

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)

6. The Chapter on the Spider (6. Makkaṭṭakavaggo)

[Mil 7.7.1-7.7.10, PTS 408-414]



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

20. The Questions of Milinda

6. The Chapter on the Spider

1. The Question on the Quality of the Wayside Spider

1. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of the road spider should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a road spider, having made a spider-web canopy on the road, if a worm or a fly or a grasshopper gets stuck in that net, having seized it, it eats it, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having made a net canopy of the establishment of mindfulness at the six doors, if the flies of mental defilements are caught there, they should be destroyed right there. This, great king, is the one factor of the road spider to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Anuruddha -

'One should restrain the mind at the six doors, in the excellent, best establishment of mindfulness;
If mental defilements are stuck there, they should be destroyed by one with insight.'

The Question on the Quality of the Wayside Spider is the first.

2. The Question on the Quality of the Child Clinging to the Breast

2. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of the breast-dependent child should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a breast-dependent child clings to its own welfare, desiring milk it cries, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should cling to one's own welfare, everywhere there should be development of knowledge of the teaching, in recitation, in questioning, in right application, in solitude, in dwelling with teachers, in associating with good friends. This, great king, is the one factor of the breast-dependent child to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Parinibbāna Discourse of the Long Collection:

'Come now, Ānanda, strive for the essential goal, devote yourselves to the essential goal;
Dwell diligent, ardent, and resolute for the essential goal.'

The Question on the Quality of the Child Clinging to the Breast is the second.

3. The Question on the Quality of the Painted Tortoise

3. "Venerable Nāgasena, as for what you say 'one factor of a painted-shell tortoise should be adopted', which is that one factor to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a painted-shell tortoise, out of fear of water, having avoided water, wanders about, and yet by that avoidance of water it does not decline in life span, just so indeed, great

king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, there should be seeing danger in heedlessness, seeing the distinction of virtue in diligence. And yet by that seeing of danger, one does not decline from asceticism, one approaches near to Nibbāna. This, great king, is the one factor of a painted-shell tortoise to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Dhammapada:

'A monk delighting in diligence, or seeing danger in heedlessness;
Is incapable of decline, he is near to Nibbāna itself.'

The Question on the Quality of the Painted Tortoise is the fourth.

4. The Question on the Quality of the Forest

4. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of the forest wilds should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, the forest wilds conceals impure people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the faults and stumbling of others should be concealed, not revealed. This, great king, is the first factor of the forest wilds to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the forest wilds is empty of many people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be empty of the net of lust, hate, delusion, conceit and wrong view, and of all mental defilements. This, great king, is the second factor of the forest wilds to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the forest wilds is secluded, free from the crowding of people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be secluded from evil unwholesome mental states that are ignoble. This, great king, is the third factor of the forest wilds to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the forest wilds is peaceful and pure, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be peaceful and pure, one with passion quenched, with conceit abandoned, with contempt abandoned. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the forest wilds to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, the forest wilds is frequented by noble people, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be one who frequents noble people. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the forest wilds to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the excellent Connected Collection:

'With the secluded noble ones, with the resolute meditators;
With those constantly putting forth strenuous energy, with the wise ones, one
should live together.'

The Question on the Quality of the Forest is the fourth.

5. The Question on the Quality of the Tree

5. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'three factors of the tree should be adopted.' What are those three factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a tree bears flowers and fruit, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should be a bearer of the flower of liberation and the fruit of asceticism. This, great king, is the first factor of the tree to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a tree gives shade to people who have approached and entered beneath it, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, people who have approached and entered should be welcomed with material hospitality or with hospitality of the Teaching. This, great king, is the second factor of the tree to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a tree does not make distinction in shade, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, distinction should not be made towards all beings; even towards thieves, murderers and enemies, and towards oneself, equal development of friendliness should be practised: 'How may these beings be free from enmity, free from affliction, free from trouble, may they look after themselves happily.' This, great king, is the third factor of the tree to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Sāriputta, the General of the Teaching -

'Towards the murderer Devadatta, the thief Aṅgulimāla;
Towards Dhanapāla and Rāhula, the sage is equal everywhere.'

The Question on the Quality of the Tree is the fifth.

6. The Question on the Quality of the Cloud

6. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'five factors of the cloud should be adopted.' What are those five factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a cloud appeases the arisen muddy dirt, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the arisen muddy dirt of defilements should be appeased. This, great king, is the first factor of the cloud to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a cloud extinguishes the heat of the earth, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the world with its gods should be extinguished by the development of friendliness. This, great king, is the second factor of the cloud to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a cloud causes all seeds to grow, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having produced faith in all beings, that seed of faith should be planted in the three attainments - in the divine and human attainments of happiness, up to the attainment of the happiness of Nibbāna as the ultimate reality. This, great king, is the third factor of the cloud to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a cloud, having arisen from the season, protects the grasses, trees, creepers, shrubs, medicinal plants and forest trees growing on the surface of the earth, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by

one devoted to meditation, having produced wise attention, by that wise attention the ascetic practice should be protected; all wholesome mental states are rooted in wise attention. This, great king, is the fourth factor of the cloud to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a cloud while raining fills rivers, lakes, lotus ponds, mountain caves, clefts, lakes, pools and wells with streams of water, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having rained the cloud of the Teaching through the scriptures of tradition, the minds of those desiring attainment should be filled. This, great king, is the fifth factor of the cloud to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Sāriputta, the General of the Teaching -

"Having seen people capable of being enlightened, even at a hundred thousand yojanas;
Having approached in a moment, the great sage awakens them."

