

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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09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns (09. Therīgāthā-
aṭṭhakathā)

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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns

5. The Book of the Fives

1. Commentary on the Verses of a Certain Elder Nun

67-71. In the Book of Fives, the verses of a certain elder nun beginning with "Twenty-five years." This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, having become a nurse of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī in the city of Devadaha, she reared her. But she was unknown by name and clan. She, at the time when Mahāpajāpati Gotamī went forth, having herself too gone forth, for twenty-five years troubled by sensual lust, not obtaining unified focus of mind even for a finger-snap's moment, having raised her arms, crying out, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā, with her mind turned away from sensual pleasures, having taken a meditation subject, devoting herself to meditation, before long, having become a possessor of the six higher knowledges, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "not even for a finger-snap's moment" means even a moment of a mere snapping of the fingers, even a mere snapping of the fingers - this is the meaning of "time." "Did I attain peace of mind" - the explanation is: I did not attain peace of mind, unified focus of mind; the meaning is I did not obtain.

"Filled with sensual lust" means with a mind soaked by thick desire and lust, through being firmly attached to objects of sensual pleasure reckoned as types of sensual pleasure.

"A nun" - she speaks with reference to the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā.

"And the knowledge of others' minds" - the connection is: and the knowledge of others' mental states has been purified; the meaning is attained. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of a certain elder nun is completed.

2. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Vimalā

72-76. The verses of the Elder Nun Vimalā beginning with "Intoxicated by beauty and form." This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, was born at Vesālī as the daughter of a certain harlot. Her name was Vimalātissā. She, having come of age, earning her livelihood in the same way, one day, having seen the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna walking for almsfood in Vesālī, having become enamoured, having gone to the elder's dwelling place, began to perform the act of enticement with reference to the elder. "She was instigated by sectarians and did so" - thus some say. The elder, having admonished her by way of making clear the foulness of the body, gave exhortation. That has come below in the Theragāthā itself; but when the exhortation had thus been given by the elder, she, with a sense of urgency arisen, having established shame and moral fear, having gained faith in the Dispensation, having become a female lay follower, at a later time, having gone forth among the nuns, striving and endeavouring, because of being accomplished in the supporting conditions, before long, having attained arahantship, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "intoxicated by beauty and form" means by the beauty of virtuous qualities and by the achievement of form. "By splendour" means by the state of being fortunate. "By fame" means by the achievement of renown. "Intoxicated" means having fallen into intoxication by way of the vanity of beauty, the vanity of form, the vanity of splendour, and the vanity of renown - this is the meaning. "And stiff with youth" means stiffened again and again by the intoxication of youth, with a mind made stiff by the conceit of I-making on account of youth, with an unpeaceful mind. "I despised other women" means I, having surpassed other women in every way by my own qualities such as beauty and so on, imagined myself superior. Or, I despised the qualities such as beauty and so on of other women; having surpassed them, I looked down upon them; I showed contempt.

"Having adorned this body, well decorated, the prattle of fools" means this body of mine, filled with various kinds of impurity, loathsome, the prattle of fools because of making fools prattle and speak "I" and "mine" - having adorned my body, well decorated by means of colouring the skin, arranging the hair, and so on, having embellished it with garments and ornaments, making it well adorned and beautified. "I stood at the harlot's door, like a hunter having spread a snare" means just as a deer hunter spreads a deer-snare of sticks, hooks, and so on for the purpose of binding deer, so having spread my aforesaid body, which had become a snare of Māra, at the harlot's door, at the house-door of a prostitute, I stood.

"Displaying ornaments, revealing much that is secret and open" means showing the thighs, buttocks, breasts, and so on which are secret, and the feet, knees, head, and so on which are open - thus displaying much ornamental adornment of many kinds, both secret and open. "I practised various deceit, laughing aloud at many people" means laughing in order to deceive many foolish people intoxicated by the vanity of youth, by concealing the true nature of the body with scents, garlands, garments, ornaments, and so on, and by means of laughing, coquetry, and such behaviour - by these I practised various, manifold deception.

"Today, having walked for almsfood, etc. "An obtainer of that without applied thought" means the explanation is: she, I, being one who had been dwelling in heedlessness thus, now today, having stood firm in the exhortation of the noble Elder Mahāmoggallāna, having gone forth in the Dispensation, having become shaven-headed and wrapped in the double robe, having walked for almsfood, having eaten the almsfood, seated at the root of a tree, seated on a secluded seat at the root of a tree, through the achievement of the highest fruition based on the second meditative absorption, I am an obtainer of that without applied thought.

"All mental bonds" means the four mental bonds beginning with the bond of sensuality and so on. "Cut off" means completely cut off and abandoned by the first path and so on, each as is appropriate. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Vimalā is concluded.

3. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sīhā

77-81. The verses beginning with "Through unwise attention" are the verses of the Elder Nun Sīhā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, was born at Vesālī as the daughter of the sister of General Sīha. They gave her the name Sīhā, saying "Let us give her the name of her maternal uncle." She, having attained discretion, one day, when the Teaching was being expounded by the Teacher to General Sīha, having heard that Teaching, having gained faith, having obtained permission from her mother and father, went forth. And having gone forth, although she had begun insight meditation, being unable to turn back the mind that was running about externally towards various objects, for seven years being afflicted by wrong thoughts, not finding mental delight, thinking "What use is this evil life to me? Having hanged myself, I shall die," having taken a snare, having attached it to a tree branch, while fastening it around her own neck, by the force of habitual action she directed her mind to insight; because she was one in her final existence, the binding of the snare was at the place of the neck; because her knowledge had reached maturity, she, at that very moment, having developed insight, attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. And at the very same time as she attained arahantship, the snare-binding, having become free from the neck, fell away. She, established in arahantship, by way of an inspired utterance -

- 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."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "through unwise attention" means by unmethodical attention, by the grasp of illusion perceiving the unattractive as attractive. "Distressed by sensual lust" means oppressed by desire and lust for the types of sensual pleasure. "I was agitated before, not having control over my mind" means before, when my mind was not under my control, I was agitated, with mind distracted among various objects, unconcentrated.

"Obsessed by mental defilements, following the perception of beauty" means overpowered by mental defilements beginning with sensual lust that had reached prepossession, habitually conforming to the perception of sensuality that occurred as beautiful regarding matter and so on. "I did not obtain tranquillity of mind, subjected

to the control of a lustful mind" means following the control of a mind associated with sensual lust, I did not obtain even slightly the tranquillity of mind, the serenity of mind, the unified focus of mind.

"Emaciated, pale and faded" means thus, through the state of dissatisfaction, having become emaciated, with veins showing all over the body, having become pale and sallow, and thereby faded, with the complexion of the skin gone. "Seven years" means seven years. "Cārihaṃ" means I wandered. "Neither by day nor by night did I find happiness, being greatly afflicted" means thus I, afflicted by the suffering of mental defilements during seven years, not even once, whether by day or by night, did I obtain the happiness of the ascetic life.

"Thereby" means because of the state of not obtaining the happiness of an ascetic due to the prepossession of mental defilements. "Having taken a rope, I entered into the forest" means having taken a snare-rope, I entered into the forest. If one asks "for what purpose did she enter?" - she said - "Better for me is hanging here, than to practise what is inferior again" means that I, being unable to practise the ascetic duty, should again practise, should follow, should undertake the inferior state of a householder - rather than that, a hundredfold, a thousandfold, death by hanging, having tied a noose in this forest, is for me better, foremost - this is the meaning. "Thereupon my mind was liberated" means when she placed the binding snare around her neck on a tree branch, then immediately after that, because of being engaged through the insight meditation leading to emergence by the path, by the succession of paths, my mind was liberated from all mental corruptions, it was liberated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Sīhā is concluded.

4. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sundarīnandā

82-86. The verse beginning with "Afflicted, impure" and so on is the verse of the elder nun Sundarīnandā. It is said that she too, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, having been reborn in a family home in the city of Hamsavatī, having attained discretion, while hearing the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having seen the Teacher establishing a certain nun in the foremost position among meditators, having performed the preparatory action, having aspired to that position of rank, accumulating wholesome deeds, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans for a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in the Sakyan royal family. They gave her the name Nandā. At a later time, through the perfection of beauty, she became known as Sundarīnandā and as the most beautiful woman in the country. When our Blessed One, having attained omniscience, having gone gradually to Kapilavatthu, having given the going forth to Prince Nanda and Prince Rāhula, had departed, and when the Great King Suddhodana had attained final Nibbāna, and when Mahāpajāpati Gotamī and Rāhulamātā had gone forth, she thought - "My elder brother, having abandoned the sovereignty of a universal monarch, having gone forth, has become the Buddha, the foremost person in the world; his son too, Prince Rāhula, has gone forth; my husband too, King Nanda; my mother too, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī; my sister too, Rāhulamātā, has gone forth; now what shall I do at home? I shall go forth." Having gone to the nuns' quarters, she went forth out of affection for her relatives, not through faith. Therefore, even after

going forth, with vanity arisen in dependence on her beauty. "The Teacher dispraises beauty, censures it, shows the danger in beauty in many ways," and so she did not go to attend upon the Buddha - all this and so on should be understood by the method already stated in the story of Abhirūpanandā above. But this is the distinction - Having seen the woman's form created by the Teacher gradually overcome by ageing, as the elder nun was attending to it as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self, her mind became directed towards the meditation subject. Having seen that, the Teacher, expounding the Teaching in a manner suitable for her -

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 your own wisdom, having broken through, you shall see."

