

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 -
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09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns (09. Therīgāthā-
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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns

16. The Great Book

1. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sumedhā

450-524. In the Great Section, the verses of the Elder Nun Sumedhā beginning with "In the city of Mantāvātī" and so on. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, carefully accumulating the requisites for deliverance, in the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, having been reborn in a family home, having attained discretion, being of one intention together with her own friends who were daughters of good families, having had a great park built, she dedicated it to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha. She, by that meritorious action, upon the collapse of the body, went to Tāvatiṃsa. There, having experienced heavenly success as long as life lasted, having passed away from there, she was reborn among the Yāma gods. Having passed away from there among the Tusita gods, having passed away from there among the gods who delight in creation, having passed away from there among the gods who control what is created by others - thus, having arisen gradually in the five sensual heavens, having become the chief queen of the kings of gods in each place, having passed away from there, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, having become the daughter of a millionaire of great wealth, having gradually attained discretion, having become devoted to the Dispensation, she performed lofty meritorious action dedicated to the Triple Gem.

There, having been one who lives by the Teaching for as long as life lasted, delighting in wholesome qualities, having passed away from there, having been reborn among the Tāvatiṃsa gods, wandering again and again only in fortunate destinations, in this arising of a Buddha, she was reborn as the daughter of a king named Koṇca in the city of Mantāvātī. Her mother and father gave her the name Sumedhā. When she had gradually reached the time of growth and come of age, her mother and father consulted together saying "We shall give her to a king named Anikaratta in the city of Vāraṇavatī." She, however, from childhood onwards, having gone to the nuns' quarters together with princesses of the same age and female slave attendants, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the nuns, because of having formed an aspiration since a long time ago, with a sense of urgency arisen regarding the round of rebirths, having become devoted to the Dispensation, at the time of coming of age, her mind was turned away from sensual pleasures. Therefore she, having heard the consultation of her mother and father and relatives, said "I have no need for the household life; I shall go forth." Her mother and father, urging her towards the household life, even though requesting in various ways, were not able to convince her. She, thinking "Thus it is possible for me to go forth," having taken a sword, having herself cut her own hair, applying attention to repulsiveness with reference to that very hair, because of having formed an aspiration there in the past and because

of having previously heard the method of attention in the presence of the nuns, having produced the sign of foulness, she attained the first meditative absorption therein. And having attained the first meditative absorption, making her mother and father who had come to urge her towards the household life the starting point, having caused the inner household, the retinue, and the entire royal family to become devoted to the Dispensation, having gone out from the house, having gone to the nuns' quarters, she went forth. And having gone forth, having established insight, with properly matured knowledge, because the qualities that ripen liberation had been distinguished, before long she attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"In the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, in a newly established monastery for the Community;
We three friends, women, gave the gift of a dwelling."

"Ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times, and ten thousand times;
We were reborn among the gods, what then to say of among human beings.

"Among the gods we were of great supernormal power, what then to say of in the human realm;
I was the chief queen of one with the seven treasures, I was the woman treasure.

"Here we who have accumulated wholesome deeds, offspring of very prosperous families;
Dhanañjānī and Khemā and I too, three people.

"Having made a well-crafted park, adorned with all its parts;
Having dedicated it to the Community headed by the Buddha, we rejoiced.

"Wherever I am reborn, owing to that action;
I attained the foremost position among the gods, and likewise among human beings.

"In this very cosmic cycle, a kinsman of Brahma of great fame;
Kassapa by clan, the best of speakers arose.

"The attendant of the great sage, then was the lord of men;
The King of Kāśi named Kikī, in the best city of Bārāṇasī.

"He had seven daughters, princesses delicately nurtured;
Devoted to attending upon the Buddha, they lived the holy life.

"Having become their companion, well grounded in morality;
Having given gifts thoroughly, I practised religious duty while still in the household.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvātimsa.

"Passed away from there, I went to the Yāma realm, from there I went to Tusita;
From there to Nimmānarati, and to the city of Vasavatti.

"Wherever I am reborn, endowed with meritorious deeds;
There in each place, I attained the status of chief queen of kings.

Passed away from there to human existence, of universal monarchs,
And of regional kings, I attained the status of chief queen.

"Having experienced success, among gods and humans;
Having been happy everywhere, I wandered in the round of rebirths through many births.

"That is the cause, that is the production, that is the root, that same is the acceptance in the Dispensation;
That is the first combination, that is Nibbāna for one delighted in the Dhamma.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, all existences have been uprooted;
Like a she-elephant having cut the bond, I dwell without mental corruptions.

"Indeed welcome it was for me, in the presence of the Buddha, the foremost;
The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled.

"The four analytical knowledges, and these eight deliverances;
The six higher knowledges have been realised, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

450. "In the city of Mantāvatī, of King Koṇca's chief queen;
I was the daughter Sumedhā, gladdened by those who practise the teaching.
451. "Virtuous, of varied discourse, very learned, disciplined in the Buddha's teaching;
Having approached her mother and father, she speaks: "Both of you, listen.
452. "I am fond of Nibbāna, non-eternal is existence even if divine;
How much less then hollow sensual pleasures, of little enjoyment and much vexation.
453. "Sensual pleasures are bitter, like venomous snakes, in which fools are infatuated;
They, consigned to hell for a long time, are afflicted and destroyed.
454. "Those of evil deeds grieve, in the nether world, ever increasing in evil;
Unrestrained by body and by speech, and by mind, the foolish.

455. "Those fools are unwise, senseless, obstructed by the origin of suffering;
Not knowing when it is being taught, they do not understand the noble truths.
456. "The truths, mother, taught by the Excellent Buddha, those who do not know
them are the majority;
They delight in existence, they long for rebirth among the gods.
457. "Even rebirth among the gods is non-eternal, in existence that is
impermanent;
Yet fools do not tremble, at being born again and again.
458. "The four nether worlds, and the two destinations are obtained with difficulty;
And for those gone to the nether worlds, there is no going forth in the hells.
459. "Both of you, allow me to go forth in the teaching of the Ten-Powered One;
Living at ease, I shall strive for the abandoning of birth and death.
460. "What is the use of rejoicing in existence, in this body, a heap of misery,
without substance;
For the cessation of craving for existence, allow me, I shall go forth.
461. "The arising of Buddhas has been avoided, the inopportune moment, the
moment has been obtained;
The moralities, the holy life, for as long as life lasts I would not corrupt.
462. Thus speaks Sumedhā to her mother and father: "I will not take food so long;
As a householder, I shall be one gone under the power of death."
463. The mother, afflicted, weeps, and the father;
His face altogether stricken with tears;
They strive to convince her, fallen on the ground on the upper floor of the
mansion.
464. "Get up, dear child, what is the use of grieving? You have been given to
Vāraṇavatī;
King Anīkaratta is handsome, to him you have been given.
465. "You will become the chief queen, the wife of King Anikaratta;
The moralities, the holy life, going forth is difficult to do, dear son.
466. "In the kingdom there is command, wealth and sovereignty, pleasures are
pleasant, you are young;
Enjoy sensual pleasures, let there be a proposal of marriage for you, child."
467. Then Sumedhā speaks to them: "Let there not be such things, existence is
without substance;
Either there will be going forth, or death for me - I will certainly not accept a
proposal of marriage."
468. "Why would I, like a worm, enter this putrid body, impure, with the odour of

discharge, a frightful corpse,
A bellows, more than once trickling, full of impurity?