The Question on the Quality of the Cloud is the sixth.

7. The Question on the Quality of the Valuable Gem

7. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'three factors of the jewel gem should be adopted.' What are those three factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a jewel gem is completely pure, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should have a completely pure livelihood. This, great king, is the first factor of the jewel gem to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a jewel gem is not mixed with anything, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should not be mixed with evil ones, with evil companions. This, great king, is the second factor of the jewel gem to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a jewel gem is combined with genuine gems, just so indeed, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should associate with those of the highest and best genuine qualities, one should associate with the ascetic jewel gems who are practitioners and possessors of fruition, those in training and possessors of fruition - stream-enterers, once-returners, non-returners, Worthy Ones, those with the three true knowledges, those with the six direct knowledges. This, great king, is the third factor of the jewel gem to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Suttanipāta:

"The pure, being mindful, arrange communal life with the pure;
Then, united and prudent, you will make an end of suffering."

The Question on the Jewel Gem is the seventh.

8. The Question on the Quality of the Huntsman

8. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'four factors of a hunter should be adopted.' What are those four factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a hunter has little torpor, just so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation,

one should have little torpor. This, great king, is the first factor of the hunter to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a hunter ties his mind only to the deer, just so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mind should be tied only to the objects. This, great king, is the second factor of the hunter to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a hunter knows the time for the work, just so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the time for seclusion should be known: 'This is the time for seclusion, this is the time for going out.' This, great king, is the third factor of the hunter to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a hunter, having seen a deer, produces mirth thinking 'I shall get this,' just so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, one should delight in the object, mirth should be produced thinking 'I shall attain further distinction.' This, great king, is the fourth factor of the hunter to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Mogharāja -

'Having obtained the object, by a resolute monk;
More mirth should be produced, I shall attain further.'

The Question on the Quality of the Huntsman is the eighth.

9. The Question on the Quality of the Fisherman

9. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'two factors of the fisherman should be adopted.' What are those two factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a fisherman pulls out fish with a hook, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the further fruits of asceticism should be pulled out with knowledge. This, great king, is the first factor of the fisherman to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a fisherman, having killed a small thing, obtains extensive gain, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, the mere small worldly gains should be abandoned. Having abandoned the mere worldly gains, great king, one who practises meditation, one devoted to meditation, attains the extensive fruit of asceticism. This, great king, is the second factor of the fisherman to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the elder Rāhula -

"'Emptiness and the signless, and the desireless deliverance;
The four fruits and the six higher knowledges, having abandoned worldly gains, one may obtain.'"

The Question on the Quality of the Fisherman is the ninth.

10. The Question on the Quality of the Carpenter

10. "Venerable Nāgasena, you say 'two factors of a carpenter should be adopted.' What are those two factors to be adopted?" "Just as, great king, a carpenter, having aligned the measuring line, planes the wood, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having aligned oneself with the Conqueror's Dispensation, having established oneself on the ground of morality,

having taken the adze of wisdom with the hand of faith, the mental defilements should be planed away. This, great king, is the first factor of a carpenter to be adopted.

"Furthermore, great king, a carpenter, having removed the softwood, takes the substance, even so, great king, by one who practises meditation, by one devoted to meditation, having removed such grounds of contention as eternalism, annihilationism, the soul is the same as the body, the soul is one thing and the body another, that is the highest, another is the highest, the uncreated is incapable, without human effort, without abiding by the holy life, destruction of beings, manifestation of new beings, eternal nature of activities, the one who acts is the one who experiences, one acts another experiences, the view of seeing the fruit of action and the view of the fruit of function, and other such grounds of contention, the intrinsic nature of activities, supreme emptiness, without longing and lifeless, absolute emptiness should be taken up. This, great king, is the second factor of a carpenter to be adopted. This too was spoken, great king, by the Blessed One, the god above gods, in the Suttanipāta:

"Eject the rubbish, remove the filth;
Then carry away the chaff, those who are not ascetics but think themselves ascetics.

"Having expelled those of evil desires, who frequent evil conduct;
The pure, being mindful, arrange communal life with the pure;
Then, united and prudent, you will make an end of suffering."

The Question on the Quality of the Carpenter is the tenth.

The Chapter on the Spider is the sixth.

Its summary:

Monkey, boy, tortoise, forest, and tree as the fifth;
Cloud, gem, hunter, fishhook, and with the carpenter.



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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