

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

5. The Collection of Minor Texts (5. Khuddaka Nikāya -
Aṭṭhakathā)

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas
(12. Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā)

6. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddha Sumana
(6. Sumanabuddhavaṃsavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

12. Commentary on the Chronicle of the Buddhas

6. Explanation on the Lineage of the Buddha Sumana

Thus, having made the ten-thousandfold world system one mass of darkness all at once, when that Blessed One had attained final nibbāna, in the period after him, when human beings had a lifespan of ninety thousand years, having gradually declined, when they had a lifespan of ten years, having increased again, having gradually become those of incalculable lifespan, having declined again, when they had a lifespan of ninety thousand years, the Bodhisatta named Sumana, having fulfilled the perfections, having been reborn in the Tusita city, having passed away from there, took conception in the womb of a queen named Sirimā in the family of a king named Sudatta in the city of Mekhalā. The wonders were in the manner already stated before.

He, having gradually come of age, being entertained by sixty-three hundred thousand dancing women in three mansions named Sirivaḍḍhana, Somavaḍḍhana, and Iddhivaḍḍhana, being attended upon by divine young women, like a divine prince, experiencing sensual happiness similar to divine happiness for nine thousand years, having begotten an incomparable son named Anupama by a queen named Vaṭṭasikā, having seen the four signs, having departed by elephant vehicle, he went forth. But when he was going forth, thirty crores went forth following him.

He, surrounded by them, having practised the practice of striving for ten months, on the full moon day of Vesākha, having eaten the milk-rice into which divine nutriment had been placed, given by one named Anupamā, the daughter of the millionaire Anoma in the town of Anoma, having spent the day residence in a sal grove, having taken eight handfuls of grass given by a naked ascetic named Anupama, having approached the Nāga Bodhi tree, having circumambulated it, having made a grass mat thirty cubits wide with eight handfuls of grass, there having folded his legs crosswise, he sat down. Thereupon, having scattered the forces of Māra, having penetrated the knowledge of omniscience - "Through the round of many births, etc. it has reached the elimination of cravings" - he uttered an inspired utterance. Therefore it was said -

1. "After Maṅgala, the Leader named Sumana;
Matchless in all qualities, the highest of all beings."

Therein, "after Maṅgala" means afterwards, in the later period of the Blessed One Maṅgala. "Matchless in all qualities" means matchless, incomparable in all qualities of morality, concentration, and wisdom.

Sumana, it is said, the Blessed One, having spent seven weeks in the very vicinity of the Bodhi tree, having accepted Brahmā's request for the purpose of expounding the Teaching - while reflecting "To whom indeed should I first expound the Teaching?" having seen thirty crores who had gone forth together with him, and his own

youngest brother, the half-brother Prince Saraṇa, and the chaplain's son, the young man Bhāvitatta, as accomplished with decisive support - having thought "I should expound the Teaching to these first," like a king of swans, through the sky-path, having descended into the Mekhala Park, having sent the park keeper, having had his own youngest brother, Prince Saraṇa, the chaplain's son, and Prince Bhāvitatta summoned, to thirty-seven crores who constituted their retinue, thirty crores who had gone forth together with him, and many other crores of gods and humans - thus to a hundred thousand crores, by the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Teaching, he gave the nectar of the Teaching to drink. Therefore it was said -

- 2.** "Then he beat the drum of the Deathless in the city of Mekhala;
The ninefold Conqueror's Dispensation, conjoined with the conch of the Teaching."

Therein, "the drum of the Deathless" means the drum for the achievement of the Deathless, for the achievement of Nibbāna. "Beat" means sounded; he expounded the Teaching - this is the meaning. This "drum of the Deathless" is a name for the ninefold word of the Buddha having the Deathless as its final goal. Therefore he said - "The ninefold Conqueror's Dispensation, conjoined with the conch of the Teaching." Therein, "conjoined with the conch of the Teaching" means conjoined with the excellent conch of the talk on the Teaching of the four truths.

