

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)

3. Commentary on the Chapter on Pāthika
(3. Pāthikavaggaṭṭhakathā)

7. Commentary on the Discourse on the Marks of a Great Man
(7. Lakkhaṇasuttavaṇṇanā)

[DN 30, PTS 3.142–3.179]



PaliVerse

1.The Collection of the Long Discourses - Commentaries

3. Commentary on the Chapter on Pāthika

7. Explanation of the Discourse on the Marks of a Great Man

Commentary on the Thirty-Two Marks of a Great Man

199. "Thus have I heard" - this is the Discourse on the Marks (of a Great Man). Herein, this is the explanation of obscure terms. "Dvattiṃsimāni" means thirty-two these. "Characteristics of a great man" means the marks of a great man, the signs of a great man, the causes for recognising "this is a great man." "Possessed of which a great man" and so on should be understood by the method explained in the Mahāpadāna.

Why did he say "Even the seers outside hold them, but they do not know 'Because of the doing of this action, this characteristic is obtained'"? Because it is in accordance with the occasion. For this discourse has an occasion. But where did that occasion of this arise? Within the village, among the people. At that time, it is said, the inhabitants of Sāvattthī, having sat down in their own houses and at their house gates and in council halls and so on, raised up a discussion - "The Blessed One has the eighty minor marks, the fathom-radiance, the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, by which the Blessed One's body, like the coral tree in full bloom on every branch, like a blooming lotus grove, like a golden archway decorated with various jewels, like the expanse of the sky shining with the rays of stars, emitting six-coloured rays running to and fro here and there, quivering, shines exceedingly. And it has not been said that by this particular action this characteristic of the Blessed One arose, but it was said by the Blessed One that it arises thus on account of what was formerly given, even as little as a ladleful of rice gruel or a spoonful of food. What action indeed did the Teacher perform, by which these characteristics of his arose?"

Then the Venerable Ānanda, walking within the village, having heard this friendly conversation, having finished his meal, having come to the monastery, having performed his duty to the Teacher, having paid homage, standing, said "By me, venerable sir, a certain discussion was heard within the village." Thereupon, when the Blessed One said "What was heard by you, Ānanda?" he reported everything. The Teacher, having heard the elder's words, having addressed the monks who were seated surrounding him, having shown the characteristics in succession as "These are the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, monks," spoke thus for the purpose of showing by which action each arose.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Well-Established Feet

201. In "a former birth" and so on, the aggregates formerly dwelt in are called "birth" by way of being born. Likewise, "existence" by way of becoming, and "abode" by way of having dwelt or in the sense of attachment. The meaning of all three terms is: established in the continuity of aggregates formerly dwelt in. Now, because that continuity of aggregates occurs even in the heavenly worlds and so on. But wholesome action capable of producing the characteristics is not easy to perform there; it is easy only for one who has become a human being. Therefore, showing whatever action was done by one as he really was, he said "when formerly being a human being." Or this is not the reason. Even when being an elephant, a horse, a deer, a buffalo, a monkey, and so on, the great man indeed fulfils the perfections. But because the action done while established in such a form of individual existence cannot be easily explained, whereas the action done while established in the human state can be easily explained. Therefore he said "when formerly being a human being."

"Of firm undertaking" means one whose grasp is steady. "In wholesome mental states" means in the ten wholesome courses of action. "Of steadfast undertaking" means one whose grasp is motionless, one whose grasp is unreversed. For the Great Being's mind, upon encountering unwholesome action, shrinks back like a cock's feather encountering fire; upon encountering the wholesome, it spreads out like a canopy. Therefore he is one of firm undertaking, of steadfast undertaking. It is not possible for anyone - whether ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā - to make him relinquish his undertaking of the wholesome.

