

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries
(1. Dīgha Nikāya - Aṭṭhakathā)
2. Commentary on the Great Chapter (2. Mahāvaggaṭṭhakathā)
4. Commentary on the Great Discourse on Sudassana
(4. Mahāsudassanasuttavaṇṇanā)

[DN 17, PTS 2.169-2.199]



PaliVerse

1.The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries

2. Commentary on the Great Chapter

4. Explanation of the Great Discourse on Sudassana

Commentary on the Royal Capital of Kusāvatī

241. "Thus have I heard" - this is the Discourse on the Great Sudassana. Herein this is the explanation of terms not previously explained - "Made of all kinds of jewels": here one brick was made of gold, one made of silver, one made of lapis lazuli, one made of crystal, one made of ruby, one made of emerald, one made of all kinds of jewels. This wall, the innermost of all the walls, was sixty cubits in height. Some elders, however - say "A city, by its nature, should be beautiful to behold for those looking from within having stood inside; therefore the outermost one was sixty cubits, and the remaining ones were progressively lower." Some - "It should be beautiful to behold for those looking having stood outside; therefore the innermost one was sixty cubits, and the remaining ones were progressively lower." Some - "It should be beautiful to behold for those looking having stood both inside and outside; therefore the middle wall was sixty cubits, and the three on the inside and the three on the outside were progressively lower."

"Esikā" means a pillar post. "Three man-lengths in circumference": one man-length is five cubits measured by the hand of a man of medium height with his own hand; therefore the meaning is that the circumference of three man-lengths is a measure of fifteen cubits. But how were they positioned? On the outer side of the city, one beside each great gate-post, one beside each small gate-post, and three between the great gates and the small gates. Regarding the rows of palm trees, "one of the palm trees made of all kinds of jewels was made of gold" - the same characteristic as stated for the walls should be understood; and the same method applies for the leaves and fruits too. Those rows of palm trees were eighty cubits in height, standing one each between the walls on a level piece of ground strewn with sand.

"Vaggu" means skilful, beautiful. "Rajaniya" means able to delight. "Khamaniya" means even when heard for a whole day, it is indeed bearable; it does not cause disgust. "Madaniya" means producing the intoxication of conceit and the intoxication of manhood. "Of the five-piece": possessed of these five factors, namely ātata, vitata, ātatavitata, susira, and ghana. Therein, "ātata" means a musical instrument with one face, among drums and so on covered with leather. "Vitata" means with both faces. "Ātatavitata" means covered with leather on all sides. "Susira" means bamboo flutes and so on. "Ghana" means cymbals and so on. "Well-trained" means well-harmonised by pulling, loosening, and so on. "Well-played" means well struck for the purpose of knowing the state of being in proper measure. "Struck by skilled musicians" means played by those who are clever and skilful at playing. "Dhuttā" means gamblers.

"Soṇḍā" means drunkards. Those very same ones are "thirsty" by the power of the desire to drink again and again. "Paricāresun" means they sported, dancing by moving their hands or feet.

Commentary on the Wheel Jewel

243. "When he had bathed his head" means one who had bathed with scented water together with the head. "Observing the uposatha" means one who had taken upon himself the uposatha factors. "Had gone up to the upper terrace of the excellent palace" means one who had gone up to the upper part of the excellent palace, having eaten excellent food, having entered the royal bedchamber on the upper great terrace of the excellent palace, and reflecting upon his moral practices. At that time, it is said, the king, right early, having distributed a hundred thousand, having given a great gift, having bathed his head with sixteen pots of scented water, having finished his morning meal, having arranged the pure upper robe on one shoulder, having folded his legs crosswise on the royal couch on the upper storey of the palace, seated, sat reflecting upon his accumulation of merit consisting of giving and so on. This is the natural order for all wheel-turning monarchs.

While they are thus reflecting, the divine wheel treasure, originated by temperature conditioned by meritorious action of the aforesaid kind, resembling a mass of sapphires, as if breaking through the surface of the waters of the eastern ocean, as if adorning the sky, becomes manifest. That became manifest in the same way for Mahāsudassana too. This is called "divine" because of being endowed with divine power. "A thousand are its spokes" means having a thousand spokes. "Together with a rim, together with a nave" means with rim and with nave. "Complete in all respects" means complete in every respect.

Therein, it is a wheel and it is a precious thing in the sense of generating delight, thus "wheel treasure." Now the nave by which it is called "with nave" is made of sapphire, and in its middle is a tube made of fine silver, by which it shines as if laughing with a row of pure, smooth teeth, with a hole in the middle like the disc of the moon, and on both outer sides it has an enclosure made with a silver plate. And on those plates of the nave, tube, and enclosure, at the appropriate places, demarcation lines appear as if well arranged. This, for now, is the completeness in every respect of its nave.

Now by those spokes by which it -is called "having a thousand spokes," they are made of the seven precious things, endowed with radiance like the rays of the sun, and their ornamental knobs, pearl strings, demarcation lines, and so on also appear as well arranged. This is the completeness in every respect of its spokes.

Now by that rim by which it -is called "with rim," it is made of well-dyed, pure, smooth coral, as if laughing at the splendour of the cluster of rays of the young sun. And at its joints, circular demarcation lines of red gold plates, possessing the splendour of the evening glow, appear well arranged. This is the completeness in every respect of its rim.

