Thag 17.2 — Sariputta Thera: Keeping the Wheel Rolling

English translation by Andrew Olendzki.

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

Completeness: UNKNOWN. Entire protected source unit, including notes and verses, preserved; canonical completeness has not been independently established.

Text

Translator's note

Sariputta (also known by the name Upatissa) was the Buddha's leading follower, particularly praised for his wisdom. These verses, containing eight syllables per line, have been extracted from a longer poem of thirty seven verses preserved in the Theragatha. They describe a man who continues to spend his time in solitary meditation in the forest, even after having attained the full awakening of the arahant. The elder keeps the dharma wheel of the Buddha's teaching rolling by such dedication to meditation practice, and by exemplifying the attitude of non-attachment in all that he does. The phrase may also refer to Sariputta's pivotal role in the development of the Abhidhamma tradition.

991:

In the village or the forest, In the lowlands or the highlands; Wherever the worthy ones dwell — That terrain would be found pleasing.

992:

So pleasing (they find) the forests, Wherein most people are not pleased. Rid of passion, they will be pleased — They do not pursue mere pleasure!

998:

Settled at the root of a tree, With shaven head, clad in a robe, The elder foremost in wisdom — Upatissa just meditates.

1006:

He has become calm and at rest, Wise in speech and not self-centered; He's shaken off unwholesome states — Like wind would leaves from a tree.

1007:

He has become calm and at rest, Wise in speech and not self-centered; He has plucked off unwholesome states — Like wind would leaves from a tree.

1013:

The mighty ocean and the earth A mountain, or even the wind Are not adequate similes — For the teacher's splendid release.

1014:

The elder keeps the wheel rolling, Possessing great wisdom, composed; And just like earth, water and fire, — He's neither attached nor opposed.