

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 -
Aṭṭhakathā)

02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses (02. Dhammapada-
aṭṭhakathā)

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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses

20. The Chapter on the Path

1. The Story of the Five Hundred Monks

273-276. "Of paths, the Eightfold": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to five hundred monks.

They, it is said, when the Teacher had wandered on a journey through the country and come again to Sāvattthī, having sat down in the assembly hall, spoke talk about paths referring to the paths they had travelled, by the method beginning with "The road from such and such a village to such and such a village is level, the road to such and such a village is uneven, with gravel, without gravel." The Teacher, having seen their decisive support for arahantship, having come to that place, seated on the prepared seat, having asked "What discussion were you having as you sat together here, monks?" when it was said "Such and such," having said "Monks, this is an external path; it is fitting for a monk to make effort on the noble path, for thus doing, a monk is freed from all suffering," spoke these verses -

273. "Of paths, the Eightfold is foremost; of truths, the four terms;
Dispassion is foremost of phenomena, and of two-footed beings, the one with vision.
274. "This is the very path, there is no other, for the purification of vision;
You should proceed along this, this is the deception of Māra.
275. "Having practised this, you will make an end of suffering;
The path has been declared to you by me, having understood the extraction of the dart.
276. "The effort should be made by you, the Truth-finders are proclaimers;
Those practising will be freed, meditators, from Māra's bondage."

Therein, "of paths, the Eightfold" means: whether they be foot-paths and so on or the sixty-two paths of wrong views, of all those paths, the eightfold path - which by the eight factors beginning with right view abandons the eight beginning with wrong view, making cessation its object, accomplishing the function beginning with the full understanding of suffering in all four truths - is foremost, highest. "Of truths, the four terms" means: whether it be verbal truth as has come in "One should speak truth, one should not be angry," or conventional truth of the classification beginning with "a true brahmin, a true warrior," or dogmatic truth as "only this is the truth, anything else is vain," or ultimate truth of the classification beginning with "suffering is a noble truth" - of all these truths, in the sense of what is to be fully understood, in the sense of what is to be realised, in the sense of what is to be abandoned, in the sense of what is to be developed, in the sense of single penetration, and in the sense of true

penetration, the four terms beginning with "suffering is a noble truth" are called foremost. "Dispassion is foremost of phenomena" means: from the statement "As far as there are phenomena, monks, whether conditioned or unconditioned, dispassion is declared the foremost among them," dispassion, reckoned as Nibbāna, is foremost of all phenomena. "And of two-footed beings, the one with vision" means: of all two-footed beings of the classification beginning with gods and humans, the Truth-finder alone, the one with vision through five eyes, is foremost. The word "and" has the purpose of combining; it combines immaterial phenomena. Therefore the Truth-finder is foremost and highest even of immaterial phenomena.

"For the purification of vision" means: for the purpose of the purification of the vision of path and fruition, that which was called "foremost" by me, this is the very path, there is no other. "You should indeed this" means therefore you should proceed along this very thing. "This is the deception of Māra" means this is called the deluding of Māra, the crushing of Māra. "The end of suffering" means the meaning is: you will make the end, the delimitation, of the entire suffering of the round of rebirths.

"Having understood the extraction of the dart" means this path is the cutting, the crushing, the extraction of the darts of lust and so on; this path was declared by me, having known by personal direct experience without oral tradition and so on. Now by you, for the purpose of achieving that which has come to be reckoned as "ardour" through the burning up of mental defilements, the energy of right striving is the function to be done. For Truth-finders are only proclaimers. Therefore, by the power of what was proclaimed by them, those who have practised, meditators through the two meditative absorptions, are freed from Māra's bondage, reckoned as the round of rebirths of the three planes - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, those monks became established in arahantship. The proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for those who had assembled as well.

The story of the five hundred monks is first.

2. The Story of the Characteristic of Impermanence

277. "All activities are impermanent": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to five hundred monks.

It is said that they, having taken a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, having gone and striving in the forest, yet not attaining arahantship, came to the presence of the Teacher thinking "We shall learn the meditation subject in a more distinguished way." The Teacher, investigating "What indeed is suitable for them?" having thought "These, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, engaged in the characteristic of impermanence for twenty thousand years; therefore it is fitting to teach them a single verse by means of the characteristic of impermanence itself," having said "Monks, in sensual existence and so on, all activities, having come to be, are indeed impermanent in the sense of non-existence," spoke this verse -

277. "All activities are impermanent", when one sees with wisdom;
Then one becomes disenchanted with suffering, this is the path to
purification."

