

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

5. The Collection of Minor Texts (5. Khuddaka Nikāya -
Aṭṭhakathā)

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas
(12. Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā)

13. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddha Sumedha
(13. Sumedhabuddhavaṃsavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas

13. Explanation of the Chronicle of the Buddha Sumedha

But when the Perfectly Enlightened One Padumuttara had attained final Nibbāna and his Dispensation too had disappeared, for seventy thousand cosmic cycles Buddhas did not arise; they were void of Buddhas. Henceforth, at the summit of thirty thousand cosmic cycles, in one cosmic cycle, two Perfectly Enlightened Ones arose, namely Sumedha and Sujāta. Therein, the Bodhisatta named Sumedha, one who had attained wisdom, having fulfilled the perfections, having been reborn in the Tusita city, having passed away from there, having taken conception in the womb of a queen named Sudattā, the chief queen of a king named Sudatta in the city of Sudassana, after the elapse of ten months, like the young sun emerged from an opening in the clouds, he came forth from the mother's womb in the Sudassana Park. He dwelt in the house for nine thousand years. He had, it is said, three mansions named Sucandana, Kañcana, and Sirivaḍḍhana. Forty-eight thousand women headed by Queen Sumanā were in attendance.

He, having seen the four signs, when a son named Punabbasumittā was born to Queen Sumanā, having gone forth in the great renunciation by elephant vehicle, went forth. And a hundred crores of humans went forth after him. He, surrounded by them, having practised the practice of striving for a fortnight, on the full moon day of Vesākha, having eaten the milk-rice given by the daughter of the millionaire Nakula in the town of Nakula, having spent the day residence in a sal grove, having taken eight handfuls of grass given by a naked ascetic named Sirivaḍḍha, having spread a grass mat twenty cubits wide at the foot of the Nīpa Bodhi tree, having scattered the forces of Māra together with Māra, having attained the highest enlightenment, "Through the round of many births, etc. it has reached the elimination of cravings" - having uttered an inspired utterance, having spent seven weeks in the very vicinity of the Bodhi tree, in the eighth week, having accepted Brahmā's request for the proclamation of the Teaching, surveying persons capable, having seen his own youngest brother Prince Saraṇa and Prince Sabbakāmī and a hundred crores of monks who had gone forth together with him, capable of penetrating the Teaching of the four truths, having gone through space, having descended into the Sudassana Park near the city of Sudassana, having had his own brothers summoned by the park keeper, in the midst of their retinues he set in motion the wheel of the Teaching. Then there was the full realisation of the teaching for a hundred thousand crores. This was the first full realisation. Therefore it was said -

1. "After Padumuttara, the Leader named Sumedha;
Difficult to approach, of risen radiance, the sage highest in all the world.
2. "With clear eyes, fair-faced, lofty, upright, majestic;

Seeking the welfare of all beings, he freed many from bondage.

3. "When the Buddha, having attained the consummate, highest enlightenment; In the city of Sudassana, set in motion the wheel of the Teaching.
4. "At his full realisations there were three, at the teaching of the Dhamma; There was the first full realisation for a hundred thousand koṭis."

1-4. Therein, "uggatejo" means of risen radiance. "Pasannanetto" means with very clear eyes; the eyes are clear like gem-balls that have been washed and polished and set in place. Therefore he is said to be "one with clear eyes." The meaning is: with eyes that are very clear, adorned with soft, smooth, blue, spotless, fine eyelashes. It is also proper to say "one with very clear five eyes." "Sumukho" means with a face like the full moon in the autumn season. "Brahā" means lofty, great, because of having a body measuring eighty-eight cubits; the meaning is a bodily measure not shared with others. "Uju" means with a divinely straight body, an upright, risen body, an excellent body like a golden archway raised up in the city of the gods - this is the meaning. "Patāpavā" means with a shining body. "Hitesī" means one who seeks welfare. "Abhisamayā tīṇi" means the full realisations were three; a change of gender has been made.