Herein are these stories - Formerly, it is said, the great man was reborn in the womb of a squirrel. Then, when the sky had rained, a flood came and, having seized the nest, carried it right into the ocean. The great man, thinking "I shall rescue my little ones," repeatedly wetting his tail, flung water out from the ocean. On the seventh day, Sakka, having reflected, came there and asked "What are you doing?" He informed him. Sakka spoke of the impossibility of removing water from the great ocean. The Bodhisatta said it is not fitting even to speak with such a lazy one. He dismissed him saying "Do not stand here." Sakka, pleased that "the grasp grasped by a superior man cannot be made to be relinquished," brought his little ones and gave them to him. In the time of Mahājanaka too, while crossing the great ocean, when asked by a deity "Why are you crossing the great ocean?" he said "I am crossing to go to the far shore, to take the kingdom belonging to my family, and to give gifts." Then by the deity - When it was said "This great ocean is both deep and broad; when will he cross it?" he said "For you this is like the great ocean, but coming to my disposition, it appears like a small irrigation channel. You yourself will see me, having crossed the ocean, having brought wealth from the other side of the ocean, having taken the kingdom belonging to my family, giving gifts." The deity, thinking "The grasp grasped by a superior man cannot be made to be relinquished," having embraced the Bodhisatta, having carried him, laid him down in the park. He, having raised the parasol, day after day making a relinquishment of five hundred thousand, at a later time went forth and became one gone forth. Thus the Great Being cannot by anyone, whether ascetic or etc. Brahmā, be made to relinquish his undertaking of the wholesome. Therefore it was said - "He was one of firm undertaking in wholesome mental states, of steadfast undertaking."

Now, to show those wholesome mental states in which he was of steadfast undertaking, he said beginning with "in bodily good conduct" and so on. "In giving and sharing": here, giving itself by way of what is given is "giving," and by way of making a sharing it is "sharing." "In undertaking morality" means at the time of fulfilling the five precepts, the ten precepts, and the fourfold purification morality. "In observing the Observance day" means at the time of observing the Observance of the type beginning with the fourteenth day and so on. "In filial love towards one's mother" means in the duty to be done towards one's mother. The same method applies to the remaining terms as well. "And in various other" means and in other such ones. "Highly wholesome": here there are wholesome and there are highly wholesome. All sensual-sphere wholesome states are called wholesome; fine-material-sphere ones are highly wholesome. Both of those are called wholesome; immaterial-sphere ones are highly wholesome. All of those are called wholesome; wholesome states that are conditions for the attainment of the perfections of a disciple are called highly wholesome. Those too are called wholesome; wholesome states that are conditions for the attainment of individual enlightenment are highly wholesome. Those too are called wholesome; but wholesome states that are conditions for the attainment of omniscient knowledge are intended here as "highly wholesome." He was one of firm undertaking, of steadfast undertaking, in those highly wholesome mental states.

"Because of the doing, the accumulation": here, what is done even once is simply done; but through repeated doing it becomes accumulated. "Because of its abundance" means action that is made into a mass, made into a heap, is called abundant. Therefore, by saying "because of its abundance," he shows: "For the action done by me, the world-circle is too confined, the highest point of existence is too low - thus abundant is my action." "Because of its extensiveness" means because of its immeasurableness. By this he shows: "Infinite and immeasurable is the action done by me." "Surpasses" means overpowers; the meaning is that he obtains in excess compared to the other gods. "Obtains" means attains.

"With all parts of the soles of his feet": this is the detailed statement of "he places his foot on the ground evenly." Therein, "with all parts" means with all the parts having every portion; he does not touch first with one portion, nor afterwards with one; he touches evenly with all the soles of his feet, and lifts evenly. For even if the Truth-finder extends his foot thinking "I shall step upon a pit many hundreds of men deep." At that very moment the sunken place, having risen up like a blacksmith's bellows filled with air, becomes level with the earth. A raised place too sinks within. For one extending his foot thinking "I shall step upon a distant place," even a mountain the size of Sineru, bending down like a well-steamed bamboo shoot, comes near to his foot. Thus indeed, having performed the Twin Miracle, when he extended his foot thinking "I shall step upon Mount Yugandhara," the mountain, having bent down, came near to his foot. He too, having stepped upon that, stepped with his second foot upon the realm of the Thirty-three. For the place where the wheel-characteristic is to be established cannot become uneven. Stumps or thorns or gravel or potsherds or excrement, urine, spittle, nasal mucus and so on either move away beforehand, or right there and then sink into the earth. For by the power of the Truth-finder's morality, by the power of his merit, by the power of his Teaching, by the might of the ten perfections, this great earth becomes completely strewn with soft flowers.

