

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)

1. Commentary on the Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality
(1. Sīlakkhandhavaggaṭṭhakathā)

11. Commentary on the Discourse to Kevaṭṭa
(11. Kevaṭṭasuttavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

1.The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries

1. Commentary on the Chapter on the Aggregate of Morality

11. Explanation of the Discourse to Kevaṭṭa

Commentary on the Story of Kevaṭṭa the Householder's Son

481. Thus have I heard... etc. "At Nāḷandā" - this is the Kevaṭṭa Discourse. Herein this is the explanation of terms not previously explained. "Pāvārikambavane" means in Pāvārika's mango grove. "Kevaṭṭa" - this is the name of that householder's son. It is said that he was a very wealthy householder with a fortune of four hundred million, exceedingly faithful and devoted. Due to the very excess of his faith, he thought: "If one monk, every fortnight or every month or every year, having flown up into the sky, were to display various wonders, all people would become exceedingly devoted. What if I were to request the Blessed One and have him authorise one monk for the purpose of performing wonders?" - having thought thus, he approached the Blessed One and spoke thus.

Therein, "prosperous" means successful, "flourishing" means having reached growth through the abundance of various goods. "Crowded with people" means crowded with people going about as if striking shoulder against shoulder. "Would command" means let him order, let him appoint to that particular position. "Through super-human achievement" means from the achievement of those who are super-human, or beyond human achievement reckoned as the ten wholesome courses of action. "Even more" means just as a lamp already blazing, having received oil, will become devoted to an exceeding measure. "I do not" - the Blessed One laid down a training rule in the case of the Rājagaha millionaire; therefore he said beginning with "I do not."

482. "I am not disparaging" means I am not disparaging by destroying virtues; having caused a breach of morality, gradually lowering from a high state, I am not placing in a low state; rather, it shows that "I speak hoping for the growth of the Buddha's Dispensation." "For the third time too" means there is no one who is able to speak having warded off the talk of the Buddhas up to the third time. But this one, being intimate with the Blessed One, having increased his intimacy, having become a favourite, spoke three times saying "I am one who wishes for his welfare."

Commentary on the Wonder of Supernormal Power

483-484. Then the Blessed One, thinking "This lay follower keeps on requesting again and again even though I am refusing." Having thought "Come, let me show him the danger in performing wonders," he said beginning with "There are three indeed." Therein, "amāhaṃ bhikkhun" means "that monk, I." "Gandhārī" means a knowledge created by a sage named Gandhāra, or a knowledge that arose in the Gandhāra country. There, it is said, many sages dwelt; the intention is that it was a knowledge

created by one of them. "I am troubled" means I am as if afflicted, oppressed. "I am ashamed" means I feel shame. "I am disgusted" means I produce disgust as if having seen faeces.

Commentary on the Wonder of Mind-Reading

485. "Of other beings" means of other beings. The second is a synonym for that very thing. "Announces" means speaks. "Mental" means pleasure and displeasure are intended. "Thus is your mind" means thus your mind is accompanied by pleasure or accompanied by displeasure or associated with sensual thought and so on. The second is a synonym for that very thing. "Such is your thought" means thus your thought proceeds thinking of this and that meaning - this is the meaning. "A charm called Maṇikā" means there is in the world one charm that has thus obtained the name "Cintāmaṇi." It explains that by means of that one knows the mind of others.

Commentary on the Wonder of Instruction

486. "Think in this way" means: think thus, setting going thoughts of renunciation and so on in this way. "Do not think in that way" means: do not think thus, setting going sensual thoughts and so on in this way. "Attend to the mind in this way" means: attend in this way to the perception of impermanence itself, or to any one among the perception of suffering and so on. "Do not thus" means: do not attend to the mind by the method beginning with "permanent." "This" means: abandon this lust for the five strands of sensual pleasure. "Having attained this" means: having attained, having reached, having accomplished this supramundane state itself, classified as the four paths and their fruitions, dwell in it. Thus the Blessed One shows that the various kinds of supernormal power is the wonder of supernormal power, and that speaking having known another's mind is the wonder of mind-reading. And the constant proclamation of the Teaching by disciples and Buddhas is the wonder of instruction.

