

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses -
Commentaries (4. Aṅguttara Nikāya - Aṭṭhakathā)

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones (01. Ekakanipāta-
aṭṭhakathā)

15. Text on the Impossible (15. Aṭṭhānapāḷi)



PaliVerse

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses - Commentaries

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones

15. Text on the Impossible

1. Explanation of the First Chapter of the Text on the Impossible

268. In the Aṭṭhāna Pāḷi, "impossible" is the rejecting of the cause. "There is no chance" is the rejecting of the condition. By both, it rejects the reason itself. For a reason, because of the result's dependent occurrence upon it, is called "possibility" and "chance" of its own result. "That" means by whatever reason. "Accomplished in right view" means a stream-enterer noble disciple accomplished in path view. For he has many names: "accomplished in right view," "accomplished in vision," "has arrived at this Good Teaching," "sees this Good Teaching," "endowed with a learner's knowledge," "endowed with a learner's true knowledge," "has attained the stream of the Teaching," "a noble one of penetrative wisdom," and "stands having reached the door to the Deathless." "Any activity" means any single activity among the conditioned activities in the four planes. "Should approach as permanent" means should grasp as permanent. "This is impossible" means this reason does not exist, is not found. "That a worldling" means by whatever reason a worldling. "This is possible" means this reason exists. The meaning is that through eternalist view, he might grasp any activity among the conditioned activities in the three planes as permanent. But the activities of the fourth plane, because of the abundance of energy, like an iron ball heated all day for flies, do not become an object of wrong view or of other unwholesome states. By this method, the meaning should be understood also in "any activity as happiness" and so on.

269. "Should approach as happiness" - this is said with reference to the grasping as happiness by the power of the view of self, thus: "The self is exclusively happy and healthy after death." But with consciousness dissociated from wrong view, a noble disciple, overcome by fever, approaches any activity as happiness like one frightened by a rutted elephant capable of appeasing the fever, or like a pure brahmin towards faeces.

270. In the section on self, in order to include concepts such as kasiṇa and so on, instead of saying "any activity," "any phenomenon" is said. Here too, for the noble disciple the delimitation should be understood by way of the four planes, and for the worldling by way of the three planes. Or in all instances, the delimitation is fitting even for the noble disciple by way of the three planes only. For whatever a worldling grasps, from that the noble disciple disentangles the grasping. For whatever a worldling grasps as permanent, as happiness, as self, the noble disciple, grasping that as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self, disentangles that grasping. Thus in this triad of discourses, what is called the disentangling of the worldling's grasping of self has been spoken of.

271. In the terms beginning with "mother" and so on, "mother" means the genetrix only, "father" means the begetter only, and "Worthy One" means one who has eliminated the mental corruptions who is a human being only. But would a noble disciple deprive another of life? This too is an impossibility. Even if someone were to say thus to a noble disciple who has gone to another existence, even not knowing his own state as a noble disciple: "Having deprived this louse or ant of life, enter upon the wheel-turning sovereignty in the entire interior of the world-circle," he would indeed not deprive it of life. And even if they were to say to him thus: "If you will not kill this one, we shall cut off your head." They would cut off his very head, but he would not kill that one. But this was said for the purpose of showing the greatly blameworthy nature of the state of being a worldling, and for the purpose of illustrating the power of the noble disciple. For this is the intention here: The state of being a worldling is blameworthy, in that a worldling will even commit heinous actions with immediate bad destination such as matricide and so on. And the noble disciple is of great power, who does not commit these actions.

274. "With a corrupted mind" means with a mind corrupted by a murderous mind. "Should shed blood" means should cause even so much blood as a small fly could drink to flow from the living body.

275. "Should break the Community" means should break the Community belonging to the same communion, standing within the same boundary, by five means. And this too was said: "In five ways, Upāli, the monastic community is split - by a legal act, by a recitation, by speaking, by proclamation, by vote taking."

