

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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02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses (02. Dhammapada-
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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses

23. The Chapter on the Bull Elephant

1. The Story of the Self-Tamed

320-322. "I am like an elephant" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Kosambī, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to himself. The story has been explained in detail in the commentary on the first verse of the Diligence Chapter. For this has been said there -

Māgaṇḍiyā, being unable to do anything to them, having thought "I shall do what is to be done to the ascetic Gotama himself," having given a bribe to the citizens, commanded "Having reviled and abused the ascetic Gotama as he enters and wanders about inside the city, drive him away with slaves, workmen and servants." Those of wrong views, without confidence in the three jewels, having followed the Teacher who had entered inside the city, revile and abuse him with the ten grounds for reviling: "You are a thief, you are a fool, you are deluded, you are a robber, you are a camel, you are an ox, you are a donkey, you are doomed to Niraya Hell, you are an animal, there is no fortunate realm for you, only an unfortunate realm is to be expected for you." Having heard that, the Venerable Ānanda said this to the Teacher - "Venerable sir, these citizens revile and abuse us; let us go elsewhere from here." "Where, Ānanda?" "To another city, venerable sir." "If people there revile and abuse us, where shall we go then, Ānanda?" "To yet another city, venerable sir." "If people there revile and abuse us, where shall we go, Ānanda?" "To yet another city, venerable sir." "Ānanda, it is not proper to do thus. Where a legal case has arisen, only when it has been settled right there is it proper to go elsewhere. But who are they, Ānanda, who are reviling?" "Venerable sir, everyone is reviling, starting from the slaves and workmen." "I, Ānanda, am like an elephant gone down into battle. For an elephant gone down into battle, it is a burden to endure arrows coming from the four directions; just so, the endurance of the talk spoken by the many who are immoral is indeed my burden" - having said this, expounding the Teaching referring to himself, he spoke these verses -

320. "Like an elephant in battle, an arrow fallen from a bow;
I shall endure abuse, for many people are immoral.
321. "They lead the tamed to an assembly, the king mounts the tamed;
The tamed is foremost among human beings, whoever endures harsh speech.
322. "Excellent are trained mules, and thoroughbreds and Sindh horses;
And elephants, great serpents; one self-restrained is better than that."

Therein, "like an elephant" means like an elephant. "Fallen from a bow" means released from a bow. "Abuse" means transgressive speech occurring by way of the eight ignoble statements. "I shall endure" means just as a well-tamed great elephant experienced in battle, patient, endures without being distressed the arrows that, having been released from bows, fall upon itself, such as spear-strikes and so on, just so I shall endure such abuse; the meaning is "I shall bear it." "For immoral" means indeed this mundane great multitude, being greatly immoral, goes about offending, uttering speech according to each one's own preference; therein, endurance and looking on with equanimity alone is my burden. "To an assembly" means when going into the midst of a great multitude at parks, playgrounds, and so on, they yoke only a tamed one of the ox breed or the horse breed to a vehicle and lead it. "The king" means a king too, going by such vehicles, mounts only a tamed one. "Among human beings" means among human beings too, one tamed by the four noble paths, who is free from agitation, is alone the foremost. "Whoever endures harsh speech" means whoever endures such transgressive speech even when spoken again and again, does not oppose, is not distressed - such a tamed one is the foremost; this is the meaning.

"Mules" means those born from a mare by a donkey. "Thoroughbreds" means those capable of quickly understanding whatever task a horse-trainer trains them in. "Sindh horses" means horses born in the Sindh country. "Great serpents" means great elephants, that is to say, tuskers. "One self-restrained" means these mules and Sindh horses and elephants are excellent only when tamed, not when untamed. But whoever is self-restrained through his own taming by the four noble paths, one who has ceased associating with defilements, he is better than that, the meaning is that he surpasses all of these.

At the conclusion of the teaching, all that great multitude who had taken bribes and stood at streets and crossroads and so on reviling and abusing attained the fruition of stream-entry and so on.

The story of the self-tamed is the first.

2. The Story of the Monk Who Was Formerly an Elephant Trainer

323. "For not by these": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to a certain monk who had formerly been an elephant trainer.

