

16. Then the Venerable Ananda asked the Blessed One : “What can be the ground, Lord, for your refusal to allow women to take Parivraja.

17. “The Lord knows that the Brahmins hold that the Shudras and women cannot reach moksha (Salvation) because they are unclean and inferior. They do therefore not allow Shudras and women to take Parivraja. Does the Blessed One hold the same view as the Brahmins ?

18. Has not the Blessed One allowed the Shudras to take Parivraja and join the Sangh in the same way he has done to the Brahmins ? What is the ground, Lord, for treating women differently ?

19. Does the Blessed One hold that women are not capable of reaching Nibbana under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Blessed One ?”

20. The Blessed One replied : “Ananda ! Do not misunderstand me. I hold that women are as much capable as men in the matter of reaching Nibbana. Ananda ! do not misunderstand me, I am not an upholder of the doctrine of sex inequality. My rejection of Mahaprajapati’s request is not based on sex inequality. It is based on practical grounds.”

21. “I am happy, Lord, to know the real reason. But must the Lord refuse her request because of practical difficulties ? Would not such an act bring the Dhamma into discredit and make it open to the charge of upholding sex inequality ? Could not the Lord devise some rules to get over such practical difficulties by which the Lord is worried ?”

22. “Well, Ananda, I grant if Mahaprajapati insists that women must be allowed to take Parivraja under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by me. But it shall be subject to eight conditions. Let Mahaprajapati Gotami take upon herself the responsibility of enforcing the Eight Chief Rules. That will be her initiation.”

23. Then the Venerable Ananda, when he learnt from the Blessed One these Eight Chief Rules, went to Mahaprajapati Gotami and told her all that the Blessed One had said.





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24. “Just, Ananda, as a man or a woman, when young and of tender years, accustomed to adorn himself, would, when he had bathed his head, receive with both hands a garland of lotus flowers, or of jasmine flowers or of stimutaka flowers, and place it on the top of his head ; even so do I, Ananda, take upon me these Eight Chief Rules, never to be transgressed during my lifelong,” said Mahaprajapati to Ananda.

25. Then the Venerable Ananda returned to the Blessed One, and bowed down before him, and took his seat, on one side. And, so sitting, the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: “Mahaprajapati Gotami, Lord, has taken upon herself the responsibility for the enforcement of the Eight Chief Rules, she may therefore be regarded as having received the Upasampada initiation,” (entry into the Sangha).

26. Now Mahaprajapati received ordination, and 500 Sakya ladies who had come with her were also ordained at the same time. Thus ordained great Prajapati came before the Master, and saluting him, stood on one side and the Blessed One taught her the Dhamma, the doctrine and the discipline.

27. The other five hundred Bhikkhunis were instructed by Nandaka, one of the disciples of the Blessed One.

28. Among the Sakya women who became Bhikkhunis along with Mahaprajapati was Yeshodhara. After her initiation she came to be known as Bhadda Kaccana.

§2. *Conversion of Prakrati, a Chandalika*

1. Once the Blessed Lord was living in Shravasti in the Jetavana Arama of Anathpindika.

2. It so happened that Ananda, his disciple, had gone into the city to beg for alms. After eating his food Ananda was going to the river for drinking water.

3. He saw a girl on the river bank filling her pot. Ananda asked her to give him some water.

4. The girl, whose name was Prakrati, refused, saying she was a Chandali.

5. Ananda said, "I am concerned with water. I am not concerned with your caste." The girl then gave him some water from her pot.

6. Thereafter Ananda left for Jetavana. The girl followed him and saw where he was staying and found that his name was Ananda and that he was a follower of the Buddha.

7. On returning home she told her mother Matangi what had happened and falling on the ground started weeping.

8. The mother asked for the cause of her weeping. The girl told the whole story, and said, "If you wish to marry me I can only marry Ananda. I will not marry anybody else."

9. The mother started on an inquiry. On return she told the girl that such a marriage was impossible for Ananda was under a vow of celibacy.

10. On hearing this news the girl was filled with extreme sorrow and gave up food. She was not prepared to take things as though it was a decree of fate. So she said: "Mother, you know the art of sorcery, don't you? Why don't you employ it to achieve our purpose?" The mother said, "I will see what can be done."

