

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

5. The Collection of Minor Texts (5. Khuddaka Nikāya)

20. The Questions of Milinda (20. Milindapañhapāḷi)

5. The Chapter on the Lion (5. Sīhavaggo)

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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

20. The Questions of Milinda

5. The Chapter on the Lion

1. The Question on the Quality of a Lion

1. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'seven factors of a lion should be adopted.' What are those seven factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a lion is white, spotless, pure and bright, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should have a mind that is white, spotless, pure and bright, free from remorse. This, great king, is the first factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion is four-footed and walks heroically, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should walk with the conduct of the four bases for spiritual power. This, great king, is the second factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion has a handsome, beautiful mane, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should have a handsome, beautiful mane of morality. This, great king, is the third factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion does not bow down to anyone even at the exhaustion of life, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should not bow down to anyone even at the exhaustion of the requisites of robes, almsfood, lodging and medicine for the sick. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion eats successively; in whatever place he falls upon, right there he eats as much as he likes, he does not select choice meat, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should eat successively; families should not be selected; having left the former house, families should not be approached; food should not be selected; in whatever place a morsel is taken, in that very place one should eat for the sustenance of the body; choice food should not be selected. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion does not eat from storage; having eaten his food resort once, he does not approach it again, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be one who consumes without making storage. This, great king, is the sixth factor of the lion to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a lion, not having obtained food, is not agitated, and even having obtained food, he consumes it not greedy, not infatuated, not clinging, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, not having obtained food, one should not be agitated, and even having obtained food, one should consume it not greedy, not infatuated, not clinging, seeing the danger,

with wisdom of escape. This, great king, is the seventh factor of the lion to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Connected Collection, while praising the Elder Mahākassapa:

'This Kassapa, monks, is content with any almsfood whatsoever, and speaks in praise of contentment with any almsfood whatsoever, and does not commit an improper wrong way of earning because of almsfood, and not having obtained almsfood, he is not agitated, and having obtained almsfood, he consumes it not greedy, not infatuated, not clinging, seeing the danger, with wisdom of escape.'

The question on the quality of a lion is the first.

2. The Question on the Quality of a Ruddy Goose

2. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'three factors of the ruddy goose should be adopted.' What are those three factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, the ruddy goose does not abandon its companion until the exhaustion of life, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, wise attention should not be abandoned until the exhaustion of life. This, great king, is the first factor of the ruddy goose to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the ruddy goose feeds on moss and water plants, and with that it reaches contentment, and by that contentment it does not decline in strength and beauty, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, contentment with whatever is obtained should be practised. Being content with whatever is obtained, great king, one who practises meditation, one devoted to meditation, does not decline in morality, does not decline in concentration, does not decline in wisdom, does not decline in liberation, does not decline in knowledge and vision of liberation, does not decline in all wholesome mental states. This, great king, is the second factor of the ruddy goose to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the ruddy goose does not harm living beings, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be with stick laid down, with weapon laid down, having shame, endowed with compassion, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. This, great king, is the third factor of the ruddy goose to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Ruddy Goose Birth Story:

"Whoever neither kills nor causes to kill, neither conquers nor causes to conquer;
Having a share of friendliness towards all beings, for him there is no enmity with anyone."

The question on the quality of a ruddy goose is the second.

3. The Question on the Quality of a Crane

3. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'two factors of a heron should be adopted.' What are those two factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a heron does not nourish the young ones of her own husband out of jealousy, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, when defilements have arisen in one's own mind, one should be jealous, having put them into the hole of

right restraint by the establishment of mindfulness, mindfulness of the body should be developed at the mind-door. This, great king, is the first factor of a heron to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a heron, having roamed for food during the day in the forest wilds, in the evening approaches a flock of birds for its own protection, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, alone, solitude should be cultivated for release from the fetters; by one not finding delight there, for protection from the fear of blame, having gone to the Community, one should dwell guarded by the Community. This, great king, is the second factor of a heron to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by Brahmā Sahampati in the presence of the Blessed One -

"One should resort to remote lodgings, one should practise for release from the fetters;
If one should not find delight there, one should dwell in the Community,
guarded in oneself, mindful."

The question on the quality of a crane is the third.

4. The Question on the Quality of a House Pigeon

4. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of a house pigeon should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a house pigeon dwelling in another's house does not grasp at any sign of their goods, dwells impartially, abundant in perception, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having approached another's family, in that family regarding women or men or beds or chairs or garments or ornaments or articles for use or articles for enjoyment or varieties of food, no sign should be grasped, one should be impartial, the perception of an ascetic should be established. This, great king, is the one factor of a house pigeon to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Cūḷanārada Jātaka:

"Having entered another's family, for the purpose of drink or for food;
One should eat measuredly, consume measuredly, and not set one's mind on form."

The question on the quality of a house pigeon is the fourth.

