

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses -
Commentaries (4. Aṅguttara Nikāya - Aṭṭhakathā)

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones (01. Ekakanipāta-
aṭṭhakathā)

5. Commentary on the Chapter on the Well-directed
(5. Paṇihitaacchavaggavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses - Commentaries

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones

5. Explanation of the Chapter on the Well-directed

41. In the first discourse of the fifth, "seyyathāpi" is an indeclinable particle in the sense of a simile. Therein, the Blessed One sometimes shows the simile surrounded by the meaning, as in the Vattha Sutta, and as in the Pāricchattaka Simile, the Mass of Fire Simile and other such discourses; and sometimes shows the meaning surrounded by the simile, as in the Loṇambila Sutta, and as in the Goldsmith Sutta, the Sun Simile and other such discourses. But in this Rice-awn Simile, showing the meaning surrounded by the simile, he said beginning with "Just as, monks." Therein, "rice-awn" means the awn of the rice grain. In the case of "barley-awn" too, the same method applies. The word "or" has the meaning of alternative. "Wrongly directed" means wrongly placed. The meaning is that it is not placed with its tip upward in such a way that it is able to pierce. "Will pierce" means will break, will cut the skin. This is the meaning. "With wrongly directed mind" means with a wrongly established mind. This was said with reference to consciousness arisen by way of the round of rebirths. "Ignorance" means the great ignorance that has become not-knowing in the eight grounds, compact and dense. "Will arouse true knowledge" - here "true knowledge" means the knowledge of the path of arahantship. "Nibbāna" means the Deathless, so called by way of the state of having departed from the weaving of craving. "Will realise" means will make evident.

42. In the second, "rightly directed" means well placed with its tip upward in such a way that it is able to pierce. "Stepped upon" - here, what is stepped upon is properly only by the foot; by the hand it is pressed down. But by the conventional usage of the word, it is said as "stepped upon" only. For this is the noble conventional expression here. But why, without taking other great thorns such as the sepaṇṇi thorn and the madana thorn, was only the subtle and weak rice-awn and barley-awn taken? For the purpose of showing the ability of even a trifling wholesome action for the end of the round of rebirths. For just as, whether it be a subtle and weak rice-awn or barley-awn, or exceedingly great sepaṇṇi thorns, madana thorns, and so on, whichever of these is wrongly placed is not able to pierce the hand or foot or to draw blood, but when rightly placed it is able to do so; just so, whether it be a trifling wholesome deed of giving a mere handful of grass, or a great wholesome deed such as the gift of Velāma and so on, if having aspired to success in the round of rebirths it is wrongly established by way of being based upon the round of rebirths, it is able to bring about only the round of rebirths, not the end of the round of rebirths. "May this gift of mine be conducive to the elimination of mental corruptions" - but when thus aspiring to the end of the round of rebirths, rightly established by way of the end of the round of rebirths, it is indeed able to give even arahantship, even the knowledge of individual enlightenment, even the knowledge of omniscience. For this was said:

"Analytical knowledge and deliverances, and the perfections of a disciple;
Individual enlightenment and Buddhahood, all of this is obtained through this."

And in this pair of discourses, the round of rebirths and the end of the round of rebirths is spoken of.

43. In the third, "with a corrupted mind" means a mind corrupted by hate. "Having encompassed his mind with my mind" means having defined his mind with one's own mind. "Deposited as if carried there" means as if having been brought and placed. "Thus in hell" should be stated as "thus as if standing in hell itself." "Realm of misery" and so on - all is entirely a synonym for hell. For hell is a "realm of misery" because it is devoid of happiness reckoned as income; "unfortunate realm" because it is the destination and shelter of suffering; "nether world" because doers of wrong-doing fall therein helplessly; "hell" in the sense of being without gratification.

44. In the fourth, "confident" means confident through the confidence of faith. "Fortunate realm" means a destination of happiness. "Heavenly world" means a world that is well supreme through the achievement of form and so on.

45. In the fifth, "a lake" means a reservoir of water. "Turbid" means not clear. "Stirred up" means unsettled. "Become muddy" means become miry. In the passages beginning with "oysters-and-shells" and so on, oysters and shells are "oysters-and-shells." Gravel and pebbles are "gravel-and-pebbles." A cluster and crowd of fish are "shoals of fish." In "moving about or remaining still," here gravel-and-pebbles only remain still, while the others both move about and remain still. But just as when among cows that are standing here and there, sitting, and lying down, one says "these cows are moving about," with reference to those that are moving about, the others too are said to be "moving about," so with reference to gravel-and-pebbles which only remain still, the other two also are said to be "remaining still," and with reference to the other two which are moving about, gravel-and-pebbles also are said to be "moving about."