She spoke these three verses.

She, having sent forth knowledge in accordance with the teaching, became established in the fruition of stream-entry. Describing the meditation subject for the purpose of the higher path for her, in order to show "Nanda, in this body there is not even a trifle of substance; it is plastered with flesh and blood, a dwelling place for ageing and so on, merely a heap of bones" -

"A city made of bones, plastered with flesh and blood;
Where ageing and death, conceit and contempt are laid down."

He spoke this verse in the Dhammapada.

She, at the conclusion of the teaching, attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"An exhorter, an instructor, a saviour of all living beings;
The Buddha, skilled in teaching, helped many people to cross.

"Compassionate and merciful, seeking the welfare of all living beings;
He established all the sectarians who had arrived in the five precepts.

"Thus it was undisturbed, and void of sectarians;
Decorated with Worthy Ones, by those who had become masters, by such ones.

"Fifty-eight cubits in height, the great sage arose;
Resembling the radiance of gold, possessing the thirty-two excellent characteristics.

"For a hundred thousand years, life span exists for that long;

Remaining for that long, he helped many people to cross.

"Then I, in Haṃsavatī, was born in a millionaire's family;
Radiant with various jewels, endowed with great happiness.

"Having approached that great hero, I heard the teaching of the Dhamma;
The Deathless, of supreme gratification, the announcer of ultimate reality.

"Then having invited the leader of the world together with the Community;
Having given to him a great gift, devoted, with my own hands.

"Among meditating nuns, I aspired for the foremost state;
Having bowed down with my head to the wise one, the leader of the world
together with the Community.

"Then the tamer of the untamed, the refuge of the three worlds, the lord;
The trainer of men declared, 'You will obtain that which is well wished for.'

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Nandā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher."

"Having heard that, having become joyful, for as long as life, then the
Conqueror;
With a mind of friendliness I tended, with requisites, the Guide.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"Passed away from there, I went to the Yāma realm, from there I went to
Tusita;
From there to Nimmānarati, and from there to the city of Vasavatti.

"Wherever I am reborn, owing to that action;
There in each place, I attained the status of chief queen of kings.

Passed away from there to human existence, of universal monarchs,
And of regional kings, I attained the status of chief queen.

"Having experienced success, among gods and humans;
Having been happy everywhere, I wandered in the round of rebirths through
many cosmic cycles.

"When the final existence was attained, in the delightful city called Kapila;
I was the blameless daughter of King Suddhodana.

"Having seen a beautiful woman with splendour, that family was delighted;
Therefore my name is Nandā, it was beautiful and excellent.

"And of all young women, she was renowned as beautiful;
In that charming city, having set aside that Yasodhara.

"My eldest brother was the highest in the three worlds, the youngest likewise a
Worthy One;
I alone remained a householder, urged on by my mother.

"Born in the Sakyan clan, you are the Buddha's sister with sons;
Being without Nanda too, why do you remain in the house?

"Youth ends in ageing, the body is considered impure;
But health ends in disease, life ends in death.

"This beautiful form of yours too, lovely as the moon, captivating;
An ornament among decorations, resembling a cluster of glory.

"Like the accumulated essence of the world, an elixir for the eyes;
Producing fame for the meritorious, the delight of the Okkāka clan.

"Not long after, ageing will overcome;
Having left the house, out of compassion, practise the blameless teaching.'

"Having heard my mother's word, I went forth into homelessness;
With body but not with mind, being charmed by beauty and youth.

"And with great effort, through meditative absorption, beyond me;
My mother speaks of doing, but I am not zealous for that.

"Then the greatly compassionate one, having seen me longing for sensual
pleasures;
For the purpose of binding to matter, the Conqueror appeared in my range of
vision.

"By his own power, he created a radiant woman;
Beautiful to behold, very lovely, and more handsome than me.

"Having seen her, I was astonished, at that exceedingly astonished being;
I thought 'this is fruitful for me', and the gaining of eyes as a human.

"Come, fortunate one, tell me what you need;
Tell me your family, name and clan, if it is dear to you.

"This is not a time for deception, fortunate one, place me on your lap;
My limbs are sinking, let me sleep for a moment.

"Then she, the beautiful-eyed one, having placed her head on my limb, lay
down;
On her forehead fell one who was greedy, extremely cruel.

"As soon as she fell, blisters arose;
And having burst, they oozed, corpse-like, with pus and blood.

"And also the erupted face, the corpse with putrid odour;
Swollen and discoloured, and also the body full of pus.

She, with all her limbs trembling, sighing moment by moment;
Experiencing her own suffering, lamented pitifully.

"I am afflicted with suffering, and feelings touch me;
I am sunk in great suffering, be a refuge to me, friend.'

"Where is the stream of your face, where is your prominent nose;
Your lips like excellent copper-coloured bimba fruit, where has your face gone?

"Where has the moon-like beauty gone, where has the conch-marked neck
gone;
Your ears, like swinging ornaments, have become discoloured.

"Like buds of rough alkaline appearance, breasts like flower buds;
Broken open, putrid corpses, having reached the utmost foul odour.

"With a beautiful waist like an altar's middle, like a butcher's block with
wrongdoing removed;
Born filled with impurity, alas, such form is not eternal.

"All that is born of the body, foul-smelling, terrifying;
Loathsome like a cemetery, where fools delight.'

"Then the greatly compassionate one, my brother, the leader of the world;
Having seen me with an agitated mind, spoke these verses.

"Afflicted, a corpse, putrid, see, Nanda, this body;
Develop the mind towards foulness, fully focused, well concentrated.

"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.

"Thus contemplating this, unwearied night and day;
Then with my own wisdom, having broken through, I shall see.

"Then I, greatly agitated, having heard the verses well spoken;
Standing right there, being peaceful, I attained arahantship.

"Wherever I sat, always devoted to meditative absorption;
The Conqueror, satisfied with that virtue, established me in the foremost
position.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has
been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an
inspired utterance, together with the three verses taught by the Teacher beginning
with "Afflicted, impure" -

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."

He spoke these two verses.

Therein, "thus contemplating this" etc. "I shall see" means this body whose intrinsic nature is afflicted and so on, thus in the manner stated beginning with "just as this is, so is that," having become unwearied night and day, at all times, having released the knowledge born of learning which is caused by the sound of another, then, because of having arisen in oneself on account of that sign, having broken through by the exact discrimination of compactness through one's own wisdom born of meditative development, "how indeed shall I see, shall I perceive" - contemplating and investigating with the preliminary-part knowledge-eye preceded by reflective attention - this is the meaning.

Therefore she said "for me, being heedful" and so on. Its meaning is - For me, being heedful through the continuous presence of mindfulness, investigating and examining wisely by means of the method, by way of impermanence and so on, with insight wisdom, this body reckoned as the five aggregates was seen as it really is, within and without, by the distinction of one's own continuity and another's continuity.

Then after such seeing, "I became wearied of the body" means I became wearied of individual existence through path wisdom together with insight wisdom; especially in the internal continuity I became dispassionate, I attained dispassion; I, being heedful through having reached the summit of the practice of diligence as it really is, unbound because of the complete eradication of all mental fetters in every respect, and I am at peace and quenched.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Sundarīnandā is concluded.

5. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Nanduttarā

87-91. The verses beginning with "Fire and the moon" and so on are the verses of the elder nun Nanduttarā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, having accumulated wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, was born in a brahmin family in the market town of Kammāsaddhamma in the Kuru country, having learnt certain subjects of study and crafts, having undertaken the Jain going forth, engaged in debate, having taken a rose-apple branch, wandering over the surface of Jambudīpa like Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, having approached the Elder Mahāmoggallāna, having asked a question, having met with defeat, having stood firm in the Elder's exhortation, having gone forth in the Dispensation, practising the ascetic duty, before long, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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."

He spoke these five verses.

Therein, "Fire and the moon and the sun, and deities I venerated" means fire is the chief among the gods; having raised an oblation for the purpose of winning the favour of the lord of the gods, the fire, and month after month on the second day of the bright fortnight the moon, and day after day evening and morning the sun, and other external deities such as Hiraññagabbha and so on, seeking the path of purification, "I venerated" means I made homage. "Having gone to the river fords, I descended into the water" means having approached the sacred fords of rivers such as the Ganges and so on, evening and morning I descend into the water, having dived into the water I perform the sprinkling of the limbs.