Now Sumana, the leader of the world, having attained the highest enlightenment, proceeding along the practice in accordance with his acknowledgment, for the purpose of liberating the public from the bondage of existence, for the protection of the jewel of wholesomeness being plundered by the thieves of defilements, built the excellent city of the Deathless, with the extensive wall of morality, surrounded by the moat of concentration, with the door of insight knowledge, with the firm door panels of mindfulness and full awareness, adorned with pavilions and the like of meditative attainments, and crowded with the people of the qualities conducive to enlightenment. Therefore it was said -

- 3.** "He, having conquered the defilements, having attained the highest enlightenment;
The Teacher built a city, the best and highest city of the Good Teaching."

Therein, "having conquered" means having vanquished, having overcome, having destroyed the mental defilements, the volitional activities, and the Māras of the sons of gods - this is the meaning. "He" means he, the glad-minded Blessed One. "Having vanquished the defilements indeed" is also a reading. Therein, the syllable "hi" is an indeclinable particle used merely as an expletive. "Having attained" means having realised. "Patto" is also a reading. "City" means the city of Nibbāna. "The best and highest city of the Good Teaching" means the highest, the foremost, the principal among the excellent cities reckoned as the Good Teaching. Or, the highest among the excellent and noble cities made of the Good Teaching is "the best and highest city of the Good Teaching." In the former alternative meaning, "city" should be understood as a synonym for that very thing. Nibbāna is called "city" in the sense of being the resort and dwelling, the support of the noble persons - trainees and those beyond training - who have penetrated the intrinsic nature of phenomena. But in that excellent city of the Good Teaching, that Teacher built a great highway made of the

establishments of mindfulness, uninterrupted, not crooked, straight, and broad and wide. Therefore it was said -

- 4.** Continuous, not crooked, straight, extensive and wide;
He built that great highway, the best and highest establishment of mindfulness.

Therein, "continuous" means continuous because of the uninterrupted nature of the movement of wholesome impulses. "Not crooked" means not crooked because of being free from the fault that causes crookedness. "Straight" means straight precisely because of being not crooked. This expression is merely an elucidation of the meaning of the preceding term. "Extensive and wide" means broad and wide in length and in breadth; the state of being broad and wide should be understood by way of mundane and supramundane establishments of mindfulness. "Great highway" means the main road. "The best and highest establishment of mindfulness" means it is an establishment of mindfulness and it is the highest among the excellent, thus it is the best and highest establishment of mindfulness. Or else, the meaning is the highest highway made of the excellent establishment of mindfulness.

Now, on that street of the establishments of mindfulness of that great city of Nibbāna, he spread out on both sides in the shops of the Teaching these very costly jewels, namely the four fruits of asceticism, the four analytical knowledges, the six direct knowledges, and the eight attainments. Therefore it was said -

- 5.** The four fruits of asceticism, the four analytical knowledges;
The six higher knowledges and the eight attainments, he spread out there on the street.

Now, the Blessed One, showing the means of carrying away those jewels - that those who are heedful, mindful, wise, endowed with shame, moral fear, energy, and so on, they take up these precious goods -

- 6.** "Those who are heedful, free from barrenness, endowed with shame and energy;
They take up these excellent qualities as they wish." He said;

Therein, "those who" (ye) is a synopsis without specifying. "Heedful" (appamattā) means endowed with diligence, which is the counterpart of negligence, having the characteristic of continuous presence of mindfulness. "Free from barrenness" (akhilā) means free from the five mental rigidities. "Endowed with shame and energy" (hivīriyehupāgatā) means one is ashamed of bodily misconduct and so on, thus "shame" (hīrī); this is a designation for moral shame. The state of a hero is energy (vīriya); that has the characteristic of endeavour. Endowed with, possessed of those shame and energy, are capable persons. "They" (te) is a specifying synopsis of the previously unspecified synopsis. Again, "they" (te) means those sons of good family take up, obtain, attain the distinguished jewels of qualities of the aforementioned kind - this is the meaning. But the Blessed One Sumana, having understood the minds of all, having beaten the drum of the Teaching, having established the city of the Teaching, by this method at the very first awakened a hundred thousand crores. Therefore it was said -

- 7.** "Thus by this exertion, lifting up the great multitude;
The Teacher first awakened a hundred thousand crores."

