

The Way to the Beyond

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu



The Way to the Beyond
(Pārāyanavagga)

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(original translation 1999, revised, May 2007)

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Preface

I first completed this translation of Pārāyanavagga around 1999, and as this text was one of the works that first inspired me to study the Pāli language, it was also one of the first translations I worked on. Since that time, naturally enough, my ideas about translation have changed somewhat and I have now revised this work in line with my current thinking.

The main changes have entailed something of a simplification in the presentation on the one hand, and an attempt to be more fluent on the other. The simplification has meant dropping the so-called recitor's remarks, and indicating the speaker by typographical conventions instead. Also in this revised version I have been less literal in the translation, and hopefully this makes the text easier to read.

I have also had a reading of the text in mind during the revision, and indeed I have read in over and over out loud to make sure the rhythms scan well. I originally made the translation into eight-syllabic lines, but later I made so many changes to vocabulary and so on that the metre was lost. Here I have been less strict about the syllabic count, and more intent on the inherent rhythm.

As the discussions recorded here were between the Buddha and highly developed meditators, some of the references may be obscure to the lay reader. I have therefore added sufficient notes to the translation to clear up anything that may be obscure in the text, but I

have tried not to overburden the text in this regard. For many years I have thought that a translation of the Commentary is highly desirable, and I may pursue this in the future.

For those who need help in reading the original text I would refer them to [Pārāyanavagga](#) in the Texts and Translations section of this website; those interested in how the text was established can see my original study of the [Pārāyanavagga, A New Edition](#) in the Prosody section, which also examines the metrical form in depth.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

May, 2007

The Way to the Beyond

*Reverence to Him, the Gracious One, the Worthy One, the Perfect
Sambuddha*

Introductory Verses

From the delightful city of the Kosalans,¹ to the Southern lands went one who wanted to have no possessions, a brahmin perfect in the Vedas.² In the locality of Assaka, and near to Mūḷaka close to the bank of the Godhāvarī he lived on gleanings and fruit.³ [1-2]

In the vicinity of the river there was a large village, and with the income that arose from that he offered a great sacrifice. When that great sacrifice had been given he entered his hermitage again, and when he had re-entered it, another brahmin came along - he had sore feet, and was thirsty, with dirty teeth, and dust on his head - and after approaching the first brahmin, he begged for five hundred coins. [3-5]

¹ Sāvattihī.

² Literally: perfect in the mantras (*mantāpāragū*).

³ This is in modern-day Maharashtra, East of Bombay, and was at that time about as far South as the Ariyans had penetrated, so that it was a very remote place indeed.

After seeing him Bāvāri invited him to take a seat, and he asked after his happiness and welfare, and this is the word that he spoke: *“Whatever gift I had, all of it has been given away by me, please excuse me brahmin, I do not have five hundred coins.”* [6-7]

“If your honour will not give me what I am begging for, then within seven days may your head split into seven pieces!” [8]

Having made a scene the dishonest man proclaimed this fearful thing. After hearing this word of his, Bāvāri became miserable. Going without food he dried up, and was affected by the dart of grief, and when his heart was like that his mind did not delight in meditation. [9-10]

Having seen him terrified and miserable, a God who desired his welfare,¹ approached Bāvāri, and this is the word that he spoke: *“He does not know the head - he is a dishonest man who wants wealth! He does not have knowledge about the head or about head-splitting.”* [11-12]

“But now your honour knows! Please explain this to me when asked: the head and head-splitting, may we hear that word of yours.” [13]

¹ A God (*Deva*) who was living in the vicinity of the hermitage.

