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)

2. The Book of Causation (2. Nidānavaggo)

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

[SN 15.1-20, PTS 2.178-2.193]

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses

2. The Book of Causation

4. Connected Discourses on Without Discernible Beginning

1. The First Chapter

1. The Discourse on Grass and Wood

124. Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" “Venerable sir!" those monks replied to the Blessed One.The Blessed One said this:

"This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Just as, monks, if a man were to cut whatever grass, sticks, branches and leaves there are in this Indian subcontinent, and having collected them together, were to make them into sticks of four inches each and lay them down - 'This is my mother, this is my mother's mother,' even so, monks, that man's mothers' mothers would not be brought to an end, yet the grass, sticks, branches and leaves in this Indian subcontinent would be eliminated and brought to an end. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Thus for a long time, monks, suffering has been experienced by you, acute suffering has been experienced, disaster has been experienced, the cemetery has been increased. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The first.

2. The Discourse on Earth

125. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Just as, monks, a man might make this great earth into clay balls the size of jujube stones and put them aside - 'This is my father, this is my father's father,' even so, monks, that man's fathers' fathers would not be brought to an end, yet this great earth would be eliminated and brought to an end. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Thus for a long time, monks, suffering has been experienced by you, acute suffering has been experienced, disaster has been experienced, the cemetery has been increased. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The second.

3. The Discourse on Tears

126. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. What do you think, monks, which is more, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while you were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, or the water in the four great oceans?" "As we understand the Teaching expounded by the Blessed One, venerable sir, this indeed is more, venerable sir, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while we were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, not the water in the four great oceans."

"Good, good, monks, good indeed that you, monks, understand the Teaching expounded by me thus. This indeed, monks, is more, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while you were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, not the water in the four great oceans. For a long time, monks, the death of a mother has been experienced by you; while experiencing the death of a mother, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, not the water in the four great oceans. For a long time, monks, the death of a father has been experienced by you, etc. the death of a brother has been experienced... the death of a sister has been experienced...the death of a son has been experienced... the death of a daughter has been experienced... disaster regarding relatives has been experienced... disaster regarding wealth has been experienced. For a long time, monks, disaster regarding illness has been experienced by you; while experiencing disaster regarding illness, the tears that have flowed and trickled down while crying aloud and weeping due to association with the disagreeable and separation from the agreeable, not the water in the four great oceans. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning etc. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The third.

4. The Discourse on Milk

127. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. What do you think, monks, which is more, the mother's milk drunk by you while transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, or the water in the four great oceans?" "As we understand the Teaching expounded by the Blessed One, venerable sir, this indeed is more, venerable sir, the mother's milk drunk by us while transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, not the water in the four great oceans."

"Good, good, monks, good indeed that you, monks, understand the Teaching expounded by me thus. This indeed, monks, is more, the mother's milk drunk by you while transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, not the water in the four great oceans. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated." The fourth.

5. The Discourse on the Mountain

128. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. in the park. Then a certain monk approached the Blessed One; having approached, he paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Seated to one side, that monk said this to the Blessed One: "How long, venerable sir, is a cosmic cycle?" "Long, monk, is a cosmic cycle. It is not easy to reckon as so many years, or so many hundreds of years, or so many thousands of years, or so many hundreds of thousands of years."

"But is it possible, venerable sir, to make a simile?" "It is possible, monk" - the Blessed One said. "Just as, monk, there might be a great rocky mountain, a yojana in length, a yojana in breadth, a yojana in height, without cracks, without hollows, one solid mass. A man might wipe it once every hundred years with a Kāsian cloth.More quickly, monk, would that great rocky mountain come to utter elimination and exhaustion by this method, but not the cosmic cycle. So long, monk, is a cosmic cycle. Of such long cosmic cycles, monk, not just one cosmic cycle has been wandered through, not just a hundred cosmic cycles have been wandered through, not just a thousand cosmic cycles have been wandered through, not just a hundred thousand cosmic cycles have been wandered through. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monk, is without discernible beginning. A first point, etc. This is enough, monk, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The fifth.