469. "Why would I, knowing this, like a worm, exceedingly repulsive, smeared with flesh and blood,
A dwelling for a multitude of worms, food for birds - why is this corpse given?"
470. "It is carried to the cemetery, before long this body devoid of consciousness;
Discarded like a log, by relatives who are disgusted.
471. "Having thrown it away in the cemetery, food for others, they bathe in disgust;
Even one's own mother and father, how much more than the common populace.
472. "Attached to the unessential, to the body, a combination of bones and sinews;
Full of spittle, excrement, and urine, in the putrid body.
473. "Whoever, having separated it, would turn its inside outward;
Not enduring the odour, even one's own mother would be disgusted.
474. "Aggregates, elements, sense bases, conditioned, rooted in birth, suffering;
Wisely investigating, why should I wish for a proposal of marriage?
475. "Day by day three hundred spears, ever fresh, might fall upon the body;
Even a hundred years of slaughter would be better, if thus there were destruction of suffering.
476. "One should accept slaughter, having thus understood the Teacher's word;
Long is the wandering in the round of rebirths for those being slain again and again.
477. Among gods and human beings, in the animal realm and the titan host;
Among ghosts and in the hells, countless destructions are seen.
478. "Many are the destructions in the hells, for one gone to the nether worlds,
being oppressed;
Even among the gods there is no protection, there is nothing beyond the happiness of Nibbāna.
479. "They have attained Nibbāna, those who are devoted to the teaching of the Ten-Powered One;
Living at ease, they strive for the abandoning of birth and death.
480. "This very day, father, I shall go forth; what use are possessions without substance?
Sensual pleasures are wearisome to me, like vomit, made like the site of a palm tree.
481. She thus speaks to her father, and Anīkaratta to whom she was given;

He approached Vāraṇavatī, when the time for the marriage proposal had arrived.

482. Then Sumedhā, having cut with a sword her hair, black, thick, and soft;
Having closed the mansion, she attained the first meditative absorption.
483. And while she was attained there, Anīkaratta came to the city;
And in the mansion Sumedhā well develops the perception of impermanence.
484. And while she attends in mind, Anīkaratta ascended quickly;
With limbs adorned with jewels and gold, with joined palms he requests
Sumedhā.
485. "In the kingdom there is command, wealth and sovereignty, pleasures are
pleasant, you are young;
Enjoy sensual pleasures, sensual happiness is rare in the world.
486. "The kingdom has been handed over to you, enjoy the wealth, give gifts;
Do not be unhappy, your mother and father are distressed.
487. To him Sumedhā speaks, not desiring sensual pleasures, with delusion gone:
"Do not delight in sensual pleasures, see the danger in sensual pleasures.
488. "King Mandhātā, ruler of the four continents, was the foremost among those
who enjoy sensual pleasures;
Unsatisfied he died, and his desire was not fulfilled.
489. "Even if the seven treasures were to rain down, the rain-cloud spreading over
the ten directions all around;
There is no satisfaction in sensual pleasures, men die unsatisfied.
490. "Sensual pleasures are like a butcher's block, sensual pleasures are like a
snake's head;
Like a torch they burn, resembling a skeleton.
491. "Impermanent, inconstant are sensual pleasures, much suffering, great
poison;
Like a heated iron ball, they are the root of misery, with suffering as their fruit.
492. "Sensual pleasures are like tree fruits, like a slice of flesh, painful;
Like a dream, deceptive, sensual pleasures are like borrowed goods.
493. "Sensual pleasures are like stakes of spears, disease, boil, misery, trouble;
Like a pit of embers, root of misery, fear, murder.
494. "Thus sensual pleasures have much suffering, declared as obstructive;
Go, I have no trust in existence for myself.
495. "What will another do for me, when my own head is burning?
When ageing and death are pursuing, one must strive for its destruction.

496. "Having opened the door, I saw my mother and father and Anīkaratta;
Seated on the ground, weeping, I said this.
497. "Long is the wandering in the round of rebirths for the foolish, and for those
weeping again and again;
Without discernible beginning, at the death of a father, at the murder of a
brother, and at the murder of oneself.
498. "Tears, mother's milk, blood, the round of rebirths without discernible
beginning, remember;
Of beings transmigrating, remember also the accumulation of bones.
499. Remember the four oceans, brought as comparison for tears, mother's milk,
and blood;
Remember the accumulation of bones of one cosmic cycle, equal to Vipula.
500. "For one transmigrating without discernible beginning, the earth of the Indian
subcontinent brought forth;
As pills the size of jujube seeds, mothers of mothers alone would not suffice.
501. "Grass, sticks, branches and leaves, brought as comparison from without
discernible beginning, remember;
As four-finger-length pieces, fathers of fathers alone would not suffice.
502. Remember the blind turtle in the eastern ocean, and the yoke-hole from the
west;
And its head inserted into it - this is the simile for obtaining human birth.
503. "Remember the materiality like a lump of foam, of the body, without
substance;
See the aggregates as impermanent, remember the hells with much vexation.
504. Remember those increasing the cemetery, again and again in those various
births;
Remember the crocodile dangers, remember the four truths.
505. "When the Deathless exists, what use to you is the five-fold bitter drink;
For all sensual delights are more bitter than the five-fold bitter.
506. "When the Deathless exists, what use to you are sensual pleasures, which are
fevers;
For all sensual delights are blazing, boiling, agitating, and tormenting.
507. "When the state without enmity exists, what use to you are sensual pleasures,
which have many enemies;
Sensual pleasures are common to kings, fire, thieves, water, and unloved
heirs, having many enemies.
508. "When freedom exists, what use to you are sensual pleasures, in which there
is murder and bondage;

For in sensual pleasures, those attached to unwholesome pleasures
experience the sufferings of murder and bondage.

