states the reason by "the conduit to existence has been uprooted." Its meaning is - Not only am I freed from the three crooked things, but indeed from all birth and death as well, because the conduit of all existence, the leader, craving, has been eradicated by me through the highest path.

12. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā

12. "One in whom desire has arisen, who has reached the conclusion" is the verse of the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā. It is said that she, in the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, in the city of Haṃsavatī, living as one dependent on others for her livelihood, having given a gift preceded by veneration and honour to the chief disciple who had emerged from cessation, was reborn in the heavenly world. Having passed away from there, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, in the time of the Blessed One Phussa, while dwelling in the house of the worker for the Teacher's half-brothers, when regarding a gift her husband said "Give one," giving two, having made much merit, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, having taken conception in the house of Kikī, the King of Kāsi, having been among the seven sisters, having lived the holy life for twenty thousand years, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a family home in Rājagaha, having come of age, she went to the house of the millionaire Visākha.

Then one day the millionaire Visākha, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having become a non-returner, having gone home, while ascending the mansion, without taking hold of the outstretched hand of Dhammadinnā who was standing at the top of the steps, having ascended the mansion, even while eating he ate silently. Dhammadinnā, having reflected upon that, said "Master's son, why did you today not take hold of my hand, and even while eating you said nothing; is there indeed any fault of mine?" Visākha said "Dhammadinnā, there is no fault of yours, but from today onwards I am unworthy to touch a woman's body and to be greedy regarding food; such is the Teaching that has been penetrated by me. But if you wish, dwell in this very house. If you do not wish, having taken however much wealth you need, go to your family house." "I shall not, master's son, lick up what has been vomited by you; allow me the going forth." Visākha, saying "Good, Dhammadinnā," sent her by a golden palanquin to the nuns' dwelling. She, having gone forth, having taken a meditation subject, having dwelt there for a few days, wishing to dwell in a secluded residence, having gone to the presence of her teachers and preceptor, said "Ladies, my mind does not delight in a crowded place; I am going to a village residence." The nuns led her to a village residence. She, dwelling there, because of having crushed the activities in the past, before long attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"Then I was in Haṃsavatī, in a certain family;
I was a worker for others, prudent, restrained by morality.

"Of the Buddha Padumuttara, Sujāta, the chief disciple;
Having gone forth from the dwelling, goes for almsfood.

"Having taken a pot, going along, then as a water carrier;
Having seen him, I gave a cake, devoted, with my own hands.

"Having accepted, right there, seated, he consumed;
Then having led him to the house, I gave food to him.

"Then my grandfather, satisfied, made me his own daughter-in-law;
Having gone together with my mother-in-law, I paid respect to the Enlightened
by himself.

"Then he, praising the nun as a speaker of the Teaching;
Established her in the foremost position, having heard that, I was joyful.

"Having invited the Fortunate One, together with the Community, the leader of
the world;
Having given a great gift, I aspired for that state.

"Then the Fortunate One said to me, with a voice like the sound of a dense
cloud;
'To one delighting in my attendance, serving food together with the
Community.

"Engaged in hearing the Good Teaching, with a mind increased in virtues;
Dear lady, be joyful, you will obtain the fruit of your aspiration.

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Dhammadinnā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.'

"Having heard that, having become joyful, for as long as life, the great sage;
With a mind of friendliness I tended, with requisites, the Guide.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvātimsa.

"In this fortunate cosmic cycle, a kinsman of Brahma of great fame;
Kassapa by clan, the best of speakers arose.

"The attendant of the great sage, then was the lord of men;
The King of Kāśi named Kikī, in the best city of Bārāṇasī.

"I was his sixth daughter, renowned as Sudhammā;
Having heard the Teaching of the foremost Conqueror, I delighted in the going
forth.

"Our father did not allow us, while still in the household then;
For twenty thousand years, we wandered untiringly.

"Living the holy life from maidenhood, princesses delicately nurtured;
Devoted to attending upon the Buddha, joyful were the seven daughters.

"Samaṇī and Samaṇaguttā, Bhikkhunī and Bhikkhudāyikā;

Dhammā and Sudhammā, and the seventh Saṅghadāyikā.

"Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā, Paṭācārā and Kuṇḍalā;
Gotamī and I myself, Visākhā is the seventh.

"By those well-done actions, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"And in this final existence now, in Giribbaja, the best of cities;
Born in a prosperous millionaire's family, abounding in all sensual pleasures.

"When endowed with beauty and virtues, standing in the first youth;
Then having gone to another's family, I dwelt, devoted to happiness.

"Having approached the refuge of the world, having heard the proclamation of
the Teaching;
My husband, of great wisdom, has attained the fruition of non-returning.

"Then I, having received permission, went forth into homelessness;
Not long after, I attained arahantship.

"Then that lay follower, having approached me, asked;
Profound and subtle questions, all those I answered.

"The Conqueror, satisfied with that virtue, established me in the foremost
position;
'I do not see another nun who is a speaker of the Teaching such as this.'

'As Dhammadinnā is wise, thus remember, monks';
Thus I am wise, shown compassion by the leader.

