

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)

26. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddha Kassapa
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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas

26. Explanation of the Chronicle of the Buddha Kassapa

Now, in the period after the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, when his Dispensation had disappeared, beings with a life span of thirty thousand years, having gradually declined, having become those with a life span of ten years, having again increased, having become those of unlimited life span, again having gradually declined, when beings with a life span of twenty thousand years had arisen, a Teacher named Kassapa, of many human lifetimes, arose in the world. He, having fulfilled the perfections, having been reborn in the Tusita city, having passed away from there, took conception in the womb of a brahmin woman named Dhanavatī, possessed of abundant virtues, the wife of a brahmin named Brahmadatta in the city of Bārāṇasī, and after the elapse of ten months, he came forth from the mother's womb at Isipatana in the Deer Park. By way of his clan, they gave him the name "Prince Kassapa." He dwelt in the house for two thousand years. Haṃsavā, Yasavā, and Sirinanda - he had three mansions. Forty-eight thousand women headed by a brahmin woman named Sunandā were in attendance.

He, having seen the four signs, when a son named Vijitasena had been born to the brahmin woman Sunandā, with a sense of urgency arisen, thought "I shall go forth in the great renunciation." Then, immediately upon his reflection, the mansion, having revolved like a potter's wheel, having risen up into the expanse of the sky, with a multitude of supremely beautiful rays, like the autumn night-maker surrounded by a host of stars, surrounded by many hundreds of men, as if adorning the expanse of the sky, as if making known the power of merit, as if drawing the eyes and hearts of the people, and as if beautifying the treetops beyond, having gone, having centred upon the banyan Bodhi tree, was established on the ground. Then the Bodhisatta, the Great Being, having stood firmly on the earth, having taken the banner of arahantship given by the gods, went forth. His dancing women, having descended from the mansion, having gone a distance of half a league, together with their retinues, having set up a lodging encampment, sat down. Then, setting aside the female attendants, all who had come together went forth.

The Great Man, it is said, surrounded by them, having practised the practice of striving for a week, on the full moon day of Vesākha, having eaten the milk-rice given by a brahmin woman named Sunandā, having spent the day residence in an acacia grove, in the evening time, having taken eight handfuls of grass brought by a barley-field keeper named Soma, having approached the banyan Bodhi tree, having spread a grass mat fifteen cubits in length and width, having sat down there, 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, having seen the achievement of decisive support of a crore of monks who had gone forth together with him, having gone through the expanse of the sky,

having descended at Isipatana in the Deer Park at Bārāṇasī, surrounded by them, he set in motion the wheel of the Teaching there. Then there was the first full realisation of the teaching for twenty thousand koṭis. Therefore it was said -

1. After Koṇāgamana, the Perfectly Enlightened One, the best of bipeds;
Kassapa by clan, the king of righteousness, the light-bringer.
2. "Having abandoned the family estate, with abundant food and drink,
Having given gifts to beggars, having fulfilled the mind;
Like a bull having broken through the pen, attained the highest enlightenment.
3. "When Kassapa, the leader of the world, was setting in motion the wheel of
the Teaching;
There was the first full realisation for twenty thousand koṭis."

1-3. Therein, "abandoned" means rejected, forsaken, given up. "The family estate" means the family house; the meaning is that the unlimited mass of wealth, the accumulation of riches of many thousands of crores, possessions comparable to the dwelling of the Thousand-Eyed One, extremely difficult to give up, was abandoned like grass. "To beggars" means having given to beggars. "The enclosure" means a cow-shed; just as a leading bull, having broken through the cow-shed, reaches the desired place as he pleases, so too the Great Man, having broken through the bondage of the household, attained the highest enlightenment - this is the meaning.

Again, when the Teacher was wandering on a four-month journey through the country, there was the second full realisation for ten thousand crores. But when, performing the Twin Miracle at the gate of the city of Sundara at the foot of an asana tree, he expounded the Teaching, then there was the third full realisation for five thousand crores. Again, having performed the Twin Miracle, in the Tāvātimsa realm which is difficult to overcome by the enemies of the gods, there is a divine assembly hall named Sudhammā; having sat down there, having made his own mother, Queen Dhanavatī, the chief, teaching the seven books of the Canon of the Higher Teaching for the purpose of assisting the deities of the ten-thousandfold world system, he gave the nectar of the Teaching to drink to three thousand crores of deities. Therefore it was said -

4. "When for four months the Buddha wandered on a journey in the world;
For ten thousand crores, there was the second full realisation.
5. "Having performed the twin miracle, he proclaimed the element of knowledge;
For five thousand crores, there was the third full realisation.
6. "In the charming celestial city Sudhammā, there he proclaimed the Teaching;
The Conqueror awakened thirty billion gods.
7. "At the proclamation of the Teaching to the demon, the king of men,
The full realisations of those are incalculable by counting."