Therein, "all activities" means when one sees with insight wisdom that the aggregates arisen in sensual existence and so on are impermanent because they cease right there and there, then one becomes disenchanted with this suffering of maintaining the aggregates; becoming disenchanted, one penetrates the truths by way of the full understanding of suffering and so on. "This is the path to purification" means: for the purpose of purification, for the purpose of cleansing, this is the path - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, those monks became established in arahantship. The proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for the assembly that had arrived as well.

The story of the characteristic of impermanence is second.

3. The Story of the Characteristic of Suffering

278. For the second verse as well, the story is of just such a nature. For at that time the Blessed One, having known that those monks had made observance in the characteristic of suffering, having said "Monks, all aggregates too are indeed suffering in the sense of oppression," spoke this verse -

278. "All activities are suffering", when one sees with wisdom;
Then one becomes disenchanted with suffering, this is the path to purification."

Therein, "suffering" means suffering in the sense of oppression. The remainder is just as before.

The story of the characteristic of suffering is third.

4. The Story of the Characteristic of Non-self

279. In the third verse too, the same method applies. However, here the Blessed One, having known that those monks had formerly been engaged in the characteristic of non-self, having said "Monks, all aggregates too are indeed non-self in the sense of being beyond control," spoke this verse -

279. "All phenomena are non-self", when one sees with wisdom;
Then one becomes disenchanted with suffering, this is the path to purification."

Therein, "all phenomena" means the five aggregates alone are intended. "Non-self" means since it is not possible to wield them under one's control thus "Let them not decay, let them not die," they are non-self in the sense of being beyond control, empty of self, without an owner, without a master - this is the meaning. The remainder is similar to the preceding.

The story of the characteristic of non-self is fourth.

5. The Story of the Elder Monk Tissa, the Worker in Striving

280. "At the time for rising" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the Elder Padhānakammikātissa.

It is said that five hundred sons of good family dwelling in Sāvattthī, having gone forth in the presence of the Teacher, having taken a meditation subject, went to the forest. Among them, one stayed behind right there. The rest, practising the ascetic duty in the forest, having attained arahantship, thinking "We shall report the quality attained to the Teacher," went again to Sāvattthī. A certain lay follower, having seen them walking for almsfood in a small village about a yojana's distance from Sāvattthī, having honoured them with rice gruel, meals, and so on, having heard the thanksgiving, invited them for the following day's meal as well. They, on that very day, having gone to Sāvattthī, having put away their bowls and robes, in the evening period, having approached the Teacher, having paid homage, sat down to one side. The Teacher exchanged friendly welcome with them, expressing very much joy.

Then their companion monk who had stayed behind there thought - "The Teacher's face is not sufficient when making friendly welcome with these monks; but because of my lack of path and fruition, he does not speak with me. This very day, having attained arahantship, having approached the Teacher, I shall make him speak with me." Those monks too asked permission of the Teacher, saying "Venerable sir, we have been invited by a lay follower on the way of coming for the morrow; we shall go there right early." Then their companion monk, walking up and down the whole night, through the power of sleep, fell on a stone-slab at the end of the walking path; his thigh-bone broke. He cried out with a loud voice. His companion monks, having recognised the sound, ran up from here and there. While they were lighting a lamp and doing the duty to be done for him, dawn arose; they did not obtain the opportunity to go to that village. Then the Teacher said to them - "What, monks, did you not go to the village for the alms round?" They said "Yes, venerable sir" and reported that incident. The Teacher, having said "Not only now, monks, does this one create an obstacle to your material gain; in the past too he did just so," being requested by them, having brought up the past -

"He who wishes to do afterwards what should be done before;
Like the breaker of varuṇa wood, he afterwards feels remorse."

He expanded the Jātaka. At that time, it is said, those monks were five hundred young men, the lazy young man was this monk, and the teacher was the Truth-finder himself.

The Teacher, having brought this proclamation of the Teaching, having said "Monks, whoever indeed does not make rising at the time for rising, is one of sunken thought, lazy, he does not attain the distinction classified as meditative absorption and so on," spoke this verse -

280. "Not rising at the time for rising,
Though young and strong, endowed with laziness;
With mind of sunken thought, lazy,
The idle one does not find the path by wisdom."

Therein, "not rising" means not rising, not striving. "Young and strong" means even though standing in early youth and endowed with strength, one is endowed with the state of laziness; having eaten, one sleeps. "With mind of sunken thought" means one whose mind of right thought is thoroughly sunk by the three wrong thoughts.

"Lazy" means without energy. "Idle" means greatly idle; not seeing the noble path that is to be seen by wisdom, one does not find it, does not obtain it - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, many attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of the Elder Monk Tissa, the worker in striving, is fifth.