11. Matangi invited Ananda to her house for a meal. The girl became very happy. Matangi then told Ananda that her daughter was very anxious to marry him. Ananda replied, "I am vowed to be celibate and therefore I cannot marry any woman."

12. "If you do not marry my daughter, she will commit suicide, so attached she is to you," Matangi told Ananda. "But I cannot help," replied Ananda.

13. Matangi went inside and told her daughter that Ananda refused to marry her.

14. The girl cried: "Mother, where is your sorcery?" The mother said, "My sorcery cannot win against the Tathagata."





15. The girl shouted and said, "Close the door and do not allow him to go out. I shall see that he becomes my husband this very night."

16. The mother did what the girl wanted her to do. As night fell the mother brought in the room a bed. The girl, dressed in her best, stepped in. But Ananda remained unmoved.

17. The mother at last used her sorcery. As a result a fire broke out in the room. The mother then held Ananda by his clothes and said, "If you will not agree to marry my daughter, I will throw you in this fire." However, Ananda did not yield, and the mother and the daughter feeling helpless, left him free.

18. Ananda on his return told the Blessed Lord all that had happened.

19. On the second day the girl came to Jetavana in search of Ananda. Ananda was going out for alms. Ananda saw her and wanted to avoid her. But the girl followed him wherever he went.

20. When Ananda returned to Jetavana he found the girl waiting at the door of his Vihar.

21. Ananda told the Blessed One how the girl was pursuing him. The Blessed One sent for her.

22. When the girl appeared before him the Blessed One asked her why she was pursuing Ananda. The girl replied that she was intent on marrying him "I have heard he is unmarried and I am also unmarried."

23. The Bhagavan said, "Ananda is a Bhikku and he has no hair on his head. If you can get yourself clean shaven I shall see what could be done."

24. The girl replied, "I am prepared for it." The Bhagavan said, "You must get your mother's permission for undergoing tonsure."

25. The girl returned to her mother and said, "Mother! I have achieved what you failed to achieve. The Bhagavan has promised to get me married to Ananda if I undergo tonsure."

26. The mother grew angry and said, "You must not do that. You are my daughter and you must keep hair. Why are you so eager to marry a Shramana

like Ananda. I can get you married to a better man.”

27. She replied, “I will either die or marry Ananda. There is no third alternative for me.”

28. The Mother said, “Why are you insulting me?” The girl said, “If you love me you must let me do as I wish.”

29. The mother withdrew her objection and the girl underwent tonsure.

30. Then the girl presented herself before the Blessed Lord saying, “I have tonsured my head as directed by you.”

31. The Blessed Lord then asked her, “What do you want? What part of his body you cherish?” The girl said, “I am in love with his nose, I am in love with his mouth, I am in love with his ears, I am in love with his voice, I am in love with his eyes and I am in love with his gait.”

32. The Blessed Lord then said to the girl, “Do you know that the eyes are the home of tears, the nose is the home of dirt, the mouth is the home of spit, the ear is the home of dirt and the body is the container of dung and urine.”

33. “When men and women come together they procreate children. But where there is birth there is death also; where there is death there is sorrow also. My dear girl, what are you going to get by marrying Ananda. I do not know.”

34. The girl began to cogitate and agreed that there was no purpose in her marriage with Ananda on which she was so intent and she told the Blessed Lord accordingly.

35. After saluting the Blessed Lord the girl said: “Owing to ignorance I was going in pursuit of Ananda. My mind is now enlightened. I am like a sailor whose ship after a mishap has reached the other bank. I am like an unprotected aged person who has found protection. I am like the blind who has got new sight. The Blessed Lord by his wise words of advice has awakened me from my sleep.”

36. Blessed art thou, Prakrati, for though you are a Chandaliika you will be a model for noblemen





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and noblewomen. You are of low caste, but Brahmins will learn a lesson from you. Swerve not from the path of justice and righteousness and you will outshine the royal glory of queens on the throne.”

37. The marriage having failed, the only course for her was to join the Bhikkhuni Sangh.

38. Having expressed her wish she was admitted into it, though she belonged to the lowest class.

PART VIII

Conversion of the Fallen and the Criminals

1. Conversion of a Vagabond.
2. Conversion of Angulimala, the Robber.
3. Conversion of Other Criminals.
4. Risk of Conversion.