"Having undertaken many ascetic practices" means having undertaken manifold ascetic practices such as the five-fold self-mortification by heat and so on. "Bahū" with the lengthening is for the sake of metrical ease in the verse. "I shaved half of my head" means I shave just half of my head. Some say the meaning of "I shaved half of my head" is: having bound half of the tress of hair by way of binding it in matted locks, she let loose the other half. "I make my sleeping place on the ground" means having become one who sleeps on the bare ground, I lie down on the uncovered earth. "At night I did not eat a meal" means having become one who abstains from eating at night, at night I did not eat food.

"Delighting in adornment and decoration" means for a long time, with a body wearied by the pursuit of self-mortification, thinking "Thus by the wearying of the body there is no purification of wisdom. But if there might be purification by the gratification of the body by way of pleasing the faculties," thinking thus, supporting this body, delighting in adornment and decoration, delighting in adorning with garments and ornaments, and in decoration with scents, garlands, and so on. "And in bathing and rubbing" means having had massaging and so on done, with bathing and with rubbing of the body. "I tended to this body" means I supported, I gratified this body of mine. "Distressed by sensual lust" means thus, having become one much given to bodily strengthening, distressed by sensual lust that had arisen conditioned by unwise attention, I was repeatedly troubled.

"Then having gained faith" means thus having broken the ascetic practices she had undertaken, having become one frequently devoted to bodily mortification and engaged in debate, wandering here and there, thereafter afterwards, having received exhortation and instruction in the presence of the Elder Mahāmoggallāna, having

gained faith. "Having seen the body as it really is" means having seen this body of mine as it really is with path wisdom together with insight, by the path of non-returning sensual lust was altogether uprooted. Thereafter by the highest path "all existences have been cut off, and desire and longing too" means the explanation is: desire, which is termed longing for present objects, and longing, which is termed longing for future existence, and all existences too have been cut off. "Attained peace of mind" means the meaning is: I attained, I reached perpetual peace, the fruition of arahantship.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Nanduttarā is concluded.

6. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Mittākālī

92-96. The verses of the Elder Nun Mittākālī beginning with "Having gone forth through faith." This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a brahmin family in the market town of Kammāsaddhamma in the Kuru country, having attained discretion, having gained faith through the teaching of the Great Establishment of Mindfulness, having gone forth among the nuns, for seven years being greedy for material gain and honour, practising the ascetic duty, having wandered here and there, at a later time wisely emerging, with a sense of urgency arisen, having established insight, before long, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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." He spoke these verses.

Therein, "I wandered here and there, eager for material gain and honour" means having been zealous, properly engaged in material gain and honour, I wandered by this and that means of producing material gain such as great learning, expounding the Teaching, and so on.

"Having abandoned the supreme good" means having left, having discarded the highest good such as meditative absorption, insight, path, fruition, and so on. "I pursued an inferior good" means I pursued through unwise seeking an inferior, low

good, being of the nature of material gains reckoned as the four requisites. "Having come under the control of defilements" means having come under the control of defilements such as conceit, vanity, craving, and so on, I did not understand, I did not know the goal of asceticism, the duty of an ascetic.

"While sitting in the dwelling" means while sitting in my dwelling inner chamber, there was spiritual urgency. If one asks "how?" - she said "I had gone astray." Therein, "I had gone astray" means this Dispensation is only for the purpose of final nibbāna by non-clinging; therein, having gone forth in the Dispensation, not giving attention to the meditation subject, I had gone astray from that. "Having come under the control of craving" means having come under the control of craving for the production of requisites.

"Short is my life" means because of its limited time and because of being beset by many dangers, my life is short, limited, and brief. "Ageing and illness crush me" means ageing and illness crush and destroy, like mountains falling upon it from all sides and beating it down. "Maddare" is also a reading. "Before this body breaks up" means this body breaks up before. Because its breaking up is definite, therefore "there is no time for me to be negligent" - this time is the ninth moment, free from the eight inopportune moments; it is not fitting to be negligent in it - the explanation is: thus there was spiritual urgency for her.

"Observing as it really is" means thus, with a sense of urgency arisen, having established insight, observing as it really is through attention to impermanence and so on. "What is she observing?" - she said "the rise and fall of the aggregates." Observing by way of the contemplation of rise and fall the arising and cessation of the five aggregates of clinging with their fifty-three varieties, by the method beginning with "from the origin of ignorance is the origin of matter," having aroused zeal in insight, with mind liberated in every respect from mental defilements and from existences by the succession of paths, I arose - meaning I emerged by the path which is a rising from both, and from the triple existence. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Mittākālī is concluded.

7. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sakulā

97-101. The verses of the Elder Nun Sakulā beginning with "While dwelling in a house." This one, it is said, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, was reborn as the daughter of King Ānanda in the city of Hamsavatī, the Teacher's half-sister, named Nandā. She, having attained discretion, one day, while hearing the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having seen the Teacher establishing a certain nun in the foremost position among those with the divine eye, with enthusiasm arisen, having performed the preparatory action, herself too aspiring to that position of rank, she made an aspiration. She, there, having performed much lofty wholesome action for as long as life lasted, having been reborn in the heavenly world, wandering again and again only in fortunate destinations, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, having been reborn in a brahmin family, having gone forth into the going forth of a wandering ascetic, wandering as one who lives alone, one day, having roamed about begging for oil, having obtained oil, with that oil she made an offering of lamps the

whole night at the Teacher's shrine. She, having passed away from there, having been reborn in Tāvātimsa, having become one with a well-purified divine eye, having wandered in the round of rebirths among the gods alone for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in a brahmin family in Sāvattthī. Her name was Sakulā. She, having attained discretion, having gained faith at the Teacher's acceptance of the Jeta Grove, having become a female lay follower, at a later time, having heard the Teaching in the presence of a certain elder who had eliminated the mental corruptions, with religious emotion arisen, having gone forth, having established insight, striving and endeavouring, before long attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"For the welfare of all beings, for happiness, the best of speakers;
For the benefit of those including the gods, the remarkable man is practicing.

"Having attained the highest fame, glorious, the Conqueror bearing the praise
of renown;
Venerated by the whole world, renowned in all directions.

"He has crossed over sceptical doubt, has passed beyond bewilderment;
With mind and thought fulfilled, he attained the highest enlightenment.

"Of the unarisen path, the producer, the highest of men;
And the undeclared he declared, and the unproduced he produced.

"The knower of the path and the expert in the path, the one who points out the
path, the lord of men;
The Teacher skilled in the path, the most excellent among charioteers.

"The greatly compassionate Teacher, the Leader, expounds the Teaching;
He lifts up living beings sunk in the mire of sensual pleasure.

"Then I, in Hamsavatī, was born a warrior's daughter;
Handsome and wealthy too, beloved and glorious.

"The supremely beautiful daughter of the great king Ānanda;
And also the half-sister of the one named Padumuttara.

"Together with princesses, adorned with all ornaments;
Having approached the great hero, I heard the teaching of the Dhamma.

"Then indeed he, the teacher of the world, the nun endowed with the divine
eye;
Praising her in the midst of the assembly, established her in the foremost
position.

"Having heard that, I was joyful, having given a gift to the Teacher;
And having venerated the Enlightened by himself, I aspired to the divine eye.

"Then the Teacher said to me, 'O Nanda, you will obtain what is wished for;
This is the well-determined fruit of the gift of lamps and the Teaching.

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Sakulā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.'

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"In this fortunate cosmic cycle, a kinsman of Brahma of great fame;
Kassapa by clan, the best of speakers arose.

"I was a female wandering ascetic, then I was one who lived alone;
Having wandered about for alms, I obtained just a little oil.

"Having lit a lamp with that, I attended on the one fully restrained;
The shrine of the highest of bipeds, with a clear mind.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"Wherever I am reborn, owing to that action;
Great lamps blaze forth for me, wherever I have gone.

"Through walls, through rocks, having passed over mountains;
I see whatever I wish, this is the fruit of giving a lamp.

"I have pure eyes, and I blaze with fame;
And I am endowed with faith and wisdom, this is the fruit of giving a lamp.

"And in this final existence now, I was born in a brahmin family;
In one abundant in wealth and grain, joyful, honoured by the king.

"I, accomplished in all limbs, adorned with all ornaments;
At the city entrance, standing at the window, I saw the Fortunate One.

"Having seen him blazing with glory, honoured by gods and humans;
Accomplished in features, adorned with characteristics.

"With elated mind, glad, I delighted in the going forth;
Not long after, I attained arahantship.

"And I am a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
I know the minds of others, carrying out the Teacher's instruction.

"I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I was pure, completely stainless.

"The Teacher has been attended upon by me, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled;

The heavy burden has been laid down, the conduit to existence has been uprooted.