It is said that he, one day, on the bank of the river Aciravatī, having seen an elephant tamer unable to train an elephant to do a task he himself wished, thinking "I shall tame one elephant," having addressed the monks standing nearby, said - "Friends, if this elephant trainer were to pierce this elephant at such and such a spot, he would quickly train it in this task." He, having heard his talk, having done so, tamed that elephant well tamed. Those monks reported that incident to the Teacher. The Teacher, having had that monk summoned, having asked "Is it true that this was said by you thus?" when it was said "It is true, venerable sir," having rebuked him, said "What use to you, foolish man, is a tamed elephant vehicle or any other tamed one? For there is indeed no one able to go by these vehicles to a place never gone to

before; but with oneself well tamed it is possible to go to a place never gone to before. Therefore tame yourself alone; what use to you is the taming of these?" - and having said this, he spoke this verse -

323. "For not by these vehicles could one go to the untravelled direction;
As with oneself well tamed, the tamed one goes by the tamed."

Its meaning is - Whatever vehicles there are such as elephant vehicles and so on, not by these vehicles could any person go in that way to the direction of Nibbāna reckoned as "untravelled" because of never having been gone to even in a dream, as a person well tamed in the preliminary stage by sense-faculty control and in the later stage by the development of the noble path, tamed, one who has ceased associating with defilements, wise, goes to that direction never gone to before, attains the plane of the tamed. Therefore self-taming alone is better than that; this is the meaning.

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

The story of the monk who was formerly an elephant trainer is the second.

3. The Story of the Sons of the Decrepit Brahmin

324. "Dhanapāla": the Teacher, while dwelling at Sāvattthī, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the sons of a certain decrepit brahmin.

It is said that a certain brahmin in Sāvattthī, possessing a fortune of eight hundred thousand, having arranged marriages for his four sons who had come of age, gave four hundred thousand. Then, when his brahmin wife had died, the sons consulted together - "If he brings another brahmin woman, by way of those born from her womb, the family's property will be divided. Come, let us treat him kindly." They, attending upon him with superior food, clothing, and so on, performing massaging of hands and feet and so on, having attended upon him, one day, when he had slept during the day and risen, while massaging his hands and feet, having separately spoken of the danger in the household life, "We shall attend upon you in this manner for as long as life; give us the remaining wealth as well," they requested. The brahmin, having again given a hundred thousand to each one, having set aside only what he was wearing as lower and upper garments, having divided all articles of use and enjoyment into four portions, handed them over. The eldest son attended upon him for a few days. Then one day, as he was coming after bathing, the daughter-in-law, standing at the gateway, said thus - "Have you given to the eldest son a hundred or a thousand extra? Were not two hundred thousand given to all? Do you not know the way to the houses of the remaining sons?" He too, having become angry saying "May this outcast woman perish!", went to another's house. From there too, after a few days, having been driven away by this very means, to another's - thus, not gaining entrance to even one house, having gone forth into the white-clad renunciation, wandering for alms, with the passage of time, worn out by old age, with body withered by bad food and uncomfortable sleeping, wandering for alms, having returned, having lain down on a small bench, having fallen into sleep, having risen and sat down, having looked at himself, not seeing any support among his sons, he thought - "The ascetic Gotama, it is said, is not frowning, is open-faced, pleasant to converse with, skilled in hospitality; it is possible, having approached the ascetic

Gotama, to receive a friendly welcome." He, having adjusted his lower and upper garments, having taken his alms vessel, having taken his stick, went to the presence of the Blessed One. And this too was said -

Then a certain wealthy brahmin, rough and wearing rough garments, approached the Blessed One; having approached, he sat down to one side. The Teacher, having exchanged friendly welcome with him who was seated to one side, said this - "Why are you, brahmin, rough and wearing rough garments?" "Here, Master Gotama, I have four sons. They, having consulted with their wives, are driving me out from the house." "If so, brahmin, having learnt these verses thoroughly, recite them in the assembly hall when a great multitude of people has gathered and when your sons are seated -

"Those whose birth brought me joy, and for whom I wished prosperity;
They, having consulted with their wives, drive me away as dogs do a pig.

"Truly these wicked, contemptible ones call me 'father, father';
Demons in the guise of sons, they abandon one who has reached old age.

"Like an old horse, useless, is removed from its fodder;
The aged father of fools begs at others' houses.

"Truly a stick is better for me than disobedient sons;
It wards off even a fierce bull, and also a fierce dog.

"In darkness it goes before, in the deep it finds a footing;
By the power of the stick, having stumbled, one stands firm again."

