Thag 10.2 — Thag 10:2 Ekavihāriya—“Dwelling Alone”

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/Thag/thag10_2.html

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Thag 10:2 Ekavihāriya—“Dwelling Alone”

This poem, which is attributed to King Asoka’s younger brother, falls into three parts: The first expresses his initial desire to leave the life of the palace and go into the forest; the second depicts his going forth; and the third announces his awakening. Some scholars have suggested that many of the poems dealing with events in the lives of the early Buddhist monks and nuns may have originally been intended for dramatic performance, and this poem could easily have been written with that intent. The language of the original, with its heavy use of poetic terms, certainly indicates that the author had a literary background and was writing for a sophisticated audience.

If, in front or behind,

there is no one else,
it’s extremely pleasant
for one staying alone
in the forest.

Come then! Alone
I will go to the wilderness
praised by the Awakened One
pleasant for a resolute monk
dwelling alone.

Alone,
astute in my goal,
I’ll quickly enter the grove
—refreshing,
giving rapture
to meditators—
the haunt
of elephants in rut.

When the Cool Forest’s in full flower,
in a cool mountain gorge,
having bathed my limbs
I’ll walk back & forth
alone.

Ah, when will I dwell,
alone and free from companions,
in the refreshing great forest—
my task done,
effluent-free?

As I desire to do this,

may my purpose succeed.
I myself
will bring it about.
No one can do it
for anyone else.

* * *

I myself
bind on my armor.
I will enter the grove
and will not emerge
without having attained
the end of the effluents.

While soft breezes blow—
cool,
heavily, fragrantly scented—
I'll make ignorance burst,
as I sit on a mountaintop.

In the forest covered with blossoms
or perhaps on a cool hillside,
blessed with the bliss of release,
on Giribbaja I'll delight.1

* * *

I am now he
whose resolves are fulfilled
like the moon on a full-moon night.
With effluents all
totally ended,
there is now no further becoming.

Note

1. Giribbaja is the ring of mountains surrounding Vulture’s Peak.