

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)

20. The Questions of Milinda (20. Milindapañhapāḷi)

3. The Chapter on Earth (3. Pathavīvaggo)

[Mil 7.4.1-7.4.10, PTS 382-392]



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

20. The Questions of Milinda

3. The Chapter on Earth

1. The Question on the Earth's Quality

1. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of the earth should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, the earth, whether desirable or undesirable things such as camphor, aloe wood, fragrant shrub, sandalwood, saffron and so on are scattered upon it, or bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, spittle, snot, synovial fluid, urine, excrement and so on are scattered upon it, remains just the same, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, in the desirable and undesirable, in gain and loss, in fame and disrepute, in blame and praise, in happiness and suffering, one should be such a one everywhere. This, great king, is the first factor of the earth to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the earth is free from adornment and decoration, pervaded by its own odour, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be free from decoration, pervaded by the fragrance of one's own morality. This, great king, is the second factor of the earth to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the earth is continuous, unbroken, without holes, not hollow, thick, compact, and extensive, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should have morality that is continuous, unbroken, without holes, not hollow, thick, compact, and extensive. This, great king, is the third factor of the earth to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the earth, even while bearing villages, market towns, cities, countries, trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, lotus ponds, and groups of deer, birds, humans, men and women, is untiring, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, whether exhorting, instructing, informing, explaining, instigating, encouraging, or gladdening, one should be untiring in the teaching of the Dhamma. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the earth to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the earth is free from attraction and aversion, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, being free from attraction and aversion, one should dwell with a mind like the earth. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the earth to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the female lay follower Cūḷasubhaddā while praising her own ascetics -

"If one arm with an axe, one should pare with an angry mind;
And one arm with fragrance, one should anoint while delighted.

"For that one there is no aversion, lust is not found in this one;
With minds like the earth, such are my ascetics."

2. The Question on the Water's Quality

2. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of water should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, water is well-established, unshaken, undisturbed, pure by intrinsic nature, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having removed scheming, talking, hinting, and belittling, there should be conduct that is well-established, unshaken, undisturbed, pure by intrinsic nature. This, great king, is the first factor of water to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, water is established in a cool intrinsic nature, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, there should be one accomplished in patience, friendliness, and compassion towards all beings, seeking their welfare, compassionate. This, great king, is the second factor of water to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, water makes the impure pure, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, whether in the village or in the forest, towards preceptors and those like preceptors, towards teachers and those like teachers, everywhere there should be one without legal cases, one who acts without remainder. This, great king, is the third factor of water to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, water is desired by many people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, through having few wishes, contentment, seclusion, and retreat, there should be one constantly desired by the whole world. This, great king, is the fourth factor of water to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, water does not cause harm to anyone, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, evil that generates quarrelling, dispute, strife, contention, emptiness of meditative absorption, and discontent for others should not be done by body, speech, and mind. This, great king, is the fifth factor of water to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Kaṇha Jātaka:

'If you have given me a boon, Sakka, lord of all beings;
Neither mind nor body, on my account, Sakka, of anyone;
Should ever be harmed - this, Sakka, is the boon I choose.'

The question on the quality of water is the second.

3. The Question on the Fire's Quality

3. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of fire should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, fire burns grass, sticks, branches and leaves, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, whatever mental defilements there are, whether internal or external, experiencing desirable and undesirable objects, all of them should be burnt by the fire of knowledge. This, great king, is the first factor of fire to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, fire is merciless and without compassion, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, compassion and pity should not be shown towards all mental defilements. This, great king, is the second factor of fire to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, fire wards off cold, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having generated the heat of the fire of energy, mental defilements should be warded off. This, great king, is the third factor of fire to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, fire, being free from attraction and aversion, generates heat, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, being free from attraction and aversion, one should dwell with a mind like fire. This, great king, is the fourth factor of fire to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, fire, having scattered darkness, shows light, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having scattered the darkness of ignorance, the light of knowledge should be shown. This, great king, is the fifth factor of fire to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, while exhorting his own son Rāhula:

'Rāhula, develop the meditation like fire. For when you, Rāhula, are developing the meditation like fire, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not remain obsessing the mind.'

The question on the quality of fire is the third.

