

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

6. The Book of the Sixes

1. Commentary on the Verses of the Five Hundred Elder Nuns

127-132. In the Book of Sixes, the verses beginning with "Whose path you do not know" and so on are the verses of about five hundred elder nuns. These 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, having been reborn in this and that family home, having come of age, brought by their mothers and fathers to their husbands' families, having obtained sons here and there, dwelling in the household life, because of having done such action of the same kind, all of them having become ones whose sons had died, overpowered by sorrow for their sons, having approached the presence of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā, having paid homage, seated, they reported the cause of their sorrow. The elder nun, dispelling their sorrow -

127. "Whose path you do not know, whether of one who has come or one who has gone;
That being who has come from somewhere, why do you weep saying 'my son'?
128. "But if you knew the path, whether of one who has come or one who has gone;
You would not grieve for him, for such is the nature of living beings.
129. "Uninvited he came from there, not permitted he went from here;
Having come from somewhere surely, having stayed for a few days;
From here too he went to another, from there he goes to yet another.
130. "The ghost, in human form, wandering in the round of rebirths, will go on;
As he came, so he went, what lamentation is there for that?"

She expounded the Teaching with these four verses.

They, having heard the Teaching from her, with religious emotion arisen, went forth in the presence of the elder nun. Having gone forth, doing the work of insight, because the qualities that ripen liberation had reached maturity, before long they became established in arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. Then they, having attained arahantship, having reviewed their own practice, by way of an inspired utterance, together with the verses of exhortation beginning with "Whose path you do not know" and so on -

131. "He has indeed drawn out my dart, difficult to see, lodged in my heart;
She who, for me overcome with sorrow, dispelled my grief for my son.

132. "Today I have the dart pulled out, without hunger, attained final Nibbāna; I go to the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community for refuge, the sage."

They spoke these verses separately, each one individually.

Therein, "whose path you do not know, whether of one who has come or one who has gone" means of whatever being who has come here, the path by which he came, or of one who has gone from here, the path by which he went, you do not know. She speaks with reference to the immediately preceding and subsequent rebirths in past and future existences. "That being who has come from somewhere" means that being whose path of coming and going is thus unknown, who, coming from some destination along the path by which he came, is like a man met on the road with whom one has made no acquaintance whatsoever - having merely aroused selfish attachment towards such a being, why, for what reason, do you weep saying "my son"? Because it cannot be remedied and because it should not be done regarding my son, there is no reason for weeping here - this is the intention.

"But if you knew the path" means if you were to know both the path by which he came, of that being regarded as your son who has come, and the path by which he went, of one who has gone. "You would not grieve over him" means even so you would not grieve over him. Why? "For such is the nature of living beings" - because even in the present life, for beings there is no power of control over separation and parting from all that is dear and beloved, how much more so in the future life.

"Uninvited he came from there" means from there, from the world beyond, uninvited by anyone, he came here. "Āgato" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "Not permitted he went from here" means from this world, not permitted by anyone, he went to the world beyond. "From somewhere" means from hell and so on, from whatever destination. "Surely" is in the sense of supposition. "Having dwelt for a few days" means having dwelt here for a period of only a few days. "From here too he went to another" means from this existence too he went to another; he approached yet another existence by way of conception. "From there he goes to yet another" means from that existence too he will go to another; he will approach yet another existence.

"Departed" means having departed, having been reborn in this and that existence, gone away from there. "In human form" - this is merely an illustration; the meaning is: in human state and in animal state and so on. "Wandering" means wandering again and again by way of rebirth. "As he came, so he went" means just as he came from an unknown origin and without informing anyone, so he went with an unknown destination and without being permitted. "What lamentation is there for that" means there, in such an uncontrollable state where one fares according to one's wishes, what indeed is lamentation? What is the use of lamenting? - this is the meaning. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

And here, the first four verses were spoken separately by the Elder Nun Paṭācārā for the purpose of dispelling the sorrow of those approximately five hundred women. It should be understood that, having stood firm in her exhortation and having gone forth, by those approximately five hundred nuns who had attained distinction, all six verses too were spoken individually.

"The five hundred Paṭācārā" means the five hundred nuns who obtained the name "Paṭācārā" because, having received exhortation in the presence of the Elder Nun Paṭācārā, they made known what was said by Paṭācārā.

The commentary on the verses of the five hundred elder nuns is concluded.

2. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Vāseṭṭhī

133-138. The verses of the Elder Nun Vāseṭṭhī beginning with "Afflicted by sorrow for my son." 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, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a family home in Vesālī, having come of age, given by her mother and father to a son of good family of the same birth, having gone to her husband's family, dwelling in pleasant communal life together with him, having obtained one son, at the time when he was running about and roaming around, when he had died, distressed by sorrow for her son, she became a mad woman. She, while her relatives and husband were seeking medical treatment, having fled without their even knowing, wandering here and there, arrived at the city of Mithilā, and there saw the Blessed One going along the middle of the street, tamed, guarded, with restrained faculties, an elephant. Having seen him, together with the seeing, through the power of the Buddha, her madness departed and she regained her normal mind. Then the Teacher expounded the Teaching to her in brief. She, having heard that Teaching, with a sense of urgency obtained, having requested the going forth from the Teacher, having gone forth among the nuns by the Teacher's command, having completed the preliminary functions, having established insight, striving and endeavouring, because of the maturity of her knowledge, before long, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

133. "Afflicted by sorrow for my son, mentally deranged, unconscious;
Naked and with dishevelled hair, I wandered here and there.
134. "On streets, on rubbish heaps, in cemeteries and on roads;
I wandered for three years, afflicted by hunger and thirst.
135. "Then I saw the Fortunate One, towards the city of Mithilā;
The tamer of the untamed, the Perfectly Enlightened One, safe from every quarter.
136. "Having regained my own mind, having paid homage, I sat down;
He expounded the Teaching to me, Gotama, out of compassion.
137. "Having heard his teaching, I went forth into homelessness;
Engaging in the Teacher's word, I realised the safe state.
138. "All sorrows have been cut off, abandoned, at an end for me;
For the bases have been fully understood by me, from which is the origination of sorrows."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "aṭṭā" means afflicted. Or this itself is the reading; the meaning is afflicted, oppressed. "Mentally deranged" means with heart overthrown by the madness of sorrow. Because of that very thing, by the disappearance of normal perception, unconscious. Because of the absence of shame and moral fear, through the state of being without clothing, naked. Because of having dishevelled hair, with dishevelled hair. "Here and there" means from village to village, from town to town, from street to street, I wandered.

"Then" means afterwards, upon the utter elimination of the action conducive to madness. "The Fortunate One" means the Fortunate One, the Blessed One, because of beautiful conduct, because of having gone to a beautiful state, because of having spoken rightly, and because of having gone rightly. "Towards Mithilā" means facing Mithilā, the meaning is walking towards the city of Mithilā.

"Having regained one's own mind" means by the power of the Buddha, having abandoned madness, having regained one's own normal consciousness.

"Engaging in the Teacher's word" means making exertion in the Dispensation of the Teacher, the Perfectly Enlightened One, devoting oneself to meditation. "I realised the safe state" means I realised the state of Nibbāna, which is safe, secure, untroubled by the four mental bonds.

"Having this as their end" means this arahantship now attained by me is the end, the final goal, of these - thus "having this as their end," the sorrows. The meaning is that now there is no origination of them. "From which is the origination of sorrows" means from which is the origination of sorrows having the characteristic of inner pondering; the bases, the foundations, of those sorrows, reckoned as the five aggregates of clinging, have been fully understood by the three full understandings of the known, of judging, and of abandoning. Therefore the explanation is: sorrows have this as their end.