He, having learnt those verses in the presence of the Blessed One, on such a day of assembly of brahmins, when his sons, adorned with all ornaments, had entered that assembly hall, when the brahmins were seated on costly seats in the midst, thinking "This is my opportunity," having entered the midst of the assembly hall, having raised his hand, having said "Sirs, I wish to recite verses to you; will you listen?" when it was said "Recite, brahmin, we shall listen," he recited while just standing. And at that time there was a custom among people that whoever, while consuming what belongs to his mother and father, does not support his mother and father, he should be put to death. Therefore those brahmin's sons, having fallen at their father's feet, begged "Give us our lives, father." He, out of a father's heart's tenderness, said "Do not, sirs, destroy my young ones; they will support me." Then the people said to his sons - "If, sirs, from today onwards you do not properly look after your father, we shall kill you." They, frightened, having caused their father to sit on a chair, having themselves lifted him up, having led him to the house, having anointed his body with oil, having rubbed it, having bathed him with scented powder and so on, having summoned the wives, having said "From today onwards, properly look after our father. If you become negligent, we shall restrain you," they fed him with sumptuous food.

The brahmin, having come to good food and a comfortable sleeping place, after a few days, having regained his strength, with invigorated faculties, having looked at his body, thinking "This success of mine was obtained in dependence on the ascetic Gotama," having taken one suit of garments for the purpose of a present, having

gone to the presence of the Blessed One, having been received with friendly welcome, seated to one side, having placed that suit of garments at the feet of the Blessed One, said "We brahmins, Master Gotama, seek a teacher's fee for our teacher. May Master Gotama, my teacher, accept the teacher's fee from me." The Blessed One, out of compassion for him, having accepted it, expounded the Teaching. At the conclusion of the teaching, the brahmin, having become established in the refuges, said thus - "Master Gotama, four regular meals have been given by my sons; from those I give two to you." Then the Teacher, having said "Good, brahmin, but we shall go only to a place of our liking," dismissed him. The brahmin, having gone to the house, said to his sons - "Dear sons, the ascetic Gotama is my friend; two regular meals have been given to him by me; when he arrives, do not be negligent." They accepted, saying "Very well."

The Teacher, on the following day, walking for almsfood, went to the house door of the eldest son. He, having seen the Teacher, having taken his bowl, having led him into the house, having caused him to sit on a costly divan, gave him sumptuous food. The Teacher went to the houses of all in succession - on the following day to the next one's, on the following day to the next one's. All of them likewise made offerings of honour. One day, the eldest son, when a blessing ceremony was at hand, said to his father - "Father, to whom shall we give the blessing?" "I do not know any others; the ascetic Gotama is my friend." "If so, invite him for the morrow together with five hundred monks." The brahmin did so. The Teacher, on the following day, went to his house with his retinue. He, in the house smeared with green and adorned with all decorations, having caused the Community of monks headed by the Buddha to sit down, served them with milk-rice with a little water and honey and with superior solid food. During the meal itself, the brahmin's four sons, having sat down near the Teacher, said - "Master Gotama, we look after our father and are not negligent; see his body."

The Teacher, having said "You have done well; supporting one's mother and father is indeed the habitual practice of the wise of old," having related in detail the Mātuposaka Nāgarāja Jātaka in the Eleventh Nipāta, beginning with "Due to the separation from that elephant, the sallakī trees and kuṭaja trees have grown," spoke this verse -

324. "The elephant named Dhanapāla,
Sharp in rut, difficult to restrain;
Bound, he does not consume a morsel,
The elephant remembers the elephant forest."

Therein, "named Dhanapāla" means this was the name of the elephant captured in a delightful elephant forest by the king of Kāśi having sent an elephant trainer. "Sharp in rut" means of fierce intoxication. For during the time of rut of elephants, the ear-knots burst open; even ordinary elephants at that time do not heed the goad or the lance and spear, and they become fierce. But he was exceedingly fierce. Therefore it was said - "sharp in rut, difficult to restrain." "Bound, he does not consume a morsel" means he, having been bound, having been led to the elephant stable, having been surrounded with a variegated curtain, placed on a ground with perfumed flooring, with a variegated canopy tied above, even though attended upon by the king with

food of various excellent flavours worthy of a king, he did not wish to eat anything. With reference to that meaning, it was said "Bound, he does not consume a morsel." "Remembers the elephant forest" means he remembers the elephant forest, thinking "My dwelling place is delightful." "But my mother in the forest has come to suffering through separation from her son; the duty of attending upon my mother and father is not fulfilled by me; what use is this food to me?" - he remembered only the righteous duty of attending upon his mother and father. But since that could be fulfilled only while standing in that very elephant forest, therefore it was said - "the elephant remembers the elephant forest." While the Teacher was bringing up and relating this former conduct of his own, even as he was speaking, all of them, having shed streams of tears, became tender-hearted with ears inclined. Then the Blessed One, having known what was suitable for them, having made known the truths, expounded the Teaching.