On the back of the rim-circle, in the space between every ten spokes, there is a coral rod, hollow inside like a bellows-bamboo, inlaid with circular holes, catching the wind, whose sound, when stirred by the wind, like that of a five-piece musical ensemble well struck by a skilled musician, is lovely, enticing, desirable, and intoxicating. Above

that coral rod is a white parasol, and on both sides two rows of assembled flower garlands - thus, with the circumference of the rim adorned by a hundred coral rods bearing a hundred white parasols attended by two hundred rows of assembled flower garlands, inside both tubes of the nave there are two lion-mouths, from which hang two clusters of pearls, the size of palmyra trunks, possessing the splendour of clusters of full-moon rays, with borders of red woollen balls resembling the young sun, as if laughing at the beauty of the course of the celestial Ganges. By which, revolving together with the wheel treasure in the sky, three wheels appear as if turning together. This is its completeness in every respect in all ways.

Now this, thus complete in every respect, ordinarily, when people have eaten their evening meal and are sitting on seats prepared at their own house doors engaged in friendly conversation, while young children are playing at crossroads and the like, as if beautifying a region of the sky neither too high nor too low, near the tops of the jungle thickets, with a sweet sound heard from twelve yojanas away flooding the ears of beings, brushing the tips of tree branches, as if drawing the eyes with its colour resplendent with the arising of various radiances from one yojana away, as if proclaiming the power of merit of the wheel-turning monarch, comes towards the royal city.

Then, just by hearing the sound of that wheel treasure - of those people whose hearts were stirred thinking "From where indeed, whose indeed is this sound?" looking towards the eastern direction, one said to another thus - "Look, sirs, a marvel! This full moon formerly rises alone, but today it has risen with a companion. For this pair of full moons traverses the vault of the sky one after the other, like a pair of royal swans." Another said to him - "What are you saying, my dear? Where indeed have you ever seen two full moons rising together? Is it not the sun that has risen, bearing golden rays, with peacock-feather-like beams?" Another, having laughed, said thus - "Are you mad? Has not the sun just now set? How then could it rise following this full moon? Surely this must be the mansion of some meritorious being, brilliant with the arising of the radiance of many precious things." All of them, dismissing the others, said thus - "Sirs, why do you prattle so much? This is neither a full moon, nor the sun, nor a heavenly mansion. For these do not possess such splendid glory; rather, this must be the wheel treasure."

Thus, while that conversation was still going on among those people, having left aside the disc of the moon, that wheel treasure comes face to face with them. Then by them - when it was said "For whom indeed has this arisen?" there are those who say - "Not for anyone else; is not our great king one who has fulfilled the duty of a wheel-turning monarch? For him this has arisen." Then that great multitude, and whoever else sees it, all follow the wheel treasure itself. And that wheel treasure too, as if wishing to make known its own arrival for the king's sake alone, having circled the city seven times at the very top of the rampart, then having circumambulated the king's inner palace, at a place on the northern side of the inner palace resembling a lion's window, where it is possible to venerate easily with scents, flowers and so on, thus it stands as if fixed on its axle.

And when it has thus stood still, having entered through the openings of the windows and so on, having seen the mass of radiance adorning the interior of the palace, resplendent with the lustre of various colourful jewels, the king becomes one in whom

a desire to see it has arisen. And his retinue, having come with the offering of pleasant words, reports that matter to him. Then the king, his body pervaded with powerful joy and gladness, having released his cross-legged posture, having risen from his seat, having gone near to the lion's window, having seen that wheel treasure, thinks the thought beginning with "I have heard this." For Mahāsudassana too, all that was likewise. Therefore it was said - "Having seen, for King Mahāsudassana, etc. Could I indeed be a wheel-turning monarch?" Therein, "he becomes a wheel-turning monarch" - in what respect does one become a wheel-turning monarch? When the wheel treasure, having risen up into space even by just one or two finger-breadths, is rolling, now showing what should be done for the purpose of making it continue to roll, he said beginning with "Then indeed, Ānanda."

244. Therein, "having risen from his seat" means having got up from the seat where he was sitting and having come near to the wheel treasure. "Having taken a golden pitcher" means having lifted up a golden pitcher with a spout resembling an elephant's trunk. "King Mahāsudassana followed right behind together with his fourfold army" - for all wheel-turning monarchs, having sprinkled with water - immediately after the words "May the venerable wheel treasure conquer," the wheel treasure, having risen up into the sky, rolls forth. At the very same time as its rolling forth, that king becomes known as a universal monarch. When the wheel treasure has rolled forth, the king, as if following it, having mounted the excellent vehicle of a universal monarch, rises up into the sky. Then his retinue holding umbrellas, chowries and so on, and the inner palace attendants, and thereupon the viceroys, generals and other notables too, together with their own respective armies adorned with armour of various kinds of jackets, coats of mail and so on, resplendent with the radiance of manifold ornaments, decorated with raised flags and banners, having risen up into the sky, surround the king himself.

The royal officers, however, for the purpose of benefiting the people, have drums beaten through the city streets - "Dear ones, the wheel treasure has arisen for our king; adorned and beautified in accordance with your own wealth, gather together." The great multitude, however, naturally by the very sound of the wheel treasure, having abandoned all duties, having taken scents, flowers and so on, having already gathered together, they too, all of them, having risen up into the sky, surround the king himself. For in whomsoever the thought of desire to go together with the king arises, that person becomes one gone into the sky. Thus the assembly is twelve yojanas in length and breadth. Therein there is not even a single person with a cut or broken body or with soiled garments. For a universal monarch has a pure retinue. The assembly of a universal monarch, like sorcerers going through the sky, is like jewels scattered upon a surface of sapphire. For Mahāsudassana too it was likewise. Therefore it was said - "King Mahāsudassana followed right behind together with his fourfold army."

