

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)

21. Commentary on the Chronicle of Buddha Vipassī
(21. Vipassībuddhavaṃsavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas

21. Explanation of the Chronicle of Buddha Vipassī

In the later period of the Buddha Phussa, in an intermediate cosmic cycle, and when that cosmic cycle had passed, ninety-one cosmic cycles from now, one whose thought was to conquer all cosmic cycles, whose thought was devoted to the welfare of others, seeing clearly everywhere, a Teacher named Vipassī arose in the world. He, having fulfilled the perfections, having been reborn in the Tusita realm, a dwelling illuminated by the lustre of many jewels and gems, having passed away from there, took conception in the womb of the chief queen named Bandhumatī, of King Bandhumā who had many kinsmen, in the city of Bandhumatī. He, after the elapse of ten months, came forth from the mother's womb in the Khema Deer Park, like a full moon resplendent from a dark mass of clouds. On the name-giving day, the experts in interpreting signs and the relatives, since he sees purely both by day and by night through the absence of darkness produced by blinking now and then, or since he sees with open eyes, gave him the name "Vipassī." They say "He sees having investigated and investigated, thus he is Vipassī." He dwelt in the house for eight thousand years. And he had three mansions named Nanda, Sunanda, and Sirimā.

There were a hundred and twenty thousand women headed by Queen Sudassanā. Sudassanā is also called "Sutanū." He, after the elapse of eight thousand years, having seen the four signs, when a son named Samavaṭṭakkhandha was born to Queen Sutanū, having gone forth in the great renunciation by a thoroughbred chariot, went forth. Eighty-four hundred thousand men went forth following him. He, the great man, surrounded by them, having practised the practice of striving for eight months, on the full moon day of Vesākha, having eaten the milk-rice given by the daughter of the millionaire Sudassana, having spent the day residence in a sal grove adorned with flowers, having taken eight handfuls of grass given by a barley-field keeper named Sujāta, having seen the Pāṭali Bodhi tree adorned, he approached it from the southern direction.

But the evenly rounded trunk of that trumpet-flower tree on that day, having been fifty ratanas, rose up, and the branches were fifty ratanas, so in height it was a hundred ratanas. On that very day, that trumpet-flower tree was entirely covered from the root upwards with flowers as if bound into sheaves, of supremely fragrant odour. A divine fragrance wafted forth; not only this one alone was in bloom at that time, but all trumpet-flower trees in the ten-thousand world-systems were in bloom. Not only the trumpet-flower trees alone, but all trees, bushes, and creepers in the ten-thousand world-systems bloomed. The great ocean too was covered with lotuses of five colours, with water-lilies, blue lotuses, and white water-lilies, and its waters were cool and sweet. And the entire interior of the ten-thousand world-systems was entangled with garlands of flags. Here and there it was strewn with scattered clusters of tossed garlands, the surface of the earth was adorned with various fragrant flowers, and there was darkness from incense powder. Having approached that,

having spread a grass mat fifty-three cubits wide, having determined energy endowed with four factors - Having made the resolution "Until I become a Buddha, I shall not rise from here," he sat down. Having thus sat down, having scattered the forces of Māra together with Māra, in the order of the paths, having brought within his grasp the four path knowledges, immediately after the paths the four fruition knowledges, the four analytical knowledges, the knowledge that distinguishes the four modes of generation, the knowledge that distinguishes the five destinations, the four grounds of self-confidence knowledges, the six kinds of knowledge not shared with others, and all the virtues of a Buddha, with fulfilled thought, while still seated on the seat of enlightenment -

"Through the round of many births, etc. it has reached the elimination of cravings.

"Just as of a blazing fire struck by an iron hammer,
Gradually subsiding, the destination is not known.

"So too for those rightly liberated, who have crossed over the flood of sensual bondage;
There is no destination to be declared for those who have attained unshakeable happiness."