"The Teacher has been attended upon by me, the Buddha's teaching has been
fulfilled;
The heavy burden has been laid down, the conduit to existence has been
uprooted.

"For the purpose of which I went forth, from home into homelessness;
That purpose has been attained by me, the destruction of all mental fetters.

"And I am a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
I know the minds of others, carrying out the Teacher's instruction.

"I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I was pure, completely stainless.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has
been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, thinking "My mind has reached its summit; now
having dwelt here, what shall I do? Having gone to Rājagaha itself, I shall pay homage
to the Teacher, and many of my relatives will make merit," she returned to Rājagaha

itself together with the nuns. Visākha, having heard of her arrival, investigating her achievement, asked a question by way of the five aggregates and so on. Dhammadinnā, as if cutting a white water-lily stalk with a well-sharpened knife, answered each and every question asked. Visākha reported the entire method of questions and answers to the Teacher. The Teacher, praising her beginning with "Wise, Visākha, is the nun Dhammadinnā" and so on, having compared it with his omniscient knowledge, having declared the fact of its being answered, making that very Cūḷavedalla Sutta the occasion, established her in the foremost position among nuns who are speakers of the Teaching. But when she, dwelling in that village residence, having attained the lower paths, established insight for the purpose of the highest path, then -

12. "One in whom desire has arisen, who has reached the conclusion, and who would be pervaded by mind;
With consciousness unbound to sensual pleasures, is called an upstream-goer."

spoke this verse.

Therein, "one in whom desire has arisen" means one in whom desire has arisen for the purpose of the highest fruition. "Who has reached the conclusion" - "avasāya" is called the end, the completion; and since that too, because of the state of having consciousness unbound to sensual pleasures, will be stated as "an upstream-goer," it should be understood as the completion of the ascetic's task, not of just anyone whatsoever; therefore, by both terms too, the meaning stated is: one who has not attained her goal, aspiring for the unsurpassed freedom from bondage. "And who would be pervaded by mind" means one would be pervaded, touched, by the three lower path consciousnesses with regard to Nibbāna. "With consciousness unbound to sensual pleasures" means with consciousness not bound to sensual pleasures by the influence of the path of non-returning. "An upstream-goer" - the stream of the path and the stream of saṃsāra go only upward for her, thus she is an upstream-goer. For just as for a non-returner the highest path arises, and no other, so for one reborn in the Aviha and other realms, up to the Akaniṭṭha realm, rebirth is only upward.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Dhammadinnā is completed.

13. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Visākhā

13. "Practise the Buddha's teaching" is the verse of the elder nun Visākhā. Her story is similar to the story of the elder nun Dhīrā. She, having attained arahantship, spending her time in the bliss of liberation -

13. "Practise the Buddha's teaching, which having done one does not regret;
Quickly having washed your feet, sit down on one side."

By this verse she declared the final liberating knowledge.

Therein, "practise the Buddha's teaching" means practise the Buddha's teaching, the exhortation and advice; the meaning is: proceed in accordance with the advice. "Which having done one does not regret" means having carried out the advice, one does not feel remorse because of doing it, since the intentions of one who practises it

are properly fulfilled. "Quickly having washed your feet, sit down on one side" - this was said because she herself, after the meal, having returned from her alms round, having shown her duty to her teachers and preceptor, having washed her feet at her own day-quarters, seated in a secret place, brought her own welfare to its summit; therefore, urging others too in that, she spoke.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Visākhā is completed.

14. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sumanā

14. "Having seen the elements as suffering" is the verse of the elder nun Sumanā. Her story is similar to the story of the elder nun Tissā. For this one too, the Teacher, having emitted a radiance, having shown himself as if seated before her -

14. "Having seen the elements as suffering, do not come again to birth;
Having removed desire for existence, you will live at peace." -

He spoke this verse. She, at the conclusion of the verse, attained arahantship.

Therein, "having seen the elements as suffering" means having seen with the eye of knowledge the elements beginning with the eye and so on, included within their own continuity, and the others too, as "suffering" through the oppression of rise and fall and so on. "Do not come again to birth" means do not approach again birth, rebirth in the future. "Having removed desire for existence" means having abandoned the desire of craving in all existence such as sensual existence and so on, by the path termed as dispassion. "You will live at peace" means through the state of having abandoned defilements in every respect, being quenched, you will dwell.

And here, by "having seen the elements as suffering," insight is shown through the approach of observation of suffering. By "having removed desire for existence," the path is shown; by "you will live at peace," the element of Nibbāna with residue of clinging is shown; by "do not come again to birth," the element of Nibbāna without residue of clinging is shown - it should be seen thus.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Sumanā is completed.

15. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Uttarā

15. "I was restrained by body" is the verse of the elder nun Uttarā. Her story too is similar to the story of the elder nun Tissā. For she too, born in a Sakyan family, having been a harem-lady of the Bodhisatta, having gone forth together with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having attained arahantship through a verse of radiance, then -

15. "I was restrained by body, by speech, or by mind;
Having uprooted craving with its root, I have become cool, quenched."