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

3. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Khemā

139-144. The verses beginning with "You are young and beautiful" are the verses of the Elder Nun Khemā. This one, it is said, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, was one dependent on others for her livelihood in the city of Haṃsavatī, a female slave of others. She, earning her livelihood by rendering service to others, one day, having seen the Elder Sujāta, the chief disciple of the Perfectly Enlightened One Padumuttara, walking for almsfood, having given three sweet-meats, on that very day having given up her own hair and having given a gift to the elder, having made the aspiration "May I become a female disciple of great wisdom of a Buddha in the future," being diligent in wholesome action for as long as life lasted, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, gradually in the six heavens of sensual pleasure, having been reborn as the chief queen of those various kings of gods, even in the human world on many occasions having attained the status of chief queen of universal monarchs and regional kings, having experienced great fortunes, in the time of the Blessed One Vipassī, having arisen in the human world, having attained

discretion, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, with a sense of urgency obtained, having gone forth, practising the holy life for ten thousand years, having become very learned and a speaker of the Teaching, having performed action conducive to wisdom by expounding the Teaching and so on to many people, having passed away from there, wandering only in fortunate destinations, in this cosmic cycle, in the time of the Blessed One Kakusandha and of the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, having been reborn in a family accomplished in wealth, having attained discretion, having had a great monastery built, she dedicated it to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha.

But in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, the One of Ten Powers, having been the eldest daughter of King Kikī of Kāśi, named Samaṇī, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Teacher, with a sense of urgency obtained, remaining just in the household life, practising the holy life from maidenhood for twenty thousand years, together with her own sisters Samaṇaguttā and so on, having had a delightful residential cell built, she dedicated it to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha. Just so, having performed lofty meritorious action that had reached its plane in this and that existence, having wandered only in fortunate destinations, in this arising of a Buddha, she was reborn in a royal family in the city of Sākala in the country of Madda. Her name was Khemā; she was gold-coloured, with skin resembling gold. She, having come of age, went to the house of King Bimbisāra. While the Teacher was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, having become intoxicated with her beauty, thinking "He will show the faults in beauty," she does not go for the purpose of seeing the Teacher.

The king, having had people proclaim the beauty of the Bamboo Grove, aroused in the queen the desire to see the monastery. Then the queen asked the king "I shall go to see the monastery." The king, having said "Having gone to the monastery, you will not be allowed to come back without seeing the Teacher," gave a signal to the men - "Even by force, show the queen to the One of Ten Powers." The queen, having gone to the monastery, having spent the daytime, while turning back, began to go without even seeing the Teacher. Then the king's men led her, even though unwilling, to the presence of the Teacher. The Teacher, having seen her coming, by supernatural power created a woman resembling a heavenly nymph, and made her take a palm leaf and fan him. Queen Khemā, having seen her, thought - "Women comparable to heavenly nymphs of such beauty stand not far from the Blessed One; I am not even equal to being their attendant; my pride too has been destroyed without reason through the influence of an evil mind" - having grasped the sign, she stood looking at that very woman. Then, even as she was watching, by the power of the Teacher's determination, that woman, having passed beyond the first stage of life, having passed beyond the middle stage of life too, having reached the final stage of life, having become one with broken teeth, grey hair, and wrinkled skin, together with the palm leaf, turned over and fell. Then Khemā, because she had formed an aspiration, thought thus - "Even a body of such a kind has reached such ruin; my body too will have just such a destiny." Then, having known the disposition of her mind, the Teacher -

"Those infatuated with lust fall into the stream, like a spider into its self-made web;

Having cut even this, they wander forth, without longing, having abandoned sensual happiness."

He spoke a verse. She, at the conclusion of the verse, attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges - thus it has come in the commentaries. But in the Apadāna it has come thus: "Having heard this verse, having become established in the fruition of stream-entry, having obtained permission from the king, having gone forth, she attained arahantship." Therein, this is the Apadāna text -

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, having vision regarding 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 go to the Conqueror for refuge.

"Having requested my mother and father, and the Guide;
Having invited for seven days, I fed him together with his disciples.

And when a week had passed, the highest among those of great wisdom;
The nun, in the foremost position, the trainer of men established.

"Having heard that, having become joyful, again to that great sage;
Having done service to that place, having bowed down, I aspired.

"Then the Conqueror said to me, 'May your aspiration succeed;
The service done by you to me together with the Community is of
immeasurable fruit.

"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;
Having attained the highest, she will be named Khemā.'

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

"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.

"Ninety-one cosmic cycles ago from now, Vipassī, the leader of the world;
Arose, lovely to behold, one with insight into all phenomena.

"Having approached him, the leader of the world, the trainer of men;
Having heard the Teaching spoken, I went forth into homelessness.

"For ten thousand years, in that hero's Dispensation;
Having lived the holy life, devoted to meditation, very learned.

"Skilled in the mode of dependent conditions, confident in the four truths;
Subtle, brilliant speakers, carrying out the Teacher's instruction.

"Having passed away from there to Tusita, I was reborn, one of fame;
I outshine others there through the fruit of the holy life.

"Wherever I was reborn, of great possessions, of great riches;
Wise, virtuous, and with a disciplined following.

"By that action, by exertion in the Conqueror's Dispensation;
All successes for me are easily obtained, dear to the mind.

"Whoever becomes my husband, wherever I have gone;
No one disrespects me, by the power of my practice.

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

"At that time in Bārāṇasī, offspring of very prosperous families;
Dhanañjānī and Sumedhā and I too, three people.

"We gave a monastery to the Community, companions in giving formerly;
And we had a dwelling-place built for the Community.

"Passed away from there, we all became those who reached Tāvatiṃsa;
Having attained the foremost position in glory, and likewise among human beings.

"In this very 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 eldest daughter, renowned as a female ascetic;
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, Paṭācārā and Kuṇḍalā;
Kisāgotamī, Dhammadinnā, Visākhā is the seventh.

"Sometimes that sun among men expounded the marvellous Teaching;
Having heard the Great Discourse on Causality, I learnt it thoroughly.

"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 Sākala, the best of cities;
I am the daughter of King Madda, agreeable, beloved, and dear.

"As soon as I was born, there was security in that city before;
Therefore the name Khemā arose for me, by virtue.

"When I had attained youth, adorned with beauty and grace;
Then my father gave me, to King Bimbisāra.

"I was dear to him, delighting in the play of beauty;
As one who spoke ill of material forms, I did not approach the greatly
compassionate one.

"King Bimbisāra then, with the intention of helping me;
Having praised the Bamboo Grove, had singers sing for me.

"By whom the charming Bamboo Grove, the dwelling place of the Fortunate
One, has not been seen;
By him the Nandana garden has not been seen, thus we imagine.

"By whom the Bamboo Grove has been seen, the garden delighting men;
By him the Nandana garden has been well seen, the delight of the lord of the
immortals.

"Having left Nandana, the gods, having descended to the surface of the earth;
Having seen the charming Bamboo Grove, they are not satisfied, being much
astonished.

"Arisen through the merit of a king, adorned through the merit of a Buddha;
Who could speak entirely of that forest's accumulation of virtues?

"Having heard that the forest was prosperous, captivating to my ear;
Wishing to see that park, I announced it to the king then.

"With a great retinue, then that lord of the earth;
Sent me to that park, eager to see.

"Go, see the forest of great treasures, a tonic for the eyes;
Which always shines with splendour, delighted by the radiance of the
Fortunate One.

"And when the sage, for almsfood, to Giribbaja, the best of cities;
Had entered, then I approached to see the forest.

"Then that forest was in full bloom, resounding with the buzzing of various
wasps;
Accompanied by the singing of cuckoos, with flocks of peacocks dancing.

"With little sound, uncrowded, adorned with various walking paths;
Filled with huts and pavilions, resplendent with excellent yogis.

"Wandering about, I imagined my eye to be fruitful;
Even there, having seen a young monk engaged, I considered.

"In such a charming forest, standing here in fresh youth;
Endowed with pleasant form, like the spring.

"Seated at the tree-root, shaven-headed, wrapped in the double robe;
This monk indeed meditates, having abandoned delight born of sense objects.

"Is it not so that by one who leads the household life, having enjoyed sensual
pleasures as one pleases;
Afterwards when old, this Teaching should be practised, O Subhadda.

"Having understood it to be empty, the fragrant chamber, the abode of the
Conqueror;
Having approached, I saw the Conqueror, like the rising sun.

