

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)

6. Commentary on the Chapter on the Finger-snap
(6. Accharāsaṅghātavaggavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses - Commentaries

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones

6. Explanation of the Chapter on the Finger-snap

51. In the first of the sixth, "that, an ignorant worldling" means that life-continuum consciousness, a worldling devoid of learning. Therein, due to the absence of scriptural learning and achievement, he should be understood as "ignorant." For one who, investigating this discourse from the beginning by way of meaning, does not know either by way of scriptural learning or by way of achievement that "this life-continuum consciousness, though naturally pure, is defiled by impurities such as greed and so on arisen at the moment of impulsion," and for whom, due to being devoid of learning, interrogation, and judgment regarding the aggregates, elements, sense bases, the mode of dependent conditions, the establishments of mindfulness, and so on, there is indeed no scriptural learning that could accomplish the penetration of knowledge of phenomena as they really are, and due to not having attained what is to be attained through practice, there is no achievement. He, due to the absence of scriptural learning and achievement, should be understood as "ignorant." This one -

"By reasons such as generating manifold defilements, one is a worldling; Because of being included among worldlings, this one is a manifold person, thus."

For he is a worldling by reasons such as generating manifold defilements of various kinds and so on. As he said -

"They generate manifold defilements, thus they are worldlings; they have manifold undestroyed identity views, thus they are worldlings; they look to the faces of manifold teachers, thus they are worldlings; they have not emerged from all destinations, thus they are worldlings; they generate manifold various volitional activities, thus they are worldlings; they are carried away by manifold various mental floods, thus they are worldlings; they are tormented by manifold various torments, thus they are worldlings; they are burnt by manifold various fevers, thus they are worldlings; they are lustful, greedy, bound, infatuated, attached, stuck, fastened, fettered regarding the five types of sensual pleasure, thus they are worldlings; they are hindered, obstructed, covered over, shut, concealed, covered by the five mental hindrances, thus they are worldlings."

Or he is a worldling because of being included among people who have passed beyond the path of counting, who are turned away from the noble teaching, whose conduct is of low qualities; or this manifold one has gone to a separate reckoning, disconnected from noble ones endowed with virtues such as morality and learning - thus he is a worldling. Thus by these two terms "an ignorant worldling," those which -

"Two kinds of worldlings were declared, by the Buddha, the Kinsman of the Sun;
One is a blind worldling, one is a good worldling."

Two kinds of worldlings were declared; among them, it should be understood that the blind worldling is the one spoken of.

"Does not understand as it really is" means he does not know according to their intrinsic nature that "this life-continuum consciousness is thus called defiled by visiting impurities, and is thus called free." "Therefore" means because he does not know, therefore. "There is no development of mind" means there is no stability of mind, no discernment of mind; he shows that by the very fact of absence, "I say 'there is not.'"

52. In the second, "learned" means accomplished in learning. In detail, however, herein the meaning should be understood by way of the opposite of the term "ignorant." "Noble disciple" - there is one who is noble but not a disciple, just as Buddhas and Individually Enlightened Ones; there is one who is a disciple but not noble, just as a layman who has not attained the fruit; there is one who is neither noble nor a disciple, just as the various sectarians. There is one who is both noble and a disciple, just as the ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, who have attained the fruit and have cognised the teaching. But here, whether a layman or one gone forth, whoever is accomplished in learning by way of the meaning stated here as "learned," this one should be understood as a noble disciple. "Understands as it really is" means he knows according to their intrinsic nature that "thus this life-continuum consciousness is free from visiting impurities, and thus defiled." "There is development of mind" means there is stability of mind, there is discernment of mind; he shows that by the very fact of presence, "I say 'there is.'" In this discourse, strong insight is spoken of. Some say it is young insight.

53. The third was spoken in the arising of the occasion. But in which arising of the occasion? In the arising of the occasion of the Discourse on the Simile of the Mass of Fire. It is said that the Blessed One at one time was dwelling in the great monastery of Jetavana in dependence on Sāvattthī. And for Buddhas, wherever they dwell, the fivefold function is indeed never abandoned. For there are five Buddha-functions - the before-meal function, the after-meal function, the first-watch function, the middle-watch function, and the last-watch function.

