



**THEMATIC
DISCOURSES
about
NUNS**

translated by
Anandajoti Bhikkhu

The Thematic Discourses about Nuns

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Texts

BJT: Sri Lankan edition, from the Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series, Volume XIII (Colombo, 1976/2519, reprinted with corrections 2005).

Thai: Thai edition, as found on Budsir for Windows CD-ROM (version 2.0, Bangkok, 1996).

ChS: Burmese edition, as found on the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM (version 3, Iḡatpuri, no date, but = 1999).

PTS: European edition, The Sagāthavagga, ed. G. A. Somaratne, (Oxford, 1998).

Comm: Sagāthāvagga-aṭṭhakathā, as found on the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM (version 3, Iḡatpuri, no date, but = 1999).

Preface

In preparing this text and translation for publication I have divided it into a number of versions. In the Buddhist Texts and Studies section will be found the Pāḷi Text together with the variant readings. This is a more technical work dealing with the establishment of the text.

In the Texts and Translations section I present the full Text and Translation with annotations which help to explain matters that may not be clear from the text itself. I have therefore translated the Commentary, such as it is, in its entirety, which will at least give students some idea of what a Commentary is like.

In the English section there is the Translation Only, with somewhat less notes than in the Text and Translations section, which is intended for the casual reader who wants a reliable translation but is not interested in the technical matters concerning the original text itself.

I have also recorded both the English translation and the Pāḷi text, which are available on their respective pages; and can also be accessed separately on the Audio page.

The establishment of the text involved no great difficulties, and the variations are minor for the most part. Wherever necessary I have indicated why I preferred a reading, or what the relationship of the alternative reading is to the text, although there is sometimes extra information in this regard in the Text and Translation version.

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I have filled in the ellipses found in the original as I believe they would have been done by the recitor (*bhāṇaka*) during recital. Where ellipsis should be marked is very fluid between the different editions, which perhaps indicates that it was a matter for the scribe to decide, rather than a strict textual tradition.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

September 2011

The Thematic Discourses about Nuns

1. The Discourse about Āḷavikā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī at Anāthapiṇḍika's grounds in Jeta's Wood.

Then the nun Āḷavikā,¹ having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man's Wood² seeking for seclusion.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Āḷavikā, desiring to drive her out of seclusion, approached the nun Āḷavikā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Āḷavikā with a verse:

¹ Comm: *Āḷavikā* means she was born in Āḷavī and she went forth from the town of Āḷavī.

² Comm: *Blind Man's Wood*, having taken riches for the purpose of the work on the Chetiya of the Fully Awakened Kassapa, after they tore out the eyes of the Dhamma recitor named Yasodhara, who was a Noble One, five hundred thieves lost their own sight and dwelt right there because of it, and the name Blind Man's Wood came to that wood. It seems it was around a half a league on the southern side of Sāvattḥī and was guarded and protected by the King, and monks and nuns who desired seclusion would go there. Therefore seeking for bodily seclusion she approached that wood.

“There is no escape³ from the world, why do you try with seclusion?
Enjoy the sensual delights, do not be remorseful hereafter.”

Then it occurred to the nun Āḷavikā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Āḷavikā: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of seclusion, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Āḷavikā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

“There is an escape from the world, which I have attained through wisdom,⁴

You do not know that state,⁵ you Wicked one, kin of the heedless,

Sensual pleasures are like an axe,⁶ the constituent parts (like) the block,⁷

That which you say is sensual delight, in that for me there is no delight.”

³ Comm: *escape means Emancipation.*

⁴ Comm: *through wisdom means through reflection knowledge* (reflection on her attainment).

⁵ Comm: *you do not know that state means you do not know the state of Emancipation or the path going to Emancipation.*

⁶ Comm: *like an axe means the same as an axe the purpose of which is to pierce through.*

⁷ Comm: *the constituent parts (are like) the block means those constituents are like a heap on a block.*

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Āḷavikā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

2. The Discourse about Somā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Somā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Somā, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Somā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Somā with a verse:

“That place⁸ which has been attained by the seers is hard to obtain,
No woman, with her two-finger wisdom,⁹ is able to attain it.”

⁸ Comm: *place means Worthiness.*

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Then it occurred to the nun Somā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Somā: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Somā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

“What is to be made of womanhood when my mind is well-composed?