202. "Bounded by the ocean" (sāgarapariyantaṃ) means having the ocean as its boundary. For when he is exercising kingship, there is no tree or mountain or river as a boundary in between; the great ocean alone is the boundary. Therefore it was said "bounded by the ocean." "Without barrenness, without danger, without thorns" (akhilaṃ animittaṃ akaṇṭakaṃ) means free from thieves. For thieves are called "barrenness" in the sense of rough contact, "danger" in the sense of being a condition for misfortune, and "thorns" in the sense of piercing. "Successful" (iddhaṃ) means prosperous. "Flourishing" (phītaṃ) means fully in fruit and blossom with all achievements. "Secure" (khemaṃ) means free from fear. "Safe" (sivaṃ) means free from danger. "Without tumult" (nirabbudaṃ) means devoid of tumult; the meaning is devoid of thieves who roam about in bands and bands. "Unshakeable" (akkhambhiyo) means one who cannot be dislodged. No one is able to move him from his position. "By an adversary" (paccatthikena) means by one who wishes opposition. "By an enemy" (paccāmittena) means by a hostile foe. Both of these are synonyms for a rival. "By internal" (abbhantarehi) means by lust and so on arisen within.

"By external" (bāhirehi) means by ascetics and so on. For thus external ones - ascetics such as Devadatta and Kokālika, brahmins such as Soṇadaṇḍa and Kūṭadaṇḍa, deities similar to Sakka, Māra who pursued him for seven years, and Brahmā gods such as Baka - were not able to dislodge him.

By this much, the action, the action's counterpart, the characteristic, and the benefit of the characteristic have been stated by the Blessed One. The action is the action done with firm energy throughout four incalculable periods exceeding a hundred thousand cosmic cycles. The action's counterpart is the characteristic of the great man with firmly established feet, so that the world with its gods may know the fact of it having been done with firmness. The characteristic is the state of having firmly established feet. The benefit of the characteristic is the state of being unshakeable by adversaries.

203. "Herein this is said" means regarding what was said about the classification of action and so on, this too is said, stated with reference to the verse composition. But these verses were handed down by the elders of old, having said "verses of explanation established by the Elder Ānanda." The elders of a later period said "it is an extraction of meaning, taking one word at a time."

Therein, "in truth" means in verbal truth. "In the teaching" means in the teaching of the ten wholesome courses of action. "In self-control" means in the restraint of the faculties. "In restraint" means in the restraint of morality. In "in purity, attachment to morality, and the Observance," here purity is threefold, beginning with bodily purity. Morality itself that has become an attachment is "attachment to morality." The Observance practice is the Observance. "In non-violence" means in non-violence. "Practised completely" means practised entirely.

"Experienced" means experienced. "Interpreters of marks" means experts in interpreting signs. "An overlord of others" means one capable of overcoming others. "By enemies" means he is unshakeable by rivals.

"He never goes to obstruction" means that foremost person definitively does not go to the state of being suppressed. "For this is his natural order" means for his this is the natural order, this is the intrinsic nature.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Wheels on the Soles of the Feet

204. "The fear of excitement and fright" means the fear of excitement and the fear of fright. Therein, fear dependent on plunder, imprisonment and so on from a thief or from a king or from an enemy is called excitement; momentary fear causing horripilation dependent on fierce elephants, horses and so on, or on serpents, demons and so on is called the fear of fright. All that was dispelled and appeased. "One who arranged" means one who prepared. How does he arrange? Having had alms-halls built at dangerous places in the forest, having fed those who came there, having given them men, he conveys them across; for those unable to enter that place, having sent men, he ushers them in. Even in towns and so on, he establishes protection at those various places; thus he arranges. "And gave gifts with accompaniments" means food, drink - the tenfold base of giving.