Therein, "by a legal act" means by any one legal act among the four legal acts beginning with a transaction by announcement. "By a recitation" means by any one recitation among the five recitations of the principal monastic code. "By speaking" means speaking, explaining the eighteen matters making for schism such as "what is not the Teaching is the Teaching" and so on, by means of various occasions. "By proclamation" means by proclamation, having made a verbal expression at the base of the ear in such a manner as: "Do you not know my state of having gone forth from a noble family and my state of being very learned? It is not fitting for you even to give rise to the thought that one like me would take up the Teacher's instruction as contrary to the Teaching and contrary to the monastic discipline. What, is Avīci cool for me like a grove of blue water-lilies? What, am I not afraid of the realm of misery?" and so on. "By vote taking" means by vote taking, having thus proclaimed and having supported their minds and having made them of the nature of not turning back, saying "Take this voting ticket."

And here, only the legal act or the recitation is the criterion, but the speaking, proclamation, and vote taking are preliminary stages. For even though one speaking by way of explaining the eighteen matters has proclaimed there for the purpose of generating approval and voting tickets have been taken, the monastic community remains unsplit. But when four or more, having thus taken voting tickets, perform a separate legal act or recitation, then the monastic community is called split. That a person thus accomplished in right view should break the Community - this is impossible. By this much, the five heinous actions with immediate bad destination beginning with matricide have been shown, which a worldling commits but not a noble disciple. For the purpose of making them manifest -

"By action, by door, and likewise by duration for a cosmic cycle;
By result, by commonality and so on, the judgment should be understood."

Therein, first by action - For here, the action of one who is a human being depriving of life a mother or father who is a human being, even one whose sex has changed, is a heinous action with immediate bad destination; even if one were to fill the entire world-circle with golden monuments the size of great shrines, thinking "I shall obstruct its result," and even if one were to give a great gift to the community of monks seated filling the entire world-circle, and even if one were to go about without releasing the corner of the double robe of the Buddha, the Blessed One, upon the body's collapse one is reborn in hell only. But whoever, being himself a human being, deprives of life a mother or father who is an animal, or being himself an animal deprives of life one who is a human being, or being an animal deprives of life one who is an animal, his action is not a heinous action with immediate bad destination, but it is weighty; it stands close to a heinous action with immediate bad destination. But this question was spoken by way of those of human birth only.

Therein, the set of four regarding the goat, the set of four regarding the battle, and the set of four regarding the thief should be discussed. Even with the intention "I shall kill a goat," indeed a human being killing a mother or father who is a human being standing in the place of a goat experiences a heinous action with immediate bad destination. One killing a goat with the intention of killing a goat or with the intention of killing mother and father does not experience a heinous action with immediate bad destination; one killing mother and father with the intention of killing mother and father does indeed experience it. This same method applies to the other pair of sets of four as well. And just as with mother and father, so too these sets of four should be understood with regard to Worthy Ones. And one experiences a heinous action with immediate bad destination only by killing a Worthy One who is a human being, not one born as a demon. But the action is weighty, similar to a heinous action with immediate bad destination. And even if a knife-blow or poison is given to a human Worthy One while still in the time of being a worldling, if he, having attained arahantship, dies by that very means, he is indeed a killer of a Worthy One. But whatever gift given during the time of being a worldling one consumes after attaining arahantship, it has been given to a worldling only. For one killing the remaining noble persons, there is no heinous action with immediate bad destination, but the action is weighty, similar to a heinous action with immediate bad destination.

Regarding the wounding, because of the Truth-finder's body being unbreakable, there is no such thing as causing blood to trickle by cutting the skin through an attack. But within the body itself, in one place, blood collects together. Even the splinter that broke off from the rock hurled by Devadatta struck the tip of the Truth-finder's foot; the foot was just bruised with blood inside, as if struck by a hatchet. For one doing thus, there is a heinous action with immediate bad destination. But Jīvaka, with the Truth-finder's approval, having cut the skin with a lancet and having removed the corrupted blood from that place, made him comfortable. For one doing thus, it is only a meritorious action.

