THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

1. The Canon of Discourses (1. Sutta Piṭaka)

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses
(3. Saṃyutta Nikāya)

5. The Great Book (5. Mahāvaggo)

3. The Chapter on the Iron Ball (3. Ayoguḷavaggo)

[SN 51.21-32, PTS 5.282-5.290]



3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses

5. The Great Book

3. The Chapter on the Iron Ball

1. The Discourse on the Path

833. At Sāvatthī. "Monks, before my enlightenment, while I was still a Bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, it occurred to me: 'What indeed is the path, what is the practice for the development of the bases for spiritual power?' It occurred to me, monks: 'Here a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving - thus my desire will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally. And he dwells perceiving after and before - as before so after, as after so before;as below so above, as above so below; as by day so by night, as by night so by day.Thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity. Concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - thus my investigation will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally. And he dwells perceiving after and before -as before so after, as after so before; as below so above, as above so below;as by day so by night, as by night so by day' - thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity.

"Monks, when the four bases for spiritual power have been developed and cultivated in this way, a monk wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; etc. He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world. Monks, when the four bases for spiritual power have been developed and cultivated in this way, a monk, through the elimination of the mental corruptions, realises by his own direct knowledge, in this very life, the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are free from mental corruptions and, having entered upon them, dwells in them." The first.

2. The Discourse on the Iron Ball

834. At Sāvatthī. Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One;having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One: "Does the Blessed One directly know, venerable sir, having approached the Brahma world by supernormal power with a mind-made body?" "I do directly know, Ānanda, having approached the Brahma world by supernormal power with a mind-made body." "But does the Blessed One directly know, venerable sir, having approached the Brahma world by supernormal power with this body made of the four primary elements?" "I do directly know, Ānanda, having approached the Brahma world by supernormal power with this body made of the four primary elements."

"That the Blessed One is able, venerable sir, to approach the Brahma world by supernormal power with a mind-made body, and that the Blessed One directly knows,

venerable sir, having approached the Brahma world by supernormal power with this body made of the four primary elements - this, venerable sir, is wonderful and marvellous for the Blessed One." "Wonderful indeed, Ānanda, are the Truth-finders and endowed with wonderful qualities; marvellous indeed, Ānanda, are the Truth-finders and endowed with marvellous qualities.

"Whenever, Ānanda, the Truth-finder puts together the body in the mind and the mind in the body, and, having entered upon the perception of happiness and the perception of lightness in the body, dwells; at that time, Ānanda, the Truth-finder's body becomes lighter and softer and more workable and more luminous.

"Just as, Ānanda, an iron ball heated all day becomes lighter and softer and more workable and more luminous; so too, Ānanda, whenever the Truth-finder puts together the body in the mind and the mind in the body, and, having entered upon the perception of happiness and the perception of lightness in the body, dwells; at that time, Ānanda, the Truth-finder's body becomes lighter and softer and more workable and more luminous.

"Whenever, Ānanda, the Truth-finder puts together the body in the mind and the mind in the body, and, having entered upon the perception of happiness and the perception of lightness in the body, dwells; at that time, Ānanda, the Truth-finder's body with little difficulty rises up from the earth into the sky, and he wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; etc. He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world.

"Just as, Ānanda, cotton-wool or kapok, being light and carried by the wind, with little difficulty rises up from the earth into the sky; so too, Ānanda, whenever the Truth-finder puts together the body in the mind and the mind in the body, and, having entered upon the perception of happiness and the perception of lightness in the body, dwells; at that time, Ānanda, the Truth-finder's body with little difficulty rises up from the earth into the sky, and he wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many, etc. He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world." The second.

3. The Discourse on the Monk

835. "Monks, there are these four bases for spiritual power. Which four? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - these, monks, are the four bases for spiritual power. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, a monk, through the elimination of the mental corruptions, realised by his own direct knowledge, in this very life, the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are free from mental corruptions and, having entered upon them, dwells in them." The third.

4. The Discourse as Simple Version

836. "Monks, there are these four bases for spiritual power. Which four? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - these, monks, are the four bases for spiritual power." The fourth.

5. The First Discourse on Fruit

837. "Monks, there are these four bases for spiritual power. Which four? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - these, monks, are the four bases for spiritual power. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, one of two fruits is to be expected by a monk - final liberating knowledge in this very life; or, if there is a residue of clinging, non-returning." The fifth.

6. The Second Discourse on Fruit

838. "Monks, there are these four bases for spiritual power. Which four? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - these, monks, are the four bases for spiritual power. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, seven fruits and seven benefits are to be expected.

"What are the seven fruits and seven benefits? He attains final liberating knowledge early in this very life. If he does not attain final liberating knowledge early in this very life, then he attains final liberating knowledge at the time of death. If he does not attain final liberating knowledge early in this very life, if he does not attain final liberating knowledge at the time of death, then with the utter elimination of the five lower mental fetters he becomes an attainer of final nibbāna in the interval, an attainer of final nibbāna after the interval, an attainer of final nibbāna without exertion, an attainer of final nibbāna through exertion, an upstream-goer heading toward the Akaniṭṭha realm. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, these seven fruits and seven benefits are to be expected." The sixth.

7. The First Discourse on Ānanda

839. At Sāvatthī. Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One; having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

"What indeed, venerable sir, is supernormal power, what is the basis for spiritual power, what is the development of the basis for spiritual power, what is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power?" "Here, Ānanda, a monk

wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; etc. he exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world - this, Ānanda, is called supernormal power."