Herein, this is the before-meal function - For the Blessed One, having risen right early, having performed the bodily preparation of washing the face and so on for the purpose of assisting the attendant and for bodily comfort, having spent the time until the hour for the alms round on a secluded seat, at the time for the alms round, having dressed, having tied the waistband, having put on the robe, having taken the bowl, sometimes alone, sometimes surrounded by the community of monks, enters a village or a market town for almsfood, sometimes in the ordinary way, sometimes with many wonders occurring. That is: As the Protector of the World enters for almsfood, going ahead again and again, gentle breezes clean the ground, rain clouds releasing drops of water settle the dust on the road and remain above as a canopy, other winds gather flowers and scatter them on the road, raised areas of ground sink down, sunken areas rise up, at the time of placing the foot the ground becomes level,

and lotus flowers of pleasant touch receive his feet. As soon as the right foot is placed within the gate, six-coloured rays issuing forth from the body, adorning the mansions, pinnacled buildings and so on as if they were tinted with liquid gold, as if surrounded by variegated cloths, run here and there; elephants, horses, birds and so on, remaining in their own respective places, make sounds in a sweet manner; likewise drums, lutes and other musical instruments, and ornaments worn on the bodies of human beings. By that sign human beings know "Today the Blessed One has entered here for almsfood." They, well dressed and well robed, taking scents, flowers and so on, having come out from their houses, having proceeded to the middle of the street, having reverently venerated the Blessed One with scents, flowers and so on, having paid homage - "Give us, venerable sir, ten monks; give us twenty; fifty, etc. a hundred" - having requested, having taken even the Blessed One's bowl, having prepared a seat, they reverently serve with almsfood. The Blessed One, having finished the meal, having surveyed the continuities of consciousness with their decisive supports of those beings, expounds the Teaching in such a way that some become established in the going for refuge, some in the five precepts, some in one of the fruits of stream-entry, once-returning, or non-returning, some, having gone forth, in the highest fruit, arahantship. Having thus assisted the great multitude, he rises from his seat and goes to the monastery. Having gone there, he sits down on the excellent Buddha-seat prepared in the fragrant circular pavilion, waiting for the monks to finish their meal. Then, when the monks have finished their meal, the attendant informs the Blessed One. Then the Blessed One enters the perfumed chamber. This is the before-meal function.

Then the Blessed One, having thus completed the before-meal function, having sat down at the attendance hall of the perfumed chamber, having washed his feet, having stood on the footstool, exhorts the community of monks - "Monks, strive with diligence; the arising of a Buddha is rare in the world, the attainment of human existence is rare, the achievement of the right moment is rare, going forth is rare, hearing the Good Teaching is rare." There some ask the Blessed One about a meditation subject. The Blessed One gives them a meditation subject suitable to their conduct. Then all, having paid homage to the Blessed One, go to their own night-quarters and day-quarters. Some to the forest, some to the root of a tree, some to one among mountains and so on, some to the abode of the Four Great Kings, etc. some to the abode of those who wield power. Then the Blessed One, having entered the perfumed chamber, if he wishes, mindful and fully aware, lies down for a moment in the lion's posture on his right side. Then, his body refreshed, having risen, in the second portion he surveys the world. In the third portion, in dependence on whatever village or market town he dwells, there the great multitude, having given a gift before the meal, after the meal, well dressed and well adorned, having taken perfumes, flowers and so on, gathers together at the monastery. Then the Blessed One, having gone with a wonder suitable to the assembly that has arrived, having sat down on the excellent Buddha-seat prepared in the Teaching hall, expounds the Teaching suited to the time and suited to the occasion; then, having known the proper time, he dismisses the assembly; the people, having paid homage to the Blessed One, depart. This is the after-meal function.

He, having thus completed the after-meal function, if he wishes to bathe his limbs, having risen from the Buddha-seat, having entered the bathing room, he has his

limbs refreshed with water prepared by the attendant. The attendant too, having brought the Buddha-seat, prepares it in the precincts of the perfumed chamber. The Blessed One, having put on a well-dyed double cloth, having tied the waistband, having arranged the upper robe on one shoulder, having come there, sits down, alone for a moment in seclusion; then monks, coming from here and there, come to the attendance upon the Blessed One. There some ask questions, some about a meditation subject, some request hearing of the Teaching. The Blessed One, fulfilling their intention, spends the first watch of the night. This is the first-watch function.

But at the conclusion of the first-watch function, when the monks have paid homage to the Blessed One and departed, the deities of the entire ten-thousand world system, gaining the opportunity, having approached the Blessed One, ask questions, as prepared, even down to four syllables. The Blessed One, answering the questions of those deities, spends the middle watch of the night. This is the middle-watch function.