“I also do not know about this, I do not have this knowledge here. The head and head-splitting! Indeed only Victors see this!”¹ [14]

“Then who knows about the head and head-splitting on the face of the earth? O God, please explain this to me.” [15]

“From out of the city of Kapilavatthu a world leader has renounced, he is of King Okkāka’s line, a Sakyan’s son, a Light-Maker. He is a Sambuddha, brahmin, in everything he is perfect, having attained all deep knowledges and strengths, endowed with Vision regarding all things, he has come to the end of all actions, in the end of all clinging he is freed. He is the Buddha in the world, the Gracious One, the Visionary who teaches the Teaching, after going there you can ask him about it, he will explain it to you.” [16-18]

Having heard the word: ‘Sambuddha’, Bāvāri became elated, then his grief became but little, and he received great happiness. Bāvāri, uplifted and elated, enthusiastically asked that God: *“In which village, or again in which town, in which country, is the Lord of the World? Where having gone to can we revere the Sambuddha, the Supreme Human Being?” [19-20]*

“The Victor is in the Kosalan’s city, Sāvāthī, he has much wisdom, excellent and great intelligence, that Sakyan’s son, who is free from

¹ *Jinā*, i.e. Buddhas.

burden and pollutant, that Bull of a Man has understanding of head-splitting.” [21]

So then the brahmin addressed his students, who were perfect in the Vedas: *“Come, young men, and I shall explain, please listen to this word of mine: He whose manifestation in the world is always rare, has now arisen in the world, renowned as one called a ‘Sambuddha’. Having gone quickly to Sāvathī, you can see the Supreme Human Being.” [22-23]*

“Having seen him how will we know that he is the ‘Buddha’, O brahmin? You must tell us who do not know, how we can know it is him.” [24]

“There has come down to us in the Vedas the marks of a Great Man, they are explained as thirty-two, complete in regular order. For whoever has on his limbs the marks of a Great Man, there can be just two destinies, for a third cannot be found: If he lives in a house, when he has been victorious over this earth, without a stick or a sword he will rule according to the Teaching.¹ But if he goes forth from the house to the homeless life, he becomes a cover-remover, a Sambuddha, a Worthy One, unexcelled. [25-28]

¹ Will be an Universal Monarch (*Cakkavattirāja*).

About my birth, family, and marks; teaching, students and other things, about the head and head-splitting, you must ask these things in your mind. If he should be a Buddha, one who sees without obstruction, the questions that are asked in your mind he will answer by way of speech.” [29-30]

After hearing Bāvāri’s words, the sixteen brahmin students: Ajita, Tissa Metteyya, Puṇṇaka, also Mettagū, Dhotaka, and Upasīva, Nanda, and also Hemaka, the two: Todeyya and Kappa, and Jatukaṇṇī, the one who is wise, Bhadrāvudha and Udaya, and also the brahmin Posāla, Mogharāja, the intelligent one, and the Great Seer, Piṅgiya, each one with his own group,¹ renowned throughout the whole world, meditators delighting in meditation,² wise ones, influenced by their pre-dispositions, after worshipping Bāvāri, and circumambulating him, they all, wearing matted-hair and deer-skins,³ set out for the North.

¹ They are said to have had a group of one thousand disciples each, and they all made the journey of some 1,500 kilometres by foot to see the Buddha.

² Many of them had attained very high levels of concentration (*samādhi*), including the spheres (*āyatana*) developed through refinement of the fourth absorption (*jhāna*).

³ Traditional wear for brahmin ascetics in those days.



From Mūḷaka to Patīṭhāna first, then on to Mahissati, to Ujjenī, and Gonaddha, to Vedisa, and to the place called Vanasa, to Kosambī, and Sāketa, and Sāvathī, the city supreme, to Setabya, and Kapilavatthu, and to the city of Kusinārā, to Pāvā, to Bhoganagara, to Vesālī, to the Magadhan city (Rājagaha), and to the Pāsāṅaka Shrine,¹ delightful, it is the mind's delight. [31–38]

¹ The Commentary explains that the Buddha was at Sāvathī when he saw them coming but realised they were still not mature enough to understand the Teaching, he therefore withdrew to Rājagaha, and to the Pāsāṅaka Shrine.