Therein, "lifting up" means lifting up from the ocean of wandering in the round of rebirths by the boat of the noble path. "A hundred thousand crores" means a hundred thousand crores is the meaning. It is stated in reverse order.

But when Sumana, the leader of the world, having performed the Twin Miracle - the crushing of the vanity and conceit of the sectarians - at the foot of a mango tree in the city of Sunandavatī, gave the nectar of the Teaching to drink to a thousand crores of beings. This was the second full realisation. Therefore it was said -

- 8.** "At which time the great hero exhorted the groups of sectarians;
Ten million thousand fully realised, at the second teaching of the Dhamma."

Therein, "the groups of sectarians" means groups that had become sectarians, or groups of sectarians. Some read "subduing the sectarians, the Buddha taught the Dhamma."

But when deities from the ten thousand world-circles, having assembled in this world-circle, and humans raised up a discussion on cessation - "How do they attain cessation, how are they attained to cessation, how do they emerge from cessation?" Thus, being unable to make a judgement regarding attainment, determination, emergence and so on, together with humans, the gods in the six sensual-sphere heavenly worlds and the Brahmās in the nine Brahmā worlds were in a state of wavering, divided in two. Thereupon, together with the king named Arindama the Beautiful among Men, in the evening time, they approached Sumana, the One of Ten Powers, the protector of the entire world; Having approached, King Arindama asked the Blessed One the question about cessation. Thereupon, when the question about cessation was answered by the Blessed One, there was the full realisation of the teaching for ninety thousand ten million living beings. This was the third full realisation. Therefore it was said -

9. "When gods and humans, united with one mind;
Asked the question about cessation, and also the doubt in their minds.
10. "Then too, at the teaching of the Dhamma, at the elucidation of cessation;
For ninety thousand ten million, there was the third full realisation."

9-10. Now, the Blessed One Sumana had three assemblies of disciples. Therein, at the first assembly, having dwelt for the rains retreat in dependence on the city of Mekhala, at the first invitation ceremony, the Blessed One celebrated the pavāraṇā together with a thousand koṭis of Worthy Ones who had gone forth by the "Come, monk" ordination. This was the first assembly. Then at another time, seated on the golden mountain of one yojana in extent, produced by the wholesome power of King Arindama, not far from the city of Saṅkassa - like the sun with its beautiful multitude of rays in the autumn season on the Yugandhara mountain, so too the sun of the excellent sage - having surrounded King Arindama and tamed ninety thousand koṭis of men who had come, having given the going forth to all by the "Come, monk" ordination, surrounded by monks who had attained arahantship on that very day, he

recited the Pātimokkha at an assembly possessed of four factors. This was the second assembly. But when Sakka, the king of gods, approached for the purpose of seeing the Fortunate One, then the Blessed One Sumana, surrounded by eighty thousand koṭis of Worthy Ones, recited the Pātimokkha. This was the third assembly. Therefore it was said -

11. "There were three assemblies of the great sage Sumana;
Of those who had eliminated the mental corruptions, spotless ones, of peaceful minds, such ones.
12. "When the Blessed One had completed the rains retreat, at the proclaimed invitation ceremony;
With a hundred thousand koṭis, the Truth-finder celebrated the pavāraṇā.
13. "Beyond that, at an assembly on the spotless golden mountain;
The second meeting was of ninety thousand koṭis.
14. "When Sakka, the king of gods, came for the sight of the Buddha;
The third meeting was of eighty thousand koṭis."

11-14. Therein, in "abhighuṭṭhe pavāraṇe" a change of gender should be understood; the meaning is "abhighuṭṭhāya pavāraṇāya." "Tatoparan" means afterwards. "Kañcanapabbate" means on a mountain made of gold. "Buddhadassanupāgamī" means he approached for the purpose of seeing the Buddha. At that time, it is said, our Bodhisatta was a king of serpents named Atula, of great supernormal power and great might. He, having heard "A Buddha has arisen in the world," surrounded by a company of relatives, having departed from his own dwelling, having made an offering with divine musical instruments to the Blessed One Sumana who was attended by a hundred thousand koṭis of monks, having carried on a great giving, having given separate pairs of garments, became established in the refuges. That Teacher too declared concerning him "In the future he will become a Buddha." Therefore it was said -