Therein, "food" means rice gruel and meal. When giving that, he did not give it having placed it at the door; rather, inside the dwelling, at a place smeared with green plaster, having scattered parched grain and flowers, having prepared seats, having tied up a canopy, having made an offering with fragrant smoke and so on, having caused the community of monks to sit down, he gave rice gruel. When giving rice gruel, he also gave it with vegetables. At the conclusion of the rice gruel drinking, having washed the feet, having anointed them with oil, having given various kinds of unlimited sweet-meats, at the end he gave sumptuous food with various curries and various vegetables. When giving drink, he gave the eightfold drink beginning with mango syrup, and that too having given rice gruel and meal. When giving cloth, he did not give merely pure cloth; rather, having given sufficient material such as single-lined and double-lined cloth and so on, he also gave a needle, he also gave thread, he had thread wound, and at the place for doing needlework he gave seats for the monks, rice gruel and meal, foot ointment, back ointment, dye, withered leaves, a dyeing trough, and even at least a robe-dyeing caretaker of legally allowable things.

"Vehicle" means sandals. Even when giving those, he gave a bag for sandals, a sandal stick, anointing oil, and the food and so on mentioned below, making them the accompaniments of that very thing. Even when giving garlands, he did not give merely pure garlands; rather, having mixed them with scents, he gave the lower four as accompaniments of that very thing. Even when giving scent for the purpose of venerating the Bodhi tree, the shrine, seats, books and so on, and for the purpose of incensing the shrine house, he did not give merely pure scent; together with a grindstone for grinding scent and a vessel for putting it in, he gave the lower five as accompaniments of that. Even when giving cosmetics such as yellow orpiment, red arsenic, China powder and so on for the purpose of shrine veneration and so on, he did not give merely pure cosmetics; together with a vessel for cosmetics, he gave the lower six as accompaniments of that. "Sleeping place" means beds and chairs. Even when giving those, he did not give merely the bare items; together with fleecy coverlets, woollen blankets, bed-sheets, and bed supports, and even at least a cobweb-cleaning stick, he gave the lower seven as accompaniments of that. Even when giving a public rest-house, he did not give merely a house; rather, having had it adorned with garland-work and creeper-work, with well-prepared beds and chairs, he gave the lower eight as accompaniments of that. "Material for lighting" means lamp

oil. When giving that, saying "Light a lamp with this" at the shrine courtyard, the Bodhi tree courtyard, the hall for hearing the Teaching, the dwelling house, and the place for reading books, he did not give merely pure oil; together with a wick, a potsherd, an oil vessel and so on, he gave the lower nine as accompaniments of that. "With well-divided spaces between" means with well-divided intervals.

"Kings" means those who have been consecrated. "Tributary" means collectors of revenues; "princes" means royal princes. Here, the action is the gift with accompaniments. The action's counterpart is the wheel characteristic that arose so that the world with its gods may know, by this reason, that he gave gifts having made them with accompaniments. The characteristic is that very wheel characteristic. The benefit is the state of having a great retinue.

205. "Herein this is said" means these verses that illuminate that same meaning are said. For verses are twofold - those that illuminate that same meaning and those that illuminate a distinct meaning. Therein, the illumination of the meaning that has come in the canonical text itself is called illumination of that same meaning. The illumination of what has not come in the canonical text is called illumination of a distinct meaning. But these are illumination of that same meaning. Therein, "pure" means formerly. "Purattā" is a synonym for that very thing. "In previous births" is an indication of the rejection of action done before this birth. "One who dispelled the fear of excitement and fright" means the dispeller of the fear of excitement and the fear of fright. "Zealous" means intent upon.

