

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)

5. Commentary on the Discourse on Janavasabha
(5. Janavasabhasuttavaṇṇanā)

[DN 18, PTS 2.200-2.219]



PaliVerse

1.The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries

2. Commentary on the Great Chapter

5. Explanation of the Discourse on Janavasabha

Commentary on the Declaration Concerning the Nātikans and So On

273-275. "Thus have I heard" - this is the Discourse on Janavasabha. Herein this is the explanation of obscure terms - "In the various surrounding countries" means in the countries all around, all around. "Attendants" means attendants of the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community. "Regarding rebirths" means regarding the rebirths of knowledge, destination, and merit. "In Kāsi and Kosala" means in Kāsi and in Kosala; the meaning is in the Kāsi country and in the Kosala country. This same method applies everywhere. However, he does not declare regarding the six countries of Aṅga, Magadha, Yonaka, Kamboja, Assaka, and Avanti. But of these sixteen great countries, he declares only regarding the first ten. "Of Nātikā" means the inhabitants of the village of Nātikā.

"By that" means by that state of non-returning and so on. "Having heard" means having heard the answering of questions by the Blessed One who was declaring after having discerned with omniscient knowledge, having reached a conclusion regarding their attainment of non-returning and so on. They were delighted by that state of non-returning and so on. In the commentary, however, "tena" is stated as "te nātikiyā" (those of Nātikā). In this meaning, the syllable "na" is merely a particle.

Commentary on the Introductory Talk of Ānanda

277. "Praising the Blessed One" means: "Oh, the Buddha! Oh, the Teaching! Oh, the Community! Oh, the Teaching is well proclaimed!" - thus, while praising in this way, he died. "Many people would be pleased" means: "Our father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, friend - he ate together with us, slept together with us, we did this and that agreeable thing for him, and he, it is said, is a non-returner, a once-returner, a stream-enterer; oh, how good! oh, how excellent!" - thus many people would gain confidence.

278. "Destination" means knowledge-destination. "Future life" means knowledge-future life itself. "He saw" means how many people did he see? Twenty-four hundred thousand.

279. "Upasantapadiṣso" means of peaceful appearance. "Bhātirivā" means shines exceedingly, is brilliant exceedingly. "Indriyāṇaṃ" means of the faculties with mind as the sixth. "Addasaṃ kho ahaṃ ānandā" - he said "I saw" not ten, not twenty, not a hundred, not a thousand, but exactly twenty-four hundred thousand.

Commentary on the Demon Janavasabha

280. Having said all this - "Having seen that so many people were freed from suffering in dependence on me, powerful pleasure arose, consciousness became bright, because of the brightness of consciousness the consciousness-originated blood became bright, because of the brightness of the blood the faculties with mind as the sixth became bright" - he then said beginning with "Then indeed, Ānanda." Therein, because he, having heard the Blessed One's talk on the Teaching, became a stream-enterer as the foremost among a hundred thousand people exceeding by ten thousand, therefore his name was Janavasabha.

"Seven from here" means seven having fallen away from here, from the heavenly world. "Seven from there" means seven having fallen away from there, from the human world. "Fourteen wanderings in the round of rebirths" means all fourteen successions of aggregates. "I directly know my abode" means I know my abode by way of birth. "Where I dwelt before" means where, having attained the company of Vessavaṇa among the gods and having been a king among human beings, I dwelt before this very individual existence. Because of having dwelt thus before, and also now, having become a stream-enterer, having made much merit in the three objects, though able by the power of that to be reborn above, because of the strength of attachment to the place where he had dwelt for a long time, he was reborn right here.

281. "And yet my hope remains fixed" - by this he shows: "Being a stream-enterer, I did not merely spend time being heedless as one asleep. Rather, insight has been undertaken by me for the purpose of the path of once-returning. Insight has been undertaken by me for the purpose of the path of once-returning. He shows that "I dwell thus with endeavour, thinking 'This very day, this very day I shall penetrate it.'" "Since" (yadagge) - he speaks with reference to the day of becoming a stream-enterer at the first seeing at the Laṭṭhivana pleasure grove. "From that time, venerable sir, for a long time, not falling into the nether world, I perceive the state of not falling into the nether world" - making that day the starting point, the meaning is: "I, venerable sir, for the long time reckoned as the previous fourteen individual existences, not falling into the nether world, perceive the state of not being subject to fall into lower realms attained by the power of the path of stream-entry at the Laṭṭhivana pleasure grove." "Not wonderful" (anacchariya) means wonderful again and again. Reflecting again and again, "This indeed is wonderful, that while going on some business I saw the Blessed One on the road." This too is wonderful, that what was spoken by the Great King Vessavaṇa in his own assembly was heard face to face, exactly as seen by the Blessed One. "Two reasons" means the fact of having seen him on the road and the wish to report what was heard in the presence of Vessavaṇa.