6. The Discourse on the Mustard Seed

129. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī. Then a certain monk approached the Blessed One, etc. Seated to one side, that monk said this to the Blessed One: "How long, venerable sir, is a cosmic cycle?" "Long, monk, is a cosmic cycle. It is not easy to reckon as so many years, etc. or so many hundreds of thousands of years."

"But is it possible, venerable sir, to make a simile?" "It is possible, monk" - the Blessed One said. "Just as, monk, there might be an iron city, a yojana in length, a yojana in breadth, a yojana in height, full of mustard seeds packed together. From that a man might remove one mustard seed at the end of every hundred years. More quickly, monk, would that great heap of mustard seeds come to utter elimination and exhaustion by this method, but not the cosmic cycle. Thus long, monk, is a cosmic cycle. Of such long cosmic cycles, monk, not just one cosmic cycle has been wandered through, not just a hundred cosmic cycles have been wandered through, not just a thousand cosmic cycles have been wandered through, not just a hundred thousand cosmic cycles have been wandered through. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monk, is without discernible beginning etc. enough to become liberated." The sixth.

7. The Disciple Discourse

130. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī. Then several monks approached the Blessed One... etc. Seated to one side, those monks said this to the Blessed One:"How many, venerable sir, cosmic cycles have gone by and passed?" "Many, monks, are the cosmic cycles that have gone by and passed. They are not easy to reckon - 'so many cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of cosmic cycles, or so many thousands of cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of thousands of cosmic cycles.'"

"But is it possible, venerable sir, to make a simile?""It is possible, monks," the Blessed One said. "Suppose here, monks, there were four disciples with a life span of a hundred years, living for a hundred years. They might recollect day by day a hundred thousand cosmic cycles each. Even so, monks, the cosmic cycles not recollected by them would remain, yet those four disciples with a life span of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, would die by the elapse of a hundred years. Thus many, monks, are the cosmic cycles that have gone by and passed.They are not easy to reckon - 'so many cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of cosmic cycles, or so many thousands of cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of thousands of cosmic cycles.' What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated." The seventh.

8. The Ganges Discourse

131. He was dwelling at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove.Then a certain brahmin approached the Blessed One; having approached, he exchanged friendly greetings with the Blessed One. Having concluded the pleasant and memorable talk, he sat down to one side. Seated to one side, that brahmin said this to the Blessed One:"How many, Master Gotama, cosmic cycles have gone by and passed?" "Many, brahmin, are the cosmic cycles that have gone by and passed. They are not easy to reckon - 'so many cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of cosmic cycles, or so many thousands of cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of thousands of cosmic cycles.'"

"But is it possible, Master Gotama, to make a simile?""It is possible, brahmin," the Blessed One said. "Just as, brahmin, from where this river Ganges originates and where it reaches the great ocean, the sand in between is not easy to reckon - 'so many grains of sand, or so many hundreds of grains of sand, or so many thousands of grains of sand, or so many hundreds of thousands of grains of sand.' More numerous than that, brahmin, are the cosmic cycles that have gone by and passed. They are not easy to reckon - 'so many cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of cosmic cycles, or so many thousands of cosmic cycles, or so many hundreds of thousands of cosmic cycles.' What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, brahmin, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Thus for a long time, brahmin, suffering has been experienced, acute suffering has been experienced, disaster has been experienced, the cemetery has been increased. This is enough, brahmin, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated."

When this was said, that brahmin said this to the Blessed One:"Excellent, Master Gotama, excellent, Master Gotama! Etc. May Master Gotama remember me as a lay

follower who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life." The eighth.

9. The Stick Discourse

132. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Just as, monks, a stick thrown up into the sky falls once on its root, falls once on its middle, falls once on its end; so too, monks, beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths, once go from this world to the world beyond, once come from the world beyond to this world. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated." The ninth.

10. The Person Discourse

133. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha on the Mount Vulture Peak. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" “Venerable sir!" those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. For one person, monks, transmigrating and wandering on for a cosmic cycle, there would be such a great skeleton, a heap of bones, a pile of bones as this Vepulla mountain, if there were a collector and what was collected would not perish. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated."

