

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

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

14. The Book of Birth Stories-1 (14. Jātakapāḷi-1)

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5. The Collection of Minor Texts

14. The Book of Birth Stories-1

13. The Book of the Thirteens

474. The Amba Birth Story (1)

- 1.** "You brought me mango fruits before, small and large, practitioner of the holy life;
With those very spells, now for you, tree fruits do not become manifest, Brahmā."
- 2.** I await the conjunction of the planets, not seeing a moment or minute in the charms;
And having obtained the conjunction of the planets and the moment, I shall certainly bring abundant mango fruit.
- 3.** He did not speak of the conjunction of the planets before, he did not tell of the moment or minute before;
He himself carried abundant mango fruit, endowed with colour, fragrance and flavour.
- 4.** For formerly by the mumbling of spells, tree fruits became manifest for you, Brahmā;
But today you cannot recite even the spell, what is this nature of yours today?
- 5.** The son of an outcast bestowed upon me, by the Teaching he declared the charms and their nature;
"Let not my name and clan be asked, if concealed, the charm would abandon its purpose."
- 6.** When I was asked by the lord of men among the people, overpowered by contempt, I spoke falsehood;
"These spells are from a brahmin," thus wrongly, having lost the spells, I cry miserably.
- 7.** Whether castor oil trees or margosa trees, or else coral trees;
One seeking honey may find honey, for that is the best tree for him.
- 8.** Warriors, brahmins, merchants, workers, outcasts and refuse-removers;
From whom one would learn the Teaching, for he is the highest of men for him.
- 9.** Having given this one punishment and beating, having seized him by the throat, drive out the contemptible one;

Who destroyed by conceit and arrogance the highest good obtained with difficulty.

- 10.** Just as one imagining it to be level might fall into a pit, a cave, a hell, or a rotten-footed place;
Or thinking "a rope" might tread upon a black snake, just as a blind man might step upon fire;
Thus too, knowing me to have stumbled, O wise one, give again to one whose charm has been abandoned.
- 11.** By the Teaching I gave you the sacred hymn, and you too received it by the Teaching;
Delighted, I also praised your nature, one established in the Teaching, the sacred hymn should not abandon him.
- 12.** The fool who destroyed the sacred hymn obtained with difficulty, which is rare today in the human world;
Although having obtained it, lacking wisdom to live, he destroyed it by speaking falsehood.
- 13.** To a fool, a confused one, an ungrateful one, one speaking falsehood, one unrestrained;
We do not give charms to such a one, whence charms? Go, you do not please me.

The Amba Birth Story is the first.

475. The Phandana Birth Story (2)

- 14.** A man with axe in hand, having entered the forest you stand;
Being asked by me, my dear, tell me, what wood do you wish to cut?
- 15.** You, bear, roam the forests, both even and uneven;
Being asked by me, my dear, tell me, what wood is firm for the rim?
- 16.** Neither sal nor acacia, nor assakaṇṇa, whence then dhava;
But the tree named phandana, that wood is firm for the rim.
- 17.** What kind are its leaves, or else what kind is its trunk?
Being asked by me, my dear, tell me, so that we may know the phandana tree.
- 18.** Whose branches hang down, bend but do not break;
That tree is named phandana, at whose root I stood.
- 19.** For the spokes, the wheel-nave, and the pole, the rim, and the rest of the chariot;
For all of that, this phandana tree will be fit for work.
- 20.** Thus the Phandana tree too, at that very moment, spoke;
"I too have a word, Bhāradvāja, listen to me.

- 21.** From the shoulder of the bear, having cut off four inches;
With that he extended the rim, thus it would be stronger.
- 22.** Thus the Phandana tree too, revenged at that very moment;
And brought suffering to the bears, both born and unborn.
- 23.** Thus Phandana envied Issa, and Issa in turn envied Phandana;
Through mutual contention, they had each other killed.
- 24.** Just so among human beings, wherever a dispute arises;
They dance the peacock dance, as did those jealous quails.
- 25.** This I say to you, may you be blessed, as many as are assembled here;
Rejoice together, do not quarrel, do not be like jealous quails.
- 26.** One should train in concord, this is praised by the Buddha;
Delighting in concord, established in the Teaching, he does not fall from
freedom from bondage.

The Phandana Birth Story is the second.

