

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

2. The Canon of Discipline (2. Vinaya Piṭaka)

4. The Minor Chapter (4. Cūḷavaggapāḷi)

11. The Section on the (Recitation with) Five Hundred Monks (11. Pañcasatikakkhandhakaṃ)

[Kd 21, PTS 2.284-2.293]



PaliVerse

4. The Minor Chapter

11. The Section on the (Recitation with) Five Hundred Monks

1. The Origin of the Recitation

437. Then the Venerable Mahākassapa addressed the monks - "On one occasion, friends, I was travelling on the highway from Pāvā to Kusinārā together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks. Then I, friends, having turned aside from the road, sat down at the foot of a certain tree.

Now at that time a certain naked ascetic, having taken a mandārava flower from Kusinārā, was travelling on the highway to Pāvā. I saw, friends, that naked ascetic coming from afar. Having seen, I said this to that naked ascetic - 'Friend, do you know our Teacher?' 'Yes, friend, I know. Today, seven days ago, the ascetic Gotama attained final Nibbāna. From there this mandārava flower was taken by me.' 'There, friends, those monks who were not free from lust, some having raised their arms, wept, fell down as if cut off, rolled forward, rolled backward - 'Too soon the Blessed One has attained final Nibbāna, too soon the Fortunate One has attained final Nibbāna, too soon the eye in the world has disappeared.' But those monks who were without lust, they, mindful and fully aware, accepted it - 'Impermanent are activities, how could it be obtained here?'

Then I, friends, said this to those monks - 'Enough, friends, do not grieve; do not lament. Has this not been declared by the Blessed One beforehand, friends - there is separation, parting, and becoming otherwise from all that is dear and beloved. How could it be obtained here, friends, that what is born, come to be, conditioned, subject to disintegration, should not disintegrate - this is impossible.'

Now at that time, friends, one named Subhadda, gone forth in old age, was seated in that assembly. Then, friends, Subhadda, gone forth in old age, said this to those monks - 'Enough, friends, do not grieve; do not lament. We are well released from that Great Ascetic; we were troubled - "This is allowable for you, this is not allowable for you." But now we shall do whatever we wish, and what we do not wish, that we shall not do.' Come, friends, let us recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline. Before what is not the Teaching shines forth, the Teaching is obstructed; before what is not the monastic discipline shines forth, the monastic discipline is obstructed; before those who speak what is not the Teaching become powerful, those who speak what is the Teaching become weak; before those who speak what is not the monastic discipline become powerful, those who speak what is the monastic discipline become weak."

"Well then, venerable sir, let the elder monk select the monks." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa selected four hundred and ninety-nine Worthy Ones. The monks said this to the Venerable Mahākassapa - "This Venerable Ānanda, venerable sir, although a trainee, is incapable of going to bias through desire, hate, delusion, or fear. And

much of the Teaching and the monastic discipline has been learnt by him in the presence of the Blessed One. Well then, venerable sir, let the elder monk select the Venerable Ānanda as well." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa selected the Venerable Ānanda as well.

Then this occurred to the elder monks - "Where indeed should we recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline?" Then this occurred to the elder monks - "Rājagaha indeed has a large food resort and abundant lodgings. What if we, dwelling at Rājagaha for the rains retreat, were to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline. Other monks should not enter the rains retreat at Rājagaha."

Then the Venerable Mahākassapa informed the Community -

438. "Let the Community hear me, friends. If it is the proper time for the Community, the Community should authorise these five hundred monks - dwelling at Rājagaha for the rains retreat to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline, and other monks should not dwell at Rājagaha for the rains retreat. This is the motion.

"Let the Community hear me, friends. The Community authorises these five hundred monks - dwelling at Rājagaha for the rains retreat to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline, and other monks should not dwell at Rājagaha for the rains retreat. If the authorisation of these five hundred monks is agreeable to the venerable one - dwelling at Rājagaha for the rains retreat to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline, and other monks should not dwell at Rājagaha for the rains retreat - he should remain silent; he to whom it is not agreeable should speak.

"These five hundred monks have been authorised by the Community to dwell at Rājagaha for the rains retreat to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline, and other monks should not dwell at Rājagaha for the rains retreat. It is agreeable to the Community, therefore they are silent, thus I remember it."

