

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality
(1. Sīlakkhandhavaggapāḷi)

3. The Discourse to Ambaṭṭha (3. Ambaṭṭhasuttaṃ)

[DN 3, PTS 1.87–1.110]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality

3. The Discourse to Ambaṭṭha

254. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering on a journey among the Kosalans together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks, and arrived at a brahmin village of the Kosalans named Icchānaṅgala. There the Blessed One stayed at Icchānaṅgala in the Icchānaṅgala forest thicket.

The Story of Pokkharasāti

255. Now at that time the brahmin Pokkharasāti was dwelling at Ukkatṭha, a place teeming with beings, with grass, wood and water, with grain, a royal domain, given by King Pasenadi of Kosala as a royal gift, a royal grant. The brahmin Pokkharasāti heard - "Indeed, my dear, the ascetic Gotama, a Sakyan son who has gone forth from the Sakyan clan, wandering on a journey among the Kosalans together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks, has arrived at Icchānaṅgala and is staying at Icchānaṅgala in the Icchānaṅgala forest thicket. And concerning that Master Gotama, such a good reputation has arisen - 'Thus indeed is the Blessed One: the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, the Fortunate One, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' He, having realised by direct knowledge himself, proclaims this world with its gods, with its Māras, with its Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, with its gods and humans. He expounds the Teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, with meaning and with phrasing; he reveals the holy life that is complete in its entirety and pure. Good indeed is the seeing of such Worthy Ones."

The Young Brahmin Ambaṭṭha

256. Now at that time the brahmin Pokkharasāti had a disciple, a young man named Ambaṭṭha, who was a reciter, a bearer of the sacred texts, who had mastered the three Vedas together with their vocabularies and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the histories as a fifth, learned in verse, a grammarian, fully versed in worldly knowledge and the marks of a great man, acknowledged and approved by his teacher in the teacher's own doctrine of the threefold true knowledge - "What I know, you know; what you know, I know."

257. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti addressed the young man Ambaṭṭha: "This, dear Ambaṭṭha, the ascetic Gotama, a Sakyan son who has gone forth from the Sakyan clan, wandering on a journey among the Kosalans together with a large Community of monks, about five hundred monks, has arrived at Icchānaṅgala and is staying at Icchānaṅgala in the Icchānaṅgala forest thicket. And concerning that Master Gotama, such a good reputation has arisen - 'Thus indeed is the Blessed One: the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, the Fortunate One, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to

be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' He, having realised by direct knowledge himself, proclaims this world with its gods, with its Māras, with its Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, with its gods and humans. He expounds the Teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, with meaning and with phrasing; he reveals the holy life that is complete in its entirety and pure. Good indeed is the seeing of such Worthy Ones." Come, dear Ambaṭṭha, go to where the ascetic Gotama is; having approached, find out about the ascetic Gotama, whether concerning that Master Gotama such a reputation has arisen as being true, or not so. Whether that Master Gotama is such or is not such, thus we shall know that Master Gotama."

258. "But in what way, sir, shall I know that Master Gotama -whether concerning that Master Gotama such a reputation has arisen as being true, or not so. Whether that Master Gotama is such or is not such?"

"There have come down, dear Ambaṭṭha, in our sacred hymns, the thirty-two marks of a great man, possessed of which a great man has only two destinations, no other. If he dwells in a house, he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a righteous king of righteousness, ruler of the four quarters, victorious, who has established the security of his realm, possessed of the seven treasures. He has these seven treasures. That is: the wheel treasure, the elephant treasure, the horse treasure, the jewel treasure, the woman treasure, the householder treasure, and the adviser treasure as the seventh. And he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy armies. He dwells having conquered this earth bounded by the ocean, without rod, without sword, by righteousness. But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world. Now I, dear Ambaṭṭha, am the giver of the sacred hymns; you are the receiver of the sacred hymns."

259. "Yes, sir," the young man Ambaṭṭha replied to the brahmin Pokkharasāti, and rising from his seat, having paid respect to the brahmin Pokkharasāti and circumambulated him keeping him on his right, having mounted a chariot drawn by mares, together with several young men, he set out towards the Icchānaṅgala forest grove. Having gone by vehicle as far as the ground was passable for vehicles, he descended from the vehicle and entered the monastery on foot. Now at that time several monks were walking up and down in the open air. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha approached those monks; having approached, he said this to those monks - "Where, good sirs, is that Master Gotama dwelling now? For we have come here to see that Master Gotama."

