

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

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

2. Commentary on the Book of Causation (2. Nidānavagga-
aṭṭhakathā)

4. Connected Discourses on Without Discernible Beginning
(4. Anamataggasaṃyuttaṃ)



PaliVerse

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses - Commentaries

2. Commentary on the Book of Causation

4. Connected Discourses on Without Discernible Beginning

1. The First Chapter

1. Commentary on the Grass and Wood Discourse

124. In the first discourse of the Anamatagga Saṃyutta, "without discernible beginning" means following the unknowable end; even having followed with knowledge for a hundred years or a thousand years, the end is unknowable, undiscovered; it is not possible to know its end from here or from there. The meaning is that the former and latter limits are undefined. "Wandering in the round of rebirths" means the uninterrupted continuing succession of aggregates and so on. "A first point is not discerned" means the former boundary is not seen. To the extent that its former end is not discerned, to that very extent the latter end also is not discerned; but beings wander in the round of rebirths in the middle itself. "Would go to exhaustion" - this is said because of the smallness of the simile. For in external teachings, the meaning is small, and the simile is great. For when it is said "This bull is like an elephant, this pig is like a bull, this lake is like an ocean," they do not have such a measure. But in the Buddha's teaching, the simile is small, and the meaning is great. For in the Pāḷi, only one Indian subcontinent is taken; but even in a hundred, a thousand, or a hundred thousand Indian subcontinents of such a kind, the grasses and so on would go to exhaustion by that method, but not the mothers of a man's mother. "Suffering has been experienced" means suffering has been undergone by you. "Acute" is a synonym for that very thing. "Disaster" means of many kinds such as disaster of relatives and so on. "Cemetery" means a charnel ground, or the earth itself. For that has been increased by the depositing of bodies by those dying again and again. "It is fitting" means it is proper. The first.

2. Commentary on the Earth Discourse

125. In the second, "the great earth" means the great earth extending to the limit of the world-circle. "Would put aside" means having broken up that earth and having made balls of the stated measure, one would place them to one side. The second.

3. Commentary on the Tears Discourse

126. In the third, "crying aloud" means weeping with sound. "Flowed" means having flowed and proceeded. "In the four great oceans" means in the four great oceans demarcated by the rays of Sineru. For the eastern side of Sineru is made of silver, the southern side is made of jewels, the western side is made of crystal, the northern side is made of gold. The silver and jewel rays issuing from the eastern and southern

sides, having become one, going across the surface of the great ocean, stand having struck the encircling world-mountain; the jewel and crystal rays issuing from the southern and western sides, the crystal and gold rays issuing from the western and northern sides, the gold and silver rays issuing from the northern and eastern sides, having become one, going across the surface of the great ocean, stand having struck the encircling world-mountain. In between those rays there are four great oceans. With reference to them it was said "in the four great oceans." In "disaster regarding relatives" and so on, "disaster" means scattering; the meaning is destruction. Disaster of relatives is disaster regarding relatives; disaster of wealth is disaster regarding wealth. But illness itself scatters and destroys health - thus it is "disaster"; illness itself is disaster - this is disaster regarding illness. The third.

4. Commentary on the Milk Discourse

127. In the fourth, "mother's milk" means the milk of a human mother of a single name. For when these beings are reborn among earthworms, ants, and so on, or among fish, turtles, and so on, or among those born from eggs, there is no mother's milk at all; when reborn among goats, cattle, buffaloes, and so on, there is milk, and likewise among human beings. Therein, in the case of goats and so on and also among human beings, not taking into account the time of being reborn in the womb of those with various names such as "Queen Sumanā, Tissā," but only the mother's milk drunk at the time of being reborn in the womb of a mother of a single name "Tissā" - it should be understood that this is more than the water in the four great oceans. The fourth.

5. Commentary on the Mountain Discourse

128. In the fifth, "But is it possible, venerable sir": that monk, it is said, thought - "The Teacher, because of the extreme length of the round of rebirths without discernible beginning, just keeps saying 'it is not easy, it is not easy,' and does not bring the talk to an end. Is it possible to have a simile made?" Therefore he spoke thus. "With a Kāsian cloth" means with an exceedingly fine cloth made of thread spun by taking three cotton fibres together. But when wiped with that, how much would be worn away? A mustard-seed amount. The fifth.

6. Commentary on the Mustard Seed Discourse

129. In the sixth, "an iron city" means a city encircled by an iron wall, but it should not be seen as being strewn inside with iron mansions of one storey and so on. The sixth.