"For the purpose of which I went forth, from home into homelessness;
That purpose has been attained by me, the destruction of all mental fetters.

"Then the greatly compassionate one established me in the foremost position;
Foremost among those with the divine eye, Sakulā," said the highest of men.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, because of having formed an aspiration in the past, she was a master through practice in the knowledge of the divine eye. Therefore the Teacher established her in the foremost position among nuns with the divine eye. She, having reviewed her own practice, filled with joy and happiness, by way of an inspired utterance -

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."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "while I was dwelling in a house, having heard the Teaching from a monk" means formerly, while I was living in the midst of a house, having heard in the presence of a certain monk whose mental defilements were destroyed a talk on the Teaching containing the four truths. "I saw the stainless Teaching, Nibbāna, the imperishable state" means stainless through the absence of the dust of lust and so on; Nibbāna because of having gone out from craving; because of the absence of passing away and because of being the cause of imperishability for those who have attained it, Nibbāna is imperishable; and the unconditioned state which has obtained the name "state" - I saw, I beheld, with the eye of the Teaching reckoned as seeing, adorned with a thousand methods.

"Sāhaṃ" means she, I, became a stream-enterer in the way above explained.

"While I was a female trainee" means while I was still a female trainee, having gone forth, while the rains retreat was not yet completed. "Developing the straight path" means because of being the middle practice, producing the higher path as a straight path. "And the co-existent mental corruptions" means I abandoned, I eradicated the mental corruptions to be destroyed by the third path, which are co-existent with lust and hate, sharing the same basis of arising and the same basis of abandoning.

"Having attained full ordination as a nun" means when the rains retreat was completed, having received full ordination, having become a nun. "Spotless" means free from stain through being liberated from the impurities of ignorance and so on; well, attentively, properly developed; or developed, produced by good people such as the Buddhas and others - the connection is: the divine eye has been purified.

"Activities" means the activities of the three planes. "As alien" means as non-self. "Arisen from causes" means conditionally arisen. "Disintegrating" means having seen with the eye of wisdom what is of the nature of crumbling, perishable. "I abandoned all mental corruptions" means by the highest path I abandoned all the remaining mental corruptions; the meaning is I exhausted them. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Sakulā is concluded.

8. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Soṇā

102-106. "Having given birth to ten sons" and so on is the verse of the elder nun Soṇā. This one too, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, having been reborn in a family home in the city of Hamsavatī, having attained discretion, one day, while hearing the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having seen the Teacher establishing a certain nun in the foremost position among nuns putting forth strenuous energy, having performed the preparatory action, herself too having aspired to that position of rank, having made merit for as long as life lasted, having passed away from there, having transmigrated among gods and humans for a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a family home in Sāvatthī, having come of age, having gone to her husband's family, having obtained ten sons and daughters, she became known as "the one with many children." She, when her husband had gone forth, having established the sons and daughters who had come of age in the household life, having divided all the wealth among the sons, gave it to them; she kept nothing for herself. Her sons and daughters, having attended on her for only a few days, treated her with contempt. She, thinking "What use is it for me, living in the house, to be treated with contempt by these?" having approached the nuns, requested the going forth. The nuns gave her the going forth. She, having obtained full ordination, thinking "I, having gone forth in the time of old age, must be heedful," performing all kinds of duties for the nuns, thinking "I shall practise the ascetic duty the whole night," at the lower mansion, having taken hold of one pillar with her hand, not letting go of it, practising the ascetic duty, even while walking up and down, thinking "In a dark place, my head might strike against trees and so on somewhere," having taken hold of a tree with her hand, not letting go of it, she practises the ascetic duty. From that time onwards,

she became well known for putting forth strenuous energy. The Teacher, having seen the maturity of her knowledge, while just seated in the perfumed chamber, having pervaded with light, having shown himself as if seated before her -

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

Spoke this verse. She, at the conclusion of the verse, attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"Then born in a millionaire's family, happy, venerated, beloved;
Having approached that excellent sage, I heard the sweet speech.

"The Conqueror praised the nun as foremost among those putting forth
strenuous energy;
Having heard that, having become joyful, having done service to the Teacher.

"Having paid respect to the Perfectly Enlightened One, I aspired to that state
then;
The great hero gave thanks, 'May your aspiration succeed.

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Soṇā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.

"Having heard that, having become joyful, for as long as life, then the
Conqueror;
With a mind of friendliness I tended, with requisites, the Guide.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"And in this final existence now, I was born in a millionaire's family;
In the excellent city of Sāvathī, prosperous, opulent, of great riches.

"And when I had reached youth, having gone to my husband's family, I;
Gave birth to ten children, handsome distinctively.

"And all of them are delicately nurtured, captivating to the eyes of people;
Pleasing even to enemies, how much more so they would be to me.

"Then against my wish, attended by ten sons;
My husband went forth, in the Dispensation of the god of gods.

"Then alone I thought, 'Enough of life for me;
Abandoned by husband and sons, and old, a wretched woman.'

"I too will go there, where my husband has reached;
Having thus reflected, I went forth into homelessness.

"Then the nuns left me alone in the nuns' quarters;
Going for the exhortation, 'Heat the water,' thus.

"Then having brought water, having poured it from the pot;
Having placed it on the stove, seated, thereupon I concentrated my mind.

"Having seen the aggregates as impermanent, as suffering and as non-self;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I attained arahantship.

"Then the nuns came and asked for hot water;
Having determined upon the heat element, I quickly heated the water.

"Astonished, they announced this matter to the excellent conqueror;
Having heard that, the joyful protector spoke this verse.

"And whoever should live a hundred years, lazy, lacking in energy;
Better is the life of one day, of one who firmly arouses energy.

"The great hero was pleased by me through good practice;
That great sage said I was foremost among those putting forth strenuous energy.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

Then the Blessed One, establishing the nuns in successive positions of rank, established her in the foremost position among those putting forth strenuous energy. She, one day, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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." He spoke these verses.

Therein, "body of matter" means in the body termed as matter. For this word "matter" is used in the sense of visible form sense base in such passages as "dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises" and so on. In such passages as "whatever materiality, past, future, or present" and so on, in the sense of the aggregate of matter. In such passages as "one is attached to what is of a pleasant nature, of a comfortable nature" and so on, in the sense of intrinsic nature. In such passages as "one sees forms externally" and so on, in the sense of circular meditation object. In such passages as "one who is material sees forms" and so on, in the sense of fine-material meditative absorption. In such passages as "dependent on bones and dependent on sinews and dependent on flesh and dependent on skin, space being enclosed, it goes by the term 'materiality'" and so on, in the sense of the material body. Here too it should be seen as the material body only. The word "body" too is a synonym for the skeleton, the body. In such passages as "there are a hundred bodies" and so on, in the sense of a synonym for the skeleton-body. In such passages as "afflicted, impure, putrid, see, Nanda, this body" and so on, in the sense of the body. Here too it should be seen in the sense of the body only. Therefore it was said - "Body of matter" means in the body termed as matter, the meaning is the body. "Having stood" is the remainder of the expression. For "in this body of matter" means the explanation is: having stood in this body of matter, in dependence on this material body, having given birth to ten sons. "Then" means therefore, because of giving birth to ten sons. For she, having passed beyond the first stage of life, giving birth to little children, gradually became weak in body and feeble and decrepit with age. Therefore it was said "then I, weak and old."

"Tassā" means "from that," or "tassā" means in her presence. Again, "tassā" is the genitive case used in the instrumental sense; the meaning is "by her."

"Sikkhamānāyā" means while being a female trainee in the three trainings.

"Anantarāvimokkhāsiṃ" means I was one whose deliverance arose immediately after the highest path. For the eight deliverances beginning with "one who is material sees forms" are not called immediate deliverances. For the fruition deliverances attained immediately after the path, even though they occur at the time of fruition attainment, are called immediate deliverances with reference to their first arising immediately after the first path, just as the path concentration is called immediate concentration without interval. "By non-clinging, quenched" means without grasping anything whatsoever among matter and so on, I was quenched through the final extinguishment of the mental defilements.

Having thus made clear the threefold true knowledge, and reaching the culmination with the fruition of arahantship, having uttered an inspired utterance, now rebuking the body long troubled by ageing, in order to make clear together with the subject matter the state of having transcended it, she spoke the concluding verse "The five aggregates are fully understood." Therein, "fie on you, wretched, contemptible ageing" means O ageing, contemptible, inferior, low, by the making of the limbs loose and so on, fie on you, let there be reproach upon you. "There is now no more rebirth" - therefore the intention is: you have been surpassed by me, you have been overcome.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Soṇā is concluded.

9. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā

107-111. The verses of the elder nun Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā beginning with "With shorn hair." This one too, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, having been reborn in a family home in the city of Hamsavatī, having attained discretion, one day, while hearing the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having seen the Teacher establishing a certain nun in the foremost position among those of quick direct knowledge, having performed the preparatory action, having aspired to that position of rank, having made merit for as long as life lasted, having transmigrated among gods and humans for a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, having been among the seven sisters in the house of Kikī, the King of Kāśi, having undertaken the ten precepts for twenty thousand years, practising the holy life from maidenhood, having had a residential cell built for the monastic community, having transmigrated only in fortunate destinations for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, she was reborn in a millionaire's family in Rājagaha. Her name was Bhaddātissā. She, growing up with a great retinue, having come of age, in that very city, looking through a latticed window, having seen the son of the chaplain, a thief named Sattuka, caught in the act of theft, being led away to the place of execution to be killed by the mayor by the king's command, having become enamoured, thinking "If I obtain him, I shall live; if not, I shall die," she lay down face downward on her bed.

Then her father, having heard that news, with strong affection for his only daughter, having given a bribe of a thousand, having had the thief released by a stratagem, having bathed him with scented water, having had him adorned with all ornaments, sent him to the mansion. Bhaddā too, with her wish fulfilled, having adorned herself with excessive ornaments, attended upon him. Sattuka, having spent a few days, with greed arisen for her ornaments, said: "Dear lady, as soon as I was seized by the mayor, I implored the deity dwelling at the Thieves' Precipice with the aspiration 'If I obtain my life, I shall offer you an oblation'; therefore have an oblation prepared." She, thinking "I shall fulfil his wish," having had an oblation prepared, decorated with all ornaments, having mounted a single vehicle together with her husband, thinking "I shall make an oblation to the deity," began to ascend the Thieves' Precipice.

Sattuka thought - "While everyone is ascending, it is not possible to take her ornaments" - having left the retinue of attendants right there, having had her carry that very oblation vessel, while ascending the mountain, he did not speak affectionate words with her. She understood his intention by his very gesture. Sattuka said: "Dear lady, having taken off your upper garment, make a bundle of the ornaments worn on your body." She said: "Husband, what is my offence?" "Do you think, foolish one, that I have come 'for the purpose of an oblation'? But I have come under the pretext of an oblation to take your ornaments." "But to whom, noble sir, do the ornaments belong, and to whom do I belong?" "I do not know that distinction." "Very well, noble sir, but fulfil one wish of mine, and allow me to embrace you while adorned." He accepted, saying "Very well." She, having known that he had accepted, having embraced him from the front, as if embracing him from behind, hurled him over the mountain precipice. He, having fallen, was crushed to bits. Having seen the marvel done by her, a deity dwelling on the mountain, making clear her proficiency, spoke these verses -

"For not in all situations is a man wise;
A woman too may be wise, discerning here and there.

"For not in all situations is a man wise;
A woman too may be wise, quickly discerning what is beneficial."

Then Bhaddā thought - "It is not possible for me to go home in this manner; having gone from here itself, I shall go forth into a going forth" - having gone to a Jain monastery, she requested the going forth from the Jains. Then they said to her - "By what procedure should the going forth be?" "Whatever is the highest for your going forth, do that." They, saying "Very well," having pulled out her hair with a palmyra-palm stalk, gave her the going forth. Again, the hair while growing grew back in curls. From that time onwards, she became known as Kuṇḍalakesā. She, having learnt there the doctrine and the method of debate that was to be learnt, having known "They know only this much; beyond this there is no distinction," having departed from there, wherever there were wise people, having gone there and there, having learnt their knowledge and craft, not finding anyone able to discuss together with her, whatever village or market town she entered, having made a heap of sand at its entrance, having placed a rose-apple branch there, having given a signal to the children standing nearby "Whoever is able to refute me in debate, let him trample this branch," she went to her dwelling place. Even when a week had passed with the rose-apple branch still standing just so, having taken it, she departed.

And at that time our Blessed One, having arisen in the world, having set in motion the excellent wheel of the Teaching, gradually was dwelling in dependence on Sāvattṥi in Jeta's Grove. Kuṇḍalakesā too, wandering in villages, market towns, and royal cities in the manner already stated, having reached Sāvattṥi, having placed a rose-apple branch on a heap of sand at the city gate, having given a signal to the boys, entered Sāvattṥi.

Then the Venerable General of the Teaching, entering the city alone, having seen that branch, wishing to tame her, asked the boys - "Why has this branch been placed thus?" The boys reported that matter to them. The Elder said "If so, trample this branch." The boys trampled it. Kuṇḍalakesā, having completed her meal duty, going out from the city, having seen that branch trampled, having asked "By whom was this trampled?" having known that it had been caused to be trampled by the Elder, thinking "A debate without an opponent does not look splendid," having entered Sāvattṥi, wandering from street to street, having proclaimed "Come see my debate together with the ascetics, the disciples of the Sakyan," surrounded by the public, having approached the General of the Teaching seated at the root of a certain tree, having exchanged friendly greetings, standing to one side, asked "Was my rose-apple branch caused to be trampled by you?" "Yes, it was caused to be trampled by me." "That being so, let there be a debate between me and you." "Let it be, dear lady." "Whose shall be the questioning, whose the answering?" "The questioning has indeed fallen to us; you ask whatever you know." She asked all the debating points she knew. The Elder answered all of that. She, not knowing anything further to ask, remained silent. Then the elder said to him - "Much has been asked by you; we too shall ask you one question." "Ask, venerable sir." The Elder asked this question "What is called one?" Kuṇḍalakesā, seeing neither end nor limit, as if having entered into

darkness, said "I do not know, venerable sir." Having said "You, not knowing even this much, what else will you know?" he expounded the Teaching. She, having fallen at the Elder's feet, said "Venerable sir, I go to you for refuge." "Do not go to me for refuge, dear lady; go for refuge to the Blessed One himself, the foremost person in the world with its gods." "I will do so, venerable sir." She, in the evening time, at the time for the proclamation of the Teaching, having gone to the Teacher's presence, having paid homage with the fivefold prostration, stood to one side. The Teacher, having known the maturity of her knowledge -

"Though a thousand verses, composed of unbeneficial terms;
One verse is better, hearing which one becomes fully calm."

He spoke this verse. At the conclusion of the verse, just as she stood, together with the analytical knowledges, she attained arahantship. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"Then I, in Haṃsavatī, was born in a millionaire's family;
Radiant with various jewels, endowed with great happiness.

"Having approached that great hero, I heard the teaching of the Dhamma;
Then, with confidence arisen, I approached the Conqueror for refuge.

"Then the greatly compassionate one, named Padumuttara;
Established the nun Subhā as foremost among those of quick direct knowledge."

"Having heard that, having become joyful, having given a gift to the great sage;
Having bowed down with my head at his feet, I aspired for that state.

"The great hero gave thanks, 'Dear lady, whatever you have aspired for;
All that will succeed, may you be happy, quenched.'

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"Passed away from there, I went to the Yāma realm, from there I went to Tusita;
From there to Nimmānarati, and from there to the city of Vasavatti.

"Wherever I am reborn, owing to that action;
There in each place, I attained the status of chief queen of kings.

"Passed away from there among human beings, of universal monarchs,
And of regional kings, I attained the status of chief queen.

"Having experienced success, among gods and humans;
Having been happy everywhere, I wandered in the round of rebirths through
many cosmic cycles.

"In this fortunate cosmic cycle, a kinsman of Brahma of great fame;
Kassapa by clan, the best of speakers arose.

"The attendant of the great sage, then was the lord of men;
The King of Kāśi named Kikī, in the best city of Bārāṇasī.

"I was his fourth daughter, renowned as 'giver to monks';
Having heard the Teaching of the foremost Conqueror, I delighted in the going
forth.

"Our father did not allow us, while still in the household then;
For twenty thousand years, we wandered untiringly.

"Living the holy life from maidenhood, princesses delicately nurtured;
Devoted to attending upon the Buddha, joyful were the seven daughters.

"Samaṇī and Samaṇaguttā, Bhikkhunī and Bhikkhudāyikā;
Dhammā and Sudhammā, and the seventh Saṅghadāyikā.

"Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā, and Paṭācārā, I was then;
Kisāgotamī, Dhammadinnā, Visākhā is the seventh.

"By those well-done actions, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"And in this final existence now, in Giribbaja, the best of cities;
Born in a prosperous millionaire's family, when I was standing in youth.

"Having seen a thief being led away for the purpose of murder, I was
infatuated with him there;
My father, having released him from murder with a thousand, thereupon.

"My father gave me to him, having known my mind;
To him I was devoted, exceedingly beloved and dear.

"He, my enemy, with greed for ornaments, with tribute as his inner intention;
Having led me to the thieves' precipice, the mountain, he intended murder.

"Then I, having bowed down to the flour, with well-joined palms;
Protecting my own life, I spoke these words.

"This golden armlet, many pearls and lapis lazuli;
Take it all, venerable one, and announce me as a slave.