Just like a thirsty man to cool water, or like a trader to great gain, like one scorched by the heat to shade, quickly they climbed up the mountain. [39]

Now at that time the Gracious One was in front of the Community of monks, teaching the monks, roaring like a lion in a forest. Ajita saw the Sambuddha, brilliant like the hundred-rayed sun, like the moon which has reached fullness on the fifteenth day of the month, and after seeing on his limbs the characteristics in their fullness, standing cheerfully on one side he asked a question in his mind: *“Speak and point out his birth, speak of his family, and marks, speak of his perfection in the Vedas, how many does the brahmin school?”* [40-43]

“One hundred and twenty years his age, his family is named as Bāvāri, three marks are on his limbs, he is perfect in the three Vedas. In the marks, and the traditions, with the glossaries, and the ritual, he schools five hundred, in his own teaching he is perfect.” [44-45]

“Your investigation of Bāvāri’s marks, One Supreme among Men, O Craving-Cutter, make that clear, so that we are not left doubting.” [46]

“He can cover his face with his tongue, there is hair between his eyebrows, what is covered by a cloth is ensheathed: know it is so young man.” [47]

Not hearing any question, but having heard the questions answered, all the people were enthusiastic, and raised their hands, thinking: *“Now who was it, a God, or a Brahmā, or Inda, the lord of Sujā, who*

asked those questions in the mind? To whom did he make reply?"
[48-49]

"About the head and head-splitting, Bāvāri asks this question, please explain that, Gracious One, please remove our doubts, O Seer." [50]

The Buddha said: "Know ignorance is called the head, and understanding is the head-splitter, joined with confidence, mindfulness, concentration, desire, and energy." [51]

Then with great enthusiasm, being resolute, the young man, having put his deer-skin on one shoulder, fell placing his head at the Buddha's feet: *"The honourable brahmin Bāvāri, and his students, dear Sir, elated in heart, and happy in mind, worships your feet, O Visionary One."* [52-53]

"May the brahmin Bāvāri, together with his students, be happy! And may you also be happy! May you live for a long time, young man! All of the doubts that Bāvāri, or you, or anyone else has, having received leave, ask whatever you long to know in your mind." [54-55]

Having received leave from the Sambuddha, sitting with hands raised in reverence, Ajita asked the Realised One the first question in that place: [56]

1: Ajita's Questions

“By what is the world enveloped? Why does it not become clear? What do you say is its defilement? What is the world's great fear?” [57]

“The world is enveloped by ignorance, because of heedlessness and meanness it does not become clear. Hunger is its defilement, I say;¹ suffering is the world's great fear.” [58]

“Streams are flowing everywhere,² what is the constraint for streams? Tell me the restraint for streams; by what are the streams shut off?” [59]

“Whatever streams there are in the world, mindfulness is the constraint for them. That is the restraint for streams, I say; by wisdom they are shut off.” [60]

“Wisdom and mindfulness, and mind and body, dear Sir, please tell me this when asked: where do these things cease?” [61]

¹ Hunger (*jappa*) = craving (*taṇhā*).

² Streams = cravings.

“This question that was asked, Ajita, I can answer it! As to where mind and body ceases without remainder: with the cessation of consciousness,¹ in this place it ceases.” [62]

“Those who have discerned the Teaching, and the many in training here,² when I ask the prudent one, please tell me their conduct, dear Sir.” [63]

“He should not be greedy for sense pleasures, or be disturbed in mind. Being skilful in all things, mindfully the monk should wander.”³ [64]

2: Tissa Metteyya’s Questions

“Who is satisfied here in the world? For whom is there no turmoil? Who is the wise man, who has known both ends, and is undefiled in the middle? Who do you say is a Great Man? Who has gone beyond the seamstress here?”⁴ [65]

¹ i.e. relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhiviññānam*).

² Trainees are those who have attained the first Path (*sotāpatti*), but not yet the final Path (*Arahatta*).

³ After this exchange the Commentary notes that Ajita and his thousand students attained Arahatta, and that countless others attained the Vision of the Teaching (*Dhammacakkhu*, i.e. *sotāpatti*). The same is repeated after all the questions and answers, except for the last, where Piṅgiya only attains to the stage of Non-Returner (*Anāgāmī*).

⁴ The seamstress = craving, personified as one who ties a person to continued existence.

