

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

2. The Canon of Discipline - Commentaries (2. Vinaya
Piṭaka - Aṭṭhakathā)

4. Commentary on the Minor Chapter (4. Cūḷavagga-
aṭṭhakathā)

10. The Section on Nuns (10. Bhikkhunikkhandhakaṃ)

[Kd 20, PTS 2.253-2.283]



PaliVerse

4. Commentary on the Minor Chapter

10. The Section on Nuns

Discussion on the Account of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī

402. In the Chapter on Nuns - "Enough, Gotamī, do not find delight in this" - why does he refuse? Do not all Buddhas have four assemblies? Indeed they do, but having been wearied and requested many times, the going forth that is permitted will be properly looked after, thinking "This was obtained by us with difficulty." Thus, wishing to grant permission after making it auspicious, he refuses. The account of the eight weighty principles has been discussed in the Mahāvibhaṅga itself.

403. "By burglars" means by thieving robbers who light a lamp in a pot and by that light search for goods in others' houses.

"A disease called mildew" means a certain creature pierces the stalk that has entered the middle of the tube, and because of being pierced, even the rice head that has emerged is unable to take in milk.

"A disease called red rust" means the state of being red inside the sugar-canes. "An embankment for a great lake beforehand" - but by this he shows this meaning: Just as even without an embankment being built for a great lake, some water would remain, but if one were built beforehand, even that which would not remain due to the absence of an embankment would also remain; just so, these rules of respect were laid down beforehand for the purpose of non-transgression, even before the occasion had arisen. Even if they had not been laid down, because of women having gone forth, the Good Teaching would have remained for only five hundred years. But because they were laid down beforehand, it will remain for another five hundred years as well - thus what was first stated as "it will remain for a thousand years" is to be understood. And "a thousand years" is said with reference to the arahants who have attained the distinction of the analytical knowledges. But beyond that, a thousand years with reference to the arahants who are bare-insight practitioners, a thousand years with reference to non-returners, a thousand years with reference to once-returners, a thousand years with reference to stream-enterers - thus the Good Teaching of penetration will remain for five thousand years. The Teaching of the Scriptures too is the same. For without learning there is no penetration, nor when there is learning does penetration not occur; but the outward form will continue for a long time even after learning has disappeared.

The discussion on the account of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is finished.

Discussion on the Allowance for the Ordination of Bhikkhunīs

404. "I allow, monks, that nuns be given full ordination by monks" - by this supplementary rule, the monks made five hundred Sakyan women co-residents of Mahāpajāpati and gave them full ordination. Thus all of them were designated as

ordained on one side only. By the exhortation "Whatever you, Gotamī," Gotamī attained arahantship.

409. "Legal acts were not being performed" means the seven kinds of legal acts beginning with the act of censure were not being performed. "Were asking forgiveness" means they were asking forgiveness saying "I shall not do thus again."

410. "I allow, monks, the monks, having charged the nuns with the legal act, to hand it over" - here, regarding the censure and other such acts, having charged thus: "such and such a legal act should be performed against her," it should be handed over thus: "now you yourselves carry it out." If, however, when one act has been charged, they perform a different one, they incur the state of having to be made to act according to the method stated in the passage: "one who performs the act of demotion for one who deserves the act of censure."

411. "With muddy water" means here not only with muddy water; even when sprinkling with any of clear water, dye, mud, and so forth, it is an offence of wrongdoing. "That monk, monks, should be made not to be paid respect by the community of nuns" means having assembled at the nuns' quarters, it should be proclaimed three times thus: "The venerable one named so-and-so shows what is displeasing to the nuns; the making of this venerable one as not to be paid respect is agreeable." By this much he is made not to be paid respect. From then on, just as they do not pay respect upon seeing novices; even so, even upon seeing him, respect should not be paid. That monk, conducting himself properly, having come to the nuns' quarters, having approached either the community or a group or a single person at the dwelling itself, having sat down squatting, having raised his joined palms, should ask for forgiveness thus: "May the community of nuns forgive me." That monk, having come into the presence of the nuns, should say: "This monk asks your forgiveness." From then on, respect should be paid to him. This is the summary here; but we shall explain in detail in the analysis of legal procedures.

"They illuminated" means they illuminated with improper conduct. "They quarrelled together with nuns" means they bring men together with nuns through improper conduct. The making of not to be paid respect is according to the method already stated. "Prohibition" means prevention from entering the dwelling. "To set aside the exhortation" means here it should not be set aside by going to the nuns' quarters. But the nuns who have come for the purpose of exhortation should be told: "The nun named so-and-so has committed an offence; I set aside the exhortation for her; do not perform the Observance together with her." The punishment in the case of uncovering the body and so forth is also according to the method already stated.

413. "A nun should not fail to go for the exhortation" and so forth has already been stated in the Commentary on the Bhikkhunī Vibhaṅga.

416. "They were bending their ribs" means they bind with a thick band waistband for the purpose of bending the ribs, just like lay girls. "That goes around once" means one that wraps around a single time.

"With a bamboo strip band" means with a band made from smooth bamboo strips. "With a cloth band" means with a band of white cloth. "With a cloth braid" means with a braid made of cloth. "With a cloth roll" means with a roll made of cloth. In "with a

rag band" and so forth, "rag" should be understood as a rag dyed with ochre.

"With a bone" means with a cow's shin bone. "Buttocks" refers to the hip region. "They were having their hands pounded" means having the forearms pounded and making variegated ornaments with peacock feathers and the like. "The back of the hand" means the upper surface of the hand. "Foot" means the leg. "The top of the foot" means the upper surface of the foot.

