

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)

02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses (02. Dhammapada-
aṭṭhakathā)

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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses

11. The Chapter on Old Age

1. The Story of Visākhā's Companions

146. "What laughter, what joy" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the companions of Visākhā.

It is said that in Sāvattihī, five hundred sons of good family, thinking "Thus these women will be ones dwelling in diligence," had their own respective wives entrusted to Visākhā, the great female lay follower. They, when going to a park or a monastery, went together with her only. They, at one time, when a festival was proclaimed that "There will be a drinking festival for seven days," prepared liquor for their own respective husbands. They, having enjoyed the drinking festival for seven days, on the eighth day, when the work-drum had gone out, went to their work. Those women too, thinking "We did not get to drink liquor in the presence of our husbands, and there is remaining liquor; we shall drink it in such a way that they do not know about this," having gone to the presence of Visākhā, having said "We wish, lady, to see the park," when it was said "Good, mothers, if so, having done the duties that must be done, set out," having gone together with her, having had the liquor brought out in a concealed manner, having drunk it in the park, they went about intoxicated. Visākhā too, having thought "Something inappropriate has been done by these women; now even the sectarians will censure me saying 'Visākhā, the female disciple of the ascetic Gotama, goes about having drunk liquor,'" said to those women - "Mothers, something inappropriate has been done by you; ill repute has been produced for me too; your husbands too will be angry with you; now what will you do?" "We shall show a pretence of illness, lady." "If so, you will become known through your own action." They, having gone home, made a pretence of illness. Then their husbands, having asked "Where are such and such a one and such and such a one?" having heard "They are ill," having considered "Surely the remaining liquor must have been drunk by them," having beaten them, brought them to calamity and disaster. They, at the next festival occasion too, wishing to drink liquor in the same way, having approached Visākhā, having said "Lady, take us to the park," having been refused by her saying "Previously too ill repute was produced for me by you; go, I shall not take you," having deliberated "Now we shall not do thus," having again approached her, they said "Lady, we wish to make an offering to the Buddha; take us to the monastery." "Now, mothers, that is fitting; go, make preparations." They, having had scents, garlands and so on taken up in baskets, having hung fist-sized jars full of liquor from their hands, having wrapped themselves in large cloths, having approached Visākhā, while entering the monastery together with her, having gone to one side, having drunk the liquor from the very fist-sized jars, having thrown away the jars, they sat down in the Teaching hall before the Teacher.

Visākhā said "Venerable sir, please expound the Teaching to these women." They too, with bodies trembling from the force of intoxication, aroused the thought "Let us sing, let us sing." Then a certain deity belonging to Māra's retinue, having thought "Having possessed the bodies of these women, I shall show misconduct before the ascetic Gotama," possessed their bodies. Among them, some began to laugh, clapping their hands before the Teacher; some began to dance. The Teacher, reflecting "What is this?" having known that reason, thought "I shall not now allow the deities belonging to Māra's retinue to find a chance. For the perfections were not fulfilled by me over so long a time for the purpose of the deities belonging to Māra's retinue finding a chance." In order to stir them with a sense of urgency, he emitted rays from the hair between his eyebrows; at that very moment there was blinding darkness. They were frightened, terrified by the fear of death. Because of that, the liquor in their bellies was digested. The Teacher, having vanished from the seat where he was sitting cross-legged, having stood on the summit of Sineru, emitted a ray from the hair between his eyebrows; at that very moment it was as if a thousand moons had risen. Then the Teacher, having addressed those women, said "It is not fitting for you, coming to my presence, to come heedlessly. For through your heedlessness alone, the deities belonging to Māra's retinue, having found a chance, caused you to laugh and so on in a place where laughing and so on should not be done. Now it is fitting for you to make endeavour for the purpose of quenching the fires of lust and so on." Having said this, he spoke this verse -

146. "What laughter, what joy, when constantly ablaze?
Enveloped by darkness, why do you not seek a lamp?"

Therein, "joy" (ānanda) means pleasure. This is what is meant - When this world community is constantly ablaze with the eleven fires beginning with lust and so on, what laughter or pleasure is there for you? Surely this is something that should not be done at all. Indeed, enveloped by the darkness of ignorance with its eight bases, why do you not seek, why do you not make the lamp of knowledge for the purpose of dispelling that very darkness?

At the conclusion of the teaching, all five hundred of those women became established in the fruition of stream-entry.

The Teacher, having known their state of being established in unshakeable faith, having descended from the summit of Sineru, sat down on the Buddha-seat. Then Visākhā said to him - "Venerable sir, this so-called intoxicating liquor is evil. For such women as these, having sat down before a Buddha such as you, being unable to maintain even their deportment, rose up and striking their hands, began laughing, singing, dancing, and so on." The Teacher said "Yes, Visākhā, this so-called intoxicating liquor is indeed evil. For in dependence on this, many beings have reached calamity and disaster." Having said this, when it was said "But when, venerable sir, did it originate?" in order to relate its origin in detail, having brought up the past, he related the Kumbha Jātaka.