Commentary on the Assembly of the Gods

282. "Assembled" - why were they assembled? It is said that they assemble for four reasons. For the purpose of the classification of entering the rains retreat, for the purpose of the classification of the invitation ceremony to admonish, for the purpose of hearing the Teaching, and for the purpose of experiencing the sport of the coral tree. Therein, "tomorrow is the entering of the rains retreat" means on the full moon day of Āsāḷhī, in the two heavenly worlds, the gods, having assembled together in the Sudhammā divine assembly hall, discuss: "In such and such a monastery one monk has entered the rains retreat, in such and such a monastery two, three, four, five, ten,

twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand monks have entered the rains retreat; in this and that place arrange protection well for the sirs." Thus the classification of entering the rains retreat is done.

On that occasion too they assembled for this very reason. "This is their seating arrangement" means this is the seat of those four great kings. Thus when they are seated, then afterwards is our seat.

"For whatever purpose" means for whatever purpose of entering the rains retreat. "Having considered that matter, having discussed that matter" means having considered the purpose of protection for the community of monks dwelling in the forest. "Arrange protection for the community of monks dwelling here and there" means having discussed together with the four great kings. "Spoken to also" - the thirty-three young gods say, the great kings are called those who have been spoken to. Likewise the thirty-three young gods instruct in return; the others are called those who have been instructed in return. But "taṃ" in both terms is merely an indeclinable particle. "Not having departed" means having come.

283. "Eminent" means vast and great. "Divine power" means that radiance of all deities' garments, ornaments, mansions, and bodies pervades twelve yojanas. But the bodily radiance of those of great merit pervades a hundred yojanas. Surpassing that divine power.

"For this is the advanced sign of Brahmā" means just as the break of dawn is the forerunner, the advanced sign of the rising of the sun, just so for Brahmā too this - he explains as "advanced sign."

Commentary on the Talk of Sanaṅkumāra

284. "Unattainable" means cannot be reached; the meaning is that the gods of the Thirty-three do not see it. "In the range of vision" means in the eye-sensitivity or in the range. He is not attainable, not reachable in the range of the gods' vision; it is said that he does not come within reach. For deities successively lower and lower are able to see only the individual existence created as gross by the gods successively higher and higher. "Attainment of inspiration" means attainment of joy. "Newly consecrated with kingship" means just now consecrated with kingship. But this meaning should be illustrated by the story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya -

It is said that he, having conquered thirty-two Tamil kings, having received the consecration at Anurādhapura, through joy and pleasure could not obtain sleep for a month; then - He told the community of monks: "I cannot obtain sleep, venerable sir." "If so, great king, today undertake the Observance." And he undertook the Observance. The monastic community, having gone - Sent eight monks versed in the Abhidhamma, saying "Recite the Consciousness Pairs." They, having gone - Having said "Lie down, great king," they began the recitation. The king, while listening to the recitation, fell into sleep. The elders - Thinking "Let us not awaken the king," departed. The king, having awoken on the second day at sunrise, not seeing the elders - Asked "Where are the venerable ones?" "Having known of your falling into sleep, they have gone." He said: "There is not, my dear, any medicine that my grandfather's children do not know; they even know the medicine for sleep."

"Pañcasikha" means having become like the gandhabba Pañcasikha. It is said that all deities cherish the individual existence of the gandhabba young god Pañcasikha. Therefore even Brahmā, having created just such an individual existence, appeared. "Sat cross-legged" means he sat down folding his legs crosswise.