4-7. Therein, "for four months" means during four months. Or this itself is the reading. "Wandered" means he walked about. "Having performed the twin miracle" means having performed the Twin Wonder. "The element of knowledge" means the

intrinsic nature of omniscient knowledge. They also say "the element of all-knowledge." "Proclaimed" means he made known to the public. "Sudhammā" means in the Tāvātimsa realm there is an assembly hall named Sudhammā; the meaning is having sat down there. "The Dhamma" means the higher teaching.

At that time, it is said, the one whose power conquered the king of men, an influential demon named Naradeva, was a demon of great supernormal power, like the demon Naradeva mentioned below. He, having created in a certain city in the Indian subcontinent a bodily form, manner of speech, and appearance similar to whatever form the king had, having killed that king, having devoured him, having assumed the kingship together with the inner palace, was one who fed on unlimited flesh. It is said that he was also one who indulged in women. But when the skilled and clever women recognised him - "This is not our king, this one is a non-human spirit" - they know, then he, being ashamed, having devoured them all, proceeds to another city. In just the same way, that demon Naradeva, devouring humans, when he went facing towards the beautiful city, then, having seen him, the people dwelling in the city, terrified with the shock of the fear of death, having departed from their own city, fled in all directions. Then, having seen those people fleeing, Kassapa, the One of Ten Powers, stood before that demon Naradeva. Naradeva, having seen the god of gods thus standing, having roared a loud and terrible roar, being unable to arouse fear in the Blessed One, having gone to him for refuge, asked a question. Having answered the question, having tamed him, while the Teaching was being taught, there was the full realisation for humans and gods who had arrived, beyond the reach of counting. Therefore it was said - "Of Naradeva, the demon" and so on. Therein, "at another proclamation of the Teaching" means at a subsequent proclamation of the Teaching. "Of these" means of these. Or this itself is the reading.

Now, of that Blessed One Kassapa there was only one assembly of disciples. In the city of Bārāṇasī there was a son of the royal chaplain named Tissa. He, having seen the excellency of marks on the body of the Bodhisatta Kassapa, having heard his father speaking - "Without doubt this one, having gone forth in the great renunciation, will become a Buddha; having gone forth in his presence, I shall be freed from the suffering of the round of rebirths" - having thought thus, having gone to the Himalayas abounding with groups of pure sages, he went forth into the going forth of a hermit. His retinue consisted of twenty thousand hermits. He, at a later time, having heard "Prince Kassapa, having gone forth, has attained the highest enlightenment," having come with his retinue, in the presence of the Blessed One Kassapa, with his retinue, having gone forth by the "Come, monk" ordination, attained arahantship. At that assembly, the Blessed One Kassapa recited the Pātimokkha on the full moon day of Māgha. Therefore it was said -

8. "Of that god of gods too, there was one meeting;
Of those who had eliminated the mental corruptions, spotless ones, of peaceful minds, such ones.
9. "Of twenty thousand monks, then was the meeting;
Of those who had gone beyond existence, such ones with shame and morality."

8-9. Therein, "of those who had gone beyond existence" means of those who had gone beyond the worldling, the stream-enterer and so on, the meaning is of all those who had eliminated the mental corruptions only. "Such ones with shame and morality" means of those who are similar by shame and by morality.

At that time our Bodhisatta was a young man named Jotipāla, one who had gone beyond the three Vedas, well-known on the ground and in the sky, a companion of the potter Ghaṭikāra. He, together with him, having approached the Teacher, having heard his talk on the Teaching, went forth in his presence. He, putting forth strenuous energy, having learnt the three Canons, adorned the Buddha's Dispensation by duty and practice. That Teacher too declared of him. Therefore it was said -