§ 1. *Conversion of a Vagabond*



1. There was in olden times a certain disorderly person living in Rajagraha, who neither revered his parents nor paid respect to his superiors, but always had resort to sacrifice and worship of the sun and moon and fire when he went wrong, hoping thereby to get merit, and feel happy in himself.

2. But notwithstanding all his bodily exercises, in worship and offerings, he found no peace, even after three years' incessant perseverance.

3. He at length resolved to go to Shravasti to inquire of the Buddha. Arrived there, and seeing the glory of his person, he fell down at his feet, and said how he was pleased.

4. Then the Lord explained the folly of animal sacrifice, and the uselessness of all such exercises where the heart was untouched, and where there was no final reverence or dutiful behaviour to those to whom it belonged; and in conclusion recited certain gathas, which resplendent with glory, lit up the place and all the surrounding country with the brightness of his presence.

5. On this, the villagers, and especially the parents of the children, came near to worship him.

6. On seeing the parents, and hearing their account of the children, Buddha smiled, and recited these gathas.

7. "The great man is entirely free from covetous desire; he wells in a place of light himself enlightened. Although perchance he meets with sorrow, he rejoices; without consternation, he exhibits his wisdom.

8. "The wise man (bhadra) concerns himself with no worldly business; he desires neither wealth, children, or possessions (land), always carefully observing the precepts, and walking in the way of supreme wisdom, he hankers not after strange doctrine (or wealth or honour).

9. "The wise man, knowing the character of instability, as a tree in the midst of sand (uses every effort) to change his friend whose mind is unfixed, and to bring him back from impurity to virtue (purity)."



§ 2. *Conversion of Angulimala, the Robber*

1. There was, in the realm of Pasenadi, king of Kosala, a robber named Angulimala, a ruffian whose hands were red with blood, who was always killing and wounding, and showed no mercy to any living creature. Because of him, what had been villages were villages no more, what had been townships were townships no more, and what had been countryside was countryside no more.

2. From every human being whom he slew, he took a finger to make for himself a necklace, and so got his name of "Necklace of Fingers."

3. Once when the Lord was staying in Shravasti in Jeta's grove he had heard of the ravages committed by the robber Angulimala. The Blessed Lord decided to convert him into a righteous man. So one day after taking his meal and after putting away his bedding and then, with robes and bowl, set out on his journey to find the robber Angulimala.

4. Seeing him journeying thither, neatherds, goatherds, ploughmen and wayfarers called out: "Don't go that way, recluse! It will take you to the robber Angulimala.

5. "Why, even when, ten, twenty, thirty, or forty people band themselves together to travel this road, the whole company falls into the robber's hands !" But, without a word, the Lord held on to his way.

6. A second time, and yet a third time those near there and the rest repeated their warning; but still, without a word, the Lord went his way.

7. From some way off the robber saw the Lord coming and marvelled exceedingly that, where even companies of ten to fifty travellers dare not come his way, this solitary recluse should be seen to be forcing his way alone; and the robber was minded to slay 'this recluse.' So, armed with sword and buckler and with his bow and quiver, the robber followed up the Lord's trail.

8. The Lord, while he himself was proceeding at

his wonted pace, the robber, for all his efforts, could not catch him up.

9. Thought the robber: "This is a wonderful and marvellous thing. Heretofore, I could always overtake an elephant, or horse, or carriage, or deer, when going full speed; and yet here am I unable, despite all my efforts, to overtake this recluse while he proceeds at his wonted pace." So he stopped and shouted to the Lord to stop.



10. When the two met the Lord said: "I have stopped, Angulimala, for your sake. Will you stop following your career of an evil doer? I have been pursuing you in order to win you over, to cover you to the path of righteousness. The good in you is not yet dead. If you will only give it a chance it will transform you."

11. Angulimala felt overcome by the words of the Blessed One, saying, "At last this sage has tracked me down."

12. "And now that thy hallowed words ask me to renounce evil deeds forever, I am prepared to give myself a trial," replied Angulimala.