476. The Javanahamsa Birth Story (3)

- 27.** Alight right here, O swan, your sight is dear to me;
You have arrived as lord, declare whatever is here.
- 28.** By hearing, some become dear to one, but having seen, for another desire
departs;
Having seen and having heard, some become dear, I wonder, are you dear to
me by seeing?
- 29.** By hearing you are dear to me, and even more so having come to seeing;
Thus agreeable to behold to me, dwell, O swan, near me.
- 30.** We would live in your house, always honoured and revered;
But once intoxicated you might say, "Let them cook the king of swans for me."
- 31.** Shame on that drinking of intoxicants, which was more dear to me than you;
And I shall not drink intoxicants, as long as you dwell in my house.
- 32.** Easily understood is the cry of jackals and of birds;
The cry of humans, O king, is more difficult to understand than that.
- 33.** Even if a man imagines, "A relative, a friend, or a companion";
He who formerly was glad, afterwards becomes an enemy.
- 34.** In whom the mind settles, even together he is not far;
Even near, indeed, he is far, in whom the mind does not settle.
- 35.** Even inside he is with a gladdened mind, across the ocean with a gladdened
mind;

Even inside he is with a corrupted mind, across the ocean with a corrupted mind.

- 36.** Those who are enemies, though living together, live apart, O bull among charioteers;
The peaceful, though far away, live together in mind, O increaser of the realm.
- 37.** By dwelling too long, the dear one becomes disagreeable;
Having informed you, we go, before we become disagreeable to you.
- 38.** If thus, when we are entreating, you do not understand our joined palms;
You do not heed the word of us, your mindful attendants;
Thus we entreat you, may you again make a turn.
- 39.** If we dwell thus, there will be no obstacle;
For you too, great king, and for me, increaser of the realm;
Perhaps we may see each other, with the passing of days and nights.

The Javanahamṣa Birth Story is the third.

477. The Cūḷanārada Birth Story (4)

- 40.** No firewood has been split by you, no water has been brought by you;
The fire too has not been lit by you, why do you brood like a fool?
- 41.** I am not able to dwell in the forest, Kassapa, I address you;
Painful is dwelling in the wilderness, I wish to go to the country.
- 42.** So that I, having gone from here, dwelling in whatever province;
Might learn the good conduct, O Brahmā, instruct me in that teaching.
- 43.** If, having abandoned the forest, and the roots and fruits of the woods,
You prefer dwelling in the realm, listen to that teaching from me.
- 44.** Do not partake of poison, avoid the precipice;
And do not sink in the mud, wander cautiously near the venomous snake.
- 45.** What now is poison or a precipice, or mire for the practitioner of the holy life;
Whom do you call a venomous snake? Tell me this when asked.
- 46.** Mental corruption, dear son, in the world, is called intoxicating liquor;
Delightful, fragrant, lovely, sweet, like the flavour of honey;
That the noble ones call poison, Nārada, to the holy life.
- 47.** Women, dear son, in the world, they crush the heedless;
They carry away the mind of a youth, as the wind carries away fallen cotton;
This is declared a precipice to the holy life, Nārada.
- 48.** Material gain, praise, honour, and veneration among other families;
This is declared a mire to the holy life, Nārada.

- 49.** Dear son, kings bearing weapons dwell on this earth;
Such lords of men, great ones, dear son, Nārada.
- 50.** Of lords, of rulers, one should not walk at their feet;
This is declared a venomous snake to the holy life, Nārada.
- 51.** Needing food, at mealtime, whatever house one might approach;
Whatever one knows here to be wholesome, there one should wander seeking food.
- 52.** Having entered another's family, for the purpose of drink or for food;
One should eat measuredly, consume measuredly, and not set one's mind on form.
- 53.** The cow-shed, intoxicants, and the junglemen, assembly halls and gambling places;
Avoid from afar, like a charioteer an uneven path.

The Cūṭanārada Birth Story is the fourth.

478. The Dūta Birth Story (5)

- 54.** I sent messengers to you, Brahmin, while you were meditating on the bank of the Ganges;
When asked by them, you did not explain; is your suffering considered a secret?
- 55.** If suffering should arise for you, O increaser of the Kāsi realm;
Do not tell it to one, who would not release you from suffering.
- 56.** Whoever could release him who is born to suffering, even from one factor in parts;
By the Teaching, surely declare it to him.
- 57.** Easily understood is the cry of jackals and of birds;
The cry of humans, O king, is more difficult to understand than that.
- 58.** Even if a man imagines, "A relative, a friend, or a companion";
He who formerly was glad, afterwards becomes an enemy.
- 59.** Whoever, without being asked, would declare his own suffering at an inappropriate time;
His friends become joyful, those seeking his welfare become unhappy.
- 60.** Having known the time for such a one, having understood the wise one to be of one mind;
The wise one should tell his sharp sufferings to another, he should utter smooth speech that is meaningful.
- 61.** And if one should know it unbearable for oneself, these indeed are not for my coming to happiness;

The wise one alone should endure sharp sufferings, looking to truth and shame and moral fear.