15. "I at that time, a king of serpents of great supernormal power;
Atula by name, with an abundant accumulation of wholesome deeds.
16. "Then I, having come out from the serpent realm with my relatives;
With the divine musical instruments of the serpents, I attended upon the Victor together with the Community.
17. "I satisfied a hundred thousand koṭis with food and drink;
Having given a separate pair of garments, I went for refuge to him.
18. "That Buddha too declared of me, Sumana, the leader of the world;
'Immeasurable cosmic cycles from now, this one will be a Buddha.'
19. "Having striven in striving, etc. we shall be face to face with him."

As in the Koṇḍañña Buddha Lineage, thus eight verses should be expanded.

20. "Having heard his word too, I gladdened my mind even more;

I determined upon further ascetic practice, for the fulfilment of the ten perfections."

15-20. Now, that Blessed One Sumana's city was named Mekhalā, his father was a king named Sudatta, his mother was a queen named Sirimā, Saraṇa and Bhāvitatta were the two chief disciples, Udena by name was the attendant, Soṇā and Upasoṇā were the two chief female disciples, the iron-wood tree was the Bodhi tree, his body was ninety cubits in height, and the life-span was ninety thousand years only, his chief queen was named Vaṭaṃsikā, his son was named Anūpama, and he departed by elephant vehicle. The attendant was the King of Aṅga. He dwelt in the Aṅga park. Therefore it was said -

21. The city was named Mekhalā, the warrior was named Sudatta;
The mother was named Sirimā, of the great sage Sumana.
22. For nine thousand years, he dwelt in the house;
Canda, Sucanda, and Vaṭaṃsa, three excellent mansions.
23. Sixty-three hundred thousand women, fully adorned;
Vaṭaṃsikā was the name of that woman, Anūpama was her son.
24. Having seen the four signs, he departed by elephant vehicle;
For no less than ten months, the Conqueror strove in striving.
25. Asked by Brahmā, the peaceful one, Sumana, the leader of the world;
The great hero turned the wheel, at Mekhala, the excellent city.
26. Saraṇa and Bhāvitatta were the chief disciples;
Udena by name was the attendant of the great sage Sumana.
27. Soṇā and Upasoṇā were the chief female disciples;
That Buddha too, of immeasurable fame, was awakened at the foot of a nāga tree.
28. Varuṇa and Saraṇa were the chief male attendants;
Cālā and Upacālā were the chief female attendants.
29. That Buddha, risen to ninety cubits in height,
Resembling the radiance of gold, the ten-thousand world-system shines brightly.
30. "For ninety thousand years, life span exists for that long;
Remaining for that long, he helped many people to cross.
31. Having helped those to be helped cross over, and having awakened those capable of being awakened;
The Perfectly Enlightened One attained final Nibbāna, like the king of stars, he set.
32. And those monks who had eliminated the mental corruptions, and that incomparable Buddha;

Having shown incomparable radiance, those of great fame were quenched.

33. That knowledge was incomparable, and those jewels were incomparable;
All that has disappeared, are not all activities empty?
34. The Buddha Sumana, bearer of fame, attained final Nibbāna in the Aṅga park;
Right there is the stūpa of the Conqueror, raised up four yojanas.

21-34. Therein, "resembling a golden festoon" means having the splendour of form similar to a festoon made of gold decorated with various jewels. "The ten-thousand world-system shines brightly" means by his radiance even the ten-thousand world-system shines brightly. This is the meaning. "Those to be helped across" means those who should be helped to cross over; when "to help across" is said, the meaning is all those accessible to instruction by a Buddha. "Like the king of stars" means like the moon. "Has passed away" means has passed away. Some read "has gone to passing away." "Incomparable" means matchless. "Of great fame" means of great reputation and of great retinue. "And that knowledge" means and that knowledge of omniscience. "Incomparable" means unequalled, matchless. The remainder is clear everywhere.

The explanation on the Lineage of the Buddha Sumana is completed.

The fourth lineage of the Buddha is concluded.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

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

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