That wheel treasure, however, rolls forth through a region of the sky above the treetops, neither too high nor too low. So that those desiring flowers, fruits and young shoots of the trees can take them with ease. And so that those standing on the ground can observe "This is the king, this is the viceroy, this is the general." And in the postures of standing and so on, whoever wishes to go in whatever direction, he goes in that very direction. And those here engaged in crafts such as painting and so

on go while performing their own respective tasks. For just as on the ground, so too all their tasks succeed in the sky itself. Thus, having taken the assembly of the universal monarch, that wheel treasure, leaving Sineru on the left side, goes over the upper part of the great ocean to Pubbavideha, measuring seven thousand yojanas.

There, whatever piece of land is twelve yojanas across, thirty-six yojanas in circumference, capable of accommodating the assembly's encampment, with easily obtainable food and provisions, endowed with shade and water, with a clean level surface, and delightful - above that piece of land, the wheel treasure stands as if fixed on its axle. Then, by that sign, the great multitude descends and, performing all tasks such as bathing, eating and so on according to preference, takes up residence. For Mahāsudassana too, all was likewise. Therefore it was said - "And, Ānanda, in whatever region the wheel treasure came to rest, there King Mahāsudassana took up residence together with his fourfold army."

When the universal monarch had thus taken up residence, whatever kings were there, even having heard "a foreign army has arrived," they do not assemble an army and prepare for battle. For immediately upon the arising of the wheel treasure, there is no such being who would dare to raise a weapon against that king with the perception of an enemy. This is the power of the wheel treasure.

For by the power of the wheel of that king,
All enemies without remainder submit to taming;
"Tamer of enemies" is the name for the lord of men,
Therefore that is called his wheel.

Therefore all those kings, having taken presents befitting their own respective sovereignty, glory, and wealth, having approached that king, with bowed heads, performing worship at his feet by anointing them with the radiance of the gems on their own crowns - with words beginning with "Come, great king," they submit to his command and service. They did likewise for Mahāsudassana too. Therefore it was said - "Now, Ānanda, whatever hostile kings there were in the eastern direction, etc. instruct us, great king."

Therein, "svāgata" means "well come." For when a certain one arrives, they grieve; when he departs, they rejoice. When a certain one arrives, they rejoice; when he departs, they grieve - such are you, one whose arrival brings rejoicing, one whose departure brings sorrowing. Therefore your coming is said to be "a good coming." But when thus addressed, the king, the universal monarch, neither - says "You must provide me this much tribute annually," nor does he take the wealth of one by force and give it to another. But with wisdom befitting his own status as a righteous king, having examined killing of living beings and so on, with a lovable, charming voice - having expounded the Teaching by the method beginning with "See, dear ones, killing of living beings, when practised, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to hell," he gives the exhortation beginning with "Living beings should not be killed." Mahāsudassana too did likewise; therefore it was said - "King Mahāsudassana said thus - 'Living beings should not be killed, etc. and eat as you have been accustomed to eat.'" But do all take this exhortation of the king? Even of the Buddha, not all take

it; how then would they take it of a king? Therefore those who are wise and intelligent, they take it. But all become followers. Therefore he said beginning with "Now, Ānanda, whatever."

Then that wheel treasure, when the exhortation had thus been given to the inhabitants of Pubbavideha and breakfast had been finished, having risen up into the sky by the power of the universal monarch, plunges into the eastern ocean. And in whatever way it plunges in, in that way, like a king of serpents who has contracted his hood having smelled the scent of medicine, the water of the great ocean, having become contracted in the spread of its waves, sinking down, having sunk down to the extent of a yojana, stands within the ocean like a wall of lapis lazuli. And at that very moment, various jewels scattered on the floor of the great ocean, as if wishing to see the splendour of merit of that king, having come from here and there, fill that area. Then that royal retinue, having seen that floor of the great ocean filled with various jewels, takes them up in their laps and so on according to their liking; and when the retinue has taken jewels according to their liking, that wheel treasure turns back. And as it turns back, the retinue is at the front, the king in the middle, and the wheel treasure at the rear. That water of the ocean too, as if being enticed by the splendour of the wheel treasure, and as if unable to endure separation from it, striking up to the circumference of the rim, continuously approaches. Thus the wheel-turning monarch, having conquered Pubbavideha bounded by the eastern great ocean, wishing to conquer Jambudīpa bounded by the southern ocean, goes facing towards the southern ocean by the path indicated by the wheel treasure. Mahāsudassana too went in just the same way. Therefore it was said - "Then, Ānanda, the wheel treasure, having plunged into the eastern ocean and having emerged, rolled towards the southern direction."

Now, as it thus rolled forth, the procedure of its rolling, the encampment of the army, the coming of the rival kings, the giving of instruction to them, the plunging into the southern ocean, the sinking down of the ocean water, and the taking of jewels - all this should be understood by the former method.

But having conquered that Jambudīpa measuring ten thousand yojanas, having emerged from the southern ocean too, having gone in the manner already stated to conquer Aparagoyāna measuring seven thousand yojanas, having likewise conquered that too up to the ocean boundary, having emerged from the western ocean too, having gone likewise to conquer Uttarakuru measuring eight thousand yojanas, having likewise conquered that too up to the ocean boundary, he emerges from the northern ocean.

By this much, sovereignty over the earth bounded by the four quarters has been attained by the wheel-turning monarch. He, thus victorious in conquest, together with his retinue, for the purpose of seeing the achievement of the splendour of his own kingdom, having leapt up to the vault of the sky above, having surveyed the four great continents, each attended by five hundred smaller islands, like four natural lakes adorned with groves of fully bloomed lotuses, white water lilies, and white lotuses, returns to his own royal capital in due order by the very path indicated by the wheel treasure. Then that wheel treasure stands as if adorning the door of the inner palace.

