

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality
(1. Sīlakkhandhavaggapāḷi)

6. The Discourse to Mahāli (6. Mahālisuttaṃ)

[DN 6, PTS 1.150–1.158]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

1. The Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality

6. The Discourse to Mahāli

The Story of the Brahmin Messengers

359. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Vesālī in the Great Wood in the Pinnacled Hall. Now at that time many brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha were dwelling at Vesālī on some business. Those brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha heard - "Indeed, my dear, the ascetic Gotama, a Sakyan son who has gone forth from the Sakyan clan, is dwelling at Vesālī in the Great Wood in the Pinnacled Hall. And concerning that Master Gotama, such a good reputation has arisen - 'Thus indeed is the Blessed One: the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, the Fortunate One, knower of the world, unsurpassed trainer of persons to be tamed, Teacher of gods and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.' He, having realised by direct knowledge himself, proclaims this world with its gods, with its Māras, with its Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, with its gods and humans. He expounds the Teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, with meaning and with phrasing; he reveals the holy life that is complete in its entirety and pure. Good indeed is the seeing of such Worthy Ones."

360. Then those brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha approached the Great Forest, to the Pinnacled Hall. Now at that time the Venerable Nāgito was the Blessed One's attendant. Then those brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha approached the Venerable Nāgito. Having approached, they said this to the Venerable Nāgito - "Where, friend Nāgita, is that Master Gotama dwelling now? For we wish to see that Master Gotama." "It is not the right time, friends, to see the Blessed One; the Blessed One is in seclusion." Then those brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha sat down to one side right there - "We shall go only after seeing that Master Gotama."

The Story of Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi

361. Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi too, together with a great assembly of Licchavis, approached the Great Forest, to the Pinnacled Hall, to where the Venerable Nāgita was; having approached, he paid respect to the Venerable Nāgita and stood to one side. Standing to one side, Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi said this to the Venerable Nāgita - "Where, Venerable Nāgita, is that Blessed One dwelling now, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One? For we wish to see that Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One." "It is not the right time, Mahāli, to see the Blessed One; the Blessed One is in seclusion." Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi sat down to one side right there - "I shall go only after seeing that Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One."

362. Then the novice Sīha approached the Venerable Nāgita; having approached, he paid respect to the Venerable Nāgita and stood to one side. Standing to one side, the novice Sīha said this to the Venerable Nāgita - "Venerable Kassapa, these many brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha have come here for an audience with the Blessed One; Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi too, together with a great assembly of Licchavis, has come here for an audience with the Blessed One. It would be good, venerable Kassapa, if this crowd could obtain an audience with the Blessed One."

"If so, Sīha, you yourself inform the Blessed One." "Yes, venerable sir," the novice Sīha replied to the Venerable Nāgita and approached the Blessed One; having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and stood to one side. Standing to one side, the novice Sīha said this to the Blessed One - "Venerable sir, these many brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha have come here for an audience with the Blessed One; Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi too, together with a great assembly of Licchavis, has come here for an audience with the Blessed One. It would be good, venerable sir, if this crowd could obtain an audience with the Blessed One." "If so, Sīha, prepare a seat in the shade of the dwelling." "Yes, venerable sir," the novice Sīha replied to the Blessed One and prepared a seat in the shade of the dwelling.

363. Then the Blessed One, having come out from the dwelling, sat down on the prepared seat in the shade of the dwelling. Then those brahmin messengers from Kosala and brahmin messengers from Magadha approached the Blessed One; having approached, they exchanged friendly greetings with the Blessed One. Having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, they sat down to one side. Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi too, together with a great assembly of Licchavis, approached the Blessed One; having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side.

364. Seated to one side, Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi said this to the Blessed One - "Some days ago, venerable sir, earlier than that, Sunakkhatta the Licchavi's son approached me; having approached, he said this to me - 'Since I, Mahāli, have been dwelling in dependence on the Blessed One, not long, three years, I see divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but I do not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.' Did Sunakkhatta the Licchavi's son, venerable sir, not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, that exist, or that do not exist?"

Concentration Developed for One Purpose

365. "Mahāli, Sunakkhatta the Licchavi's son did not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, that exist, not those that do not exist." "What, venerable sir, is the cause, what is the condition, by which Sunakkhatta the Licchavi's son did not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, that exist, not those that do not exist?"

366. "Here, Mahāli, a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern

direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, sees divine forms in the eastern direction that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but does not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.

367. "Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk in the southern direction... etc... in the western direction... in the northern direction... above, below, and across has concentration developed one-sidedly for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed one-sidedly above, below, and across for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, sees divine forms above, below, and across that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but does not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly above, below, and across for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.