Thus, having uttered an inspired utterance, having spent seven weeks in the very vicinity of the Bodhi tree, having accepted Brahmā's request, having surveyed the achievement of decisive support of his own half-brother Prince Khaṇḍa and the son of the royal chaplain Prince Tissa, having gone through space, having descended into the deer-park called Khema, having had both of them 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 by unlimited deities. Therefore it was said -

1. "And after Phussa, the Perfectly Enlightened One, the best of bipeds;
The one with vision named Vipassī by name arose in the world.
2. Having broken through all ignorance, attained the highest enlightenment;
To set in motion the wheel of the Teaching, he departed for the city of Bandhumatī.
3. Having set in motion the wheel of the Teaching, the Leader awakened both;
The first full realisation was not to be told by counting."

1-3. Therein, "having split" means having broken; the meaning is having broken the darkness of ignorance. "Vattetvā cakkamārāme" is also a reading; its meaning is "in the park" means in the secure deer-park. "He awakened both" means he awakened both his own youngest brother, the prince Khaṇḍa, and Tissa, the chaplain's son. "Not to be told by counting" means there is no numerical delimitation by way of the full realisation of the deities; this is the meaning.

Then at another time he gave the nectar of the Teaching to drink to eighty-four thousand monks who had gone forth following the prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa, the chaplain's son. That was the second full realisation. Therefore it was said -

4. "Furthermore, the one of immeasurable fame made known the truth there; For eighty-four thousand, there was the second full realisation."

Therein, "there" means in the deer-park called Khema. In "Eighty-four thousand went forth after the Enlightened by himself," here these men reckoned as eighty-four thousand were indeed the attendant men of the boy Vipassī. They, having come right early to attend upon the boy Vipassī and not seeing the boy, having gone for the purpose of the morning meal, having eaten the morning meal, having asked "Where is the boy?" and thereupon having heard "He has gone to the pleasure ground," having departed thinking "We shall see him right there," having seen his charioteer returning, having heard "The boy has gone forth," right at the place where they heard, they took off all their ornaments, had ochre robes brought from the market place, shaved off their hair and beards, and went forth. And having gone forth, they went and surrounded the Great Man.

Thereupon the Bodhisatta Vipassī, having become dissatisfied with the desire to be in a crowd, thinking "While practising the practice of striving, I dwell crowded; but this is not fitting - just as these, when they were householders, formerly surrounded me and went about, even now it is the same; what is the use of this group?" having thought "I shall go this very day," then again - he thought "Today is an improper time; if I go today, all these will know; I shall go tomorrow itself." And on that very day, the villagers in a village similar to the village of Uruvelā invited the Great Man for the morrow together with his assembly. They prepared milk-rice for those eighty-four thousand and for the Great Man as well. Then the Great Man Vipassī, on the following day, on the full moon day of Vesākha, in that village, having done the meal duty together with those gone forth people, went to the dwelling place itself. There those gone forth ones, having shown their duty to the Great Man, entered their own respective night-quarters and day-quarters.

The Bodhisatta too, having entered the hermitage, seated, thought - "This is the time, let me depart," and having departed, having closed the door of the hermitage, he set out facing the seat of enlightenment. It is said that those gone forth ones, having gone in the evening to attend upon the Bodhisatta, having surrounded the hermitage, sat down - having said "It has become too late, investigate it," and having opened the door of the hermitage, even though not seeing him, did not pursue him asking "Where has the Great Man gone?" "The Great Man, methinks, is disenchanted with living in a group and wishes to dwell alone; we shall see him only when he has become enlightened" - they departed on a journey heading towards the interior of Jambudīpa. Then they - having heard "Vipassī, it is said, having attained the state of a Buddha, has set in motion the wheel of the Teaching," gradually all those gone forth ones gathered together in the deer-park called Khema in the royal city of Bandhumatī. Thereupon the Blessed One expounded the Teaching to them; then there was the full realisation of the teaching for eighty-four thousand monks. That was the third full realisation. Therefore it was said -

5. "Eighty-four thousand went forth after the Enlightened by himself; To those who had reached the park, the one with vision expounded the Teaching.

6. "Having heard him speaking in every way, those who sat near;
They too, having gone to the excellent Teaching, there was the third full
realisation."