And when that wheel treasure has thus been established, there is no need for torches or lamps in the royal inner palace; the radiance of the wheel treasure itself dispels the darkness at night. But for those who desire darkness, there is darkness indeed. For Mahāsudassana too, all this was likewise. Therefore it was said - "Having plunged into the southern ocean, etc. such a wheel treasure became manifest."

Commentary on the Elephant Jewel

246. For the universal monarch for whom the wheel treasure had thus become manifest, the ministers, having had the place for the regular state elephant made into a level, clean piece of ground, having had it anointed with fragrant scents such as yellow sandalwood and so on, having prepared it below strewn with variegated, colourful, fragrant flowers, above with a canopy adorned with delightful garland-festoons of flowers gathered here and there between golden stars, like a heavenly mansion of the gods - they say "Consider, Sire, the arrival of such an elephant treasure." He, in the manner already stated previously, having given a great gift and having undertaken the precepts, sat reflecting upon that achievement of merit. Then, prompted by the power of his merit, from the Chaddanta clan or from the Uposatha clan, wishing to enjoy that special honour, with a pure white body adorned at the feet, neck, and face with the redness of the orb of the young sun, with seven supports, with a well-proportioned arrangement of major and minor limbs, with beautiful lotus-like markings like fully bloomed red lotuses, possessing supernormal power, capable of travelling through the sky like a meditator, like a silver mountain with its borders coloured with red arsenic powder, the chief of elephants, having come, stands in that place. If coming from the Chaddanta clan, the youngest of all comes. If coming from the Uposatha clan, the eldest of all. But in the Pāḷi it has come as just "Uposatha, the king of elephants." "King of elephants" means not used by anyone; the youngest of all comes - thus it is said in the commentaries. This one comes for universal monarchs who have fulfilled the duty of a universal monarch, when they reflect in the manner already stated. But for Mahāsudassana, it came of its own accord to the place of the regular state elephant, and having removed that elephant, stood there. Therefore it was said - "Furthermore, Ānanda, etc. king of elephants."

Having seen that elephant treasure thus become manifest, the elephant keepers and others, full of mirth, having gone quickly, inform the king. The king, coming very quickly, having seen it, with a gladdened mind - thinking "Excellent indeed, friend, would be an elephant vehicle, if it would submit to training," stretches out his hand. Then it, like a calf of a domestic cow, having let its ears hang down, showing a gentle disposition, approaches the king. The king wishes to mount it. Then his attendants, having known his intention, having fitted that elephant treasure with a golden banner, golden ornaments, and covered it with a golden net, bring it forward. The king, without even making it sit down, having ascended by a ladder made of the seven precious things, becomes inclined in mind towards travelling through the sky. Together with the very arising of his consciousness, that king of elephants, like a royal swan, leaps up into the blue vault of the sky, a net of radiance of sapphire gems. Then, in the manner already stated for the journey of the wheel, the entire royal retinue. Thus the king together with his retinue, having traversed the entire earth within the time before the morning meal itself, returns to the royal capital. Thus

of great supernormal power is the elephant treasure of a universal monarch. For Mahāsudassana too it was just the same. Therefore it was said - "Having seen, for the king, etc. became manifest."

Commentary on the Horse Jewel

247. Now, for the universal monarch for whom the elephant treasure had thus become manifest, the ministers, having had the place for the regular state horse made into a clean, level ground, and having adorned it, in the former method itself, generate endeavour for the purpose of the king's reflection upon its arrival. He, in the former method itself, having made gifts, honour, and respect, having undertaken moral rules and austerities, comfortably seated on the upper floor of the mansion, recollects the achievement of merit. Then, prompted by the power of his merit, from the Sindhava breed, resplendent like a mass of autumnal dark and white rain clouds intertwined with streaks of lightning, with red feet, with a red muzzle, with a body pure, smooth, compact, and firmly knit like a mass of moonlight, because of being possessed of a head of dark colour like a crow's neck and like a sapphire, thus called "black-headed," because of being possessed of hair like muñja grass, smooth, round, and going straight, as if well arranged and placed, with a mane like muñja grass, able to travel through the sky, a king of horses named Valāhaka, having come, stands established in that place. But this one came like the elephant treasure for Mahāsudassana. All the remainder should be understood by the method stated in the elephant treasure. With reference to such a horse treasure, the Blessed One -said beginning with "Furthermore."

Commentary on the Gem Jewel

248. Now, for the wheel-turning monarch for whom the horse treasure had become manifest, the jewel treasure comes from Mount Vepulla, four cubits in length, with the circumference equal to a cart-hub, decorated with two golden lotuses with clusters of perfectly pure pearls come out from the edge of the pericarp on both ends, attended by eighty-four thousand gems, as if pervading the splendour of a full moon surrounded by a host of stars. When it had thus arrived, having been placed in a net of pearls and raised into the sky to a height of sixty cubits by a series of bamboos, during the night-time its radiance pervades an area of one yojana in extent all around, by which that entire area becomes illuminated as if at the time of the break of dawn. Thereupon, farmers engage in agriculture, merchants in opening their shops, and the various craftsmen in their various activities, thinking it is day. For Mahāsudassana too, all that was likewise. Therefore it was said - "Furthermore, Ānanda, etc. a jewel treasure became manifest."