509. "A blazing grass torch burns the one who grasps it, not the one who releases it;
For sensual pleasures are like a torch, they burn those who do not release
them.
510. "Do not, for the sake of little sensual happiness, give up abundant happiness;
Do not, like a fish swallowing a hook, afterwards suffer vexation.
511. "Surely, tame yourself in sensual pleasures, so long as you are like a dog
bound by a chain;
Sensual pleasures will do to you what hungry outcasts do to a dog.
512. "Unlimited suffering and many mental displeasures;
You will experience, being attached to sensual pleasures; give up the unstable
sensual pleasures.
513. "When the ageless exists, what use to you are sensual pleasures, in which
there is ageing;
Seized by death and illness, are all births everywhere.
514. "This is ageless, this is deathless, this is the ageless and deathless state, free
from sorrow;
Without enmity, without confinement, without stumbling, without fear, without
distress.
515. "This has been attained by many, the Deathless, and even today this can be
obtained;
By one who wisely applies oneself, but it is not possible for one not striving.
516. Thus speaks Sumedhā, not finding delight in what is subject to activities;
Persuading Anikaratta, Sumedhā threw her hair on the ground.
517. Having risen, Anikaratta, with joined palms, he requested her father;
"Give up Sumedhā, to go forth, may she see the truth of deliverance."
518. Released by her mother and father, she went forth, frightened by the fear of
sorrow;
The six direct knowledges were realised, the highest fruition for her as a
female trainee.
519. Wonderful and marvellous was that Nibbāna of the princess;
Her past life conduct, as she declared at the final time.
520. "In the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, in a newly established
monastery for the Community;
We three friends, women, gave the gift of a dwelling."
521. "Ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times, and ten thousand times;

We were reborn among the gods, what then to say of among human beings.

522. "Among the gods we were of great supernormal power, what then to say of in the human realm;
I was the chief queen of one with the seven treasures, I was the woman treasure.
523. "That is the cause, that is the production, that is the root, that same is the acceptance in the Dispensation;
That is the first combination, that is Nibbāna for one delighted in the Dhamma.
524. "Thus do those who believe the word of the one of superior wisdom;
They become disenchanted with existence, and having become disenchanted, they become dispassionate."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "in the city of Mantāvātī" means in the city so named as Mantāvātī. "Of King Koñca" means I was a daughter born in the womb of the chief queen of the king named Koñca. "Sumedhā" means Sumedhā by name. "Gladdened by those who practise the teaching" means gladdened in the Dispensation by the noble ones who practise the Teacher's instruction through the teaching of the Dhamma, made one in whom confidence in the Triple Gem had arisen.

"Moral" means accomplished in good conduct and morality. "Skilled in discourse" means skilled in talk on the Teaching. "Very learned" means endowed with hearing of the Scriptures in the presence of the nuns. "Disciplined in the Buddha's Dispensation" means through wise attention following the discourses, thinking "thus is occurrence, thus is cessation, such is morality, such is concentration, such is wisdom," because of the turning back of mental defilements by way of substitution of opposites, she was disciplined in the Buddhas' Dispensation, restrained in body, speech and mind. "Listen, both of you" means may you both listen to my words; the explanation is: having approached her mother and father, she speaks.

"Even if divine" means all existence, even that included in the heavenly world, is entirely non-eternal, impermanent, suffering, and subject to change. "How much less then hollow sensual pleasures" means how much less then human sensual pleasures; all of them, because of being without substance, are hollow and empty, of little enjoyment like a drop of honey on a sword's edge, and of much vexation because of the abundance of suffering now and in the future.

"Bitter" means undesirable. Like venomous snakes in the sense of being fearful. In which sensual pleasures. "Infatuated" means attached. "Consigned" means by their own action, in every respect applied and cast; the meaning is "reborn." "Are destroyed" means are afflicted.

"In the downfall" means in the realm of misery.

"Senseless" means senseless due to the absence of volition for one's own welfare. "Obstructed by the origin of suffering" means imprisoned in the round of rebirths caused by craving. "When it is being taught" means when the teaching of the four

truths is being taught. "Not knowing" means not knowing the meaning. "They do not understand the noble truths" means they do not awaken to the noble truths of suffering and so on.

"Mother" - she addresses with the mother as the chief. "Those who do not know them are the majority" - the explanation is: those who delight in existence, who long for rebirth among the gods, not knowing the truths taught by the Excellent Buddha, those very ones are the majority in this world.

"In existence that is impermanent" means in all existence that is impermanent, rebirth among the gods is not eternal; even this being so, yet fools do not tremble, are not frightened, do not attain a sense of urgency. "At being born again and again" means of one being reborn again and again.

"The four nether worlds" means hell, the animal realm, the sphere of ghosts, and the titan realm - these four are the destinations of the nether world, being fallen from the accumulation of happiness. However, the only two destinations designated as rebirth among humans and gods are obtained somehow with difficulty and hardship, because of the difficulty of meritorious action. "In hells" means in the realms of misery devoid of happiness.

"Living at ease" means free from concern in other tasks. "I shall strive" means I shall endeavour, I shall devote myself to meditation - the explanation is: what is the use of rejoicing in existence, in this body, a heap of misery, without substance?

"Through the cessation of craving for existence" means for the cause of cessation, for the purpose of cessation of craving directed towards existence.

The explanation is: the arising of Buddhas has been obtained, the eightfold inopportune moment consisting of rebirth in hell and so on has been avoided, the moment - the ninth moment - has been obtained. "Moral practices" means the fourfold purification morality. "Holy life" means the holy life of the Dispensation. "I would not corrupt" means I would not violate.

"I will not take food so long as a householder" - the explanation is: thus Sumedhā speaks to her mother and father: "I will indeed not take food while remaining a householder; if I do not obtain the going forth, I shall be one gone under the power of death."

"Her" means of Sumedhā. "Stricken in every respect" means with face stricken in every respect by tears. "They strive to convince" means the mother and father strive and endeavour to convince Sumedhā, who had fallen on the ground on the upper floor of the mansion, to accept the householder life. "They strive and endeavour" is also a reading; the meaning is the same.

"What is the use of grieving" means what is the use of sorrowing "I shall not obtain the going forth." "You have been given to Vāraṇavatī" means you have been given in the city of Vāraṇavatī. Having said "you have been given," the word "you have been given" is repeated again to firmly show the state of having been given.

"In the kingdom there is command" means in the kingdom of Anikaratta your command prevails. "Wealth and sovereignty" means wealth and sovereignty in this family and in the husband's family; and pleasures are pleasant, exceedingly desirable

enjoyments - all this is available to you, come into your possession. "You are young" means you are a young maiden; therefore enjoy sensual pleasures. The explanation is: for that reason, let there be a proposal of marriage for you, child.

"Ne" means mother and father. "Let not such things be" means let not such things as sovereignty in the kingdom and so on exist. If one asks why, she said "existence is without substance" and so on.

"Like what" means like a worm. "Foul body" means this putrid corpse. "Oozing odour" means the smell of discharged raw flesh. "Frightful" means bringing fear to those not free from lust. "A corpse, a bellows, I should cling to" means a leather bag filled with corpses, more than once trickling, full of impurity - having become full of many kinds of impurity, constantly oozing at all times, I should cling to it thinking "this is mine."

"How can I, knowing it, so exceedingly repulsive" means exceedingly repulsive, smeared with impure flesh and blood, a dwelling place of many families of worms, become food for birds. "Kimikulālasakuṇabhadda" is also a reading; the meaning is become food for worms and for the remaining birds. I stand knowing that corpse. She shows: for what reason indeed is that me now given by way of a marriage proposal? The explanation is: what is that giving of him like, what does it resemble?