But dividing the last watch of the night into three portions, for the purpose of releasing the body from the state of weariness, oppressed by sitting from before the meal onwards, he spends one portion by walking meditation; in the second portion, having entered the perfumed chamber, mindful and fully aware, he lies down in the lion's posture on his right side. In the third portion, having risen and sat down, he surveys the world with the Buddha-eye for the purpose of seeing persons who have made aspirations by means of giving, morality and so on in the presence of former Buddhas. This is the last-watch function.

On that day too, the Blessed One, engaged in this very function, surveying the world, saw this - When I, wandering on a journey in the Kosalan country, having compared with a mass of fire, teach a certain discourse, sixty monks will attain arahantship, hot blood will gush from the mouths of about sixty, about sixty will go to the state of householders. Therein, those who will attain arahantship, having heard whatever proclamation of the Teaching, will attain it indeed. But wishing to go on a journey for the purpose of supporting the other monks, he said "Ānanda, inform the monks."

The Elder, having gone from cell to cell, said "Friends, the Teacher wishes to go on a journey for the purpose of supporting the public; those wishing to go, come." The monks, as if having obtained a great gain, with satisfied minds, thinking "We shall indeed be able to look upon the golden-coloured body of the Blessed One expounding the Teaching to the public and to hear the sweet talk on the Teaching," those with overgrown hair having shaved off their hair, those with stain-covered bowls having fired their bowls, those with soiled robes having washed their robes, were ready for the journey. The Teacher, surrounded by an unlimited community of monks, having departed for a journey to the Kosalan country, travelling in the order of villages and market towns, journeying one day a maximum of a league, half a yojana, three leagues, or a yojana, having seen in a certain place a great hollow tree ablaze with fire, thinking "Having made this very subject matter, having adorned it with seven factors, I shall speak a proclamation of the Teaching," having cut short his going, having approached a certain tree-root, showed the indication of sitting down. The Elder Ānanda, having known the Teacher's intention, thinking "Surely there must be a reason; Truth-finders do not cut short their going and sit down without reason," prepared the double robe folded in four. The Teacher, having sat down, having addressed the monks, "Do you see, monks, that great mass of fire?" teaches the

Aggikkhandhopamasuttanta.

And while this explanation was being spoken, hot blood gushed from the mouths of about sixty monks, about sixty monks, having rejected the training, returned to the lower life, the minds of about sixty monks were liberated from the mental corruptions by non-clinging. For having heard that explanation, the mental body of about sixty monks was scorched; when the mental body was scorched, the material body was scorched; when the material body was scorched, stored-up hot blood gushed from their mouths. About sixty monks, thinking "Difficult indeed it is to live the holy life that is complete and pure for as long as life lasts in the Buddha's teaching," having rejected the training, returned to the lower life; about sixty monks, having directed their knowledge towards the Teacher's teaching, together with the analytical knowledges, attained arahantship.

Therein, those from whose mouths hot blood gushed, they committed an offence entailing expulsion. Those who attained the state of householders, they went about trampling upon the lesser and minor training rules. Those who attained arahantship, they were of pure morality indeed. The Teacher's proclamation of the Teaching was fruitful indeed for all three of these. Let it be fruitful for those who attained arahantship; how was it fruitful for the others? For they too, if they had not heard this proclamation of the Teaching, being heedless indeed, would not have been able to give up their position. Then that evil of theirs, growing, would have caused them to sink down in the realms of misery indeed. But having heard this teaching, with a sense of urgency arisen, having given up their position, standing on the plane of a novice, having fulfilled the ten precepts, properly engaged in wise attention, some became stream-enterers, some once-returners, some non-returners, some were reborn in the heavenly world; thus it was fruitful even for those who had committed an offence entailing expulsion. But the others, if they had not heard this proclamation of the Teaching, as time went on and on, gradually having committed both an offence entailing initial and subsequent meetings of the Community and an offence entailing expulsion, having arisen in the realms of misery indeed, they would have experienced great suffering. But having heard this teaching, thinking "Alas, how austere is the Buddha's teaching; it is not possible for us to fulfil this practice for as long as life lasts; having rejected the training, having fulfilled the duty of a lay follower, we shall be freed from suffering," they entered the state of householders. They, having established themselves in the three refuges, having observed the five precepts, having fulfilled the duty of a lay follower, some became stream-enterers, some once-returners, some non-returners, some were reborn in the heavenly world. Thus it was fruitful for them too indeed.