"Vissatṭha" means well released, unhindered. "Viññeyya" means conveying the meaning. "Mañju" means sweet and soft. "Savanīya" means fit to be heard, pleasant to the ear. "Bindu" means compact. "Avisārī" means very clear, not scattered. "Gambhīra" means arising deep from the root of the navel, not arising from the mere striking of the tongue, teeth, lips, and palate. For what arises thus is unsweet and does not carry far. "Ninnādī" means endowed with resonance like the sound of a great cloud or a small drum. But here it should be understood that each successive term is the meaning of each preceding one. "According to the assembly" means it conveys to just as large an assembly as there is. His sound circulates only within the assembly; it does not run outside. He says beginning with "whoever" for the purpose of showing the state of practising for the welfare of many people. "Gone for refuge" - he does not speak with reference to those who have gone for refuge in one way or another. But he speaks with reference to those who have taken refuge free from doubt. "They fill the gandhabba class" means they fill the group of gandhabba gods. Thus he said that from the time of our Teacher's arising in the world, in the six heavenly worlds and so on, the assembly has arisen continuously, like a measure filled by pounding flour, and like a forest of reeds and a thicket of canes.

Commentary on the Developed Bases for Spiritual Power

287. "How well laid down are these by that Blessed One" means by that Teacher of mine, the Blessed One, how well laid down, how well spoken. "Bases for spiritual power" - here, "supernormal power" should be understood in the sense of success, and "basis" in the sense of support. "For the abundance of supernormal power" means for the sufficiency of supernormal power. "For the mastery of supernormal power" means for the state of supernormal power occurring; what is meant is mastery practised by way of repeated cultivation. "For the miraculous transformation of supernormal power" means for the state of miraculous transformation of supernormal power, for the purpose of displaying by making in various ways. In "possessing concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving" and so on, concentration caused by desire or predominated by desire is concentration due to desire; this is a designation for the concentration attained by making the desire to act as predominant. Activities that are striving are volitional activities of striving. This is a designation for the energy of right striving that accomplishes the four functions. "Possessed of" means endowed with concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving. "Basis for spiritual power" - either by the method of accomplishment in the sense of success, or by this method: "by this, beings succeed, become prosperous, grown, and gone to excellence" - thus what has come to the reckoning of "supernormal power," the remaining heap of consciousness and mental factors that serves as the foundation in the sense of determination for the concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving associated with the consciousness of direct knowledge - this is the meaning. For this was said: "The basis for spiritual power means, of one so constituted, the aggregate of feeling, the aggregate of perception, the aggregate of mental activities, the aggregate of

consciousness." By this method the meaning should be understood in the remaining ones too. For just as concentration attained by making desire predominant is called concentration due to desire, so too concentration attained by making energy, mind, or investigation predominant is called concentration due to investigation. Furthermore, access meditative absorption is the basis, the first meditative absorption is the supernormal power. The first meditative absorption together with its access is the basis, the second meditative absorption is the supernormal power - thus in the preceding stage is the basis, in the subsequent stage is the supernormal power - thus the meaning here should be understood. The treatise on the bases for spiritual power has been stated in detail in the Visuddhimagga and in the commentary on the Vibhaṅga.

Some, however, say "supernormal power is concretely produced. The basis for spiritual power is not concretely produced." For the purpose of crushing their doctrine, the section called the Uttaracūḷika in the higher teaching was brought forth: "Four bases for spiritual power: the basis for spiritual power of desire, the basis for spiritual power of energy, the basis for spiritual power of developed mind, the basis for spiritual power of investigation. Therein, what is the basis for spiritual power of desire? Here a monk, at whatever time he develops supramundane meditative absorption, leading to liberation, leading to non-accumulation, for the abandoning of wrong views, for the attainment of the first plane, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, enters and dwells in the first meditative absorption, which is of difficult practice and sluggish direct knowledge. Whatever at that time is desire, desirousness, wish to do, wholesome desire for mental states - this is called the basis for spiritual power of desire; the remaining states are associated with the basis for spiritual power of desire." These, however, have come by way of the supramundane only. Therein, the Elder Raṭṭhapāla, having made desire his responsibility, produced the supramundane mental state. The Elder Soṇa, having made energy his responsibility; the Elder Sambhūta, having made mind his responsibility; the Venerable Mogharāja, having made investigation his responsibility.

Therein, just as when four sons of ministers, having aspired to a position of rank, were dwelling in dependence on the king, one, with desire arisen for attendance, having known the king's disposition and preference, attending by day and by night, having pleased the king, attained a position of rank. Just as he, so should one who produces the supramundane mental state by the responsibility of desire be understood.

