Thag 10.3 — Mahākappina

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Verses of the Senior Monks 10.3

The Book of the Tens

Chapter One

Mahākappina

If you’re prepared for the future,

both the good and the bad,

then those, whether enemies or well-wishers,

who examine you for weakness will see none.

One who has fulfilled, developed,

and gradually consolidated

mindfulness of breathing

as it was taught by the Buddha:

they shine on this world,

like the moon freed from clouds.

Yes, my mind is clean,

limitless and well-developed;

it has broken through and been uplifted—

it radiates in every direction.

A wise person lives on

even after loss of wealth;

but without gaining wisdom,

even a rich person doesn’t really live.

Wisdom questions what is learned;

wisdom grows fame and reputation;
a person united with wisdom
finds happiness even among sufferings.
It’s not a teaching just for today;
it isn’t incredible or amazing.
When you’re born, you die—
what’s amazing about that?
For anyone who is born,
death always follows after life.
Everyone who is born here dies here;
such is the nature of living creatures.
The things that are useful for the living
are of no use for the dead—not fame, not celebrity,
not praise by ascetics and brahmins.
For the dead, there is only weeping.
And weeping impairs the eye and the body;
complexion, strength, and intelligence decline.
Your enemies rejoice;
but your well-wishers are not happy.
So you should wish that those who stay in your family
have intelligence and learning,
and do their duty through the power of wisdom,
just as you’d cross a full river by boat.