"Having the marks of a hundred merits" means each mark produced by a hundredfold of meritorious action. If it were so, anyone could become a Buddha - they did not approve of this. Rather, in infinite world-systems, all beings would each perform each action a hundred times; the Bodhisatta alone, having made each action a hundredfold of the action done by that many people, was reborn. Therefore they approved of this meaning as "having the marks of a hundred merits." "Humans, titans, Sakkas and demons" means humans and titans and Sakkas and demons.

Commentary on the Three Characteristics Beginning with Long Heels

206. "In between" means in between conception and natural death. Here, the action is abstinence from killing living beings. The action's counterpart is that those committing killing of living beings, out of fear of hearing the sound of footsteps, treading on the very tips of their toes, having gone, they kill others. Then they, so that people may know their action by this reason, become inwardly bent-footed or outwardly bent-footed or squatting-footed or lame at the toes or lame at the heels. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of not having killed others by going on the tips of the feet, the characteristic of the great man with projecting heels arises for the Truth-finder. Likewise, those killing others, going with an upright body, thinking "others will see," having gone stooped down, they kill others. Then they, so that others may know their action by this reason, thinking "these ones, having gone thus, killed others," become hunchbacked or dwarfish or cripples. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of not having killed others by going thus, the characteristic of the great man with a divinely straight body arises for the Truth-finder. Likewise, those killing others, having taken a weapon or a club, with fists clenched in their hands, they kill others. They, so that

people may know by this reason the fact of their having killed others thus, become short-fingered or short-handed or crooked-fingered or cobra-hooded-handed. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of not having killed others thus, the characteristic of the great man with long fingers arises for the Truth-finder. This here is the action's counterpart. But this very triad of characteristics is what is called the characteristic. The state of being long-lived is the benefit of the characteristic.

207. "The fear of death and murder for oneself" means here, murder reckoned as death is "death-murder," fear from death-murder is "fear of death-murder," having known that for oneself. "Abstained from killing others" means having known "just as there is fear of death for me, my life is dear, so it is for others too," he abstained from killing others. "By good conduct" means by what was well-practised. "He went to heaven" means he went to heaven.

"Having passed away and come here again" means having passed away, he came here again. "Dīghapāsaṇhiko" means one with long heels. "Like Brahmā, upright" means like Brahmā, well upright.

"Subhujo" means one with beautiful arms. "Susu" means youthful in appearance even in old age. "Well-proportioned" means endowed with good proportions. "Whose fingers are soft and tender" means his fingers are soft and tender. "Tibhi" means with three. "With the foremost characteristics of the best of men" means with the foremost characteristics of the best of men. "For long sustenance" means for sustaining for a long time, for the state of being long-lived.

"He sustains himself for long" means he sustains himself for a long time. "If he goes forth, even longer than that" means from that he sustains himself for a further long time, if he goes forth - this is the meaning. "And he sustains himself through mastery and development of supernormal power" means having attained mastery, he sustains himself through the development of supernormal power.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Seven Prominences

208. "Flavourful" means accomplished in flavour. In "solid food" and so on, solid food means flour-based sweetmeats and the like. "Soft food" means the five foods. "Food to be tasted" means things to be tasted such as ghee, butter and the like. "Food to be licked" means things to be licked such as flour-pudding and the like. "Beverages" means the eight kinds of drinks.

Here, the action is this gift of sumptuous food given throughout four incalculable periods exceeding a hundred thousand cosmic cycles. The action's counterpart is that when coarse food has entered the belly, the blood dries up and the flesh withers. Therefore, beings who are givers of coarse food, so that people may know by this reason the fact of their having given coarse food, become with little flesh, with little blood, like human ghosts, with food and drink difficult to obtain. But when sumptuous food has entered the belly, flesh and blood increase; they become full-bodied, pleasing, and handsome in appearance. Therefore, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the Truth-finder's state of being a giver of sumptuous food

for a long time, the characteristic of the great man with seven convex surfaces arises. The characteristic is the characteristic of seven convex surfaces itself. The obtaining of superior things is the benefit.