Commentary on the Woman Jewel

249. Now, for the universal monarch for whom the jewel treasure had thus become manifest, the woman treasure becomes manifest as the distinguishing cause of the distinction of sensual pleasure in his domain. They either bring his queen-consort from the royal family of the Madda kings, or she comes of her own accord from Uttarakuru through the power of merit. But the remaining excellence of hers - has come in the Pāḷi text itself by the method beginning with "Furthermore, Ānanda, for King Mahāsudassana, a woman treasure became manifest - lovely, beautiful."

Therein, "lovely" means she has a form exceeding the fulfilment of her bodily proportions. "Beautiful" means merely by being seen she satisfies the eyes; therefore she is one who should be seen even by abandoning other duties and distractions. "Pleasing" means merely by being seen she gladdens the mind through pleasure. "The highest" means the highest because of thus bringing about confidence. "Beauty of complexion" means beauty of colour. "Endowed with" means possessed of. Or "lovely" because she is not too tall and not too short. "Beautiful" because she is not too thin and not too stout. "Pleasing" because she is not too dark and not too fair. "Endowed with the highest beauty of complexion" because she has surpassed human beauty and not attained divine beauty. For the radiance of beauty of human beings does not emanate outwards. But for the gods it emanates even to a great distance.

But the radiance of her body illuminates an area measuring twelve cubits. And in the terms beginning with "not too tall," by the first pair the excellence of height is stated, by the second pair the excellence of girth is stated, and by the third pair the excellence of complexion is stated. Or by these six the absence of bodily deficiency is stated, and by "surpassing human beauty" the excellence of body is stated. "Cotton-wool or silk-cotton" means cotton-wool or silk-cotton that has been placed in clarified butter and kept, and carded a hundred times. "In the cold" means at the time when the king is cold. "In the heat" means at the time when the king is hot. "The fragrance of sandalwood" means the fragrance of yellow sandalwood that is always well-ground, fresh, and blended with the four kinds of aromatics wafts from her body. "The fragrance of waterlilies wafts" means from her mouth, at the times of laughing and speaking, the exceedingly sweet fragrance of a blue waterlily as if just bloomed at that very moment wafts forth.

Now, in order to show conduct befitting her bodily excellence endowed with the excellence of form, touch, and fragrance, "that" and so on beginning with "now" was said. Therein, "one who rises before" means having seen the king, she rises first from the seat where she was sitting, as if burnt by fire. "One who retires after" means when he is seated, having performed the duties such as fanning him with a palm-leaf fan, she lies down and sits down afterwards. "One who is obedient to his wishes" means she responds to whatever is to be done by the words "What shall I do, Sire?" "One who conducts herself agreeably" means she conducts herself and acts only in what is agreeable to the king. "One who speaks pleasantly" means whatever is dear to the king, that alone she speaks.

Now - In order to show that "her conduct was solely out of purity of disposition, not out of fraudulence," he said beginning with "Now, that." Therein, "did not transgress" means she did not go beyond, did not behave transgressively; setting aside the king, she did not desire even in thought any other man - thus it has been said.

Therein, those qualities stated of her at the beginning such as "lovely" and so on, and at the end such as "one who rises early" and so on, are merely her natural qualities. But those beginning with "surpassing human beauty" should be understood as having arisen through the power of former actions, beginning from the manifestation of the wheel treasure, in dependence on the merit of the universal monarch.

Or alternatively, even the loveliness and so on became complete in all respects beginning from the manifestation of the wheel treasure. Therefore he said - "Such a woman treasure became manifest."

Commentary on the Householder Jewel

250. Now, for the wheel-turning monarch for whom the woman treasure had become manifest, the householder treasure becomes manifest for the purpose of comfortably carrying out the functions to be done with wealth. He is by nature itself of great wealth, born in a family of great wealth. He is a millionaire householder who increases the king's heap of wealth. And for him a divine eye born of the result of action becomes manifest, combined with the power of the wheel treasure, by which he sees treasure even within the earth within a distance of a yojana. He, having seen that wealth, with a satisfied mind, having gone and having offered the king with wealth, accomplishes all the affairs to be done with wealth. He accomplished likewise for Mahāsudassana too. Therefore it was said - "Furthermore, Ānanda, etc. such a householder treasure became manifest."

Commentary on the Adviser Jewel

251. Now, for the wheel-turning monarch for whom the householder treasure had become manifest, the adviser treasure, able to arrange all duties, becomes manifest. He is the king's eldest son. By his very nature he is wise, experienced, intelligent, and discerning. But in dependence on the king's power of merit, through the power of his own actions, knowledge of others' minds arises in him. By which he is able, having known the disposition of minds of the royal assembly of twelve yojanas, to define what is beneficial and what is harmful for the king; he too, having seen that power of his own, with a satisfied heart, invites the king to admonish with advice on all duties. He likewise invited Mahāsudassana to admonish. Therefore it was said - "Furthermore, etc. an adviser treasure became manifest."

Therein, "to establish what should be established" means to establish what should be established in each and every position.

Commentary on Being Endowed with the Four Supernormal Powers

252. "Of even-ripening" means of even digestion. "Digestion" means the kamma-born heat element. Therein, one for whom food decays as soon as it is eaten, or one for whom it remains right there like a parcel of boiled rice, both these are not endowed with even-ripening digestion. But one for whom, when mealtime comes again, desire for food arises indeed, this one is endowed with even-ripening digestion.