13. Angulimala threw into a deep abyss the string of his victims' fingers which he wore round his neck and fell at the Master's feet and craved admission to the Brotherhood.

14. The Lord, the guide of gods and men, said: "Almsman, follow me"; and almsman since that summons Angulimala did become.

15. With Angulimala as his almsman in attendance, the Lord now proceeded on his way to the pleasance in Shravasti. At this very time the portals of King Pasenadi's inner palace were beset by a huge crowd loudly shouting that in the realm he had conquered there was a robber named Angulimala, a ruffian who was committing ravages and was killing and wounding innocent people and who took pride in wearing a necklace made of fingers of victims whom he slew. "Suppress him, sire," they cried. Pasenadi promised to run him down to earth. But he failed.

16. One morning King Pasenadi went to the



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pleasance to see the Lord. The Blessed Lord inquired: "What is the matter, sire? Is there trouble with Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha, or with Licchavis of Vesali or with any other hostile power?"

17. "No trouble at all of that sort, sir. In my realms there is a robber named Angulimala who is infesting my territories and harassing my subjects. I want to suppress him but I have failed."

18. "If now, sire, you were to see Angulimala with his hair and beard off, in the yellow robes, as a pilgrim who kills not steals not, lies not, eats but one meal a day, and leads the higher life in virtue and goodness,—what would you do to him?"

19. "Sir, I would salute him, or rise to meet him or would invite him to be seated or invite him to accept robes and other requisites, or I would extend to him the defence, protection and safeguards which are his due. But how could the shadow of such virtue ever extend to one so wicked and depraved?"

20. At that moment the Reverend Angulimala was seated quite close to the Lord, who stretching forth his right arm, said: "This, sire, is Angulimala!"

21. At this the king in his alarm became dumbfounded, with every hair of his body standing erect. Seeing this, the Lord said, "Fear not, sire; fear not; there is no cause for fear here."

22. So the king's fears and alarm abated; and across to the reverend Angulimala he went, saying: "Is your reverence indeed Angulimala?" "Yes, sire."

23. "What sire, was your father's family, and your mother's?" "My father was a Gagga, sire, and my mother a Mantani."

24. "Be of good cheer, Gagga Mantani-putta; I will take care to supply you with all requisites."

25. Now at the time the Reverend Angulimala having pledged to be resident in the wilds, subsisting on alms, and wearing clothes from the dust heap not exceeding three in number, he declined the king's offer on the ground that he had already got his full three robes.

26. Then the king went across to the Lord and

after salutations seated himself to the one side, saying; “It is wonderful, sir, it is marvellous, what a tamer of the untamed the Lord is, how he quells the unquelled, and how he calms the uncalmed ! Here is one whom I could not subdue with cudgel and sword; but without either cudgel or sword the Lord has subdued him! And now, sir, I must be going, for I have much to do and attend to.”



27. “When Your Majesty pleases.” Then, rising from his seat, the king saluted the Lord with deep reverence and withdrew.

28. One day when, duly robed and bowl in hand, Angulimala had gone into Shravasti for alms, he was hit by a clod flung by one man, by a club flung by a second and by a potsherd flung by a third, so that it was with a broken head streaming with blood, with his bowl smashed, and with his cloak in tatters, that he presented himself before the Lord. Seeing him drawing near, the Lord said to Angulimala: “Endure it all, endure it all.”

29. Thus did Angulimala the robber become a righteous man by accepting the teachings of the Buddha.

30. Expressing the joy of the bliss of deliverance he said: “Who shows zeal, where zeal was none, who with virtue clokes his past, who in youth to Buddha cleaves, he, like the moon, floods earth with light.

31. “Let my foes hear this gospel, embrace this creed and follow wisdom’s sons who cleave to it. Let my foes hear in season, love’s message which is meek forbearance—and conform their lives to it.

32. “As ‘ Finger Necklace,’ I, bandit, lived and whirled downstream, till He brought me to land. As ‘Finger Necklace,’ I was steeped in blood; saved now am I.”

§ 3. *Conversion of Other Criminals*

1. There was to the south of Rajagraha a great mountain, distant from the city about 200 li.

2. Through this mountain there was a pass,



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deep and lonely, through which the road to South India lay.