The story of Visākhā's companions is the first.

2. The Story of Sirimā

147. "See this adorned": the Teacher, while dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to Sirimā.

She, it is said, was a lovely courtesan in Rājagaha. But during one rainy season, having offended against the female lay follower named Uttarā, the wife of the merchant Sumana's son, the daughter of the merchant Puṇṇaka, wishing to appease her, having asked forgiveness of the Teacher who had finished his meal together with the Community of monks at her house, on that day, having heard the thanksgiving for the meal of the One of Ten Powers -

"One should conquer wrath by non-wrath, one should conquer the bad by good;

One should conquer the miser by giving, the speaker of falsehood by truth."

At the conclusion of the verse, she attained the fruition of stream-entry. This is the summary here; but the detailed discussion will become clear in the commentary on the thanksgiving verse in the Wrath Chapter. But having thus attained the fruition of stream-entry, Sirimā, having invited the One of Ten Powers, on the following day, having given a great gift, had a regular meal for eight monks given to the Community. From the beginning, eight monks regularly go to the house. Having said "Take ghee, take milk" and so on, she fills their bowls. What is obtained by one is sufficient for even three or four. Daily, almsfood is given at an expenditure of sixteen coins. Then one day, a certain monk, having eaten the meal for eight at her house, went to a certain monastery at a distance of three yojanas. Then they asked him, seated in the evening at the attendance upon the elders - "Friend, where did you take almsfood and come from?" "The meal for eight at Sirimā's was eaten by me." "She gives it making it agreeable, friend." "It is not possible to describe her food; she gives it making it exceedingly superior; what is obtained by one is sufficient for even three or four; but even more than her gift is the sight of her itself. For that woman is of such and such a kind" - thus he praised her virtues.

Then a certain monk, having heard the talk of praise of her, having developed affection without even seeing her, thinking "It is fitting for me to go and see her," having told his own seniority, having asked that monk about his place in the list, having heard "Tomorrow, friend, you will be the senior monk of the Community in that house and will receive the meal for eight," at that very moment, having taken his bowl and robe, even though he had departed, right early when dawn broke, having entered the ticket hall and stood, being the senior monk of the Community, he received the meal for eight at her house. But the monk who had eaten the day before and departed - at the very time of his departure, a disease arose in her body. Therefore she, having taken off her ornaments, lay down. Then her maidservants, having seen the monks who had come having received the meal for eight, informed her. She, being unable to take the bowls with her own hand, or to seat them, or to serve food, commanded the maidservants - "Take the bowls, ladies, seat them, serve them rice gruel, give them sweet-meats, and at mealtime fill the bowls and give them." They, having said "Very well, lady," having ushered in the monks, having served them rice gruel, having given sweet-meats, at mealtime, having filled the bowls with food, informed her. She, having said "Support me and lead me there, ladies, I shall pay homage," being supported by them, led to the presence of the

monks, with trembling body she paid homage to the monks. That monk, having looked at her, thought - "Even when ill, such is this beauty of her appearance; but when she is well, adorned with all ornaments, what kind of beauty of form would this one have?" Then the mental defilement accumulated over many crores of aeons occurred to him; he, becoming unknowing, being unable to eat the food, having taken the bowl, having gone to the monastery, having covered the bowl, having placed it to one side, having spread out his robe, lay down.

Then one companion monk, even though entreating him, was not able to feed him. He was famished. On that very day, in the evening, Sirimā died. The king sent a message to the Teacher - "Venerable sir, Jīvaka's younger sister, Sirimā, has died." The Teacher, having heard that, sent a message to the king: "There is no cremation to be done for Sirimā; having laid her down in a charnel grove for fresh corpses in such a way that crows, dogs and the like do not eat her, have her guarded." The king did so too. Three days passed in succession. On the fourth day the body swelled up, worms oozed from the nine wound-openings, and the entire body, broken open, was like a pot of boiled rice. The king had a drum beaten in the city - "Except for those guarding the house and children, for those not coming to see Sirimā, a fine of eight coins." He also sent someone to the Teacher's presence - "Let the community of monks headed by the Buddha, it seems, come to see Sirimā." The Teacher announced to the monks - "We shall go to see Sirimā." That young monk too, for four days, not heeding anyone's word, lay down just famished. The food in the bowl had become putrid; stain arose on the bowl. Then that companion monk, having approached him, said "Friend, the Teacher is going to see Sirimā." He, though thus hungry within, at the very word "Sirimā" being spoken, suddenly got up and said "What are you saying?" When it was said "The Teacher is going to see Sirimā; you too will go," saying "Yes, I shall go," having thrown away the food, having washed the bowl, having put it into the bag, he went together with the community of monks. The Teacher, surrounded by the community of monks, stood on one side; the nuns' community too, the king's retinue too, the lay followers' assembly too, the female lay followers' assembly too, stood each on one side.