“He who is chaste in regard to sense pleasures, free from craving, always mindful, having discernment¹ the monk is emancipated, for him there is no turmoil. He is the wise man, who has known both ends, and is undefiled in the middle. He, I say, is a Great Man, he has gone beyond the seamstress here.” [66-67]

3: Puṇṇaka’s Questions

“To the one who is unmoved, who sees the root,² I have come in need with a question: on account of what did the seers and men, nobles, and brahmins, here in the world offer many sacrifices to the Gods? I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me.” [68]

“Whoever of those seers and men, nobles, and brahmins, here in the world, offered many sacrifices to the Gods, they did so yearning, Puṇṇaka, for mundane existence, on account of old age,³ they offered sacrifices.” [69]

“Whoever of those seers and men, nobles, and brahmins, here in the world offered many sacrifices to the Gods, Gracious One, perhaps those heedful of the path of sacrifice have crossed over birth and old age, dear Sir? I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me.” [70]

¹ Having discerned the truth of impermanence, etc.

² The root of unwholesomeness.

³ i.e. fearing old age and death.

“They yearn and they praise, they hunger, and they offer, they hunger for sense pleasures, because of gain they engage in sacrifice, excited by the passion for existence. They have not crossed over birth and old age, I say.” [71]

“If those engaged in sacrifice have not crossed over birth and old age by their sacrifices, dear Sir, then just who in the world of the Gods and men have crossed over birth and old age, dear Sir? I ask you, Gracious One, please explain this to me.” [72]

“The one who has discerned far and near in the world, who has no turmoil anywhere in the world, who is peaceful, not incensed, troubled, or yearning, he has crossed over birth and old age, I say.” [73]

4: Mettagū’s Questions

“I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me, I think you have true understanding, and a developed self - how have these countless kinds of suffering arisen for those who are in the world?” [74]

“You asked me about the origin of suffering, as I know it I will declare it to you: because of clinging to a basis¹ countless kinds of

¹ Clinging to a basis translates the one word *upadhi* in the Pāli, which carries both the meaning of clinging, and forming a basis for the very same clinging.

suffering originate for those who are in the world. The foolish one without wisdom clings to a basis, and comes to suffering again, the fool. Therefore knowing this, do not cling to a basis, seeing the birth and origin of suffering.” [75–76]

“You have proclaimed to us what we asked you about, another thing we ask please answer: how do the wise ones cross over the flood of birth, old age, grief, and lamentation? Please explain this to me, O Sage, for this Teaching has been understood by you.” [77]

“I shall proclaim the Teaching to you, which is not hearsay in this world, which, having understood, and living mindfully, one can cross over clinging to the world.” [78]

“I greatly rejoice in that supreme Teaching, Great Seer, which, having understood, and living mindfully, one can cross over clinging to the world.” [79]

“Whatever you know, above, below, and across the middle, dispel the enjoyment of, and settling on, these things, and consciousness,¹ and one will not remain in existence. Living in this way, mindful, and heedful, the monk who lives on after giving up loved things, can, being wise, give up birth, old age, grief, lamentation, and suffering right here.” [80–81]

¹ It means the type of consciousness that is still engaged in result-producing actions (*kamma*).

“I greatly rejoice in this, the Great Seer’s word, O Gotama, well-proclaimed is freedom from clinging. Surely the Gracious One gave up suffering, for this Teaching has been understood by you. Surely they too can give up suffering, whomever you would continually advise, O Sage, therefore having met with the Strong One,¹ I revere him, perhaps the Gracious One could always advise me!” [82–83]

“You should know the brahmin who has true understanding, who has nothing, and is not clinging to sense-existence, for he has surely crossed over the flood, without hindrance or doubt, he has crossed beyond. That man here who is wise, and has true understanding, who has released the shackle of repeated existence, he is craving-free, not troubled, not yearning - he has crossed over birth and old age, I say.” [84–85]

5: Dhotaka’s Questions

“I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me, I am waiting for a word of yours, Great Seer, having heard your utterance I could train for my own Nibbāna.” [86]

“Then you must become ardent, being prudent and mindful right here, henceforth, after hearing this utterance you should train for your own Nibbāna.” [87]

¹ Nāga.

