

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)

09. Verses of the Elder Nuns (09. Therīgāthāpāḷi)

5. The Book of the Fives (5. Pañcakanipāto)

[Thig 5.1-12, PTS 131-136]



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

09. Verses of the Elder Nuns

5. The Book of the Fives

1. Verses of a Certain Elder Nun

- 67.** "Twenty-five years, since I went forth;
Not even for a finger-snap's moment, did I attain peace of mind.
- 68.** "Not having gained peace of mind, filled with sensual lust;
Having raised my arms, crying out, I entered the dwelling.
- 69.** "I approached a nun, who was trustworthy to me;
She expounded the Teaching to me, the aggregates, sense bases, and elements.
- 70.** "Having heard the teaching from her, I sat down to one side;
I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified.
- 71.** "And the knowledge of others' minds, the ear-element purified;
Supernormal power has been realised by me, the elimination of mental corruptions has been attained by me;
The six higher knowledges have been realised, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

... A Certain Elder Nun...

2. Verses of the Elder Nun Vimalā

- 72.** "Intoxicated by beauty and form, by splendour and fame;
And stiff with youth, I despised other women.
- 73.** "Having adorned this body, well decorated, the prattle of fools;
I stood at the harlot's door, like a hunter having spread a snare.
- 74.** "Displaying ornaments, revealing much that is secret and open;
I practised various deceit, laughing aloud at many people.
- 75.** "Today, having walked for almsfood, shaven-headed, wrapped in the double robe;
Seated at the root of a tree, an obtainer of that without applied thought.
- 76.** "All mental bonds have been cut off, those that are divine and those that are human;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I have become cool, quenched."

... The Elder Nun Vimalā, the Former Courtesan...

3. Verses of the Elder Nun Sīhā

- 77.** "Through unwise attention, distressed by sensual lust;
I was agitated before, not having control over my mind.
- 78.** "Obsessed by mental defilements, following the perception of beauty;
I did not obtain tranquillity of mind, subjected to the control of a lustful mind.
- 79.** "Emaciated, pale and faded, for seven years I wandered;
Neither by day nor by night did I find happiness, being greatly afflicted.
- 80.** "Then having taken a rope, I entered into the forest;
Better for me is hanging here, than to practise what is inferior again.
- 81.** "Having made a firm snare, having tied it to a tree branch;
I threw the snare around my neck, thereupon my mind was liberated."

... The Elder Nun Sīhā...

4. Verses of the Elder Nun Sundarīnandā

- 82.** "Afflicted, impure, putrid, see, Nanda, this body;
Develop the mind towards foulness, fully focused, well concentrated.
- 83.** "Just as this is, so is that; just as that is, so is this;
Foul-smelling and putrid it blows, delighted in by the foolish.
- 84.** "Thus contemplating this, unwearied night and day;
Then with my own wisdom, having broken through, I shall see.
- 85.** "For me, being heedful, investigating wisely;
This body was seen as it really is, within and without.
- 86.** "Then I became wearied of the body, and internally I became dispassionate;
Diligent, unbound, I am at peace, quenched."

... The Elder Nun Sundarīnandā...

5. Verses of the Elder Nun Nanduttarā

- 87.** "Fire and the moon and the sun, and deities I venerated;
Having gone to the river fords, I descended into the water.
- 88.** "Having undertaken many ascetic practices, I shaved half of my head;
I make my sleeping place on the ground, at night I did not eat a meal.
- 89.** "Delighting in adornment and decoration, and in bathing and rubbing;
I tended to this body, distressed by sensual lust.
- 90.** "Then having gained faith, I went forth into homelessness;
Having seen the body as it really is, sensual lust was uprooted.

- 91.** "All existences have been cut off, and desire and longing too;
Unbound from all mental bonds, I have attained peace of mind."

... The Elder Nun Nanduttarā...

6. Verses of the Elder Nun Mittākāḷī

- 92.** "Having gone forth through faith, from home into homelessness;
I wandered here and there, eager for material gain and honour.
- 93.** "Having abandoned the supreme good, I pursued an inferior good;
Having come under the control of defilements, I did not understand the goal of asceticism.
- 94.** "For me there was spiritual urgency, while sitting in the dwelling;
I had gone astray, having come under the control of craving.
- 95.** "Short is my life, ageing and illness crush me;
Before this body breaks up, there is no time for me to be negligent.
- 96.** "Observing as it really is, the rise and fall of the aggregates;
With liberated mind I arose, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

... The Elder Nun Mittā Kāḷī...