Now, for those who, when the Truth-finder has attained final Nibbāna, break a shrine, cut down a Bodhi tree, or make an attack upon a relic - what happens to them? It is a weighty action, similar to a heinous action with immediate bad destination. But it is proper to cut a branch of the Bodhi tree that is obstructing a monument or an image containing relics. Even if birds hidden there drop excrement on the shrine, it is indeed proper to cut it. For a bodily relic shrine is greater than a shrine of articles of use. It is proper to cut down and remove even the root of a Bodhi tree that is breaking through the shrine site as it grows. But a branch of the Bodhi tree that obstructs the Bodhi tree house - one is not permitted to cut it for the purpose of protecting the house. For the house is for the sake of the Bodhi tree, not the Bodhi tree for the sake of the house. In the case of the seat-house too, the same method applies. But in whatever seat-house a relic has been deposited, it is proper to cut a branch of the Bodhi tree for the purpose of protecting it. It is indeed proper to cut a branch that draws away nutrients or a rotten branch for the purpose of tending the Bodhi tree, and there is merit too, as in attending to the body.

Regarding the schism of the Community too, when the Community standing within the boundary has not assembled, for one who, having taken a separate assembly and having performed the declaration, proclamation, and vote-taking, performs an act or recites the recitation, there is both a schism and a heinous action with immediate bad destination. But for one who performs with the perception of unity thinking "it is proper," or with that perception, there is only a schism, not a heinous action with immediate bad destination. Likewise in an assembly of fewer than nine. By the final reckoning, whoever breaks the Community of nine persons, for him there is a heinous action with immediate bad destination. For his followers who speak what is not according to the Teaching, it is a greatly blameworthy action; but those who speak what is the Teaching are blameless. Therein, regarding schism in the Community with only nine, there is this discourse - "On one side, Upāli, there are four, on one side four, a ninth proclaims, has the voting ticket taken - 'This is the Teaching, this is the monastic discipline, this is the Teacher's instruction; take this, approve of this.' Thus, Upāli, there is both dissension in the Community and schism in the Community. With nine, Upāli, or more than nine, there is both dissension in the Community and schism in the Community." But among these five, schism in the Community is verbal action, the remaining are bodily actions. Thus the judgment should be understood as regards action.

"As regards door" means all of these originate from both the body-door and the speech-door. But here the former four, even though originating from the speech-door by means of the effort of commanding, knowledge, and craft, fulfil only the body-door; schism in the Community, even though originating from the body-door for one creating schism by hand-gesture, fulfils only the speech-door. Thus here the judgment should be understood also as regards door.

"As regards duration for a cosmic cycle" means here only schism in the Community has duration for a cosmic cycle. For having created schism in the Community during a forming cosmic cycle or at the middle of a cosmic cycle, one is released only at the destruction of the cosmic cycle. Even if one creates schism in the Community today thinking "Tomorrow the cosmic cycle will be destroyed," one is released the next day; one is cooked in hell for just one day. But such an occurrence does not exist. The

remaining four actions are only of immediate result, not of duration for a cosmic cycle. Thus here the judgment should be understood also as regards duration for a cosmic cycle.

"As regards ripening" means for one by whom all five of these actions have been done, only schism in the Community ripens by way of conception; the remaining come to be reckoned among such categories as "defunct kamma, there was no result of action" and so on. In the absence of schism in the Community, wounding; in the absence of that, killing a Worthy One; in the absence of that, if the father is moral and the mother is immoral, or not moral in the same way, patricide ripens by way of conception. If the mother is moral, matricide. When both are equal in morality or immorality, only matricide ripens by way of conception. For a mother is one who does what is difficult to do and is very helpful to her children. Thus here the judgment should be understood also as regards ripening.