Commentary on the Dhamma Mansion and Pond

253. "He had constructed" means he did not construct them by having a drum circulated in the city and having a mass of people assembled; rather, together with the very arising of the king's consciousness, the ground split open and eighty-four thousand ponds came into being. This was said with reference to those. "With two railings" means by one railing they were fenced at the very edge of the bricks, and by one at the boundary of the surrounding courtyard. "This occurred to him" - why did it occur? One day, it is said, the great man, having observed the great multitude going after having bathed and drunk, thought: "These people go about as if in the guise of

mad men. If there were flowers for them to adorn themselves with here, it would be a good thing." Then this occurred to him. Therein, "flowering in all seasons" - a flower by nature blooms in only one season. But I shall act in such a way - "So that it will flower in all seasons," he thought. "Had planted" means he did not have them planted by having seeds of waterlilies of various colours and so forth brought from here and there; rather, together with the very arising of his consciousness, everything succeeds for him. The world thought that it was planted by the king. Therefore it was said - "Had planted." From then on, the great multitude, having bedecked themselves with garlands of various kinds of water-born and land-born flowers, goes about as if celebrating a festival.

254. Then the king, desirous of making the people endowed with happiness even further beyond that - having thought out the arrangement of happiness for the people by the passage beginning with "What if I were to, on the banks of these ponds," did everything. Therein, "they bathed" means one rubbed the body, another applied bath powder, another brought water for one bathing on the bank, another received and gave garments.

"He established" - how did he establish? Having had suitable ornaments made for women and men, having set aside only the women there for the purpose of attendance and all the rest for the purpose of relinquishment, he had the drum beaten: "King Mahāsudassana gives a gift; consume it." The great multitude, having come to the bank of the pond, having bathed, having changed garments, anointed with various fragrances, adorned with garlands decorated with ornaments, having gone to the place of giving, among the manifold rice gruels, meals, and sweet-meats, and the eight kinds of beverages, whoever wishes for whatever, having eaten and drunk that, having put on garments of various colours of fine linen, having experienced success - those who already had such things, they leave them behind and go. But those who did not have them, they take them and go. Having sat upon elephants, horses, vehicles and so on, having gone about a little, those not desiring them leave them behind, and those desiring them take them and go. Having lain down on excellent beds, having experienced success, those not desiring them leave them behind, and those desiring them take them and go. Having experienced success together with women too, those not desiring them leave them behind, and those desiring them take them and go. And having adorned themselves with ornaments of the seven kinds of jewels too, having experienced success, those not desiring them leave them behind, and those desiring them take them and go. That gift too, having risen and exerted oneself, is given indeed. For the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent there is no other work; they go about just consuming the king's gift.

255. Then the brahmins and householders thought - "This king, even while giving such a gift, does not cause anything to be brought, saying 'Give me rice-grain and so on or milk and so on'; but it is not proper for us - to remain silent thinking 'the king does not cause anything to be brought.'" They, having collected abundant property, offered it to the king. Therefore - he said beginning with "Then, Ānanda, the brahmins and householders." "Considered thus" means why did they consider thus? From someone's house a little was brought, from someone's house much. When that was

being taken back - "Why was something beautiful brought only from your house, not from my house? Why was much brought only from your house, not from mine?" - thus even a sound of dispute might arise; lest that should arise, thus they considered.

256. "Come, my dear" means come, friend. "A mansion named Teaching" - he commanded having assigned the name to the mansion. But Vissakamma, having asked in return "How great, Sire, should the mansion be?" even when it was said "A yojana in length, half a yojana in breadth, and made entirely of all jewels," having assented to him saying "Let it be so, good is your word," having caused the king of righteousness to accept, he built it. Therein, "Yes, good for you, Ānanda" means "thus, good for you," indeed, Ānanda. "Having assented" means having accepted; the meaning is having said. "By silence" means wishing "There will be an opportunity for me to practise the duties of an ascetic," he consented by silence. "Made of hardwood" means made of sandalwood.

257. "With two railings": here one railing was at the top of the capital, and one below at the top of the boundary.

258. "Difficult to look at" (duddikkho ahosi) means difficult to gaze upon (duuddikkho); the meaning is difficult to see (duddasa) because of the achievement of radiance (pabhāsampatti). "Dazzles" (musati) means it carries away, it causes to tremble, it does not allow one to become established in a state of stillness. "Clear" (viddhe) means risen high; the meaning is that the clouds have become distant through the departure of clouds. "Sky" (deve) means in space.

259. "He had constructed" means he did not construct it by having it done thus: "I am constructing a pond in this place, demolish your houses." Rather, merely through the power of the arising of his consciousness, the ground split open and such a pond came into being. "Those with all desirable things" means with all wished-for and desired objects; he satisfied the ascetics with ascetic requisites, and the brahmins with brahmin requisites.

The explanation of the first recitation section is completed.

Commentary on the Achievement of Meditative Absorption

260. "Of great supernormal power" means possessed of great supernormal power reckoned as the arising of eighty-four thousand ponds merely through the power of the arising of consciousness. "Of great majesty" means possessed of great majesty because of the greatness of those very things to be experienced. "As follows" (seyyathidaṃ) is an indeclinable particle; of that - the meaning is "of which three." "Of giving" means of the relinquishment of one's possessions. "Of self-control" - in the Āḷavaka Sutta it has come as "wisdom is taming." Here it means the Observance practice performed by one who tames oneself. "Of restraint" means of morality.