7. Commentary on the Disciple Discourse

130. In the seventh, "they might recollect" means when one has recollected a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, another recollects a different hundred thousand from the place where that one stopped, and yet another recollects yet another - thus all four might recollect four hundred thousand cosmic cycles. The seventh.

8-9. Commentary on the Ganges Discourse and Others

131-132. In the eighth, "the sand in between" means the sand in between this interval of five hundred yojanas in length. In the ninth, there is nothing to be said. The eighth and ninth.

10. Commentary on the Puggala Discourse

133. In the tenth, "skeleton" and so on - all three are merely synonyms for "heap." But for these beings, the boneless period is indeed greater than the period with bones. For beings such as earthworms and so on, there are no bones at all, but for beings such as fish, turtles and so on, bones are indeed more abundant; therefore, not taking into account the boneless period and the period with abundant bones, only the period with an even proportion of bones should be taken. "To the north of the Vulture's Peak" means standing on the northern side of the Vulture's Peak. "In the Giribbaja of the Magadhans" means in the Giribbaja of the country of Magadha; the meaning is standing in the enclosure of mountains. The remainder is clear everywhere. The tenth.

The first chapter.

2. The Second Chapter

1. Commentary on the Duggata Sutta

134. In the first discourse of the second chapter, "poor" means destitute and miserable. "Deformed" means endowed with badly shaped hands and feet. The first.

2. Commentary on the Sukhita Sutta

135. In the second, "happy" means endowed with happiness, of great riches, of great wealth. "Well-adorned" means adorned and prepared, seated on the back of an elephant, with a great retinue. The second.

3. Commentary on the Tiṃsamatta Sutta

136. In the third, "from Pāvā" means dwellers in the region of Pāvā. In "all forest-dwellers" and so on, their state of being forest-dwellers and so on should be understood by way of undertaking ascetic practices. "All still with mental fetters" means all still with bonds; some were stream-enterers, some once-returners, some non-returners. For among them there was neither a worldling nor one who had eliminated the mental corruptions. In "cattle" and so on, among the colours such as white, black and so on, only one colour at a time should be taken. "Highway robbers" means those standing in ambush, thieves who waylay travellers. "Adulterers" means those who engage in the conduct of going to another's wife. The third.

4-9. Commentary on the Mātu Sutta and Others

137-142. In the fourth and so on, the meaning should be understood by the restriction of gender and by the restriction of world-circle. For men have a time as womankind, and womankind have a time as men - thus here is the restriction of gender. Beings transmigrate from this world-circle to another world-circle, and from another world-circle to this world-circle. Among those, showing only one who has been a mother during the time as womankind in this world-circle, he said "who has not previously been a mother." In "who has not previously been a father" and so on too, the same method applies. The fourth and so on.

10. Commentary on the Vepullapabbata Sutta

143. In the tenth, "once in the past" - he shows by bringing forth one life history from the past time. "The designation arose" means a description came to be. "They ascend in four days" - this was said with reference to those of middling strength. "Foremost" means the highest. "Best pair" means a beautiful couple. "They ascend in three days" - to this extent, it is said, in the interval between two Buddhas, the earth rose up by one yojana; that mountain became three yojanas in height.

"A little more" means a little beyond a hundred years, ten or twenty years. Again, there is no one called a person who lives a full hundred years; but at the upper limit, they live sixty or eighty years. But without reaching a hundred years, many are those dying at the time of five years, ten years, and so on. And here, the Blessed One Kakusandha arose at the time when the life span was forty thousand years, Koṇāgamana at the time when the life span was thirty thousand years - this appears to be made as a gradual decline, but it should be understood that it did not decline in this way; rather, it declined after having increased and increased. How? First, the Blessed One Kakusandha arose in this very cosmic cycle at the time when the life span was forty thousand years; having divided the life-span measure into five portions and having stood for four, he attained final Nibbāna while the fifth was still existing. That life span, declining, having reached the time of ten years, again increasing, having become incalculable, then declining, stood at the time when the life span was thirty thousand years; then Koṇāgamana arose. When he too had likewise attained final Nibbāna, that life span, having reached the time of ten years, again increasing, having become incalculable, having declined, stood at the time of twenty thousand years; then the Blessed One Kassapa arose. When he too had likewise attained final Nibbāna, that life span, having reached the time of ten years, again increasing, having become incalculable, having declined, reached the time of a hundred years; then our Perfectly Enlightened One arose. Thus it should be understood as having declined gradually by increasing and increasing and then declining. And therein, among whatever life-span measures that are low the Buddhas arise, for them too that very same life-span measure exists. The tenth.

The second chapter.

The commentary on the Anamatagga Connected Discourses is concluded.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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