Then the elder monks went to Rājagaha to recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline. Then this occurred to the elder monks - "The repair of broken and shattered portions has been praised by the Blessed One, friends. Come, friends, let us repair the broken and shattered portions during the first month; during the middle month, having assembled, we will recite together the Teaching and the monastic discipline."

Then the elder monks repaired the broken and shattered portions during the first month. Then the Venerable Ānanda thought: "Tomorrow is the assembly. It is not proper for me that I, being a trainee, should go to the assembly" - having spent much of the night with mindfulness of the body, towards the break of dawn, thinking "I will lie down," he inclined his body. And his head had not yet reached the pillow, and his feet were released from the ground. In this interval, his mind was liberated from the mental corruptions by non-clinging.

439. Then the Venerable Ānanda, being a Worthy One, went to the assembly. Then the Venerable Mahākassapa informed the Community -

"Let the Community hear me, friends. If it is the proper time for the Community, I would question Upāli about monastic discipline."

The Venerable Upāli informed the Community -

"Let the Community hear me, venerable sir. If it is the proper time for the Community, I, when asked by the Venerable Mahākassapa about monastic discipline, would answer."

Then the Venerable Mahākassapa said this to the Venerable Upāli - "Friend Upāli, where was the first expulsion laid down?" "At Vesālī, venerable sir." "Referring to whom?" "Referring to Sudinna the Kalanda's son." "In what case?" "In the case of sexual intercourse." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Upāli about the case of the first expulsion, and asked about the origin, and asked about the person, and asked about the regulation, and asked about the supplementary regulation, and asked about the offence, and asked about the non-offence. "But friend Upāli, where was the second expulsion laid down?" "At Rājagaha, venerable sir." "Referring to whom?" "Referring to Dhaniya the potter's son." "In what case?" "In the case of taking what is not given." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Upāli about the case of the second expulsion, and asked about the origin, and asked about the person, and asked about the regulation, and asked about the supplementary regulation, and asked about the offence, and asked about the non-offence. "But friend Upāli, where was the third expulsion laid down?" "At Vesālī, venerable sir." "Referring to whom?" "Referring to many monks." "In what case?" "In the case of a human body." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Upāli about the case of the third expulsion, and asked about the origin, and asked about the person, and asked about the regulation, and asked about the supplementary regulation, and asked about the offence, and asked about the non-offence. "But friend Upāli, where was the fourth expulsion laid down?" "At Vesālī, venerable sir." "Referring to whom?" "Referring to the monks dwelling on the bank of the Vaggumudā." "In what case?" "In the case of super-human achievement." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Upāli about the case of the fourth expulsion, and asked about the origin, and asked about the person, and asked about the regulation, and asked about the supplementary regulation, and asked about the offence, and asked about the non-offence. By this very means he asked about both Analyses. The Venerable Upāli answered each question as asked.

440. Then the Venerable Mahākassapa informed the Community -

"Let the Community hear me, friends. If it is the proper time for the Community, I would question Ānanda about the Teaching."

The Venerable Ānanda informed the Community -

"Let the Community hear me, venerable sir. If it is the proper time for the Community, I, when asked by the Venerable Mahākassapa about the Teaching, would answer."

Then the Venerable Mahākassapa said this to the Venerable Ānanda - "The Brahmajāla, friend Ānanda, where was it spoken?" "Between Rājagaha and Nāḷanda, venerable sir, at the royal rest-house at Ambalaṭṭhikā." "Referring to whom?" "The wandering ascetic Suppiya and the young man Brahmadatta." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Ānanda about the origin of the Brahmajāla and asked about the person. "But the Sāmaññaphala, friend Ānanda, where was it spoken?" "At Rājagaha, venerable sir, in Jīvaka's Mango Grove." "Together with

whom?" "Together with Ajātasattu Vedehiputta." Then the Venerable Mahākassapa asked the Venerable Ānanda about the origin of the Sāmaññaphala and asked about the person. By this very means he asked about all five Nikāyas. The Venerable Ānanda answered each question as asked.