One, however - "Who is able to attend day after day? When a task has arisen, I shall succeed by effort" - sent by the king when the borderland was agitated, having crushed the enemies by effort, he attained a position of rank. Just as he, so should one who produces the supramundane mental state by the responsibility of energy be understood.

One - "Even attendance day after day, even having one's chest covered with spears and arrows, is merely a burden; I shall win favour by the power of counsel" - because of having practised the science of statecraft, having pleased the king through the arrangement of counsel, he attains a position of rank. Just as that one, so should be understood one who produces supramundane states by making mind the leading factor.

Another - "What is the use of these attendance and so on? Kings give a position of rank to one of good birth; giving to such a one, he will give to me" - relying solely on the excellence of birth, he attained a position of rank. Just as that one, so should be understood one who, relying on completely pure investigation, produces supramundane states by making investigation the leading factor.

"Various kinds" means of many kinds. "Kinds of supernormal power" means portions of supernormal power.

Commentary on the Threefold Achievement of Permission

288. "For the achievement of happiness" means for the achievement of the happiness of meditative absorption, the happiness of the path, and the happiness of fruition. "In company" means with an associated mind. "The noble teaching" means the Teaching taught by the noble Blessed One, the Buddha. "Hears" means he hears it being taught in the presence of the Teacher or by monks, nuns, and so on. "Attends wisely" means he attends by way of method, by way of path, by way of cause, by way of "impermanent" and so on. "Wise attention is skilful attention, path-attention; regarding the impermanent as 'impermanent', regarding suffering as 'suffering', regarding non-self as 'non-self', regarding the unattractive as 'unattractive', or in conformity with the truths, the adverting of consciousness, the turning towards, reflective attention, attentiveness, attention - this is called wise attention." When thus spoken of, the meaning is that one begins the work of wise attention. "Not in company" means he dwells not in company with either objective sensual pleasures or with the defilement of sensual desire. "Happiness arises" means the happiness of the first meditative absorption arises. "From happiness, even more pleasure" means for one who has emerged from the attainment, by the condition of the happiness of meditative absorption, pleasure arises again and again. "Gladness" means weak joy from a state of satisfaction. "Joy" means stronger rapture and pleasure. "The first achievement of opportunity" means the first meditative absorption, having suppressed the five mental hindrances, having taken its own place, remains; therefore "the first achievement of opportunity" is said.

"Gross" - here, let bodily and verbal activities be gross for now, but how are mental activities gross? Because they have not been abandoned. For bodily activities are abandoned by the fourth meditative absorption, verbal activities by the second meditative absorption, and mental activities by the attainment of cessation. Thus, even when bodily and verbal activities have been abandoned, those still remain; with reference to what has been abandoned, because of not being abandoned, they have become called gross. "Happiness" means the happiness of the fruition attainment of the fourth meditative absorption that has arisen for one emerging from cessation. "From happiness, even more pleasure" means pleasure again and again for one who has emerged from the fruition attainment. "The second achievement of opportunity" means the fourth meditative absorption, having suppressed happiness and pain, having taken its own place, remains; therefore "the second achievement of opportunity" is said. But the second and third meditative absorptions here, when the fourth is taken, are already taken; therefore they were not stated separately.

In the passage beginning with "this is wholesome," wholesome means the ten wholesome courses of action. "Unwholesome" means the ten unwholesome courses of action. The pairs beginning with blameworthy and so on should also be understood by way of these very same. "And all this is dark and bright and has a counterpart" means partaking of both dark and bright with a counterpart. For only Nibbāna is without counterpart. "Ignorance is abandoned" means the ignorance that conceals the round of rebirths is abandoned. "True knowledge arises" means the true knowledge of the path of arahantship arises. "Happiness" means both the happiness of the path of arahantship and the happiness of fruition. "From happiness, even more pleasure" means pleasure again and again for one who has emerged from the fruition attainment. "The third achievement of opportunity" means the path of arahantship, having suppressed all mental defilements, having taken its own place, remains; therefore "the third achievement of opportunity" is said. But the remaining paths, when that is taken, are already included within it; therefore they were not stated separately.