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, said further:

> "For one person in one cosmic cycle, the accumulation of bones;
> Would be a heap equal to a mountain, thus was said by the great sage.
>
> "And this great Vepulla mountain has been declared;
> To the north of the Vulture's Peak, in the Giribbaja of the Magadhans.
>
> "But when one sees the noble truths with right wisdom;
> Suffering, the origin of suffering, and the overcoming of suffering;
> The noble eightfold path, leading to the peace of suffering.
>
> "That person, having transmigrated seven times at most;
> Becomes one who makes an end of suffering, through the elimination of all fetters." The tenth.

The first chapter.

Its summary:

> Grass and sticks and earth, tears and milk and mountain;
> Mustard seeds, disciples, Ganges, stick, and with person.

2. The Second Chapter

1. The Miserable Discourse

134. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatthī. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" “Venerable sir!" those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this: "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Whatever, monks, you might see as poor and deformed, the conclusion should be reached here - 'Such has been experienced by us too during this long period of time.' What is the reason for this? Etc. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The first.

2. The Happy Discourse

135. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. Whatever, monks, you might see as happy and well-adorned, the conclusion should be reached here - 'Such has been experienced by us too during this long period of time.' What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned, etc. enough to become liberated." The second.

3. The Thirty Discourse

136. He was dwelling at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove.Then about thirty monks from Pāvā, all forest-dwellers, all almsfood eaters, all wearers of rag-robes, all three-robe wearers, all still with mental fetters, approached the Blessed One; having approached, they paid respect to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. Then this occurred to the Blessed One: "These about thirty monks from Pāvā are all forest-dwellers, all almsfood eaters, all wearers of rag-robes, all three-robe wearers, all still with mental fetters. What if I were to expound to them the Teaching in such a way that their minds might be liberated from the mental corruptions by non-clinging while sitting in this very seat." Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" “Venerable sir!" those monks replied to the Blessed One.The Blessed One said this:

"This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. What do you think, monks, which is more, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, having had your heads cut off, or the water in the four great oceans?" "As we understand the Teaching expounded by the Blessed One, venerable sir, this indeed is more, venerable sir, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while we were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, having had our heads cut off, not the water in the four great oceans."

"Good, good, monks, good indeed that you, monks, understand the Teaching expounded by me thus. This indeed, monks, is more, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths during this long period of time, having had your heads cut off, not the water in the four great oceans. For a long time, monks, the blood that has flowed and trickled

down while you were a hundred cattle, having become cattle, having had your heads cut off, not the water in the four great oceans. For a long time, monks, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were a hundred buffaloes, having become buffaloes, having had your heads cut off, etc. For a long time, monks, while you were a hundred rams, having become rams, etc. while you were a hundred goats, having become goats... while you were a hundred deer, having become deer...while you were a hundred chickens, having become chickens... while you were a hundred pigs, having become pigs... For a long time, monks, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were seized as thieves, as village plunderers, having had your heads cut off. For a long time, monks, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were seized as thieves, as highway robbers, having had your heads cut off. For a long time, monks, the blood that has flowed and trickled down while you were seized as thieves, as adulterers, having had your heads cut off, not the water in the four great oceans. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated."

This is what the Blessed One said. Pleased, those monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words. And while this explanation was being spoken, the minds of thirty monks from Pāvā were liberated from the mental corruptions by non-clinging. The third.

4. The Mother Discourse

137. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a mother during this long period of time. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. enough to become liberated." The fourth.

5. The Father Discourse

138. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning, etc. There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a father, etc. enough to become liberated." The fifth.

6. The Brother Discourse

139. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a brother, etc. enough to become liberated." The sixth.

7. The Sister Discourse

140. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a sister during this long period of time, etc. enough to become liberated." The seventh.

8. The Son Discourse

141. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a son, etc. enough to become liberated." The eighth.