She spoke that very verse by way of an inspired utterance.

Therein, "I was restrained by body" means I was restrained by bodily restraint. "By speech" means the explanation is: I was restrained by verbal restraint. By both terms, she speaks of restraint by morality. "Or" means then. "By mind" means by the consciousness of concentration; by this she speaks of insight meditation. "Having

uprooted craving with its root" means with its underlying tendencies, or having pulled out craving together with ignorance. For craving arises in the three existences when the danger has been concealed by ignorance.

Another method - "Restrained by body" means by right action, through the abandoning of wrong action in every respect, I was restrained by body through path restraint alone. "By speech" means the meaning is: by right speech, through the abandoning of wrong speech in every respect, I was restrained by speech through path restraint alone. "By mind" means by concentration. By the heading "mind," right concentration is stated here below; by the inclusion of right concentration alone, through the characteristic of the path having a single characteristic, the path factors beginning with right view are included as well. Thus, by path restraint, the abandoning of non-restraint beginning with covetousness without remainder has been shown. Therefore she said "having uprooted craving with its root." "I have become cool, quenched" means through the absence of the fever of mental defilements in every respect, having attained the state of coolness, I am quenched through the Nibbāna element without residue of clinging.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Uttarā is completed.

16. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sumanā Who Went Forth in Old Age

16. "Sleep happily, little elder" is the verse of Sumanā, who went forth in old age. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in Sāvattihī as the sister of the king of Mahākosala. She, having heard the Teaching expounded by the Teacher to King Pasenadi of Kosala beginning with "There are four, great king, who should not be despised as young," having gained confidence, having established herself in the refuges and in the precepts, although desirous of going forth, having spent a long time thinking "I will look after my grandmother," at a later time, when her grandmother had died, together with the king, having had very costly bed-coverings and outer garments carried, having gone to the monastery, having given them to the monastic community, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having become established in the fruition of non-returning, she requested the going forth. The Teacher, having seen the maturity of her knowledge -

16. "Sleep happily, little elder, wrapped in a robe you have made;
For your lust is calmed, you have become cool, quenched."

spoke this verse. She, at the conclusion of the verse, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, spoke that very verse by way of an inspired utterance. This itself was her declaration of final liberating knowledge; she went forth at that very moment. In the verse, however, "little elder" means senior, advanced in age - this is the meaning. But this one was also senior by virtues such as morality and so on; in the fourth verse of the verse spoken by the elder nun, it should be connected as "you have become cool, quenched." The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Sumanā who went forth in old age is completed.

17. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Dhammā

17. "Having walked for almsfood" is the verse of the elder nun Dhammā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, with stored-up accumulation of merit, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a family home in Sāvattthī, having come of age, having gone to the house of a suitable husband, having gained faith in the Dispensation, wishing to go forth, not permitted by her husband, afterwards when her husband had died, having gone forth, doing the work of insight, one day, having walked for almsfood, while coming to the monastery, having fallen down, having made that very thing her object, having developed insight, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges -

17. "Having walked for almsfood, leaning on a staff, weak;
With trembling limbs, right there I fell to the ground;
Having seen the danger in the body, thereupon my mind was liberated."

She spoke this verse by way of an inspired utterance.

Therein, "having walked for almsfood, leaning on a staff" means having wandered about in the city with a stick as a support for the purpose of almsfood, having roamed about for alms. "Chamā" means on the ground, on the earth; she fell to the ground by way of her feet - this is the meaning. "Having seen the danger in the body" means having seen with the eye of wisdom the fault in the body in various ways such as foulness, impermanence, suffering, non-self, and so on. "Thereupon my mind was liberated" means through the observation of danger and through the observation of disenchantment and so on that occurred thereafter, by way of suppression my mind was released from mental defilements, and then again through path and fruition, in due order, by way of eradication and by way of subsiding, it was altogether liberated, liberated; now there is nothing of hers that needs to be liberated. This itself was her declaration of final liberating knowledge.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Dhammā is completed.

18. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Saṅghā

18. "Having left the household, gone forth" is the verse of the elder nun Saṅghā. Her story is similar to the story of the elder nun Dhīrā. The verse, however -

18. "Having left the household, gone forth, having left son, cattle, and dear ones;
Having left lust and hate, and having become dispassionate towards
ignorance;
Having uprooted craving with its root, I am at peace, quenched." He spoke this verse.

Therein, "having left" means having abandoned. "Household" means home. For the word "ghara" is sometimes used in the conventional sense in the plural even for a single referent, like a seed. "Having left son, cattle, and dear ones" means having abandoned, by the abandoning of desire and lust bound to them, the sons who are to be held dear and the cattle such as cows and buffaloes and so on. "Having left lust

and hate" means having completely cut off by the noble path lust, whose intrinsic nature is defilement, and hate, whose intrinsic nature is aversion. "And having become dispassionate towards ignorance" means having discarded delusion, the forerunner among all unwholesome states, and having uprooted it by the path - this is the meaning. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Saṅghā is completed.

The commentary on the Book of Ones is completed.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

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