3. Five hundred robbers had taken up their abode in this defile, who used to murder and rob all travellers that passed that way.

4. The king had vainly sent his forces to capture them, but they always escaped.

5. The Buddha, residing in the neighbourhood, and considering the case of these men, that they understood not the nature of their conduct, and that although he had come into the world to teach them, yet their eyes had not seen him, nor their ears heard the tidings of his law, he resolved to go to them.

6. Consequently he transformed himself into a man richly dighted, on a well-caparisoned steed, with his sword and bow, with bags of silver and gold on his saddle-bow, and precious stones studding his horse's bravery.

7. On entering the defile loud neighed his steed. On hearing the sound the 500 robbers started up, and spying the traveller, exclaimed, "Never have we had such a prospect of booty; let us be up, and capture him!"

8. So they proceeded to surround the traveller, with a view to prevent his escape; but on seeing him they fell on the ground.

9. On their falling to the ground, they exclaimed, "What God is this?" "What God is this?"

10. On this the traveller began to explain that such hurts and pains as they give and receive were trivial compared with the pain caused by the sorrow that rules the world, and the wounds of unbelief and doubt, and that nought but the wisdom resulting from earnest attention (hearing) to the Scriptures could heal such wounds; and then he added these words and said :

11. "There is no painful wound so bad as sorrow—no piercing arrow so sharp as folly. Nothing can remedy these but an earnest attention to religious instruction. From this the blind receive sight, the deluded are enlightened.

12. "Men are guided and led by this, as eyes, given to them without eyes.

13. "This, then, is able to dispel unbelief, to remove sorrow, to impart joy; the highest wisdom is the lot of those who "hear."

14. "This is the title of him who has acquired the greatest merit (most to be revered)."

15. On hearing this the robbers repented of their evil lives, and the arrows, of themselves, left their bodies, and their wounds were healed.

16. They then became disciples, and obtained rest and peace.



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§ 4. *Risk of Conversion*

1. In olden times, Buddha was residing in a country about 500 li from Rajagraha, full of mountains. In these mountains there lived a certain clan of about 122 persons, who occupied themselves in hunting, and fed themselves on the flesh of the animals they killed.

2. (Buddha goes to the place and converts the women, who were left alone during the day, whilst their husbands were hunting, and then adds these lines.)

3. "He who is humane does not kill (or, it is humane not to kill) ; he is ever able to preserve (his own ?) life.

4. "This principle (chu) is imperishable; whoever observes it, no calamity shall betide that man.

5. "Politeness, indifference to wordly things, hurting no one, without place for annoyance—this is the character of the Brahma Heaven (or of Brahma Deva).

6. "Ever exercising love towards the infirm ; pure, according to the teaching of Buddha ; knowing when sufficient has been had ; knowing when to stop,—this is to escape (the recurrence of) birth and death."

The women, having heard these words, were converted, and on the men's return, although they



wished at first to kill Buddha, they were restrained by their wives ; and, listening to these words of love, they also were converted.

7. And then he added these lines.

8. "There are eleven advantages which attend the man who practices mercifulness, and is tender to all that lives.

9. "His body is always in health (happy); he is blessed with peaceful sleep, and when engaged in study he is also composed."

10. "He has no evil dreams, he is protected by Heaven (Devas) and loved by man ; he is unmolested by poisonous things, and escapes the violence of war; he is unharmed by fire or water.

11. "He is successful wherever he lives, and when dead goes to the Heaven of Brahma. These are the eleven."

12. Having uttered these words, both men and women were admitted into the company of his disciples, and obtained rest.

BOOK III

What the Buddha Taught

- Part I — His Place in His Dhamma.
- Part II — Different Views of the Buddha's Dhamma.
- Part III — What is Dhamma.
- Part IV — What is Not Dhamma.
- Part V — What is Saddhamma

PART I

His Place in His Dhamma

1. The Buddha claimed no place for Himself in His Own Dhamma.
2. The Buddha did not promise to give salvation. He said He was Marga Data (Way Finder) and not Moksha Data (Giver of Salvation).
3. The Buddha did not claim any Divinity for Himself or for His Dhamma. It was discovered by man for man. It was not a Revelation.