6. The Story of the Pig Ghost

281. "Guarding one's speech": the Teacher, while dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the pig-ghost.

For on one day, the Elder Mahāmoggallāna, while descending from the Vulture's Peak together with the Elder Lakkhaṇa, manifested a smile at a certain spot. When asked by the Elder Lakkhaṇa "What now, friend, is the cause for the manifestation of a smile?" having said "It is not the right time, friend, for this question; you should ask me in the presence of the Teacher," having walked for almsfood in Rājagaha together with the Elder Lakkhaṇa himself, having returned from his alms round, having gone to the Bamboo Grove, having paid homage to the Teacher, he sat down. Then the Elder Lakkhaṇa asked him about that matter. He said - "Friend, I saw a certain ghost; its body was measuring three leagues, resembling a human body. But its head was like that of a pig; a tail had grown on its mouth, and from it worms oozed forth.

Thereupon I, having seen that, thinking 'Never has such a being been seen before by me,' manifested a smile." The Teacher, having said "Disciples indeed dwell possessing vision, monks," said "I too saw this very being at the seat of enlightenment itself. Thinking 'But those who would not believe me, it would be for their harm,' out of compassion for others I did not speak of it. Now, having made Moggallāna a witness, I speak of it. It is true, monks, Moggallāna has said," he related. Having heard that, the monks asked the Teacher - "But what, venerable sir, was his former deed?" The Teacher, having said "If so, monks, listen," having brought up the past, related his former deed.

It is said that in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, in a certain village residence, two elder monks lived together in harmonious living. Among them, one had sixty rains, one had fifty-nine rains. The one of fifty-nine rains went about carrying the other's bowl and robes, and like a novice performed all duties and counter-duties. To the dwelling place of those two who were living together in harmonious living like brothers who had dwelt in one mother's womb, a certain speaker of the Teaching came. And at that time it was a day for hearing the Teaching. The elder monks, having treated him kindly, said "Speak a talk on the Teaching for us, good person." He spoke a talk on the Teaching. The elder monks, with gladdened minds thinking "A speaker of the Teaching has been obtained by us," on the following day, taking him along, having entered a neighbouring village for almsfood, having finished their meal there, had him speak the Teaching to the people, saying "Friend, speak a little of the Teaching just from the point where you spoke yesterday." The people, having heard the talk on the Teaching, invited them for the following day's meal as well. Thus all around in the villages for almsfood, they walked for almsfood for two days at a time, taking him along.

The speaker of the Teaching thought - "These two are exceedingly soft; having driven both of them away, it is fitting for me to dwell in this monastery." He, having gone in the evening to attend upon the elder monks, at the time when the monks had risen and gone, having turned back, having approached the great elder, having said "Venerable sir, there is something to be said," when it was said "Speak, friend," having reflected a little, having said "Venerable sir, this talk is indeed of great fault," without having spoken, he departed. Having gone to the presence of the next senior elder as well, he did likewise. He, having done likewise on the second day, on the third day, when very great curiosity had arisen in them, having approached the great elder, having said "Venerable sir, there is something to be said, but I do not dare to say it in your presence," when pressed by the elder saying "Let it be, friend, speak," he said - "But, venerable sir, does the next senior elder have association with you?" Good person, what indeed is this you are speaking of? We are like sons who have dwelt in one mother's womb; whatever is obtained by one of us is as if obtained by the other as well. Has any fault ever been seen by me in him for so long a time?" "Yes, venerable sir." "Yes, friend." Venerable sir, the next senior elder said thus to me - "Good person, you are a son of good family; this great elder is one who has shame and is well-behaved; in having association with him, you should do so having investigated" - thus he has been saying to me from the day of his arrival.