Therein, the wonder of instruction together with the wonder of supernormal power was the habitual practice of Mahāmoggallāna; the wonder of instruction together with the wonder of mind-reading was that of the General of the Teaching. For when Devadatta, having split the Community and having taken five hundred monks to Gayāsīsa, was teaching them the Teaching in the manner of a Buddha, when the two chief disciples were sent by the Blessed One, the General of the Teaching, having known the disposition of their minds, expounded the Teaching. Having heard the Elder's proclamation of the Teaching, the five hundred monks became established in the fruition of stream-entry. Then Mahāmoggallāna, having shown them miraculous transformations again and again, expounded the Teaching. Having heard that, all became established in the fruition of arahantship. Then the two great warriors, having taken the five hundred monks, having risen up into the sky, went to the Bamboo Grove itself. The wonder of instruction, however, is the constant proclamation of the Teaching by the Buddhas. Among those, the wonder of supernormal power and the wonder of mind-reading are open to censure, are faulty, do not endure for a long stretch of time, and because they do not endure for a long stretch of time, they do not lead forth. The wonder of instruction is beyond censure, faultless, endures for a long stretch of time, and because it endures for a long stretch of time, it leads forth. Therefore the Blessed One censures the wonder of supernormal power and the wonder of mind-reading, and praises only the wonder of instruction.

Commentary on the Story of the Seeker of the Cessation of the Elements

487. "Once in the past" - why was this begun by the Blessed One? For the purpose of showing the nature of not leading to liberation of the miracle of supernormal power and the miracle of mind-reading, and for the purpose of showing the nature of leading to liberation of the miracle of instruction alone. Furthermore, in the dispensation of all Buddhas there is indeed always one monk named the seeker of the primary elements. Who, seeking the primary elements, having wandered as far as the Brahmā world and not obtaining one who could answer, having returned and having asked the Buddha himself, becomes free from uncertainty. Therefore, for the purpose of making manifest the greatness of the Buddhas, and this reason being concealed, then having made it open, even while teaching, the Blessed One said beginning with "once in the past."

Therein, "where indeed" means in what place, having come to what, of one who has attained what, do those cease without remainder by way of non-occurrence. But this discussion of the primary elements has been spoken in every way in the Visuddhimagga; therefore it should be taken from there itself.

488. "The path leading to the gods" means there is no separate path for going to the world of the gods; rather, this is a designation for the knowledge of various kinds of supernormal power. For by that, he goes to the world of the gods, exercising mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world. Therefore it is said "that is the path leading to the gods." "To where the gods (ruled by) the four great kings" means without asking the Blessed One who was standing nearby, prompted by natural inclination, imagining the deities to be of great might, he approached. "We too, monk, do not know" means the deities, when asked a question in the domain of a Buddha, do not know; therefore they said thus. Then that monk overpowers those deities, saying "It is not possible not to answer this question of mine; speak quickly!" and asks again and again. Those deities, having thought "This monk overpowers us; come, let us release him from our hands," said beginning with "There are, monk, the four great kings." Therein, "more superior" means more pleasing, having surpassed. "More sublime" means more excellent in beauty, fame, sovereignty, and so on. By this method, the meaning should be understood in all instances.

491-493. But this is the distinction - It is said that Sakka, the king of gods, thought: "This question is within the domain of a Buddha; it cannot be answered by another. And this monk, like one who, having abandoned fire, blows on a firefly, and like one who, having abandoned a drum, beats his belly, having abandoned the foremost person in the world, the Perfectly Enlightened One, goes about asking deities. I shall send him to the presence of the Teacher." Then again he thought: "Even having gone very far, he will become free from uncertainty only in the presence of the Teacher. Moreover, this one is indeed a person; let him wander about a little and become weary first, he will know afterwards." Then he said to him beginning with "I too indeed." "Leading to Brahmā" is also similar to "leading to the gods." Whether "the path leading to the gods" or "the path leading to Brahmā" or "the bridge of the Dhamma" or "absorption lasting one mind-moment" or "decisive volition" or "exalted mind" or "knowledge of direct knowledge" - all this is just a name for the knowledge of various kinds of supernormal power.