9. The Daughter Discourse

142. He was dwelling at Sāvatthī, etc. "This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. There is no being easy to obtain, monks, who has not previously been a daughter during this long period of time. What is the reason for this? This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Thus for a long time, monks, suffering has been experienced by you, acute suffering has been experienced, disaster has been experienced, the cemetery has been increased. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated." The ninth.

10. The Vepulla Mountain Discourse

143. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rājagaha on the Mount Vulture Peak. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" “Venerable sir!" those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"This wandering in the round of rebirths, monks, is without discernible beginning. A first point is not discerned of beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, transmigrating and wandering in the round of rebirths. Once in the past, monks, for this Vepulla mountain the designation 'Pācīnavaṃsa' arose. Now at that time, monks, for human beings the designation 'Tivarā' arose. For the Tivarā human beings, monks, the life-span was forty thousand years. The Tivarā human beings, monks, ascended the Pācīnavaṃsa mountain in four days, and descended in four days. Now at that time, monks, the Blessed One Kakusandha, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. Monks, the Blessed One Kakusandha, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had a pair of disciples named Vidhura and Sañjīva, the foremost, the best pair. See, monks, that designation of this mountain has disappeared, and those human beings have died, and that Blessed One has attained final Nibbāna. Thus impermanent, monks, are activities; thus unstable, monks, are activities; thus without comfort, monks, are activities. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated.

"Once in the past, monks, for this Vepulla mountain the designation 'Vaṅkaka' arose. Now at that time, monks, for human beings the designation 'Rohitassā' arose.For the Rohitassā human beings, monks, the life-span was thirty thousand years. The Rohitassā human beings, monks, ascended the Vaṅkaka mountain in three days, and descended in three days. Now at that time, monks, the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. Monks, the Blessed One Koṇāgamana, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had a pair of disciples named Bhiyyosa and Uttara, the foremost, the best pair. See, monks, that designation of this mountain has disappeared, and those human beings have died, and that Blessed One has attained final Nibbāna. Thus impermanent, monks, are activities, etc. enough to become liberated.

"Once in the past, monks, for this Vepulla mountain the designation 'Supassa' arose. Now at that time, monks, for human beings the designation 'Suppiyā' arose.For the Suppiyā human beings, monks, the life-span was twenty thousand years. The Suppiyā human beings, monks, ascended the Supassa mountain in two days, and descended in two days. Now at that time, monks, the Blessed One Kassapa, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had arisen in the world. Monks, the Blessed One Kassapa, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, had a pair of disciples named Tissa and Bhāradvāja, the foremost, the best pair. See, monks, that designation of this mountain has disappeared, and those human beings have died, and that Blessed One has attained final Nibbāna. Thus impermanent, monks, are activities; thus unstable, monks, are activities, etc. enough to become liberated.

"Now indeed, monks, for this Vepulla mountain the designation 'Vepulla' arose.Now indeed, monks, for these human beings the designation 'Magadhans' arose. The life-span of the Magadhan human beings, monks, is short, limited, and brief; one who lives long lives a hundred years or a little more. The Magadhan human beings, monks, ascend the Vepulla mountain in a moment and descend in a moment. Now indeed, monks, I, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, have arisen in the world. And I, monks, have a pair of disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna, the foremost, the best pair. There will be, monks, that time when this designation of this mountain will disappear, and these human beings will die, and I will attain final nibbāna. Thus impermanent, monks, are activities; thus unstable, monks, are activities; thus without comfort, monks, are activities. This is enough, monks, to become disenchanted with all activities, enough to become dispassionate, enough to become liberated."

This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, said further:

> "Pācīnavaṃsa for the Tivaras, Vaṅkaka for the Rohitassas;
> Supassa for the Suppiyas, and Vepulla for the Magadhans.
>
> "Impermanent indeed are activities; their nature is to arise and fall.
> Having arisen, they cease; their appeasement is blissful." The tenth.

The second chapter.

Its summary:

> The poor and the happy, thirty, with mother and father;
> Brother, sister, son, daughter, and the Vepulla mountain.

The Connected Discourses on Without Discernible Beginning is complete.

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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