"As regards common and so on" means the former four are common to all, both householders and those gone forth. But schism in the Community - "Indeed, Upāli, a nun does not break the Community, nor a female trainee, nor a novice, nor a female novice, nor a lay follower, nor a female lay follower breaks the Community. A monk, Upāli, who is regular, belonging to the same communion, standing within the same boundary, breaks the Community" - from this statement, it belongs only to a monk of the aforesaid type, not to another; therefore it is not common. By the word "and so on," all of these are also accompanied by unpleasant feeling and associated with hate and delusion. Thus here the judgment should be understood also as regards common and so on.

276. "Another teacher" means thinking "This is my Teacher, but he is unable to perform the function of a Teacher," even in another existence he should take another founder of a religious order as 'This is my Teacher' - this is impossible; such is the meaning.

277. "In one world system" means in the ten-thousandfold world system. For there are three fields - the birth-field, the authority-field, and the domain-field. Therein, the birth-field is the ten-thousandfold world system. For it trembles at the time of the Truth-finder's descent into the mother's womb, at the time of emergence, at the time of highest enlightenment, at the turning of the wheel of the Teaching, at the relinquishing of the life principle, and at the final nibbāna. But the hundred thousand million world-circles is what is called the authority-field. For herein the authority of the Āṭānāṭiya Protection, the Peacock Protection, the Banner-top Protection, the Jewel Protection, and so on, operates. But the domain-field has no measure. For since the statement regarding the Buddhas says "as much as is knowledge, so much is what is to be known; as much as is what is to be known, so much is knowledge; what is to be known has knowledge as its limit; knowledge has what is to be known as its limit," there is nothing that is outside their domain.

But in these three fields, setting aside this world-circle, there is no discourse stating that Buddhas arise in another world-circle; but there is one stating that they do not arise. For there are three Canons - the Canon of Monastic Discipline, the Canon of Discourses, and the Canon of the Higher Teaching. Three rehearsals - the rehearsal of the Elder Mahākassapa, the rehearsal of the Elder Yasa, and the rehearsal of the Elder

Moggaliputta. In the three Canons of the word of the Buddha that have been established through these three rehearsals, having left aside this world-circle, there is no discourse stating that Buddhas arise elsewhere; but there is one stating that they do not arise.

"Simultaneously" means neither before nor after; they do not arise together. It is said that they arise either before or after. Therein, from the time of sitting on the seat of enlightenment thinking "Without attaining enlightenment I shall not rise," going back to the taking of conception in the mother's womb, that much should not be understood as "before." For at the Bodhisatta's moment of conception, the discernment of the field was made by the very trembling of the ten-thousand world-circles; in the meantime, the arising of another Buddha is indeed prevented. From the final nibbāna onwards, as long as a relic even the size of a mustard seed remains, that much should not be understood as "after." For as long as the relics remain, the Buddhas too remain as it were. Therefore, in the meantime, the arising of another Buddha is indeed prevented. But when the final nibbāna of the relics has occurred, the arising of another Buddha is not prevented.

But why do they not arise simultaneously? Because it would not have been marvellous. For Buddhas are marvellous human beings. As he said - "One person, monks, arising in the world arises as a marvellous human being. Which one person? The Truth-finder, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One." And if two or four or eight or sixteen were to arise together, they would not be marvellous. For even in one monastery, the material gain and honour for two shrines is not eminent; monks too, by being many, have become not marvellous; so too would Buddhas be. Therefore they do not arise.

And because of the absence of distinction in the Teaching. For the Teaching beginning with the establishments of mindfulness and so on, which one teaches - even if another were to arise, that very same Teaching would have to be taught by him. Therefore it would not be marvellous. But when one expounds the Teaching, the teaching too is marvellous indeed.

And because of contention. For if many Buddhas were to arise, like the pupils of many teachers, they would quarrel saying "Our Buddha is pleasing, our Buddha is sweet-voiced, an obtainer, meritorious." For this reason too they do not thus arise.