10. I was then a young man, renowned as Jotipāla;
A reciter, a bearer of sacred texts, one who has gone beyond the three Vedas.
11. In the marks of a great man and in history, having reached perfection in his own teaching;
Skilled in earth and sky, accomplished in knowledge, without deficiency.
12. Ghaṭikāra by name was the attendant of the Blessed One Kassapa;
Respectful, deferential, he attained final Nibbāna at the third fruit.
13. Ghaṭikāra, having taken me, approached Kassapa the Conqueror;
Having heard his teaching, I went forth in his presence.
14. Having become one putting forth strenuous energy, skilled in duties great and small;
Nowhere do I decline, I fulfilled the Conqueror's Dispensation.
15. As far as what was spoken by the Buddha, the ninefold Conqueror's Dispensation;
Having learnt all thoroughly, I made resplendent the Conqueror's Dispensation.
16. Having seen my marvel, that Buddha too predicted;
In this fortunate cosmic cycle, this one will be a Buddha.
17. "Having gone forth from the delightful city called Kapila, etc. we shall be face to face with him."
30. "Having heard his word too, I gladdened my mind even more;
I determined upon further ascetic practice, for the fulfilment of the ten perfections.
31. "Thus having wandered in the round of rebirths, avoiding misconduct;
And difficult deeds were done by me, because of enlightenment itself."

10-31. Therein, "skilled in the earth and the sky" means skilled in the trainings of the ground and in the sky, in the practice of the stellar wheel, and in the knowledge of the stars - this is the meaning. "Attendant" means one who attends. "Deferential" means with deference. "Quenched" means disciplined, or renowned. "In the third fruit" is a locative of sign; the meaning is quenched by reason of the achievement of the third

fruit. "Having taken" means having taken me. "In the duties and obligations" means in the minor duties and the major duties. "Skilled" means skilled in the fulfilment of those. "Nowhere do I decline" explains that in no place whatsoever, whether in morality or in concentration, attainments and so on, anywhere, from any source, I do not decline; there is no decline for me anywhere at all. "Nowhere do I decline" is also a reading; the meaning is the same.

"As far as" is an expression of delimitation; the meaning is "however much." "Spoken by the Buddha" means the word of the Buddha. "I adorned" means I adorned, I made known. "My marvel" means the Blessed One Kassapa, having seen my right practice, wonderful and marvellous, not shared with others - this is the meaning. "Having wandered" means having wandered in the round of rebirths. "Misconduct" means inappropriate conduct, what ought not to be done, what is not to be done - this is the meaning.

Now that Blessed One Kassapa's birth city was named Bārāṇasī, his father was a brahmin named Brahmadatta, his mother was a brahmin woman named Dhanavatī of supreme virtue, Tissa and Bhāradvāja were the two chief disciples, Sabbamitto by name was the attendant, Anuḷā and Uruveḷā were the two chief female disciples, the banyan tree was the enlightenment tree, his body was twenty cubits in height, his life span was twenty thousand years, his chief queen was named Sunandā, his son was named Vijitasena, and he departed by a mansion vehicle. Therefore it was said -

32. "There was a city named Bārāṇasī, there was a warrior named Kikī;
There in that city dwelt the great family of the Perfectly Enlightened One.
33. "The brahmin Brahmadatta was the father of that Buddha;
Dhanavatī by name was the mother, of Kassapa the great sage.
38. "Tissa and Bhāradvāja were the chief disciples;
Sabbamitto by name was the attendant, of Kassapa the great sage.
39. "Anuḷā and Uruveḷā were the chief female disciples;
The enlightenment tree of that Blessed One is called the banyan tree.
41. That Buddha, risen to twenty cubits in height,
Like a lightning-staff in the sky, like the moon surrounded by a halo.
42. Twenty thousand years was the life span of that great sage;
Remaining for that long, he helped many people to cross.
43. Having built a lake of the Dhamma, having given morality as cosmetic;
Having put on the cloth of the Dhamma, having distributed the garland of the Dhamma.
44. Having placed the stainless mirror of the Dhamma among the great assembly;
Let those aspiring for Nibbāna see my adornment.
45. Having given the jacket of morality, armoured with the armour of meditative absorption,
Having wrapped in the leather of the Dhamma, having given the highest

armour.

46. Having given the shield of mindfulness, with a sharp knowledge-lance,
Having given the excellent sword of the Dhamma, for crushing the association
with defilements through morality.
47. Having given the ornament of the threefold true knowledge, a garland of the
four fruits;
Having given the adornment of the six higher knowledges, the ornament of
Dhamma flowers.
48. Having given the white umbrella of the Good Teaching, which wards off evil;
Having created the flower of fearlessness, he, together with his disciples,
attained final Nibbāna.
49. For he is the Perfectly Enlightened One, immeasurable, difficult to approach;
For he is the jewel of the Teaching, well proclaimed, inviting one to come and
see.
50. For he is the jewel of the Community, practicing well, unsurpassed;
All that has disappeared, are not all activities empty?"

