

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

3. The Canon of Higher Teaching - Commentaries
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PaliVerse

4. Commentary on the Designation of Individuals

Canon of the Higher Teaching

Commentary on the Designation of Individuals

The treatise of subtle meaning, the illuminator of the classification of elements;

The Teacher, having taught the treatise on elements by name, in the abode of the gods.

Immediately after that, the Conqueror, the illumination of the classification of descriptions;

He, the foremost person in the world, spoke the Designation of Human Types.

Since the occasion for its exposition has now arrived;

Therefore I shall explain it - listen to that with composure.

1. Explanation of the Matrix

1. There are six descriptions - the description of aggregates, etc. the description of persons - this is the synopsis of the Designation of Human Types. Therein, "six" is a delimitation by number. By that, he shows in brief the delimitation of descriptions by way of counting those phenomena which he wishes to describe here. "Descriptions" is an indication of the defined phenomena. Therein, in the passage where it says "he tells, teaches, makes known, establishes," describing, showing, elucidating is called description. In the passage where it says "well laid down beds and chairs," setting up, placing is called description. Here both are applicable. For "six descriptions" means six describings, six showings and elucidations; six settings up and placings is also what is intended here. For the concept-as-name both shows those various phenomena and places them in those various categories.

But "the description of aggregates" and so on is the showing of the own forms of those descriptions in brief. Therein, the describing, showing, elucidating, setting up, and placing of the aggregates as 'aggregates' is called the description of aggregates. The describing, showing, elucidating, setting up, and placing of the sense bases as 'sense bases,' of the elements as 'elements,' of the truths as 'truths,' of the faculties as 'faculties,' of persons as 'persons' is called the description of persons.

But according to the commentarial method independent of the canonical text, there are another six descriptions - the description of the existent, the description of the non-existent, the description of the non-existent by the existent, the description of the existent by the non-existent, the description of the existent by the existent, and the description of the non-existent by the non-existent. Therein, the describing of a phenomenon that is existing, real, and arisen in terms of highest truth and ultimate

reality, just as the wholesome and unwholesome, is called the description of the existent. Likewise, the describing of what is non-existent, established merely through popular language, such as woman, man, and so on, is called the description of the non-existent. The describing of what is in every way unascertainable, being merely a subject matter of speech, such as the fifth truth and so on, or the primordial person of the sectarians and so on, is also just a description of the non-existent. But that does not fall within the scope of the Dispensation, so it is not taken up here. Thus the remaining should be understood by way of the permutation of these existents and non-existents. For in such terms as 'possessor of the threefold true knowledge' and 'possessor of the six higher knowledges,' the three true knowledges and the six direct knowledges are existent, but the person is non-existent. Therefore, "one who has the three true knowledges" is the possessor of the threefold true knowledge, "one who has the six direct knowledges" is the possessor of the six higher knowledges - thus, because of describing the non-existent by the existent, such is called the description of the non-existent by the existent. But in such terms as 'woman's form' and 'man's form' and so on, the woman and man are non-existent, while matter is existent. Therefore, the matter of a woman is woman's form, the matter of a man is man's form - thus, because of describing the existent by the non-existent, such is called the description of the existent by the non-existent. In such terms as eye-contact, ear-contact, and so on, the eye, ear, and so on, as well as contact, are all just existent. Therefore, contact at the eye, contact arisen from the eye, or contact that is the fruit of the eye is eye-contact - thus, because of describing the existent by the existent, such is called the description of the existent by the existent. In such terms as warrior's son, brahmin's son, merchant's son, and so on, the warrior and so on are non-existent, and the son too. Therefore, the son of a warrior is a warrior's son - thus, because of describing the non-existent by the non-existent, such is called the description of the non-existent by the non-existent. Among those, in this treatise only the first three descriptions are found. "The description of aggregates, etc. the description of faculties" - in this passage, because only the existent has been described, the description of the existent is found. In the term "the description of persons" is the description of the non-existent. But further on, in such terms as 'possessor of the threefold true knowledge' and 'possessor of the six higher knowledges' and so on, the description of the non-existent by the existent is found.

Furthermore, according to the method of the teachers independent of the commentary, there are another six concepts - the concept by derivation, the concept by comparison, the concept by combination, the concept by placing beside, the concept arising from that, and the concept by continuity. Therein, whatever being is conventionally accepted, though of a nature not to be found in the highest truth and ultimate reality, either as identical with or as different from materiality, feeling and so on, just as materiality, feeling and so on, with reference to, in dependence on, and having made the cause of the aggregates classified as materiality, feeling and so on. And with reference to these and those constituent parts, a chariot, a house, a fist, and an oven; with reference to those very same materiality and so on, a pot, a cloth; with reference to the revolutions of the moon and sun and so on, time and direction; with reference to, in dependence on, and having made the cause of this and that primary element sign and benefit of meditation, what is conventionally accepted and presented in this and that manner as the learning sign and the counterpart sign - this

is such a concept called concept by derivation. And this is called concept in the sense of what is to be described, not in the sense of describing. But whatever is the describing of that meaning, this is just a concept of what is not existing.

Whatever describing such as "second, third" and so on by placing alongside the first, second and so on, and such as "long, short, far, near" and so on by placing alongside each other; this is called the concept by comparison. Moreover, this concept by comparison is - of manifold kinds by the classification of comparison by reference to another, comparison by what is held in the hand, comparison by what is associated, comparison by what is placed upon, comparison by what is situated nearby, comparison by counterpart, comparison by what is abundant therein, and comparison by what is distinguished therein, and so on.