Moreover, this reason was explained in detail by the Elder Nāgasena when asked by King Milinda. For it is said there -

"Venerable Nāgasena, this too was said by the Blessed One - 'This is impossible, monks, there is no chance, that two Worthy Ones, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, should arise simultaneously in one world system - this is impossible.' And when teaching, venerable Nāgasena, all Truth-finders teach the thirty-seven qualities conducive to enlightenment; when speaking, they speak of the four noble truths; when training, they train in the three trainings; when instructing, they instruct in the practice of diligence. If, venerable Nāgasena, all Truth-finders have one recitation, one talk, one training, one instruction, for what reason do two Truth-finders not arise at one moment? Even by the arising of one Buddha this world has become radiant; if there were a second Buddha too, by the radiance of two this world would become radiant to an even greater degree. And two Truth-finders exhorting would exhort easily, and

instructing would instruct easily. Teach me the reason for this, so that I may be free from doubt."

"This ten-thousand-fold world system, great king, can bear only one Buddha; it bears the virtue of only one Truth-finder. If a second Buddha were to arise, this ten-thousand-fold world system would not bear it; it would shake, tremble, bend, bend down, twist, scatter, be destroyed, be demolished, and would not remain in place.

Just as, great king, a boat might be able to carry one person. When one person has boarded, that boat would be fully loaded. Then a second person might come, similar in life span, beauty, age, size, thinness and stoutness, and in all major and minor limbs; he might board that boat. Would that boat, great king, bear both of them?" "No indeed, venerable sir, it would shake, tremble, bend, bend down, twist, scatter, be destroyed, be demolished, would not remain in place, and would sink in the water."

"Just so indeed, great king, this ten-thousand-fold world system can bear only one Buddha; it bears the virtue of only one Truth-finder. If a second Buddha were to arise, this ten-thousand-fold world system would not bear it; it would shake, etc. would not remain in place.

Or else, great king, suppose a man were to eat as much food as he likes, satisfying himself, filling up to the throat. He, satisfied, gratified, complete, without interval, drowsy, become stiff as an unbent stick, were to eat again that much food. Would that man, great king, be happy?" "No indeed, venerable sir, having eaten once he would die." "Just so indeed, great king, this ten-thousand-fold world system can bear only one Buddha, etc. would not remain in place.

"Is it then, venerable Nāgasena, that the earth shakes because of the excessive burden of the Teaching?" "Here, great king, suppose there were two carts filled with jewels up to the brim. Having taken jewels from one cart, they were to heap them onto one cart. Would that cart, great king, bear the jewels of both carts?" "No indeed, venerable sir, its hub would split, its spokes would break, its rim would fall off, its axle would break." Is it then, great king, that the cart breaks because of the excessive burden of jewels? Yes, venerable sir. "Just so indeed, great king, the earth shakes because of the excessive burden of the Teaching."

But moreover, great king, this reason has been brought forward for the elucidation of the power of a Buddha. Listen also to another fitting reason therein, by which reason two Perfectly Enlightened Ones do not arise at one moment. If, great king, two Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise at one moment, a dispute would arise among the assembly, 'Your Buddha, our Buddha,' and they would become divided into two factions. Just as, great king, a dispute arises among the followers of two powerful ministers, 'Your minister, our minister,' and they become divided into two factions. Just so indeed, great king, if two Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise at one moment, a dispute would arise among the assembly, 'Your Buddha, our Buddha,' and they would become divided into two factions. Listen to this first reason, by which reason two Perfectly Enlightened Ones do not arise at one moment.

"Furthermore, great king, listen to a further reason by which reason two Perfectly Enlightened Ones do not arise at one moment. If, great king, two Perfectly Enlightened Ones were to arise at one moment, the statement 'the foremost Buddha' would be wrong. 'The eldest Buddha' etc. 'The best Buddha.' The statement 'the

distinguished Buddha,' 'the highest Buddha,' 'the most excellent Buddha,' 'the matchless Buddha,' 'the equal to the matchless Buddha,' 'the without equal Buddha,' 'the without counterpart Buddha,' 'the matchless person Buddha' would be wrong. Accept this reason too, great king, according to its meaning, by which reason two Perfectly Enlightened Ones do not arise at one moment.