When knowledges exist,¹⁰ and Right Dhamma has been seen with insight.¹¹

For whomever thinks thus: I am a woman or a man,

Or I am something other, deserves to have Māra speak to her.”¹²

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Somā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

⁹ Comm: *two-finger wisdom* means having little wisdom, because having grabbed the cotton with her two fingers she spins thread, therefore a woman has two-finger wisdom is said.

¹⁰ Comm: *when knowledge exists* means when the knowledge of fruition attainment exists.

¹¹ Comm: *Dhamma has been seen with insight* means the Dhamma of the Four Truths has been seen with insight, or previously seeing the five constituents objectively with insight.

¹² Comm: *or I am something other* means there will be some other ‘I am’, on account of craving, conceit or views.

3. The Discourse about Kisāgotamī

Comm: *Kisāgotamī*, because of having little flesh and blood she was called thin (*Kisā*), *Gotamī* is her (clan) name. In the past it seems in a certain family in *Sāvattihī* having 80,000 in wealth it all turned to ashes. The head of the family, having not thrown away those ashes (thought): “Inevitably there will be some merit (remaining), and it will be possible to restore (the wealth) through that merit.” Having filled golden coloured vessels (with the ashes), and set them up in the market, he sat down close by. Then a certain poor family’s daughter (thinking): “Having got a halfpenny, I can carry away some wood and vegetables,” while going along the road said this to the head of the family: “You have so much wealth in the market, how much will there be in the home?” “Having seen what, dear girl, do you speak thus?” “This is pure gold!” He (thought): “She must be endowed with merit.” Having asked the place she was living, and set in order his goods at the market, he approached her mother and father and said this: “In our house there is a young boy growing up, give her to this boy.” “Why, Master, do you play with poor people (like us)?” “(I am) known as an intimate friend to the poor, give her, and she will be the wife of the head of the family,” and having taken her he led her to the house. After intercourse she became one who had borne a son. The son, at one time when he was wandering around on foot, died. Having been born in a poor family, she went to the great family (and said): “My son has come to destruction.” Being overcome by grief, she put aside the duties to her son’s body, and took his dead body and roamed about wailing in the city. One day, having drawn close to the Buddha, the One of Ten Powers, on the highway: She said: “My son has fallen ill, give some medicine, Fortunate One.” “Go, and having wandered in *Sāvattihī*, from a house where there has formerly been no

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deaths, bring a mustard seed, and that will be medicine for your son.” She entered the city, and beginning from the nearest house, she went in accordance with the Fortunate One’s words, begging for mustard seed from house to house, “Where will you find such a house?” they said. Having wandered to several homes (she understood): “It seems to be a general rule everywhere (that people die), not only my son.” Having left the corpse in a shed she asked for the going-forth. The Teacher sent her to the nunnery and said: “Give her the going-forth.” In the razor hall itself (while they were still giving her the going-forth) she attained Worthiness. In connection with this Elder: “Then Kisāgotamī...” was said.

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattthī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Kisāgotamī, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattthī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattthī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Kisāgotamī, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Kisāgotamī, and after approaching he addressed the nun Kisāgotamī with a verse:

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“Why do you, like one with a dead son, sit solitary with a tearful face,¹³

Having entered the Wood alone, do you seek for a man?”

Then it occurred to the nun Kisāgotamī: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Kisāgotamī: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Kisāgotamī having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

¹³ Comm: *with a tearful face means like someone with a tearful face.*

“I am at the end of dead sons,¹⁴ (I am) finished with men,¹⁵
I do not grieve, I do not cry, I am not afraid of you, friend.

Everywhere delight is dead,¹⁶ broken¹⁷ is the dark mass,¹⁸
Having defeated Death’s army, I live without pollutants.”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Kisāgotamī knows me!”
and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

4. The Discourse about Vijayā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattthī at
Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

¹⁴ Comm: *I am at the end of dead sons means now I am at the end, gone past, I sit aside* (such is the sub-commentarial explanation of this strange phrase). *This is what is said: just as there is a past, and end of dead sons, so I am dead to sons, now there is nothing known as a dead son.*

¹⁵ Comm: *I am one who is finished with men means for me there is an end of men, for me in whom there is an end of dead sons there is also an end of men, it is impossible now to seek for men.*

