

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)

13. The Canon of Conduct (13. Cariyāpiṭakapāḷi)

2. The Chapter on Bull Elephants (2. Hatthināgavaggo)

[Cp 11-20, PTS 84-91]



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

13. The Canon of Conduct

2. The Chapter on Large Bull Elephants

1. The Conduct of the One Who Supported His Mother

1. "When I was in the forest wilds, an elephant supporting my mother;
There was none on earth then, equal to me in virtue.
2. "Having seen me in the forest wilds, a forester reported to the king;
'A fitting elephant for you, great king, dwells in the forest.
3. "'There is no need for a pit for him, nor for a post-pit;
Once seized by the trunk, he will come here by himself.'"
4. Having heard that word of his, the king too, with a satisfied mind,
Sent an elephant tamer, a skilful trainer, well-trained.
5. "Having gone, that elephant tamer saw in the lotus pond;
One pulling up lotus roots and fibres, for the sustenance of his mother.
6. "Having known my virtue of morality, he considered my characteristics;
Having said 'Come, son,' he grasped my trunk.
7. "That which was then my natural power, inherent in my body;
Today is equal and similar in power to a thousand elephants.
8. "If I were to become angry with them, who have approached to seize me;
I would be competent against them, even up to the human kingdom.
9. "But I, for the protection of morality, for the fulfilment of the perfection of
morality;
Do not make alteration in my mind, seeing them throwing me into the stake.
10. "If they were to beat me there, with hatchets and with lances;
I would indeed not become angry with them, out of fear of breaking my
morality."

The Conduct of the One Who Supports His Mother is the first.

2. The Conduct of Bhūridatta

11. "Furthermore, when I was Bhūridatta of great supernormal power;
With the great king Virūpakkha, I went to the world of the gods.
12. "Having seen there the gods, surely endowed with happiness;

For the purpose of going to that heaven, I undertook moral rules and austerities.

- 13.** "Having performed the bodily function, having eaten just enough for sustenance;
Having determined the four limbs, I lie on the top of the ant-hill.
- 14.** "With outer skin, with hide, with meat, or with sinews and bones;
Whoever has need of this, let him take what is given."
- 15.** "Pointed out by the ungrateful one, Ālampāyana seized me;
Having put me in a box, he makes me perform here and there.
- 16.** "Even when putting me in a box, even when crushing me with the hand;
At Ālampāyana I do not become angry, out of fear of breaking my morality.
- 17.** "The giving up of my own life is lighter to me than grass;
Transgression of morality for me is like the overturning of the earth.
- 18.** "Continuously for a hundred births, I would give up my life;
I would indeed not break morality, even for the sake of the four continents.
- 19.** "But I, for the protection of morality, for the fulfilment of the perfection of morality;
Do not make alteration in my mind, even when being thrown into the box."

The Conduct of Bhūridatta is the second.

3. The Conduct of Campeyya the Nāga

- 20.** "Furthermore, when I was Campeyyaka of great supernormal power;
Even then I was righteous, devoted to moral rules and austerities.
- 21.** "Even then me, practising the Teaching, having observed the Observance;
A snake-catcher, having taken me, plays at the king's gate.
- 22.** "Whatever colour he thought of, whether blue, yellow, or red;
Following his mind, I became like what was thought of.
- 23.** "I could make dry land into water, and water into dry land;
If I were to become angry with him, I could reduce him to ashes in a moment.
- 24.** "If I were to become a master of my mind, I would decline from morality;
For one who has fallen away from morality, the highest good does not succeed.
- 25.** "Let this body be broken, let it be scattered right here;
I would indeed not break morality, like chaff being scattered."

The Conduct of the Campeyya Serpent is the third.

4. The Conduct of Cūḷabodhi

- 26.** "Furthermore, when I was Cūḷabodhi, virtuous;
Having seen existence as peril, I went forth into renunciation.
- 27.** "She who was my companion, a brahmin woman resembling gold;
She too, without concern for the round of rebirths, went forth into renunciation.
- 28.** "Free from attachment, with kinship severed, without concern for family or group;
Wandering through village and market town, we arrived at Bārāṇasī.
- 29.** "There we dwelt, prudent, aloof from family and group;
Undisturbed and quiet, in the royal garden we both dwelt.
- 30.** "Having gone to see the park, the king saw the brahmin woman;
Having approached, he asked me, 'Who is she to you, whose wife is she?'
- 31.** "When this was said, I spoke these words to him;
'She is not my wife, she shares the same teaching, under one discipline'.
- 32.** "Filled with lust and bound to Tissā, having caused the servants to seize her;
Oppressing her by force, he led her into the inner palace.
- 33.** "When my water-bowl wife, born together, under one discipline;
Was being dragged away and led off, irritation arose in me.
- 34.** "When irritation arose, I remembered my moral rules and austerities;
Right there I restrained the irritation, I did not allow it to grow further.
- 35.** "If anyone were to beat that brahmin woman with a sharp spear;
I would indeed not break morality, because of enlightenment itself.
- 36.** "This brahmin woman is not odious to me, nor is strength not found in me;
Omniscience is dear to me, therefore I shall guard morality."

