

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality
(1. Sīlakkhandhavaggapāḷi)

11. The Discourse to Kevaṭṭa (11. Kevaṭṭasuttaṃ)

[DN 11, PTS 1.211–1.223]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality

11. The Discourse to Kevaṭṭa

The Story of Kevaṭṭa the Householder's Son

481. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Nālandā in Pāvārika's mango grove. Then Kevaṭṭa, a householder's son, approached the Blessed One; having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son, said this to the Blessed One - "This Nālandā, Venerable Sir, is prosperous and flourishing, populous, crowded with people, and devoted to the Blessed One. It would be good, Venerable Sir, if the Blessed One would command a monk who would perform a wonder of supernormal power through super-human achievement; thus this Nālandā would become even more devoted to the Blessed One." When this was said, the Blessed One said this to Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son - "I do not, Kevaṭṭa, expound the Teaching to monks thus - 'Come, monks, perform a wonder of supernormal power through super-human achievement for the white-clothed laypeople.'"

482. For the second time, Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son, said this to the Blessed One - "I am not, venerable sir, disparaging the Blessed One; but I say thus - 'This Nālandā, venerable sir, is prosperous and flourishing, populous, crowded with people, and devoted to the Blessed One. It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would command a monk who would perform a wonder of supernormal power through super-human achievement; thus this Nālandā would become even more devoted to the Blessed One.'" For the second time the Blessed One said this to Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son - "I do not, Kevaṭṭa, expound the Teaching to monks thus - 'Come, monks, perform a wonder of supernormal power through super-human achievement for the white-clothed laypeople.'"

For the third time, Kevaṭṭa, the householder's son, said this to the Blessed One - "I am not, venerable sir, disparaging the Blessed One; but I say thus - 'This Nālandā, venerable sir, is prosperous and flourishing, populous, crowded with people, and devoted to the Blessed One. It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would command a monk who would perform a wonder of supernormal power through super-human achievement. Thus this Nālandā would become even more devoted to the Blessed One.'"

The Wonder of Supernormal Power

483. "Kevaṭṭa, there are these three wonders that I have realised by direct knowledge myself and proclaimed. What three? The wonder of supernormal power, the wonder of mind-reading, the wonder of instruction.

484. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the wonder of supernormal power? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk experiences the various kinds of supernormal power. Having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; he appears and vanishes; he

goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, through mountains, just as through space; he dives in and out of the earth just as in water; he goes on water without breaking it just as on earth; he travels cross-legged through space just as a winged bird; he fondles and strokes with his hand even the moon and sun, so mighty and powerful; He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world.

"A certain faithful and devoted person sees that monk experiencing the various kinds of supernormal power - having been one, becoming many; having been many, becoming one; appearing and vanishing; going unhindered through walls, through ramparts, through mountains, just as through space; diving in and out of the earth just as in water; going on water without breaking it just as on earth; travelling cross-legged through space just as a winged bird; fondling and stroking with his hand even the moon and sun, so mighty and powerful; exercising mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world.

"That faithful and devoted person reports this to a certain faithless and undevoted person: 'Wonderful indeed, friend, marvellous indeed, friend, is the great power and great majesty of the ascetic. I saw that monk experiencing the various kinds of supernormal power - having been one, becoming many; having been many, becoming one; etc. exercising mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world.'

"That faithless and undevoted person might say to that faithful and devoted person thus: 'There is indeed, friend, a charm called Gandhārī. By means of that, the monk experiences the various kinds of supernormal power - having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; etc. he exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world.'

"What do you think, Kevaṭṭa, would not that faithless and undevoted person say thus to that faithful and devoted person?" "He would, venerable sir." "Seeing this danger in the wonder of supernormal power, Kevaṭṭa, I am troubled, ashamed, and disgusted by the wonder of supernormal power."

The Wonder of Mind-Reading

485. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the wonder of mind-reading? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk announces the mind of other beings, of other persons, announces the mental factors, announces what has been reflected upon, announces what has been considered - 'Thus is your mind, in this way is your mind, such is your thought.'