260. Then those monks had this thought: "This young man Ambaṭṭha is of a well-known family and is a disciple of the well-known brahmin Pokkharasāti. Friendly conversation with such sons of good family is not troublesome for the Blessed One." They said this to the the young man Ambaṭṭha: "This dwelling, Ambaṭṭha, has its door closed; approach it quietly, without hurrying enter the veranda, clear your throat and knock on the door-bolt; the Blessed One will open the door for you."

261. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha approached quietly that dwelling with its door closed, and without hurrying entered the veranda, cleared his throat and knocked on the door-bolt. The Blessed One opened the door. The young brahmin

Ambaṭṭha entered. The young men also, having entered, exchanged friendly greetings with the Blessed One, and having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, sat down to one side. But the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, while walking up and down, exchanged some talk to be remembered with the seated Blessed One, and while standing, exchanged some talk to be remembered with the seated Blessed One.

262. Then the Blessed One said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha - "Is this how you have friendly conversation with senior, elderly brahmins, with teachers and teachers' teachers, Ambaṭṭha, that while walking and standing you exchange some talk to be remembered with me who is seated?"

The First Claim of Low Birth

263. "No indeed, Master Gotama. For indeed, Master Gotama, a brahmin walking is fit to converse with a brahmin who is walking, a brahmin standing is fit to converse with a brahmin who is standing, a brahmin seated is fit to converse with a brahmin who is seated, a brahmin lying down is fit to converse with a brahmin who is lying down. And indeed, Master Gotama, with those shavelings, those petty ascetics, those menials, those dark offspring of Brahmā's feet, with them too I have such friendly conversation, just as with the venerable Gotama." "But surely, Ambaṭṭha, your coming here was with a purpose; for whatever purpose you might come, you should pay close attention to that very purpose. But indeed, sirs, this young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, though untrained, thinks himself trained - what else could it be but his lack of training?"

264. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, being addressed by the Blessed One with the charge of not having lived the holy life, angry and displeased, jeering at the Blessed One, scoffing at the Blessed One, blaming the Blessed One - thinking "The ascetic Gotama will be brought to disgrace by me," said this to the Blessed One - "Fierce, Master Gotama, is the Sakyan clan; harsh, Master Gotama, is the Sakyan clan; fickle, Master Gotama, is the Sakyan clan; talkative, Master Gotama, is the Sakyan clan; being menials, being mere menials, they do not honour brahmins, they do not respect brahmins, they do not revere brahmins, they do not venerate brahmins, they do not pay homage to brahmins. This, Master Gotama, is not proper, this is not fitting, that these Sakyans, being menials, being mere menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not venerate brahmins, do not pay homage to brahmins." Thus the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha for the first time threw down the charge of being menials against the Sakyans.

The Second Claim of Low Birth

265. "But what have the Sakyans done wrong to you, Ambaṭṭha?" "On one occasion, Master Gotama, I went to Kapilavatthu on some business for my teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti. I approached the Sakyans' assembly hall. Now at that time several Sakyans and Sakyan princes were seated on high seats in the assembly hall, laughing loudly and playing with each other, poking each other with their fingers, and surely, I think, they were laughing at me; and no one invited me to a seat. This, Master Gotama, is not proper, this is not fitting, that these Sakyans, being menials, being mere menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not venerate brahmins, do not pay homage to brahmins." Thus the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha for the second time threw down the charge of being

menials against the Sakyans.

The Third Claim of Low Birth

266. "Even the Indian quail, Ambaṭṭha, a little bird, speaks as she pleases in her own nest. But this, Ambaṭṭha, is the Sakyans' own, namely Kapilavatthu; the venerable Ambaṭṭha should not be angry over such a trifling matter." "There are these four castes, Master Gotama - nobles, brahmins, merchants, and workers. Of these four castes, Master Gotama, three castes - nobles and merchants and workers - surely become servants of the brahmins. This, Master Gotama, is not proper, this is not fitting, that these Sakyans, being menials, being mere menials, do not honour brahmins, do not respect brahmins, do not revere brahmins, do not venerate brahmins, do not pay homage to brahmins." Thus the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha for the third time threw down the charge of being menials against the Sakyans.

The Claim of Being a Slave-Woman's Son

267. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "This young brahmin Ambaṭṭha disparages the Sakyans too much with the charge of being menials. What if I were to ask about his clan?" Then the Blessed One said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha - "What is your clan, Ambaṭṭha?" "I am a Kaṇhāyana, Master Gotama." But, Ambaṭṭha, when one traces back your ancient maternal and paternal name and clan, the Sakyans are the sons of masters; you are the son of a female slave of the Sakyans. But, Ambaṭṭha, the Sakyans regard King Okkāka as their grandfather.

