

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 -
Aṭṭhakathā)

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

9. The Book of the Nines (9. Navakanipāto)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

09. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nuns

9. The Book of the Nines

1. Commentary on the Verses of the Elder Nun Vaḍḍhamātu

204-212. In the Ninth Book, the verses of the elder nun Vaḍḍha's Mother beginning with "May there never be, Vaḍḍha, in the world." 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 family home in the city of Bhārukaccha, having come of age, having gone to her husband's family, gave birth to one son. His name was Vaḍḍha. From that time onwards, she was called "Vaḍḍha's Mother." She, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the monks, having gained faith, having handed over her son to relatives, having gone to the nuns' quarters, went forth. What should be said hereafter has come in the story of the Elder Vaḍḍha itself. For the Elder Vaḍḍha's own son, having come alone with just his inner and outer robes to the nuns' quarters to see her, this elder nun, having reproved him "Why have you come here alone, with just your inner and outer robes?" while exhorting him -

204. "May there never be craving for you, Vaḍḍha, in the world;
May you not, dear son, again and again, be a partaker of suffering.
205. "Happily indeed, Vaḍḍha, the sages, without longing, having cut off doubt;
Having become cooled, having attained self-control, dwell without mental corruptions.
206. "The path practised by those seers, for the attainment of insight;
For making an end of suffering, you, Vaḍḍha, should develop."

She spoke these three verses.

Therein, in "May there never be craving for you, Vaḍḍha, in the world," "su" is merely a particle. Vaḍḍha, dear son, in the entire world of beings and the world of activities, may the undergrowth of mental defilements never be for you, may it never exist. Therein he states the reason - "May you not, dear son, again and again, be a partaker of suffering" means not cutting off the craving, on account of that sign, may you not again and again, repeatedly, be a partaker of the suffering of birth and so on.

Having thus shown the danger in the non-eradication of craving, now showing the benefit in its eradication, she said beginning with "Happily indeed, Vaḍḍha." Its meaning is - Dear son, Vaḍḍha, the sages, being endowed with the qualities of moral perfection, are without longing due to the absence of craving termed longing, having cut off doubt because sceptical doubt has been eliminated by the path of insight alone, having become cooled due to the absence of the fever of all mental

defilements, having attained self-control because of having achieved the highest restraint, without mental corruptions, ones who have eliminated the mental corruptions, dwell happily; for them there is no mental suffering at present, and in the future too, all suffering will certainly not exist.

Because this is so, therefore the path practised by those seers, etc. "Should develop" means the path of serenity and insight meditation practised and followed by those seers who have eliminated the mental corruptions, for the achievement of knowledge and vision, for making an end of the entire suffering of the round of rebirths, Vaḍḍha, you should develop, you should cultivate.

Having heard that, the Elder Vaḍḍha, having thought "Surely my mother is established in arahantship," declaring that matter -

207. "You speak confidently, this matter to me, mother;
I think surely towards me, craving is not found in you." He spoke a verse.

Therein, "you speak confidently, this matter to me, mother" means "May there never be craving for you, Vaḍḍha, in the world" - this matter, this exhortation, mother, free from timidity, not stuck anywhere, not clinging, you speak to me. Therefore "I think surely towards me, craving is not found in you" means surely towards me, mother, not even the mere amount of affection connected with the household is found in you towards me - I think; "not towards me" is the meaning.

Having heard that, the elder nun, having said "not even the slightest mental defilement in any object whatsoever is found in me," making known that her task is done -

208. "Whatever activities there are, Vaḍḍha, inferior, superior, or middling;
Even minute, even the slightest, craving is not found in me.

209. "All my mental corruptions are eliminated, being diligent and meditating;
The three true knowledges have been attained, the Buddha's teaching has been fulfilled."

She spoke this pair of verses.

Therein, "whatever" is an indefinite term. "Activities" means conditioned phenomena. "Inferior" means low, blameworthy. "Superior and middling" means sublime and middling. Or among those, the unconditioned are inferior, those conditioned by birth are superior, those mixed with both are middling. Or those produced by inferior desire and so on are inferior, by middling ones middling, by superior ones superior. Or unwholesome mental states are inferior, supramundane mental states are superior, the others are middling. "Even minute, even the slightest" means not only in you alone, but indeed whatever activities distinguished by the classification of inferior and so on. Among all of those, even minute, even the slightest, even the most insignificant, craving is not found in me.

Therein he states the reason - "All my mental corruptions are eliminated, being diligent and meditating." Therein, "being diligent and meditating" means being a diligent woman who meditates; for this is said by way of change of gender. And here, because the three true knowledges have been attained, therefore the Buddha's

teaching has been fulfilled. Because she is diligent and a meditator, therefore all my mental corruptions are eliminated, even minute, even the slightest, craving is not found in me - this is the explanation.

Thus, having made the spoken exhortation his goad, with religious emotion arisen, the elder, having gone to the monastery, seated at his daytime resting place, having developed insight, having attained arahantship, having reviewed his own practice, with pleasure arisen, having gone to his mother's presence, declaring final liberating knowledge -

210. "Indeed my mother bestowed upon me a lofty goad;
Verses connected with the ultimate meaning, just as one who is
compassionate.
211. "Having heard her word, the admonition of my mother;
I attained religious emotion regarding the Dhamma, for the attainment of
freedom from bondage.
212. "I, with self resolute in striving, unwearied day and night;
Urged on by my mother, being peaceful, I attained the highest peace."

She spoke these three verses.

Then the elder nun, having made her own word a goad, with her mind pleased by her son's attainment of arahantship, herself recited back the verses spoken by him. Thus those too became known as Verses of the Elder Nun.

Therein, "lofty" means extensive, great. "Goad" means the goad of exhortation. "Bestowed" means the explanation is: she rightly set in motion, indeed. But what is that goad? He says "verses connected with the ultimate meaning." He speaks that with reference to the verse beginning with "May there not be for you, Vaḍḍha, in the world." "Just as one who is compassionate" means just as another who is helpful, so my mother set in motion the lofty goad, the driving stick, reckoned as verses elucidating occurrence and cessation, arousing the force of my knowledge - this is the meaning.

"I attained religious emotion regarding the Dhamma" means because of bringing the fear of knowledge, I underwent an exceedingly great, dreadful religious emotion.

"With self resolute in striving" means one whose mind is directed towards the divine through the exertion of the fourfold right striving. "I attained the highest peace" means I touched, I attained the unsurpassed peace, Nibbāna - this is the meaning.

The commentary on the verses of the Elder Nun Vaḍḍhamātu is concluded.

The commentary on the Book of Nines 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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