

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

The Canon of Discourses - Commentaries (Sutta
Piṭaka - Aṭṭhakathā)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries
(1. Dīgha Nikāya - Aṭṭhakathā)

2. Commentary on the Great Chapter (2. Mahāvaggaṭṭhakathā)

10. Commentary on the Discourse to Pāyāsi
(10. Pāyāsirājaññasuttavaṇṇanā)

[DN 23, PTS 2.316-2.358]



PaliVerse

1.The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries

2. Commentary on the Great Chapter

10. Explanation of the Discourse to Pāyāsi

406. "Thus have I heard" - this is the Discourse on the Chieftain Pāyāsi. Herein this is the explanation of terms not previously explained - "Venerable": this is a term of endearment. "Kumārakassapa" is his name. But because he went forth in his youth, when the Blessed One said "Summon Kassapa, give this fruit or solid food to Kassapa," "To which Kassapa?" Because the name was thus taken as "To Kumārakassapa," from then on even in his senior years he is called simply "Kumārakassapa." Furthermore, because he was the son raised by the king's allowance, they recognised him as "Kumārakassapa."

Now this is the account of his manifestation beginning from his former connection - The Elder, it is said, in the time of the Blessed One Padumuttara, was a merchant's son. Then one day, having seen the Blessed One establishing one of his own disciples who was a varied speaker in the foremost position, having given gifts to the Blessed One for seven days, having made the aspiration "May I too, Blessed One, in the future become a varied-speaking disciple of a Buddha, just like this Elder," performing meritorious deeds, having gone forth in the Dispensation of the Blessed One Kassapa, he was unable to produce a distinction. At that time, it is said, when the Dispensation of the Blessed One who had attained final Nibbāna was declining, five monks, having tied a ladder, having ascended a mountain, practised the ascetic duty. The senior monk of the Community attained arahantship on the third day, the next senior became a non-returner on the fourth day, the other three, being unable to produce a distinction, were reborn in the heavenly world.

Of those, while experiencing success among gods and human beings for one interval between Buddhas, one, having been reborn in a royal family at Takkasilā, having become a king named Pakkusāti, having gone forth with reference to the Blessed One, coming towards Rājagaha, having heard the Blessed One's proclamation of the Teaching in the potter's workshop, attained the fruition of non-returning. One, having been reborn in a family house at a certain seaport, having boarded a ship, his ship having broken up, having dressed in bark garments, having attained success in material gain, having given rise to the thought "I am a Worthy One," urged by a well-wishing deity saying "You are not a Worthy One; go, having approached the Teacher, ask a question," having done so, attained the fruition of arahantship.

One arose in the womb of a certain young woman of good family at Rājagaha. And she, having first entreated her mother and father, not obtaining the going forth, having gone to a family house, conceived an embryo. Not knowing even that the embryo had become established, having pleased her husband, permitted by him, she went forth among the nuns; having seen the sign of her pregnancy, the nuns asked Devadatta. He said "She is not a female ascetic." They asked the One of Ten Powers.

The Teacher had the Elder Upāli undertake the case. The Elder, having summoned the families dwelling in the city of Sāvattthī and the female lay follower Visākhā, investigating, said "The embryo was obtained before; the going forth is without fault." The Teacher gave applause to the Elder, saying "The legal case has been well determined." That nun gave birth to a son resembling a golden image. Having taken him, King Pasenadi of Kosala had him raised. And having given him the name "Kassapa," at a later time, having adorned him, having led him to the Teacher's presence, he gave him the going forth. Thus, because he was the son raised by the king's allowance too, they recognised him as "Kumārakassapa." One day, while he was practising the ascetic duty in the Blind Men's Grove, a well-wishing deity, having had him learn the questions, said "Ask these questions to the Blessed One." The Elder, having asked the questions, at the conclusion of the answering of the questions, attained arahantship. The Blessed One too established him in the foremost position among monks who are varied speakers.