2. The Discussion on the Lesser and Minor Training Rules

441. Then the Venerable Ānanda said this to the elder monks - "The Blessed One, venerable sirs, at the time of final Nibbāna said this to me - 'If it wishes, Ānanda, the monastic community may abolish the lesser and minor training rules after my passing.'" "But did you, friend Ānanda, ask the Blessed One - 'Which, venerable sir, are the lesser and minor training rules?'" "I did not, venerable sirs, ask the Blessed One - 'Which, venerable sir, are the lesser and minor training rules?'" "Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules." Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, setting aside the thirteen entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules." Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, setting aside the thirteen entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community, setting aside the two undetermined, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules." Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, setting aside the thirteen entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community, setting aside the two undetermined, setting aside the thirty expiations involving forfeiture, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules." Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, setting aside the thirteen entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community, setting aside the two undetermined, setting aside the thirty expiations involving forfeiture, setting aside the ninety-two expiations, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules." Some elder monks said thus - "Setting aside the four expulsions, setting aside the thirteen entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community, setting aside the two undetermined, setting aside the thirty expiations involving forfeiture, setting aside the ninety-two expiations, setting aside the four acknowledgements, the remaining are the lesser and minor training rules."

442. Then the Venerable Mahākassapa informed the Community -

"Let the Community hear me, friends. There are training rules of ours that have become known to householders. Even householders know - 'This is allowable for you ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, this is not allowable for you.' If we abolish the lesser and minor training rules, there will be those who will say - 'The training rule was laid down by the ascetic Gotama for disciples like smoke for a time. As long as their Teacher remained, they trained in the training rules. Since their Teacher attained final Nibbāna, now they do not train in the training rules.' If it is the proper time for the Community, the Community should not establish what has not been established, should not abolish what has been established, and should proceed having accepted the training rules as they were established. This is the motion.

"Let the Community hear me, friends. There are training rules of ours that have become known to householders. Even householders know - 'This is allowable for you ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, this is not allowable for you.' If we abolish the lesser

and minor training rules, there will be those who will say - 'The training rule was laid down by the ascetic Gotama for disciples like smoke for a time. As long as their Teacher remained, they trained in the training rules. Since their Teacher attained final Nibbāna, now they do not train in the training rules.' The Community does not establish what has not been established, does not abolish what has been established, and proceeds having accepted the training rules as they were established. If the non-establishment of what has not been established, the non-abolition of what has been established, and the proceeding having accepted the training rules as they were established is agreeable to the venerable one, he should remain silent; he to whom it is not agreeable should speak.

"The Community does not establish what has not been established, does not abolish what has been established, and proceeds having accepted the training rules as they were established. It is agreeable to the Community, therefore they are silent, thus I remember it."

443. Then the elder monks said this to the Venerable Ānanda - "This is a wrong-doing of yours, friend Ānanda, that you did not ask the Blessed One - 'Which, venerable sir, are the lesser and minor training rules?' Confess that wrong-doing." "I, venerable sir, through unmindfulness did not ask the Blessed One - 'Which, venerable sir, are the lesser and minor training rules?' I do not see that as a wrong-doing, but out of faith in the venerable ones I confess that wrong-doing." "This too is a wrong-doing of yours, friend Ānanda, that you sewed the Blessed One's cloth for the rains having stepped on it. Confess that wrong-doing." "I, venerable sir, sewed the Blessed One's cloth for the rains having stepped on it, but not out of disrespect. I do not see that as a wrong-doing, but out of faith in the venerable ones I confess that wrong-doing." "This too is a wrong-doing of yours, friend Ānanda, that you had women pay homage to the Blessed One's body first; while they were weeping, the Blessed One's body was smeared with tears. Confess that wrong-doing." "I, venerable sir - thinking 'Let them not be at an improper time' - had women pay homage to the Blessed One's body first. I do not see that as a wrong-doing, but out of faith in the venerable ones I confess that wrong-doing." "This too is a wrong-doing of yours, friend Ānanda, that when a gross sign was being made by the Blessed One, when a gross indication was being made, you did not request the Blessed One - 'Let the Blessed One remain for a cosmic cycle, let the Fortunate One remain for a cosmic cycle, for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' Confess that wrong-doing." "I, venerable sir, with my mind possessed by Māra, did not request the Blessed One - 'Let the Blessed One remain for a cosmic cycle, let the Fortunate One remain for a cosmic cycle, for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' I do not see that as a wrong-doing, but out of faith in the venerable ones I confess that wrong-doing." "This too is a wrong-doing of yours, friend Ānanda, that you made effort for a woman's going forth in the Teaching and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder. Confess that wrong-doing." "I, venerable sir, thinking 'This Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is the Blessed One's maternal aunt, his foster-mother, his nurse, the giver of milk; when the Blessed One's mother had died, she gave him her