"Seated happily alone, being fanned by an excellent woman;
Having seen thus I thought, 'This lord of men is not rough.'

"That maiden with the radiance of gold, with eyes like lotus faces;
With lips like bimba fruit, with teeth like jasmine, a delight to the mind and
eye.

"With earrings like golden swings, with well-formed thighs like a bud's shape;
With a beautiful waist like an altar's middle, with thighs like plantain stems,
adorned with charming ornaments.

With red-dyed shoulder cloths, wearing polished blue inner robes;
With an appearance not to be exerted upon, endowed with a mirthful
disposition.

"Having seen her, I thought thus, 'Ah, this beautiful woman;

Never before have I seen her with this eye.'

"Then she, overcome by ageing, faded, with distorted face;
With broken teeth, white-haired, drooling, her mouth impure.

"With contracted ears, white eyes, with pendulous, ugly breasts;
With wrinkles spread over all limbs, with veins spread over the body.

"With bent limbs, with a staff as companion, with ribs protruding, emaciated;
Trembling, fallen, sighing moment by moment.

Then there was spiritual urgency for me, wonderful and terrifying;
Shame on the impure body, where fools delight.

"Then the greatly compassionate one, having seen the one with an agitated
mind;
The Fortunate One, elated in mind, spoke these verses.

"Afflicted, impure, putrid, see, Khemā, this body;
Oozing and dripping, delighted in by the foolish.

"Develop the mind towards foulness, fully focused, well concentrated;
Let mindfulness directed to the body be yours, be full of disenchantment.

"Just as this is, so is that; just as that is, so is this;
Internally and externally, remove desire regarding the body.

"And develop the signless, abandon the underlying tendency to conceit;
Then through the full realisation of conceit, you will live at peace.

"Those infatuated with lust fall into the stream, like a spider into its self-made
web;
Having cut even this, they wander forth, without longing, having abandoned
sensual happiness."

"Then, having known my ready mind, the trainer of men;
Taught the Mahānidāna discourse, for my discipline.

"Having heard that foremost discourse, I recollected my former perception;
Steady in that, while I was peaceful, I purified the eye of the Teaching.

"Having fallen down at the feet of the great sage at that very moment;
For the purpose of confessing my transgression, I spoke these words.

"Homage to you, all-seeing one, homage to you, compassionate one;
Homage to you, one who has crossed over the round of rebirths, homage to
you, bestower of the Deathless.

"Plunged into the thicket of views, deluded by sensual lust;
By you, through the right means, disciplined, delighting in the discipline.

"By not seeing, by separation from such great sages;
Beings experience great suffering in the ocean of saṃsāra.

"When I did not see the refuge of the world, without conflict, one who has
reached the end of conflict;
Standing not far away, I confess that transgression.

"The great benefactor, the giver of boons, suspecting him to be harmful;
Delighting in form, I did not approach him, I confess that transgression.

"Then the one of sweet utterance, the greatly compassionate Conqueror;
Said 'Stand in security,' sprinkling me with the deathless.

"Then having bowed down with my head, and having circumambulated him
keeping him on my right;
Having gone and seen the king, I spoke these words.

"Oh, rightly devised is your means, O tamer of the foe of death;
For the desire to see the forest, the sage was seen from Nibbāna.

"If it pleases you, O king, in the Dispensation of that Such One;
I shall go forth from material things, wearied by the sage's word.

"Having raised his joined palms, then the lord of the earth said:
'I allow you, dear lady, may your going forth succeed.'

"Having gone forth, then I, when a fortnight had arrived;
Having seen the rise and destruction of the island, with a stirred mind.

"Wearied of all activities, skilled in the mode of dependent conditions;
Having passed over the four mental floods, I attained arahantship.

"And I was a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
In the knowledge of others' mental states, I become a master too.

"I know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
With all mental corruptions eliminated, there is now no more rebirth.

"In meaning, teaching, and language, and likewise in discernment;
My knowledge is pure, arisen in the Buddha's Dispensation.

"I am skilled in the purifications, confident in the points of controversy;
And knowing the method of the higher teaching, I have attained mastery in the
Dispensation.

"Then at Toraṇavatthu, by the king, the lord of Kosala;
Asked subtle questions, she answered according to truth.

"Then that king, having approached the Fortunate One, asked;
The Buddha declared just so, as it was declared to you by me.

"The Conqueror, satisfied with that virtue, established me in the foremost position;
As foremost among those of great wisdom, among the nuns, the highest of men.

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

But having attained arahantship, although this elder nun was dwelling in the happiness of fruition and the happiness of Nibbāna, even though other elder nuns who had eliminated the mental corruptions had also attained the expansion of wisdom, her state of great wisdom became well-known because of having formed an aspiration there. For thus the Blessed One, seated in the midst of the noble company at the great monastery of Jetavana, while establishing the nuns in successive positions of rank, established her in the foremost position for great wisdom: "This is the foremost, monks, of my female disciples who are nuns of great wisdom, that is to say, Khemā." One day, while she was seated for the day's abiding at the root of a certain tree, Māra the Evil One, having approached in the guise of a young man, enticing her with sensual pleasures -

139. "You are young and beautiful, and I too am a young youth;
With the five-part music, come, Khemā, let us delight." He spoke a verse.

Its meaning is - Khemā, you have reached youth, standing in the prime of life, endowed with beauty, and I too am a young youth; therefore, without wasting our youth, come, with the five-part music being played, let us delight and sport in the enjoyment of sensual play.

Having heard that, she, making known her own state of dispassion towards sensual pleasures and all phenomena, and his nature as Māra, and her own firmly established distrust towards beings who adhere to self, and her having performed her obligations -

140. "With this foul body, sick and brittle;
I am troubled and ashamed, sensual craving has been uprooted.
141. "Sensual pleasures are like stakes of spears, the aggregates are their chopping block;
What you call 'sensual delight', that is now discontent for me.
142. "Delight has been destroyed everywhere, the mass of darkness has been split open;
Know thus, Evil One, you are defeated, O Death.
143. "Paying homage to the constellations, tending the fire in the forest;
Not knowing in conformity with the truth, fools imagined purity.
144. "But I, paying homage to the Enlightened by himself, the highest of men;
Freed from all suffering, carrying out the Teacher's instruction." He spoke these verses.

Therein, "tending the fire in the forest" means tending the fire-sacrifice in the forest of austere practice. "Not knowing in conformity with the truth" means not fully understanding occurrences as they really are. The remainder here is clear in itself since the method has been stated above.

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

4. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Sujātā

145-150. The verses of the elder nun Sujātā beginning with "Adorned, well-dressed" and so on. 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, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a millionaire's family in the city of Sāketa, having come of age, given by her mother and father to a merchant's son of the same birth, went to her husband's family. There, dwelling in pleasant communal life together with him, one day, having gone to the park, having enjoyed the festival celebration, while coming to the city together with her attendants, having seen the Teacher in the Añjana forest, with a gladdened mind, having approached, having paid homage, sat down to one side. The Teacher, having given her a progressive discourse, having known the pliancy of her mind, made known the proclamation of the Teaching further above by the progressive method. She, at the conclusion of the teaching, because of having formed an aspiration and because her knowledge had reached maturity, and through the beauty of the Teacher's instruction, just as she was seated, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having paid homage to the Teacher, having gone home, having obtained permission from her husband and her mother and father, by the Teacher's command, having gone to the nuns' quarters, went forth in the presence of the nuns. And having gone forth, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

- 145. "Adorned, well-dressed, garlanded, anointed with sandalwood;
Covered with all ornaments, attended by a group of female slaves.
- 146. Having taken food and drink, sweets and edibles, not a little;
Having gone out from the house, I brought them to the park.
- 147. "Having delighted and played there, coming back to my own home;
I entered the dwelling to see, the Añjana forest at Sāketa.
- 148. "Having seen the light of the world, having paid homage, I sat down;
He expounded the Teaching to me, the one with vision, out of compassion.
- 149. "And having heard the great sage, I penetrated the truth;
Right there I experienced the stainless Teaching, the Deathless state.
- 150. "Then having cognised the Good Teaching, I went forth into homelessness;
The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching is not in vain."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "adorned" means decorated. But to show the manner of being adorned, "well-dressed, garlanded, anointed with sandalwood" was said. Therein, "garlanded" means wearing garlands. "Anointed with sandalwood" means smeared with sandalwood. "Covered with all ornaments" means with body covered by way of decoration with all ornaments such as those worn on the hands and so on.