- 62.** I, wandering through countries, to market towns and royal cities;
Begging alms, great king, desiring wealth for my teacher.
- 63.** From householders, royal servants, and wealthy brahmins;
I obtained seven gold coins, O lord of people;
They are lost to me, great king, therefore I grieve exceedingly.
- 64.** Those men, great king, were considered in my mind;
They were not able to release me from suffering, therefore I did not speak to them.
- 65.** And you indeed, great king, were considered by me in mind;
You are able to release me from suffering, therefore I declared to you.
- 66.** To him, with a pleased mind, the increaser of the Kāsi realm gave;
Fourteen gold coins made of gold.

The Dūta Birth Story is the fifth.

479. The Kāliṅgabodhi Birth Story (6)

- 67.** King Kāliṅga, the wheel-turning monarch, ruling the earth by the Teaching;
Went near the Bodhi tree, with a serpent of great majesty.
- 68.** Kāliṅga Bhāradvāja, having examined the region where King Kāliṅga, son of ascetics,
Was turning the wheel, with joined palms said this.
- 69.** Descend, great king, as this piece of ground has been praised by ascetics;
Here the unsurpassed Buddhas, the fully awakened ones, shine.
- 70.** Turned to the right, the grasses and creepers in this piece of land;
The ornament at the navel of the earth, thus have we heard in the charms,
great king.
- 71.** Of the earth bounded by the ocean, the ground that supports all beings;
This is the ornament of the earth, having descended, pay homage.
- 72.** Those elephants that are well-born and noble tuskers;
in this way, those elephants indeed do not approach that place.
- 73.** The elephant is well-born indeed, send forth the tusked elephant;
To this extent is the place that can be approached by the elephant.
- 74.** Having heard that, King Kāliṅga, having attended to the word of the interpreter;
Sent the elephant, "We shall know whether this word of his is true."

- 75.** And sent forth by the king, the elephant, having trumpeted like a heron;
Having drawn back, sat down, like one not enduring a heavy burden.
- 76.** Kāliṅga Bhāradvāja, having understood that the elephant's life was exhausted;
Hastening, he addressed King Kāliṅga;
"Mount another elephant, the elephant's life is exhausted, great king."
- 77.** Having heard that, Kāliṅga, crossing over, approached the elephant;
When he had crossed over to the wilderness, the elephant right there fell to
the ground;
The word of the interpreter, just as it was, so was the elephant.
- 78.** King Kāliṅga said this to the brahmin Kāliṅga;
"You alone are the Enlightened by himself, omniscient, all-seeing."
- 79.** Not consenting to that, the brahmin said this to Kāliṅga;
"For we are interpreters of marks, the Buddhas are omniscient, great king."
- 80.** The omniscient, the all-knowing, the Buddhas do not know by characteristics;
For we know by the power of scripture, the Buddhas understand all.
- 81.** Having celebrated the highest enlightenment, with various musical
instruments being played;
Having brought garlands and ointments, then the king approached his
parents.
- 82.** Sixty thousand cartloads of flowers, he gathered together;
King Kāliṅga honoured the unsurpassed site of enlightenment.

The Kāliṅgabodhi Birth Story is the sixth.

480. The Akitti Birth Story (7)

- 83.** Having seen Akitti meditating, Sakka, the lord of beings, spoke;
"Aspiring to what, Great Brahmā, do you meditate alone in the heat?"
- 84.** Rebirth is suffering, Sakka, and the breaking of the body;
Death in confusion is suffering, therefore I strive, Vāsava.
- 85.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 86.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
By which sons and wife, wealth and grain, and dear things;
Having obtained, men are not satisfied, may that greed not dwell in me.
- 87.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 88.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
Field, site, and unwrought gold, cattle and horses, slaves and servants;

That hate by which, when arisen, they decay - may it not dwell in me.