The Teacher asked the king - "Who is this, great king?" Venerable sir, Jīvaka's sister, named Sirimā. This is Sirimā? Yes, venerable sir. Then have a drum beaten in the city: "Let them take Sirimā, having given a thousand." The king had it done so. There was not even one saying 'ha' or 'hu'. The king reported to the Teacher - "They do not take her, venerable sir." Then, great king, lower the price. The king, having had a drum beaten saying "Let them take her, having given five hundred," not seeing anyone to take her, had a drum beaten saying "Let them take Sirimā, having given two hundred and fifty, two hundred, a hundred, fifty, twenty-five coins, ten coins, five coins, one coin, a half, a quarter, a māśaka, a farthing." No one wanted her. He had a drum beaten: "Let them take her even for nothing." There was not even one saying 'ha' or 'hu'. The king said "Even for nothing, venerable sir, there is no one to take her." The Teacher, having said "See, monks, a woman dear to the public. In this very city, having given a thousand, formerly they obtained her for one day; now there is no one to take her even for nothing. Such a form has reached destruction and decay. See, monks, the afflicted individual existence" - spoke this verse -

147. "See this adorned image, a heap of sores, raised up;

Afflicted, the object of many thoughts, for which there is no stable duration."

Therein, "adorned" means made beautiful; the meaning is: decorated with garments, ornaments, garlands, lac-dye, and so on. "Image" means the individual existence established with major and minor limbs such as long and so on in places requiring long and so on. "Heap of sores" means the body that has become a sore by way of the nine wound-openings. "Raised up" means raised up by three hundred bones. "Afflicted" means constantly sick, because of having to be maintained at all times by postures and so on. "The object of many thoughts" means thought about in many ways by the great multitude. "For which there is no stable duration" means for which there is neither a state of permanence nor a state of duration; this is absolutely subject to the nature of breaking apart, scattering, and destruction - the meaning is: see this.

At the conclusion of the teaching, there was the full realisation of the teaching by eighty-four thousand living beings, and that monk too became established in the fruition of stream-entry.

The story of Sirimā is the second.

3. The Story of the Elder Nun Uttarā

148. The Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to a nun named the Elder Uttarā, beginning with "This is worn out."

It is said that the elder nun, one hundred and twenty years old by birth, having walked for almsfood and having obtained almsfood, having seen a certain monk in the middle of a street, having offered him with almsfood, as he did not refuse but took it, having given him everything, she was without food. Thus on the second and third days too, having given the meal to that very monk at that very place, she was without food. But on the fourth day, while walking for almsfood, having seen the Teacher at a certain narrow place, while stepping back, having trodden on the hanging corner of her own robe, being unable to stand still, she turned over and fell. The Teacher, having gone to her presence, having said "Sister, your body is worn out; before long it will break up," spoke this verse -

148. "This body is worn out, a seat of disease, perishable;
This putrid body breaks up, for life has death as its end."

Its meaning is - Sister, this body, reckoned as your body, is worn out through old age; and that indeed is a seat of disease in the sense of being the dwelling place of all diseases. Just as even a young jackal is called "an old jackal," and even a young gaḷocī creeper is called "a putrid creeper," so even though born that very day and being gold-coloured, it is perishable through putridness in the sense of constantly oozing. That body of yours, being thus putrid, breaks up - it should be understood that before long it will break up. Why? "For life has death as its end" - because the life of all beings has death as its end, is what has been said.

At the conclusion of the teaching, that elder nun attained the fruition of stream-entry. The proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for the great multitude as well.

The story of the Elder Nun Uttarā is the third.

4. The Story of the Many Monks with Over-estimation

149. "These" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to many monks who had overestimation.

Five hundred monks, it is said, having taken a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, having entered the forest, striving and endeavouring, having produced meditative absorption, thinking "Through the non-occurrence of mental defilements, the task of one gone forth has been accomplished by us; we shall report the quality attained by ourselves to the Teacher," came. The Teacher, at the very time they had reached the outer gateway, said to the Elder Ānanda - "Ānanda, there is no purpose for these monks to enter and be seen by me; let them go to the charnel ground and having come from there, let them see me." The elder, having gone, reported that matter to them. They, without even saying "What have we to do with the charnel ground?" thinking "The reason must have been seen by the far-seeing Buddha," having gone to the charnel ground, while seeing corpses there, having obtained resentment towards corpses that had fallen one or two days ago, at that moment they gave rise to lust towards freshly fallen bodies, and at that moment they knew their own state of being with mental defilements. The Teacher, while just seated in the perfumed chamber, having pervaded with light, as if speaking before those monks, having said "Is it not indeed unfitting, monks, for you to give rise to delight in lust having seen such an assemblage of bones?" spoke this verse -

149. "These discarded bones, like gourds in autumn,
Dove-coloured - having seen them, what delight?"

Therein, "discarded" means thrown away. "In autumn" means like gourds scattered here and there, struck by wind and heat of the sun in the autumn season. "Dove-coloured" means pigeon-coloured. "Having seen them" means having seen such bones, what delight is there for you? Surely it is not fitting to produce even the slightest sensual delight. This is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, those monks, just as they stood, having attained arahantship, praising the Blessed One, having come, paid homage.

The story of the many monks with over-estimation is the fourth.