"It is carried to the cemetery, before long the body devoid of consciousness" means this body, before long indeed, devoid of consciousness, is carried to the cemetery, is taken away. "Discarded" means thrown away. "Like a log" means resembling a useless piece of wood. "By relatives who are disgusted" means by one's own kinfolk too who are disgusted.

"Having thrown it away in the cemetery" means having abandoned that corpse in the cemetery. "Food for others" means become food for others such as dogs, jackals, and so on. "They bathe in disgust" means being disgusted even by just this much, thinking "we have come from behind this one," diving in up to the head they bathe; how much more so those who have touched it. "One's own mother and father" means even one's own mother and father. "How much more than the common populace" means what need is there to say that the rest of the multitude is disgusted.

"Attached" means clinging through the influence of craving. "Without substance" means devoid of substance such as permanence and so on.

"Having separated" means having made a separation by consciousness. "Not enduring the odour" means not bearing the odour of this body. "Even one's own mother" means even one's own mother would be disgusted, because through the separation of the bodily parts, the repulsive nature presents itself most clearly.

"Aggregates, elements, sense bases" means these five aggregates beginning with the aggregate of matter, these eighteen elements beginning with the eye-element, these twelve sense bases beginning with the eye sense base - thus aggregates, elements, and sense bases - all this, the totality of material and immaterial phenomena, is conditioned because it is made by conditions having come together and combined; this, occurring in that existence, is suffering; because it has birth as

its condition, it has birth as its root. Thus wisely, by means of the method, investigating and reflecting: a marriage proposal - for what reason should I wish for it?

That which was said by the mother and father, "The moralities, the holy life, going forth is difficult to do" - in order to give a reply to that, "day by day" and so on was said. Therein, "day by day three hundred spears, ever fresh, might fall upon the body" means day by day three hundred spears, at that very moment fresh by being newly sharpened, might fall upon the body. "Even a hundred years of slaughter would be better" means the aforesaid slaughter by spears falling continuously even for a hundred years would be better. "If thus there were destruction of suffering" means if thus there would be the utter elimination of the suffering of the round of rebirths; the intention is that even having endured such great suffering of continued existence, effort should be made for the achievement of Nibbāna.

"Accepts" means one should receive. "Thus" means in the manner stated. This is what is meant - Whatever person, having understood the Teacher's word illuminating the beginningless round of rebirths and the immeasurable suffering of the round of rebirths, standing firm, should accept the suffering of slaughter by spears as aforesaid, by that very means there might be the utter elimination of the suffering of the round of rebirths. Therefore he said - "Long is the wandering in the round of rebirths for those being slain again and again" means the meaning is: those being afflicted again and again by birth, ageing, illness, death, and so on.

"Among the titan host" means in the order of ghost-titans beginning with the Kālakañcikas. "Slaughter" means injuries and killing of body and mind.

"Many" means many, numerous slaughters occurring by reason of punishments such as the fivefold bondage and so on. "Of one gone to the nether world" means even of one who has reached the nether world reckoned as the remaining realms of misery. "Of one being oppressed" means of one being afflicted by impacts and so on in individual existences such as the animal realm and so on. "Even among the gods there is no protection" means even in divine individual existences there is no shelter, because of the state of being accompanied by suffering and vexation through the fever of lust and so on. "There is nothing beyond the happiness of Nibbāna" means beyond the happiness of Nibbāna there is no other highest happiness whatsoever, because mundane happiness is by nature the suffering of change and of activities. Therefore the Blessed One said - "Nibbāna is the highest bliss."

"They have attained Nibbāna" means they have indeed attained Nibbāna. Or alternatively, those very ones have attained Nibbāna. "Those who are devoted to the teaching of the Ten-Powered One" means those who are devoted and engaged in the Dispensation of the Perfectly Enlightened One.

"Disenchanted" means dispassionate. "By me" means by me. "Like vomit" means similar to a dog's vomit. "Made like a palm stump" means made similar to the base of a palm tree.

"Then" means afterwards, having declared her own disposition to her mother and father, and having heard of the arrival of Anikaratta. "Black, thick, and soft" means black by being of the same colour as a sapphire-coloured bee, thick by being dense,

soft by having a touch similar to silk-cotton fibre. "Having cut her hair with a sword" means having cut her own hair with a well-sharpened sword. "Having closed the mansion" means having closed the royal bedchamber in her own dwelling mansion, having shut its door - this is the meaning. "She attained the first meditative absorption" means having placed before her the hair cut with the sword, applying attention to repulsiveness therein, when the sign had duly appeared, having brought the arisen first meditative absorption to mastery, she attained it.

That Sumedhā had attained meditative absorption there in the mansion - this is the intention. "She well develops the perception of impermanence" means having risen from meditative absorption, having made the meditative absorption the foundation, having established insight, she well develops the observation of impermanence by the method beginning with "whatever materiality." It should be understood that by the inclusion of the perception of impermanence alone, the inclusion of the perception of suffering and so on is also made here.

"With limbs adorned with gems and gold" means with body decorated with gem-studded golden garland ornaments.

"In the kingdom, command" and so on is an illustration of the manner of his entreaty. Therein, "command" means lordship. "Sovereignty" means fame and the achievement of resources. "Wealth and happiness" means desirable and agreeable enjoyment of sensual pleasures. "You are young" means you are now young, a maiden.

"The kingdom has been handed over to you" means my entire kingdom of three yojanas has been given up to you; having entered upon that, enjoy the wealth too. "This one invites me with sensual pleasures alone" - do not be unhappy. "Give gifts" means carry on great gifts to ascetics and brahmins according to your liking. Your mother and father are distressed, having reached displeasure, having heard your intention to go forth; therefore, while enjoying sensual pleasures. "They too are present; release their minds from suffering" - thus here the word-meaning construction should be understood.

"Do not delight in sensual pleasures" means do not delight in objective sensual pleasures and defilement sensual pleasures. But rather, see the danger, the fault, in those sensual pleasures in accordance with my words; look with the eye of knowledge.

"Ruler of the four continents" means lord of the four great continents beginning with Jambudīpa. "Mandhātā" means a king of that name; he was the foremost, the chief, among those who enjoy sensual pleasures. Therefore the Blessed One said - "Rāhu is the foremost among those possessing a physical form, Mandhātā among those who enjoy sensual pleasures." "Unsatisfied he died" means for eighty-four thousand years by way of boyish amusements, for eighty-four thousand years by way of viceroyalty, for eighty-four thousand years having become a wheel-turning monarch, having enjoyed wealth similar to divine wealth, having experienced heavenly success in the Tāvātimsa realm for the life-span duration of thirty-six Sakkas, even so he died still unsatisfied with sensual pleasures. "And his desire was not fulfilled" means the hope of that King Mandhātā regarding sensual pleasures was not complete.