"With an agitated" means enveloped by the five mental hindrances. In the passages beginning with "one's own benefit or" and so on, one's own benefit pertaining to the present life, a mixture of mundane and supramundane, is called one's own benefit. One's own benefit in the future state, a mixture of mundane and supramundane, is called the benefit of others. For that is benefit in the other world, thus "the benefit of others." Both of those together is called the benefit of both. Furthermore, one's own benefit both pertaining to the present life and pertaining to the future life, whether mundane or supramundane, is called one's own benefit; a similar benefit for another is called the benefit of others; both of those together is called the benefit of both. "A super-human achievement" means beyond human achievements reckoned as the ten wholesome courses of action. For this tenfold principle, because it is undertaken by human beings themselves who have become spiritually stirred at the end of a cosmic cycle without a teacher, even without another instigator, is called a human achievement; beyond that, however, meditative absorptions, insight, path and fruitions should be understood. "A distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones" means a distinction reckoned as knowledge and vision that is fitting for the noble ones, or capable of producing the noble state. For it should be understood

that knowledge itself is knowledge in the meaning of knowing, and seeing in the meaning of seeing; this is a designation for the divine eye knowledge, insight knowledge, path knowledge, fruition knowledge, and reviewing knowledge.

46. In the sixth, "clear" means not thick; "bright" is also applicable. "Bright" means well purified. "Undisturbed" means not disturbed; the meaning is pure; what is meant is free from foam, bubbles, small shells, moss, and aquatic plants. "With an undisturbed" means with one liberated from the five mental hindrances. The remainder is by the same method as stated in the fourth. In this pair of discourses too, only the round of rebirths and the end of the round of rebirths are spoken of.

47. In the seventh, "rukkhajātānaṃ" is the genitive case used in the reflexive sense; the meaning is "rukkhajātānī" (among kinds of trees). This is a designation for trees. "Yadidaṃ" is merely a particle. "Mudutāya" means by softness. For a certain tree is foremost in colour, a certain one in odour, a certain one in flavour, a certain one in hardness. But the trembling tree is shown to be the foremost, the best, in softness and in wieldiness. Here, in "The mind, monks, when developed and cultivated," the mind that is intended is that which is developed by way of serenity and insight and practised again and again. But the Elder Phussamitta, the dweller at Kurundaka, said - "The mind that is absolutely soft and wieldy is solely the consciousness of the fourth meditative absorption that serves as the basis for direct knowledge, friend."

48. In the eighth, "thus quickly changing" means having thus quickly arisen, quickly ceasing. "To such an extent" is an indeclinable particle used in the sense of exceeding measure; the meaning is exceedingly not easy to make. "This" is merely a particle. "Mind" - some teachers first say "life-continuum consciousness," but having rejected that, it was said: "Here 'mind' means whatever is intended, including at least even eye-consciousness." But regarding this matter, King Milinda asked the Elder Nāgasena, the speaker of the Teaching: "Venerable sir Nāgasena, if the mental activities occurring in a single finger-snap moment were material, how great a heap would there be?" "A hundred cartloads of paddy, great king, and half a cartload more, seven measures of paddy and two tumbas - they do not amount to a reckoning of the consciousness occurring in a single finger-snap moment, they do not amount to a fraction, they do not amount to a fraction of a fraction." Then why was it said by the Perfectly Enlightened One that "even a simile is not easy to make"? For just as, even having rejected a simile, similes were made for the length of a cosmic cycle by means of a mountain a league high and a city a league wide filled with mustard seeds, for the suffering of hell by means of the simile of being struck by a hundred spears, and for heavenly happiness by means of the achievement of a universal monarch - should it not be done here as well? There, the simile was made by way of the question thus: "But is it possible, venerable sir, to make a simile?" In this discourse, because of the absence of a question, it was not made. For this discourse was spoken at the conclusion of a proclamation of the Teaching. Thus in this discourse, what is called the heap of consciousness has been spoken of.

49. In the ninth, "luminous" means white, pure. "Mind" means the life-continuum consciousness. But does consciousness have a colour? There is not. For whether it be one of the colours such as blue and so on, or without colour, whatever is called "luminous" by reason of its purity. This too is luminous because it is pure through being free from impurities. "And that" means that life-continuum consciousness. "By

visiting" means by those not co-arisen, arising afterwards at the moment of impulsion. "By impurities" means it is called defiled because of being defiled by lust and so on. How? Just as virtuous parents accomplished in good conduct, or teachers and preceptors, on account of immoral, ill-conducted, unaccomplished-in-duty sons and pupils and co-residents, obtain blame and disrepute thus: "They do not reprove their own sons or pupils and co-residents, do not train them, do not exhort them, do not instruct them" - this should be understood in the same way. The life-continuum consciousness should be seen as like parents accomplished in good conduct and like teachers and preceptors; just as they obtain disrepute on account of sons and so on, so too, by visiting impurities arisen by way of consciousnesses accompanied by greed and so on, whose intrinsic nature is defilement, aversion, and delusion, at the moment of impulsion, even the life-continuum consciousness that is naturally pure is called defiled.

50. In the tenth too, "mind" is just the life-continuum consciousness. "Free" means at the moment of impulsion, not being lustful, not being corrupted, not being deluded, arising by way of wholesome consciousness with three roots associated with knowledge and so on, it is called free from visiting impurities. Here too, just as mothers and so on, on account of sons and so on who are virtuous and accomplished in good conduct, obtain praise and fame thus: "These beautiful ones indeed train their own little sons and so on, exhort and instruct them," so too, by way of wholesome consciousness arisen at the moment of impulsion, this life-continuum consciousness is said to be free from visiting impurities.

Explanation of the Chapter on the Well-directed.



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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