"Having taken food and drink, sweets and edibles, not a little" means having taken abundant food such as rice and cooked rice and so on, beverages such as mango syrup and so on, solid food such as sweets made of flour and so on, and the remaining edible things reckoned as food. "I brought to the pleasure grove" means I brought to the pleasure grove for the purpose of a festival celebration. The intention is: having brought food and drink and so on there, playing together with the attendants, delighting, and amusing oneself.

"The Añjana forest at Sāketa" means I entered the monastery in the Añjana forest near Sāketa.

"Light of the world" means one who has become a light to the world through the light of knowledge.

"Phusayiṃ" means I touched, the meaning is I attained. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

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

5. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Anopamā

151-156. The verses beginning with "In a high family" are the verses of the Elder Nun Anopamā. 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, having gradually developed the qualities that ripen liberation, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn as the daughter of a millionaire named Majjha in the city of Sāketa. Because of her beauty, her name was Anopamā. When she came of age, many merchants' sons, royal ministers, and kings sent a messenger to her father - "Give your daughter Anopamā, and we shall give you this and that." She, having heard that, through the achievement of decisive support, thinking "I have no need for the household life," having gone to the Teacher's presence, having heard the Teaching, because her knowledge had reached maturity, having undertaken insight in accordance with the teaching, striving in that, became established in the third fruit by the succession of paths. She, having requested the going forth from the Teacher, by the Teacher's command, having gone to the nuns' quarters, having gone forth in the presence of the nuns, on the seventh day, having realised arahantship, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

151. "I was born in a high family, of much wealth and great riches;
Accomplished in beauty and form, a daughter born from Majjha himself.
152. "Desired by princes, longed for by merchants' sons;
They sent a messenger to my father: 'Give me Anopamā.'
153. "However much this one has been weighed, your incomparable daughter;

Eight times that I will give, unwrought gold and jewels too.

154. "I, having seen the Enlightened by himself, the elder of the world,
unsurpassed;
Having paid homage to his feet, I sat down to one side.
155. "He expounded the Teaching to me, Gotama, out of compassion;
Seated on that seat, I experienced the third fruit.
156. "Then having cut off my hair, I went forth into homelessness;
Today is my seventh night, since when craving was distinguished."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "in a high family" means in the most eminent merchant family. "Of much wealth" means having abundant wealth and provisions such as ornaments and so on. "Of great riches" - the explanation is: I was born in a family of great riches, due to the existence of great wealth amounting to forty crores that had gone into deposit. "Accomplished in beauty and form" means accomplished in beauty and accomplished in form; the meaning is endowed with a smooth and radiant achievement of complexion and with the achievement of bodily limbs such as garments, ornaments, and so on. "A daughter born from Majjha himself" means the legitimate daughter of the millionaire named Majjha.

"Desired by princes" means longed for by royal princes, thinking "How indeed might we obtain her?" "Coveted by merchants' sons" means likewise craved for and desired by young merchants too. "Give me Anopamā" means the princes and others sent a messenger to her father's presence, saying "Give me Anopamā, give me her."

"However much this one has been weighed" means "your daughter Anopamā is worth however much wealth" - thus weighed, defined by those who know the characteristics; the explanation is: "I will give eight times that" - thus he sent a messenger to my father. The remainder is the same as the method stated below.

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

6. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī

157-162. The verses beginning with "Homage to you, O Buddha, hero" are those of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī. 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 Haṃsavatī, 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 those of long standing, having performed the preparatory action, having aspired to that position of rank, having made meritorious deeds such as giving for as long as life lasted, having transmigrated among gods and humans for a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, in the interval between the Blessed One Kassapa and our Blessed One, in a world devoid of a Buddha, she was reborn in Bārāṇasī as the chief of five hundred female slaves. Then she, at the time of entering the rains retreat, having seen five Individually Enlightened Ones who had descended from the Nandamūlaka cave to Isipatana, having walked for almsfood in the city, having gone to Isipatana

itself, at the time of entering the rains retreat seeking manual labour for the purpose of a hut, having encouraged those female slaves, their husbands and her own, having had five huts built furnished with walking paths and other accessories, having set up beds, chairs, drinking water, washing water, vessels and so on, having obtained a promise from the Individually Enlightened Ones for the purpose of dwelling there for three months, they established almsfood by turns. Whoever was not able to give almsfood on her own turn-day, for her she herself, having brought it from her own home, gives it. Thus, having watched over them for three months, when the invitation ceremony to admonish had arrived, she had each female slave give up one cloth each. There were five hundred coarse cloths. Having exchanged those, she had three robes made for the five Individually Enlightened Ones and gave them. The Individually Enlightened Ones, while they were still watching, went through the sky to Mount Gandhamādana.

They too, all of them, having done wholesome deeds for as long as life lasted, were reborn in the heavenly world. Their chief, having passed away from there, having been reborn in the house of the chief weaver in a weavers' village not far from Bārāṇasī, having attained discretion, having seen the five hundred Individually Enlightened Ones who were the sons of Padumavatī, treating them with great affection, having paid homage to all of them, she gave almsfood. They, having done the meal duty, went to Gandhamādana itself. She too, having done wholesome deeds for as long as life lasted, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, even before the arising of our Teacher, took conception in the house of Mahāsuppabuddha in the city of Devadaha. Her name was Gotamī, a name derived from her clan. She was the younger sister of Mahāmāyā. The interpreters of signs also declared "The children dwelling in the wombs of both of these two will become wheel-turning monarchs." The Great King Suddhodana, when they came of age, having performed the marriage ceremony for both, led them to his own house.

At a later time, when our Teacher had arisen and had set in motion the excellent wheel of the Teaching, while gradually rendering assistance to those amenable to instruction here and there, while dwelling in dependence on Vesālī in the Pinnacled Hall, the Great King Suddhodana, beneath the white parasol, having realised arahantship, attained final Nibbāna. Then Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, wishing to go forth, having requested the going forth from the Teacher on one occasion and not having obtained it, on the second occasion, having had her hair cut, having clothed herself in ochre robes, at the conclusion of the teaching of the Kalahavivāda Suttanta, having gone forth, having gone to Vesālī together with the wives of the five hundred Sakyan princes who had gone forth, having had the Elder Ānanda request the Teacher, she obtained the going forth and full ordination by means of the eight rules of respect. But all the others were ordained unilaterally. This is the summary here; but in detail, this story has come in the canonical text itself.

Thus fully ordained, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, having approached the Teacher, having paid respect, stood to one side. Then the Teacher expounded the Teaching to her. She, having taken a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, devoting herself to meditation, before long attained arahantship accompanied by the direct knowledges and analytical knowledges. But the remaining five hundred nuns were possessors of the six direct knowledges at the conclusion of Nandaka's exhortation.

Then one day the Teacher, seated in the midst of the noble company at the great monastery of Jetavana, while establishing the nuns in successive positions of rank, established Mahāpajāpati Gotamī in the foremost position among nuns of long standing. She, spending her time in the happiness of fruition and the happiness of Nibbāna, standing firm in gratitude, one day, declaring the final liberating knowledge by way of making manifest the Teacher's helpfulness preceded by praise of his virtues -

157. "Homage to you, O Buddha, hero, highest of all beings;
Who released me from suffering, and many other people.
158. "All suffering has been fully understood, craving, the cause, has been dried up;
The eightfold path has been developed, cessation has been attained by me.
159. "Mother, son, father, brother, and grandmother I was formerly;
Not knowing according to truth, I wandered on, not finding.
160. "For I have seen that Blessed One, this is the final body;
The cycle of birth and wandering is eliminated, there is now no more rebirth."
161. "Seeing those putting forth strenuous energy, resolute, constantly of strong effort;
Disciples in unity, this is the homage to the Buddhas.
162. "Indeed for the benefit of many, Māyā gave birth to Gotama;
He dispelled the mass of suffering for those afflicted by disease and death."He spoke these verses.