But these three achievements of opportunity should be spoken of in detail by way of the thirty-eight objects. How? Having defined all objects by way of access and by way of absorption in the very manner stated in the Visuddhimagga, the first meditative absorption in twenty-four states should be spoken of as "the first achievement of opportunity." The second and third meditative absorptions in thirteen states, and the fourth meditative absorption in fifteen states, including up to the attainment of cessation, should be spoken of as "the second achievement of opportunity." But the ten access absorptions, being the proximate causes of the path, belong to the third achievement of opportunity. Furthermore, among the three trainings, the training in higher morality belongs to the first achievement of opportunity, the training in higher consciousness to the second, and the training in higher wisdom to the third - thus it should be spoken of by way of the trainings also. In the Fruit of Asceticism also, from the lesser morality up to the first meditative absorption is the first achievement of opportunity, from the second meditative absorption up to the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is the second, and from insight up to arahantship is the third achievement of opportunity - thus it should be spoken of by way of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta also. But among the three Canons, the Canon of monastic discipline belongs to the first achievement of opportunity, the Canon of discourses to the second, and the Canon of the higher teaching to the third - thus it should be spoken of by way of the Canons also.

Formerly, it is said, the great elders would establish this very discourse at the entering of the rains retreat. Why? Because they would be able to teach by dividing the three Canons. For it cannot be said that one who teaches by combining the Triple Canon has taught badly. This discourse, having been taught by distributing the Triple Canon, is indeed well taught.

Commentary on the Four Establishments of Mindfulness

289. "For the achievement of the wholesome" means for the purpose of achieving both path-wholesome and fruition-wholesome. For both of these are indeed wholesome in the sense of being blameless or in the sense of being secure. Therein, "becomes rightly concentrated" means in that internal body he becomes concentrated with a fully focused mind. "Brings forth knowledge and vision externally

regarding another's body" means he sends forth knowledge from one's own body directed towards another's body. This same method applies everywhere. By the term "mindful in every case," mindfulness that comprehends the body and so on is meant; by the term "the world," the world is just the body and so on that has been comprehended. It should be understood that these four establishments of mindfulness have been spoken of as a mixture of mundane and supramundane.

Commentary on the Seven Requisites of Concentration

290. "Accessories of concentration" - here there are three kinds of accessories. In "The chariot has morality as its accessory, meditative absorption as its axle, energy as its wheels," here ornament is the name for accessory. In "It is well equipped with seven city accessories," here retinue is the name for accessory. In "Accessory of requisites for the sick and for life," here materials is the name for accessory. But here, in the sense of accessory as retinue, "seven accessories of concentration" is said. "Equipped" means surrounded. "This is called noble right concentration" means this, surrounded by seven factors like a universal monarch surrounded by seven treasures, is called "noble right concentration." "With its proximate cause" means it is also called "with its decisive support," meaning with its retinue indeed - this is what is said. "For one with right view" means for one established in right view. "Right thought is able to arise" means right thought proceeds. This same method applies in all terms. But this meaning should be understood both in terms of the path and in terms of fruition. How? For one established in path-right view, path-right thought is able to arise, etc. For one established in path-knowledge, path-liberation is able to arise. Likewise, for one established in fruition-right view, fruition-right thought is able to arise, etc. For one established in fruition-right knowledge, fruition-liberation is able to arise.

"Well proclaimed" and so on were explained in the Visuddhimagga. "Open" means opened. "Of the Deathless" means of Nibbāna. "Doors" means paths of entry. "With unwavering confidence" means with unshakeable confidence. "Disciplined by the Teaching" means led forth by the right vehicle.

"There is this other generation" - he said this with reference to non-returners; it is said that there are also non-returners. "Sharers in merit" means arisen through a share of merit. "Moral fear" means being morally fearful. "Lest at some time there might be falsehood in that" - he explains: I am unable to reckon out of fear of lying, but it is not that I lack the power to reckon.

291. "What does the venerable think" - by this he merely asks Vessavaṇa, but he does not hold the view that such a Teacher did not exist or will not exist. For there is no distinction in the full realisation of all Buddhas.

292. "To his own assembly" means in one's own assembly. "This holy life" means that this entire holy life of the threefold training. The remainder is clear in itself. But these passages were placed by the elder monks who compiled the teachings.

Thus in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, the Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya,

the explanation of the Discourse on Janavasabha 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.

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