breast milk,' made effort for a woman's going forth in the Teaching and discipline proclaimed by the Truth-finder. I do not see that as a wrong-doing, but out of faith in the venerable ones I confess that wrong-doing."

444. Now at that time the Venerable Purāṇa was wandering on a journey in the Southern Hills together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks. Then the Venerable Purāṇa, when the Teaching and the monastic discipline had been rehearsed by the elder monks, having dwelt in the Southern Hills as long as he liked, approached Rājagaha, the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground, and the elder monks; having approached, having exchanged friendly greetings with the elder monks, he sat down to one side. To the Venerable Purāṇa seated to one side, the elder monks said this: "The Teaching and the monastic discipline have been rehearsed by the elders, friend Purāṇa. Accept that rehearsal." "The Teaching and the monastic discipline have been well rehearsed by the elders, friends. But just as I heard face to face from the Blessed One, received face to face, just so I will remember it."

3. The Discussion on the Highest Penalty

445. Then the Venerable Ānanda said this to the elder monks - "The Blessed One, venerable sirs, at the time of final Nibbāna said this to me - 'Well then, Ānanda, let the Community, after my passing, impose the highest penalty on the monk Channa.'" "But did you, friend Ānanda, ask the Blessed One - 'But what, venerable sir, is the highest penalty?'" "I did indeed, venerable sirs, ask the Blessed One - 'But what, venerable sir, is the highest penalty?'" "The monk Channa, Ānanda, may say whatever he wishes. The monk Channa should not be spoken to by the monks, not be exhorted, not be instructed." "Well then, friend Ānanda, you yourself impose the highest penalty on the monk Channa." "How, venerable sirs, can I impose the highest penalty on the monk Channa? That monk is fierce and harsh." "Well then, friend Ānanda, go together with many monks." "Yes, venerable sirs," the Venerable Ānanda, having assented to the elder monks, together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks, went upstream to Kosambī by a boat going upstream; having descended from the boat, he sat down at the foot of a certain tree not far from King Udena's park. Now at that time King Udena was enjoying himself in the park together with his harem. King Udena's harem heard - "It seems our teacher, the noble Ānanda, is seated at the foot of a certain tree not far from the park." Then King Udena's harem said this to King Udena - "It seems, Sire, our teacher, the noble Ānanda, is seated at the foot of a certain tree not far from the park. We wish, Sire, to see the noble Ānanda." "Well then, go and see the ascetic Ānanda."

Then King Udena's harem approached the Venerable Ānanda; having approached, having paid respect to the Venerable Ānanda, they sat down to one side. To King Udena's harem seated to one side, the Venerable Ānanda instructed, encouraged, inspired, and gladdened them with a talk on the Teaching. Then King Udena's harem, having been instructed, encouraged, inspired, and gladdened by the Venerable Ānanda with a talk on the Teaching, gave five hundred upper robes to the Venerable Ānanda. Then King Udena's harem, having delighted in and given thanks for what the Venerable Ānanda had said, rose from their seats, paid respect to the Venerable Ānanda, circumambulated him keeping him on their right, and approached King Udena. King Udena saw the harem coming from afar. Having seen the harem, he said

this - "Did you see the ascetic Ānanda?" "We did see, Sire, the noble Ānanda." "Did you give anything to the ascetic Ānanda?" "We gave, Sire, five hundred upper robes to the noble Ānanda." King Udena grumbled, criticised, and complained - "How indeed could the ascetic Ānanda accept so many robes! Either the ascetic Ānanda will engage in cloth trade, or he will open a cloth shop!"