“I see in the world with its Gods and men, a brahmin who moves about having nothing, therefore I revere you, Visionary One, O Sakyan, please free me from my doubts.” [88]

“I am unable to free anyone in the world who is having doubts, Dhotaka, but knowing (Nibbāna), the best thing, in this way you can cross over the flood.”¹ [89]

“Brahmin! Being compassionate teach the state of detachment that I should know, then I, being undisturbed, just like the sky, may live peaceful and independent right here.” [90]

“I shall proclaim the peace to you, which is not hearsay here in the world, which, having understood, and living mindfully, one can cross over clinging to the world.” [91]

“I greatly rejoice in that supreme peace, Great Seer, which, having understood, and living mindfully, one can cross over clinging to the world.” [92]

“Whatever you know, above, below, and across the middle, having understood this is called a shackle in the world, you must not have craving for repeated existence.” [93]

¹ Confidence (*saddhā*) being a basis upon which to make effort.

6: Upasīva's Questions

“Alone, Sakyān, with nothing to depend on, I am unable to cross over the great flood.¹ Please tell me of a support, Visionary One, depending on which I can cross over this flood.” [94]

“Looking to nothingness, and being mindful, depending on nothing, cross over the flood.² Having given up sense pleasures, abstaining from talk, day and night you must look for the end of suffering.” [95]

“He who is passionless regarding all sense pleasures, who is depending on nothingness, having given up all else, intent on the highest freedom which still has perception - will he remain there without going away?”³ [96]

“He who is passionless regarding all sense pleasures, who is depending on nothingness, having given up all else, intent on the highest

¹ The great flood of existence.

² Paraphrase: having developed the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ*), emerging and gaining insight into impermanence, cross over the flood.

³ He is asking about the state of the Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*) in the Ākiñcaññāyatana Brahmāloka. The next higher state (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ*) cannot be said to have perception or no perception.

freedom which still has perception - he will remain there without going away.”¹ [97]

*“If he remains there without going away for a great number of years, Visionary One, will he become cool and free right there, or will the consciousness of such a one fall away?”*² [98]

“As a flame overthrown by the force of the wind, goes to rest and can no longer be discerned, just so the sage free from the mental body goes to rest and can no longer be discerned.” [99]

*“The one who has come to rest, is he then nothing? Or is he eternally healthy?”*³ *Please explain this to me, Sage, for this Teaching has been understood by you.*” [100]

“There is no measure of the one who has come to rest, there is nothing by which they can speak of him, when everything has been completely removed, all the pathways for speech are also completely removed.”⁴ [101]

¹ It means: will he return to this world?

² The discussion now turns to the one who has attained Arahatta.

³ Upasīva is still thinking in terms of annihilation (*uccheda*) or eternal life (*sassata*).

⁴ The Buddha points out that the truth is outside of conditioned reality.

7: Nanda's Questions

“There are sages in the world’, *that is what people say - how is this so? Do they say he is a sage because he has knowledge or because of the life he leads?*” [102]

“Not by view, tradition, or knowledge, do the skilful say one is a sage, Nanda, whoever lives without company, not troubled, not yearning, they are sages, I say.” [103]

“Whoever among these ascetics and brahmins, say that purity is through what is seen or heard, say that purity is through virtue and practices, say that purity is through countless other ways, ¹ Gracious One, perhaps those living restrained in this way have crossed over birth and old age, dear Sir? I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me.” [104]

“Whoever among these ascetics and brahmins, say that purity is through what is seen or heard, say that purity is through virtue and practices, say that purity is through countless other ways, although they are living restrained in this way, they have not crossed over birth and old age, I say.” [105]

¹ The first group refers to auspicious sights and sounds; the second (= *sīlabbata*), may be good or bad, but are always insufficient in themselves; the third group includes other things short of the destruction of craving.