The Conduct of Cūḷabodhi is the fourth.

5. The Conduct of King Mahiṃsa

- 37.** "Furthermore, when I was a buffalo, roaming the wilds;
With a fully grown body, powerful, great, dreadful to behold.
- 38.** "In mountain slopes and mountain fortresses, at tree-roots and near water reservoirs;
Here and there is a place for buffaloes, one here, one there.
- 39.** "Wandering in the great forest, I saw a good place;
Having approached that place, I stand and I lie down.
- 40.** "Then here a monkey having come, evil, ignoble, light;

On the shoulder, on the forehead, on the eyebrows, he urinates and defecates on me.

- 41.** "Once a day, a second time, a third and even a fourth time;
He ill-treats me at all times, by that I am troubled.
- 42.** "Having seen me troubled, the demon said this to me;
'Destroy this wretched evil one, with horns and with hooves.'"
- 43.** "When this was said, then to the demon, I spoke this to him;
'Why do you smear me with a corpse, with evil, with what is ignoble?
- 44.** "If I were to become angry with him, I would become lower than that;
And my morality would be broken, and the wise would censure me.
- 45.** "'Rather than a life despised, death while pure is better;
Why would I, even for the sake of life, do harassing of others?'
- 46.** "Imagining this one to be like me, he will do the same to others;
They will kill him, that will be my freedom."
- 47.** Enduring disrespect from the low, middle, and superior;
Thus the wise one obtains what is wished for in the mind."

The Conduct of King Mahiṃsa is the fifth.

6. The Conduct of King Ruru

- 48.** "Furthermore, when I was, resembling well-heated gold;
A king of beasts named Ruru, established in supreme morality.
- 49.** "In a charming region, delightful, secluded, free from humans;
There I took up abode, on the delightful bank of the Ganges.
- 50.** "Then upstream on the Ganges, oppressed by creditors;
A man fell into the Ganges, 'whether I live or die'.
- 51.** "Night and day he in the Ganges, being swept along in the great water;
Crying a pitiful cry, goes in the middle of the Ganges.
- 52.** "Having heard his sound, pitiably lamenting;
Standing on the bank of the Ganges, I asked 'Who are you, man?'
- 53.** "He, when asked by me, explained his action then;
'Frightened and trembling because of creditors, I leapt into the great river'.
- 54.** "Having shown compassion to him, having given up my life;
Having entered, I brought him out, in the darkness of the night.
- 55.** "Having understood the time of comfort, I spoke this to him;
'I request one boon from you, do not tell anyone about me.'

- 56.** "Having gone to the city, he informed, when asked, for the sake of wealth;
Having taken the king, he approached my presence.
- 57.** "As far as all his doing, was reported by me to the king;
The king, having heard the word, prepared an arrow for him;
'Right here I will have killed the betrayer of friends, the ignoble one.'
- 58.** "Guarding him, I exchanged myself;
'Let him remain, great king, I become your servant at will.'
- 59.** "I protected my morality, I did not protect my life;
For I was moral then, because of enlightenment itself."

The Conduct of King Ruru is the sixth.

7. The Conduct of Mātāṅga

- 60.** "Furthermore, when I was a matted-hair ascetic of fierce austerity;
Mātāṅga by name, virtuous and well concentrated.
- 61.** "I and a brahmin, we both dwelt on the bank of the Ganges;
I dwelt upstream, the brahmin dwelt downstream.
- 62.** "Wandering along the riverbank, he saw my hermitage upstream;
There, having abused me, he cursed me with the splitting of my head.
- 63.** "If I were to become angry with him, if I were not to guard my morality;
Having looked at him, I could reduce him to ashes, as it were.
- 64.** "That curse which he then cursed me with, angry, with a corrupted mind;
It fell upon his very own head, by exertion I released him from that.
- 65.** "I protected my morality, I did not protect my life;
For I was moral then, because of enlightenment itself."

The Conduct of Mātāṅga is the seventh.