"And what, Ānanda, is the basis for spiritual power? Whatever path, Ānanda, whatever practice leads to the gaining of supernormal power, to the attainment of supernormal power - this, Ānanda, is called the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, Ānanda, is the development of the basis for spiritual power? Here, Ānanda, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - this, Ānanda, is called the development of the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, Ānanda, is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power? It is just this noble eightfold path, as follows -right view, etc. right concentration - this, Ānanda, is called the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power." The seventh.

8. The Second Discourse on Ānanda

840. To the venerable Ānanda seated to one side, the Blessed One said this: "What indeed, Ānanda, is supernormal power, what is the basis for spiritual power, what is the development of the basis for spiritual power, what is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power?" "The teachings have the Blessed One as their root, venerable sir, have the Blessed One as their guide, etc.

"Here, Ānanda, a monk wields the various kinds of supernormal power:having been one, he becomes many, etc. he exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world - this, Ānanda, is called supernormal power.

"And what, Ānanda, is the basis for spiritual power? Whatever path, Ānanda, whatever practice leads to the gaining of supernormal power, to the attainment of supernormal power - this, Ānanda, is called the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, Ānanda, is the development of the basis for spiritual power? Here, Ānanda, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - this, Ānanda, is called the development of the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, Ānanda, is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power? It is just this noble eightfold path, as follows -right view, etc. right concentration - this, Ānanda, is called the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power." The eighth.

9. The First Discourse on the Monk

841. Then several monks approached the Blessed One; having approached, they paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, those monks said this to the Blessed One: "What indeed, venerable sir, is supernormal

power, what is the basis for spiritual power, what is the development of the basis for spiritual power, what is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power?"

"Here, monks, a monk wields the various kinds of supernormal power:having been one, he becomes many, etc. he exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world - this is called, monks, supernormal power.

"And what, monks, is the basis for spiritual power? Whatever path, monks, whatever practice leads to the gaining of supernormal power, to the attainment of supernormal power - this is called, monks, the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, monks, is the development of the basis for spiritual power? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - this is called, monks, the development of the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, monks, is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power? It is just this noble eightfold path, as follows -right view, etc. right concentration - this is called, monks, the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power." The ninth.

10. The Second Discourse on the Monk

842. Then several monks approached the Blessed One, etc. To those monks seated to one side, the Blessed One said this: "What indeed, monks, is supernormal power, what is the basis for spiritual power, what is the development of the basis for spiritual power, what is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power?" "The teachings have the Blessed One as their root, venerable sir, have the Blessed One as their guide, etc.

"And what, monks, is supernormal power? Here, monks, a monk wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many, etc. he exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world - this is called, monks, supernormal power.

"And what, monks, is the basis for spiritual power? Whatever path, monks, whatever practice leads to the gaining of supernormal power, to the attainment of supernormal power - this is called, monks, the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, monks, is the development of the basis for spiritual power? Here, monks, a monk develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving, concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - this is called, monks, the development of the basis for spiritual power.

"And what, monks, is the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power? It is just this noble eightfold path, as follows -right view, etc. right concentration. This is called, monks, the practice leading to the development of the basis for spiritual power." The tenth.

11. The Discourse on Moggallāna

843. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "What do you think, monks, because of having developed and cultivated which qualities is the monk Moggallāna of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty?" "The teachings have the Blessed One as their root, venerable sir, have the Blessed One as their guide, etc. "Because of having developed and cultivated the four bases for spiritual power, monks, the monk Moggallāna is of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty."

"Which four? Here, monks, the monk Moggallāna develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving - 'thus my desire will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally.' And he dwells perceiving after and before -'as before so after, as after so before; as below so above, as above so below;as by day so by night, as by night so by day.' Thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity. Concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - 'thus my investigation will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally,' etc. thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the monk Moggallāna is of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty.

"And because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the monk Moggallāna wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; etc.He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world. And because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the monk Moggallāna, through the elimination of the mental corruptions, realised by his own direct knowledge, in this very life, the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are free from mental corruptions and, having entered upon them, dwells in them." The eleventh.

12. The Discourse on the Truth-finder

844. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "What do you think, monks, because of having developed and cultivated which qualities is the Truth-finder of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty?" "The teachings have the Blessed One as their root, venerable sir, etc. "Because of having developed and cultivated the four bases for spiritual power, monks, the Truth-finder is of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty."

"Which four? Here, monks, the Truth-finder develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving - 'thus my desire will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally.' And he dwells perceiving after and before -'as before so after, as after so before; as below so above, as above so below;as by day so by night, as by night so by day.' Thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity. Concentration due to energy, etc. concentration due to mind, etc. he develops the

basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional activities of striving - 'thus my investigation will not be too slack, nor too tense, nor contracted internally, nor distracted externally.' And he dwells perceiving after and before - 'as before so after, as after so before;as below so above, as above so below; as by day so by night, as by night so by day.'Thus with an open mind, unobstructed, he develops a mind of luminosity. Because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the Truth-finder is of such great supernormal power, of such great majesty.

"And because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the Truth-finder wields the various kinds of supernormal power: having been one, he becomes many, etc. He exercises mastery with his body even as far as the Brahma world. And because of having developed and cultivated these four bases for spiritual power, monks, the Truth-finder, through the elimination of the mental corruptions, realised by his own direct knowledge, in this very life, the liberation of mind and the liberation by wisdom that are free from mental corruptions and, having entered upon them, dwells in them." The twelfth.

The Iron Ball Chapter is the third.

Its summary:

> Path, iron ball, monk, purity and also two on fruit;
> Two on Ānanda and two on monks, Moggallāna, and the Truth-finder.

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 (Ṭīkā), 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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