7. Verses of the Elder Nun Sakulā

- 97.** "While I was dwelling in a house, having heard the Teaching from a monk;
I saw the stainless Teaching, Nibbāna, the imperishable state.
- 98.** "I, having abandoned son and daughter, wealth and grain;
Having had my hair cut off, I went forth into homelessness.
- 99.** "While I was a female trainee, developing the straight path;
I abandoned lust and hate, and the co-existent mental corruptions.
- 100.** "Having attained full ordination as a nun, I recollected past births;
The divine eye has been purified, spotless, well developed.
- 101.** "Having seen activities as alien, arisen from causes, disintegrating;
I abandoned all mental corruptions, I have become cool, quenched."

... The Elder Nun Sakulā...

8. Verses of the Elder Nun Soṇā

- 102.** "Having given birth to ten sons, in this body of matter;
Then I, weak and old, approached a nun.
- 103.** "She expounded the Teaching to me, the aggregates, sense bases, and elements;
Having heard the teaching from her, having cut off my hair, I went forth.

- 104.** "For me as a female trainee, the divine eye has been purified;
I know past lives, where I dwelt before.
- 105.** "And I develop the signless, fully focused, well concentrated;
I was one with immediate deliverance, quenched by non-clinging.
- 106.** "The five aggregates are fully understood, they remain with their roots cut off;
Fie on you, wretched, contemptible ageing, there is now no more rebirth."

... The Elder Nun Soṇā...

9. Verses of the Elder Nun Bhaddākuṇḍalakesā

- 107.** "With shorn hair, bearing filth, wearing a single robe, I wandered before;
Perceiving fault in the faultless, and seeing the faulty as faultless.
- 108.** "Having come out from the day residence, on Vulture's Peak mountain;
I saw the stainless Buddha, honoured by the community of monks.
- 109.** Having placed my knees down and paid homage, I made a salutation with
joined palms in his presence;
'Come, Bhadda,' he said to me, that was my full ordination.
- 110.** "I wandered through Aṅga and Magadha, Vajjī, Kāsī and Kosala;
Free of debt for fifty years, I have eaten food obtained from the people.
- 111.** "Much merit indeed he has generated, this wise lay follower;
Who gave a robe to Bhaddā, free from all mental knots."

... The Elder Nun Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā...

10. Verses of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā

- 112.** "Ploughing the field with ploughs, sowing seeds on the ground;
Nourishing children and wife, young men gain wealth.
- 113.** "Why do I, accomplished in morality, carrying out the Teacher's instruction,
Not attain Nibbāna, being not lazy, not agitated?
- 114.** "Having washed my feet, I observe the waters;
And having seen the foot-water, flowing from high ground to low.
- 115.** "Thereupon I concentrated my mind, like a good thoroughbred horse;
Then having taken a lamp, I entered the dwelling;
Having looked at the sleeping place, I sat down on the small bed.
- 116.** "Then having taken a needle, I drew down the wick;
Like the extinguishing of a lamp, there was deliverance of the mind."

... The Elder Nun Paṭācārā...

11. Verses of the Thirty Elder Nuns

- 117.** "Having taken pestles, young men pound grain;
Nourishing children and wife, young men gain wealth.
- 118.** "Practise the Buddha's teaching, which having done one does not regret;
Quickly having washed your feet, sit down on one side;
Engaged in serenity of mind, practise the Buddha's teaching."
- 119.** Having heard that word of hers, Paṭācārā's teaching;
Having washed their feet, they sat down to one side;
Engaged in serenity of mind, they practised the Buddha's teaching.
- 120.** "In the first watch of the night, they remembered their former births;
In the middle watch of the night, they purified the divine eye;
In the last watch of the night, they shattered the mass of darkness.
- 121.** Having risen, they paid homage at her feet: "Your instruction has been fulfilled;
Like the deities of the Thirty-three honour Indra, unconquered in battle;
Having put you in front, we shall dwell, we are possessors of the threefold true knowledge, without mental corruptions."

Thus about thirty elder nuns declared the final liberating knowledge in the presence of Paṭācārā.

12. Verses of the Elder Nun Candā

- 122.** "Formerly I was destitute, a widow and childless;
Without friends and relatives, I did not obtain food and cloth.
- 123.** "Having taken bowl and staff, begging for alms from family to family;
Burning with cold and heat, for seven years I wandered.
- 124.** "Then having seen a nun, an obtainer of food and drink;
Having approached, I said, 'The going forth into homelessness'.
- 125.** "And she, out of compassion for me, Paṭācārā gave me the going forth;
Then having exhorted me, she urged me towards the supreme goal.
- 126.** "Having heard her word, I followed the instruction;
The lady's exhortation was not futile, I am a possessor of the threefold true knowledge, without mental corruptions."

... The Elder Nun Candā...

The Book of Fives is concluded.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Ṭīkā), 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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