Therein, "Buddha, hero" means hero among those enlightened in the four truths; for all Buddhas are called heroes because of having won the victory through the accomplishment of the fourfold right striving energy with the highest energy, or because of being enlightened in the four truths. But the Blessed One, through the fulfilment of the perfection of energy, by the determination of energy endowed with four factors, through the accomplishment of the surpassing fourfold right striving function, and because of having properly established that in the continuity of those accessible to instruction, deserves to be called a hero because of being distinctively endowed with energy. "Homage to you" means let homage, veneration, be to you. "Highest of all beings" means the Blessed One is the highest among beings distinguished as footless and so on, by virtues such as morality and so on. To show a portion of the Teacher's virtue of helpfulness, having said "who released me from suffering, and many other people," making clear her own state of being freed from suffering, she spoke the verse "all suffering."

Again, showing in part that suffering of the round of rebirths from which he released her, she spoke the verse "mother, son." Therein, "not knowing according to truth" means not comprehending as it really is the cause of occurrence and so on. "I wandered on, not finding" means not finding, not obtaining a foothold in the ocean of the round of rebirths, speaking thus "I wandered in existences and so on by way of

successive rebirths," she said "mother, son" and so on. In whichever existence she was his mother, in another existence she was that very one's son, in yet another existence she was his father or brother - this is the meaning.

The verse "For I have seen" also makes clear her own state of being freed from suffering. Therein, "For I have seen that Blessed One" means that Blessed One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, was seen by me directly with the eye of knowledge through the vision of the supramundane Teaching seen by oneself. For whoever sees the Teaching, he indeed sees the Blessed One. As he said - "Whoever, Vakkali, sees the Teaching sees me" and so on.

"Putting forth strenuous energy" means those whose energy has been exerted.

"Resolute" means those whose minds are directed towards Nibbāna. "Constantly of strong effort" means those of firm effort at all times, for the attainment of what has not been attained and for the expansion of what has been attained. "In unity" means united by the state of being joined together through similarity of morality and view. Because of having become through hearing at the end of the Teacher's teaching, she sees the disciples as they really are thus: "These are stationed in the path, these are stationed in fruition." "This is the homage to the Buddhas" means that self-witnessed realisation of the supramundane Teaching, which has become the body of the Teaching of the Teacher and which has become the noble state of the noble disciples - this is the homage to the Perfectly Enlightened Ones and the Enlightened as Noble Disciples, the exact inclination towards their virtues.

In the concluding verse "For the benefit of many indeed," she makes clear the Teacher's very helpfulness to the world. But whatever here has not been analysed as to meaning, that is easily understood.

Then on one occasion, while the Teacher was dwelling at Vesālī in the Great Wood in the Pinnacled Hall, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, herself dwelling in the nuns' quarters at Vesālī, in the earlier period of the day having walked for almsfood in Vesālī, having eaten her meal, having spent the determined time at her own daytime resting place with the happiness of fruition attainment, having emerged from the fruition attainment, having reviewed her own practice, being joyful, reflecting on her own life-force, having known their exhausted state, thought thus - "What if I were to go to the monastery, having obtained permission from the Blessed One, having taken leave of all the elders who are inspiring to the mind and all the fellow practitioners of the holy life, having come back right here, I would attain final Nibbāna." And just as for the elder nun, so too was the reflection of the five hundred nuns who formed her retinue. Therefore it was said in the Apadāna -

"Once the light of the world, in Vesālī in the Great Wood;
In the Pinnacled Hall, in the excellent hall, the trainer of men dwelt.

"Then the Conqueror's maternal aunt, the nun Mahāgotamī;
Dwelt in the nuns' quarters, in that charming city that was built there.

"With five hundred liberated nuns,
Gone to a private place, thus was her mind's reflection.

"The final Nibbāna of the Buddha, or of the foremost pair of disciples;

Of Rāhula, Ānanda, and Nanda, I will not obtain to see.

"The final Nibbāna of the Buddha, or of the foremost pair of disciples;
Of Mahākassapa and Nanda, and of Ānanda and Rāhula.

"Having relinquished beforehand the life-force, having let go for peace;
I would go, permitted by the Lord of the World, the great sage.

"Likewise was the reflection of five hundred nuns;
Of Khemā and the others too, this very same was the reflection.

"There was an earthquake then, the divine drum resounded;
The deities inhabiting the dwelling, were oppressed by sorrow.

Lamenting pitiably, there they shed tears;
Those friendly nuns, having approached Gotamī.

Having bowed down with my head at his feet, they spoke these words;
'There, sprinkled with drops of water, we ladies went to a private place.

"That earth shook and trembled, the divine drum resounded;
And lamentations are heard, for what purpose indeed, Gotamī?"

Then she spoke all, just as she had reflected;
They all also said, just as she had reflected.

"If Nibbāna, the supreme, the safe, is approved by you, lady;
We shall all attain Nibbāna, by the Buddha's permission, O one of good
conduct.

"We went forth together, from home and from existence;
Together we shall go to Nibbāna, the supreme state.

"What shall I say to those going to Nibbāna?" she said;
Together with all of them she departed from the nuns' dwelling place then.

"May those deities who dwell in the dwelling forgive me;
This is my last seeing of the nuns' abode.

"Where there is no ageing nor death, no meeting with the unpleasant;
There is no separation from the dear, I shall go to that unconditioned.

"Those not free from lust, having heard that word, the sons of the Fortunate
One;
Afflicted by sorrow, they lamented, 'Alas, our lack of merit.'

"The nuns' dwelling place is empty, this has become without them;
Like stars at dawn, the Victor's daughters are not seen.

"Gotamī goes to Nibbāna, together with five hundred;
Just as the Ganges with five hundred rivers goes to the ocean.

"Seeing them going along the road, the faithful female lay followers;
Having come out from their houses, having bowed down at their feet, said this.

"Be pleased, O one of great wealth, leaving us helpless;
It is not fitting for us to cease to exist without you,' thus desiring, they
lamented.

"For the purpose of abandoning their sorrow, he spoke a sweet utterance;
'Enough of weeping, daughters, today is a time for joy for you.

"Suffering has been fully understood by me, the cause of suffering has been
abandoned;
Cessation has been realised by me, and the path too has been well developed.

"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.

"As long as the Buddha and his Good Teaching remain complete;
So long is the time for me to cease to exist, do not grieve for me, dear
children.

"Koṇḍañña, Ānanda, Nanda and so on, Rāhula, the Conqueror stand;
The Community is happy together, and the sectarians' substance is destroyed.

"The glory of the Okkāka lineage, raised up, the crusher of Māra;
Is it not now the time for me, for the sake of Nibbāna, dear children.

"What has been wished for by me since long ago, succeeds today;
This is the time of the drum of joy, why with tears, dear children?

"If there is compassion for me, if there is gratitude;
For the duration of the Good Teaching, all of you, make firm energy.

"The Perfectly Enlightened One gave the going forth to women, when asked by
me;
Therefore, just as I would rejoice, so you should support that.

"Having thus instructed them, honoured by the nuns;
Having approached and paid homage to the Buddha, she spoke these words.

"I am your mother, O Fortunate One, and you, O hero, are my father;
O protector, giver of the happiness of the Good Teaching, by you I have been
born, O Gotama.

"This material body of yours, O Fortunate One, was nourished by me;

The blameless body of the Teaching was nourished in me by you.

"For a moment you were given milk to drink by me, that which quells craving;
By you I was given to drink the milk of the Dhamma, absolutely peaceful.

"In the protection of bondage for me, you are free of debt, O great sage;
Women desiring sons, requesting, obtain such a son.

"She who was the mother of kings of men beginning with Mandhātā, in the
ocean of existence;
I who was submerged, by you, son, have been helped across the ocean of
existence.