"Once upon a time, Ambaṭṭha, King Okkāka, wishing to divert the kingdom to the son of that chief queen who was dear and agreeable to him, banished the elder princes from the realm - Okkāma, Karakaṇḍa, Hatthinika, and Sinisūra. They, banished from the realm, on the slopes of the Himalayas beside a pond where there was a great teak grove, there they made their dwelling. They, fearing the mixing of birth, lived together with their own sisters.

"Then, Ambaṭṭha, King Okkāka addressed his ministers and councillors: 'Where, good sirs, are the princes dwelling now?' 'There is, Sire, on the slopes of the Himalayas beside a pond, a great teak grove; there the princes are now dwelling. They, fearing the mixing of birth, are living together with their own sisters.' Then, Ambaṭṭha, King Okkāka uttered an inspired utterance: 'Capable indeed, good sirs, are the princes, supremely capable indeed, good sirs, are the princes!' From that time onwards, Ambaṭṭha, the Sakyans became known; and he is their ancestor.

"Now, Ambaṭṭha, King Okkāka had a female slave named Disā. She gave birth to one named Kaṇha. When born, Kaṇha spoke: 'Wash me, mother, bathe me, mother, free me from this impurity, mother; I shall be of benefit to you.' Just as, Ambaṭṭha, people nowadays, having seen goblins, perceive them as 'goblins'; even so, Ambaṭṭha, at that time people perceived goblins as 'dark ones'. They said thus: 'This one spoke when born, a dark one is born, a goblin is born.' From that time onwards, Ambaṭṭha, the Kaṇhāyanas became known, and he is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas. Thus, Ambaṭṭha, when one traces back your ancient maternal and paternal name and clan, the Sakyans are the sons of masters; you are the son of a female slave of the Sakyans."

268. When this was said, those young men said to the Blessed One: "Let not Master Gotama disparage Ambaṭṭha too much with the charge of being a slave-woman's son. The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is well-born, Master Gotama, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is a son of good family, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is very learned, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is of good conversation, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is wise, and the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is able to discuss this matter together with Master Gotama."

269. Then the Blessed One said this to those young men: "If you young men think thus: 'The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is ill-born, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is not a son of good family, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is of little learning, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is not of good conversation, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is unwise, and the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is not able to discuss this matter together with the ascetic Gotama,' then let the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha stand aside, and you discuss this matter together with me. But if you young men think thus: 'The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is well-born, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is a son of good family, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is very learned, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is of good conversation, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is wise, and the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is able to discuss this matter together with the ascetic Gotama,' then you stand aside; let the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha discuss together with me."

"The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is well-born, Master Gotama, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is a son of good family, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is very learned, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is of good conversation, the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is wise, and the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is able to discuss this matter together with Master Gotama. We will remain silent; let the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha discuss this matter together with Master Gotama."

270. Then the Blessed One said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha - "But now, Ambaṭṭha, a reasonable question comes to you, which you must answer whether you wish to or not. If you do not answer, or evade the question with another, or remain silent, or depart, right here your head will split into seven pieces. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard from the brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak about where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from, and who is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas?"

When this was said, the young man Ambaṭṭha remained silent. For the second time the Blessed One said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha - "What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard from the brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak about where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from, and who is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas?" For the second time the young man Ambaṭṭha remained silent. Then the Blessed One said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha - "Answer now, Ambaṭṭha, now is not the time for your silence. Whoever, Ambaṭṭha, when asked a reasonable question by the Truth-finder up to the third time does not answer, right here his head will split into seven pieces."

271. Now at that time the demon Vajirapāṇī, having taken up a great iron hammer, blazing, in flames, aglow, stood in the sky above the the young man Ambaṭṭha - "If this young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, when asked a reasonable question by the Blessed One

up to the third time, does not answer, right here I will split his head into seven pieces." Now both the Blessed One and the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha saw that demon Vajirapāṇī.

272. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, frightened, agitated, with hair standing on end, sought shelter in the Blessed One himself, sought a rock cell in the Blessed One himself, sought refuge in the Blessed One himself - having sat close to him, he said this to the Blessed One - "What is this that Master Gotama has said? Let Master Gotama say it again."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard from the brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak about where the Kaṇhāyanas originated from, and who is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas?" "Just so have I heard, Master Gotama, just as Master Gotama has said. From there the Kaṇhāyanas originated; and he is the ancestor of the Kaṇhāyanas."

