# Thag 16.4 — Ratthapala

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

Source: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/thag/thag.16.04.than.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

Translator's note: The verses here fall into three sections, with the first two relating to Ratthapala's story as told in MN 82. In the first, Ratthapala is addressing his father after the latter had tried to use wealth and Ratthapala's former wives to lure Ratthapala into disrobing. In the second section, Ratthapala is talking to King Koravya, who had asked him why he had ordained when he was still young and healthy, and had suffered no loss of relatives or wealth.

The third section of verses here does not occur in MN 82.

Look at the image beautified, a heap of festering wounds, shored up: ill, but the object of many resolves, where there is nothing lasting or sure.[1] Look at the form beautified with earrings & gems: a skeleton wrapped in skin, made attractive with clothes. Feet reddened with henna, a face smeared with powder: enough to deceive a fool, but not a seeker for the further shore. Hair plaited in eight pleats, eyes smeared with unguent: enough to deceive a fool, but not a seeker for the further shore. Like a newly painted unguent pot — a putrid body adorned: enough to deceive a fool, but not a seeker for the further shore. The hunter set out the snares, but the deer didn't go near the trap. Having eaten the bait, we go, leaving the hunters to weep. The hunter's snares are broken; the deer didn't go near the trap. Having eaten the bait, we go, leaving the hunters to grieve.[2]

I see in the world people with wealth who, from delusion, don't make a gift of the treasure they've gained. Greedy, they stash it away, hoping for even more sensual pleasures. A king who, by force, has conquered the world and rules over the earth to the edge of the sea, dissatisfied with the ocean's near shore, longs for the ocean's far shore as well. Kings & others — plenty of people — go to death with craving unabated. Unsated, they leave the body behind, having not had enough of the world's sensual pleasures. One's relatives weep & pull out their hair. 'Oh woe, our loved one is dead,' they cry. Carrying him off, wrapped in a piece of cloth, they place him on a pyre, then set him on fire. So he burns, poked with sticks, in just one piece of cloth, leaving all his possessions behind. They are not shelters for one who has died — not relatives, friends, or companions. His heirs take over his wealth, while the being goes on, in line with his kamma. No wealth at all follows the dead one — not children, wives, dominion, or riches. Long life can't be gotten with wealth, nor aging warded off with treasure. The wise say this life is next to nothing — impermanent, subject to change. The rich & the poor touch the touch of Death. The foolish & wise are touched by it, too. But while fools lie as if slain by their folly, the wise don't tremble when touched by the touch. Thus the discernment by which one attains to mastery, is better than wealth — for those who haven't reached mastery go from existence to existence, out of delusion, doing bad deeds. One goes to a womb & to the next world, falling into the wandering on — one thing after another — while those of weak discernment, trusting in one, also go to a womb & to the next world. Just as an evil thief caught at the break-in is destroyed by his own act, so evil people — after dying, in the next world — are destroyed by their own acts. Sensual pleasures — variegated, enticing, sweet — in various ways disturb the mind. Seeing the drawbacks in sensual objects: that's why, O king, I went forth. Just like fruits, people fall — young & old — at the break-up of the body. Knowing this, O king, I went forth. The contemplative life is better for sure.[3]

Out of conviction, I went forth equipped with the Victor's message. Blameless[4] was my going-forth: Debtless I eat my food. Seeing sensuality as burning, gold as a knife, pain in the entry into the womb & great danger in hells — seeing this peril, I was then dismayed — pierced (with dismay), then calmed on attaining fermentations' end. The Teacher has been served by me; the Awakened One's bidding, done; the heavy load, laid down; the guide to becoming,[5] uprooted. And the goal for which I went forth from home life into homelessness I've reached: the end of all fetters.

Notes

1.

This verse = Dhp 147

2.

This verse is not contained in MN 82.

3.

The verses in MN 82 end here.

4.

Avajjaa. The Burmese and Sinhalese editions of the Pali canon read avañjhaa, or "not barren."

5.

The guide to becoming is craving.

See also: MN 82