

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)

7. Commentary on the Chapter on Arousal of Energy and So Forth
(7. Vīriyārambhādivaggavaṇṇanā)



PaliVerse

4. The Collection of the Numerical Discourses - Commentaries

01. Commentary on the Book of the Ones

7. Explanation of the Chapter on Arousal of Energy and So Forth

61. In the first of the seventh, "arousal of energy" means the arousal of right striving energy with four functions; the meaning is the state of energy that is initiated, upheld, and perfected.

62. In the second, "great desire" (mahicchātā) means great greed. With reference to which it was said -

"Therein, what is great desire? Whatever is the desire for more of one who is not content with whatsoever requisites of robes, almsfood, lodging and medicine for the sick, or with the five types of sensual pleasure, whatever such wish, state of wishing, great desire, lust, passion, mental passion. This is called great desire."

63. In the third, "fewness of wishes" means non-greed. "Of one of few wishes" means of one without desire. For here the phrasing is as if with a remainder, but the meaning is without remainder. For he is not called "one of few wishes" due to the presence of a trifling desire, but he is called "one of few wishes" due to the absence of desire, by the state of non-greed itself cultivated again and again.

But here this distinction should be known: excessive desire, evil desire, great desire, and fewness of wishes. Therein, the longing of one unsatisfied with his own gain for another's gain is called excessive desire. For one possessed of that, even a ripe cake fallen into one's own bowl from a single portion appears as if not well-cooked and as if small; but that very same one, thrown into another's bowl, appears as if well-cooked and as if large. But the making known of non-existent virtues and immoderation in accepting is called evil desire; that has come in the Abhidhamma itself by the method beginning with "here a certain one being faithless wishes 'May people know me as faithful'"; a person possessed of that becomes established in hypocrisy. But the making known of existing virtues and immoderation in accepting is called great desire; that too has come by this method: "here a certain one being faithful wishes 'May people know me as faithful,' being moral wishes 'May people know me as moral.'" A person possessed of that is difficult to satisfy, and even a mother who has given birth is unable to win his heart. Therefore this is said -

"A great mass of fire, the ocean, and also a greedy person;
Let them give requisites by cartloads - these three are insatiable."

But the concealment of existing virtues and moderation in accepting is called fewness of wishes. A person endowed with that, through the desire to conceal even the virtue existing in himself, being faithful, does not wish "May people know me as faithful."

Being moral, secluded, very learned, putting forth strenuous energy, accomplished in concentration, wise, being one who has eliminated the mental corruptions, does not wish "May people know me as one who has eliminated the mental corruptions" - just as the Elder Majjhantika.

The Elder, it is said, was a great one who had eliminated the mental corruptions, but his bowl and robes were worth only a foot's measure. He was the senior monk of the Community on the great festival day of the monastery of King Dhammāsoka. Then, having seen his excessively rough appearance, people said: "Venerable sir, please stay a little outside." The Elder, thinking "If one who has eliminated the mental corruptions like me does not perform the service for the king, who else will do it?" dived into the earth and emerged right while taking the almsfood lifted up for the senior monk of the Community. Thus, being one who has eliminated the mental corruptions, he does not wish "May people know me as one who has eliminated the mental corruptions." But a monk of few wishes thus gives rise to unarisen material gain, makes arisen material gain lasting, and pleases the minds of donors. For in whatever way he, through his fewness of wishes, takes little, in that very way people, faithful to his practice, give much.

There is also another fourfold one of few wishes -one of few wishes regarding requisites, one of few wishes regarding ascetic practices, one of few wishes regarding the Scriptures, and one of few wishes regarding achievement. Therein, one of few wishes regarding the four requisites is called one of few wishes regarding requisites. He knows the disposition of the donor, knows the disposition of the gift, and knows his own strength. For if the gift is abundant but the donor wishes to give a trifle, he takes little according to the donor's disposition. The gift is little but the donor wishes to give much - he takes little according to the disposition of the gift. Even when the gift is abundant and the donor too wishes to give much, having known his own strength, he takes only in measure.

One who does not wish to make known to others the existence in himself of the undertaking of ascetic practices is called one of few wishes regarding ascetic practices. For the elucidation of this, these are the cases -The Elder Mahākumāra, the cemetery dweller, it is said, dwelt in a cemetery for sixty years; not even one other monk knew of it. Therefore he said -

"In the cemetery for sixty years, uninterruptedly I dwell;

A second person would not know me - ah, the supreme cemetery dweller!"

At Cetiyaṭṭhāṭṭha two brother elders dwelt. The younger one, having taken pieces of sugar-cane sent by his attendant, went to the presence of the elder saying "Please make use of them, venerable sir." And it was the time for the Elder to wash his mouth after having done the meal duty. He said: "Enough, friend." "Are you perhaps a one-session eater, venerable sir?" "Bring them here, friend, the pieces of sugar-cane" - even though being a one-session eater for fifty years, concealing the ascetic practice, having made use of them and washed his mouth, he again determined the ascetic practice and departed.

But whoever, like the Elder Tissa of Sāketa, does not wish to make known his state of being very learned - this one is called one of few wishes regarding the Scriptures. The Elder, it is said, thinking "There is no moment to spare," not making opportunity for recitation and questioning, when urged "When, venerable sir, will you obtain the moment of death?" having dismissed his group, went to the Kaṇikāra Sand-Ocean Monastery. There, during the rainy season, having been of assistance to elders, newly ordained, and those of middle standing, on the Observance day of the great invitation ceremony, having stirred the countryside with a talk on the Teaching, he departed.