The Discussion of Ambaṭṭha's Lineage

273. When this was said, those young men became noisy, making loud sounds and great sounds: "The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is truly ill-born, good sir; the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is truly not a son of good family, good sir; the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha is truly the son of a female slave of the Sakyans, good sir. The Sakyans are truly the sons of masters of the the young man Ambaṭṭha, good sir. We truly thought that the ascetic Gotama, one who speaks what is the Teaching, was to be disparaged."

274. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "These young men disparage the young man Ambaṭṭha too much with the charge of being a slave-woman's son. What if I were to set him free?" Then the Blessed One said this to those young men: "Do not, young men, disparage the young man Ambaṭṭha too much with the charge of being a slave-woman's son. That Kaṇha was an eminent sage. He went to the southern country, and having studied the sacred mantras, approached King Okkāka and requested his daughter Maddarūpī. To him King Okkāka said: 'Who indeed is this fellow, being my slave-woman's son, requesting my daughter Maddarūpī?' Angry and displeased, he fitted a hoof-tipped arrow. He was unable either to release or to withdraw that arrow."

"Then, young men, the ministers and councillors approached the sage Kaṇha and said: 'May there be well-being for the king, venerable sir; may there be well-being for the king, venerable sir.' 'There will be well-being for the king, but if the king releases the arrow downwards, as far as the king's realm extends, to that extent the earth will split open.' 'May there be well-being for the king, venerable sir, may there be well-being for the country.' 'There will be well-being for the king, there will be well-being for the country, but if the king releases the arrow upwards, as far as the king's realm extends, to that extent for seven years the rain god will not rain.' 'May there be well-being for the king, venerable sir, may there be well-being for the country, and may the rain god rain.' 'There will be well-being for the king, there will be well-being for the country, and the rain god will rain, but let the king set up the arrow in the eldest prince; the prince will be safe with fallen hair.' Then, young men, the ministers reported to Okkāka: 'Let Okkāka set up the arrow in the eldest prince. The prince will be safe with fallen hair.' Then King Okkāka set up the arrow in the eldest prince; the

prince became safe with fallen hair. Then King Okkāka, frightened, agitated, with hair standing on end, threatened by the highest penalty, gave his daughter Maddarūpī to him. Do not, young men, disparage the young man Ambaṭṭha too much with the charge of being a slave-woman's son; that Kaṇha was an eminent sage."

The Supremacy of the Warrior Caste

275. Then the Blessed One addressed the young man Ambaṭṭha: "What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, suppose here a young noble were to live together with a brahmin maiden, and from their living together a son would be born. Would that son born from a young noble and a brahmin maiden receive a seat or water among the brahmins?" "He would receive it, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins feed him at a memorial feast, or at a pot-of-rice ceremony, or at a sacrifice, or at a guest meal?" "They would feed him, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins teach him the sacred verses or not?" "They would teach him, Master Gotama." "Would he be prohibited or not prohibited regarding women?" "He would not be prohibited, Master Gotama." "Would the nobles consecrate him with the noble consecration?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "What is the reason for this?" "Because, Master Gotama, he is not of pure descent on his mother's side."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, suppose here a young brahmin were to live together with a noble maiden, and from their living together a son would be born. Would that son born from a young brahmin and a noble maiden receive a seat or water among the brahmins?" "He would receive it, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins feed him at a memorial feast, or at a pot-of-rice ceremony, or at a sacrifice, or at a guest meal?" "They would feed him, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins teach him the sacred verses or not?" "They would teach him, Master Gotama." "Would he be prohibited or not prohibited regarding women?" "He would not be prohibited, Master Gotama." "Would the nobles consecrate him with the noble consecration?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "What is the reason for this?" "Because, Master Gotama, he is not of pure descent on his father's side."

276. "Thus indeed, Ambaṭṭha, whether comparing woman with woman or man with man, the nobles are superior, the brahmins are inferior. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, suppose here the brahmins were to shave a brahmin's head for some offence, and having struck him with a bag of ashes, were to banish him from the country or from the town. Would he receive a seat or water among the brahmins?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins feed him at a memorial feast, or at a pot-of-rice ceremony, or at a sacrifice, or at a guest meal?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins teach him the sacred verses or not?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "Would he be prohibited or not prohibited regarding women?" "He would be prohibited, Master Gotama."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, suppose here the nobles were to shave a noble's head for some offence, and having struck him with a bag of ashes, were to banish him from the country or from the town. Would he receive a seat or water among the brahmins?" "He would receive it, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins feed him at a memorial feast, or at a pot-of-rice ceremony, or at a sacrifice, or at a guest meal?"

"They would feed him, Master Gotama." "Would the brahmins teach him the sacred verses or not?" "They would teach him, Master Gotama." "Would he be prohibited or not prohibited regarding women?" "He would not be prohibited, Master Gotama."