- 89.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 90.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
May I not see a fool, may I not hear one, may I not dwell with a fool;
May I not engage in conversation with a fool, may I not do so nor approve of it.
- 91.** What did the fool do to you, tell, Kassapa, the reason;
By what, Kassapa, do you not long for the seeing of the fool.
- 92.** The imprudent one leads to calamity, engages in what is not his duty;
He is hard to guide to what is better, when rightly spoken to he becomes angry;
He does not know the discipline, good is not seeing him.
- 93.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 94.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
May I see the wise, may I hear the wise, may I dwell together with the wise;
May I have conversation with the wise, may I do that and may I approve of that.
- 95.** What did the wise one do to you, tell, Kassapa, the reason;
By what, Kassapa, do you long for the seeing of the wise one.
- 96.** The wise one leads by the right method, does not engage in what is not his duty;
He is easy to guide to what is better, when rightly spoken to he does not become angry;
He understands the discipline, good is meeting with him.
- 97.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 98.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
Then at the end of the night, towards the rising of the sun;

May divine foods appear, and may the beggars be virtuous.
- 99.** "May my giving not be exhausted, having given may I not regret;
While giving may I gladden the mind, this boon I would wish for, Sakka."
- 100.** Since this has been well spoken by you, fitting and well said;
I grant you a boon, Kassapa, whatever you wish in your mind.
- 101.** If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
May you not approach me again, this boon I would wish for, Sakka.

- 102.** Through many ascetic practices, men and also women;
Long for seeing me, what fear is there for me in being seen?
- 103.** Having seen such divine beauty, endowed with all sensual pleasures;
I might be negligent in austere asceticism, this is the fear for me in seeing you.

The Akitti Birth Story is the seventh.

481. The Takkāriya Birth Story (8)

- 104.** I myself spoke insulting speech, a fool, like a frog in the forest calling out to a snake;
O Takkārī, I fall into this pit, indeed one who speaks excessively is not good.
- 105.** A mortal who speaks excessively attains imprisonment, murder, sorrow and lamentation;
You should censure only yourself here, teacher, for which reason they bury you in a pit.
- 106.** Why indeed did I inquire of Tuṇḍila, that he might make his own brother in Kāḷikā;
Naked indeed am I, having lost even a pair of clothes, this meaning too is just like many others.
- 107.** A quail, not fighting, flew down between the fighting rams;
It was crushed there by the rams' heads, this meaning too is just like many others.
- 108.** Four people grabbed a canvas, while guarding one man;
All of them lay with broken heads, this meaning too is just like many others.
- 109.** Just as a goat bound in a bamboo thicket, while throwing down her hind legs, went into the middle of a sword;
By that very thing her throat was cut, this meaning too is just like many others.
- 110.** These are not gods nor sons of gandhabbas, these beasts have come under my control;
Let them cook one for the evening meal, and let them cook one again for the morning meal.
- 111.** A hundred thousand insulting speeches are not worth even a fraction of a well-spoken word;
Insulting speech passing over is a defilement, therefore the kinnara women remain silent, not through folly.
- 112.** "She who spoke this to me, release her, and let them take her to the Himalaya mountain;
And let them give this one to the kitchen, right early let them cook her for the morning meal."

- 113.** Cattle have the rain-cloud as protector, this generation has cattle as protector;
You are my protector, great king, I am the protector of my wife;

Having known one of the two, freed one would go to the mountain.

- 114.** Indeed, blame cannot be easily avoided, various people should be cultivated,
O lord of men;
By whatever one obtains praise, by that very thing another obtains a blamer.

- 115.** The whole world is encompassed by mind, surpassed by mind, the whole world
is possessed of mind in its own mind;
All beings separately have their own minds, far and wide, who here does not
come under the control of mind?

- 116.** The kinnara with his wife was silent, who now spoke out, frightened of fear;
He is now released, happy, healthy, speech indeed is beneficial for people.

The Takkāriya Birth Story is the eighth.

482. The Rurumigarāja Birth Story (9)

- 117.** To him I give an excellent village, and adorned women;
Whoever tells me of this deer, the best of deer among deer.
- 118.** Give me an excellent village, and adorned women;
I will tell you of the deer, the best of deer among deer.
- 119.** In this jungle thicket, mango trees and sal trees are in bloom;
Covered with red insects, here this deer stands.
- 120.** Having made the bow unerring, he armed himself with an arrow and
approached;
And the deer, having seen the king, addressed him from afar.
- 121.** Wait, great king, do not shoot me, O bull among charioteers;
Who then told you this, that here this deer stands?
- 122.** This man of evil conduct, my dear, stands far away;
He told me this, that here this deer stands.
- 123.** "Truly indeed thus they said, some men here;
A piece of wood rescued is better, but not indeed some men."
- 124.** What now, Ruru, do you censure among beasts, what among birds, or what
among humans?
For fear, not small, finds me, having heard you speaking human speech.
- 125.** Whom I rescued while being swept along in the torrent, in the great water, the
stream with swift current;
On that account fear has come to me, painful indeed, O king, is the meeting
with the unvirtuous.