But whoever, having become a certain one among stream-enterers and so on, does not wish to make known his state of being a stream-enterer and so on, this one is called one of few wishes regarding achievement, like the three sons of good family and like Ghaṭikāra the potter. But regarding this matter, one possessed of strong non-greed through repeated cultivation, whether a trainee or a worldling, should be understood as one of few wishes.

64. In the fourth, "discontent" means greed reckoned as dissatisfaction that has arisen in one who associates with, keeps company with, and attends upon discontented persons.

65. In the fifth, "contentment" means contentment reckoned as non-greed that has arisen in one who associates with, keeps company with, and attends upon contented persons. "Of one who is content" means of one endowed with contentment with whatsoever requisites. And this contentment is twelvefold. That is: Regarding robes, there is contentment with whatever is obtained, contentment according to one's strength, and contentment according to what is suitable - thus it is threefold. Likewise regarding almsfood and so on.

Here is the detailed exposition of that - Here a monk obtains a robe, whether beautiful or ugly. He sustains himself with just that, does not desire another, and even when obtaining one does not take it. This is his contentment with whatever is obtained regarding robes. But then he is either naturally weak or overcome by illness and ageing, and becomes wearied when wearing a heavy robe. He, having exchanged it with a fellow monk, even while sustaining himself with a light one, is still content. This is his contentment according to one's strength regarding robes. Another is one who obtains superior requisites. He, having obtained among silk robes and so on a certain costly robe, or many robes, having given them away thinking "Let this be for the elders, for those long gone forth, this is suitable for the very learned, this for the sick, this for those of little gain," and having taken their old robe, or having picked up rags from a rubbish heap and so on, having made a double robe from them and wearing it, is still content. This is his contentment according to what is suitable regarding robes.

Here again a monk obtains almsfood, whether coarse or superior; he sustains himself with just that, does not desire another, and even when obtaining it does not take it. This is his contentment with whatever is obtained regarding almsfood. But whoever obtains almsfood that is opposed to one's own nature or opposed to one's illness, by the use of which there is discomfort for him, he, having given that to a fellow monk, having eaten suitable food from his hand, even while practising the ascetic duty, is still content. This is his contentment according to one's strength regarding almsfood.

Another obtains much superior almsfood. He, having given that, just as with the robe, to elders, those long gone forth, the very learned, those of little gain, and the sick, even while eating either their leftovers or mixed food obtained by walking for almsfood, is still content. This is his contentment according to what is suitable regarding almsfood.

Here again a monk obtains a lodging, whether agreeable or disagreeable; by that he produces neither pleasure nor displeasure; at the very least, he is satisfied even with a mat of grass, with whatever he has obtained. This is his contentment with whatever is obtained regarding lodging. But whoever obtains a lodging that is opposed to one's own nature or opposed to one's illness, where dwelling there is discomfort for him, he, having given that to a fellow monk, even while dwelling in a suitable lodging belonging to that monk, is still content. This is his contentment according to one's strength regarding lodging.

Another, of great merit, obtains many superior lodgings such as rock cells, pavilions, pinnacled buildings, and so on. He, having given those, just as with robes and so on, to elders, those long gone forth, the very learned, those of little gain, and the sick, even while dwelling anywhere at all, is still content. This is his contentment according to what is suitable regarding lodging. Whoever too, having reflected "An excellent lodging is indeed a ground for heedlessness; for one seated there, sloth and torpor descend upon him; and for one overcome by sleep, upon waking again, evil thoughts manifest," does not accept such a lodging even when it has been obtained; he, having rejected that, even while dwelling in the open air, at the root of a tree, and so on, is still content. This too is his contentment according to what is suitable regarding lodging.

Here again a monk obtains medicine, whether coarse or superior; whatever he obtains, he is satisfied with just that, does not desire another, and even when obtaining it does not take it. This is his contentment with whatever is obtained regarding the requisite for the sick. But one who is in need of oil obtains molasses; he, having given that to a fellow monk, having taken oil from his hand, or having sought something else, even while preparing medicine, is still content. This is his contentment according to one's strength regarding the requisite for the sick.

Another of great merit obtains much superior medicine such as oil, honey, molasses and so on. He, having given that, just as with robes, to elders, those long gone forth, the very learned, those of little gain, and the sick, even while sustaining himself with whatever they bring, is content. But whoever, when in one vessel urine-soaked yellow myrobalan is placed and in another the four sweets - Being told "Take, venerable sir, whichever you wish," thinking "If his illness is appeased by either of those, then urine-soaked yellow myrobalan has been praised by the Buddha and others," having rejected the four sweets, even while preparing medicine with the urine-soaked yellow myrobalan, is supremely content. This is his contentment according to what is suitable regarding the requisite for the sick. But among the three kinds of contentment individually in each requisite, contentment according to what is suitable is the foremost.

66-67. In the sixth and seventh, unwise attention and wise attention have the same characteristics as stated above. The remainder here is clear in meaning.

68. In the eighth, "lack of full awareness" means the state of not being fully aware; this is a designation for delusion. "For one not fully aware" means for one not knowing, who is deluded.

69. In the ninth, "full awareness" means the state of being fully aware; this is a name for wisdom. "For the fully aware" means for one who is fully aware.

70. In the tenth, "evil friendship" means: one whose evil, inferior friends are evil - he is one with evil friends. The state of one with evil friends is evil friendship; this is the name for the four aggregates occurring in that manner. And this too was said -

"Therein, what is evil friendship? Those persons who are faithless, immoral, of little learning, stingy, unwise. Whatever association with them, close association, intimate association, companionship, close companionship, devotion, close devotion, inclination towards them. This is called evil friendship."

Explanation of the Chapter on Arousal of Energy and So Forth.



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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