5-6. Therein, "eighty-four thousand went forth after the Enlightened by himself" - here it should be understood that "the Enlightened by himself" is made into the accusative case by connection with the prefix "anu"; the meaning is they went forth after the Enlightened by himself. The grammatical rule should be understood from the science of grammar. "Tattha ārāmapattāna" is also a reading. "Speaking" means of one who says. "Sitting near" means having gone and dwelling in dependence on, giving the gift of the Teaching - this is the meaning. "They too" means those gone forth reckoned as eighty-four thousand who had become attendants of Vipassī. "Having gone" means having known his Teaching. Thus there was the third full realisation for them. The Blessed One Vipassī, seated in the midst of six hundred and eight thousand monks who had gone forth after the Perfectly Enlightened One Vipassī and the two chief disciples, in the Khema Deer Park -

"Patience is the supreme austere asceticism, forbearance; the Buddhas
declare Nibbāna to be supreme;
For one who injures others is not one who has gone forth, one who vexes
others is not an ascetic.

"The non-performance of all evil, the acquisition of the wholesome;
The purification of one's own mind - this is the instruction of the Buddhas.

"Not reviling, not injuring, and restraint in the Pātimokkha;
Moderation in food, and secluded lodgings;
And devotion to higher consciousness - this is the instruction of the Buddhas."

He recited this Pātimokkha. But it should be understood that these are the verses for the recitation of the Pātimokkha of all Buddhas. That was the first assembly. Again, of a hundred thousand monks who had gone forth having seen the Twin Miracle, there was the second assembly. But when Vipassī's three half-brothers from a different mother, having appeased the borderland, having received a boon for the service of attendance upon the Blessed One, having led him to their own city, while attending upon him, having heard his Teaching, went forth. Having sat down in the midst of those eighty hundred thousand, the Blessed One recited the Pātimokkha in the Khema Deer Park. That was the third assembly. Therefore it was said -

7. "There were three assemblies of Vipassī, the great sage;
Of those who had eliminated the mental corruptions, spotless ones, of peaceful
minds, such ones.
8. "The first meeting was of six hundred and eight thousand.
The second meeting was of a hundred thousand monks.
9. "The third meeting was of eighty thousand monks;
There, in the midst of the group of monks, the Enlightened by himself
outshines."

7-9. Therein, "of sixty-eight hundred thousand" means the meaning is of a hundred thousand monks exceeding by sixty-eight thousand. "There" means there in the Khema Deer Park. "In the midst of the group of monks" means in the middle of the group of monks. "Tassa bhikkhugaṇamajjhe" is also a reading; its meaning is in the middle of that group of monks.

At that time our Bodhisatta, of great supernormal power and great might, having been a king of serpents named Atula, having been attended by a retinue of many tens of millions of hundreds of thousands of serpents, for the purpose of paying honour to the Possessor of the Ten Powers together with his retinue, whose morality was of matchless power, whose heart was cooled by compassion, having had a pavilion built made of the seven precious things, resembling the disc of the moon, a sphere of the essence of what is to be seen, having caused him to sit down there, having given for a week a great gift befitting divine splendour, he gave to the Blessed One a chair inlaid with the seven precious things, very precious, made of gold, resplendent with the radiance of various scattered gems. Then, at the conclusion of the thanksgiving for the chair, he declared of him: "Ninety-one cosmic cycles from now this one will be a Buddha." Therefore it was said -

10. "I at that time, a king of serpents of great supernormal power;
Atula by name, possessing merit, resplendent.
11. Having surrounded myself with many tens of millions of serpents then,
Playing divine musical instruments, I approached the elder of the world.
12. Having approached the Perfectly Enlightened One, Vipassī, the leader of the
world;
Inlaid with gems, pearls, and precious things, adorned with all ornaments;
Having invited the King of the Dhamma, I gave a golden chair.
13. "That Buddha too declared of me, having sat down in the midst of the
Community;
Ninety-one cosmic cycles from now, this one will be a Buddha.
14. "Having gone forth from the delightful city called Kapila, the Truth-finder;
Having striven in striving, having performed austerities.
15. "Having sat down at the root of the goatherd's tree, the Truth-finder;
Having taken up the milk-rice there, he will approach the Nerañjarā.
16. "On the bank of the Nerañjarā, that Conqueror ate the milk-rice;
By the prepared excellent path, he will approach the foot of the Bodhi tree.
17. "Then, having circumambulated, the unsurpassed one, the ground of
enlightenment;
At the root of the holy fig tree, the one of great fame will awaken to the
highest enlightenment.
18. "'His mother who gave him birth will be named Māyā;
His father will be named Suddhodana, this one will be Gotama.