The great elder, having merely heard that, with an angered mind, broke like a potter's vessel struck with a stick. The other too, having risen, having gone to the presence of the next senior elder, said likewise, and he too broke likewise. Although among them for so long a time there was not even one who had ever entered separately for almsfood, on the following day, however, having entered separately for almsfood, the next senior elder, having come back earlier, stood in the assembly hall, and the great elder came afterwards. Having seen him, the next senior elder thought - "Should his bowl and robes be received, or not?" He, even having thought "I shall not receive them now," thinking "So be it, this has never been done by me before; it is not fitting for me to neglect my own duty," having softened his mind, having approached the elder, said "Venerable sir, give me the bowl and robes." The other, having snapped his fingers, said "Go, you badly trained one, you are not fit to receive my bowl and robes." When the other too said "Yes, venerable sir, I too thought I would not receive your bowl and robes," he said "Friend junior, what do you think? Do I have any attachment to this monastery?" The other too, having said "But you, venerable sir, why do you think thus 'I have some attachment to this monastery'? This monastery is yours," having taken the bowl and robes, went out. The other too went out. Both of them, not even going by the same road, one took the road by the western gate, one by the eastern gate. The speaker of the Teaching, having said "Venerable sir, do not do thus, do not do thus," when it was said "Stay, friend," turned back. He, on the following day, having entered the neighbouring village, when the people said "Venerable sir, where are the venerable ones?" said "Friends, do not ask. Your monks dependent on families, having quarrelled yesterday, departed. Even though I entreated them, I was not able to make them turn back." Among them, the foolish ones remained silent. But the wise ones, having reached displeasure, thought "In so long a time we have never before seen any stumbling of the venerable ones; their fear must have arisen in dependence on this one."

Those elders too did not find any such thing as happiness of mind in the places where

they had gone. The great elder thought - "Alas, a weighty deed was done by the junior monk; he said to a visiting monk seen for just a moment - 'Do not have fellowship with the great elder.'" The other too thought - "Alas, a weighty deed was done by the great elder; he said to a visiting monk seen for just a moment - 'Do not have fellowship with this one.'" For them there was neither rehearsal nor attention. They, with the passing of a hundred rains retreats, went to a certain monastery in the western direction. Only one lodging was obtained for them. When the great elder had entered and sat down on the small bed, the other too entered. The great elder, having merely seen him, having recognised him, was not able to hold back his tears. The other too, having recognised the great elder, with eyes full of tears, having thought "Should I speak or should I not speak?" thinking "That would not be trustworthy," having paid homage to the elder, said "I, venerable sir, for so long a time went about having taken your bowl and robes; have you ever seen anything improper of mine in the bodily door and so on?" "It has never been seen before, friend." Then why did you say to the speaker of the Teaching "Do not have fellowship with this one?" "I, friend, do not say thus; it was said thus by you, it seems, in my regard." "I too, venerable sir, do not say so." They, at that moment, having known "This must have been said by one wishing to divide us," confessed their transgressions to one another. They, not finding mental delight for a hundred rains retreats, on that day, having become united, having departed thinking "Let us go; we shall drive him out from that monastery," gradually went to that monastery.

The speaker of the Teaching too, having seen the elder monks, approached to receive their bowl and robes. The elder monks snapped their fingers, saying "You are not fit to dwell in this monastery." He, being unable to remain, went out at that very moment and fled. Then the ascetic practice he had performed for twenty thousand years was unable to sustain him; having fallen away from there, he was reborn in Avīci, and having been tormented for one interval between Buddhas, he now experiences suffering on the Vulture's Peak with an individual existence of the kind above explained.

The Teacher, having brought up this as his former deed, having said "Monks, a monk should be one who is peaceful in body and so on," spoke this verse -

281. "Guarding one's speech, well-restrained in mind,
One would not do what is unwholesome with the body;
One should purify these three courses of action,
One should attain the path proclaimed by the seers."

Its meaning is - Guarding one's speech by avoiding the four kinds of verbal misconduct, and well restrained in mind by the non-arising of covetousness and so on, abandoning killing living beings and so on, one would not do what is unwholesome with the body. Thus one should purify these three courses of action. For one who purifies thus would attain the eightfold path proclaimed by the seers such as the Buddha and others, who seek the aggregates of morality and so on.

At the conclusion of the teaching, many attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of the pig ghost is sixth.

7. The Story of the Elder Monk Poṭṭhila

282. The Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to an elder monk named Poṭṭhila, beginning with "From meditation indeed."

It is said that he, a master of the three Canons in the Dispensation of all seven Buddhas, expounded the Teaching to five hundred monks. The Teacher thought - "This monk does not even have the thought 'I shall make my own escape from suffering'; I shall stir him with religious emotion." Thenceforth, when that elder monk came to his own attendance, he says "Come, hollow Poṭṭhila, pay homage, hollow Poṭṭhila, sit down, hollow Poṭṭhila, go on, hollow Poṭṭhila." Even at the time of rising and going, he says "Hollow Poṭṭhila has gone." He thought - "I bear the three Canons together with their commentaries, I expound the Teaching to eighteen great groups of five hundred monks, yet the Teacher constantly calls me 'hollow Poṭṭhila'; surely the Teacher speaks thus to me because of the absence of meditative absorptions and so on." He, with religious emotion arisen, thinking "Now, having entered the forest, I shall practise the ascetic duty," having prepared his bowl and robes by himself, departed together with the monk who, towards the break of dawn, last of all, having learnt the Teaching, was going out. Those who were sitting in the residential cell reciting did not recognise him as "the teacher." He, having travelled a path of two thousand yojanas, at a certain forest residence where thirty monks dwelt, having approached them, having paid homage to the senior monk of the Community, said "Venerable sir, be my support." Friend, you are a speaker of the Teaching; by us, in dependence on you, something should be known; why do you speak thus? Do not, venerable sir, do thus; be my support. They, however, were all ones who had eliminated the mental corruptions. Then the great elder monk, thinking "On account of this one's learning, conceit is still present," sent him to the presence of the next senior elder. He too said the same thing to him. In this manner, all of them sending him on, they sent him to the presence of a seven-year-old novice, the most junior of all, who was sitting at the day-quarters doing needlework. Thus they removed his conceit.