¹⁶ Comm: *everywhere delight is dead means my delight and craving for all dwellings, continuation, persistence, destinations, realms or states involving the constituents, the sense spheres or the elements is dead.*

¹⁷ Comm: *destroyed means broken through knowledge.*

¹⁸ Comm: *the mass of darkness means the the mass of ignorance.*

Then the nun Vijayā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Vijayā, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Vijayā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Vijayā with a verse:

“You are a beautiful maiden, and I am a youthful man,
Come, Sister, let us enjoy ourselves with the fivefold musical instruments.”¹⁹

Then it occurred to the nun Vijayā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Vijayā: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Vijayā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

¹⁹ Comm: *with the five musical instruments* means being endowed with the fivefold musical instruments thus: a one-faced drum, a two-faced drum, a stringed instrument, a clapper and a flute. These are translated in accordance with the sub-commentarial explanation.

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“Delightful forms, sounds, tastes, smells and touches,
I assign (them) to you,²⁰ Māra, I am not seeking for that.

With this putrid body,²¹ which is brittle²² and frail,²³
I am distressed²⁴ and ashamed,²⁵ and have rooted up sensual craving.

There are beings who reached form, and those in the formless state,
(But) those who have attained to peace:²⁶ have destroyed darkness
everywhere.”²⁷

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Vijayā knows me!” and
pained and depressed he vanished right there.

²⁰ Comm: ***I assign (them) to you*** means *I surely give all of them to you.*

²¹ Comm: ***with (this) putrid body*** means *this golden-coloured body is a putrid body which is always oozing and trickling, therefore this is said.*

²² Comm: ***brittle*** means *having the nature of brittleness.*

²³ Comm: ***frail*** means *having the nature to undergo being crushed to pieces.*

²⁴ Comm: ***I am distressed*** means *I am grieved and harassed.*

²⁵ Comm: ***I am ashamed*** means *I am abashed.*

²⁶ Comm: ***attained to peace*** means *it is said that in eight ways the mundane attainments bring peacefulness to the limbs and to sense-objects.* This is interpreting the last line as referring to only mundane attainments, which doesn't make good sense to me; there is evidently a contrast intended in the verse between those still attached to sense pleasures, form and the formless, with those (referred to in the last line) who have gone beyond.

²⁷ Comm: ***everywhere*** means *in all the form and formless worlds, the grasping nature of these two worlds and the eight attainments grasped-at in the sensual world. For me the darkness of ignorance is destroyed in these places, is what is said.*

5. The Discourse about Uppalavaṇṇā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī at Anāthapiṇḍika's grounds in Jeta's Wood.

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man's Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man's Wood, she stood at the root of a Sāla tree in full flower.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Uppalavaṇṇā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Uppalavaṇṇā with a verse:

“Approaching (a tree) blossoming from the top,²⁸ nun,
You stay alone at the root of the Sāla tree,
You are second to none in your beautiful form,²⁹

²⁸ Comm: *blossoming from the top* means from the top of the Sāla tree which was in full flower.

²⁹ Comm: *you are second to none in your beautiful form* means there is no beauty the same as your beautiful form, there is no other nun the same as you, is what is said.

Young woman, are you not afraid of the scoundrels?”

Then it occurred to the nun Uppalavaṇṇā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Uppalavaṇṇā: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Uppalavaṇṇā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

“Even if a hundred thousand scoundrels
Of such a character were to come here³⁰
Not a body-hair would shake or tremble,
Even alone I am not afraid, Māra.

³⁰ Comm: *(if) such a character were to come here means there is no affection or love found for anyone of such a character, thus they would (all) be the same to her.*

I will disappear completely or I will enter your stomach,
I will stand between (your) eyelashes:³¹ (even there) you will not see me.

I have mastery over my mind, the powers are well-developed,
I am free of all bondages, I am not afraid of you, friend!”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Uppalavaṇṇā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

6. The Discourse about Cālā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Cālā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

³¹ Comm: *between (your) eyelashes* means on the bridge of (your) nose, between (your) two eyes, I will stand, and you will not (be able to) see me.

Then the Wicked Māra approached the nun Cālā, and after approaching he said this to the nun Cālā:

“With what, nun, are you not pleased?”

“I am not pleased, friend, with birth.”

“Why is it you’re not pleased with birth? Being born one enjoys pleasures,

Just who made you agree to this:³² ‘Do not be pleased with birth, nun?’”