"And yet, great king, this is the intrinsic nature of the Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, that only one Buddha arises in the world. Why? Because of the greatness of the causes of the qualities of an omniscient Buddha. Whatever else, great king, is great, that is only one. The earth, great king, is great; it is only one. The ocean is great; it is only one. Sineru, the king of mountains, is great; it is only one. Space is great; it is only one. Sakka is great; he is only one. Brahmā is great; he is only one. The Truth-finder, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One is great; he is only one. Wherever they arise, there is no opportunity for others. Therefore the Truth-finder, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One arises only one in the world." "Well explained, Venerable Nāgasena, is the question with similes and reasons."

"In one world system" means in one world-circle. Below, by this very term, ten thousand world-circles were included; those too are proper to be delimited by one world-circle alone. For Buddhas, when arising, arise in this very world-circle; but when the place of arising is prevented, the fact that they do not arise in other world-circles apart from this is itself what is prevented.

Explanation of the First Chapter.

15. Text on the Impossible

2. Explanation of the Second Chapter of the Text on the Impossible

278. "Simultaneously" - here, "before" means before the manifestation of the wheel treasure, and "after" means after its very disappearance. Therein, the disappearance of the wheel treasure occurs in two ways: either through the death of the universal monarch or through his going forth. And when disappearing, it disappears on the seventh day after the death or the going forth; after that, the manifestation of a universal monarch is not prevented.

But why do two universal monarchs not arise in a single world-system? Because of the prevention of contention, because of the nature of being marvellous, and because of the great majesty of the wheel treasure. For if two were to arise, the contention "Our king is great, our king is great" would arise, and "A universal monarch on one continent, a universal monarch on one continent" - it would not be marvellous. And this great majesty of the wheel treasure, which is capable of bestowing sovereignty over the four great continents with their surrounding two thousand islands, would also decline. Thus, because of the prevention of contention, because of the nature of being marvellous, and because of the great majesty of the wheel treasure, two do not arise in a single world-system.

279. "That a woman should be a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One" - here, let alone the Buddhahood which, having produced the qualities of omniscience, is capable of delivering the world, even the mere aspiration does not succeed for a woman.

"Human existence, achievement of gender, cause, seeing the Teacher;
Going forth, achievement of qualities, aspiration and desire;
Through the combination of eight factors, the resolution succeeds."

For these are the causes for the success of the aspiration. Thus, since a woman is unable to accomplish even the aspiration, how could there be Buddhahood? "This is impossible, monks, there is no chance that a woman should be a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One" - thus it is said. An accumulation of merit complete in every respect produces an individual existence complete in every respect; therefore only a man becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, not a woman.

280. In "should be a king, a universal monarch" and so on as well, since for a woman the characteristics are not fulfilled due to the absence of the sheathed male organ and so on, the endowment with the seven jewels does not succeed due to the absence of the jewel of a woman, and there is no individual existence superior to all human beings. Therefore it is said: "This is impossible, monks, there is no chance that a woman should be a king, a universal monarch."

281. And since the three positions of Sakka and so on are the highest, and the female gender is inferior, therefore the positions of Sakka and so on are also prohibited for her.

But is it not the case that just as the female gender, so too the male gender does not exist in the Brahma world? Therefore, it might be that even "that a man should attain the position of Brahmā - this is possible" should not be said. No, it should not be said so. Why? Because of a man here being reborn there. "The position of Brahmā" means the position of Great Brahmā is intended. And a woman, having developed meditative absorption here and having died, is reborn in the company of Brahmā's retinue, not of the Great Brahmās. But it should not be said that a man does not arise there. And even though there is the absence of both genders here, the Brahmās have the appearance of men, not the appearance of women. Therefore this has been well said indeed.

284. In "of bodily misconduct" and so on, just as neem seeds, bitter gourd seeds, and so on do not produce sweet fruit, but produce only disagreeable, non-sweet fruit, so bodily misconduct and so on do not produce sweet results, but produce only non-sweet results. And just as sugar-cane seeds, rice seeds, and so on produce only sweet, pleasant-flavoured fruit, not disagreeable and pungent. So bodily good conduct and so on produce only sweet results, not non-sweet. And this too was said -

"Whatever kind of seed one sows, that kind of fruit one reaps;
The doer of good reaps good, the doer of evil reaps evil."