32-50. "Like a lightning staff" means like a lightning creeper established in compactness. "Like the moon surrounded by a halo" means like a full moon encircled by a halo. "Having built a lake of the Dhamma" means having built a lake of the Dhamma of the scriptures. "Having given morality as cosmetic" means having given the cosmetic reckoned as the fourfold purification of morality for the purpose of adorning the continuity of consciousness. "Having put on the cloth of the Dhamma" means having put on the pair of cloths reckoned as the qualities of moral shame and moral fear. "Having distributed the garland of the Dhamma" means having distributed the flower garland of the thirty-seven qualities conducive to enlightenment. "Having arranged" is the meaning.

"The spotless mirror of the Dhamma" means having placed the mirror of the Dhamma - the spotless mirror reckoned as the path of stream-entry - on the shore of the lake of the Dhamma for the public, for the purpose of discerning blameworthy and blameless, wholesome and unwholesome mental states - this is the meaning. "The public" means of the public. "Whoever" means whoever. "Aspiring for Nibbāna" means they wander about aspiring for Nibbāna, which causes the dissolution of all unwholesome stains, which is the Deathless, the unconditioned, free from harm, supremely peaceful, of unfailing flavour. The meaning is: let them see this adornment of the aforesaid manner shown by me. "Those aspiring for Nibbāna, let them see my adornment" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "Alaṅkara" is stated having made it short.

"Having given the jacket of morality" means having given the jacket made of the five precepts, the ten precepts, and the fourfold purification of morality. "Armoured with the armour of meditative absorption" means having fastened the armour-bond of the fourfold and fivefold meditative absorptions. "Having wrapped in the leather of the Dhamma" means having wrapped in the leather of the Dhamma reckoned as

mindfulness and full awareness. "Having given the highest armour" means having given the highest armour of energy endowed with four factors - this is the meaning. "Having given the shield of mindfulness" means having given the shield-protection of the four establishments of mindfulness for the purpose of warding off the enemies of lust and the like, faults, and evil. "With a sharp knowledge-lance" means possessing a sharp lance of insight knowledge capable of penetration; the meaning is possessing an excellent lance sharpened by insight knowledge; or the meaning is having established an excellent warrior of meditation practice capable of destroying the power of defilements. "Having given the excellent sword of the Dhamma" means having given to that meditation practitioner the excellent sword of path-wisdom with an edge sharpened on the whetstone of energy. "For crushing the association with defilements through morality" means the noble supramundane morality for the purpose of crushing the association with defilements, for the purpose of destroying defilements - this is the meaning.

"Having given the ornament of the threefold true knowledge" means having given the ornament made of the threefold true knowledge. "A garland of the four fruits" means having made the four fruits into a wreath for the head. "The ornament of the six higher knowledges" means having given the six higher knowledges for the purpose of ornament, for the purpose of making adornment. "The adornment of Dhamma-flowers" means having made a flower garland reckoned as the nine supramundane states. "Having given the white umbrella of the Good Teaching, which wards off evil" means having given the utterly pure white umbrella of liberation, which wards off the heat of all unwholesome states. "Having created the flower of fearlessness" means having made the eightfold path, which leads to fearlessness, into a flower - this is the meaning.

It is said that the Blessed One Kassapa attained final Nibbāna in the Kāsi country, in the city of Setabya, in the Setabya park. It is said that his relics did not scatter. The human beings dwelling in the whole Indian subcontinent, having assembled, each contributing one golden brick worth ten million, variegated with jewels, for the purpose of building the exterior, and each contributing one worth half of ten million for the purpose of filling the interior, using red arsenic to serve the function of clay and oil to serve the function of water, built a stūpa one yojana in height.

"The Blessed One Kassapa too, having performed his obligations, doing only what is for the welfare of all beings;
In the Deer Park in the royal city of Kāsi, the one who brings delight to the world dwelt."

In the remaining verses, everything is obvious everywhere.

Thus in the Madhuratthavilāsinī, the commentary on the Buddhavaṃsa,

the explanation of the Chronicle of the Buddha Kassapa is completed.

Thus far the commentary on the lineage of the Buddhas of the twenty-four Buddhas

is completed in every way.



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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