"A certain faithful and devoted person sees that monk announcing the mind of other beings, of other persons, announcing the mental factors, announcing what has been reflected upon, announcing what has been considered - 'Thus is your mind, in this way is your mind, such is your thought.' That faithful and devoted person reports this to a certain faithless and undevoted person: 'Wonderful indeed, friend, marvellous indeed, friend, is the great power and great majesty of the ascetic. I saw that monk announcing the mind of other beings, of other persons, announcing the mental factors, announcing what has been reflected upon, announcing what has been considered - "Thus is your mind, in this way is your mind, such is your thought.'"

"That faithless and undevoted person might say to that faithful and devoted person thus: 'There is indeed, friend, a charm called Maṇikā; by means of that, the monk

announces the mind of other beings, of other persons, announces the mental factors, announces what has been reflected upon, announces what has been considered - "Thus is your mind, in this way is your mind, such is your thought."

"What do you think, Kevaṭṭa, would not that faithless and undevoted person say thus to that faithful and devoted person?" "He would, venerable sir." "Seeing this danger in the wonder of mind-reading, Kevaṭṭa, I am troubled, ashamed, and disgusted by the wonder of mind-reading."

The Wonder of Instruction

486. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the wonder of instruction? Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk instructs thus: 'Think in this way, do not think in that way, attend to the mind in this way, do not attend to the mind in that way, abandon this, enter upon and dwell in this.' This is called, Kevaṭṭa, the wonder of instruction.

"Furthermore, Kevaṭṭa, here a Truth-finder arises in the world, a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One... etc. Thus, Kevaṭṭa, a monk is accomplished in morality... etc. he enters and dwells in the first meditative absorption. This too is called, Kevaṭṭa, the wonder of instruction... etc. the second meditative absorption, etc. the third meditative absorption... etc. he enters and dwells in the fourth meditative absorption. This too is called, Kevaṭṭa, the wonder of instruction... etc. he directs and inclines the mind towards knowledge and vision... etc. this too is called, Kevaṭṭa, the wonder of instruction... etc. He understands: 'There is no more of this state of being'... etc. this too is called, Kevaṭṭa, the wonder of instruction.

"These, Kevaṭṭa, are the three wonders that I have realised by direct knowledge myself and proclaimed."

The Story of the Monk Seeking the Cessation of the Elements

487. "Once in the past, Kevaṭṭa, in this very community of monks, this reflection arose in the mind of a certain monk: 'Where do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?'"

488. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk attained such a concentration that when his mind was concentrated, the path leading to the gods became manifest. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the gods (ruled by) the four great kings; having approached, he said this to the gods (ruled by) the four great kings - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?'"

"When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the gods (ruled by) the four great kings said this to that monk - 'We too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There are, monk, the four great kings who are more superior and more sublime than us. They would know this, where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

489. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the four great kings; having approached, he said this to the four great kings - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?' When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the four great kings said this to that monk - 'We too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There are, monk, gods called the Thirty-three who are more superior and more sublime than us. They would know this, where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

490. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the Thirty-three gods; having approached, he said this to the Thirty-three gods - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?' When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the Thirty-three gods said this to that monk - 'We too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There is, monk, Sakka, the lord of the gods, who is more superior and more sublime than us. He would know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

491. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached Sakka, the lord of the gods; having approached, he said this to Sakka, the lord of the gods - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?' When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, Sakka, the lord of the gods, said this to that monk - 'I too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There are, monk, gods called the Yāma gods... etc... the young god called Suyāma... gods called the Tusita gods... the young god called Santussita... gods called the Nimmānaratī gods... the young god called Sunimmita... gods called the Paranimmitavasavattī gods... the young god called Vasavattī who is more superior and more sublime than us. He would know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

492. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the young god Vasavattī; having approached, he said this to the young god Vasavattī - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?' When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the young god Vasavattī said this to that monk - 'I too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There are, monk, gods called the Brahmā's retinue who are more superior and more sublime than us. They would know this, where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

493. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk attained such a concentration that when his mind was concentrated, the path leading to Brahmā became manifest. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached the gods of Brahmā's company; having approached, he said this to

the gods of Brahmā's company - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?'" When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, the gods of Brahmā's company said this to that monk - 'We too, monk, do not know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. There is, monk, Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Overlord, the Unvanquished, the All-Seeing, the Wielder of Power, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Supreme, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and are to be, who is more superior and more sublime than us. He would know where these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element.'