5. The Story of the Elder Nun Rūpanandā, the Most Beautiful Girl in the Country

150. "A city made of bones" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the Elder Nun Rūpanandā, the most beautiful woman in the country.

She, it is said, one day thought - "My elder brother, having abandoned the glory of sovereignty, having gone forth, has become the Buddha, the foremost person in the world; his son too, Prince Rāhula, has gone forth; my husband too has gone forth; my mother too has gone forth; when so many of my relatives have gone forth, what shall I do at home? I shall go forth." She, having gone to the nuns' quarters, went forth out of affection for her relatives only, not through faith; but because of her loveliness she became known as Rūpanandā. Having heard "The Teacher, it is said, declares 'Materiality is impermanent, suffering, non-self; feeling... perception... activities...

consciousness is impermanent, suffering, non-self," she, thinking "He might speak of faults even in my appearance, which is so fair to behold and pleasing," does not go into the presence of the Teacher. The inhabitants of Sāvattthī, right early, having given a gift, having taken upon themselves the Observance, with clean upper robes, with scents, garlands and so on in their hands, in the evening period, having assembled at Jeta's Grove, listen to the Teaching. The nuns' community too, with desire arisen for the Teacher's proclamation of the Teaching, having gone to the monastery, listens to the Teaching. Having heard the Teaching, while entering the city, they enter speaking just the talk of praise of the Teacher.

For in the world community of four measures, few indeed are those beings for whom confidence does not arise when seeing the Truth-finder. For even those who measure by appearance, having seen the Truth-finder's golden-coloured body adorned with the marks and features, are pleased; those who measure by reputation too, having heard the Teacher's fame of virtue that has proceeded in dependence on many hundreds of births, and the sound of the proclamation of the Teaching endowed with eight factors, are pleased; those who measure by austerity too are pleased on account of his austerity in robes and so on; those who measure by the Teaching too are pleased, thinking "Such is the morality of the One of Ten Powers, such is his concentration, such is his wisdom; the Blessed One is matchless, without equal in virtues such as morality and so on." Their mouths are not sufficient when speaking the virtues of the Truth-finder. Rūpanandā, having heard the talk of praise of the Truth-finder from both nuns and female lay followers, thought - "They are speaking exceedingly just the praise of my brother. Even for one day, speaking of faults in my appearance, how much will he speak? What if I were to go together with the nuns, and without showing myself, having seen the Truth-finder, having heard his Teaching, come back." She announced to the nuns "I too shall go today for the hearing of the Teaching."

The nuns, with satisfied minds, thinking "At long last indeed the desire to go to attend upon the Teacher has arisen in Rūpanandā; today the Teacher, in dependence on her, will teach a varied proclamation of the Teaching in various ways," taking her, set out. She, from the time of setting out, thought "I shall not show myself at all." The Teacher, having thought "Today Rūpanandā will come to attend upon me; what kind of proclamation of the Teaching would be suitable for her?" having reached the conclusion "She regards appearance as important, with strong affection for her individual existence; just as the extraction of a thorn by a thorn, so the subduing of her intoxication with appearance by appearance itself is suitable," at the time of her entering the monastery, by the power of supernormal power, created a beautiful woman of about sixteen years of age, dressed in red garments, adorned with all ornaments, holding a fan, standing near him and fanning. Now both the Teacher and Rūpanandā saw that woman. She, having entered the monastery together with the nuns, having stood behind the nuns, having paid homage to the Teacher with the fivefold prostration, seated among the nuns, looking at the Teacher beginning from the soles of his feet, having seen the Teacher's body variegated with the marks, resplendent with the features, surrounded by the fathom-wide radiance, while looking at his face resplendent like the full moon, she saw the figure of a woman standing nearby. She, having looked at her, looking at her own body, despised herself as like a she-crow before a golden royal swan. For from the very time of seeing the form

created by supernormal power, her eyes were captivated. She, thinking "Oh, how beautiful are her head hairs! Oh, how beautiful is her forehead!" with her mind drawn by the splendour of beauty of all the bodily parts, had strong affection for that form.

The Teacher, having known her delight therein, while expounding the Teaching, showed that form having passed beyond the state of being about sixteen years of age, making it about twenty years of age. Rūpanandā, having looked, became slightly dispassionate in mind, thinking "Indeed this form is not like the former one." The Teacher, in due order, showed that woman the appearance of one who has given birth once, the appearance of a middle-aged woman, and the appearance of an old decrepit elderly woman. She too, gradually, becoming dispassionate towards her at the time of old age and decrepitude, thinking "This too has disappeared, this too has disappeared," having seen her with broken teeth, grey-haired head, bent over, crooked as a roof beam, leaning on a stick, trembling, became exceedingly dispassionate. Then the Teacher showed her overcome by illness. She, at that very moment, having thrown away the stick and the palm-leaf fan, crying out with a great uproar, having fallen on the ground, submerged in her own urine and excrement, rolled about again and again. Rūpanandā, having seen that too, became exceedingly dispassionate. The Teacher too showed the death of that woman. She, at that very moment, reached the state of being bloated; from the nine wound-openings, streams of pus and worms oozed forth; crows and so on, having gathered together, tore her apart. Rūpanandā too, having looked at that, saw her individual existence as impermanent, thinking "This woman, in this very place, reached ageing, reached illness, reached death; for this individual existence of mine too, ageing, illness, and death will come in just the same way." But because of having seen as impermanent, it is just as if seen as suffering and as non-self. Then the three existences appeared to her like houses on fire and like a corpse tied to her neck; her mind rushed towards the meditation subject. The Teacher, having known that she had seen as impermanent, looking to see "Will she be able to establish a support for herself by herself?" having thought "She will not be able; it is fitting to obtain a condition from outside," expounding the Teaching in a manner suitable for her, said -