He, with his conceit subdued, having raised joined palms in the presence of the novice, said "Be my support, good person." Oh, teacher, what indeed is this you say? You are old and very learned; in your presence something should be known by me. Do not do thus, good person; just be my support. Venerable sir, if you will be amenable to exhortation, I shall be your support. I shall be, good person; if told "Enter the fire," I shall enter the fire indeed. Then he, having shown him a lake not far away, said "Venerable sir, enter this lake just as you are, dressed and robed." For he, even though knowing the state of being dressed and robed in his very costly double-layered robes, said thus testing "Is he indeed amenable to exhortation?" The elder monk too, at just that one word, descended into the water. Then, at the time when the corners of his robes were being wetted, having said "Come, venerable sir," to him who at just that one word had come and was standing there, he said - "Venerable sir, in one ant-hill there are six holes; therein, through one hole an iguana has entered inside. One wishing to catch it, having blocked the other five holes, having broken open the sixth, catches it through the very hole it entered. In the same way, you too, among the objects belonging to the six doors, having closed the remaining five doors,

should establish your work at the mind-door." For the very learned monk, by just this much, it was as if a lamp had been kindled. He, saying "Let it be just this much, good person," having brought down knowledge into his body born of impurity, began the ascetic duty.

The Teacher, while just seated at the end of two thousand yojanas, having observed that monk, having thought "Just as this monk is of extensive wisdom, just so it is fitting for him to establish himself," having pervaded with light as if speaking together with him, spoke this verse -

282. "From meditation indeed arises wisdom, from lack of meditation the
destruction of wisdom;
Having known this twofold path, for existence and non-existence;
One should so establish oneself, that wisdom may increase."

Therein, "from meditation" means from wise attention to the thirty-eight objects. "Wisdom" - this is a name for wisdom that is like the earth, widespread. "Destruction" means ruin. "This twofold path" means this meditation and lack of meditation. "For existence and non-existence" means for growth and non-growth. "So" means one should establish oneself in such a way that this wisdom termed "extensive" increases. This is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, the Elder Poṭṭhila became established in arahantship.

The story of the Elder Monk Poṭṭhila is seventh.

8. The Story of the Five Elderly Elder Monks

283-284. "Cut down the forest" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to many old monks.

It is said that during their time as householders they were householders of great riches in Sāvattihī, friends of one another, performing meritorious deeds together; having heard the Teacher's proclamation of the Teaching, having requested the going forth from the Teacher, saying "We are old, what use is the household life to us?" they went forth. But being unable to learn the Teaching thoroughly due to their old age, having had a hermitage built at the edge of the monastery, they dwelt together. Even when going for almsfood, they mostly went to the house of their sons and wives and ate. Among them, the former wife of one was named Madhurapācikā; she was a benefactress to all of them. Why did they all, having taken the food obtained by themselves, sit down at her house and eat? She too gave them lentil curry and vegetables according to whatever was available. She, touched by a certain illness, died. Then those old elders, having assembled at the hermitage of the friend elder, having seized one another by the necks, lamenting "The lay follower Madhurapācikā has died," wept. And when monks, having run up from all around, asked "What is this, friends?" they said "Venerable sir, the former wife of our friend has died; she was exceedingly our benefactress. Now from where shall we obtain such a one? For this reason we are weeping."

The monks raised up a discussion in the Teaching hall. The Teacher, having come, having asked "What discussion were you having as you sat together here, monks?"

when it was said "Such and such," having said "Not only now, monks; in the past too they, having been reborn in the realm of crows, while roaming about on the seashore, when a she-crow had been carried into the ocean by an ocean wave and killed, having cried and lamented, thinking 'We shall take her out,' were exhausted trying to bail out the great ocean with their beaks," having brought up the past -

"Are our jaws wearied, and does the mouth dry up?