At the conclusion of the teaching, the brahmin, together with his sons and daughters-in-law, became established in the fruition of stream-entry.

The story of the sons of the decrepit brahmin is the third.

4. The Story of Pasenadi of Kosala

325. "When one is torpid" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to King Pasenadi of Kosala.

For on one occasion the king ate cooked rice of a doṇa-measure of rice-grain with a corresponding amount of lentil curry and vegetables. One day, having eaten his morning meal, without having dispelled the drowsiness after the meal, having gone to the Teacher's presence, in a state of exhaustion he tossed about here and there, and even though being overcome by sleepiness, being unable to lie down straight, he sat down to one side. Then the Teacher said to him - "What, great king, have you come without resting?" "Yes, venerable sir, from the time of eating I have great suffering." Then the Teacher, having said to him "Great king, excessive eating brings such suffering," spoke this verse -

325. "When one is torpid and gluttonous,
A sleeper who lies tossing about;
Like a great hog fed on fodder,
The fool enters the womb again and again."

Therein, "torpid" means overcome by sloth and torpor. "And gluttonous" means a great eater, like one of those who eat by the handful, by the hem of the robe, by the plateful, by the crow-māsaka measure, or who eat and vomit. "Fed on fodder" means fed with pig-food such as rice-bran and so on. For a domestic pig, being nourished from the time it is young, when its body becomes fat, being unable to go outside the house, having rolled about under beds and so on, breathing in and breathing out, simply lies down. This is what is meant - When a person is torpid and gluttonous, and like a great hog fed on fodder, being unable to sustain himself in any other posture, is given to sleeping and lies tossing about, then he is unable to attend to the three characteristics as "impermanent, suffering, non-self." Through inattention to those, the one of dull wisdom enters the womb again and again, and is not released from dwelling in the womb. At the conclusion of the teaching, the Teacher, for the benefit

of the king -

"For a person who is always mindful, who knows moderation in food obtained;
For him feelings become slight, he ages slowly, protecting his life."

Having spoken this verse, having taught it to the young man Uttara, he explained the means: "You should recite this verse to the king at mealtime; by this means you should reduce the food." He did so. The king, at a later time, having settled on a nāḷi-measure of cooked rice at most, with a well-lightened body, having attained happiness, with trust arisen in the Teacher, carried on an incomparable gift for seven days. Through the thanksgiving for the gift, the great multitude attained great distinction.

The story of Pasenadi of Kosala is the fourth.

5. The Story of the Novice Sānu

326. "This formerly" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to a novice named Sānu.

He was, it is said, the only son of a certain female lay follower. Then she gave him the going forth while still in his youth. From the time of going forth he was virtuous and dutiful; the duty towards teachers, preceptors, and visitors was always performed by him. On the eighth day of the month, having risen right early, having set up water in the water enclosure, having swept the hall for hearing the Teaching, having prepared a seat, having lit a lamp, he announces the hearing of the Teaching with a sweet voice. The monks, having known his strength, request him: "Recite a melodic recital, novice." He, without making any excuse such as "my heart-wind aches" or "a cough afflicts me," having ascended the pulpit, as if bringing down the celestial river, having given a melodic recital, while descending, says: "I give a share of merit to my mother and father in this melodic recital." His human mother and father do not know of the fact of merit having been given. But in the immediately preceding individual existence, his mother had been born as a demoness; she, having come together with the deities, having heard the Teaching, says: "I give thanks for the merit given by the novice, dear son." Since "a monk accomplished in morality is indeed dear to the world with its gods," the deities were modest and respectful towards that novice, regarding him as the Great Brahmā, as a great mass of fire. Out of respect for the novice, they regard that demoness with honour. At the hearing of the Teaching, demon assemblies, and so on, saying "Sānu's mother, Sānu's mother," they give the demoness the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood. Even influential demons, having seen her, step aside from the path and rise from their seats.

