Thag 17.1 — Phussa

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Text

Verses of the Senior Monks 17.1

The Book of the Thirties

Chapter One

Phussa

Seeing many who inspire confidence,

evolved and well-restrained,

the seer of the Paṇḍara clan,

asked the one known as Phussa:

“In future times,

what desire and motivation

and behavior will people have?

Please answer my question.”

“Listen to my words,

O seer known as a Paṇḍara,

and remember them carefully,

I will describe the future.

In the future many will be

angry and hostile,

offensive, stubborn, and devious,

jealous, holding divergent views.

Imagining they understand the depths of the teaching,

they resort to the near shore.

Superficial and disrespectful toward the teaching,

they lack respect for one another.
In the future
many dangers will arise in the world.
Idiots will defile
the Dhamma that was taught so well.
Though bereft of good qualities,
unlearned prattlers, too sure of themselves,
will become powerful
in running Saṅgha proceedings.
Though possessing good qualities,
the conscientious and unbiased, acting in the proper spirit,
will become weak
in running Saṅgha proceedings.
In the future, simpletons will accept
currency and gold,
fields and land, goats and sheep,
and bonded servants, male and female.
Fools finding fault in others,
but unsteady in their own ethics,
will wander about, insolent,
like cantankerous beasts.
They'll be haughty,
wrapped in robes of blue;
deceivers and flatterers, pompous and fake,
they'll wander as if they were noble ones.
With hair sleeked back with oil,
fickle, their eyes painted with eyeshadow,
they'll travel on the high-road,
wrapped in robes of ivory color.

The deep-dyed ocher robe,
worn without disgust by the free,
they will come to loathe,
besotted by white clothes.
They'll want lots of possessions,
and be lazy, lacking energy.
Weary of the forest,
they'll stay within villages.
Being unrestrained, they'll keep company with
those who acquire profit,
and who always enjoy wrong livelihood,
following their example.
They won't respect those
who don't get lots of stuff,
and they won't associate with the attentive,
even though they're very amiable.
Disparaging their own banner,
dyed a vermilion color,
some will wear the white banner
of those of other religions.
Then they'll have no respect
for the ocher robe.
The mendicants will not reflect
on the nature of the ocher robe.
This awful lack of reflection
was unthinkable to the elephant,
who was overcome by suffering,
inflicted by an arrow strike.
Then the six-tusked elephant,

seeing the deep-dyed banner of the perfected ones,
straight away spoke these verses
connected with the goal.
‘One who, not free of stains themselves,
would wear the robe stained in ocher,
bereft of self-control and truth:
they are not worthy of the ocher robe.
One who’s purged all their stains,
steady in ethics,
possessing truth and self-control:
they are truly worthy of the ocher robe.’
Devoid of virtue, a simpleton,
wild, doing what they like,
their minds astray, indolent:
they are not worthy of the ocher robe.
One accomplished in ethics,
free of greed, serene,
their heart’s intention pure:
they are truly worthy of the ocher robe.
The haughty, insolent fool,
who has no ethics at all,
is worthy of a white robe—
what use is an ocher robe for them?
In the future, monks and nuns
with corrupt hearts, lacking regard for others,
will disparage those
with hearts of loving-kindness.
Though trained in wearing the robe
by senior monks,

simpletons will not listen,
wild, doing what they like.
With that kind of attitude to training,
those fools won’t respect each other,
or take any notice of their mentors,
like a wild colt with its charioteer.
Even so, in the future,
this will be the practice
of monks and nuns
when the latter days have come.
Before this frightening future arrives,
be easy to admonish,
courteous in speech,
and respect one another.
Have hearts of love and compassion,
and please do keep your precepts.
Be energetic, resolute,
and always staunchly vigorous.
Seeing negligence as fearful,
and diligence as a sanctuary,
develop the eightfold path,
realizing the state free of death.”
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