Therefore "this is impossible, monks, there is no chance, that of bodily misconduct" and so on was stated.

290-295. In "one possessing bodily misconduct" and so on, "possessing" means the fact of being endowed is fivefold - the fact of being endowed with accumulation, the fact of being endowed with volition, the fact of being endowed with action, the fact of being endowed with result, and the fact of being endowed with presence. Therein, at the moment of accumulating wholesome and unwholesome action, it is called the fact

of being endowed with accumulation. Likewise the fact of being endowed with volition. But as long as beings do not attain arahantship, all beings are called "possessing volition" by virtue of the fact of being endowed with volition previously accumulated. This is the fact of being endowed with volition. As long as they do not attain arahantship, all beings, with reference to action previously accumulated that is worthy of result, are called "possessing action." This is the fact of being endowed with action. The fact of being endowed with result should be known only at the moment of result. But as long as beings do not attain arahantship, for them, having fallen away from here and there, for those being reborn in hell, hell appears through the modes of presence such as flames of fire and copper cauldrons and so on; for those entering the state of womb-born beings, the mother's womb; for those being reborn among the gods, the heavenly world appears through the modes of presence such as wish-fulfilling trees and heavenly mansions and so on - thus the sign of rebirth appears. Thus, their not being freed from this appearance of the sign of rebirth is called the fact of being endowed with presence. That one changes; the rest are unchanging. For even when hell has appeared, the heavenly world appears; even when the heavenly world has appeared, hell appears; even when the human world has appeared, the animal realm appears; and even when the animal realm has appeared, the human world just appears.

Herein is this story - At the foot of Soṇagiri, it is said, in the Naked Ascetics' monastery, there was a speaker of the Teaching named the Elder Soṇa. His father was named Sunakhavājika, a dog-hunter. The Elder, even while obstructing him, being unable to establish him in restraint, thinking "Let the wretched man not perish," gave him the going forth unwillingly in his old age. As he lay on his sick bed, hell appeared to him. Great dogs, having come from the foot of Soṇagiri, surrounded him as if wishing to devour him. He, frightened by great fear, said "Ward them off, dear son Soṇa, ward them off, dear son, the dogs!" "What is it, Great Elder?" "Do you not see, dear son?" - he told him that occurrence. The Elder Soṇa, thinking "How indeed could the father of one such as myself be reborn in hell! I shall be his support," having had various flowers brought by novices, having had the offering of spreading flowers on the ground and the offering of seats made in the shrine courtyard and the Bodhi tree courtyard, having brought his father on a small bed to the shrine courtyard, having had him seated on the bed, said "This offering, Great Elder, has been made for your benefit. Having said 'This is my humble gift-offering to the Blessed One,' having paid homage to the Blessed One, inspire confidence in your mind." That Great Elder, having seen the offering, doing accordingly, inspired confidence in his mind. At that very moment the heavenly world appeared to him. The mansions of Nandana Grove, Cittalatā Grove, Missaka Grove, and Phārusaka Grove, together with celestial dancers, appeared as if standing surrounding him. He said to the Elder "Go away, Soṇa, go away, dogs!" "What is this, Great Elder?" "These are your mothers coming." The Elder thought "Heaven has appeared to the Great Elder." Thus it should be known that the fact of being endowed with presence changes. Among these facts of being endowed, here "one possessing bodily misconduct" and so on was stated by way of the fact of being endowed with accumulation, volition, and action.

Therein, some teachers say: "At whatever moment one accumulates action, at that very moment heaven is obstructed for him." Others, however, say: "Accumulated

action may or may not obtain its turn for result. Therein, when the action obtains its turn for result, at that very time heaven is obstructed for him." The remainder is of manifest meaning everywhere.

The commentary on the Aṭṭhāna section 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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