But when the Blessed One, towards the break of dawn, having entered upon the great compassion attainment, having emerged from it, surveying the world, saw a man-eating demon named Kumbhakaṇṇa, of power similar to Kumbhakaṇṇa, with a terrible body visible at the entrance to a great forest, who was going about having cut off the path through the forest, entirely alone, without a companion, having gone to the dwelling of that demon, having entered inside, he sat down on the prepared royal couch. Then that demon, not enduring the contempt, enraged like a venomous snake struck with a stick, desiring to frighten the One of Ten Powers, having made his own individual existence more terrible, having made his head like a mountain, having created eyes like the orb of the sun, having made fangs exceedingly long, broad, and sharp like the tip of a ploughshare, with a hanging, blue, broad, uneven belly, with arms like the trunk of a palm tree, with a flat, deformed, crooked nose, with a broad, red mouth like a mountain cave, with coarse, tawny, rough, harsh hair, having become exceedingly frightful in appearance, having come, having stood before the Blessed One Sumedha, smoking and blazing, even having rained down nine kinds of showers of the type of rocks, mountains, fire, nets, water, mud, ashes, weapons, embers, and sand, being unable to shake even the tip of a hair of the Blessed One, like Āḷavaka, he asked a question, thinking "Having asked the Blessed One a question, I shall kill him." This Blessed One, by answering the questions, led that demon to the discipline. Then on the second day, it is said, the inhabitants of the country, having brought a prince together with food loaded on carts, gave them to the demon. Then the demon gave the prince to the Buddha. The people standing at the entrance to the forest approached the Blessed One. Then at that assembly, the One of Ten Powers, expounding the Teaching agreeable to the mind of the demon, produced the eye of the Teaching for ninety thousand koṭis of living beings; that was the second full realisation of the Teaching. Therefore it was said -

- 5.** "Furthermore, he, the Conqueror, tamed the demon Kumbhakaṇṇa;

For ninety thousand crores, there was the second full realisation."

But when he made known the four truths in the Sirinanda park in the city of Upakāri, then there was the third full realisation of the teaching for eighty hundred thousand crores. Therefore it was said -

- 6.** "Furthermore, the one of immeasurable fame made known the four truths;
For eighty thousand crores, there was the third full realisation."

The Blessed One Sumedha too had three assemblies of disciples. At the first assembly in the city of Sudassana there were a hundred crores who had eliminated the mental corruptions. Again, at the second, on Mount Devakūṭa, when the kathina robe was spread, there were ninety crores. Again, at the third, when the Blessed One was wandering on a journey, there were eighty crores. Therefore it was said -

7. "There were three assemblies of Sumedha, the great sage;
Of those who had eliminated the mental corruptions, spotless ones, of peaceful minds, such ones.
8. "When the Conqueror approached the city named Sudassana;
Then a hundred koṭis of monks who had eliminated the mental corruptions met together.
9. "Furthermore, at Devakūṭa, when the kathina robe was spread for the monks;
Then the second meeting was of ninety koṭis.
10. "Furthermore, the one with ten powers, when he went on a journey;
Then the third meeting was of eighty koṭis."

7-10. At that time our Bodhisatta, having been a young man named Uttara, the highest among all people, having given up the eighty crores of wealth that had been merely deposited and stored away, having given a great gift to the monastic community headed by the Buddha, having then heard the Teaching of the One of Ten Powers, having become established in the refuges, having gone forth, he went forth. That Teacher too, while giving the thanksgiving after the meal - "In the future he will become a Buddha named Gotama" - thus he declared. Therefore it was said -

11. "I at that time, a young man named Uttara;
Eighty crores of wealth, accumulated in my house.
12. Having given the whole entire to the leader of the world together with the Community;
I went for refuge to him, and I delighted in the going forth.
13. That Buddha too declared of me, giving thanksgiving;
In thirty thousand cosmic cycles, this one will be a Buddha.
14. "Having striven in striving, etc. we shall be face to face with him."
The verses of declaration should be expanded.
15. "Having heard his word too, I gladdened my mind even more;

I determined upon further ascetic practice, for the fulfilment of the ten perfections.