277. "To this extent indeed, Ambaṭṭha, a noble reaches the state of supreme degradation, when the nobles, having shaved his head, strike him with a bag of ashes and banish him from the country or from the town. Thus indeed, Ambaṭṭha, even when a noble reaches the state of supreme degradation, even then the nobles are superior, the brahmins are inferior. This verse too, Ambaṭṭha, was spoken by Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra -

'The noble is foremost among people,
Those who trace their lineage by clan;
One accomplished in true knowledge and conduct,
He is foremost among gods and humans.'

"Now this verse, Ambaṭṭha, was well sung by Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, not badly sung, well spoken, not badly spoken, connected with benefit, not connected with harm, and is approved by me. For I too, Ambaṭṭha, say thus -

'The noble is foremost among people,
Those who trace their lineage by clan;
One accomplished in true knowledge and conduct,
He is foremost among gods and humans.'

First recitation section.

The Discussion of True Knowledge and Conduct

278. "But what, Master Gotama, is that conduct, and what is that true knowledge?" "Indeed, Ambaṭṭha, with regard to the unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, talk of birth is not spoken of, talk of clan is not spoken of, talk of conceit is not spoken of - 'You are worthy of me, or you are not worthy of me.' Where, Ambaṭṭha, there is marriage arrangement from the bride's side, or marriage arrangement from the groom's side, or both marriage arrangements, there this is spoken of as talk of birth, or talk of clan, or talk of conceit - 'You are worthy of me, or you are not worthy of me.' For whoever, Ambaṭṭha, are bound to talk of birth, or bound to talk of clan, or bound to talk of conceit, or bound to marriage arrangements, they are far from the unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct. Having abandoned, Ambaṭṭha, being bound to talk of birth, and being bound to talk of clan, and being bound to talk of conceit, and being bound to marriage arrangements, there is the realisation of the unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct."

279. "But what, Master Gotama, is that conduct, and what is that true knowledge?" "Here, Ambaṭṭha, a Truth-finder arises in the world, a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, the Fortunate One, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One. He, having realised by direct knowledge himself, proclaims this world with its gods, with its Māras, with its Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, with its gods and humans."

He expounds the Teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, with meaning and with phrasing; he reveals the holy life that is complete in its entirety and pure. A householder, or a householder's son, or one reborn in some other family, hears that Teaching. Having heard that Teaching, he gains faith in the Truth-finder. Endowed with that acquisition of faith, he considers thus: etc.

"He, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, enters and dwells in the first meditative absorption, which is accompanied by applied thought and sustained thought, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion. Etc. This too is his conduct.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, with the subsiding of applied and sustained thought, a monk enters and dwells in the second meditative absorption, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied thought and without sustained thought, with rapture and happiness born of concentration. Etc. This too is his conduct.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, with the fading away of rapture, a monk dwells in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body - that which the noble ones declare: 'One who is equanimous and mindful, one who dwells in happiness' - he enters and dwells in the third meditative absorption. Etc. This too is his conduct.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and displeasure, a monk enters and dwells in the fourth meditative absorption, which has neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. Etc. This too is his conduct. This, Ambaṭṭha, is that conduct.

"When the mind is thus concentrated, pure, bright, without blemish, free from impurities, supple, wieldy, stable, and having attained imperturbability, he directs and inclines the mind towards knowledge and vision. Etc. This too is his true knowledge. Etc. He understands: 'There is no more of this state of being.' This too is his true knowledge. This, Ambaṭṭha, is that true knowledge.

"This, Ambaṭṭha, is called a monk 'accomplished in true knowledge', and also 'accomplished in conduct', and also 'accomplished in true knowledge and conduct'. And, Ambaṭṭha, there is no other accomplishment in true knowledge and accomplishment in conduct that is more superior or more sublime than this accomplishment in true knowledge and accomplishment in conduct.

The Four Gateways to Ruin

280. "Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, there are four causes of ruin. What are the four? Here, Ambaṭṭha, some ascetic or brahmin, not attaining this very unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, taking a pingo basket, plunges into a forest haunt - 'I shall be one who eats fallen fruit.' He surely becomes a servant of one accomplished in true knowledge and conduct. Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, this is the first cause of ruin.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here some ascetic or brahmin, not attaining this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, taking a hoe and basket, plunges into a forest grove - 'I shall be one who eats tubers, roots, and fruits.' He surely becomes a servant of one accomplished in true knowledge and conduct. Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, this is the second cause of ruin.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here some ascetic or brahmin, not attaining this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, and not attaining the eating of tubers, roots, and fruits, having built a fire room near a village or near a market town, dwells tending the fire. He surely becomes a servant of one accomplished in true knowledge and conduct. Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, this is the third cause of ruin.