“For one who is born there is death, being born one feels suffering, (There is) bondage, murder, hardship,³³ therefore I am not pleased with birth.

The Awakened One taught the Dhamma, the transcendence of birth (and death),

For giving up of all suffering, he has established me in the Truth.³⁴

(There are) those beings attached to form, those (attached to) formless states,

³² Comm: *just who made you agree to this* means which fool of dull intellect made you seize on this?

³³ Comm: *hardship* means manifold calamities. Now this is what Māra said: “Just who made you agree to this?” To show how she rejects that: “No blind fool made me agree, but the greatest man in the world, the Teacher who taught the Dhamma.” (So) *The Awakened One* and so on is said.

³⁴ Comm: herein, *he has established (me) in the Truth* means he has established (me) in the highest truth, in Emancipation.

(And) those who know not cessation,³⁵ they (all) come to rebirth again.”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Cālā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

7. The Discourse about Upacālā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattḥī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Upacālā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattḥī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattḥī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra approached the nun Upacālā, and after approaching he said this to the nun Upacālā:

“Where would you, nun, like to be reborn?”

“There is nowhere, friend, I would like to be reborn.”

³⁵ Comm: *those know not cessation* means those who do not know the truth of cessation.

“The Thirty-Three gods, the Restrained gods, also the Satisfied gods,
Those gods who delight in creation, those gods who are Wielding
Power,
To those places direct your mind, there you will experience delight.”

“The Thirty-Three gods, the Restrained gods, also the Satisfied gods,
Those gods who delight in creation, those gods who are Wielding
Power,
Those bound by sensual-bondage come to Māra’s power again.³⁶

The whole of the world is in flames, the whole of the world is
blazing,³⁷
The whole of the world is burning, the whole of the world is shaking.

Not shaken, not burning, not associating with worldly folk,
Not going back to Māra’s (realm):³⁸ (for) there³⁹ my mind does not
delight.”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Upacālā knows me!” and
pained and depressed he vanished right there.

³⁶ Comm: *come to Māra's power again* means again and again they come under the power of Māra as death, Māra as defilements, Māra (personified) as the godly son.

³⁷ Comm: *blazing* means burning.

³⁸ Comm: *not going back to Māra's (realm)* means you are not going back to that place where Māra is.

8. The Discourse about Sīsupacālā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattthī at Anāthapiṇḍika's grounds in Jeta's Wood.

Then the nun Sīsupacālā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattthī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattthī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man's Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man's Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra approached the nun Sīsupacālā, and after approaching he said this to the nun Sīsupacālā:

“Which heresy, nun, are you pleased with?”

“I am not pleased, friend, with any heresy.”

“On whose account was your head shaved, as you look like an ascetic,⁴⁰

You don't rejoice in heresy, why (then) do you live like a fool?”⁴¹

³⁹ Comm: *there means in that place, in Emacipation*. This seems a little awkward, presumably she means to say: *having attained Emacipation my mind does not delight in Māra's realm*.

⁴⁰ Comm: *as you look like an ascetic means you look the same as an ascetic*.

“Outside of this⁴² there are heretics⁴³ who are stuck fast⁴⁴ in their views,

In their Dhamma I am not pleased, their Dhamma is lacking in skill.

An unmatched Awakened One is born in the Sakya family,⁴⁵

Lord of all,⁴⁶ dispelling Māra,⁴⁷ undefeated in every place.⁴⁸

Free from all things,⁴⁹ independent,⁵⁰ the Visionary who sees all,

Attained to the end of all deeds,⁵¹ free in the ending of clinging,⁵²

⁴¹ Comm: *why (then) do you live like a fool?* means why, for what reason, do you live like a fool?

⁴² Comm: *outside of this* means outside of this Teaching.

⁴³ Comm: *caught in a snare they are heretics*, the meaning is these beings have fallen into a snare of views in their minds. But the (Buddha's) Teaching is free from snares therefore it is not called a heresy, outside of this there are surely heretics. This is a play on words deriving (heresy) from (snare), which hardly works in translation.

⁴⁴ Comm: *stuck fast* means sinking down, getting attached.

⁴⁵ Comm: *now speaking in answer to “on whose account was your head shaved?” born in the Sakya family* and so on was said.