19. "Without mental corruptions, without lust, with peaceful minds, concentrated;
Kolita and Upatissa will be the chief disciples;
Ānanda by name will be the attendant, he will attend upon this Conqueror.
20. "Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā will be the chief female disciples;
Without mental corruptions, without lust, with peaceful minds, concentrated;
The enlightenment tree of that Blessed One is called the holy fig tree, etc.
23. "Having heard his word, I gladdened my mind even more;
I determined upon further ascetic practice, for the fulfilment of the ten
perfections."

10-23. Therein, "possessing merit" means meritorious; the meaning is one who has accumulated a store of merit. "Resplendent" means endowed with radiance. "Of many tens of millions of serpents" means with many tens of millions of serpents; the genitive case should be seen as used in the instrumental sense. "Having surrounded" means having surrounded the Blessed One. "I" points out oneself. "Playing" means sounding and striking. "Inlaid with gems, pearls, and precious things" means the meaning is inlaid with various precious things such as gems, pearls, and so on. "Adorned with all ornaments" means the meaning is decorated with all ornaments made of precious things such as animal figures and so on. "Golden chair" means a chair made of gold. "Adāsahaṃ" means I gave.

Now that Blessed One Vipassī's city was named Bandhumatī. His father was a king named Bandhumā, his mother was named Bandhumatī, Khaṇḍa and Tissa were the two chief disciples, Asoka by name was the attendant, Candā and Candamittā were the two chief female disciples, the trumpet-flower tree was the enlightenment tree, his body was eighty cubits in height, the lustre of his body at all times having pervaded seven yojanas stood, the life span was eighty thousand years, Sutanu by name was his chief queen, Samavaṭṭakkhandha by name was his son, and he departed by a thoroughbred chariot. Therefore it was said -

24. "The city was named Bandhumatī, the warrior was named Bandhumā;
His mother was named Bandhumatī, of Vipassī, the great sage.
29. "Khaṇḍa and Tissa by name were the chief disciples;
Asoka by name was the attendant of Vipassī, the great sage.
30. "Candā and Candamittā were the chief female disciples;
The enlightenment tree of that Blessed One is called the trumpet-flower tree.
32. "Eighty cubits in height, Vipassī, the leader of the world;
His radiance radiates all around for seven yojanas.
33. "Eighty thousand years was the life span of that Buddha;
Remaining for that long, he helped many people to cross.
34. He freed many gods and humans from bondage;
And taught the path and non-path to the remaining worldlings.

35. Having shown light, having taught the Deathless state;
Having blazed like a great mass of fire, he, together with his disciples, attained
final Nibbāna.
36. The excellent supernormal power, the excellent merit, and the characteristic in
bloom;
All that has disappeared, are not all activities empty?"

24-36. Therein, "from bondage" means he freed gods and humans from the bondage of the mental fetter of sensual lust and so on; the meaning is "he illuminated." "And taught the path and non-path" means he taught the remaining worldlings thus: "This is the path for the achievement of the Deathless - the middle practice free from the annihilationist and eternalist views is the path; that which begins with bodily mortification is not the path." This is the meaning. "Having shown light" means having shown the light of path knowledge and the light of insight knowledge. "And the characteristic in bloom" means the body of the Blessed One was in full blossom and adorned with the variegated characteristics and so on. This is the meaning. The remainder everywhere in the verses is clear in itself.

The explanation of the Chronicle of Buddha Vipassī is completed.

The nineteenth 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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