Commentary on the Bodhisatta's Former Exertion

Standing here, however, his former exertion should be understood - it is said that the king was formerly born in a householder's family. Now at that time, while the Dispensation of the Buddha Kassapa was still enduring, a certain elder was dwelling in the forest, and the Bodhisatta, having entered the forest on his own business, having seen the elder, having approached and paid homage, having looked at the

elder's sitting place and walking path, asked - "Does the noble one dwell right here, venerable sir?" Having heard "Yes, lay follower" - having thought "It is fitting to make a hermitage for the noble one right here," having abandoned his own work, having pounded building materials, having made a hermitage, having roofed it, having plastered the walls with clay, having fitted a door, having made a wooden bed-spread - he sat down to one side, thinking "Will he make use of it, or will he not?" The elder, having come from inside the village, having entered the hermitage, sat down on the wooden bed-spread. The lay follower too, having come, having paid homage, seated nearby, asked "Is the hermitage comfortable, venerable sir?" "It is comfortable, good sir, suitable for one gone forth." "Will you dwell here, venerable sir?" "Yes, lay follower" - he, having known by the manner of consent that he would dwell there, having made him promise "You must come regularly to my house door" - said "Give me one boon, venerable sir." "Those gone forth have gone beyond boons, lay follower." "Venerable sir, what is allowable and what is blameless." "Speak, lay follower." "Venerable sir, at a place of regular dwelling, people wish for one's coming at auspicious or inauspicious occasions, and they become angry with one who does not come." "Therefore, even having gone to another place of invitation, the meal duty should be completed only after entering my house." The elder consented.

He, having spread a mat-cloth in the hermitage, prepared a bed and chair, laid down a back-rest, placed a footstand, dug a pond, having made a walking path scattered sand on it, and having seen deer coming and rubbing against the wall causing the clay to fall, he surrounded it with a thorn fence. Having seen them entering the pond and making the water muddy, having piled stones inside, having surrounded it outside with a thorn fence, he planted rows of palm trees at the inner edge of the fence; having seen them disturbing the swept area on the great walking path, having surrounded the walking path too with a fence, he planted a row of palm trees at the inner edge of the fence. Having thus completed the residence, he gave the elder the three robes, almsfood, medicine, vessels for use, a needle-thorn, a small knife, a nail-cutter, a needle, a walking stick, sandals, a water vessel, an umbrella, a lamp-stand, a dirt-remover, a water strainer, a filter, a bowl, a small dish, and whatever else was an article of use for those gone forth - he gave everything. There was no requisite not given by the Bodhisatta to the elder. He, guarding the moral precepts, performing the Observance, attended upon the elder for life. The elder, dwelling right there, having attained arahantship, attained final Nibbāna.

The Bodhisatta too, having performed merit as long as life lasted, having been reborn in the heavenly world, having passed away from there, coming to the human world, having been reborn in the royal city of Kusāvātī, was King Mahāsudassana.

"Thus even merit that is not very great, done in a worthy recipient,
Has great result; therefore that should be done by a wise man."

"The Great Array" means the great pinnacle chamber made of silver. Having wished to dwell there, he went; "this far, sensual thought" means: sensual thought, you should turn back this far; beyond this is not your ground; this is called a meditation dwelling; this is not a place for dwelling together with you - thus he turned back the three thoughts right at the door of the pinnacle chamber.

261. In the passage beginning with "the first meditative absorption" and so on, there is no separate function of preliminary work with the circular meditation object. When there is need for the blue circular meditation object, a sapphire; when there is need for the yellow circular meditation object, gold; when there is need for the red circular meditation object, a ruby; when there is need for the white circular meditation object, silver - in every place looked at, only the circular meditation object appears.

262. Regarding what should be said concerning "accompanied by friendliness" and so on, all that has been stated in the Visuddhimagga itself. Thus in the canonical text, only four meditative absorptions and four boundless states are stated. But the great man, having produced all eight attainments and the five direct knowledges, entering the attainments in fourteen modes by way of forward order, reverse order, and so on, sustains himself solely by the happiness of attainment, like a wasp that has entered a honeycomb by the sweet taste.

Commentary on the Eighty-four Thousand Cities and So On

263. "With the royal city of Kusāvatī as chief" means Kusāvatī the royal city was the chief of those cities; the meaning is the foremost of all. "Food offering" means food to be brought.

264. "At the end of every hundred years" - why did he think thus? Having become dissatisfied by their sound, for it has been said "sound is a thorn for one who has attained." Therefore the Great Man was dissatisfied by the sound. Then why does he not say "let them not come"? He does not say so lest this should arise for them: "Now the king does not see us," and they would not receive their regular duty.

Commentary on Queen Subhaddā's Approach

265. "This occurred to her" means when did this occur? On the day of the king's death. At that time, it is said, the deities thought - "Let the king not die destitute; let him die surrounded by harem ladies, many daughters, and sons." Then, having turned the queen around, they aroused such a thought in her. "Yellow garments" means those, it is said, were by nature agreeable to the king; therefore she said "put on those." "Stay right here, queen" means: queen, this meditation dwelling is not a place for dwelling together with you; it is my place for finding delight in meditative absorption; do not enter here.

266. "This occurred to her" means that in the world, beings indeed shine exceedingly at the time near death; therefore, having seen the state of very clear faculties of that king, this occurred to her; then, unwilling that the king's death should occur, having thought "Just now, having spoken of his virtues, I shall make an appearance of his remaining," she said beginning with "These are yours, Sire." Therein, "arouse desire" means arouse affection, make delight. "Have longing for life" means make expectation for life, attachment, craving - this is the meaning.

"Thus, queen, you should towards me" - when the queen, thinking "this one is a gone forth one," said "We indeed, Sire, being women, do not know the manner of speaking to those gone forth; how should we speak, great king?" to the king - He said beginning with "Thus, queen, you should behave towards me." "Blameworthy" means blamed by Buddhas, Individually Enlightened Ones, disciples, and other wise and very

learned persons. Why? For death with longing is the cause of rebirth in one's own house in the state of a demon, dog, goat, bull, buffalo, rat, cock, louse, worm, and so on.