But having heard this proclamation of the Teaching by the Teacher, the hosts of gods went about announcing it to all, both to those by whom it had been heard and to those by whom it had not been heard. Monks, having heard it again and again, thinking "It is difficult to do, friend, to live the holy life that is complete and pure for as long as life lasts in the Buddhas' Dispensation," in a single moment even ten monks, even twenty, even sixty, even a hundred, even a thousand monks become laymen. The Teacher, having wandered on a journey according to his preference, having come again to Jeta's Grove itself, addressed the monks - "Monks, the Truth-finder, wandering on a journey, has dwelt crowded for a long time. I wish, monks, to

go into seclusion for a fortnight. I should not be approached by anyone except for one bringing almsfood." Having spent a fortnight in solitude, having emerged from seclusion, while walking on a monastery tour together with the Elder Ānanda, having seen at every place he looked the diminished community of monks, though already knowing, he asked the Elder - "Ānanda, at other times when the Truth-finder, having wandered on a journey, has come to Jeta's Grove, the entire monastery is radiant with saffron robes and fragrant with the breeze of the sages. But now the community of monks appears diminished, and for the most part the monks have become pale and sallow. What indeed is this?" "At present, Blessed One, from the time your proclamation of the Teaching with the simile of the mass of fire was spoken, monks, having become overcome with religious emotion, thinking 'We shall not be able to fulfil this Teaching in every way, and it is inappropriate for those not conducting themselves rightly to consume the offerings given in faith of the people,' are passing over to the state of a householder."

At that moment, religious emotion arose in the Blessed One. Then he said to the Elder - "While I was spending time in seclusion, not a single one spoke even one source of comfort to my sons. For just as there are many landing places for descending into the ocean, so there are many causes for comfort in this Dispensation. Go, Ānanda, having prepared the Buddha-seat in the precincts of the Perfumed Chamber, assemble the community of monks." The Elder did so. The Teacher, having gone to the excellent Buddha-seat, having addressed the monks, having said "Monks, what is called the entire preliminary part of friendliness is neither absorption nor access, but merely the pervading of welfare towards beings," taught this Cūḷaccharāsaṅghāta Sutta on this occasion.

Therein, "for even just a finger-snap" means just the measure of a snap of the fingers; the meaning is just the measure of making a sound by striking two fingers together. "A mind of friendliness" means a mind pervading welfare towards all beings. "Cultivates" - how does one cultivate? Attending, one cultivates; knowing, one cultivates; seeing, one cultivates; reviewing, one cultivates; resolving the mind, one cultivates; resolving through faith, one cultivates; arousing energy, one cultivates; establishing mindfulness, one cultivates; concentrating the mind, one cultivates; understanding with wisdom, one cultivates; directly knowing what should be directly known, one cultivates; fully understanding what should be fully understood, one cultivates; abandoning what should be abandoned, one cultivates; developing what should be developed, one cultivates; realising what should be realised, one cultivates. But here it should be understood that one cultivates by the preliminary part of friendliness, merely by the occurrence of pervading welfare.

"With meditation not empty" means one whose meditation is not hollow, or one whose meditation is not abandoned. "Dwells" means moves, conducts himself, maintains, sustains, supports, walks, dwells. Therefore it is called "dwells." By this term, the posture-abiding of a monk cultivating friendliness is stated. "Who follows the Teacher's instruction" means one who carries out the Teacher's instruction. "Who accepts exhortation" means one who acts upon exhortation. And here, what is said once is exhortation; what is said again and again is instruction. What is said face to face is also exhortation; what is said having sent someone, in one's absence, is instruction. Speech concerning a case that has been reported is exhortation; speech

concerning a case whether reported or not reported, by way of establishing the authoritative text, is instruction. Thus the distinction should be known. But in the ultimate sense, whether exhortation or instruction, these are the same, of one meaning, equal, of equal share, of the same kind, just that. And here, "If, monks, a monk cultivates a mind of friendliness for even just a finger-snap" - this itself is both the Teacher's instruction and exhortation; because of his carrying it out, he should be known as one who follows the instruction and who accepts exhortation.