"'Mother of a king, chief queen' - such names for women are easy to obtain;
But the name 'mother of a Buddha' - this is supremely rare.

"And that aspiration of mine obtained by you, O great hero;
Whether small or great, all that has been fulfilled by me.

"I wish to attain final nibbāna, having abandoned this corpse;
Permit me, O hero, O leader, maker of an end to suffering.

"Stretch out your feet, soft as lotuses, strewn with wheel, goad and banner
marks;
I shall pay homage to you, O best of sons.

"Make manifest your body, similar to a heap of gold;
Having well seen your body, I go to peace, O leader.

Endowed with the thirty-two characteristics, his body adorned with excellent
radiance;
Like the young sun amidst evening clouds, the Conqueror showed his mother's
sister.

"On the soles of his feet, resembling fully opened lotuses, radiant as the young
sun;
Marked with wheels, thereupon she fell at them with her head.

"I bow down to the sun among men, the banner of the solar clan;
At my final death, I shall not see him again.

Women, indeed, are called the foremost in the world, considered the source of
all faults;
If there is any fault of mine, forgive me, O compassionate one.

And the going forth of women, I requested you again and again;
If there is any fault of mine in that, forgive me, O bull among men.

The nuns, O hero, were instructed by me with your permission;
If therein there is anything wrongly applied, forgive that, O lord of patience.

One who is patient should indeed be patient, why in existence adorned with virtues;
What further shall I say to you, who are going to Nibbāna.

In my community of monks, pure and complete, capable of departing from this world;
At the time of dawn, having seen those who have come to disaster, like the crescent moon it goes forth.

Then those other nuns, to the foremost of conquerors, like stars following the moon to Sumeru;
Having circumambulated, having bowed down at his feet, standing, gazing at his face.

Never before was my eye satisfied by seeing you, nor my ear by your sayings;
My mind alone, only this one, having attained that, is satisfied by the flavour of the Dhamma.

When you roar in the assembly, striker of what should be sounded;
Those who will see your face, fortunate are they, O bull among men.

With long fingers, copper-coloured nails, beautiful, with extended heels;
Those who will bow down to these feet, they too are fortunate, O bearer of virtues.

Sweet and delightful, dispelling hate and beneficial;
Those who hear your sayings, they too are fortunate, O best of men.

Fortunate am I, O Great Hero, devoted to the worship of your feet;
Having crossed the wilderness of saṃsāra, by the good words of the glorious one.

Then she, of good conduct, having announced to the community of monks also;
And having paid homage to Rāhula, Ānanda and Nanda, said this.

"In this body, like a den of venomous snakes, a residence of disease;
Becoming disenchanted with this mass of suffering, the domain of ageing and death.

Strewn with various sins and stains, belonging to others, without endeavour;
By that I wish to be extinguished, approve, dear children.

"Nanda and Rāhulabhadda, free from sorrow, without mental corruptions;
Firm in unshakeable stability, they reflected on the nature of phenomena.

"Shame on the conditioned, the fickle, without substance, like a plantain tree;
Like magic and a mirage, brief, unsteady.

Where indeed this maternal aunt of the Conqueror, the Buddha's nurse;

Gotamī goes to destruction, impermanent is all that is conditioned.

And Ānanda, then a trainee, afflicted by sorrow, affectionate to the Conqueror;
There shedding tears, he laments pitifully.

"Alas! Gotamī goes to peace, surely the Buddha too to final bliss;
Goes not long after, like a fire without fuel.

"To him thus lamenting, to Ānanda, Gotamī said;
O you deep as an ocean of learning, devoted to attending upon the Buddha.

"It is not proper to grieve, son, when the time for joy has arrived;
Through you, son, my refuge, that Nibbāna has been attained.

Requested by you, dear father, he allowed us the going forth;
Do not be displeased, son, fruitful is your effort.

What was not seen by the ancients, nor by the teachers of other sects;
That state was known by delicate girls of seven years.

O protector of the Buddha's Dispensation, this is my last seeing of you;
I am going there, son, where one who has gone is not seen.

Sometimes while expounding the Teaching, the chief leader of the world
sneezed;
Then I, compassionate, spoke a word of blessing.

"May you live long, O great hero, may you remain for a cosmic cycle, O great
sage;
For the benefit of the whole world, may you become free from ageing and
death.

"To me who spoke thus, the Buddha, he said this:
'Not in this way are Buddhas to be paid respect, as you pay respect, Gotamī.

"How then are the omniscient ones, the Truth-finders, to be honoured?
How are the Buddhas not to be honoured? Tell me this when asked.

"Seeing those putting forth strenuous energy, resolute, constantly of strong
effort;
Disciples in unity, this is the homage to the Buddhas.

"Then having gone to the dwelling, I alone considered;
The Protector, gone to the end of the three existences, obstructed the united
assembly.

"Come, I shall attain final Nibbāna, may I not see that failure;
Having thus reflected, having seen the seventh sage.

"The time of my final nibbāna, I announced to the Guide;
Then he gave approval, 'Know the time, Gotamī.'

"Mental defilements have been burnt by me, all existences have been uprooted;
Like an elephant having cut the bond, I dwell without mental corruptions.

"Indeed welcome it was for me, my coming to the Buddha's presence;
The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled.

"The four analytical knowledges, and these eight deliverances;
The six higher knowledges have been realised, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled.

"For the full realisation of the teaching by women, those fools who have gone to doubt;
For the purpose of abandoning their view, display supernormal power, Gotamī.'

"Then having bowed down to the Enlightened by himself, having flown up into the sky;
Gotamī showed various supernormal powers, by the Buddha's permission.

"One became many, and many became one likewise;
Appearing, vanishing, through walls, through mountains.

"Not clinging she went, and sank into the ground;
On the water not breaking, she came as if on the earth.

Like a bird in the sky, he went then in cross-legged posture;
He exercised mastery with his body, up to the dwelling of Brahmā.

"Having made Sineru the handle, having made the great earth the umbrella;
Having turned it upside down with its root, holding it I walked in the sky.

"Like the rising of six suns, she made the world smoky;
Like the world at the end of an age, she made it entangled with garlands of flames.

The great rock Mucalinda, between the base of Meru and the river;
All like mustard seeds, he grasped with one fist.

"With the tip of a finger he covered the light-maker together with the night-maker;
Thousands of moons and suns, he wore like a garland.

"The waters of the four oceans, he held in one hand;
Like a rain cloud at the end of an age, shed a great rain.

She created a wheel-turning monarch with his following in the sky;
She displayed a garuḷa, an elephant, and a lion roaring.

"Having created, alone, an immeasurable group of nuns;

Then having made them disappear, alone she spoke to the sage.

"Your maternal aunt, O Great Hero, who followed your teaching;
Having attained her own welfare, I pay homage at your feet, O One with
Vision.

"Having shown various supernormal powers, having descended from the sky;
Having paid homage to the light of the world, she sat down to one side.

"I am one hundred and twenty years old by birth, O great sage;
This much is enough, O hero, I shall attain nibbāna, O leader.

"Then that whole assembly, greatly astonished, with joined palms;
Said how she was, of incomparable supernormal power and effort.

"The Conqueror named Padumuttara, having vision regarding all phenomena;
A hundred thousand cosmic cycles ago from now, the Leader arose.

"Then I, in Haṃsavatī, was born in a minister's family;
Endowed with all supports, prosperous, opulent, of great riches.

"Sometimes together with my father, attended by a group of female slaves;
With a great retinue, having approached that lord of men.

Like Vāsava raining, a cloud of the Teaching, without mental corruptions;
Like the autumn sun, resplendent with a net of rays.

"Having seen, having gladdened my mind, and having heard his well-spoken
words;
The leader of men establishing my mother's sister, the nun, in the foremost
position.

"Having heard, having given a great gift, for seven days to that Such One;
To the highest of men together with the monastic community, and many
requisites.

"Having bowed down at his feet, I aspired for that state;
Then, to the great assembly, the seventh sage said.

"She who fed the leader of the world together with the Community for seven
days;
Him I will explain, listen to me as I speak.