"Lay aside, beautiful one, do not lament excessively;
And I do not directly know wealth brought by having killed."

"Since I remember myself, since I have attained discretion;
And I do not directly know another more dear than you."

"Come, I will embrace you, having circumambulated you;
And now there is no more meeting of me and you."

"For not in all situations is a man wise;
A woman too may be wise, discerning here and there."

"For not in all situations is a man wise;
A woman too may be wise, quickly discerning what is beneficial."

"Quickly and indeed swiftly, I perceived nearby;
Just as wool a deer, then I killed the deer."

"Whoever does not quickly understand the matter that has arisen;
He, of slow wit, is destroyed, like a thief in a mountain cave."

"Whoever quickly understands the matter that has arisen;
Is freed from the confinement of the enemy, just as I was from Sattuka."

"Then I, having thrown down the deer in the mountain fortress;
Having approached the presence of the white-robed ones, I went forth."

"And having pulled out my hair altogether with tweezers then;
Having gone forth, they explained the teaching continuously."

"Then, having learnt that, having sat down alone;
I thought over that teaching, a dog performing human deeds."

"Having grasped the severed one near me, having thrown it down, he
departed;
Having seen it, I obtained a sign, that hand swarming with worms."

"From there having risen, agitated, I asked those of the same teaching;
They said they understand, that matter, the Sakyan monks."

"I, having approached the Buddha's disciples, asked them about that matter;
They, having taken me, went to the presence of the Buddha, the foremost."

"He expounded the Teaching to me, the aggregates, sense bases, and
elements;
Foulness, impermanence, and suffering, and non-self," said the Leader."

"Having heard his teaching, I purified the eye of the teaching;
Then having cognised the Good Teaching, I received the going forth and the
full ordination."

"Having been requested, the Leader then said, 'Come, dear lady';
Then I became fully ordained, I saw a small amount of water.

"By the washing of feet, I, having known the rise and fall;
Likewise all activities, thus I reflected then.

"Thereupon my mind was liberated, altogether by non-clinging;
The Conqueror then made known to me the path of quick direct knowledge.

"And I am a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
I know the minds of others, carrying out the Teacher's instruction.

"I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I was pure, completely stainless.

"The Teacher has been attended upon by me, the Buddha's teaching has been
fulfilled;
The heavy burden has been laid down, the conduit to existence has been
uprooted.

"For the purpose of which I went forth, from home into homelessness;
That purpose has been attained by me, the destruction of all mental fetters.

"In meaning, teaching, and language, and likewise in discernment;
My knowledge is spotless, pure, in the Dispensation of the Buddha, the
foremost.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has
been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, she at that very moment requested the going forth.
The Teacher allowed her the going forth. She, having gone to the nuns' quarters and
having gone forth, spending her time in the happiness of fruition and the happiness of
Nibbāna, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

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, Kāśī 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."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "with shorn hair" means one whose hair is shorn, plucked out, is "with shorn hair," meaning "mine"; she speaks with reference to having her hair plucked out with a palmyra stalk at the time of going forth among the Jains. "Bearing filth" means bearing filth because of bearing the stain and filth on the teeth due to not chewing a wooden toothbrush. "Wearing a single robe" means wearing a single cloth according to the Jain practice. "I wandered before" means formerly, having become a Jain woman, I thus wandered. "Perceiving fault in the faultless" means perceiving as blameworthy what is faultless, such as bathing, anointing the body, chewing a wooden toothbrush, and so on. "And seeing the faulty as faultless" means having the view that what is blameworthy, such as conceit, contempt, insolence, illusion, and so on, is faultless.

"Having come out from the day residence" means having gone out from her own place of day residence. This one too, having met with the elder at the time of midday, through the answering of his question and through the proclamation of the Teaching, having become one whose conceit was destroyed and whose mind was gladdened, wishing to approach the Teacher's presence, having gone to her own dwelling place, having sat down at the day-quarters, in the evening approached the Teacher's presence.

"Having placed my knees down and paid homage" means having placed both knees down on the ground and established them, having paid homage with the fivefold prostration. "I made a salutation with joined palms in his presence" means I made a salutation with joined palms resplendent with the joining of ten fingernails in the presence of the Teacher. "'Come, Bhadda,' he said to me, that was my full ordination" means that the Blessed One, when she stood having attained arahantship and having requested the going forth and full ordination, said and commanded "Come, Bhadda, having gone to the nuns' quarters, go forth and receive full ordination in the presence of the nuns." That command of the Teacher, because of being the cause of my full ordination, was my full ordination.

The two verses beginning with "I wandered" are verses of declaration of final liberating knowledge. Therein, "I wandered through Aṅga and Magadha" means these provinces of Aṅga and Magadha and Vajjī and Kāśī and Kosala which were formerly wandered through, traversed by me while eating food obtained from the people with conflict - in those very provinces, from the time of meeting with the Teacher onwards, having become free of debt, faultless, with mental defilements departed, for fifty years I ate food obtained from the people.

Declaring the final liberating knowledge by way of praising the distinction of merit of that lay follower with a devoted mind by whom a robe was given to her, she spoke the concluding verse "Much merit indeed he has generated." That is easily understood.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā is concluded.

10. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā

112-116. The verses beginning with "Ploughing the field with ploughs" are the verses of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā. This one too, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, having been reborn in a family home in the city of Haṃsavatī, having attained discretion, one day, while hearing the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, having seen the Teacher establishing a certain nun in the foremost position among experts in monastic discipline, having performed the preparatory action, she aspired to that position of rank. She, having done wholesome deeds for as long as life lasted, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, having taken conception in the house of Kikī, the King of Kāsi, having been among the seven sisters, having lived the holy life for twenty thousand years, she had a residential cell built for the Community of monks. She, having passed away from there, having been reborn in the heavenly world, having experienced divine success for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a millionaire's house in Sāvatthī, having come of age, she made defiling intimacy with a certain labourer in her own house. Her mother and father fixed a day to give her to a young man of the same caste. Having known that, she, having taken her most valuable possessions, having departed through the main entrance together with the man with whom she had made intimacy, while dwelling in a certain small village, became pregnant. She, when the embryo was fully matured, having said "Why should we live here in this destitute condition? Let us go to the family house, husband," when he kept delaying saying "Let us go today, let us go tomorrow," thinking "This fool will not take me," when he had gone outside, having set in order what was to be set in order in the house, having told the neighbours dwelling nearby "Tell my husband 'She has gone to the family house'," thinking "I shall go to the family house alone," she set out on the road. He, having come and not seeing her in the house, having asked the neighbours, having heard "She has gone to the family house," thinking "On my account a daughter of a good family has become destitute," having gone step by step, he caught up with her. Her delivery took place right on the road. She, from the time of giving birth, with her zeal for going allayed, having taken her husband, turned back. She became pregnant a second time too, and so on - all should be expanded by the former method.

But this is the distinction - When her kamma-born winds stirred on the road, then a great untimely rain cloud arose. The sky was as if ablaze all around with flashes of lightning, as if breaking apart with thunder of clouds, with an uninterrupted fall of torrents of water. She, having seen that, said "Husband, find me a place sheltered from the rain." He, looking here and there, having seen a bush covered with grass, having gone there, with a hatchet in hand, wishing to cut sticks in that bush, he cut a small tree-stick that had grown up at the top of an ant-hill covered over with grass. And at that very moment a terribly venomous snake, having come out from that ant-hill, bit him. He, having fallen right there, died. She, experiencing great suffering, looking for his coming, having placed both children, who were unable to endure the wind and rain and were crying out, between her breasts, having pressed down on the ground with both knees and both hands, standing just so, having spent the night, when the night became light, having laid one son the colour of a slice of flesh on a rag-pad, having embraced him with her hands and chest, having said to the other "Come, dear child, your father has gone from here," going by the path her husband had gone, having seen him deceased, seated near the ant-hill, crying and lamenting

"On my account my husband has died," having reached a river on the road, flowing with water at knee-measure and breast-measure because of the rain having rained the entire night, being unable by her own dull intelligence and weakness to descend into the water together with the two children, having left the elder son on the near shore, having taken the other, having gone to the far shore, having spread out a broken branch, having laid him there on a rag-pad, thinking "I shall go to the presence of the other," unable to leave the young child, again and again having turned back, looking, she descends into the river.