"Furthermore, Ambaṭṭha, here some ascetic or brahmin, not attaining this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, and not attaining the eating of tubers, roots, and fruits, and not attaining the tending of fire, having built a four-doored house at a crossroads, dwells - 'Whatever ascetic or brahmin comes from these four directions, I shall honour him according to my ability, according to my strength.' He surely becomes a servant of one accomplished in true knowledge and conduct. Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, this is the fourth cause of ruin. Ambaṭṭha, with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, these are the four causes of ruin.

281. "What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, do you appear together with your teacher to possess this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct?" "No indeed, Master Gotama." "Who am I, Master Gotama, together with my teacher, and what is the unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct? I am far, Master Gotama, together with my teacher, from the unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, not attaining this very unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, have you, together with your teacher, taking a pingo basket, plunged into a forest grove - 'I shall be one who eats fallen fruit'?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, not attaining this very unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, have you, together with your teacher, taking a hoe and basket, plunged into a forest grove - 'I shall be one who eats tubers, roots, and fruits'?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, not attaining this very unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, and not attaining the eating of tubers, roots, and fruits, have you, together with your teacher, having built a fire room near a village or near a market town, dwelt tending the fire?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

"What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, not attaining this very unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, and not attaining the eating of fallen fruit, and not attaining the eating of tubers, roots, and fruits, and not attaining the tending of fire, have you, together with your teacher, having built a four-doored house at a crossroads, dwelt - 'Whatever ascetic or brahmin comes from these four directions, we shall honour him according to our ability, according to our strength'?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

282. "Thus indeed, Ambaṭṭha, you together with your teacher have fallen away from this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct. And those four causes of ruin that exist with regard to this unsurpassed accomplishment of true knowledge and conduct, from those too you together with your teacher have fallen away. But this speech was spoken by your teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti, Ambaṭṭha - 'Who are these shavelings, these petty ascetics, these menials, these dark offspring of Brahmā's feet, and what is their conversation with brahmins who possess the threefold true knowledge?' - while he himself is bound for the realm of misery and not fulfilling. See, Ambaṭṭha, how much your teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti, has failed in this.

The Inquiry into the Former Seer Status

283. "Now, Ambaṭṭha, the brahmin Pokkharasāti consumes what is given by King Pasenadi of Kosala. To him, King Pasenadi of Kosala does not even grant a face-to-face audience. Even when he consults with him, he consults through a cloth screen. Now, Ambaṭṭha, one who would accept righteous almsfood that has been offered, how could King Pasenadi of Kosala not grant him even a face-to-face audience? See, Ambaṭṭha, how much your teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti, has failed in this.

284. "What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, suppose here King Pasenadi of Kosala, seated on an elephant's neck, or seated on horseback, or standing on a chariot rug, were to discuss some matter with nobles or warriors. He might depart from that place and stand to one side. Then a worker or a worker's slave might come, and standing in that place, discuss that very same matter - 'Thus too said King Pasenadi of Kosala, thus too said King Pasenadi of Kosala.' Does he thereby speak what the king spoke or discuss the king's discussion? Would he thereby be a king or a king's minister?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

285. "Just so, Ambaṭṭha, those who were the ancient sages of the brahmins, the makers of the sacred hymns, the transmitters of the sacred hymns, whose ancient hymn passages are now sung, recited, and collected by the brahmins of today, who sing along with them, recite along with them, repeat what was spoken, recite what was taught, as follows - Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, Bhagu - 'I study the sacred hymns together with my teacher' - that by this much you will become a sage or one practising for sagehood - this is impossible.

286. "What do you think, Ambaṭṭha, what have you heard from the brahmins who are senior, elderly, teachers and teachers' teachers, when they speak - those who were the ancient sages of the brahmins, the makers of the sacred hymns, the transmitters of the sacred hymns, whose ancient hymn passages are now sung, recited, and collected by the brahmins of today, who sing along with them, recite

along with them, repeat what was spoken, recite what was taught, as follows - Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamataggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, Bhagu - did they thus, well-bathed, well-anointed, with trimmed hair and beard, adorned with jewelled earrings and ornaments, dressed in white garments, endowed and furnished with the five cords of sensual pleasure, indulge themselves, just as you do now together with your teacher?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

Etc. did they thus consume rice with pure meat sauce, with the dark grains picked out, with various curries and various vegetables, just as you do now together with your teacher?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

Etc. did they thus amuse themselves with women wearing enveloping garments, just as you do now together with your teacher?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

Etc. did they thus drive about in mare-drawn chariots with trimmed tails, goading the animals with long driving sticks, just as you do now together with your teacher?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

Etc. did they thus have themselves guarded in cities with dug moats, with lowered crossbars, with buttressed walls, by men with long swords, just as you do now together with your teacher?" "No indeed, Master Gotama."