"Even if the seven treasures were to rain" means even if the seven treasures, the rain-cloud spreading over the ten directions, from all sides, all around, were to rain according to a man's preference, just as in the case of the Great King Mandhātā, even so there is no satisfaction in sensual pleasures; men die unsatisfied. Therefore the Blessed One said - "Not by a rain of coins is satisfaction in sensual pleasures found."

Sensual pleasures are like a butcher's block in the sense of cutting, like a snake's head in the sense of being fearful, like a torch, like a grass torch, in the sense of burning. Therefore it is said "they burn." Resembling a skeleton in the sense of having little gratification.

"Of great poison" means similar to great poisons such as *halāhala*. "Root of misery" means the root, the cause, of misery, of suffering. Therefore it is said "with suffering as their fruit."

Like tree fruits in the sense of breaking the limbs and minor limbs. The simile of a piece of meat is in the sense of being shared by many. Like a dream in the sense of manifesting only briefly, because of enticing like an illusion. Therefore it is said "deceptive," meaning deceitful - this is the meaning. "Like borrowed goods" means similar to borrowed articles in the sense of being temporary.

The simile of a stake of spears is in the sense of piercing through. A disease in the sense of afflicting, because suffering is easily obtained. A boil because of the oozing of the impurity of mental defilements. Misery in the sense of producing suffering. Trouble by leading to death. Like a pit of embers in the sense of greatly scorching. Because of being a cause of fear and because of the abundance of murderers, they are called fear and murder - sensual pleasures, this is the explanation.

"Declared as forming impediments" means "obstructing the attainment of the heavenly path and the path leading to *Nibbāna*" - thus spoken by the Buddhas and others who are possessors of right understanding. "Go" means she dismisses *Anikaratta* together with his following.

"What will another do for me" means what indeed of benefit will another, a different person, do for me when one's own head, the highest part, is burning with the eleven fires. Therefore she said "when ageing and death are pursuing." For the destruction, for the uprooting of that ageing and death, that burning of the head, one must strive, one must endeavour.

"*Chamā*" means on the ground. "I said this" means I spoke this utterance beginning with "Long is the wandering in the round of rebirths for the foolish," which leads to a sense of urgency.

"Long is the wandering in the round of rebirths for the foolish" means the round of rebirths, reckoned as the successive occurrence of the aggregates, sense bases, and so on, which constitute the round of mental defilements, action, and result, is long for the blindly foolish whose basis has not been fully understood - not to be delimited even by the knowledge of a Buddha. For just as, because of the uninterruptedness of ignorance and craving, the first point of the continuity of existence is not discerned

due to its very unlimitedness, so too the latter point. "And for those weeping again and again" means of those weeping again and again on account of sorrow. By this too she makes clear the very uninterruptedness of their ignorance and craving.

"Tears, mother's milk, blood" means the tears of those weeping who are afflicted by the disaster of relatives and so on, and the mother's milk drunk from the mother's breast during childhood, and the blood of those slain by enemies. "The round of rebirths without discernible beginning" - following the round of rebirths, because of its unknowable end, even having followed with knowledge, because of its unknowable end, because of its undiscovered end, during this long period of time, of beings who have transmigrated, who have wandered again and again, remember the transmigrating; recollect that as "how much"; remember, recollect the accumulation of bones; reflect upon it - this is the meaning.

Now, in order to show the abundance of the danger by means of a simile, she spoke the verse "remember the four oceans." Therein, "remember the four oceans, brought as comparison for tears, mother's milk, and blood" means remember, recollect the four oceans, the four great oceans, brought by the Buddhas by way of comparison, to be compared in measure with the tears, mother's milk, and blood of each and every one of these beings transmigrating in the round of rebirths without discernible beginning. "The accumulation of bones of one cosmic cycle, equal to Vipula" means remember the accumulation of bones of one person in one cosmic cycle, brought as equal to Mount Vepulla. And this too was said of them -

"For one person in one cosmic cycle, the accumulation of bones;
Would be a heap equal to a mountain, thus was said by the great sage.

"And this great Vepulla mountain has been declared;
To the north of the Vulture's Peak, in the Giribbaja of the Magadhans."

The earth of the Indian subcontinent brought forth. "As pills the size of jujube seeds, mothers of mothers alone would not suffice" means having made the great earth reckoned as the Indian subcontinent into pills the size of jujube seeds, the size of jujube stones, and when distributing each one thus: "This is for my mother, this is for my mother's mother," those pills would not suffice for the mothers of mothers alone; while the mothers of mothers remain unexhausted, those limited pills would be eliminated and brought to an end, but not the mothers of a mother of a being transmigrating in the round of rebirths without discernible beginning. Thus reflect upon the earth of the Indian subcontinent brought forth by way of simile because of the long nature of the round of rebirths.

"Grass, sticks, branches and leaves" means grass and sticks and branches and leaves. "Brought" means brought by way of comparison. "From without discernible beginning" means because of the state of the round of rebirths being without discernible beginning. "Four-finger-length pieces" means pieces measuring four finger-breadths. "Fathers of fathers alone would not suffice" means those pieces would not suffice even for the fathers and grandfathers alone. This is what is meant - If all the grass and sticks and branches and leaves in this world were made into four-finger-length pieces and each one were distributed thus: "This is for my father, this is for my grandfather," those pieces alone would be eliminated and brought to an end,

but not the fathers and grandfathers of a being transmigrating in the round of rebirths without discernible beginning. Thus remember the grass and sticks and branches and leaves brought as comparison by the long nature of the round of rebirths. But in this instance -

"This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, a first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. What do you think, monks, which is more, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while you were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, or the water in the four great oceans?" and so on - The "Anamatagga Pāḷi" should be brought in.

"Remember the blind turtle" means recollect the turtle blind in both eyes. "In the eastern ocean and the yoke-hole from the west" means the single hole of a yoke drifting about by the force of the wind in the eastern ocean and from the west in the western, northern, and southern oceans. "And its head inserted into it" means remember the head of the blind turtle and the insertion of the head into the yoke-hole of one who raises its neck by the elapse of every hundred years. "The simile for obtaining human birth" means remember all this with wisdom, having made it a simile for obtaining human existence, just as in the teachings on the arising of Buddhas, because of its exceedingly rare nature and because of the surpassing nature even of the fear of attachment. For this was said: "Just as, monks, a man might throw a yoke with a single hole into the great ocean" and so on.

"Remember the materiality like a lump of foam" means remember the materiality - impure, foul-smelling, loathsome and repulsive in nature - of the body, which is termed a mass, which is like a lump of foam because of being unable to withstand crushing, which is a coming together of many harmful things, and which is without substance because of being devoid of permanent substance and so on. "See the aggregates as impermanent" means see even the five aggregates of clinging as impermanent in the sense of non-existence after having been; look with the eye of knowledge. "Remember the hells with much vexation" means recollect the eight great hells and the sixteen subsidiary hells with much vexation, much suffering, and great suffering.