Then, when she had gone to the middle of the river, a hawk, having seen that child, with the perception "a slice of flesh," descended from the sky. She, having seen that, having raised both hands, uttered a great sound "shoo, shoo" three times. The hawk, because of the distance, paying no heed to her, having seized the boy, flew up into the sky. The son standing on the near shore, having seen her raising both hands and emitting a great sound, with the perception "she is speaking with reference to me," fell into the water with speed. Thus the young child was killed by the hawk, the elder child by the water. She, crying and lamenting "One son of mine was seized by a hawk, one was swept away by the water, my husband died on the road," while going, having seen one man coming from Sāvattthī, asked - "Where are you dwelling, father?" "I am a dweller in Sāvattthī, mother." "In Sāvattthī, in such and such a street, there is such and such a family; do you know it, father?" "I know, mother, but do not ask about that; ask something else." "I have no business with anything else; I ask about that very thing, father." "Mother, you do not allow yourself to be told; today the rain god was seen by you raining the whole night?" "It was seen by me, father; that rained the whole night for me alone. That reason I shall tell afterwards; for now, tell me the news in that millionaire's house." "Mother, tonight the house fell upon three people - the millionaire, the wife, and the millionaire's son - covering them over; they are burning on one funeral pyre. That smoke can be seen, mother." She, at that moment, did not notice even the cloth she was wearing falling. Having reached the state of madness through grief, just as she was born -

"Both sons have died, my husband died on the road;
Mother, father, and brother are burnt on one pyre."

Lamenting, she wandered about.

From that time onwards, because even the cloth that was merely her inner robe was not being worn properly, because of her fallen conduct, the designation Paṭācārā came to be. Having seen her, people said "Go away, mad woman!" - some threw rubbish on her head, others scattered dust, others threw clods of earth. The Teacher, having sat down in the midst of the great assembly at Jeta's Grove, expounding the Teaching, having seen her thus wandering about, and having looked at the maturity of her knowledge, made it so that she came towards the monastery. The assembly, having seen her, said "Do not allow this mad woman to come here." Having said "The Blessed One, do not obstruct her," when she had come to a place not far away, he said "Regain mindfulness, sister." She, at that very moment, by the power of the Buddha, having regained mindfulness, having observed the fallen state of the cloth she was wearing, having established shame and moral fear, sat down squatting in a crouching posture. One man threw an upper garment. She, having put it on, having

approached the Teacher, having paid homage with the fivefold prostration, said "Venerable sir, be my support; one son of mine was seized by a hawk, one was swept away by the water, my husband died on the road, and my mother, father, and brother, covered over by the house, died and are burning on one funeral pyre" - thus she declared the cause of her sorrow. The Teacher said "Paṭācārā, do not worry; you have come to the presence of one who is indeed able to be your support. Just as you now shed tears on account of the death of sons and so on, so in the round of rebirths without discernible beginning, the tears shed on account of the death of sons and so on are more than the water of the four great oceans" - showing this -

"The water in the four oceans is small, more than that is the water of tears,
not trifling;
The sorrowing of a man touched by suffering, why, mother, are you
negligent?"

Spoke this verse.

Thus, while the Teacher was speaking the discourse by way of the beginningless round of rebirths, her sorrow became thinner. Then, having known that her sorrow had become thin, showing that "Paṭācārā, sons and so on are unable to be a shelter or a rock cell or a refuge for one going to the world beyond" - even though they exist, they are as if they do not exist; therefore, a wise person, having purified one's own morality, should accomplish the path leading to Nibbāna itself -

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

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

He expounded the Teaching with these verses. At the conclusion of the teaching, Paṭācārā, having become established in the fruition of stream-entry, requested the going forth from the Teacher. The Teacher, having led her to the presence of the nuns, gave her the going forth. She, having obtained full ordination, doing the work of insight for the purpose of the higher path, one day, having taken water with a water pot, while washing her feet, poured water. That, having gone a short distance, was cut short; that poured on the second occasion went farther than that; that poured on the third occasion went even farther than that. She, having taken that very object, having defined the three stages of life, reflected: "Just as the water poured by me the first time, these beings die even in the first stage of life; just as the water poured on the second occasion that went farther than that, they die even in the middle stage of life; just as the water poured on the third occasion that went even farther than that, they die even in the last stage of life." The Teacher, while just seated in the perfumed chamber, having pervaded with light, as if standing before her and speaking, said "It is just so, Paṭācārā; all these beings are subject to death; therefore, rather than living a hundred years not seeing the rise and fall of the five aggregates, better is life even for one day, even for one moment, of one seeing their rise and fall" - showing this meaning -

"And whoever should live a hundred years, not seeing rise and fall;

Better is the life of one day, of one seeing rise and fall."

He spoke a verse. At the conclusion of the verse, Paṭācārā attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, who has gone beyond all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"Then I, in Haṃsavatī, was born in a millionaire's family;
Radiant with various jewels, endowed with great happiness.

"Having approached that great hero, I heard the teaching of the Dhamma;
Then, with confidence arisen, I approached the Conqueror for refuge.

"Then the Leader praised as foremost among those who uphold the discipline,
A nun who was conscientious, such a one, skilled in what is allowable and what is not allowable.

"Then with a joyful mind, I, wishing for that state;
Having invited the one of ten powers, the leader of the world together with the Community.

"Having fed them for seven days, having given the three robes;
Having bowed down with my head at his feet, I spoke these words.

"She who was praised by you, O hero, the sage in the eighth cosmic cycle from now;
Such shall I become, if it succeeds, O leader.

"Then the Teacher said to me, 'Dear lady, do not fear, be confident;
In the future time, you will obtain that wish.

"A hundred thousand cosmic cycles from now, of the Okkāka clan origin;
Gotama by name, by clan, the Teacher in the world will be.

"His heirs in the teachings, legitimate, created by the Teaching;
Paṭācārā by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.'

"Then I, having become joyful, for as long as life, then the Conqueror;
With a mind of friendliness I attended, the leader of the world together with the Community.

"By that well-done action, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"In this fortunate cosmic cycle, a kinsman of Brahma of great fame;
Kassapa by clan, the best of speakers arose.

"The attendant of the great sage, then was the lord of men;
The King of Kāśi named Kikī, in the best city of Bārāṇasī.

"I was his third daughter, renowned as a nun;
Having heard the Teaching of the foremost Conqueror, I delighted in the going forth.

"Our father did not allow us, while still in the household then;
For twenty thousand years, we wandered untiringly.

"Living the holy life from maidenhood, princesses delicately nurtured;
Devoted to attending upon the Buddha, joyful were the seven daughters.

"Samaṇī and Samaṇaguttā, Bhikkhunī and Bhikkhudāyikā;
Dhammā and Sudhammā, and the seventh Saṅghadāyikā.

"I and Uppalavaṇṇā, Khemā and Bhaddā the nun;
Kisāgotamī, Dhammadinnā, Visākhā is the seventh.

"By those well-done actions, and by volition and aspirations;
Having abandoned the human body, I went to Tāvatiṃsa.

"And in this final existence now, I was born in a millionaire's family;
In the excellent city of Sāvatthī, prosperous, opulent, of great riches.

"When I was endowed with youth, under the control of thoughts, I;
Having seen a man, an old husband, I went together with him.

"Having given birth to one son, a second was in my womb;
Then I, fully resolved, thought 'I will leave my mother and father.'

"I did not inform my husband, when he was away at that time;
Alone I went forth from the house, to go to Sāvatthī, the excellent.

"Then my husband, having come, honoured me on the path;
At that time, kamma-born pains arose in me, extremely severe.

"And a great rain cloud arose, at the time of my giving birth;
Having gone then for the sake of timber, my husband was killed by a snake.

"Then, with the suffering of having given birth, helpless and wretched was I;
Having seen the rivulet filled, going to my family's home.

"Having taken the child I crossed over, and left him alone on the far bank;
Having put the young son to sleep, I went back to cross for the other.

"The osprey turned back, alas, the young one lamenting;
And the other the stream carried away, I was given over to sorrow.

"Having gone to the city of Sāvatthī, I heard that my kinsman had died;
Then, afflicted by sorrow, overcome by great sorrow, I said.

"Both sons have died, my husband died on the road;
Mother, father, and brother are burnt on one pyre.

"Then emaciated and pale, helpless with dejected mind;
Wandering here and there, I saw the trainer of men.

"Then the Teacher said to me, 'Do not grieve for your sons, be confident;
You should seek yourself, why do you vex yourself in vain?

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

"Having heard that word of the sage, I attained the first fruit;
Having gone forth, not long after, I attained arahantship.

"And I am a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
I know the minds of others, carrying out the Teacher's instruction.

"I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
Having eliminated all mental corruptions, I was pure, completely stainless.

"Then I learned the whole monastic discipline, in its entirety, near the All-
Seeing One;
I learned it in all its detail, and recited it according to truth.

"The Conqueror, satisfied with that virtue, established me in the foremost
position;
Foremost among those who uphold the discipline, Paṭācārā alone.

"The Teacher has been attended upon by me, the Buddha's teaching has been
fulfilled;
The heavy burden has been laid down, the conduit to existence has been
uprooted.

"For the purpose of which I went forth, from home into homelessness;
That purpose has been attained by me, the destruction of all mental fetters.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, etc. the Buddha's teaching has
been fulfilled."

But having attained arahantship, having reviewed her own practice during the time of
being a learner, making clear the manner in which the higher distinction arose, by
way of an inspired utterance -

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."He spoke these verses.