Then King Udena approached the Venerable Ānanda; having approached, he exchanged friendly greetings with the Venerable Ānanda. Having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, he sat down to one side. Seated to one side, King Udena said this to the Venerable Ānanda - "Did our harem-lady come here, dear Ānanda?" "Your harem-lady did come here, great king." "But did she give anything to the venerable Ānanda?" "She gave me five hundred upper robes, great king." "But what will the venerable Ānanda do with so many robes?" "I will share them with those monks who have worn-out robes, great king." "But what will you do with the old worn-out robes, dear Ānanda?" "We will make them into upper covers, great king." "But what will you do with the old upper covers, dear Ānanda?" "We will make them into mattress covers, great king." "But what will you do with the old mattress covers, dear Ānanda?" "We will make them into floor coverings, great king." "But what will you do with the old floor coverings, dear Ānanda?" "We will make them into mats for the feet, great king." "But what will you do with the old mats for the feet, dear Ānanda?" "We will make them into dusters, great king." "But what will you do with the old dusters, dear Ānanda?" "We will pound them, mix them with mud, and plaster the flooring, great king."

Then King Udena - thinking "All these ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, use things wisely, they do not let them go to waste" - gave another five hundred pieces of cloth to the Venerable Ānanda. And this was the first robe offering that arose for the Venerable Ānanda, a thousand robes. Then the Venerable Ānanda approached Ghosita's park; having approached, he sat down on the prepared seat. Then the Venerable Channa approached the Venerable Ānanda; having approached, he paid respect to the Venerable Ānanda and sat down to one side. To the Venerable Channa seated to one side, the Venerable Ānanda said this - "The highest penalty has been commanded upon you by the Community, friend Channa."

"But what highest penalty has been commanded, Venerable Ānanda?" "You, friend Channa, may say whatever you wish to the monks. You should not be spoken to by the monks, not be exhorted, not be instructed." "Am I not destroyed by this much, Venerable Ānanda, that I should not be spoken to by the monks, not be exhorted, not be instructed?" - right there he fainted and fell. Then the Venerable Channa, being troubled, ashamed, and disgusted by the highest penalty, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, soon realised for himself, with direct knowledge, in this very life, that unsurpassed consummation of the holy life for the sake of which sons of good family rightly go forth from home into homelessness; and, having entered upon it, he dwelt in it. He directly knew: "Birth is eliminated, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being." And the Venerable Channa became one of the Worthy Ones. Then the Venerable Channa, having attained arahantship, approached the Venerable Ānanda; having approached, he said this to the Venerable Ānanda - "Revoke the highest penalty for me now, Venerable Ānanda." "Inasmuch as, friend Channa, arahantship

has been realised by you, in this way the highest penalty has been revoked for you." Now at this recitation of the monastic discipline there were five hundred monks, neither less nor more. Therefore this recitation of the monastic discipline is called "The Recitation of the Five Hundred."

The Chapter on the Five Hundred is the eleventh.

In this chapter there are twenty-three cases.

Its summary:

When the Perfectly Enlightened One had attained final Nibbāna, the elder named Kassapa;
Addressed the group of monks, the protector of the Good Teaching;
On the highway from Pāvā, what was declared by Subhadda;
"We shall recite together the Good Teaching, before what is not the Teaching shines forth."

He selected four hundred and ninety-nine, and Ānanda too;
For the recitation of the Teaching and discipline, dwelling in the excellent cave.

He questioned Upāli about monastic discipline, and Ānanda the wise one about the discourses;
The three Canons they recited together, the disciples of the Conqueror.

He did not ask having stepped upon, he did not have him pay homage, nor did he request.

The going forth of womankind, through faith, are wrong-doings of mine;
Purāṇa and the highest penalty, the harem-lady together with Udena.

So many weak robes, upper coverings and mattresses;
Floor coverings and foot-wiping cloths, dust-cloths and mud-kneading.

A thousand robes arose, the first one named Ānanda;
Threatened by the highest penalty, he attained the four truths;
Five hundred became masters, therefore it is called "the Five Hundred."

The Chapter on the Five Hundred is concluded.



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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