"Afflicted, impure, putrid, see, Nanda, this body;
Oozing and dripping, longed for by the foolish.

"Just as this is, so is that; just as that is, so is this;
See it as elements, as emptiness, do not come again to the world;
Having removed desire for existence, you will live at peace."

Thus the Blessed One spoke these verses referring to the nun Nandā. Nandā, having sent forth knowledge in accordance with the teaching, attained the fruition of stream-entry. Then, in order to teach her the emptiness meditation subject for the purpose of the probation of insight for the upper three paths and fruitions, "Nanda, do not form the perception 'There is substance in this body.' For there is not even a trifle of substance here; this is a city of bones made by raising up three hundred bones" - having said this, he spoke this verse -

150. "A city made of bones, plastered with flesh and blood;
Where ageing and death, conceit and contempt are laid down."

Its meaning is - Just as indeed, for the purpose of storing cereals, secondary crops, and so on, they raise up timbers, bind them with creepers, plaster them with clay, and make an external dwelling termed a city, so too this internal one also - a city made by raising up three hundred bones, intertwined with sinews, plastered with flesh and blood, covered with skin - for the purpose of laying down ageing with the characteristic of decaying, death with the characteristic of dying, conceit with the characteristic of imagining dependent on accomplishment of stature and so on, and contempt with the characteristic of destroying what has been well done. For such bodily and mental affliction is indeed laid down here; beyond this there is nothing fit to be grasped.

At the conclusion of the teaching, that elder nun attained arahantship. The proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for the great multitude as well.

The story of the Elder Nun Rūpanandā, the most beautiful girl in the country, is the fifth.

6. The Story of Queen Mallikā

151. The Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to Queen Mallikā, beginning with "They decay indeed."

She, it is said, one day, having entered the bathing room, having washed her face, with body bent down, began to wash her calf. And there was a certain favourite dog that had entered together with her. He, having seen her thus bent down, began to engage in sexual misconduct with her. She, consenting to the contact, stood still. The king too, looking from the upper storey of the mansion through the window, having seen that, when she came from there, said "Away with you, wretched woman, why did you do such a thing?" "What has been done by me, Sire?" "Intimacy with a dog." "There is no such thing, Sire." "It was seen by me personally; I shall not believe you. Away with you, wretched woman." "Great king, whoever has entered this room appears as two to one looking through this window" - she spoke what was not factual. "Sire, if you believe me, enter this room; I shall look at you through this window." The king, being of a confused nature, having believed her words, entered the room. That queen too, standing at the window and looking, said "You blind fool, great king, what is this indeed? You are making intimacy with a she-goat!" Even when it was said "I am not doing such a thing, dear lady," she said "It was seen by me personally; I shall not believe you."

Having heard that, the king believed "Certainly, one who has entered this room appears as two." Mallikā thought - "This king has been deceived by me through blind foolishness; evil has been done by me; and he has been falsely accused by me with what is not factual; this deed of mine the Teacher too will know, the two chief disciples too and the eighty great disciples too will know. Alas, indeed a weighty deed has been done by me." She, it is said, was the king's companion in the Incomparable Gift. And therein, the relinquishment made on one day was worth fourteen hundred million in wealth. But these four - the white parasol, the sitting divan, the stand, and the footstool - for the Truth-finder were indeed priceless. She, at the time of death, not recollecting such a great relinquishment, but recollecting that very evil deed, having died, was reborn in Avīci. But she was very much dear to the king. He, overcome by intense sorrow, having had the funeral rites performed for her, thinking

"I shall ask about her place of rebirth," went to the Teacher's presence. The Teacher acted in such a way that he did not remember the reason for which he had come. He, having heard a talk on the Teaching on the principles of cordiality in the Teacher's presence, having remembered when he had entered his house, thinking "I say, I went to the Teacher's presence to ask about Mallikā's place of rebirth and forgot; tomorrow I shall ask again," went again on the following day too. The Teacher too, in succession for seven days, acted in such a way that he did not remember. She too, having been tormented in hell for just seven days, on the eighth day, having passed away from there, was reborn in the Tusita realm. But why did the Teacher bring about the state of not remembering for him? She, it is said, was very much dear and agreeable to him; therefore, having heard of her state of being reborn in hell, he might take up wrong view, thinking "If one such as this, accomplished in faith, was reborn in hell, what shall I accomplish by giving gifts?" and having taken up wrong view, having had the regular meal provided in his house for five hundred monks taken away, he might be reborn in hell. Therefore the Teacher, having brought about the state of not remembering for him for seven days, on the eighth day, walking for almsfood, himself went to the gate of the royal palace.