Therein, "kasaṃ" means those who are ploughing, doing the work of agriculture. For this is a singular used in the sense of a plural. "Pavapaṃ" means sowing seeds. "Chamā" means on the ground. For this is a nominative case used in the locative sense. Here this is the meaning in brief - These young men, beings, ploughing the field with ploughs, with ploughshares, sowing seeds of various kinds such as early crops and late crops on the field-ground according to their intention, for that reason, on that account, nourishing themselves, children, wife, and so on, obtain wealth. Thus in this world, individual effort wisely applied is indeed fruitful and productive.

Therein, "Why do I, accomplished in morality, carrying out the Teacher's instruction, Not attain Nibbāna, being not lazy, not agitated" means I, being of thoroughly purified morality, not lazy through putting forth strenuous energy, not agitated through being internally well concentrated in mind, and carrying out the Teacher's instruction, which is called the meditation on the four truths as a meditation subject - why do I not attain Nibbāna? I shall surely attain it.

Having thought thus, while doing the work of insight, one day she took a sign in the water for washing her feet. Therefore she said "having washed my feet" and so on. Its meaning is - While washing my feet, I observe a sign, having seen the foot-water that had flowed from high ground to low in the waters poured three times for the purpose of washing the feet.

"Just as this water is subject to destruction, having the nature of falling, so are the vital principles of beings" - thus having reflected upon the characteristic of impermanence, and in accordance with that the characteristic of suffering, and the characteristic of non-self, developing insight, "thereupon I concentrated my mind, like a good thoroughbred horse" means just as a skilled charioteer drives a good thoroughbred horse with ease, so I concentrated my mind with ease alone, I made it concentrated by insight concentration. Thus developing insight, entering an inner chamber seeking the agreeableness of the climate, having taken a lamp for the purpose of dispelling darkness, having entered the inner room, having placed the lamp, as soon as she had sat down on the small bed, she pulled the lamp wick with the door-bolt needle to put off the lamp; at that very moment, through obtaining an agreeable climate, her mind became concentrated, she entered upon the cognitive process of insight, she struck with the path. Thereupon, by the succession of paths, there was the complete elimination of mental corruptions. Therefore it was said - "Then having taken a lamp, etc. there was deliverance of the mind." Therein, "having looked at the sleeping place" means having seen the sleeping place by the light of the lamp.

"Needle" means the door-bolt needle. "I draw down the wick" means I pull the lamp wick towards the oil in order to put off the lamp. "Deliverance" means deliverance from mental defilements. But since that is, in the ultimate sense, the continuity of

consciousness, therefore it was said "of the mind." Just as a lamp that is worthy of arising when conditions such as wick and oil are present is called quenched because of not arising in the absence of those, so consciousness that is worthy of arising when conditions such as mental defilements are present is called liberated because of not arising in the absence of those - thus she said - "Like the extinguishing of a lamp, there was deliverance of the mind."

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Paṭācārā is concluded.

11. Commentary on the Verses of the Thirty Elder Nuns

117-121. The verses beginning with "Having taken pestles" and so on are the verses of about thirty elder nuns. They too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, gradually having accumulated the requisites for deliverance, in this arising of a Buddha, prompted by their own actions, having been reborn in this and that family home, having attained discretion, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā, having gained faith, having gone forth, of pure morality, they dwell fulfilling all kinds of duties. Then one day the Elder Nun Paṭācārā, giving them an exhortation -

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." he spoke these two verses.

Herein this is the meaning in brief - These beings, because of life, having taken pestles, pound the grain of others, they do mortar-work. Having done other such low work too, nourishing children and wife, they also collect wealth as is proper. But that work of theirs is low, vulgar, belonging to ordinary people, painful, and not connected with benefit. Therefore, having avoided such defiling obsession, practise the Buddha's teaching; practise, accomplish, bring about in one's own continuity the teaching of the Perfectly Enlightened One, reckoned as the threefold training. Therein he states the reason - "Which having done one does not regret" means because of doing which, one does not undergo remorse now or in the future. Now, to show the preliminary function and the method of pursuit in doing that, "Quickly having washed your feet" and so on was stated. Therein, because for one whose feet are unwashed and whose face is unrinsed, there is no comfort in sitting nor the obtaining of a suitable climate, but for one who, having washed the feet and rinsed the face, is seated to one side, one obtains both of those; therefore, quickly, not missing this moment as obtained, having washed your feet - your own feet - sit down, be seated, to one side in a secluded place. Having bound one's own mind to any object among the thirty-eight objects that is pleasing to the mind, wherever it may be, engaged in serenity of mind, with a concentrated mind, by means of the development of the meditation subject of the four truths, practise, accomplish the teaching, the exhortation, the instruction of the Buddha, the Blessed One.

Then those nuns, having stood firm in the exhortation of that elder nun, having established insight, doing the work of meditation, because their knowledge had reached maturity and because of being accomplished in the supporting conditions, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed their own practice, together with the verses of exhortation -

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.'"

They spoke these verses.

Therein, "having heard that word of hers, Paṭācārā's teaching" means the exhortation word that was a teaching in the sense of an instruction against the enemy of defilements of that Elder Nun Paṭācārā - those approximately thirty nuns, having heard, having assented, having accepted it with bowed head.

"Having risen, they paid homage at her feet: 'Your instruction has been fulfilled'" means having taken to heart and having reflected upon her teaching as accepted, having sat down in a convenient place, developing, having brought meditation to its summit, in order to report the distinction attained by themselves, having risen from the seat where they were sitting, having gone to her presence, having said "Great Elder Nun, your instruction has been fulfilled by us in accordance with the advice," they paid homage at her feet with the fivefold prostration. "Like the deities of the Thirty-three honour Indra, unconquered in battle" means just as the Tāvatiṃsa gods honour Indra, the victorious one, unconquered in the battle between the gods and titans, so, Great Elder Nun, we shall dwell having put you in front, because there is nothing else to be done. Therefore, "we are possessors of the threefold true knowledge, without mental corruptions" - declaring their own gratitude, this itself was their declaration of final liberating knowledge. But whatever here has not been analysed as to meaning, that is by the very method stated above.

The commentary on the verses of the thirty elder nuns is concluded.

12. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Candā

122-126. The verses beginning with "Formerly I was destitute" are the verses of the Elder Nun Candā. This one too, having formed aspirations under former Buddhas, accumulating wholesome action as a decisive support for the end of the round of rebirths in this and that existence, gradually with the requisites of deliverance stored up, with matured knowledge, in this arising of a Buddha, took conception in the house

of an unknown brahmin in a certain brahmin village. From the time of her birth, that family went to utter elimination of wealth. She, gradually having attained discretion, lived with difficulty. Then a snake-wind disease arose in that house. On account of that, all her relatives too reached the disaster of death. She, when the destruction of relatives had occurred, being unable to live elsewhere, with a beggar's bowl in hand, having wandered from family to family, sustaining herself with whatever almsfood was obtained, one day went to the place of participation in a meal of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā. The nuns, having seen her afflicted and overcome by hunger, with compassion arisen, having supported her with affectionate address, satisfied her there with the existing food that was charming in its presentation. She, having become confident in their good conduct and morality, having approached the presence of the elder nun, having paid homage, sat down to one side. The elder nun expounded the Teaching to her. She, having heard that Teaching, having confidence in the Dispensation and with a sense of urgency arisen regarding the round of rebirths, went forth. And having gone forth, having stood firm in the exhortation of the elder nun, having established insight, devoting herself to meditation, because of having formed an aspiration and because her knowledge had reached maturity, before long, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed her own practice -

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."

He spoke these verses by way of an inspired utterance.

Therein, "destitute" means poor. "Formerly" means before going forth. For from the time of going forth, here a person is not to be called wealthy or poor in wealth. But in virtues this elder nun was wealthy indeed. Therefore she said "Formerly I was destitute." "Widow" - dhava is called husband; due to the absence of that, a widow; the meaning is one whose husband has died. "Childless" means deprived of children. "Without friends" means declined from and deprived of friends and kinsmen. "Did not obtain food and cloth" means I did not obtain the fulfilment of food and cloth; but the intention is that I obtained merely food and clothing by way of a morsel of almsfood and a scrap of rag. Therefore she said "Having taken bowl and staff" and so on.

Therein, "bowl" means an earthenware vessel. "Stick" means a stick for warding off oxen, dogs, and so on. "From family to family" means from one family to another family. "Burning with cold and heat" means being oppressed by cold and heat due to the absence of a dwelling house.

"A nun" - she speaks with reference to the Elder Nun Paṭācārā. "Again" means afterwards, in the later period after seven years.

"In the ultimate reality" means in the supreme, highest good, in the practice leading to Nibbāna and in Nibbāna. "She directed" means she directed by indicating a meditation subject. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Candā is concluded.

The commentary on 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 (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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