"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;
Gotamī by name, will be a disciple of the Teacher.

"She is the maternal aunt of that Buddha, his foster-mother;
She will obtain pre-eminence among nuns of long standing.'

"Having heard that, having rejoiced, then for as long as life, the Conqueror;
Having attended on with requisites, thereafter I deceased.

Among the Tāvatiṃsa gods, endowed with all sensual pleasures;
Reborn with ten factors, I surpassed others.

"With forms and sounds, with odours, with flavours and with touchings;
And also with life span and beauty, with happiness and also with fame.

"Likewise with authority, having attained, I shone forth;
I was the chief queen, beloved of the lord of the immortals, there.

"Wandering in the round of rebirths, I, driven by the wind of action;
In the domain of the king of Kāśi, I was born in a slave village.

"Less than fifteen hundred lived there then;
Whoever was the eldest of all there, I was his wife.

"Five hundred of the Self-Become One entered the village for almsfood;
Having seen them, I was satisfied, together with all the women.

Having become guilds, all of us attended for four months;
Having given the three robes, we transmigrated with our husbands.

"Passed away from there, all of us, we went to the Tāvatiṃsa realm;
And in this final existence now, we were born in the city of Devadaha.

"My father was Añjanasakka, my mother was Sulakkhaṇā;
From there she went to Kapilavatthu, to the house of Siddhodana.

"The others were born in the Sakyan clan, they came to the homes of the
Sakyans;
I was the most distinguished of all, I was the foster-mother of the Conqueror.

"My son, having gone forth, became the Buddha, the great leader;
Afterwards I, having gone forth, together with five hundred.

"Together with the wise Sakyan women, I experienced the happiness of peace;
Those who then in a former birth were our masters.

"The makers of merit together, the builders of the great assembly;
They attained arahantship, compassionately cared for by the Fortunate One.

Then those other nuns ascended to the sky;
Like stars assembled, they shone, of great supernormal power.

They showed various supernormal powers, like an ornament's transformation;
Like a smith with gold, well-trained in workable material.

Having shown miracles, variegated and many;

Having pleased the excellent speaker, the sage together with his following then.

"Having descended from the sky, having paid homage to the seventh sage; Permitted by the best of men, they sat down in their proper places.

"Oh, you were compassionate towards us, towards all, for a long time, Gotamī; Perfumed by your merits, we have attained the elimination of mental corruptions.

"Mental defilements have been burnt by us, all existences have been uprooted;
Like she-elephants having cut the bond, we dwell without mental corruptions.

"Indeed welcome it was for us, in the presence of the Buddha, the foremost; The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled.

"The four analytical knowledges, and these eight deliverances;
The six higher knowledges have been realised, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled.

"And I was a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element; In the knowledge of others' mental states, I was a master, O great sage.

"We know past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
With all mental corruptions eliminated, there is now no more rebirth.

"In meaning and teaching and language, and in discernment there exists; Knowledge for us, O great hero, arisen in your presence.

"We have attended upon you, O leader, with friendly minds;
Permit us all for Nibbāna, O great sage.

"We shall attain Nibbāna," thus saying, "What shall I say?"
"Now do as you think fit," the Conqueror said.

"Those three nuns beginning with Gotamī, then the Victor;
Having paid homage, having risen from that seat, they departed.

Together with a great crowd of people, the chief leader of the world;
That hero accompanied his mother's sister as far as the porch.

"Then Gotamī fell at the feet of the kinsman of the world;
Together with all of them, the last homage at his feet.

"This is my last seeing of the Protector of the World;
I shall not again see your face, having the appearance of the Deathless.

"And my homage, O hero, will not touch your very soft feet;
O chief of the world, today I go to peace.

"What use is this matter to you, when phenomena are seen as they truly are in the present life;
All this is merely conditioned, without comfort and short-lived.

"She, having gone together with them, to her own nuns' quarters;
Having bent into a half cross-legged posture, sat down on the highest seat.

"Then the female lay followers there, devoted to the Buddha's teaching;
Having heard the news of her, they approached to pay homage at her feet.

Striking their chests with their hands, like creepers with roots cut;
Crying a pitiful cry, afflicted by sorrow, fallen to the ground.

"Do not, O Protector, giver of refuge, go to peace leaving us;
Having fallen down, we all entreat with our heads.

"She who was the foremost among them in striving, a faithful and wise female lay follower;
While stroking her head, spoke these words.

"Enough, sons, with dejection, which follows Māra's snare;
Impermanent is all that is conditioned, ending in separation, unstable.

"Then she, having released those, the first meditative absorption, the highest;
And the second and the third, she attained the fourth.

The base of infinite space and likewise the base of infinite consciousness;
Nothingness and neither-perception, he attained in succession.

"In reverse order the meditative absorptions, Gotamī attained;
As far as the first meditative absorption, thence up to the fourth.

"Then having emerged, she attained Nibbāna, like a lamp's flame, without mental corruptions;
There was a great earthquake, lightning fell from the sky.

"The drums resounded, the deities lamented;
And a shower of flowers from the sky, rained down upon the earth.

"Even the king of mountains, Meru, was shaken, like an actor in the midst of the stage;
And the ocean, as if wretched with sorrow, was roaring.

"Gods, serpents, titans, and brahmās, were agitated at that moment;
Impermanent indeed are activities, just as this has gone to dissolution.

"Those who surrounded me, who followed the Teacher's teaching;
They too, without clinging, are quenched like a lamp's flame.

"Alas! Unions end in separation, alas! Impermanent is all that is conditioned;
Alas! Life ends in destruction," thus was the lamentation.

"Then the gods and Brahmā, conforming to worldly conditions;
Act in accordance with time, having approached the seventh sage.

Then the Teacher addressed Ānanda, the ocean of learning;
Go, Ānanda, announce to the monks the passing of their mother.

Then Ānanda, joyless, with eyes full of tears;
Said with a choked voice, let the monks assemble.

In the east, south, west, and near in the north;
Let them hear my saying, monks, sons of the Fortunate One.

She who nurtured with effort the final body of the sage;
That Gotamī has gone to peace, like a star at sunrise.

Even the mother of a Buddha, having set aside the designation, has gone to
the matchless;
Where even the five-eyed Leader does not see her destination.

"Whoever has faith in the Fortunate One, and whoever is dear to the great
sage;
Let the son of the Fortunate One make an offering to the Buddha's mother.'

Having heard that, monks came quickly even from very distant places;
Some by the power of the Buddha, some skilled in supernormal powers.

"In the excellent pinnacle building, charming, entirely made of gold, beautiful;
They placed a small bed, where Gotamī lay sleeping.

"The four world-guardians bore it on their shoulders;
The remaining gods, Sakka and so on, assembled in the pinnacle building.

"All the pinnacle buildings, there were five hundred;
With the colour of the autumn sun, made by Vissakamma indeed.

"All those nuns too, were lying on beds;
Having mounted the shoulders of the gods, they are led out gradually.

"Altogether covered it was, the expanse of the sky with a canopy;
With stars, moon and sun, marked, made of gold.

"Many banners raised, spread with flower-sheaths;
Lotuses descended from the sky, flowers risen from the earth.

"The moon and sun shine, and the stars blaze forth;
Even the sun gone to the middle, does not scorch as the moon does.

"The gods with divine odours, and with fragrant garlands;
And with music and dancing, and with singing they venerated.

"Serpents, titans, and brahmās, according to their ability, according to their

strength;

Honoured her as she was being carried out, the quenched mother of the Buddha.

"All were led in front, quenched, the sons of the Fortunate One;
Gotamī is led afterwards, honoured, the Buddha's nurse.

"In front, gods and humans, with serpents, titans, and brahmā gods;
Behind, the Buddha with his disciples, goes for the purpose of honouring his mother.

"The final Nibbāna of the Buddha, was not such as this;
The final Nibbāna of Gotamī, was exceedingly marvellous.

"The Buddha at the Buddha's Nibbāna, did not lament, monks;
The Buddha at Gotamī's Nibbāna, likewise Sāriputta and so on.