We draw from this side but do not reach the other, the great ocean just keeps filling up."

Having expanded this Crow Jātaka, having addressed those monks, having said "Monks, in dependence on the forest of lust, hate, and delusion, this suffering has been reached by you; it is proper to cut down that forest; thus you will become free from suffering," he spoke these verses -

283. "Cut down the forest, not the tree, from the forest arises fear;
Having cut down both the forest and the undergrowth, be free from craving,
monks.

284. "For as long as craving is not cut off,
Even the slightest, of a man towards women;
So long is his mind bound,
Like a milk-sucking calf to its mother."

Therein, "not the tree" - for when the Teacher said "Cut down the forest," in those recently gone forth the desire to cut trees arose, thinking "The Teacher is making us cut down the forest having taken axes and so on." Then, preventing them, saying "This was said by me with reference to the forest of mental defilements such as lust and so on, not trees," he said "not the tree." "From the forest" - just as from a natural forest fear of lions and so on arises, so too fear of birth and so on arises from the forest of mental defilements - this is the meaning. "Both the forest and the undergrowth" - herein, large trees are called the forest; small ones, because of standing in that forest, are called the undergrowth. Or trees that arose first are called the forest; those arising again and again are called the undergrowth. Just so, exceedingly great mental defilements that drag one into existence are called the forest; those that give results in the course of existence are called the undergrowth. Those that arose first are called the forest; those arising again and again are called the undergrowth. That both should be cut by the knowledge of the fourth path. Therefore he said - "Having cut down both the forest and the undergrowth, be free from craving, monks." "Be free from craving" means be free from mental defilements. "For as long as craving" - as long as this undergrowth of mental defilements, even the slightest, of a man towards women is not cut off, so long he is one with mind bound, with consciousness attached, like a milk-sucking calf to its mother - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, those five senior elders became established in the fruition of stream-entry, and the proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for those who had assembled.

The story of the five elderly elder monks is eighth.

9. The Story of the Elder Monk Goldsmith

285. "Cut off": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the co-resident pupil of the Elder Sāriputta.

It is said that a certain goldsmith's son, handsome, went forth in the presence of the Elder Sāriputta. The Elder, having thought "For the young, lust is abundant," gave him the meditation subject of foulness for the counteracting of lust. But that was unsuitable for him. Therefore, having entered the forest, striving for three months, not obtaining even a mere degree of one-pointedness of mind, having come again to the Elder's presence, when the Elder said "Has your meditation subject been established, friend?" he reported that incident. Then the Elder, having said "It is not fitting to give up because the meditation subject does not succeed," having again thoroughly explained that very same meditation subject, gave it to him. He, on the second occasion too, being unable to produce any distinction, having come, informed the Elder. Then the Elder too, having given reasons and similes, explained that very same meditation subject. He, having come again, told of the non-success of the meditation subject. The Elder thought - "A monk who is a doer understands sensual desire and so on that are present in himself as present, and those that are absent as absent. This monk is a doer, not a non-doer, one who is practising, not one who is not practising; but I do not know his disposition; he must be one to be guided by a Buddha" - having taken him, in the evening period, having approached the Teacher, he reported all that incident, saying "This, venerable sir, is my co-resident pupil; by me, for this reason, this meditation subject was given to him."

Then the Teacher, having said to him "The knowledge of the inclinations and underlying tendencies - this by name, having fulfilled the perfections, having made resound the ten-thousandfold world system, is the domain only of Buddhas who have attained omniscience," reflecting "From which family indeed has this one gone forth?" having known "From a goldsmith's family," looking at his past individual existences, having seen five hundred individual existences arisen in succession in a goldsmith's family itself, having thought "By this young one, for a long time doing goldsmith's work, thinking 'I shall make kaṇikāra flowers, lotus flowers and so on,' only red gold was handled; therefore the meditation subject of foulness and repulsiveness is not fitting for this one; only an agreeable meditation subject is suitable for him," having dismissed the Elder saying "Sāriputta, the monk whom you wearied for four months by giving a meditation subject - today, this very afternoon, you will see him having attained arahantship; off you go," having created by supernormal power a golden lotus the size of a wheel, having made it as if releasing drops of water from its petals and stalks, he gave it saying "Monk, having taken this lotus, having placed it on a heap of sand at the edge of the monastery, having sat down cross-legged in a place facing it, do the preliminary work thus: 'Red, red.'" Even as he was taking the lotus from the Teacher's hand, his mind was pleased. He, having gone to the edge of the monastery, having heaped up sand, having inserted the lotus stalk therein, seated cross-legged facing it, began the preliminary work: "Red, red." Then at that very moment the mental hindrances were suppressed, and access meditative absorption arose. Immediately after that, having produced the first meditative absorption,

having attained mastery in five ways, just as he was seated, having also attained the second meditative absorption and so on, having become a master, he sat playing the sport of meditative absorption with the fourth meditative absorption.