"Setabyā" is the name of that city. "To the north of Setabyā" means in the northern direction from Setabyā. "Chieftain" means an unconsecrated king. "Wrong view" means just view itself. Just as when "gone to dung" and "gone to urine" are said, there is nothing other than dung and so on, so too "wrong view" is just view itself. "Thus too there is not" means having cited this and that reason, he says "in this way too there is not." "Before" etc. "Convinces" means as long as he does not convince.

Commentary on the Simile of the Moon and Sun

411. "These, friend Kassapa, moon and sun": it is said that he, when questioned by the elder, thought: "This ascetic first brought forth the moon and sun as a simile; he will be similar to the moon and sun in wisdom, not to be overcome by another. But if I say 'The moon and sun are in this world,' he will encircle me with such questions as 'Upon what are they based, how great is their measure, how high are they?' and so on. But I shall not be able to unravel this; I shall tell him just this: 'In another world.'" Therefore he spoke thus.

But the Blessed One, not long before that, had related the Sudhābhojanīya Jātaka. Therein it has come thus: "In the moon, the young god Canda; in the sun, the young god Suriya." And whatever birth story or discourse spoken by the Blessed One becomes spread throughout the whole of Jambudīpa; therefore he, having thought "It is not possible to say 'There are no young gods dwelling there,'" said "They are gods, not humans."

412. "But is there, chieftain, a method" - he asks "but is there a reason?" "Sick" means endowed with illness reckoned as disagreeable feeling. "Afflicted" means reached suffering. "Severely ill" means excessively ill. "Trustworthy" - I believe you, you are trustworthy to me, meaning those whose words are to be believed. "Reliable" - I have confidence in you, you are reliable to me, meaning those who are to be relied upon.

Commentary on the Simile of the Thief and So On

413. "Having entrusted" means having shown them oneself and one's set-in-order belongings, having made them accept; this is the meaning. "While wailing" means while variously lamenting "My son, my daughter, my wealth." "Among the guardians

of hell" means among the beings who inflict torture in hell. But those who say "Action itself carries out the torture; there are no guardians of hell." They obstruct the Devadūta Sutta which states "Him, monks, the guardians of hell." For just as in the human world there are torturers in the royal families, so in hell there are guardians of hell.

415. "With bamboo scrapers" means with bamboo slips. "Scrape well" means scrape in such a way that it is well scraped; the meaning is remove.

"Impure" means disagreeable. "Reckoned as impure" means one who has become a portion of impurity, or one who is known as impure. "Foul-smelling" means the smell of a corpse. "Loathsome" means fit to be shunned. "Repulsive" means bringing aversion by the very seeing. "Offends" means the odour of human beings - even of universal monarchs and others who have bathed twice a day, changed garments three times, and are adorned and decorated - afflicts the deities standing a hundred yojanas away like a corpse hung around the neck.

416. Again, he speaks by way of those who conduct themselves having undertaken the five precepts beginning with abstaining from killing living beings. "Of the Thirty-three" - and this means: let alone those reborn far away, let them not come, why do these not come? - thus he speaks.

418. "Like one blind from birth, methinks, you appear" means he appeared as if blind from birth. "Remote forest and woodland lodgings" means forests by virtue of being endowed with the forest-dweller's factor, and deep forests by virtue of being great jungle thickets. "Remote" means distant.

419. "Of good character" means of good qualities by that very morality. "Averse to suffering" means not desiring suffering. "It will be better" - the intention is that there will be the happiness of a fortunate world in the world beyond.

420. "Near to giving birth" means having reached the time of giving birth, with a fully matured embryo, she will give birth before long - this is the meaning. "Will be your servant" means she will be a foot-attendant. "Calamity and disaster" means great suffering. "Aya" means happiness; "not aya" is "anaya," suffering. That which scatters and disperses happiness in every respect is disaster. Thus calamity itself is disaster; "calamity and disaster" means great suffering - this is the meaning. "Unwisely" means by an improper method. "Do not ripen what is unripe" means they do not cut short prematurely the unmatured, unexhausted life span. "They wait for the ripening" means they wait for the time of the ripening of the life span. This too was said by the General of the Dhamma -

"I do not delight in death, I do not delight in life;
And I await the time, like a hired servant earning his wages."