"Remember those increasing the cemetery" means recollect the beings who, again and again in those various births, through successive arising again and again, increase the cemetery, the charnel ground, the cremation ground itself. Or the reading is "increasing"; the explanation is: you increasing. "Crocodile dangers" means the dangers of gluttony, by way of doing what should not be done for the purpose of feeding the belly. For it was said: "Danger of crocodiles, monks, is a designation for gluttony." "Remember the four truths" means "This is the noble truth of suffering, etc. this is the noble truth of the practice leading to the cessation of suffering" - recollect and reflect upon the four noble truths as they really are.

Thus the king's daughter, having made known the danger in sensual pleasures and in the round of rebirths by way of recollection in various ways, now, to make that known also by way of contrast, said beginning with "when the Deathless exists." Therein,

"when the Deathless exists" means when the nectar of the Good Teaching, brought by the Perfectly Enlightened One through great compassion, is obtainable. "What use to you is the five-fold bitter drink" means what use to you is the five-fold bitter, the flavour of the five types of sensual pleasure, when drunk - since in all five instances, namely quest, possession, safeguarding, enjoyment, and result, because of being followed by sharper suffering, because of being accompanied by vexation, because of being accompanied by anguish? Now, making the very meaning already stated more obvious, she said - "For all sensual delights are more bitter than the five-fold bitter" - the meaning is exceedingly more bitter.

"Which are fevers" means which sensual pleasures, just now with the fever of mental defilements and in the future with the fever of results, are with fever and of great vexation. "Blazing, boiling, agitating, and tormenting" means having blazed up and boiled with the eleven fires, they are agitating and tormenting to those possessed of them.

"In the state without enmity" means in renunciation which is devoid of enmity. "Existing" means being present, existing. Having said "having many enemies," in order to show by which there are many enemies, "kings, fire" and so on was stated. Because sensual pleasures are common to kings and fire and thieves and water and unloved heirs and so on, the simile was stated with reference to those very things - kings, fire, thieves, water, and the unloved.

"In which there is murder and bondage" means in which sensual pleasures, on account of sensual pleasures, there is the affliction of death, beating and so on, and the bondage of chains and fetters and so on - this is the meaning. "In sensual pleasures" and so on is the making obvious of the very meaning stated. Therein, "hi" is an indeclinable particle in the sense of cause. Because in sensual pleasures, because of sensual pleasures, these beings experience and undergo the sufferings of murder and bondage, therefore she said - "Asakāmā" means sensual pleasures by name are unwholesome, inferior, and low - this is the meaning. "Ahakāmā" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. For "aha" is a synonym for low, as in such passages as "ahalokitthiyo nāmā" and so on.

"Ablaze" means blazing. "A grass torch" means a torch made of grass. "They burn those who do not release them" means whatever beings do not release those sensual pleasures, but rather grasp them, they indeed burn them, they consume them both now and in the future.

"Do not for the sake of little" means do not give up, do not abandon the abundant, lofty, sublime, and supramundane happiness for the sake of sensual happiness which is small, similar to the taste of a flower. "Do not, like a broad-scaled fish, having swallowed a hook" means like a fish named "broad-scaled" which, having swallowed a hook through greed for bait, reaches disaster, do not, without relinquishing sensual pleasures, afterwards suffer vexation, afterwards incur distress.

"Like a dog bound by a chain" means just as a dog bound by a leash, tied to a post by the leash-binding, unable to go elsewhere, wanders about right there, so you, bound by sensual craving - now surely, even if in sensual pleasures, at least tame yourself, tame the faculties. "Sensual pleasures will do to you what hungry outcasts do to a dog" - "khu" is merely a particle. But those sensual pleasures will do to you just as

outcasts, internally hungry, having obtained a dog, bring it to calamity and disaster - this is the meaning.

"And unlimited suffering" means immeasurable, impossible to define as "this much," bodily suffering in hell and so on. "And many mental displeasures" means many, numerous displeasures and mental sufferings arising in the mind. "You will experience" means you will undergo. "Attached to sensual pleasures" means yoked to sensual pleasures, not relinquishing them. "Give up the unstable sensual pleasures" means depart from, go away from sensual pleasures which are unstable and impermanent - this is the meaning.

"Seized by ageing, death, and illness, all births everywhere" means since births, distinguished by the classification of inferior and so on, everywhere in existences and so on, are seized by ageing, death, and illness, and are not freed from them, therefore, when the ageless Nibbāna exists, what use to you are sensual pleasures which are not freed from ageing and so on - this is the explanation.

Having thus made known the danger in sensual pleasures and existences by way of showing the virtues of Nibbāna, now making known the very virtues of Nibbāna that have been produced, she spoke two verses beginning with "This is the ageless." Therein, "this is the ageless" means this one alone is ageless because of the absence of ageing in itself and because of being the cause of the absence of ageing for one who has attained it. "This is the deathless" - here too the same method applies. "This is the ageless and deathless" - she speaks combining both of those together by way of praise. "State" means the state to be gone forth into and to be practised by those wishing to be freed from the suffering of the round of rebirths. Sorrowless because of the absence of the causes of sorrow and because of the absence of sorrow. Without enmity because of the absence of states that produce enmity. Without confinement because of the absence of the confinement of mental defilements. Without stumbling because of the absence of misconduct reckoned as stumbling. Without fear because of the complete absence of the fears of self-reproach and so on and the fear of the round of rebirths. Without distress because of the absence of the distress of suffering and of mental defilements as well. All this she says with reference to the great deathless Nibbāna alone. For she, presenting it to herself by way of an aspect established through oral tradition and so on, as if showing it to them directly, said "this."

"This has been attained by many, the Deathless" means this Deathless, Nibbāna, has been attained by many, by infinite and immeasurable noble ones such as the Buddha and others, known, made evident to oneself. She speaks not only with reference to what has been attained by them, but indeed even today it can be obtained, even now it can be attained, it is possible to attain. "By whom can it be obtained?" she said "one who wisely applies oneself." Whatever person, wisely, by means of the method, standing firm in the exhortation given by the Teacher, engages and makes right effort - by that person it can be obtained. This is the explanation. "But it is not possible for one not striving" means whoever does not wisely apply oneself, by that one not striving it is not possible; it is simply never possible to obtain - this is the meaning.

"Thus speaks Sumedhā" means in the way above explained, the princess Sumedhā speaks a talk on the Teaching that illuminates her own sense of urgency regarding the round of rebirths and is conducive to penetration regarding sensual pleasures. "Not finding delight in what is subject to activities" means not finding contentment even in the slightest occurrence of activities. "Persuading Anikaratta" means persuading King Anikaratta. "And threw her hair on the ground" means she threw, cast away, on the ground the hair cut by her own sword.

"He requested her father" means that Anikaratta requested her, Sumedhā's, father, King Koṇca. What does he request? She said "Give up Sumedhā, to go forth, may she see the truth of deliverance." Give up the princess Sumedhā to go forth, and having gone forth, may she see the truth of deliverance, may she become one who sees Nibbāna without distortion - this is the meaning.