The king, having heard "The Teacher has come," having gone out, having taken the bowl, began to ascend the mansion. The Teacher, however, showed an indication of wishing to sit down in the chariot hall. The king, having caused the Teacher to sit down right there, having honoured him with rice gruel and hard food, having paid homage, while still seated said "I, venerable sir, having gone thinking 'I shall ask about the place of rebirth of Queen Mallikā,' forgot. Where indeed, venerable sir, was she reborn?" "In the Tusita realm, great king." "Venerable sir, if she was not reborn in the Tusita realm, who else would be reborn there? Venerable sir, there is no woman equal to her. For in her places of sitting and so on, apart from the arrangement of giving, thinking 'Tomorrow I shall give this to the Truth-finder, I shall do this,' there was no other business at all. Venerable sir, from the time she went to the world beyond, my body does not function." Then the Teacher, having said to him "Do not worry, great king, this is the nature of all beings subject to death," asked "Whose is this chariot, great king?" Having heard that, the king, having placed joined palms on his head, said "My grandfather's, venerable sir." "Whose is this one?" "My father's, venerable sir." "But whose is this chariot?" "Mine, venerable sir." When this was said, the Teacher said "Great king, your grandfather's chariot did not last in that very same condition to reach your father's chariot, your father's chariot did not last to reach your chariot. If ageing comes even to such a log of wood, how much more so to individual existence. Great king, for the teaching of the good person alone there is no ageing; but there are no beings called non-decaying" - and having said this, he spoke this verse -

151. "Royal chariots, beautifully decorated, indeed decay,
 And also the body approaches ageing;
 But the teaching of the virtuous does not approach ageing,
 The virtuous indeed declare this among the virtuous."

Therein, "ve" is a particle. "Beautifully decorated" means well adorned with the seven jewels and other chariot ornaments - even the chariots of kings decay. "And also the body" means not only chariots alone; this well-tended body too, reaching broken

teeth and so on, approaches ageing. "And of the virtuous" means but the ninefold supramundane teaching and the continuity of the virtuous ones such as the Buddha and so on does not undergo any destruction - thus it is called "does not approach ageing." "Declare" means thus the virtuous ones such as the Buddha and so on speak together with the virtuous wise ones - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, many attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of Queen Mallikā is the sixth.

7. The Story of the Elder Lāḷudāyī

152. "Of little learning": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the Elder Lāḷudāyī.

It is said that he, having gone to the house of those performing a blessing, speaks of ill omen by the method beginning with "They stand outside the walls," and having gone to the house of those performing a funeral, when what should be spoken of is about those outside the walls and so on, speaks blessing verses by the method beginning with "giving and righteous conduct," or speaks the Ratana Sutta beginning with "Whatever wealth there is here or beyond." Thus, in those various places, even while speaking something other than what he intended to speak, thinking "I shall speak something else," he does not know "I am speaking something else." The monks, having heard his talk, reported to the Teacher - "What, venerable sir, is the use of Lāḷudāyī's going to places of blessing and ill omen? When one thing should be spoken, he speaks something else entirely." The Teacher, having said "Not only now, monks, does this one speak thus; in the past too, when one thing should be spoken, he spoke something else entirely," brought up the past -

In the past, it is said, in Bārāṇasī, a son of a brahmin named Aggidatta, a prince named Somadatta, attended upon the king. He was dear and agreeable to the king. But the brahmin lived in dependence on agriculture. He had just two oxen. Among them, one died. The brahmin said to his son - "Dear son, Somadatta, having requested the king for me, bring one ox." Somadatta, having thought "If I request the king, my lowliness will become apparent," having said "You yourself, dear father, request the king," when told "Then, dear father, take me and go," thought - "This brahmin is of slow wisdom; he does not know even the mere words of how to approach and so on; when one thing should be said, he says something else entirely; but having trained him, I shall take him." He, having taken him, having gone to a cemetery named Bīraṇatthambhaka, having tied bundles of grass, having designated them "This is the king, this is the viceroy, this is the general," having shown them to his father in order, taught him the verse, saying "Having gone to the royal palace, you should approach thus, you should withdraw thus, the king should be addressed thus, the viceroy should be addressed thus; but having approached the king, having said 'Victory to you, great king,' having stood thus, having spoken this verse, you should request an ox" -

"Two oxen are mine, great king, with which we plough the field;
Among them one has died, Sire, give the second, O warrior."

He indeed, having made that verse well-practised in the space of a year, having informed his son of its being well-practised, when it was said "Then, dear father, having taken some present, come; I, having gone earlier, shall stand in the king's presence," saying "Very well, dear father," having taken the present, when Somadatta was standing in the king's presence, having gained confidence, having gone to the royal palace, having been greeted with a gladdened mind by the king, when it was said "Dear father, at long last indeed you have come; having sat down on this seat, say whatever you need," he spoke this verse -

"Two oxen are mine, great king, with which we plough the field;
Among them one has died, Sire, take the second, O warrior."