Then the novice, following the course of growth, with faculties matured, oppressed by discontent, being unable to dispel the discontent, with hair and nails grown long, wearing soiled inner and outer robes, without informing anyone, taking his bowl and robes, went alone to his mother's house. The female lay follower, having seen her son, having paid homage, said - "Why, dear son, you formerly come here together with teachers and preceptors or with young novices; why have you come alone today?" He reported his state of dissatisfaction. That female lay follower, having shown the danger in the household life in various ways, even while exhorting her son, being unable to convince him, thinking "Perhaps he will observe through his own

natural experience," having urged him on, having said "Wait, dear son, until I prepare rice gruel and a meal for you; having drunk the rice gruel, when you have finished your meal duty, I shall bring out and give you agreeable garments," having prepared a seat, she gave it. The novice sat down. The female lay follower, having prepared rice gruel and hard food in just a moment, gave it. Then, thinking "I shall prepare a meal," she sat down not far away and washes the rice-grain. At that time, that demoness, reflecting "Where indeed is the novice? Does he obtain any almsfood, or not?" having known that he was seated with the desire to disrobe, thinking "The novice would cause me shame among the influential deities; I shall go and create an obstacle to his disrobing," having come and having possessed his body, having twisted his neck, with spittle flowing, he fell to the ground. The female lay follower, having seen that affliction of her son, having gone quickly, having embraced her son, laid him down on her thighs. The entire village inhabitants, having come, performed oblations and so on. The female lay follower, however, lamenting, spoke these verses -

"The fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight;
And the extra holiday, well endowed with the eight factors.

"Those who observe the Observance, who practise the holy life;
Demons do not sport with them, thus I have heard from the Worthy Ones;
Yet now today I see demons sporting with Sānu."

Having heard the female lay follower's words -

"The fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight;
And the extra holiday, well endowed with the eight factors.

"Those who observe the Observance, who practise the holy life;
Demons do not sport with them, good is what you have heard from the Worthy Ones."

Having said this, she said -

"Sānu, having awakened, you should speak this word of the demons;
Do not do evil action, whether openly or in secret.

"If you will do or are doing evil action;
There is no freedom from suffering for you, even if you fly up and flee."

Thus, having said "Even having done evil action, having flown up like a bird and fled, there is no release for you," that demoness released the novice. He, having opened his eyes, having seen his mother with dishevelled hair, breathing in and breathing out, weeping, and the entire village inhabitants gathered together, not knowing that he had been seized by a demon, thinking "I was formerly seated on a chair, my mother, having sat down not far away, was washing rice-grain, but now I am lying on the ground - what indeed is this?" while still lying down, said to his mother -

"They weep for the dead, mother, or for one living who is not seen;
Seeing me living, mother, why do you weep for me, mother?"

Then his mother, showing the danger in the coming back for the purpose of leaving the Order of one who had gone forth having abandoned objective sensual pleasures and defilement sensual pleasures, said -

"They weep for the dead, son, or for one living who is not seen;
And whoever, having abandoned sensual pleasures, returns here again;
For him too they weep, son, for though living he is dead."

And having said thus, comparing the household life to hot ashes and to hell, showing the danger in the household life, she again said -

"Pulled out from hot ashes, dear, you wish to fall into hot ashes;
Pulled out from hell, dear, you wish to fall into hell."

Then she said to him: "Son, may it be well for you; but by me, thinking 'This little son of ours is burning,' having taken him out from the house like goods, he was given the going forth in the Buddha's Dispensation; do you wish to be burned again in the household life? In order to explain the meaning 'Run forth, protect us' - 'To whom shall we make complaint, to whom shall we make reproach?' - she spoke this verse -

"Run forth, venerable one, to whom shall we make complaint;
Goods removed from a burning house, do you wish to be burned again?"

He, while his mother was speaking and speaking, having observed, said "There is no need for me of the state of a layman." Then his mother, pleased, saying "Good, dear," having fed him with sumptuous food, having asked "How many rains retreats have you, dear?" having known the state of having completed the rains retreats, prepared the three robes. He, with bowl and robes complete, obtained full ordination. Then, for him who had recently received full ordination, the Teacher, generating enthusiasm for the restraint of the mind, having said "This mind indeed, wandering on a journey among various objects for a long time, for one who does not restrain it there is no safety; therefore, exertion should be made in restraining the mind, as with a goad a maddened elephant," spoke this verse -

326. "This mind formerly wandered on a journey,
Wherever it wished, wherever it desired, as it pleased;
That today I shall restrain wisely,
Like a goad-holder a furious elephant."