“Whoever among these ascetics and brahmins, say that purity is through what is seen or heard, say that purity is through virtue and practices, say that purity is through countless other ways, if you say these sages have not crossed the flood, then just who in the world of the Gods and men have crossed over birth and old age, dear Sir? I ask you, Gracious One, please tell this to me.” [106]

“I do not say that all ascetics and brahmins, are enveloped in birth and old age: whoever here has given up reliance on what is seen, heard, or sensed, and virtue and practices, and has also given up all the countless other ways, who, by fully knowing craving, are pollutant-free - I say those men have crossed over the flood.” [107]

“I greatly rejoice in the Great Seer’s word, Gotama, well-proclaimed is freedom from clinging! Whoever has given up reliance on what is seen, heard, or sensed, and virtue and practices, and has also given up all the countless other ways, who, by fully knowing craving, are pollutant-free - I also say they have crossed over the flood.” [108]

8: Hemaka’s Questions

“Those who explained things to me in the past, before Gotama’s teaching, saying ‘it was so, and so it will be’, all that was just hearsay, all that just increased my thoughts, and I did not find delight therein. You must explain the Teaching to me, Sage, and the destruction of craving, which, having understood, and living mindfully, one can cross over clinging to the world.” [109-110]

“In regard to likeable forms seen, heard, sensed, and cognized, Hemaka, the dispelling of desire and passion for them - this is the undying Nibbāna. Knowing this, those who are mindful, who are Emancipated¹ in this very life, those who are always peaceful, have crossed over clinging to the world.” [111-112]

9: Todeyya’s Questions

“He who has no sense desires, he in whom no craving is found, he who crossed beyond doubts, what kind of freedom is there for him?” [113]

“He who has no sense desires, he in whom no craving is found, he who has crossed beyond doubts, there is no further freedom for him.” [114]

“Is he without yearning, or is he still yearning? Is he wise, or still acquiring wisdom? I would know just what the sage is like, Sakyā: explain that to me, Visionary One.” [115]

“He is without yearning, he is not still yearning. He is wise, he is not still acquiring wisdom. Know that the sage is just like this, Todeyya: he has nothing, and is not clinging to sense-existence.” [116]

¹ Abhinibbutā.

10: Kappa's Questions

“For those standing in the middle of a lake, when a fearful flood has arisen, for those overcome by old age and death, speak about an island, dear Sir, you must explain an island to me, so there will be no more after this.” [117]

“For those standing in the middle of a lake, when a fearful flood has arisen, for those overcome by old age and death, I speak about an island, Kappa: Having nothing, no attachment, this is the island with nothing beyond, this is called Nibbāna, I say, the end of old age and death. Knowing this, those who are mindful, who are emancipated in this very life, come not under Māra's control, they are not servants to Māra.” [118-120]

11: Jatukaṇṇī's Questions

“Having heard of a hero who has no desire for pleasure, I came to ask that desireless one who is beyond the flood, please speak of the state of peace, as it really is, Gracious One, please tell me this. The Gracious One moves about having vanquished sense desires, as the splendid sun vanquishes the earth with its splendour. To me of little wisdom, One of Great Wisdom, explain the Teaching so that I may know the complete giving up of birth and old age here.” [121-122]

“Remove the greed for sense pleasures, having seen there is safety in renunciation; let there be nothing found in you that has been taken up

or is still to be put down. You should erase that which is past, and have nothing for the future, if you take up nothing in the present you will live peacefully. For one altogether without greed for mind and body, O brahmin, no pollutants are found whereby he can come under Death's control." [123-125]

12: Bhadrāvudha's Questions

"The one who left home, the craving-cutter, the unmoved one, the enjoyment-leaver, the flood-crosser, the one who is free, the one who left off speculation, the intelligent one - him I beg, after hearing the Strong One, they will go away from here. Various people have come from the Countries, and are waiting for your saying, Heroic One, you must explain the Teaching to them properly, for this Teaching has been understood by you." [126-127]

"You must remove all attachment to craving, above, below, and across the middle, for with whatever they are attached to in the world, with just that Māra follows a man. Therefore knowing this, the mindful monk should not be attached to anything in the world, seeing that with what is called attachment and clinging, these people are clinging to the realm of Death." [128-129]

13: Udaya's Questions

"To the meditator who sits dust-free, with duty-done, pollutant-free, who is perfect in all things, I have come in need with a question:

please tell of freedom through knowledge, the breaking up of ignorance.” [130]