⁴⁶ Comm: *herein Lord of all* means he stands having overcome all destinations, realms or states involving the constituents, the sense spheres or the elements.

⁴⁷ Comm: *expelling, driving away Māra as death and so on he is dispelling Māra.*

⁴⁸ Comm: *undefeated in every place* means he is undefeated in the war with Māra or (undefeated) by all the passions and so on.

⁴⁹ Comm: *free from all things* means free from all constituents and so on.

⁵⁰ Comm: *independent* means independent of the dependence on craving and views.

The Fortunate One is my teacher, in his Teaching I am well-pleased.”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Sīsupacālā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

9. The Discourse about Selā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattthī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Selā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattthī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattthī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Selā, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Selā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Selā with a verse:

⁵¹ Comm: *attained to the end of all deeds* means attained to Worthiness with the complete destruction of all deeds.

⁵² Comm: *in the ending of clinging* means free from sense objects by the complete destruction of clinging in Emancipation.

“By whom was this manikin made, where is this manikin’s maker,
Where has this manikin⁵³ risen, and where does the manikin cease?”

Then it occurred to the nun Selā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Selā: “This is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Selā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

“This manikin’s not made by oneself, pain⁵⁴ is not made by another,
Through conditions it arises, conditions broken⁵⁵ it ceases.

Just as a certain seed when it has been sown in a field will grow
Through both of these (conditions): the earth’s essence and the
moisture,

So the constituents and the elements and these six sense spheres,
Through conditions (surely) arise, with conditions broken they
cease.”

⁵³ Comm: *manikin* is said in reference to selfhood.

⁵⁴ Comm: *pain* is said (because) selfhood is established on pain.

⁵⁵ Comm: *conditions broken* means through the ceasing of conditions, through deficiency of causes.

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Selā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

10. The Discourse about Vajirā

Thus I have heard:

at one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Sāvattthī at Anāthapiṇḍika’s grounds in Jeta’s Wood.

Then the nun Vajirā, having dressed in the morning time, after picking up her bowl and robe, was entering Sāvattthī for alms. After walking for alms in Sāvattthī, and returning from the alms-round after the meal, she approached the Blind Man’s Wood to pass the day, and having entered Blind Man’s Wood, she sat down at the root of a certain tree to pass the day.

Then the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in the nun Vajirā, desiring to drive her out of concentration, approached the nun Vajirā, and after approaching he addressed the nun Vajirā with a verse:

“By whom was this being made, just where is this being’s maker,
Where has this being arisen, and just where does this being cease?”

Then it occurred to the nun Vajirā: “Who is this, a human or a non-human, speaking this verse?” Then it occurred to the nun Vajirā: “This

is the Wicked Māra desiring to give rise to fear, terror, and horror in me, desiring to drive me out of concentration, who speaks this verse.”

Then the nun Vajirā having understood: This is the Wicked Māra, replied with these verses to the Wicked Māra:

“Why fall back on a ‘being’? Haven’t you come to a view, Māra?
This is just a bunch of processes, no being is to be found here.⁵⁶

Just as with a collection of parts the sound ‘chariot’ is said,
So when there are these constituents⁵⁷ a ‘being’ is determined on.⁵⁸

Only suffering⁵⁹ arises, suffering it is that persists,
Nothing other than sufferings⁶⁰ arise, just sufferings that cease.”

Then the Wicked Māra (thought): “The nun Vajirā knows me!” and pained and depressed he vanished right there.

The Thematic Discourses about Nuns are Complete.

⁵⁶ Comm: **no being is to be found here** means in this bunch of pure processes nothing known as ‘a being’ is found in the ultimate sense.

⁵⁷ Comm: **when there are these constituents** means when there are these five constituents existing then it is fixed through that state.


⁵⁸ Comm: **a being is determined on** means there is just this appellation.

⁵⁹ Comm: **suffering** means the suffering in the five constituents.

⁶⁰ Comm: **nothing other than sufferings** means except for suffering nothing else arises or ceases.

This is the summary:

Ālavikā and then Somā and Gotamī with Vijayā,
Uppalavaṇṇā, Cālā,
Upacālā, Sisupacālā, Selā with Vajirā, these ten.



Ten discourses from the Verses section of the Thematic Collection, in which eminent nuns meet with and overcome Māra, it includes some very notable exchanges.