

THE VERSES OF THE ELDERS CHAPTER 18

vv. 1051 – 1090

Mahā Kassapa Thera

Don't go around as the leader of a crowd,
it's distracting, hard to gain samādhi;
'solidarity with the multitude is oppressive'
– having seen thus, don't take a shine to a crowd. 1051

The sage doesn't mingle with families,
it's distracting, hard to gain samādhi;
he, the striver greedy for tastes
neglects his aim – what's conducive to ease. 1052

He has sensed it indeed as 'sludge',
this reverence and honour among families;
a subtle dart hard to extract,
prominence is hard given-up by the wretch. 1053

I descended from my dwelling
and entered the city for alms:
a man with leprosy was eating.
Respectfully I wait for him. 1054

With his charred rotten hand
he brought a morsel near
to drop the morsel in
– his fingers here broke off. 1055

Against the base of a wall
I ate that morsel
and while eating, or having eaten,
loathing could not be found in me. 1056

Gathering alms for food,
fermented urine as medicine,
the root of a tree for a lodging,
and a robe of cast-off cloth:
having risen to this
I am really a man of the four directions. 1057

Where one may find difficulties
climbing the mountain,
an heir to the Awakened One,
mindful and circumspect,
supported by his psychic power,
Kassapa ascends. 1058

Returning from alms-round
Kassapa climbs the mountain;
without clinging he meditates,
fearful dangers abandoned. 1059

Returning from alms-round
Kassapa climbs the mountain;
without clinging he meditates,
quenched amongst those getting burned. 1060

Returning from alms-round
Kassapa climbs the mountain;
without clinging he meditates,
uncompulsive, his duty done. 1061

Strung with garlands of musk-rose
these regions are the heart's delight,
with the tuskers' delightful trumpeting,
these crags delight me. 1062

The blue-coloured splendour of clouds,
cool, clear crystal springs,
awash with red ladybugs
these crags delight me. 1063

The blue clouded peaks
like fine gabled mansions,
the delightful eagle's cry,
these crags delight me. 1064

The rain on the ground is a delight,
these mountains the resort of seers,
with the piercing lament of the peacocks
these crags delight me. 1065

Suitable for desiring to meditate,
mindful, taking my stand to fight.
Suitable for me, desiring the goal,
for a bhikkhu taking a stand. 1066

Suitable for me, desiring comfort,
for a bhikkhu taking a stand to fight.
Suitable for me, desiring endeavour,
for one who's such, taking his stand. 1067

Clothed in blue-flowering flax
like the sky thatched with cloud,
strewn with myriad flocks of birds,
these crags delight me. 1068

Not strewn with householders
but a resort for droves of wild deer,
strewn with myriad flocks of birds
these crags delight me. 1069

Clear-flowing waters and rocky ravines, the haunt of wild gibbons and deer, imperial mosses carpet the streams, these crags delight me.	1070	But the unpretentious, down-to-earth, skilled in sense restraint, is adorned in off-cast cloth like a lion in a mountain cave.	1081
Not with the five-fold musical instruments is there such delight for me, as the primal mind's rightly seeing into the Dhamma.	1071	Once many devas of majesty and psychic power, ten thousand devas – all of Brahma's retinue –	1082
Don't get involved in a lot of work, don't waste energy socialising; he, the striver greedy for tastes neglects his aim – what's conducive to ease.	1072	approached the Lieutenant of the Dhamma while in steady, mighty meditation; they paid respects to Sāriputta and stood with hands in añjali:	1083
Don't get involved in a lot of work, avoid what doesn't lead to the goal; wearied with work the body gets tired and one afflicted knows no calm.	1073	"Homage to this thoroughbred man! Homage to this superior man! We can't discern just what there is for a basis on which he meditates!	1084
By merely flapping one's lips one does not even see oneself – going around stiff-necked thinking, "I am better."	1074	"Awakened ones are so amazing – how deep is their dominion! Discern it we cannot, although we come as hair-splitting marksmen!"	1085
Not better, but better all the same the fool conceives himself; the wise do not praise him, the man with 'stiff-neck' mind.	1075	Thus did that group of devas honour one worthy of honour; having seen Sāriputta at that time, they say Kappina could only smile.	1086
He who – "I am better", or "better I am not", or "I am worse or equal" – remains unmoved in modes of pride,	1076	As long endures this Buddha-field – excepting the mighty Sage himself – I am supreme in divestiture, the likes of me cannot be found.	1087
it is said of that discerning one well-steadied is he in virtue, with awareness yoked to calm, and he is praised by the wise.	1077	The Great Teacher has been served by me, the Buddha's teaching has been done; the burden has been abanded and further being is destroyed.	1088
In whatever spiritual people respect cannot be found, they are far from true Dhamma – as the earth is from the sky.	1078	Not in robes, nor in eating, nor in laying down to rest, nothing sticks to the immeasurable Gotama. As the lotus leaf remains unstained as the water rolls away, the three levels of being have all been left behind.	1089
But one who – to shame and conscience – is ever rightly predisposed, their holy life comes to growth and further being is destroyed.	1079	Close-quartered mindfulness for his neck, the mighty Sage has hands of faith, the mighty Knower's head is wisdom: ever fully quenched he goes.	1090
The pretentious, inflated bhikkhu though robed in cast-off cloth – like a monkey in a lion's skin – is not adorned on that account.	1080	Mahā-Kassapo thero uddānaṃ	