421. "Having broken open" means having broken the clay coating.

422. "Rāmaṇeyyaka" means the state of being delightful. "Velāsikā" means playful girls. "Komārikā" means young maidens. "Your soul" - at the time of seeing a dream, do they see a soul departing or entering? Here, he spoke taking the disposition of mind as "soul." For he had the perception of a soul therein.

423. "By a bowstring" means by a bow's bowstring; the meaning is having wrapped around the neck. "Stiffer" means more rigid. What does he show by this? You say that during the time of living a being has five aggregates, but at the time of passing away only the mere aggregate of matter remains, three aggregates are non-occurring, and the aggregate of consciousness departs. The remaining aggregate of matter should be lighter, yet it becomes heavier. Therefore he shows this meaning: there is no one who goes anywhere.

424. "Quenched" means with heat allayed.

425. "Without damaging" means without destroying. "Is half-dead" means he has begun to die halfway. "Shake him from below" means do it from this side. "Shake him from above" means do it from the other side. "Shake him all around" means do it again and again. "Does not experience that sense base" means with that eye he does not make clear that visible form sense base. This same method applies everywhere.

426. "Conch-blower" means one who blows a conch shell. "Having blown" (upalāpetvā) means having blown (dhamitvā).

428. "Fire-worshipper" means one who tends the fire. "I would nurse" means I would bring up, or I would enable him to reach his life span. "I would nourish" means I would maintain him with food and so on. "I would raise" means I would bring him to growth. "Fire-drill" means a pair of fire-sticks.

429. "Kings in other lands too" means kings in other countries, in other provinces too, know. "Inexperienced" means unclear, unskilful. "Out of irritation too" means those who will speak of me thus, with the irritation arising towards them, I will hold on to this wrong view, I will carry it about - having taken it up, I will go about. "Out of contempt" means also out of contempt having the characteristic of denigrating the fitting reason stated by you. "Out of insolence" means also out of insolence having the characteristic of rivalry together with you.

430. "Green vegetation" means whatever is green; the meaning is that there is not even fresh grass and leaves at the very least. "With a strung quiver" means with a strung bow and quiver. "The roads are flooded with water" means the paths and grottoes are full of water. "Draught animals" means oxen.

"Long departed" means having departed long ago, having departed a long time ago - this is the meaning. "With the goods as they were carried" means whatever goods of grass, wood, and water were loaded up by you, with those as they were carried, as they were loaded up, as they were taken - this is the meaning.

"Of little value" means of little worth. "Articles of trade" means goods.

Commentary on the Simile of the Dung Carrier and So On

432. "Food for my pigs" means "this is food for my pigs." "Dripping" means oozing from above. "Oozing" means trickling down below. "You indeed are, my good men" means "you indeed here, my good men." Or this itself is the reading. "For this is food for my pigs" means "for this dung of mine is food for pigs."

434. "Swallows each losing throw as it came" means he swallows each losing die as it came. "I will make an offering" means I will make an oblation, I will make an oblation - this is the meaning. "Let us play with the dice" means let us play with the balls. "Smeared with supreme potency" means smeared with poison of supreme power.

436. "Gāmapaṭṭa" means an abandoned village area is called thus. "Gāmapada" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "Sāṇabhāra" means a load of hempen bark. "Susannaddha" means well tied up. "You decide for yourself" means you know. If you wish to take it, take it - thus it has been said.

"Khoma" means linen bark. "Aya" means black metal. "Loha" means copper. "Sajjha" means silver. "Suvanṇa" means gold coins. "Abhinandiṃsu" means they were satisfied.

437. "Delighted" means joyful, with a gladdened mind. "Satisfied" means pleased. "Discernments of questions" means presentations of questions. "Should be opposed" means I thought it should be done as if contrary, in opposition; the meaning is he stood having taken a contrary position.