“The giving up of sensual desire, and of sorrow, these two, the dispelling of sloth, and constraint of worry about wrong-doing, purity through equanimity and mindfulness,¹ preceded by thought of impermanent things,² this I call freedom through knowledge, the breaking up of ignorance.” [131-132]

“By what is the world fettered? By what does it roam about? By completely giving up what, is there that thing called Nibbāna?” [133]

“The world is fettered by enjoyment, it roams about through reflections. By completely giving up craving there is that thing called Nibbāna.” [134]

“For he who lives mindfully, how is it consciousness ceases? We have come to ask the Gracious One, therefore may we hear a word of yours.” [135]

¹ Alluding to the fourth absorption (*jhāna*), said to have complete purity of mindfulness and equanimity (*upekkhāsatipārisuddhī*).

² It refers to seeing the passing away of the factors of absorption (*jhānaṅgāni*).

“Without rejoicing over feeling on the inside or outside - for he who lives mindfully in this way, consciousness surely ceases.”¹ [136]

14: Posāla’s Questions

“To the one who points out the past, the unmoved one, who has cut off doubt, who is perfect in everything, I have come in need with a question: For the one in whom perception of form has ended, who, on the inside and outside is seeing: ‘There is nothing whatsoever’,² I ask about his knowledge, Sakyā, how is such a one led further?”
[137-138]

“All the stations of consciousness the Realised One knows, he knows where that one stands, what he is intent on, what he is going towards. Having known the origin of nothingness, and that enjoyment is called a fetter, knowing deeply that it is so, and then having insight into this: this is real knowledge for him, for the brahmin who is accomplished.” [139-140]

¹ i.e. rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhiviññāṇaṃ*).

² This again refers to the sphere of nothingness (*ākāṅkāññāyatanaṃ*).

15: Mogharāja's Questions

“Twice I asked the Sakyan, but the Visionary did not reply, if asked up to a third time the Divine Seer will answer, so I have heard.¹ This world, the other world, the Brahmā world with its Gods: One does not know what view of this the reputable Gotama has. So, to the One with Excellent Sight, I have come in need with a question: looking on the world in what way does the king of Death not see one?” [141-143]

“Look on the world as empty,² Mogharāja, being always mindful. Having removed wrong view of self, in this way one will cross beyond Death. When looking on the world in this way the king of Death does not see one.” [144]

¹ Mogharāja had tried to ask his question earlier on two occasions, but understanding that he was not ready, the Buddha accepted other questions first, giving him a chance to mature.

² This is one of the earliest references to *suññatā*, which was to play such an important role in the Mahāyāna teachings.

16: Piṅgiya's Questions

“I am old, without strength, with poor complexion, my eyes are unclear, and hearing is difficult - may I indeed not perish a fool mid-way!¹ Explain the Teaching so that I may know how to give up birth and old age.” [145]

“Having seen people struck down amid forms, and that the heedless are pained amid forms - being heedful, Piṅgiya, must give up form, and not come into existence again.” [146]

“The four directions, the four intermediate directions, above and below: in these ten directions, there is nothing for you that is unseen, unheard, unsensed, or uncognized in the world! Explain the Teaching so that I may know the complete giving up of birth and old age.” [147]

“Seeing human beings, victims of craving, are tormented, and overcome by decay - being heedful, Piṅgiya, must give up craving and not come into existence again.” [148]

¹ The Commentary explains that Piṅgiya was 120 years old. Mid-way refers to what is short of Arahatta.

Verses in Praise of the Way to the Beyond

This was said by the Gracious One while living among the Magadhans at the Pāsāṅaka Shrine. The sixteen attendant brahmins requested and asked, and he answered their questions. If, knowing the meaning of each question, knowing the Teaching, he would practice in conformity with the Teaching, he would surely go beyond old age and death. It is said “These teachings go to the beyond,” therefore this presentation of the Teaching is indeed called The Way to the Beyond.