Its meaning is - This thing called mind, before this, among objects such as matter and so on, by whatever reason it wishes for lust and so on, wherever desire arises for it, by the influence of that, wherever it desires, wandering according to its preference there is happiness, in just that way from such wandering, as it pleased, it wandered on a journey for a long time. That today I shall restrain, like a skilled goad-holder - reckoned as an elephant trainer - with a goad, with wise attention, a furious, intoxicated elephant; I shall not allow it to transgress.

At the conclusion of the teaching, there was full realisation of the teaching for many deities who had approached together with Sānu for hearing the Teaching. That Venerable One, having learnt the three Canons of the Buddha's teaching, having

become a great speaker of the Teaching, having remained for one hundred and twenty years, having stirred the entire Indian subcontinent, attained final Nibbāna.

The story of the novice Sānu is the fifth.

6. The Story of the Pāveyyaka Elephant

327. "Delighted in heedfulness" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to the elephant named Pāveyyaka belonging to the king of Kosala.

That elephant, it is said, having been of great power in his youth, at a later time, having been struck by the force of the wind of old age, having descended into a great lake, having stuck in the mud, was not able to get out. The public, having seen him, raised up a discussion: "Even such an elephant has reached this state of feebleness." The king, having heard that incident, commanded the elephant trainer - "Go, teacher, pull that elephant out of the mud." He, having gone, having displayed the battle front at that place, caused the battle drum to be beaten. The elephant, being of a proud nature, having risen up with force, stood firmly on dry ground. The monks, having seen that matter, reported to the Teacher. The Teacher said: "By that elephant, monks, the self was pulled out from the difficulty of ordinary mud; but you have plunged into the difficulty of mental defilements. Therefore, having wisely striven, you too pull yourselves out from that" - and having said this, he spoke this verse -

327. "Be delighted in heedfulness, guard your own mind;
Lift yourselves out of difficulty, as an elephant sunk in mud."

Therein, "delighted in heedfulness" means be delighted in the continuous presence of mindfulness. "Your own mind" means guard your own mind among objects such as matter and so on in such a way that it does not commit transgression. "Out of difficulty" means just as that elephant sunk in the mud, having made effort with his forelegs and hind legs, having pulled himself out from the difficulty of the mud, stood firmly on dry ground, so you too pull yourselves out from the difficulty of mental defilements, establish yourselves on the dry ground of Nibbāna - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, those monks became established in arahantship.

The story of the Pāveyyaka elephant is the sixth.

7. The Story of Several Monks

328-330. "If one should find" - the Teacher, while dwelling in the Protected Forest Grove in dependence on Pālileyyaka, spoke this proclamation of the Teaching referring to several monks. The story has come in the commentary on the verse "Others do not understand" in the Pairs Chapter itself. For this was said:

The fact of the Truth-finder's dwelling there, being attended upon by the noble elephant, became well-known throughout the whole Indian subcontinent. From the city of Sāvathī, great families such as "Anāthapiṇḍika and Visākhā the great female lay follower" and so on sent a message to the Elder Ānanda: "Show us the Teacher, venerable sir." Five hundred monks dwelling in the various directions too, having finished keeping the rains retreat, having approached the Elder Ānanda, requested:

"It has been a long time, friend Ānanda, since we have heard a talk on the Teaching in the presence of the Blessed One. It would be good if we, friend Ānanda, could receive a talk on the Teaching in the presence of the Blessed One for hearing." The Elder, having taken those monks and having gone there, having thought "It is inappropriate to approach the Truth-finder, who has been dwelling alone for three months, together with this many monks," having left those monks outside, approached the Teacher alone. Pālileyyaka, having seen him, having taken up a stick, rushed forward. The Teacher, having looked at him, said "Go away, go away, Pālileyyaka, do not obstruct him, this one is an attendant of the Buddha." He, having thrown down the stick right there, asked permission to receive the bowl and robes. The Elder did not give them. The elephant thought "If he is one who has learnt the duties, he will not place his own requisites on the Teacher's sitting stone-slab." The Elder placed the bowl and robes on the ground. For those accomplished in duties do not place their own requisites on the seat or bed of their teachers.