4. The Question on the Wind's Quality

4. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of wind should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, wind blows through a forest grove fully in bloom, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should delight in the forest grove of objects blooming with the excellent flowers of liberation. This, great king, is the first factor of wind to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, wind shakes the group of trees growing from the earth, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, gone into the forest, investigating activities, the mental defilements should be shaken. This, great king, is the second factor of wind to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, wind moves in space, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mind should be directed towards supramundane states. This, great king, is the third factor of wind to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, wind experiences odour, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the fragrant odour of one's own excellent morality should be experienced. This, great king, is the fourth factor of wind to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, wind is free from attachment, dwelling without abode, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be free from attachment, without abode, without intimacy, liberated everywhere. This, great king, is the fifth factor of wind to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Suttanipāta:

'From intimacy fear is born, from abode arises dust;
Without abode, without intimacy - this indeed is the sage's vision.'

The question on the quality of wind is the fourth.

5. The Question on the Mountain's Quality

5. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of the mountain should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a mountain is immovable, unshaken, unshakeable, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, in honour and dishonour, in respect and disrespect, in esteem and disesteem, in fame and disgrace, in blame and praise, in happiness and suffering, in desirable and undesirable things, everywhere in forms, sounds, odours, flavours, tangible objects and mental phenomena, one should not find pleasure in what is enticing, one should not become corrupted towards what leads to hate, one should not become deluded towards what leads to infatuation, one should not be shaken, one should not be moved, one should be like an immovable mountain. This, great king, is the first factor of the mountain to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods -

"Just as a rock, one solid mass, is not moved by the wind;
So the wise do not waver amidst blame and praise.'

"Furthermore, great king, a mountain is firm, not associated with anyone, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be firm and unassociated, bonding should not be made with anyone. This, great king, is the second factor of the mountain to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods -

"Unassociated with householders, and with homeless ones, both;
Not dwelling in a home, of few wishes, him I call a brahmin.'

"Furthermore, great king, on a mountain a seed does not grow, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, mental defilements should not be allowed to grow in one's own mind. This, great king, is the third factor of the mountain to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Subhūti -

"When a mind connected with lust arises in me;
I myself review it, fully focused I tame it.

"You find pleasure in what is enticing, and you become corrupted towards what leads to hate;

You become deluded towards what leads to infatuation, depart from the forest, you.

"This is the dwelling of the pure, of the stainless austere ascetics;
Do not defile the pure, depart from the forest, you.'

"Furthermore, great king, a mountain is very high, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be very high in knowledge. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the mountain to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods -

"When the wise person drives away heedlessness with diligence;
Having ascended the palace of wisdom, free from sorrow, the sorrowful generation;
Like one standing on a mountain looks upon those standing on the ground, the wise one looks upon the foolish.'

"Furthermore, great king, a mountain is neither raised up nor bent down, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, raising up and bending down should not be done. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the mountain to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the female lay follower Cūḷasubhaddā while praising her own ascetics -

"The world is elated by gain, and dejected by loss;
Unmoved by gain and loss, such are my ascetics."

The question on the quality of a mountain is the fifth.

6. The Question on the Space's Quality

6. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of space should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, space is altogether ungraspable, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be altogether ungraspable by mental defilements. This, great king, is the first factor of space to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, space is frequented by groups of seers, ascetics, spirits, and birds, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mind should be directed among activities thus: 'impermanent, suffering, non-self.' This, great king, is the second factor of space to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, space is terrifying, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mind should be made to tremble regarding conception in all existences, gratification should not be made. This, great king, is the third factor of space to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, space is infinite, limitless, immeasurable, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be endowed with infinite morality and unlimited knowledge. This, great king, is the fourth factor of space to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, space is not stuck, not attached, unestablished, unhindered, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be not stuck everywhere - in family, in group, in material gain, in residence, in impediments, in requisites, and in all mental defilements, one should be unattached, unestablished, unhindered. This, great king, is the fifth factor of space to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, while exhorting his own son Rāhula: 'Just as, Rāhula, space is not established anywhere, just so you, Rāhula, develop the meditation like space. For when you, Rāhula, are developing the meditation like space, arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not remain obsessing the mind.'"

The question on the quality of space is the sixth.

7. The Question on the Quality of the Moon

7. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of the moon should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, the moon rising in the bright fortnight grows progressively higher and higher, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, through the practice of good conduct, morality, virtue and duty, in learning and achievement, in seclusion, in the establishment of mindfulness, in guarding the doors of the sense faculties, in moderation in eating, in the pursuit of wakefulness, one should grow progressively higher and higher. This, great king, is the first factor of the moon to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the moon has a lofty predominance, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, there should be lofty predominance of desire. This, great king, is the second factor of the moon to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the moon moves by night, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be secluded. This, great king, is the third factor of the moon to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the moon is the banner of the mansions, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should have morality as one's banner. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the moon to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the moon rises requested and wished for, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, families should be approached as one requested and wished for. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the moon to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Connected Collection: 'Like the moon, monks, approach families - having drawn back the body, having drawn back the mind, always as newcomers among families, not impudent.'"