"Not in vain" means not hollow. "The country's almsfood" means: having abandoned the circle of relatives and gone forth in dependence on the country, because it is obtained from the houses of others, the almsfood is called the country's almsfood. "Consumes" means: there are four kinds of use - use by theft, use by debt, use by inheritance, and use by ownership. Therein, the use of one who is immoral is called use by theft. The use without reviewing by one who is moral is called use by debt. The use of the seven trainees is called use by inheritance. The use of one who has eliminated the mental corruptions is called use by ownership. Therein, this monk's use of the country's almsfood is not in vain for two reasons. A monk who cultivates a mind of friendliness for even just a finger-snap, having become an owner of the country's almsfood, having become free of debt, having become an heir, consumes it - thus for him the use of the country's almsfood is not in vain. For a monk who cultivates friendliness for even just a finger-snap, the gift given is of great importance, of great fruit, of great benefit, of great brightness, of great pervasion - thus for him the use of the country's almsfood is not in vain. "What then to say of those who cultivate it abundantly" means: those who cultivate, develop, and practise again and again this mind of friendliness abundantly - that they consume the country's almsfood not in vain - what is there even to be said here? For such monks consume the country's almsfood having become owners, free of debt, and heirs.

54-55. In the fourth, "develops" means produces and cultivates. In the fifth, "attends to" means does in the mind. The remainder in both these should be understood by the method already stated in the third. For whoever practises, this same one develops, this one attends to. With whatever consciousness one practises, with that very same one develops, with that one attends to. However, the Perfectly Enlightened One, through the thorough penetration of that element of phenomena by virtue of which he is called one who has attained the beauty of instruction, in dependence on that thorough penetration, on his own beauty of instruction, on his sovereignty over the Teaching, on his skilfulness in the varieties of analytical knowledge, and on his unobstructed omniscient knowledge, showed a single consciousness arisen at one moment, having divided that very one consciousness into three portions.

56. In the sixth, "whatever" is an undefined expression. "Unwholesome" is their defined expression. To this extent, all unwholesome mental states are included without remainder. "Connected with the unwholesome, on the side of the unwholesome" is just a name for the unwholesome themselves. For the unwholesome themselves, some associate with the unwholesome by way of conscience, some by way of decisive support, and are their partisans - thus they are called "connected with the unwholesome, on the side of the unwholesome." "All of them are directed by mind" means mind goes before, goes first among these - thus they are directed by mind. For these, although they have simultaneous arising with mind, have the same

sense-organ, have simultaneous cessation, and have the same object. But since mind is their producer, doer, begetter, originator, and generator, therefore they are called directed by mind.

"Arises first" means just as when it is said "the king has departed," there is no reason to ask "Has only the king departed, has the rest of the royal army departed or not departed?" - all are understood to have departed; just so, from the time when it is said "mind has arisen," there is no reason to ask whether the remaining conascent, conjoined, and associated states have arisen or not arisen - all of them are understood to have arisen. Dependent on this reason, mind, although being conjoined and associated with them, having simultaneous arising and simultaneous cessation, is said to arise first among those mental states. "Follow right behind" means following behind, together, as one - this is the meaning. But having taken the shadow of the letter, it should not be understood that consciousness arises first and mental factors afterwards. For the meaning is the refuge, not the letter. In the verse "Mental states are directed by mind, mind is their chief, they are mind-made" too, the same method applies.

57. In the seventh, "wholesome" means wholesome mental states belonging to even the four planes were spoken of. The remainder should be understood by the method already stated in the sixth.

58. In the eighth, regarding "as does, monks, negligence," herein "monks" is an address, and the meaning is "as this negligence." "Negligence" means the act of being negligent. For this was said:

"Therein, what is negligence? The release of consciousness in bodily misconduct or verbal misconduct or mental misconduct or in the five types of sensual pleasure, the non-arising of release, or inattentive practice in the development of wholesome mental states, non-persevering practice, unsteady practice, sluggish conduct, abandoned desire, abandoned responsibility, non-determination, non-pursuit, non-repetition, non-development, non-cultivation. Whatever such negligence, act of being negligent, state of negligence - this is called negligence."

"And arisen wholesome mental states decline" - this is said by way of meditative absorption and insight. But for path and fruition, once arisen, there is no such thing as decline again.

59. In the ninth, diligence should be understood in detail by way of the opposite of negligence.

60. In the tenth, "idleness" means the state of being lazy. The remainder is just by the method already stated.

Explanation of the Chapter on the Finger-snap.



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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