The Teacher, having known the state of his meditative absorptions having arisen, looking to see "Will this one be able to produce a further distinction by his own nature?" having known "He will not be able," determined "Let that lotus wither." That became dark in colour, as if a lotus crushed by hands and withering. He, having emerged from the meditative absorption, having looked at it, "Why indeed does this lotus appear struck by ageing? When even what is not clung-to is thus overcome by ageing, of what is clung-to there is not even any discussion. For ageing will overcome this too" - he saw the characteristic of impermanence. But when that is seen, the characteristic of suffering and the characteristic of non-self are also seen. The three existences appeared to him as if ablaze and as if corpses tied to an arrow shaft. At that moment, not far from him, some boys, having descended into a certain lake, having broken off white water lilies, were making a heap on dry ground. He looked at the white water lilies in the water and on dry ground. Then the white water lilies in the water appeared to him as beautiful, as if streaming with water, while the others were withered at their very tips. He, thinking "Ageing strikes thus what is not clung-to; will it not strike what is clung-to?" saw even more clearly the characteristic of impermanence and so on. The Teacher, having known "Now this monk's meditation subject has become manifest," while just seated in the perfumed chamber, emitted a radiance; it struck his face. Then, as he was looking thinking "What indeed is this?" the Teacher appeared as if having come and standing before him. He, having risen, raised joined palms. Then the Teacher, having observed what was suitable for him, spoke this verse -

285. "Cut off affection for oneself, like an autumnal white water lily with the hand;
Develop only the path of peace, Nibbāna taught by the Fortunate One."

Therein, "cut off" means cut off by the path of arahantship. "Autumnal" means arisen in the autumn season. "The path of peace" means the eightfold path leading to Nibbāna. "Develop" means increase. For Nibbāna has been taught by the Fortunate One; therefore the meaning is "develop the path to it."

At the conclusion of the teaching, that monk became established in arahantship.

The story of the Elder Monk Goldsmith is ninth.

10. The Story of the Merchant Mahādhana

286. "Here for the rains" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to a merchant named Great Wealth.

It is said that he, having filled five hundred carts with safflower-dyed cloths from Bārāṇasī, having come to Sāvattthī for trade, having reached the riverbank, thinking "Tomorrow I shall cross the river," unyoked the carts right there and stayed. During the night a great rain cloud arose and rained. The river stood full of water for seven days. The citizens too celebrated a festival for seven days. The business with the safflower-dyed cloths was not finished. The merchant thought - "I have come from far away. If I go back again, there will be delay. Right here, during the rains and winter

and summer, doing my work and staying, I shall sell these." The Teacher, walking for almsfood in the city, having known his mind, having manifested a smile, when asked by the Elder Ānanda the reason for the smile, said - "Have you seen, Ānanda, the merchant of great wealth?" "Yes, venerable sir." He, not knowing the obstacle to his own life, has made up his mind to stay right here this year and sell his goods. "But what obstacle will there be for him, venerable sir?" The Teacher, having said "Yes, Ānanda, having lived only seven days, he will fall into the mouth of death," spoke these verses -

"Today itself the effort should be made, who knows death tomorrow;
For there is no bargaining with that one, Death with his great army.

"One who dwells thus, ardent, unwearied day and night;
That one indeed is called 'one who has an auspicious night,' the peaceful sage declares."

I shall go, venerable sir, and inform him. Go with confidence, Ānanda. The Elder, having gone to the place of the carts, walked for almsfood. The merchant honoured the Elder with food. Then the elder said to him - "For how long will you stay here?" "Venerable sir, I have come from afar." If I go back again, there will be delay; having stayed here this year and having sold the goods, I shall go. Lay follower, the obstacle to life is difficult to know; it is proper to be diligent. "But what obstacle will there be, venerable sir?" "Yes, lay follower, your life will continue for only seven days." He, having become agitated in mind, having invited the Community of monks headed by the Buddha, having given a great gift for seven days, took the bowl for the purpose of thanksgiving. Then the Teacher, while giving the thanksgiving, having said "Lay follower, it is not proper for a wise person to think 'Right here I shall stay for the rains and so on, I shall undertake this and that work'; but it is proper to think only about the obstacle to one's own life," spoke this verse -

286. "Here I shall reside for the rains retreat, here during winter and summer;"
Thus the fool thinks, not understanding the obstacle.

