Ud 4.5 — Naga Sutta: The Bull Elephant

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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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; source ellipsis or repetition-omission statement retained. Canonical repetitions were not reconstructed.

Text

Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Kosambi at the Ghosita monastery. At that time the Lord was living hemmed in by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, by male and female lay followers, by kings and royal ministers, by sectarian teachers and their disciples, and he lived in discomfort and not at ease. Then the Lord thought: "At present I am living hemmed in by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis... by sectarian teachers and their disciples, and I live in discomfort and not at ease. Suppose I were to live alone, secluded from the crowd?"

Then the Lord, having put on his robe in the forenoon and taken his bowl and outer cloak, entered Kosambi for almsfood. Having walked for almsfood in Kosambi and returned after the meal, he set his lodging in order by himself, took his bowl and cloak, and without informing his attendant or taking leave of the Order of bhikkhus, he set off alone, without a companion, for Parileyyaka. Walking on tour by stages, he arrived at Parileyyaka and stayed near Parileyyaka in a protected forest at the foot of an auspicious sal-tree.

Now a certain bull elephant was living hemmed in by elephants and she-elephants, by elephant calves and sucklings; he ate grass with the tips pulled off and they ate the branches he had broken down. He drank muddied water and on going down and coming out of the water he was jostled by she-elephants; and he lived in discomfort and not at ease. Then that bull elephant thought: "At present I am living hemmed in by elephants and she-elephants, by elephant calves and sucklings; I eat grass with the tips pulled off and they eat the branches which I break down. I drink muddied water and on going down and coming out of the water I am jostled by she-elephants; and I live in discomfort and not at ease. Suppose I were to live alone, secluded from the crowd?"

So that bull elephant left the herd and went to Parileyyaka, to the protected forest, and approached the Lord at the foot of the auspicious sal-tree. On reaching the place where the Lord was staying that bull elephant kept the place free of grass and brought water with his trunk for the Lord's use.

Then, while the Lord was in solitude and seclusion, this thought arose in his mind: "Formerly I was living hemmed in by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis... and I was living in discomfort and not at ease. But now I live not hemmed in by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis... in comfort and at ease." And also this thought arose in that bull elephant's mind: "Formerly I was living hemmed in by elephants and she-elephants... and I was living in discomfort and not at ease, but now I live not hemmed in by elephants and she-elephants... I eat unbroken grass and (others) do not eat the branches which I break down. I drink clear water and on going down and coming out of the water I am not jostled by she-elephants, and I live in comfort and at ease."

Then the Lord, on observing his own solitude, understood with his mind the thought in the mind of that bull elephant, and uttered on that occasion this inspired utterance:

This unites mind with mind, The perfected one and the bull elephant With tusks as long as chariot-poles: That each delights in being alone in the forest.