368. "Here, Mahāli, a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern direction for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern direction for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, hears divine sounds in the eastern direction that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but does not see divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly in the eastern direction for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.

369. "Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk in the southern direction... etc... in the western direction... in the northern direction... above, below, and across has concentration developed one-sidedly for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed one-sidedly above, below, and across for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, hears divine sounds above, below, and across that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but does not see divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For

this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed one-sidedly above, below, and across for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, but not for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.

370. "Here, Mahāli, a monk has concentration developed both-sidedly in the eastern direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed both-sidedly in the eastern direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, sees divine forms in the eastern direction that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and hears divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed both-sidedly in the eastern direction for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing.

371. "Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk in the southern direction... etc... in the western direction... in the northern direction... above, below, and across has concentration developed both-sidedly for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. He, with concentration developed both-sidedly above, below, and across for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, sees divine forms above, below, and across that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and hears divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. What is the reason for this? For this is so, Mahāli, when a monk has concentration developed both-sidedly above, below, and across for seeing divine forms that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, and for hearing divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing. This, Mahāli, is the cause, this is the condition, by which Sunakkhatta the Licchavi's son did not hear divine sounds that are dear, connected with sensual pleasure, enticing, that exist, not those that do not exist."

372. "Surely, venerable sir, it is for the sake of realising these developments of concentration that monks live the holy life under the Blessed One." "No indeed, Mahāli, it is not for the sake of realising these developments of concentration that monks live the holy life under me. There are indeed, Mahāli, other things that are more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me."

The Four Noble Fruits

373. "But what, venerable sir, are those things that are more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under the Blessed One?" "Here, Mahāli, a monk, with the utter elimination of the three mental fetters, becomes a stream-enterer, no longer subject to fall into lower realms, fixed in

destiny, heading for the highest enlightenment. This too, Mahāli, is a thing that is more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me.

"Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk, with the utter elimination of the three mental fetters and with the reduction of lust, hate, and delusion, becomes a once-returner, who, having come to this world only once more, makes an end of suffering. This too, Mahāli, is a thing that is more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me.

"Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk, with the utter elimination of the five lower mental fetters, becomes one of spontaneous birth, attaining final nibbāna there, not subject to return from that world. This too, Mahāli, is a thing that is more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me.

"Furthermore, Mahāli, a monk, with the elimination of the mental corruptions, in this very life, having realised by direct knowledge himself, having attained, dwells in the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom that are without mental corruptions. This too, Mahāli, is a thing that is more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me. These, Mahāli, are those things that are more superior and more sublime, for the sake of realising which monks live the holy life under me."

The Noble Eightfold Path

374. "But, venerable sir, is there a path, is there a practice for the realisation of these things?" "There is indeed, Mahāli, a path, there is a practice for the realisation of these things."

375. "But, venerable sir, what is the path, what is the practice for the realisation of these things?" "It is just this noble eightfold path. That is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, Mahāli, is the path, this is the practice for the realisation of these things.

The Story of the Two Gone Forth

376. "On one occasion, Mahāli, I was dwelling at Kosambī in Ghosita's park. Then two gone forth ones - the wandering ascetic Muṇḍiya and Jāliya, the disciple of Dārupattika, approached me. Having approached, they exchanged friendly greetings with me. Having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, they stood to one side. Standing to one side, those two gone forth ones said this to me: 'Now what, friend Gotama, is the soul the same as the body, or is the soul one thing and the body another?'

377. "If so, friends, listen and pay close attention, I will speak." "Yes, friend," those two gone forth ones assented to me. I said this: "Here, friends, a Truth-finder arises in the world, a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One... etc. Thus, friends, a monk is accomplished in morality... etc. he enters and dwells in the first meditative absorption. Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, is it proper for him to say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another'? Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, it is proper for him to say: 'The soul is

the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another.' But I, friends, thus know and thus see. And yet I do not say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another'... etc. the second meditative absorption, etc. the third meditative absorption... etc. he enters and dwells in the fourth meditative absorption. Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, is it proper for him to say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another'? Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, it is proper for him to say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another.' But I, friends, thus know and thus see. And yet I do not say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another'... etc. he directs and inclines the mind towards knowledge and vision... etc. Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, is it proper for him to say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another'? Friends, a monk who thus knows and thus sees, it is proper for him to say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another.' But I, friends, thus know and thus see. And yet I do not say: 'The soul is the same as the body' or 'the soul is one thing and the body another.' This is what the Blessed One said. Delighted, Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said.

The Discourse on Mahāli is concluded as sixth.



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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