The Elder, having paid homage to the Teacher, sat down to one side. The Teacher, having asked "Have you come alone?" having heard that he had come with five hundred monks, having asked "But where are they?" when it was said "Not knowing your mind, I have come having left them outside," said "Summon them." The Elder did so. The Teacher, having exchanged friendly welcome with those monks, when those monks said "Venerable sir, the Blessed One is indeed delicate as a Buddha and delicate as a warrior; by you, standing and sitting alone for three months, a difficult thing has been done; there was, I think, no one to perform duties and counter-duties, nor anyone to give water for washing the face and so on," said "Monks, all my duties were done by the Pālileyyaka elephant. For one who obtains such a companion, it is proper to dwell alone; for one who does not obtain one, the state of wandering alone is better" - having said this, he spoke these verses in the Elephant Chapter -

328. "If one should find a prudent companion,
A fellow traveller, living well, wise;
Having overcome all dangers,
One should wander with him, glad and mindful.
329. "If one should not find a prudent companion,
A fellow traveller, living well, wise;
Like a king abandoning a conquered kingdom,
One should wander alone, like an elephant in the forest.
330. "Better is the life of one alone;
There is no companionship with a fool;
One should wander alone and not do evil deeds,
Living at ease, like an elephant in the forest."

Therein, "prudent" means endowed with the wisdom of discretion. "Living well, wise" means one who dwells well, a wise person. "Dangers" means obtaining such a companion who abides in friendliness, having overcome all dangers - both obvious dangers such as lions, tigers, and so on, and concealed dangers such as the fear of lust, the fear of hate, the fear of delusion, and so on - one should wander with him, glad, having established mindfulness; one should dwell - this is the meaning.

"Like a king abandoning a kingdom" means like King Mahājanaka who departed having abandoned his kingdom. This is what is meant - just as a king whose territory has been conquered, thinking "This kingship is indeed a great state of heedlessness; what use is kingship to me?" having abandoned the conquered kingdom, having entered alone into the great forest, having gone forth into the going forth as a hermit, wanders alone in the four postures - so one should wander alone. "Like an elephant in the forest" means just as "I am dwelling crowded by elephants, she-elephants, young elephants, and elephant calves; I eat grass with cut-off tips, and they eat my bent-down broken branches, and I drink turbid water, and when I have come up from the water, she-elephants go along rubbing against my body; what if I were to dwell alone, withdrawn from the group?" - having thus considered, this noble elephant named Mātaṅga because of his going, having abandoned the herd in this forest, wanders comfortably alone in all postures - so too one should wander alone - this is the meaning.

"Of one alone" means for one gone forth, indeed, from the time of going forth onwards, for one who delights in solitude, the life of one alone is better. "There is no companionship with a fool" means the lesser morality, the middle morality, the greater morality, the ten topics of discussion, the thirteen virtues of the ascetic practices, insight knowledge, the four paths, the four fruits, the three true knowledges, the six direct knowledges, and the Deathless, great Nibbāna - this indeed is what is called companionship. That cannot be attained in dependence on a fool - thus there is no companionship with a fool. "Alone" means for this reason one should wander alone in all postures, and should not do even trifling evil deeds. Just as that noble elephant Mātaṅga, living at ease, free from attachment, wanders comfortably in this forest at whatever place he wishes, so having become alone one should wander, and should not do even trifling evil deeds - this is the meaning. Therefore, showing this meaning that "by you who do not obtain a suitable companion, one should become a solitary wandering ascetic," the Teacher expounded this Teaching to those monks.

At the conclusion of the teaching, all five hundred of those monks became established in arahantship.

The story of several monks is the seventh.

8. The Story of Māra

331-333. "When a need has arisen" - the Teacher spoke this proclamation of the Teaching while dwelling in a forest hut in the Himalayan region, referring to Māra.

At that time, it is said, kings were exercising kingship having oppressed the people. Then the Blessed One, having seen the people oppressed by punishment and taxation in the kingdoms of unrighteous kings, thought thus out of compassion - "Is it possible to exercise kingship without killing, without causing to kill, without conquering, without causing to conquer, without sorrowing, without causing to sorrow, righteously?" Māra the Evil One, having known that reflection of the Blessed One, having thought "The ascetic Gotama has thought 'Is it possible to exercise kingship?' Now he will be desirous of exercising kingship. And kingship is indeed a state of heedlessness. When he is exercising kingship, it is possible to find an opportunity. I

shall go and generate enthusiasm in him," having approached the Teacher, said - "Let the Blessed One exercise kingship, venerable sir, let the Fortunate One exercise kingship without killing, without causing to kill, without conquering, without causing to conquer, without sorrowing, without causing to sorrow, righteously." Then the Teacher, having said to him "But what do you see in me, Evil One, that you speak to me thus?" when he said "The four bases for spiritual power, venerable sir, have been well developed by the Blessed One. For if the Blessed One wishes, he could resolve that the Himalaya, the king of mountains, be gold, and it would indeed be gold. I shall manage the wealth affairs with wealth; you shall exercise kingship righteously" - when this was said by him -

"Even if there were a mountain of gold, of pure gold, entirely;
Even twice that would not be enough for one, knowing this, one should live righteously.