5. The Question on the Quality of an Owl

5. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'two factors of the owl should be adopted.' What are those two factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, an owl is opposed to crows, and going at night to a flock of crows, kills even many crows, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, opposition should be made to not knowing, having sat down alone in a secret place, not knowing should be crushed, should be cut off from the root. This, great king, is the first factor of the owl to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, an owl is well secluded, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be one who

delights in seclusion, one who is devoted to seclusion. This, great king, is the second factor of the owl to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Connected Collection:

'Here, monks, a monk who delights in seclusion, who is devoted to seclusion, understands as it really is "this is suffering," understands as it really is "this is the origin of suffering," understands as it really is "this is the cessation of suffering," understands as it really is "this is the practice leading to the cessation of suffering."'

The question on the quality of an owl is the fifth.

6. The Question on the Quality of a Woodpecker

6. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of a woodpecker should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a woodpecker, having cried out, tells others of security or danger, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, when expounding the Teaching to others, the nether world should be shown as danger, Nibbāna should be shown as security. This, great king, is the one factor of a woodpecker to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Piṇḍolabhāradvāja -

"'Fear and trembling in hell, abundant happiness in Nibbāna;
Both these meanings should be shown by one who practises meditation.'"

The question on the quality of a woodpecker is the sixth.

7. The Question on the Quality of a Bat

7. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'two factors of a bat should be adopted.' What are those two factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a bat, having entered a house and wandered about, departs, and is not obstructed there, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having entered a village for almsfood, having wandered about successively, with the gain obtained, one should depart quickly, one should not be obstructed there. This, great king, is the first factor of a bat to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a bat dwelling in another's house does not cause their decline, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having approached families, through excessive begging or through abundance of requests or through abundance of bodily faults or through excessive talking or through sharing in their happiness and suffering, no remorse should be caused to them, nor should their basic livelihood be diminished, in every way only growth should be desired. This, great king, is the second factor of a bat to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Lakkhaṇa Discourse of the Long Collection:

"'By pure morality, by learning, by higher intelligence, by generosity, by righteousness, by many good qualities;
By wealth, by grain, and by fields and sites, by children, by wife, and by quadrupeds.

"'By relatives, by friends, and by kinsmen, by power, by beauty, by happiness,

and by both;

He wishes 'How might they not decline' and goes beyond, and he longs for the accomplishment of welfare."

The question on the quality of a bat is the seventh.

8. The Question on the Quality of a Leech

8. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of a leech should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a leech, wherever it clings, having clung firmly right there, drinks blood, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, to whatever object the mind clings, having firmly established that object by colour and by shape and by direction and by location and by delimitation and by characteristic and by sign, by that very object the sprinkling of the taste of liberation should be drunk. This, great king, is the one factor of a leech to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Anuruddha -

'With a purified mind, having established oneself on the object;
By that mind should be drunk, the sprinkling of the taste of liberation.'

The question on the quality of a leech is the eighth.

9. The Question on the Quality of a Snake

9. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'three factors of a snake should be adopted.' What are those three factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a snake goes on its chest, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should conduct oneself with wisdom; for one who practises meditation conducting oneself with wisdom, great king, the mind proceeds in the true method, avoids what is without characteristic, and develops what has characteristic. This, great king, is the first factor of the snake to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a snake going about avoids medicine while going about; just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should conduct oneself avoiding misconduct. This, great king, is the second factor of the snake to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a snake having seen humans is tormented, grieves, and reflects; just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having thought evil thoughts, having aroused discontent, one should be tormented, should grieve, should reflect: 'My day has passed by in negligence; it cannot be obtained again.' This, great king, is the third factor of the snake to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One in the Bhallāṭṭiya Jātaka concerning two kinnaras:

"'We stayed apart for one night, huntsman, unwillingly, remembering each other;
Regretting that one night, we grieve, "That night will not come again.'"

The question on the quality of a snake is the ninth.

10. The Question on the Quality of a Boa Constrictor

10. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of a boa constrictor should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a boa constrictor, having a great massive body, even for many days with belly unfilled, more wretched, does not obtain belly-filling food, being incomplete, sustains itself only for the mere sustenance of the body, just so indeed, great king, for one who practises meditation, for one devoted to meditation, engaged in going for alms, approaching others' almsfood, expecting what is given by others, abstaining from taking for oneself, food to fill the belly is rare to obtain; but moreover, by a son of good family intent on the good, having not eaten four or five morsels, the remainder should be filled with water. This, great king, is the one factor of a boa constrictor to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Sāriputta, the General of the Teaching -

"Whether eating fresh or dry food, one should not be excessively satisfied;
With belly unfilled, with measured food, a mindful monk should wander forth.

"Four or five morsels, without eating, one should drink water;
Enough for comfortable abiding, for the resolute monk."

The question on the quality of a boa constrictor is the tenth.

The Lion Chapter is the fifth.

Its summary:

The lion and the ruddy goose, the foam and the house pigeon;
The owl and the woodpecker, the bat and the leech;
The snake and the boa constrictor, by that the chapter is called.



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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