438. "Come to slaughter" means they come to slaughter, destruction, death. "Not rich in result" means it is not rich in result by way of resultant fruit. "Not of great benefit" means it is not of great benefit by way of the benefit of virtuous qualities. "Not of great brightness" means it is not of great brightness by way of the brightness of power. "Not of great pervasion" means it is not of great pervasion by way of the pervasiveness of result. "Seed and plough" means seed and plough. "In a bad field" means in a bad field, a worthless field. "On bad ground" means on an uneven piece of ground. "Might plant" means might place. "Broken" means cut and shattered. "Rotten" means worthless. "Damaged by wind and heat" means destroyed by wind and by heat, with their vitality exhausted. "Without substance" means mere straw devoid of the substance of rice grain. "Not well stored" means those which, having been dried, scattered into a granary, and placed there, are called well stored. But these are not like that. "Were to send down" means were to let in; it would not rain properly; the meaning is it would not rain fortnightly, every ten days, or every five days. "Would those" means would those seeds, when there is such a defect in field, seed, and rain, attain upward growth through shoots, roots, leaves, and so on, downward increase, and expansion on all sides? "Such a sacrifice, chieftain" means such a gift, chieftain, is not rich in result because of the impurity of the requisites produced through harming others, of the donor, and of the recipient.

"Such a sacrifice, chieftain" means such a chieftain's gift is rich in result because of the requisites arisen without harming others, because of the moral donor who has not harmed others, and because of the recipient accomplished in virtues beginning with right view. But if one obtains a recipient who is surpassing in virtues, one who has emerged from cessation, and the volition is extensive, it gives result in this very life.

439. But having heard this talk on the Teaching by the elder, the chieftain Pāyāsi, having invited the elder, having given a great gift to the elder for seven days, from then on established a gift for the public. With reference to that, "Then the chieftain Pāyāsi" and so on was said. Therein, "porridge of broken rice" means a meal of rice with husk-powder, with uncooked grains. "With vinegar as a second" means with rice-gruel as a second. "And coarse garments" means and rough garments. "With ball-like

tassels" means with ball-shaped fringes; the meaning is large fringes standing in heap upon heap. "Thus dedicates" means thus points out. "With his foot even" means even with the foot.

440. "Inattentively" means without faith, a faithless gift. "Not with his own hand" means not with one's own hand. "Without respect" means devoid of respect; he gave without even setting up respect, without making the mind sublime. "As if throwing it away" means discarded, cast aside. "An empty Serīsaka" means he reached one hollow silver mansion named Serīsaka. At its gate, it is said, there was a great sirīsa tree; therefore it is called "Serīsaka."

441. "The Venerable Gavampati" - the Elder, it is said, formerly in the time of being a human, having been the chief among cowherd boys, having cleaned the base of a great acacia tree, having scattered sand, having caused a certain elder who was an almsfood eater to sit down at the tree-root, having given the food obtained by himself, having passed away from there, by the power of that, he was reborn in that silver mansion. The acacia tree stood at the door of the mansion. It bears fruit every fifty years; thereupon, the young god becomes anxious thinking "fifty years have passed." He, at a later time, in the time of our Blessed One, having been reborn among human beings, having heard the Teacher's talk on the Teaching, attained arahantship. But by the force of habitual action, he frequently goes to that very mansion for the purpose of the day's abiding; it is said that the pleasantness of the climate was agreeable to him. With reference to that, "Now at that time the Venerable Gavampati" and so on was stated.

"He, having given the gift attentively" means he, having given even another's property as a gift attentively. "Announced thus" means he announced by the method beginning with "Give gifts attentively." And having heard the Elder's announcement, the great multitude, having given gifts attentively, was reborn in the heavenly world. But the attendants of the chieftain Pāyāsi, even though having given gifts attentively, having gone by the force of attachment, were reborn in his very presence. That, it is said, was a mansion wandering through the directions, in the path of mansions. And the young god Pāyāsi, one day, having shown himself to merchants, related the deed done by himself.

Thus in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, the Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya,

the explanation of the Discourse to Pāyāsi is concluded.

And the commentary on the meaning of the Mahā Chapter is completed.

The Commentary on the Great Chapter is concluded.



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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