"He who has seen suffering and from what source it arises,
How could that being incline towards sensual pleasures;
Having understood that clinging is attachment in the world,
A being should train for the removal of that very thing."

Having stirred him with these verses, having said "Your exhortation, Evil One, is one thing, mine is another; there is no such thing as a comparison of teachings with you; for I exhort thus," he spoke these verses -

331. "When a need has arisen, friends are pleasant;
Contentment is pleasant with whatever there is;
Merit is pleasant at the end of life;
The abandoning of all suffering is pleasant.
332. "Pleasant is filial love towards one's mother in the world,
And also filial piety is pleasant;
Pleasant is asceticism in the world,
And also commitment to holy life is pleasant.
333. "Morality is pleasant until old age, faith established is pleasant;
Pleasant is the attainment of wisdom, the non-performance of evil is pleasant."

Therein, "when a need has arisen" means: for even one who has gone forth, when a matter has arisen such as robe-making and so on, or the appeasement of legal cases and so on, or even for a householder, such as farming and so on, or overcoming and so on by those based upon a powerful faction - those who are able to accomplish or to appease that matter, such friends are pleasant. This is the meaning. "Contentment is pleasant" means: because even householders, being discontented with their own possessions, undertake burglary and so on, and those gone forth too, various kinds of wrong ways of earning. Thus they do not find happiness at all. Therefore, whatever contentment with whatever there is, whether small or abundant, that is one's own possession - this alone is pleasant. This is the meaning. "Merit" means: at the time of death, the meritorious deed performed having spread out according to one's

disposition is itself pleasant. "Of all" means: but arahantship itself, reckoned as the abandoning of the entire suffering of the round of rebirths, is what is called happiness in this world.

"Filial love towards one's mother" means right practice towards one's mother. "Filial piety" means right practice towards one's father. By both, the attendance upon one's mother and father is spoken of. For mother and father, having known the state of non-attendance by their children, either bury their own property in the ground or give it away to others; blame towards them also grows, saying "They do not attend upon their mother and father"; and upon the collapse of the body, they are reborn even in the excrement hell. But those who attend upon their mother and father carefully, they obtain the wealth belonging to them, they also gain praise, and upon the collapse of the body, they are reborn in heaven. Therefore both of these have been said to be pleasant. "Asceticism" means right practice towards those gone forth.

"Brahmanhood" means right practice itself towards Buddhas, Individually Enlightened Ones, and disciples, who have warded off evil. By both, the state of looking after them with the four requisites is stated; this too is called pleasant in the world.

"Morality" - for ornaments such as jewelled earrings, red garments, and so on shine only for those established in the appropriate stage of life. The ornament of the young does not shine in old age, nor does the ornament of the old shine in youth; but by the arising of reproach, thinking "This one is a madman, methinks," it generates only fault. But morality, classified as the five precepts, the ten precepts, and so on, shines indeed in all stages of life for both the young and the old; by the arising of praise, thinking "Oh, indeed this one is virtuous," it brings only pleasure. Therefore it was said - "Morality is pleasant until old age." "Faith established" means faith of both kinds, mundane and supramundane, having become unwavering, is established. "Pleasant is the attainment of wisdom" means the attainment of mundane and supramundane wisdom is pleasant. "The non-performance of evil" - but the non-performance of evil by way of completely cutting off is pleasant in this world - this is the meaning.

At the conclusion of the teaching, there was full realisation of the teaching for many deities.

The story of Māra is the eighth.

The commentary on the Elephant Chapter is concluded.

The twenty-third 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.

PDF Creation Date: 14 September 2026

HOW TO CITE

PaliVerse (2026). Commentaries. The Canon of Discourses - Commentaries. 5. The Collection of Minor Texts. 02. Commentary on the Teaching in Verses. 23. The Chapter on the Elephant Retrieved from paliverse.org

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