494. "Advanced sign" means a sign preceding the arrival, like the break of dawn before the rising of the sun. Therefore they indicated that "Brahmā will come just now; thus we know." "Appeared" means he became manifest. Then that Brahmā, being asked by that monk, having known that it was not within his own domain, thought: "If I say 'I do not know,' these will treat me with contempt; then if I speak something as though knowing, this monk, unsatisfied in mind with the explanation, will refute my argument. But when I am saying such things as 'I, monk, am Brahmā' and so on, no one will believe my words. What if I were to create a diversion and send this monk to the presence of the Teacher himself?" Having thus reflected, he said beginning with "I, monk, am Brahmā" and so on.

495-496. "Having led him aside" - why did he do thus? Because of deceitfulness. "Undertook a search outside" means like one desiring oil being squeezed from sand, he undertakes a search outside as far as the Brahmā world.

497. "Bird" means a crow or a hawk. "This question, monk, should not be asked thus" - this the Blessed One prohibits because this question should be asked in part, but this monk, having taken even the not clung-to, asks without leaving a portion aside. This, it is said, is the habitual practice of the Buddhas: having shown the fault in the question of a person confused about questioning, having trained him in the question, then the answering of the question. Why? One who inquires without knowing how to ask is difficult to inform. But in training him in the question, he said beginning with "where do water and" etc.

498. Therein, "does not stand fast" means does not find a footing; the meaning is: having come to what do these four primary elements become without a footing? He asks with reference to the clung-to only. "Long and short" means derivative materiality is stated in terms of shape. "Subtle and gross" means small or great; by this too, only colour has been spoken of in regard to derivative materiality. "Beautiful and ugly" means beautiful and ugly derivative materiality alone has been spoken of. But is there derivative materiality that is beautiful or ugly? There is not. Rather, what has been spoken of is desirable and undesirable objects. "Mentality and materiality" means mentality and materiality classified as long and so on. "Ceases" means comes to cessation; having come to what does all this entirely not occur?

Having shown the question thus, "should be asked thus," now showing the answer, having said "there is this explanation," he said beginning with "consciousness." He said beginning with "consciousness."

499. Therein, "what should be understood" (viññātabba) is consciousness (viññāṇa) - this is a name for Nibbāna. That same, due to the absence of manifestation, is non-manifest. There is no arising-end, or passing away-end, or change in its duration-end of this - thus it is infinite. "Pabha" is indeed said to be a name for a ford; for "they fall into here" (papanti ettha) thus it is "papa" (water), but the letter "pa" has been changed to the letter "bha." "It has fords from all sides" (sabbato pabham assa) thus it is "radiant from all sides" (sabbatopabha). For Nibbāna, truly, just as with the great ocean, from whatever direction those wishing to descend enter, that itself is the ford; there is no place that is not a ford. Just so, among the thirty-eight meditation subjects, by whatever means those wishing to descend into Nibbāna enter, that itself is the ford; for Nibbāna there is no place that is not a ford. Therefore it was said "radiant

from all sides." "Here water and" means here in Nibbāna - having come to this Nibbāna, all this grasped phenomenon stated by the method beginning with "water" etc. ceases, becomes non-occurring.

Now, showing the means of its cessation, he said "with the cessation of consciousness, here this ceases." Therein, "consciousness" means both the final consciousness and the volitional activity consciousness; for with the cessation of the final consciousness too, here this ceases. Like the flame of an extinguished lamp, it goes to the state of being beyond designation. With the cessation by non-arising of the volitional activity consciousness too, it ceases by way of non-arising. As it was said: "With the cessation of volitional activity consciousness through the knowledge of the path of stream-entry, setting aside seven existences, whatever mentality and materiality would arise in the round of rebirths without discernible beginning, here these cease" - all should be understood by the method stated in the Cūḷaniddesa. The remainder is clear everywhere.

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

the explanation of the Discourse to Kevaṭṭa is completed.



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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