8. The Conduct of Dhamma the Young God

- 66.** "Furthermore, when I was of great following, of great supernormal power;
A great demon named Dhamma, having compassion for the whole world.
- 67.** "Instigating the great multitude in the ten wholesome courses of action;
I wander through village and market town, with friends and retinue.
- 68.** "The evil, miserly demon, explaining the ten evil things;
He wanders here on earth, with friends and retinue.
- 69.** "The one who speaks the Teaching and the one who is not the Teaching, both
of us are opponents;
Clashing shaft against shaft, we both met on the opposite path.

- 70.** "A fearsome dispute arose, between the good and the evil;
For the purpose of turning aside from the road, a great battle was at hand.
- 71.** "If I were to become angry with him, if I were to break my austere ascetic practice;
I could reduce him together with his retinue to dust.
- 72.** "But I, for the protection of morality, having cooled my mental state;
Having stepped aside together with my people, I gave the path to the evil one.
- 73.** "As soon as he stepped off the path, having brought about the calming of his mind;
The earth gave an opening to the evil demon at that very moment."

The Conduct of Dhamma the Young God is the eighth.

9. The Conduct of Alīnasattu

- 74.** "In the Pañcāla country, in the noble city, in Kapilā, the best of cities;
A king named Jayaddisa, endowed with virtuous qualities.
- 75.** "I was the son of that king, learned in the teachings, virtuous;
Alīnasatta, endowed with virtues, always protecting my attendants.
- 76.** "My father, having gone hunting, approached a man-eater;
He seized my father, 'You are my food, do not move.'
- 77.** Having heard that word of his, frightened, trembling and quaking;
His thighs became stiff, having seen the man-eater.
- 78.** "Having gone hunting, release me, having made a promise to return again;
Having given wealth to the brahmin, my father addressed me.
- 79.** "'Proceed with the kingdom, son, do not be negligent with this city;
A promise was made by me to the man-eater, for my return again.'
- 80.** "Having paid homage to my mother and father, having created myself;
Having laid down the bow and sword, I approached the man-eater.
- 81.** "Having approached with weapon in hand, sometimes he will tremble;
By that, morality will be broken, when terror is caused in me.
- 82.** "Out of fear of breaking my morality, I did not speak anything disagreeable to him;
With a mind of friendliness, speaking for his welfare, I spoke these words.
- 83.** "'Light a great fire, I will fall from the tree;
You, having understood the time when cooked, eat me, grandfather.'
- 84.** "Thus because of ceremonial observances, I did not protect my life;
And I gave the going forth to him, the constant killer of living beings."

10. The Conduct of Saṅkhapāla

- 85.** "Furthermore, when I was Saṅkhapāla of great supernormal power;
With fangs as weapons, with terrible poison, two-tongued, lord of serpents.
- 86.** "At the crossroads on the highway, crowded with many kinds of folk;
Having determined the four factors, I made my dwelling there.
- 87.** "With outer skin, with hide, with meat, or with sinews and bones;
Whoever has need of this, let him take what is given."
- 88.** "The sons of hunters saw me, rough, cruel, merciless;
They approached me there, with sticks and clubs in hand.
- 89.** "Having pierced through the nose, the tail, and the backbone;
Having placed me on a carrying pole, the sons of hunters carried me away.
- 90.** "The earth up to the ocean's end, with its forests, with its mountains;
If I wished, I could burn it there with the breath from my nose.
- 91.** "Though pierced through with stakes, though beaten with spears;
I do not become angry at the Bhoja princes, this is my perfection of morality."

The Conduct of Saṅkhapāla is the tenth.

The Chapter on the Large Bull Elephants is the second.

Its summary:

The large bull elephant, Bhūridatta, Campeyya, Bodhi, the buffalo;
Ruru, Mātāṅga, Dhamma, and the son Jayaddisa.

These nine have morality as their strength, requisites with limitations;
Having protected my life, I guarded the moralities.

When I was mindful as Saṅkhapāla, my life at all times;
Was given up to whoever it may be, therefore that is the perfection of
morality.

The Exposition on the Perfection of Morality is concluded.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

PDF Creation Date: 14 September 2026

HOW TO CITE

PaliVerse (2026). The Triple Canon. The Canon of Discourses. 5. The Collection of Minor Texts. 13. The Canon of Conduct. 2. The Chapter on Bull Elephants Retrieved from paliverse.org

© 2026 The PaliVerse Project · All Rights Reserved
Centre for Study and Practice of Theravāda Buddhism
Civic Non-Profit Company registered in Greece
This PDF may be freely distributed for study and practice.

PaliVerse.org