Even when the king said "What are you saying, dear father? Say it again," he spoke that very same verse. The king, having known the fact that he had spoken having missed the mark, having smiled, having said "Somadatta, there are many oxen in your house, I think," when it was said "Those given by you will be many, Sire," being pleased with the Bodhisatta, having given the brahmin sixteen oxen, ornamental goods, a dwelling village, and a royal grant, he dismissed the brahmin with great honour.

The Teacher, having brought this proclamation of the Teaching, having connected the Jātaka, saying "At that time the king was Ānanda, the brahmin was Lāḷudāyī, but Somadatta was myself," "Not only now, monks; in the past too this one, due to his own little learning, when one thing should be said, says something else entirely. For a person of little learning is indeed like an ox" - and having said this, he spoke this verse -

152. "This person of little learning grows old like an ox;
His flesh increases, but his wisdom does not increase."

Therein, "of little learning" means of one or two sets of fifty. Or alternatively, by the very last division of chapters, due to the absence of even one or two discourses, this one is of little learning. But one who, having taken up a meditation subject, engages in it, is indeed very learned. "Grows old like an ox" means just as indeed an ox, growing old and growing up, does not grow for the benefit of its mother, nor of its father, nor of the remaining relatives, but rather grows old uselessly; just so this one too does not perform the duties to the preceptor, nor the duties to the teacher, nor the duties of visitors and so on, nor does he engage in delight in meditation; he grows old uselessly. "His flesh increases" means just as the flesh of an ox that has been released into the forest, thinking "This one is unable to carry the yoke, plough, and so on," wandering right there, eating and drinking, increases; just so the flesh of this one too, who has been released by the preceptor and others, in dependence on the Community, having obtained the four requisites, having performed purging upwards and so on, nourishing the body, increases; having become of stout body, he goes about. "His wisdom" means his mundane and supramundane wisdom does not increase even by a finger-breadth; but in dependence on the six doors, like shrubs and creepers and so on in the forest, both craving and the ninefold conceit increase. This is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, the great multitude attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of the Elder Lāṇudāyī is the seventh.

8. The Story of the Inspired Utterance

153-154. "Through the round of many births" - the Teacher, seated at the foot of the Bodhi tree, having uttered this proclamation of the Teaching by way of an inspired utterance, afterwards, when asked by the Elder Ānanda, spoke it.

For he, seated at the foot of the Bodhi tree, while the sun had not yet set, having destroyed the forces of Māra, in the first watch having broken through the darkness that conceals past lives, in the middle watch having purified the divine eye, in the last watch, dependent on compassion for beings, having brought down knowledge into the mode of dependent conditions, contemplating it by way of forward and reverse order, at the time of the break of dawn, having fully awakened to the perfect enlightenment, uttering the inspired utterance not abandoned by many hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, he spoke these verses -

153. Through the round of many births I wandered, not finding;
Seeking the house-builder, painful is birth again and again.
154. "House-builder, you have been seen, you will not build a house again;
All your ribs are broken, the peak of the house is demolished;
The mind has gone to the unconditioned, it has reached the elimination of cravings."

Therein, "seeking the house-builder" means: I, seeking the builder of this house reckoned as individual existence, the carpenter who is craving, by whatever knowledge it is possible to see it - having formed the resolution at the feet of Dīpaṅkara for the sake of that knowledge of enlightenment, for so long a time, through the round of many births, this round of rebirths reckoned as many hundreds of thousands of births, not finding, not gaining, not obtaining that knowledge, I wandered, I transmigrated - the meaning is wandering again and again. "Painful is birth again and again" - this is a statement of the reason for seeking the house-builder. Because this birth, mixed with ageing, disease, and death, is painful to undergo again and again, and it does not cease when that is not seen. Therefore, the meaning is: seeking that, I wandered. "You have been seen" means: by me, penetrating the knowledge of omniscience, you have now been seen. "A house again" means: again in this round of rebirths you will not build my house reckoned as individual existence. "All your ribs are broken" means: all your remaining ribs of mental defilements have been broken by me. "The peak of the house is demolished" means: the circular pinnacle reckoned as ignorance of this house of individual existence made by you has also been destroyed by me. "The mind has gone to the unconditioned" means: now my mind has gone, has entered into the unconditioned, Nibbāna, by way of making it an object. "It has reached the elimination of cravings" means: I have attained arahantship reckoned as the elimination of cravings.

The story of the inspired utterance is the eighth.

9. The Story of the Son of the Millionaire Mahādhana

155-156. "Not having lived" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Isipatana in the Deer Park, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the son of the merchant of great wealth.