Therein, "here for the rains retreat" means in this place, doing this and that, I shall reside for the four-month rains retreat. "During winter and summer" means even during winter and summer, "doing this and that for four months I shall reside right here" - thus, not knowing the benefit pertaining to the present life and the future life, the fool thinks. "The obstacle" means he does not understand the obstacle to his own life, thinking "I shall die at such and such a time or in such and such a place or at such and such an age."

At the conclusion of the teaching, that merchant became established in the fruition of stream-entry, and the proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for those who had assembled. The merchant too, having followed after the Teacher and having returned, saying "Something like a head disease has arisen in me," lay down on the bed, and having died while lying down just like that, was reborn in the Tusita mansion.

The story of the merchant of great wealth is tenth.

11. The Story of Kisāgotamī

287. The Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching, beginning with "The man who is infatuated with sons and cattle," referring to Kisāgotamī. The story has been told in detail, expanding in the commentary on the verse in the Thousand Chapter -

"And whoever should live a hundred years, not seeing the Deathless state;
Better is the life of one day, of one seeing the Deathless state."

It has been told in detail in the commentary on the verse. For then the Teacher said "Kisāgotamī, have you obtained a pinch of mustard seeds?" "Not obtained, venerable sir; in the entire village the deceased are indeed more numerous than the living." Then the Teacher said to her "You observed 'only my son is dead'; this is the nature of all beings subject to death. For indeed the King of Death, like a great flood, dragging along all beings whose aspirations are unfulfilled, throws them into the ocean of the realms of misery." Having said this, expounding the Teaching, he spoke this verse -

287. "The man who is infatuated with sons and cattle, with mind attached,
Death takes him away, as a great flood a sleeping village."

Therein, "the man who is infatuated with sons and cattle" means that man who, having obtained sons and cattle endowed with beauty, strength, and so on, is infatuated with sons and cattle thus: "My sons are handsome, endowed with strength, wise, capable of all tasks; my oxen are handsome, healthy, bearers of great burdens; my cows are rich in milk." "With mind attached" means either one whose mind is attached, having obtained something among unwrought gold, gold, and so on, or among bowl, robes, and so on, through longing for what is further and more; or one whose mind is variously attached through clinging to whatever has been obtained among objects cognisable by eye and so on, or among requisites of the aforementioned kind. "A sleeping village" means the order of beings that has gone to sleep. "As a great flood" means just as a great flood of great rivers, deep and wide, carries away everything from such a village, not leaving even a dog behind, so Death takes away the man of the aforementioned kind. This is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, Kisāgotamī became established in the fruition of stream-entry, and the proclamation of the Teaching was beneficial for those who had assembled.

The story of Kisāgotamī is eleventh.

12. The Story of Paṭācārā

288-289. "Sons are not" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to Paṭācārā. The story has been told in detail, expanding in the commentary on the verse in the Thousand Chapter -

"And whoever should live a hundred years, not seeing rise and fall;
Better is the life of one day, of one seeing rise and fall."

It has been told in detail in the commentary on the verse. At that time, however, the Teacher, having known that Paṭācārā's sorrow had become thin, said "Paṭācārā, sons and so on are unable to be a shelter or a rock cell or a refuge for one going to the

world beyond; therefore, even though they exist, they are as if they do not exist. But it is fitting for a wise person, having purified morality, to cleanse one's own path leading to Nibbāna" - and expounding the Teaching, he spoke these verses -

288. "Sons are not for shelter, nor father nor even relatives;
For one overcome by the Ender, there is no protection among kin.

289. "Having known this reason, the wise person, restrained in morality;
Should quickly purify the path leading to Nibbāna."

Therein, "for shelter" means for the state of shelter, for the purpose of support. "Relatives" means the remaining kinsmen and friends, setting aside sons and mother and father. "Overcome by the Ender" means overpowered by death. For in the course of existence, although sons and so on are shelters by giving food, drink, and so on, and by overcoming arisen duties, at the time of death, due to being unable to ward off death by any means, they are said to not exist for the purpose of shelter, for the purpose of rock cell. For that very reason it was said - "There is no protection among kin." "This reason" means having known the reason reckoned as the state of being unable to be a shelter for each other thus, the wise person, restrained by the morality of fourfold purity, having become guarded and protected, should very quickly purify the eightfold path leading to Nibbāna - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, Paṭācārā became established in the fruition of stream-entry, and many others too attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of Paṭācārā is twelfth.

The commentary on the Chapter on the Path is completed.

The twentieth chapter.



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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