"Frightened by sorrow and fear" means frightened by the cause of separation from relatives and so on, and by all the fear of the round of rebirths, alarmed by the superiority of knowledge. "As a female trainee" means while being a female trainee, the six direct knowledges were realised; from that very fact the highest fruition, arahantship, was realised.

"Wonderful and marvellous was that Nibbāna of the princess" means for the king's daughter Sumedhā, the final extinguishment of the mental defilements was wonderful and marvellous. If one asks how the accomplishment of the six direct knowledges is spoken of - "her past life conduct, as she declared at the final time" means at the final time of the extinguishment of the aggregates, her conduct included in her past lives, as she declared it, so should that be known.

But in order to show her past lives as declared by her, "in the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana" and so on was stated. Therein, "in the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana" means when the Perfectly Enlightened One Koṇāgamana had arisen in the world. "In a newly established monastery for the Community" means in a park newly established for the Community. "We three friends, women, gave the gift of a dwelling" means Dhanañjānī, Khemā, and I - we three friends gave the gift of a dwelling, a park, to the Community.

"Ten times, a hundred times" means by the power of that gift of a dwelling, we were reborn among the gods on ten occasions; then having been reborn among human beings, again a hundred times we were reborn among the gods; from there too having been reborn among human beings, again a thousand times we were reborn among the gods; from there too having been reborn among human beings, again ten thousand times we were reborn among the gods - what then to say of among human beings. Thus, regarding the occasions of being reborn among human beings, there is not even any discussion; the meaning is we were reborn many thousands of times.

"Among the gods we were of great supernormal power" means at the time of being reborn among the gods, in each and every order of gods, we were of great supernormal power and great majesty. "What then to say of in the human realm" means regarding the obtaining of human existence, there is not even any discussion of the state of great supernormal power. Now, showing that very excellence and state of great supernormal power in the state of human existence, she said "I was the chief queen of one with the seven treasures, I was the woman treasure." Therein, the seven

treasures beginning with the wheel treasure belong to him - thus "one with the seven treasures," a wheel-turning monarch; of that one with the seven treasures. Free from the six faults, possessing the five beauties, having surpassed human beauty, having reached but not attained divine beauty - by the endowment of such and other qualities, I was a jewel among women.

"That is the cause" means that gift of a dwelling to the Community made in the time of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana - that is the cause of the aforesaid celestial success as well. "That is the production, that is the root" is a synonym for that very same thing. "That same is the acceptance in the Dispensation" means that very same is the acquiescence through pondering in the Teacher's instruction, in the Teaching, here. "That is the first combination" means that very same is the first combination, the first meeting with the Teaching of the Teacher's instruction; that very same, for one delighted in the Teaching of the Teacher's instruction, at the final goal is Nibbāna - she speaks of the cause by a figurative usage of the result. But these four verses, because they proceeded by way of elucidation of the elder nun's life history, were placed in the classification in the Apadāna text as well.

In the concluding verse, "thus do" means just as what was done and practised by me in former existences and at present, so others too do and practise. Who do thus? She said - "Those who believe the word of the one of superior wisdom" means whatever persons believe the word of the Perfectly Enlightened One whose wisdom is complete through having knowledge that reaches the limit of what is knowable, accepting "so it is," they thus do and practise. Now, in order to show that by the practice that has reached excellence, "they become disenchanted with existence, and having become disenchanted, they become dispassionate" was said. Its meaning is - Those who believe the word of the Blessed One as it really is, proceeding along the practice of purification, become disenchanted through insight wisdom with all activities of the three planes that constitute existence; and having become disenchanted, they become dispassionate in every respect through the noble path, and are liberated from all existence - this is the meaning. When the noble path of dispassion is attained, they are indeed liberated.

Thus these elder nuns and others, ending with Sumedhā, have been brought together here into one collection by way of similar verses, "seventy-three in number." But by recitation sections, the elder nuns and verses are approximately six hundred and two more. They are all of one kind just as by being female disciples of the Perfectly Enlightened One, so too by the state of being beyond training, by having the cross-bar lifted, by having the surrounding moat filled, by having the pillar pulled out, by being unbolted, by having the burden laid down, by being unbound, and by having dwelt the dwelling in the ten noble dwellings; for thus they have abandoned the five factors, are possessed of the six factors, have one safeguard, have four supports, have dismissed individual truths, have completely abandoned the search, have undisturbed thought, have calmed bodily activities, have a well-liberated mind, and have well-liberated wisdom - thus they are of one kind by such a method and so on.

They are twofold by the distinction of face-to-face and not-face-to-face. For those who were born with a noble birth during the time the Teacher was still living, such as Mahāpajāpati Gotamī and others, they are called face-to-face disciples. But those who

attained distinction after the Blessed One's extinguishment of the aggregates, they, even though the Teacher's Teaching-body is evident, because of the Teacher's physical body not being evident, are called not-face-to-face disciples. Likewise by way of liberation on both sides and liberation by wisdom. But those who have come in the canonical text here are liberated on both sides only. Likewise by the distinction of those with a life history and those without a life history. For those for whom there exists a life history reckoned as the state of having formed aspirations by way of meritorious activity in the presence of former Perfectly Enlightened Ones, Individually Enlightened Ones, or Enlightened Noble Disciples, they are those with a life history. Those for whom that does not exist, they are those without a life history. Likewise they are twofold: those who obtained full ordination from the Teacher and those who obtained full ordination from the Community. Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, who obtained full ordination through the acceptance of the rules of respect, because she obtained full ordination from the Teacher's own presence, is called one who obtained full ordination from the Teacher. All the rest obtained full ordination from the Community. They too are twofold: those ordained unilaterally and those ordained bilaterally. Therein, those five hundred Sakyan women who went forth together with Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, they were ordained unilaterally, because they obtained full ordination from the community of monks only, setting aside Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. The others were ordained bilaterally, because of full ordination in both communities.

Like the "come, monk" pair, the "come, nun" pair is not found here. Why? Because of the absence of such full ordination for nuns. If so, that which was said in the Therīgāthā by Subhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā -

Having placed my knees down and paid homage, I made a salutation with
joined palms in his presence;
'Come, Bhadda,' he said to me, that was my full ordination."

Likewise in the Apadāna too -

"Having been requested, the Leader then said, 'Come, dear lady';
Then I became fully ordained, I saw a small amount of water."

How is that explained? This was not said with reference to full ordination by way of the "come nun" status. But it was said "That command of the Teacher, which was the cause of my full ordination, was my full ordination."

For thus it was said in the commentary: "He said to me and commanded, 'Come, dear lady, having gone to the nuns' quarters, go forth and receive full ordination in the presence of the nuns.' That command of the Teacher, because of being the cause of my full ordination, was my full ordination." It should be seen that by this very means the meaning of the Apadāna verse too is explained.