It is said that he was born in Bārāṇasī in a family with wealth of eighty ten millions. Then his mother and father thought - "In our family there is a great mass of wealth; having placed it in our son's hands, we shall enjoy it comfortably; there is no need for any other work." They had him trained in nothing but dancing, singing, and music. In that very city, in another family with wealth of eighty ten millions, a daughter too was born. Her mother and father too, having thought likewise, had her trained in nothing but dancing, singing, and music. When they had come of age, a marriage took place. Then afterwards their mother and father died. Wealth of one hundred and sixty ten millions was in just one house. The merchant's son went thrice a day to attend upon the king. Then cheats in that city thought - "If this merchant's son becomes a drunkard, it will be convenient for us; let us teach him the habit of drunkenness." They, having taken liquor, having tied savoury meats and salt crystals in the edges of their cloths, having taken root-tubers, having sat down watching the road as he came from the royal family, having seen him coming, having drunk liquor, having tossed a salt crystal into their mouths, having bitten a root-tuber, said "May you live a hundred years, master, merchant's son; in dependence on you, may we be able to eat and drink." He, having heard their words, asked the junior attendant coming behind - "What are they drinking?" A certain beverage, master. It is of an agreeable kind, this. Master, in this world of the living there is nothing fit to be drunk similar to this. He, thinking "That being so, it is fitting for me too to drink," having had it brought little by little, drinks. Then, before long, those cheats, having known his habit of drinking, surrounded him. As time went on, the retinue became great. He, having had liquor brought even with a hundred or two hundred, while drinking, by this gradual method, having placed heaps of coins at his places of sitting and so on, while drinking liquor, said "With this bring garlands, with this bring perfumes, this person is skilled at gambling, this one at dancing, this one at singing, this one at music. Give a thousand to this one, two thousand to this one" - thus scattering, before long, having squandered his own wealth of eighty ten millions, when it was said "Your wealth is exhausted, master," he said "Is there not what belongs to my wife?" There is, master. Then bring that. Having squandered that too in the same way, gradually, having sold all his own property - even fields, parks, pleasure groves, and vehicles and so on, even down to vessels and goods, even bed-sheets, cloaks, and sitting cloths - he consumed it. Then, in his old age, those by whom his family's house had been bought, they drove him out of the house. He, having taken his wife, dwelling against the wall of a stranger's house, having taken a broken pot-sherd, having wandered for almsfood, began to eat people's leftovers.

Then one day, having seen him standing at the door of the hall with sitting accommodation, receiving leftover food being given by young novices, the Teacher manifested a smile. Then the Elder Ānanda asked him the reason for the smile. The Teacher, explaining the reason for the smile, said "See, Ānanda, this son of the merchant of great wealth, having squandered eighty-two hundred million in wealth in this city, having taken his wife, wandering about for almsfood. If indeed this person,

without having wasted his wealth in the first stage of life, had applied himself to business activities, he would have been the foremost millionaire in this very city. If, however, having gone forth, he had gone forth into the homeless life, he would have attained arahantship, and his wife too would have become established in the fruition of non-returning. If, without having wasted his wealth in the middle stage of life, he had applied himself to business activities, he would have been the second millionaire; having gone forth into the homeless life, he would have been a non-returner. His wife too would have become established in the fruition of once-returning. If, without having wasted his wealth in the last stage of life, he had applied himself to business activities, he would have been the third millionaire; having gone forth into the homeless life too, he would have been a once-returner, and his wife too would have become established in the fruition of stream-entry. But now he has declined both from the enjoyments of a layman and from asceticism. Having declined, he has become like a heron bird in a dried-up pond" - having said this, he spoke these verses -

155. "Not having lived the holy life, not having gained wealth in youth;
They brood like old herons, in a pond where the fish are gone.

156. "Not having lived the holy life, not having gained wealth in youth;
They lie like arrows shot from a bow, lamenting the past."

Therein, "not having lived" means not having dwelt the dwelling of the holy life. "In youth" means at the time when one was able to produce wealth that had not arisen or to protect wealth that had arisen, not having gained even wealth. "Where the fish are gone" means those foolish ones of such kind brood like old herons with worn-out wings in a pond where the fish are gone due to the absence of water. This is what is meant - For just as the absence of water in a pond, so is the absence of a dwelling place for these; just as the state of the fish being gone, so is the absence of wealth for these; just as the inability of herons with worn-out wings to fly away, so is the inability of these now to establish wealth by means of water-routes, land-routes, and so on. Therefore, like herons with worn-out wings, being trapped right there, they brood. "Like arrows shot from a bow" means much exhausted from the bow, released from the bow - this is the meaning. This is what is meant - Just as arrows released from a bow, having gone according to their momentum and fallen, when there is no one to pick them up, right there they become food for termites; so too these, having passed beyond the three stages of life, now through their inability to uplift themselves, will approach death. Therefore it was said - "They lie like arrows shot from a bow." "Lamenting the past" means they lie lamenting, mourning, bewailing the things done before - eating, drinking, dancing, singing, music, and so on - thinking "Thus was eaten by us, thus was drunk."

At the conclusion of the teaching, many attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of the son of the millionaire Mahādhana is the ninth.

The commentary on the Chapter on Ageing is concluded.

The eleventh chapter.



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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