- 126.** I release this four-winged bird, the body-cutter, into the heart;
I kill that betrayer of friends, the wrongdoer, who does not know such a deed done.
- 127.** O lord of men, the peaceful do not ever praise the murder of the wise or the fool;
Let the one of bad character go freely to his home, and whatever was promised to him, give that to him;
And I will be one who does your will.
- 128.** Surely, Ruru, you are one among the good, who did not betray the man who betrayed;
Let the one of bad character go freely to his home, and whatever was promised to him, that I give to him;
And I grant you freedom to roam as you wish.
- 129.** Easily understood is the cry of jackals and of birds;
The cry of humans, O king, is more difficult to understand than that.
- 130.** Even if a man imagines, "A relative, a friend, or a companion";
He who formerly was glad, afterwards becomes an enemy.
- 131.** The country-folk have assembled, and the townspeople have assembled;
The beasts are eating the crops, may Your Majesty ward them off.
- 132.** Let the country be lost, and let the kingdom also perish;
But I would never betray the ruru deer, having given the gift of safety.
- 133.** Let the country be lost, and let the kingdom also perish;
But I would never speak falsely, having given a boon to the king of beasts.

The Rurumigarāja Birth Story is the ninth.

483. The Sarabhamiga Birth Story (10)

- 134.** A person should indeed hope, a wise one should not become weary;
I see myself, as I wished, so it came to be.
- 135.** A person should indeed hope, a wise one should not become weary;
I see myself lifted from the water to dry land.
- 136.** A person should indeed strive, a wise one should not become weary;
I see myself, as I wished, so it came to be.
- 137.** A person should indeed strive, a wise one should not become weary;
I see myself lifted from the water to dry land.
- 138.** Even a wise man brought to suffering should not cut off hope for the coming of happiness;
For many contacts, harmful and beneficial, come upon a mortal unthought of.

- 139.** The unthought-of comes to be, the thought-out perishes;
For wealth is not made of thought, whether for woman or man.
- 140.** The deer in the mountain fortress, which you followed before;
You live by the heroism of one whose mind is not sluggish.
- 141.** He who lifted you up from the difficult passage of hell, the sarabha deer having
made a contrivance with a stone;
Released you from the mouth of death when brought to suffering, you speak
of that deer of unshrunk mind.
- 142.** Were you yourself there at that time, or did someone tell you this?
Are you one with the covering removed, all-seeing? Is your knowledge,
brahmin, of fearsome form?
- 143.** I was not there at that time, nor did anyone tell me this;
The wise bring the meaning of well-spoken verses and stanzas, O lord of men.
- 144.** Having taken the arrow fitted with feathers, the destroyer of others' energy,
on the bow, why do you doubt?
Let the released arrow quickly strike the deer, for this is food, O wise one, for
the king.
- 145.** Surely I too understand this, the deer is food for the warrior, brahmin;
And honouring what was done before, therefore I do not kill the deer, the
sarabha.
- 146.** This is not a deer, great king, this is a titan, a lord of the land;
Having killed him, O lord of men, may you become the lord of the immortals.
- 147.** And if you, O king, doubt whether to kill the deer, the sarabha, your friend;
Together with your sons and wife, O foremost hero among men, you will go to
Yama's Vetaraṇī river.
- 148.** Surely I, and all the country-folk, sons and wives and groups of friends;
Let us go to that Vetaraṇī of Yama, but he who is my life-preserver should not
be killed.
- 149.** This deer, to me who had fallen into distress, alone, was a helper in the terrible
waterless place;
Remembering such a former service, knowing it, Great Brahmā, how could I kill
him?
- 150.** Delighting friends, may you live long, govern this kingdom with the qualities of
the teaching;
Attended upon by groups of women, may you rejoice in the realm like Vāsava
in heaven.
- 151.** Without wrath, with a mind constantly serene, having become ready to comply
with all guests' requests;

Having given and enjoyed according to one's ability, blameless, go to the heavenly state.

The Sarabhamiga Birth Story is the tenth.

The Book of Thirteens is concluded.

Its summary:

Vara, Amba, Kuṭhāri, with Haṃsa, Vara, then in the forest, with Dūtaka as the fifth;

Then Bodhi, Akitti, with Sutakkari, then Ruru, Miga, and after that Sarabha.



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 (Ṭīkā), 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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