"Thus indeed, Ambaṭṭha, you together with your teacher are neither a sage nor one practising for sagehood. But, Ambaṭṭha, whoever has uncertainty or doubt about me, let him question me, and I shall clear it up by explanation."

The Showing of the Two Marks

287. Then the Blessed One, having come out from the dwelling, stood up on the walking path. The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha too, having come out from the dwelling, stood up on the walking path. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, following the Blessed One as he walked up and down, examined the thirty-two characteristics of a great man on the Blessed One's body. The young brahmin Ambaṭṭha saw on the Blessed One's body the thirty-two characteristics of a great man for the most part, except for two. Regarding two characteristics of a great man he was uncertain, he doubted sceptically, he was not resolved, he was not confident - regarding the sheathed private parts and the broad tongue.

288. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "This young brahmin Ambaṭṭha sees the thirty-two characteristics of a great man on me for the most part, except for two. Regarding two characteristics of a great man he was uncertain, he doubted sceptically, he was not resolved, he was not confident - regarding the sheathed private parts and the broad tongue." Then the Blessed One performed such a feat of supernormal power that the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha saw the Blessed One's sheathed private parts. Then the Blessed One, having put out his tongue, stroked back and forth both ear-holes, stroked back and forth both nostrils, and covered the entire circle of his forehead with his tongue. Then this occurred to the the young man Ambaṭṭha: "The ascetic Gotama is endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, complete, not incomplete." He said this to the Blessed One: "Well then,

Master Gotama, we will now go. We have much to do, we have many duties." "Now do as you think fit, Ambaṭṭha." Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha, having mounted a chariot drawn by mares, departed.

289. Now at that time the brahmin Pokkharasāti, having gone out from Ukkaṭṭha, was seated in his own park together with a large group of brahmins, waiting for the the young man Ambaṭṭha. Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha set out towards his own park. Having gone by vehicle as far as the ground was passable for vehicles, he descended from the vehicle and approached the brahmin Pokkharasāti on foot; having approached, he paid respect to the brahmin Pokkharasāti and sat down to one side.

290. To the the young man Ambaṭṭha seated to one side, the brahmin Pokkharasāti said this - "Did you, dear Ambaṭṭha, see that Master Gotama?" "We did indeed see, sir, that Master Gotama." "Did, dear Ambaṭṭha, such a reputation arise concerning that Master Gotama as being true, not otherwise; and is that Master Gotama such, not otherwise?" "Such a reputation has arisen, sir, concerning that Master Gotama as being true, not otherwise; that Master Gotama is indeed such, not otherwise. And that Master Gotama is endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, complete, not incomplete." "But did you, dear Ambaṭṭha, have any friendly conversation with the ascetic Gotama?" "I did indeed have, sir, some friendly conversation with the ascetic Gotama." "In what way, then, dear Ambaṭṭha, did you have some friendly conversation with the ascetic Gotama?" Then the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha reported to the brahmin Pokkharasāti all the friendly conversation he had with the Blessed One.

291. When this was said, the brahmin Pokkharasāti said this to the young man Ambaṭṭha: "Oh indeed, you our little wise one, oh indeed, you our little learned one, oh indeed, you our little master of the three Vedas, truly, friend, with such a person working for one's welfare, upon the body's collapse at death, one would be reborn in a realm of misery, an unfortunate realm, a nether world, in hell. Because you, Ambaṭṭha, repeatedly attacking that Master Gotama, spoke thus, then that Master Gotama repeatedly bringing up spoke thus about us too. Oh indeed, you our little wise one, oh indeed, you our little learned one, oh indeed, you our little master of the three Vedas, truly, friend, with such a person working for one's welfare, upon the body's collapse at death, one would be reborn in a realm of misery, an unfortunate realm, a nether world, in hell." Angry and displeased, he knocked down the young man Ambaṭṭha with his foot. And he wished to approach the Blessed One for an audience at that very moment.