Even so, how is this "come nun" stated in the Bhikkhunī Vibhaṅga? It is a statement illuminating the non-intrinsic nature of the full ordination of nuns by way of the "come nun" status, because of the absence of such full ordination for nuns. If so, how was the analytic explanation "come nun" made in the Vibhaṅga? By way of having fallen into the stream of the method of teaching. For this falling into the stream is such that even what is obtainable somewhere is not brought in.

Just as in the Abhidhamma, in the analytic explanation of the mind-element, although the factor of meditative absorption is obtainable, it was not taken up because of having fallen into the stream of the five sense consciousnesses, since it is not possible in any teaching. Just as the heart-organ in the analytic explanation of the sense-base right there, by way of including even what is not obtainable somewhere. Likewise in the analytic explanation of one who stabilises the cosmic cycle. As he said -

"And what person is one who stabilises the cosmic cycle? If this person were practising for the realisation of the fruition of stream-entry, and it were the time for the cosmic cycle to be burnt up, the cosmic cycle would indeed not be burnt up until this person realises the fruition of stream-entry."

Thus here too it should be understood by way of including what is not obtainable; for this is a hypothetical statement - if the Blessed One were to say "come, nun" to any woman suitable for the status of a nun, even so the status of a nun might be. But why did the Blessed One not speak thus? Because of the absence of those who had made such aspirations. But those who, having stated the reason "because of not being near and present," say "monks indeed are ones who walk near the Teacher, always present, therefore they deserve to be told 'come, monk,' not nuns" - that is merely their opinion. Because the state of being near or far from the Teacher is not established as the state of being capable or incapable. For this was said by the Blessed One -

"Even if, monks, a monk were to follow behind, holding the corner of the double robe, stepping foot upon foot, and yet he is covetous, with intense lust for sensual pleasures, with a corrupted mind, with evil mental intentions, unmindful, not fully aware, unconcentrated, with a wandering mind, with uncontrolled faculties; then he is far from me, and I from him. What is the reason for this? For that monk, monks, does not see the Teaching. Not seeing the Teaching, he does not see me.

"Even if, monks, that monk were to dwell a hundred yojanas away. And yet he is non-covetous, without intense lust for sensual pleasures, with an uncorrupted mind, with non-evil mental intentions, mindful, fully aware, concentrated, with fully focused mind, with controlled faculties; then he is near to me, and I to him. What is the reason for this? For that monk, monks, sees the Teaching. Seeing the Teaching, he sees me."

Therefore, nearness to or distance from the Teacher in terms of place is not the reason. But because of not having formed a resolution, there is the unsuitability of nuns for that. Therefore it was said - "The 'come, nun' pair is not found here." Thus they are twofold.

Chief female disciples, great female disciples, and ordinary female disciples - thus they are threefold. Therein, Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā - these two elder nuns are called chief female disciples. Granted that all elder nuns who have eliminated the mental corruptions, accomplishing purification of morality and so on, with minds well established in the four establishments of mindfulness, having developed the seven factors of enlightenment as they really are, having exhausted the mental defilements without remainder by the succession of paths, become established in the highest fruition. Nevertheless, just as the distinction in the preliminary stage of development between one liberated by faith and one attained to right view, and between one

liberated by wisdom and one liberated in both ways, is a desired distinction accomplished through the preliminary development, so because of the production of a surpassing distinction of qualities in one's own continuity through the greatness of resolution and the greatness of former exertion, they are great among female disciples through virtues such as morality and so on - thus they are great female disciples. But among those very qualities conducive to enlightenment, through right practice that was the cause for the production of the surpassing function and power of right view and right concentration - which are the bearers of the charge by being foremost - a right practice brought about by the corresponding resolution, carefully, continuously, for a long time, through the attainment of the highest perfection in wisdom and concentration respectively in succession, because of standing in the foremost state among all virtues with distinction, those two also are called chief female disciples. But Mahāpajāpati Gotamī and others, by virtue of the distinction of qualities obtained through the greatness of resolution and the greatness of former exertion, being great female disciples - thus they are called great female disciples. The other elder nuns such as Tissā, Vīrā, Dhīrā, and so on, because of the absence of greatness of resolution and so on, are called ordinary female disciples. But they, unlike the chief female disciples and unlike the great female disciples, are not limited in number; rather, they should be understood as many hundreds and many thousands. Thus they are threefold by the classification beginning with chief female disciples. Likewise, they are threefold by the classification beginning with the deliverance through emptiness.

Fourfold by the classification beginning with practice. Fivefold by the classification of predominant faculty. Likewise, fivefold by the classification beginning with mode of practice. Sixfold by way of liberation through the signless and so on. Sevenfold by the classification of disposition. Eightfold by the classification beginning with the charge and practice. Ninefold and tenfold by the classification of liberation. Now these, when divided by the aforesaid classification of charge, become twenty; when divided by the classification of practice, they become forty. Again, when divided by the classification of practice and the classification of charge, they become eighty. Or alternatively, when divided by the classification beginning with deliverance through emptiness, they become two hundred and forty. Again, when divided by the classification of predominant faculty, they become one thousand two hundred. Thus the manifold diversity of these elder nuns should be understood by virtue of their own qualities alone. This is the summary here; the detail, however, should be understood by the method already stated below in the commentary on the Theragāthā.

The commentary on the verses of the Elder Nun Sumedhā is concluded.

The commentary on the Great Chapter is concluded.

Concluding Verses

And to this extent -

"Those who are accomplished in the Good Teaching, of the King of the Dhamma, the Teacher;
Legitimate, mouth-born sons, heirs, created by the Teaching.

"Accomplished in virtues beginning with morality, having done what had to be done, without mental corruptions;
The elders beginning with Subhūti, the elder nuns beginning with Therikā and others.

"The verses that were spoken by them, by way of declaration of the final liberating knowledge and so on;
Having gathered all those together, the great elders placed them into the classification as 'Verses of the Elder Monks'

"And as 'Verses of the Elder Nuns,' such ones;
In order to make known the meaning of those, in dependence on the method of the ancient commentary,

"The exposition of the meaning that was undertaken by me;
That which therein is the elucidation of ultimate realities, in each case as is fitting,

"Is by name called the Paramatthadīpanī;
It has reached accomplishment, with unconfused judgment;
Measuring ninety-two recitation sections of the Pāḷi.

"Thus, by one who has composed that, whatever merit has been attained by me;
By the power of that, may the Dispensation of the Protector of the World,

"Having been plunged into through the purified practice beginning with morality;
May all embodied beings become partakers of the flavour of liberation.

"May the Dispensation of the Perfectly Enlightened One long endure in the world;
May all living beings always be respectful towards it.

"May the god who is lord of the earth rain properly in due season;
Delighting in the Good Teaching, may he govern the world by the Teaching alone."

By the Elder Teacher Dhammapāla, dwelling at the Badaratittha Monastery

Completed.

the exposition of the meaning of the Therīgāthā is concluded.

The commentary on the Therīgāthā is completed.



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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