417. The anointing of the face and so forth are according to the method already stated. "They applied eye-liner" means that while applying collyrium to the eyes, they make a downward line in the area of the eye-liner. "Distinguishing marks" means they make distinguishing marks of variegated design in the area of the cheeks. "They looked" means they opened the window and looked out at the street. "They stood in the light" means they opened the door and stood displaying half their body. "Dancing" means they had dance performances arranged. "They evicted prostitutes" means they evicted courtesans. "They set up drinking booths" means they sold liquor. "They set up slaughterhouses" means they sold meat. "Shops" means they spread out various kinds of shops for diverse goods. "They caused male slaves to attend" means having taken a male slave, they had him perform services for themselves. The same method applies to female slaves and so forth as well. "They scattered myrobalan and ripe fruits" means they scattered both myrobalan and ripe fruits; the meaning is that they spread out a miscellaneous goods shop.

418. The discussion on entirely blue robes and so forth has already been stated.

419. Regarding "If, monks, a nun, when dying" and so forth, this is the determination beyond the canonical text - If indeed, among the five companions in the Dhamma, anyone when dying should say: "After my passing, let my requisites belong to my preceptor, let them belong to my teacher, let them belong to my co-resident, let them belong to my pupil, let them belong to my mother, let them belong to my father, or let them belong to anyone else whatsoever," they do not belong to those persons; they belong only to the monastic community. For a bequest upon death to the five companions in the Dhamma does not hold, but to lay people it does hold. For if a monk dies in a nuns' monastery, his requisites belong only to the monks. If a nun dies in a monks' monastery, her requisites belong only to the nuns.

420. "A former wrestler" means the wife of a wrestler in her former lay life. "A male characteristic" means the male sign, whether cut off or uncut, whether concealed or unconcealed. If, having aroused the thought "a male characteristic" regarding that place, she gazes at it attentively, it is an offence of wrong-doing.

421. What is called "given for one's own use" is what was given saying "you yourselves should use it"; for one who gives that to another, there is an offence of wrong-doing. However, it is allowable to give after taking the best portion. If it is unsuitable, it is allowable to remove all of it. It is allowable to give a robe after using it for one day or two days. The same method applies to bowls and so forth as well.

"For the monks' storage to be consumed after having it accepted by nuns" means: meat that was received yesterday and stored should today, when no other unordained person is available, be consumed by the nuns after having it accepted by

the monks. For what has been accepted by the monks stands in the position of not having been accepted by the nuns; the same method applies also when what has been accepted by the nuns is to be used by the monks.

426. "Disputing over seats, they let the proper time pass" means that, making one rise and seating another, they let the meal time pass.

"For eight nuns according to seniority" means here, if eight are already seated and another who is senior among them arrives, she may make the one junior to her rise and sit down. But one who is more junior than all eight, even if she is of sixty rains, is entitled to sit only in the order of arrival. "Elsewhere, everywhere according to seniority should not be obstructed" means that, apart from the refectory, in any other place where the four requisites are distributed, one should not obstruct a senior saying "I arrived first" and take anything; only according to seniority is proper. The discussion on the invitation ceremony has already been stated.

429. By "cow-yoked" and so forth, all vehicles are permitted. "Litter" means a cloth-bundle carrier.

430. Full ordination by messenger is applicable in the case of any one of the ten obstacles. At the conclusion of the formal act, whether that nun is standing or lying down, awake or fallen asleep in the nuns' quarters, she is indeed fully ordained. At that very moment, the shadow and so forth should be declared to the messenger nun who has come.

431. "Storehouse" means a goods-shed. "Was not suitable" means it was not sufficient. "Dwelling" means a house. "New construction work" means the meaning is: "I allow a nun to undertake even new construction work for the benefit of the community."

432. "After she had gone forth" means at the time of her going forth. "Until that boy attains discretion" means until he is able by his own nature to eat hard food, eat soft food, bathe, and adorn himself - this is the meaning.

"Except for sharing a room" means except for sharing the same room for sleeping. Just as with regard to another man; so it shows that the companion nun should proceed with regard to that boy. But the mother is allowed to bathe him, give him drink, feed him, adorn him, and to sleep with him held to her breast.

434. "The very moment she left the monastic community" shows that because she left the monastic community having donned white garments of her own preference and inclination, for that very reason she is a non-nun, not by rejection of the training. She does not obtain full ordination again.

"She, having come, should not be given full ordination" means not only should she not be given full ordination, she does not obtain even the going forth. However, one who left the monastic community having taken up white garments obtains merely the going forth.

Regarding "paying respect" etc., the meaning is that men pay respect by massaging the feet, cut hair, cut nails, and perform treatment of wounds, and being scrupulous about all of that, they did not consent. Therein some teachers say: "If there is lust on one side or on both sides, it is just as in the case of the basis." Some teachers say:

"There is no offence herein." Having shown the teachers' views thus, it is stated in the commentaries that this is allowable as a specific permission. That is the authority. For by the very statement "I allow, monks, to consent," that is permissible.

435. "Sitting cross-legged" means sitting having folded the legs in a cross-legged position. "Half cross-legged" means a cross-legged position made by folding one foot. "Open below and covered above" - here, if a pit has been dug, and above only a foot-span is visible in all directions, even in such a place it is permissible.

436. "Bran and clay" means bran as well as clay. The remainder here is clear in itself.

The discussion on the allowance for the ordination of nuns is finished.

The commentary on the Chapter on Bhikkhunīs is finished.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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