Pokkharasāti's Approach to the Buddha

292. Then those brahmins said this to the brahmin Pokkharasāti: "It is too late, good sir, to approach the ascetic Gotama for an audience today. Tomorrow the venerable Pokkharasāti will approach the ascetic Gotama for an audience." Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti, having had excellent solid and soft food prepared at his own dwelling, having had it loaded onto a vehicle, while torches were being held, departed from Ukkaṭṭha and set out towards the Icchānaṅgala forest grove. Having gone by vehicle as far as the ground was passable for vehicles, he descended from the vehicle and

approached the Blessed One on foot. Having approached, he exchanged friendly greetings with the Blessed One, and having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, he sat down to one side.

293. Seated to one side, the brahmin Pokkharasāti said this to the Blessed One - "Did our disciple, the young man Ambaṭṭha, come here, Master Gotama?" "Your disciple, the young man Ambaṭṭha, did come, brahmin." "But did you, Master Gotama, have any friendly conversation with the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha?" "I did indeed have, brahmin, some friendly conversation with the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha." "But in what way, Master Gotama, did you have some friendly conversation with the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha?" Then the Blessed One reported to the brahmin Pokkharasāti all the friendly conversation he had with the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha. When this was said, the brahmin Pokkharasāti said this to the Blessed One - "The the young man Ambaṭṭha is a fool, Master Gotama. May the venerable Gotama pardon the the young man Ambaṭṭha." "May the young brahmin Ambaṭṭha be happy, brahmin."

294. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti examined the thirty-two characteristics of a great man on the Blessed One's body. The brahmin Pokkharasāti saw on the Blessed One's body the thirty-two characteristics of a great man for the most part, except for two. Regarding two characteristics of a great man he was uncertain, he doubted sceptically, he was not resolved, he was not confident - regarding the sheathed private parts and the broad tongue.

295. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "This brahmin Pokkharasāti sees the thirty-two characteristics of a great man on me for the most part, except for two. Regarding two characteristics of a great man he was uncertain, he doubted sceptically, he was not resolved, he was not confident - regarding the sheathed private parts and the broad tongue." Then the Blessed One performed such a feat of supernormal power that the brahmin Pokkharasāti saw the Blessed One's sheathed private parts. Then the Blessed One, having put out his tongue, stroked back and forth both ear-holes, stroked back and forth both nostrils, and covered the entire circle of his forehead with his tongue.

296. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti had this thought: "The ascetic Gotama is endowed with the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, complete, not incomplete." He said this to the Blessed One: "May Master Gotama consent to accept a meal from me today together with the Community of monks." The Blessed One consented by silence.

297. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti, having learned of the Blessed One's acceptance, announced the time to the Blessed One - "It is time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready." Then the Blessed One, having dressed in the earlier period of the day, taking his bowl and robe, together with the Community of monks, approached the dwelling of the brahmin Pokkharasāti; having approached, he sat down on the prepared seat. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti with his own hand satisfied and served the Blessed One with superior solid and soft food, and the young men served the Community of monks. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti, when the Blessed One had finished eating and had removed his hand from the bowl, having taken a certain low seat, sat down to one side.

298. To the brahmin Pokkharasāti seated to one side, the Blessed One gave a

progressive discourse, as follows: a talk on giving, a talk on morality, a talk on heaven; he made known the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual pleasures, and the benefit of renunciation. When the Blessed One knew that the brahmin Pokkharasāti was of pliant mind, of tender mind, of mind free from hindrances, of elated mind, of confident mind, then he made known that proclamation of the Teaching which the Buddhas have themselves discovered: suffering, origin, cessation, path. Just as a pure cloth, free from stains, would properly receive dye; even so, in the brahmin Pokkharasāti, in that very seat, the stainless, spotless eye of the Teaching arose: "Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of cessation."

Pokkharasāti's Declaration of Lay Followership

299. Then the brahmin Pokkharasāti, having seen the Teaching, having attained the Teaching, having understood the Teaching, having penetrated the Teaching, having crossed over doubt, having gone beyond uncertainty, having attained self-confidence, not relying on others in the Teacher's instruction, said this to the Blessed One - "Excellent, Master Gotama, excellent, Master Gotama. Just as, Master Gotama, one might set upright what had been overturned, or reveal what had been concealed, or point out the path to one who was lost, or hold up an oil lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes might see forms; just so, the Teaching has been made clear by Master Gotama in many ways. I, Master Gotama, together with my sons, my wife, my retinue, and my ministers, go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the Teaching, and to the Community of monks. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life. And just as Master Gotama approaches other lay follower families in Ukkatṭha, so may Master Gotama approach the family of Pokkharasāti. There, whatever young men or young women will pay respect to Master Gotama, or will rise up for him, or will offer a seat or water, or will gladden their minds, that will be for their welfare and happiness for a long time." "That is well spoken, brahmin."

The Discourse on Ambaṭṭha is concluded as third.



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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