268. "Then, Ānanda, Queen Subhaddā, having wiped away her tears" means the queen, having gone to one side, having wept and lamented, having wiped away her tears, said this.

Commentary on the Passage to the Brahmā World

269. "For a householder or" - why did he say this? It is said that for them there is great prosperity like that of Soṇa the merchant's son and others; it is said that for Soṇa the merchant's son, one dish of food is worth two hundred thousand. Thus, for those who have eaten such food, for a moment there is drowsiness after a meal, faintness after a meal, and weariness after a meal.

271. "Which I dwell in at that time" means where I dwell, that is only one city; in the remaining ones, sons, daughters and so on, and also slaves and servants dwelt. In the case of mansions and pinnacle chambers too, the same method applies. In the case of divans and so on too, he uses only one divan; the remaining ones are for the use of sons and so on. In the case of women too, only one attends upon him; the remaining ones are merely retinue. "I wear" means I wear only one suit of garments; the remaining ones belong to sixteen hundred thousand persons plus eighty thousand who go about surrounding him. "I eat" shows that at the very most I eat only a measure of rice, and the remainder belongs to eight hundred thousand persons plus forty thousand who go about surrounding him. For one pot of boiled rice is sufficient for ten persons.

Now, these eighty-four thousand cities and thousands of mansions and thousands of pinnacle chambers arose as the outcome of just one hermitage. Eighty-four thousand divans arose as the outcome of a bed given for the purpose of lying down. Eighty-four thousand elephants, thousands of horses, and thousands of chariots arose as the outcome of a chair given for the purpose of sitting. Eighty-four thousand jewels arose as the outcome of one lamp. Eighty-four thousand ponds arose as the outcome of one pond. Eighty-four thousand women, thousands of sons, and thousands of householders arose as the outcome of the giving of articles for use - vessels, bowls, beakers, bellows, water strainers, needles, scissors, nail cutters, keys, ear cleaners, footstands, sandals, umbrellas, and walking sticks. Eighty-four thousand cows arose as the outcome of the giving of dairy products. Eighty-four thousand ten million garments arose as the outcome of the giving of inner robes and cloaks. Eighty-four thousand pots of boiled rice should be understood as having arisen as the outcome of the giving of food.

272. Thus the Blessed One, having spoken in detail about the success of Mahāsudassana from the beginning, showing all that as like children's playing with sand-houses, while lying on the bed of final Nibbāna, said beginning with "See, Ānanda" and so on. Therein, "changed" means by abandoning their natural state, they have gone to the state of being undesignable, like an extinguished lamp. "Thus impermanent indeed, Ānanda, are activities" means impermanent in the sense of non-existence after having been thus.

By this much, the Blessed One, just as a man, having tied a ladder to a campaka tree a hundred cubits in height, having ascended and taken a campaka flower, would descend while releasing the ladder, just so, as if tying a ladder, having ascended the success of Mahāsudassana, whose height was many hundreds of thousands of tens of millions of years, having taken the characteristic of impermanence standing at the summit of that success, he has descended as if releasing the ladder. For that very reason, formerly King Vasabha, having heard the elder monks who were reciters of the Dīgha Nikāya reciting this discourse at the Ambalaṭṭhikā on the eastern side of the Lohapāsāda - "What, my dear, has been said here by my grandfather? He speaks only of the success at the place where he himself ate and drank" - thinking thus - When the words "Thus impermanent indeed, Ānanda, are activities" were spoken, thinking "My dear, having seen this, it was thus spoken by the one with vision through five eyes," having bent his left hand and clapping with his right hand - With a satisfied heart, he gave applause saying "Good! Good!"

"Thus unstable" means thus devoid of a stable nature, like water bubbles and so on. "Thus without comfort" means thus devoid of comfort, like water drunk in a dream, and like sandalwood applied in a dream.

"Would lay down a body" means would discard a body. He says: now there is neither the laying down of another body nor the caring for one, because of the elimination of mental defilements, Ānanda, for the Truth-finder. But having said this, he again addressed the elder: the power of a wheel-turning monarch, when the king has gone forth, disappears on the seventh day. But on the seventh day from the death of Mahāsudassana, the walls of seven precious things, the palm trees of seven precious things, the eighty-four thousand ponds, the Dhamma Palace, the Dhamma Pond, the wheel treasure - all this disappeared. But regarding the elephant and so on, this is the natural order: those whose life span is exhausted die together with him. When there is remaining life span, the elephant treasure goes to the Uposatha clan, the horse treasure to the Valāhaka clan, and the jewel treasure goes to Mount Vepulla itself. The power of the woman treasure disappears. The eye of the householder treasure becomes merely ordinary. The lucidity of the adviser treasure perishes.

"This the Blessed One said" means the Blessed One said all this, both what has been included in the canonical text and what has not been included. The remainder is of manifest meaning only.

*Thus in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, the Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya,
the explanation of the Great Discourse on Sudassana is completed.*



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.

PDF Creation Date: 16 August 2026

HOW TO CITE

PaliVerse (2026). Commentaries. The Canon of Discourses - Commentaries. 1. The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries. 2. Commentary on the Great Chapter. 4. Commentary on the Great Discourse on Sudassana Retrieved from paliverse.org

© 2026 The PaliVerse Project · All Rights Reserved
Centre for Study and Practice of Theravāda Buddhism
Civic Non-Profit Company registered in Greece
This PDF may be freely distributed for study and practice.

PaliVerse.org