'But where, friends, is that Great Brahmā now?' 'We too, monk, do not know where Brahmā is or in which direction Brahmā is or in which place Brahmā is; but, monk, when signs appear, light arises, and radiance becomes manifest, Brahmā will appear, for this is the advanced sign of Brahmā's manifestation, namely that light arises and radiance becomes manifest.' Then, Kevaṭṭa, that Great Brahmā appeared before long.

494. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk approached that Great Brahmā; having approached, he said this to that Great Brahmā - 'Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?' When this was said, Kevaṭṭa, that Great Brahmā said this to that monk - 'I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Overlord, the Unvanquished, the All-Seeing, the Wielder of Power, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Supreme, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and are to be.'

"For the second time, Kevaṭṭa, that monk said this to that Great Brahmā - 'I do not ask you thus, friend - "You are Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Overlord, the Unvanquished, the All-Seeing, the Wielder of Power, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Supreme, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and are to be." But thus I ask you, friend - "Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?"'

"For the second time, Kevaṭṭa, that Great Brahmā said this to that monk - 'I, monk, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Overlord, the Unvanquished, the All-Seeing, the Wielder of Power, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Supreme, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and are to be.' For the third time, Kevaṭṭa, that monk said this to that Great Brahmā - 'I do not ask you thus, friend - "You are Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Overlord, the Unvanquished, the All-Seeing, the Wielder of Power, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Supreme, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and are to be." But thus I ask you, friend - "Where, friends, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?"'

495. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that Great Brahmā, having taken that monk by the arm and led him aside, said this to that monk - 'These gods of Brahmā's company, monk, know me thus: "There is nothing unknown to Brahmā, there is nothing unseen by Brahmā, there is nothing not understood by Brahmā, there is nothing not realised by Brahmā." Therefore I did not answer in their presence. I too, monk, do not know where these

four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element. Therefore, monk, this is your wrong-doing, this is your failure, that you, having passed over that Blessed One, undertook a search outside for the answer to this question. Go, monk, having approached that very Blessed One, ask this question, and as the Blessed One answers you, so you should remember it.'

496. "Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk - just as a strong man might extend his bent arm or bend his extended arm, even so, having vanished from the Brahma world, he appeared before me. Then, Kevaṭṭa, that monk, having paid respect to me, sat down to one side. Seated to one side, Kevaṭṭa, that monk said this to me - 'Where, venerable sir, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?'"

The Simile of the Shore-Sighting Bird

497. "When this was said, I, Kevaṭṭa, said this to that monk: 'Once in the past, monk, seafaring merchants, having taken a shore-sighting bird, plunged into the ocean by boat. When the boat was out of sight of the shore, they released the shore-sighting bird. It goes to the eastern direction, goes to the southern direction, goes to the western direction, goes to the northern direction, goes to the zenith, goes to the intermediate directions. If it sees the shore all around, it goes just there. But if it does not see the shore all around, it returns to that very boat. Just so, monk, since searching as far as the Brahma world you did not find an answer to this question, you have returned to my presence. This question, monk, should not be asked thus: 'Where, venerable sir, do these four primary elements cease without remainder, as follows - the solid element, the liquid element, the heat element, and the air element?'"

498. "And this question, monk, should be asked thus:

'Where do water and earth, fire and air not stand fast;
Where do long and short, subtle and gross, beautiful and ugly;
Where do mentality and materiality entirely cease?'

499. "There is this explanation -

'Consciousness non-manifest, infinite, radiant from all sides;
Here water and earth, fire and air do not stand fast.

Here long and short, subtle and gross, beautiful and ugly;
Here mentality and materiality entirely cease;
With the cessation of consciousness, here this ceases.'

500. This is what the Blessed One said. Delighted, Kevaṭṭa, a householder's son, rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said.

The Discourse on Kevaṭṭa is concluded as eleventh.



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.

PDF Creation Date: 16 August 2026

HOW TO CITE

PaliVerse (2026). The Triple Canon. The Canon of Discourses. 1. The Collection of the Long Discourses. 1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality. 11. The Discourse to Kevaṭṭa Retrieved from paliverse.org

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