The question on the quality of the moon is the seventh.

8. The Question on the Quality of the Sun

8. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'seven factors of the sun should be adopted.' What are those seven factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, the sun dries up all water, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, all mental defilements should be completely dried up. This, great king, is the first factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun dispels the darkness of ignorance, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, all the darkness of lust, the darkness of hate, the darkness of delusion, the darkness of conceit, the darkness of wrong view, the darkness of mental defilement, all the darkness of misconduct should be dispelled. This, great king, is the second factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun constantly moves, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, wise attention should be constantly applied. This, great king, is the third factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun has a garland of rays, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be garlanded with objects. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun moves about heating the great multitude of people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the world with its gods should be heated by the practice of good conduct, morality, virtue and duty, by meditative absorptions, deliverances, concentration, attainments, faculties, powers, factors of enlightenment, establishments of mindfulness, right strivings, and bases for spiritual power. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun moves about frightened by fear of Rāhu, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having seen beings entangled in the net of mental defilements through misconduct, unfortunate realms, uneven wilderness, result, and nether world, bound by the mass of wrong views, rushing on the wrong path, practising the wrong way, the mind should be stirred with great religious emotion and fear. This, great king, is the sixth factor of the sun to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the sun shows the good and the evil, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mundane and supramundane phenomena of faculties, powers, factors of enlightenment, establishments of mindfulness, right strivings, and bases for spiritual power should be shown. This, great king, is the seventh factor of the sun to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Vaṅgīsa -

"Just as the sun rising shows the form of living beings;
Both the pure and the impure, and the good and the evil.

"So too a monk who bears the Teaching, to people covered by ignorance;
Shows the various path, as the sun at its rising."

The question on the quality of the sun is the eighth.

9. The Question on the Quality of Sakka

9. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'three factors of Sakka should be adopted.' What are those three factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, Sakka is endowed with complete happiness, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, there should be delight in the happiness of complete solitude. This, great king, is the first factor of Sakka to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, Sakka, having seen the gods, encourages them, produces mirth; even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the peaceful mind, not sluggish and not lazy, should be exerted in wholesome mental states, mirth should be produced, one should rise up, strive, and endeavour. This, great king, is the second factor of Sakka to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, discontent does not arise for Sakka; even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, discontent should not be produced in an empty house. This, great king, is the third factor of Sakka to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Subhūti -

"Since I went forth, O great hero, in your Dispensation;
I do not directly know as arisen, a mind connected with sensual pleasure."

The question on the quality of Sakka is the ninth.

10. The Question on the Quality of a Universal Monarch

10. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'four factors of a universal monarch should be adopted.' What are those four factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a universal monarch treats people kindly by the four ways of supporting others, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the minds of the four assemblies should be supported, helped, and gladdened. This, great king, is the first factor of a universal monarch to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, in the realm of a universal monarch, thieves do not arise; just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, thoughts of sensual lust, anger, and violence should not be produced. This, great king, is the second factor of a universal monarch to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods -

"And whoever delights in the peace of applied thought, always mindful,
develops foulness;
This one indeed will put an end to it, this one will cut the bondage of Māra."

"Furthermore, great king, a universal monarch day by day traverses the great earth bounded by the ocean, examining what is good and evil; just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, bodily action, verbal action, and mental action should be reviewed day by day - 'Does my day pass blamelessly in these three respects?' This, great king, is the third factor of a universal monarch to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Aṅguttara Collection -

'In what state do my nights and days pass?' - this should be repeatedly reviewed by one gone forth.

"Furthermore, great king, for a universal monarch, internal and external protection is well arranged; just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, mindfulness as doorkeeper should be established for the protection of internal and external defilements. This, great king, is the fourth factor of a universal monarch to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods -

'The noble disciple who has mindfulness as doorkeeper, monks, abandons the unwholesome, develops the wholesome; abandons the blameworthy, develops the blameless; he maintains himself in purity.'"

The question on the quality of a universal monarch is the tenth.

The Earth Chapter is the third.

Its summary:

Earth, water, and fire, air, and with the mountain;
Space, moon and sun, Sakka, and with the universal monarch.



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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