"Having made funeral pyres, made of all kinds of fragrant substances;
Scattered with fragrant powder, they burnt them there.

The remaining parts were burnt, the bones remaining altogether;
And Ānanda then said, words productive of religious emotion.

"Gotamī has gone to destruction, and her body is being burnt;
The rendezvous is the Buddha's Nibbāna, it will not be long.

Then Ānanda, urged by the Buddha, brought near to the Protector
The relics of Gotamī, those that had gone into her bowl.

Having held them up with his hand, the seventh sage said:
'Just as a great tree standing with substance,

"That which was the greater branch, might break off due to impermanence;
Likewise of the community of nuns, Gotamī has attained final Nibbāna.

"Oh, how wonderful for me, even though my mother has passed away;
With only her body remaining, there is no sorrow or lamentation.

"She is not to be sorrowed for by others, having crossed over the ocean of saṃsāra;
Having avoided torment, become cooled, well quenched.

"You are wise, of great wisdom, of broad wisdom likewise;
She is of long standing among the nuns, thus remember, monks.

"And she was a master in supernormal powers, in the divine ear element;
In the knowledge of others' mental states, Gotamī was a master.

"She knew past lives, the divine eye has been purified;
With all mental corruptions eliminated, there is no more rebirth for her.

"In meaning, teaching, and language, and likewise in discernment;
Knowledge was pure, therefore she is not to be sorrowed for.

"Just as of a blazing fire struck by an iron hammer,
Gradually subsiding, the destination is not known.

"So too for those rightly liberated, who have crossed over the flood of sensual
bondage;
There is no destination to be declared for those who have attained
unshakeable happiness.

"Having yourselves as an island, therefore, with the establishments of
mindfulness as your domain;
Having developed the seven factors of enlightenment, you will make an end of
suffering."

The commentary on the verses of the elder nun Mahāpajāpati Gotamī is concluded.

7. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Guttā

163-168. The verse beginning with "Guttā, for whatever purpose the going forth was" is the verse of the elder nun Guttā. 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 having stored up the requisites of deliverance, with wholesome roots fully matured, wandering only in fortunate destinations, in this arising of a Buddha, was reborn in a brahmin family in Sāvattihī; her name was Guttātissā. She, having attained discretion, being urged by the achievement of decisive support, loathing the household life, having obtained permission from her mother and father, went forth in the presence of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. And having gone forth, having established insight, while she was devoting herself to meditation, her mind ran about towards external objects through long-time familiarity, and did not become fully focused. The Teacher, having seen her, helping her, while just seated in the perfumed chamber, having pervaded with light, having shown himself as if seated in the sky near her, exhorting -

- 163. "Guttā, for whatever purpose the going forth was, having left son, wealth, and dear ones;
Cultivate that very thing, do not come under the control of the mind.
- 164. "Beings deceived by the mind, delighting in Māra's domain;
Through the round of many births they transmigrate, the fools.
- 165. "Sensual desire and anger, and identity view;
Adherence to moral rules and austerities, and sceptical doubt as the fifth.
- 166. "These mental fetters, having abandoned them, O nun;
The lower fetters, you will not come here again.
- 167. "Having avoided lust and conceit, and ignorance, and restlessness;
Having cut off the mental fetters, you will make an end of suffering.

168. "Having exhausted the round of rebirths, having fully understood rebirth; Without hunger in this very life, at peace, you will live." -He spoke these verses.

Therein, "cultivate that very thing" means for whatever purpose, for the sake of which final extinguishment of the mental defilements and extinguishment of the aggregates. "Having left son, wealth, and dear ones" means having left the circle of relatives who are to be held dear and the mass of wealth, the going forth in my Dispensation, the abiding by the holy life, was desired; you should cultivate and accomplish that very thing. "Do not come under the control of the mind" means do not come under the control of the deceitful mind that has been nourished for a long time by way of objects such as visible form and so on.

Because this mind is comparable to an illusion, by which blind worldlings, deceived, subject to Māra's control, do not transcend the round of rebirths. Therefore it was said "beings deceived by the mind" and so on.

"These mental fetters" means those five, as aforesaid beginning with "sensual desire and anger," are mental fetters in the sense of binding. "Having abandoned" means having completely cut off by the path of non-returning. "Nun" is a vocative addressing her. "Belonging to the lower portion" means beneficial and helpful to the life of a human being in the sensual element, which is the lower portion below the fine-material and immaterial elements, because of being conditions for conception there. The syllable "ma" serves as a word-connector. "Oramāgamanīyānī" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "You will not come here again" means by the abandoning of the lower mental fetters, you will not come again to this place of sensuality, this sensual existence, by way of conception. The letter "ra" serves as a word-connector. Or "ittha" is also a reading; the meaning is just this state of being, sensual existence.

"Lust" means lust for material form and lust for immaterial existence. "Conceit" means conceit that is to be destroyed by the highest path. "And ignorance and restlessness" - here too the same method applies. "Having avoided" means having suppressed through insight. "Having cut the mental fetters" means having completely cut off these five higher mental fetters beginning with lust for material form by the path of arahantship. "You will make an end of suffering" means you will reach the limit, the final goal of all the suffering of the round of rebirths.

"Having exhausted the round of rebirths of birth" means having brought to an end the continuation of the round of rebirths together with its root, birth. "Without hunger" means free from craving. "At peace" means at peace through the appeasement of mental defilements in every respect. The remainder is according to the method already stated.

Thus, when these verses were spoken by the Teacher, at the conclusion of the verses, the elder nun, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, spoke these very verses by way of an inspired utterance in the same manner as spoken by the Blessed One. Therefore those became known as Verses of the Elder Nun.

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

8. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Vijayā

169-174. The verses beginning with "Four times" are the verses of the Elder Nun Vijayā. 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 developed wholesome roots, wandering in the round of rebirths among gods and humans, in this arising of a Buddha, having been reborn in a certain family home in Rājagaha, having attained discretion, was a companion of the Elder Nun Khemā during her time as a householder. She, having heard of her state of having gone forth, having become desirous of going forth thinking "Even she, a chief queen, will go forth; how much more then should I," approached the presence of the Elder Nun Khemā. The elder nun, having known her disposition, expounded the Teaching in such a way that she, with a mind stirred with regard to the round of rebirths, would become devoted to the Dispensation. She, having heard that Teaching, with a sense of urgency arisen and having gained faith, requested the going forth. The elder nun gave her the going forth. She, having gone forth, having completed the preliminary functions, having established insight, because of being accomplished in the supporting conditions, before long, having attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges, having reviewed her own practice, by way of an inspired utterance -

169. "Four times, five times, I went out from the dwelling;
Not having gained peace of mind, not having control over my mind.
170. "Having approached a nun, I questioned her attentively;
She expounded the Teaching to me, and the elements and sense bases.
171. "The four noble truths, the faculties and powers;
The factors of enlightenment and the eightfold path, for the attainment of the highest goal.
172. "Having heard her word, following the instruction;
In the first watch of the night, I recollected past births.
173. "In the middle watch of the night, I purified the divine eye;
In the last watch of the night, I shattered the mass of darkness.
174. "And having pervaded the body with rapture and happiness, I dwelt then;
On the seventh day I stretched out my feet, having shattered the mass of darkness."

He spoke these verses.

Therein, "a nun" - she speaks with reference to the Elder Nun Khemā.

"The factors of enlightenment and the eightfold path" means the seven factors of enlightenment and the eightfold noble path. "For the attainment of the highest goal" means for the attainment, for the achievement of arahantship or of Nibbāna itself.

"With rapture and happiness" means with the rapture and happiness included in the fruition attainment. "Body" means the mental body associated with that, and in accordance with that, the material body as well. "Having pervaded" means having touched, or having spread throughout. "On the seventh day I stretched out my feet" means on the seventh day from the day insight was begun, having broken the cross-legged posture, I stretched out my feet. How? "Having shattered the mass of darkness" means having shattered with the sword of knowledge of the highest path the mass of delusion never before shattered. The remainder is the same as the method stated below.

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

The commentary on the Book of Sixes 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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