Ajita, Tissa Metteyya, Puṅṅaka, also Mettagū, Dhotaka, and Upasīva, Nanda, and also Hemaka, the two: Todeyya, and Kappa, and Jatukaṅṅī, the one who is wise, Bhadrāvudha, and Udaya, also the brahmin Posāla, Mogharāja, the intelligent one, and the Great Seer Piṅgiya. [149-150]

These went to the Buddha, to the seer with perfect conduct, asking subtle questions, they went to the Buddha who is best. The Buddha answered as it truly is the questions that they asked, and by answering the questions the sage satisfied those brahmins. [152-152]

They, being satisfied by the Visionary, the Buddha, the Kinsman of the Sun, lived the spiritual life under the One with Excellent Wisdom. The Buddha taught like this in response to the questions one by one, he who practices like this can go from here to the beyond. From here to the beyond he can go by developing the supreme path. This is the

path for going to the beyond, therefore it is called The Way to the Beyond. [153-156]

Verses on the Recital of the Way to the Beyond

[Piṅgiya said:] *“I will recite the Way to the Beyond: as he saw it, so he explained: unstained, with great intelligence, the One Free from Sense Desire, the Unentangled One, the Strong One, why should he speak falsely? [156]*

Of the one who gave up stain and delusion, who gave up conceit and malevolence, come now, I will proclaim this lyric which is endowed with beauty: The Buddha, the Darkness-Dispeller, the Visionary One, who has gone to the end of the world, transcended all of existence and given up all suffering, the one pollutant-free, whose very name is truth - O Brahmin, (you are) worshipped by me. [157-158]

Just as a bird who has given up a barren woodland, might live in a forest which has much fruit, so too I have given up those of little wisdom, like a swan who has arrived at the great sea. [159]

Those who explained things to me in the past, before Gotama's teaching, saying: 'It was so, and so it will be', all that was just hearsay, all that just increased my thoughts. [160]

Alone sits the Darkness-Dispeller, the Bright One, the Light-Maker, Gotama of Great Knowledge, Gotama of Great Intelligence. He who taught the Teaching to me, which is visible, not subject to time, the end

of craving, beyond calamity, for which there is nowhere a likeness.”
[161-162]

[Bāvāri said:] *“Then why do you dwell apart from him, even for a second, Piṅgiya, from Gotama of Great Knowledge, Gotama of Great Intelligence, he who taught the Teaching to you, which is visible, not subject to time, the end of craving, beyond calamity, for which there is nowhere a likeness?”* [163-164]

[Piṅgiya said:] *“I would not dwell apart from him even for a second, brahmin, from Gotama of Great Knowledge, Gotama of Great Intelligence, he who taught the Teaching to me, which is visible, not subject to time, the end of craving, beyond calamity, for which there is nowhere a likeness. I see him in my mind as though with the eye, as I dwell heedful night and day, brahmin. Revering him I make the night pass, for that reason I think there is no dwelling apart.* [165-167]

My confidence, happiness, mind, and mindfulness, do not depart from Gotama’s teaching, whatever direction the One of Great Wisdom goes to it is that very place that I incline. [168]

I am old, without strength and feeble, because of that my body does not go there, but by an effort of thought I always go, for my mind, brahmin, is joined to him. Lying down in a quagmire I was trembling, I drifted from island to island, then I saw the Sambuddha, the Flood-Crosser, the One Pollutant-Free.” [169-170]

[The Buddha said:] “Just as Vakkali released his confidence - and Bhadrāvudha, and Āḷavi-Gotama - just like that you must release your confidence, and you will go, Piṅgiya, beyond the realm of Death.”¹

[171]

[Piṅgiya said:] “*I am more and more sure about this, having heard the sage’s word, the Cover-Remover, the Sambuddha, who is unhindered, assured in speech, who knows the great Gods, who has understood everything far and near, the Teacher who makes an end to questions in those who have doubts, and make them known. The Indestructible, the Unagitated, for which there is nowhere a likeness, surely I will go there, about this I have no doubt, thus bear me in mind as one whose heart is intent on Nibbāna.*” [172-174]

The Way to the Beyond is Finished

¹ The Buddha said this because Piṅgiya was still at the stage of Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*).