16. "The discourses and also the monastic discipline, the ninefold Teacher's instruction;
Having learnt all thoroughly, I made resplendent the Conqueror's Dispensation.
17. "There, dwelling diligent, in sitting, standing, and walking;
Having gone to the perfection of direct knowledge, I went to the Brahma world."

11-17. Therein, "accumulated" means deposited by way of a hidden treasure. "Consummate" means whole; that is the meaning. "All" means having given entirely. "Together with the Community" means to one together with the Community. "To him I approached" means I approached him; the genitive case is used in the accusative sense. "I found delight in" means I went forth. "In thirty thousand cosmic cycles" means when thirty thousand cosmic cycles had passed; that is the meaning.

Now that Blessed One Sumedha's city was named Sudassana, his father was a king named Sudatta, his mother was named Sudattā, Saraṇa and Sabbakāma were the two chief disciples, Sāgara by name was the attendant, Rāmā and Surāmā were the two chief female disciples, the great nīpa tree was the Bodhi tree, his body was eighty-eight cubits in height, the life span was ninety thousand years, he dwelt in the house for nine thousand years, his chief queen was named Sumanā, his son was named Punabbasumitto, and he departed by elephant vehicle. The remainder is seen in the verses. Therefore it was said -

18. "The city was named Sudassana, the warrior was named Sudatta;
The mother was named Sudattā, of Sumedha, the great sage.
23. "Saraṇa and Sabbakāma were the chief disciples;
Sāgara by name was the attendant of Sumedha, the great sage.
24. "Rāmā and Surāmā were the chief female disciples;
The enlightenment tree of that Blessed One is called the great ironwood tree.
26. "Eighty-eight ratanas, very high, the great sage;
He illuminates all directions, as the moon the host of stars.
27. "Just as the jewel of a universal monarch shines for a yojana;
So too his jewel pervades a yojana all around.
28. "For ninety thousand years, life span exists for that long;
Remaining for that long, he helped many people to cross.
29. With those possessing the threefold true knowledge and the six higher knowledges, those who had attained power, such ones;
This was crowded with Worthy Ones, good ones.
30. They too, all of boundless glory, free, without clinging;
Having shown the light of knowledge, those of great fame were quenched.

18-30. Therein, "as the moon the host of stars" means just as the full moon in the sky illuminates and makes radiant the host of stars, even so it illuminates all directions too - this is the meaning. Some read "as the moon on the fifteenth"; its meaning is manifest.

"Named the jewel of a universal monarch" means just as the jewel treasure of a universal monarch, four cubits in length, with a circumference equal to a cart-hub, attended by eighty-four thousand gems, as if invoking the splendour of the arising of glory of the full moon of the autumn season surrounded by a host of stars, the jewel treasure of supremely delightful appearance comes from Mount Vepulla; as it thus comes, its radiance pervades an area of one yojana in extent all around; even so the jewel of radiance from the body of that Blessed One Sumedha too pervades one yojana all around - this is the meaning.

"By those possessing the threefold true knowledge and the six higher knowledges" means by those possessing the threefold true knowledge and by those possessing the six higher knowledges - this is the meaning. "By those who have attained power" means by those who have attained supernormal power. "By such ones" means by those who have attained the state of such-likeness. "Crowded" means filled, with a single radiance of orange robes. "This" he said with reference to the Dispensation, or the surface of the earth. "Of boundless glory" means with a boundless retinue, or of incomparable reputation. "Without clinging" means devoid of the four kinds of clinging. The remainder here in the verses is obvious everywhere.

The explanation of the Chronicle of the Buddha Sumedha is completed.

The eleventh lineage of the Buddhas 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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