Therein, such as "second, third" and so on, because it is stated having looked at something other than that, is called comparison by reference to another. Such as "umbrella-in-hand, knife-in-hand" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is held in the hand, is called comparison by what is held in the hand. Such as "one with earrings, one with a crest, one with a diadem" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is associated, is called comparison by what is associated. Such as "grain-cart, ghee-pot" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is placed upon, is called comparison by what is placed upon. Such as "Indasāla cave, Piyaṅgu cave, Serīsaka" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is situated nearby, is called comparison by what is situated nearby. Such as "golden-coloured, walking like a bull" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside a counterpart, is called comparison by counterpart. Such as "lotus lake, brahmin village" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is abundant therein, is called comparison by what is abundant therein. Such as "gem bracelet, diamond bracelet" and so on, because it is stated by placing alongside what is distinguished therein, is called comparison by what is distinguished therein.

But whatever describing such as "tripod, chessboard, heap of grain, heap of flowers" and so on, having considered the combination of these and those, this is called the concept by combination. Whatever describing such as "two, three, four" and so on, having placed beside each preceding one, this is called the concept by placing beside. Whatever describing such as "earth, heat, hardness, hotness" and so on, having considered this and that intrinsic nature of phenomena, this is called the concept arising from that. But whatever describing such as "eighty-year-old, ninety-year-old" and so on, having considered the absence of interruption of continuity, this is called the concept by continuity. But among these, the concept arising from that is just a concept of what is existing. The remaining ones belong to the side of the concept of what is not existing, and to the side of the concept of what is not existing by what is not existing.

Furthermore, according to the very same method of the teachers independent of the commentary, there are another six concepts - the concept by function, the concept by shape, the concept by gender-mark, the concept by plane, the concept by individual name, and the concept of the unconditioned. Therein, such as "reciter, speaker of the Teaching" and so on, describing by way of function, is called the concept by function. Such as "thin, fat, circular, quadrangular" and so on, describing by way of shape, is called the concept by shape. Such as "woman, man" and so on,

describing by way of gender-mark, is called the concept by gender-mark. Such as "belonging to the sensual-sphere, belonging to the fine-material-sphere, belonging to the immaterial-sphere, Kosalan, Madhuran" and so on, describing by way of plane, is called the concept by plane. Such as "Tissa, Nāga, Sumana" and so on, describing merely by way of individual naming, is called the concept by individual name. Such as "cessation, Nibbāna" and so on, describing of the unconditioned state, is called the concept of the unconditioned. Therein, some of the concept by plane and the concept of the unconditioned are just concepts of what is existing, and the concept by function belongs to the side of the concept of what is not existing by what is existing. The remaining ones are called concepts of what is not existing.

2. Now, for those descriptions whose own forms were shown in brief in the synopsis section, in order to show them by way of showing, having classified their subject matter just in brief, he said beginning with "in what respect." Therein, the meaning of the question should first be understood thus - that which is this describing, showing, and setting up of the aggregates as "aggregates," by how much does it exist - this is a question from the wish to speak. In what follows, in "in what respect of the sense bases" and so on too, the same method applies. In the answer too, the meaning should be understood thus - by however much describing, in brief as "five aggregates" or in detail as "the aggregate of matter, etc. the aggregate of consciousness" or; therein too, the aggregate of matter belongs to the sensual-sphere of existence, the remaining belong to the four planes - or such describing exists; by this much there is the description of the aggregates as "aggregates."

3. Likewise, by however much describing, in brief as "twelve sense bases" or in detail as "the eye sense base, etc. the mind-object sense base" or; therein too, ten sense bases belong to the sensual-sphere of existence, two sense bases belong to the four planes - or such describing exists; by this much there is the description of the sense bases as "sense bases."

4. By however much describing, in brief as "eighteen elements" or in detail as "eye-element, etc. mind-consciousness element" or; therein too, sixteen elements belong to the sensual-sphere of existence, two elements belong to the four planes - or such describing exists; by this much there is the description of the elements as "elements."

5. By however much describing, in brief as "four truths" or in detail as "the truth of suffering, etc. the truth of cessation" or; therein too, two truths are mundane, two truths are supramundane - or such describing exists; by this much there is the description of the truths as "truths."

6. By however much describing, in brief as "twenty-two faculties" or in detail as "the eye-faculty, etc. the faculty of one who has final knowledge" or; therein too, ten faculties belong to the sensual-sphere of existence, nine faculties are mixed, three faculties are supramundane - or such describing exists; by this much there is the description of the faculties as "faculties." To this extent, having classified the subject matter in brief, by way of showing, five descriptions have been shown.

7. Now, in order to show the designation of human types by way of showing, having classified the subject matter in detail, he said beginning with "temporarily liberated, perpetually liberated." For just as the Perfectly Enlightened One spreading sesame seeds, and just as stripping bark, below in the Vibhaṅga treatise the aggregates and

so on, which are the basis of these five descriptions, were spoken of all-embracingly; therefore he spoke of them here only in part. The sixth, the designation of human types, was not spoken of below at all. Here too, in the synopsis section, it was spoken of only in part. Therefore, wishing to speak of it in detail, he established the matrix beginning with "temporarily liberated, perpetually liberated" from the set of one up to the set of ten.

Explanation of the Matrix.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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