209. "Solid food and edible food, and also lickable and tasteable" means solid food and food and lickable food and tasteable food. "The highest donor of the best flavours" means the highest, a donor of the best flavours, or a donor of the highest and best flavours.

"A being and excellences" means a being and excellences. "That which illuminates that purpose" means that which illuminates solid food and edible food and so on; the meaning is conducive to the obtaining of those. "And even one going forth" means and even one who is going forth. "Attains that" means attains that. "Obtainer of the highest" means an obtainer of the highest.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with Hands and Feet

210. In the passage beginning with "by giving" and so on, a certain person is to be supported by giving alone; him he supported by giving. To those gone forth he gave the requisites of those gone forth; to laypeople he gave the requisites of laypeople.

"By endearing speech" means a certain person speaks thus: "This one gives what should be given, but with one word he smears over and removes everything; what is his giving?" Another says: "This one, although he does not give a gift, yet when speaking he anoints as if with oil. Whether he gives or does not give, his word alone is worth a thousand." Such a person does not expect a gift; he expects only endearing speech. Him he supported by endearing speech.

"By beneficent conduct" means by talk that promotes welfare. For a certain person expects neither a gift nor endearing speech. He expects only talk about his own welfare and talk about his progress. Such a person he supported saying: "This should be done by you, this should not be done by you. Such a person should be associated with, such a person should not be associated with" - thus he supported him by beneficent conduct.

"By impartiality" means by the state of sharing the same happiness and suffering. For a certain person does not expect even one among giving and so on, but expects sharing the same happiness and suffering thus: sitting on one seat, lying on one divan, eating together. Therein, one who is inferior by birth but superior in wealth is difficult to support. For it is not possible to share the same enjoyment with him, and when that is not done, he becomes angry. One who is inferior in wealth but superior by birth is also difficult to support. For he, thinking "I am of noble birth," does not wish to share the same enjoyment with one accomplished in wealth, and when that is not done, he becomes angry. But one who is inferior in both is easy to support. For he does not wish to share the same enjoyment with the other, and does not become angry when it is not done. One who is equal in both is also easy to support. Among monks, one who is immoral is difficult to support. For it is not possible to share the same enjoyment with him, and when that is not done, he becomes angry. One who is virtuous is easy to support. For one who is virtuous does not become angry even

when nothing is given or when nothing is done. He does not look with an evil mind upon another who does not share enjoyment with him. Sharing enjoyment with him is also easy to do. Therefore he supported such a person thus by impartiality.

"Well-supported by him are" means they are well-supported by him. Whether he gives or does not give, whether he acts or does not act, they remain well-supported; they do not break away. "When there is something to be given by him, then he gives. Now, methinks, there is nothing; therefore he does not give. Should we attend upon him only when he is giving? We shall not attend upon one who is not giving and not acting" - thus they think.

Here, the action is the action of supporting others beginning with giving, done for a long time. The action's counterpart is that whoever is thus unsupportive, so that people may know his unsupportive nature by this reason, he has stiff hands and feet, and has the mark of unevenly placed limbs. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the Truth-finder's supportive nature for a long time, these two characteristics arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. Having a well-supported retinue is the benefit.

211. "Kariyā" means having done. "Cariyā" means having practised. "Anavamatenā" means by unslighted. "Anapamodenā" is also a reading; the meaning is not with little delight, not dejected, not conceited.

"Caviyā" means having passed away. "Atirucira suvaggu dassaneyyaṃ" means exceedingly beautiful and very pleasing, lovely and thoroughly elegant, and fair to behold, fitting to be seen. "Susu kumāro" means thoroughly tender.

"Parijanassavo" means the attendants are loyal and obedient. "Vidheyyo" means one who can be directed according to preference in matters to be done and not to be done. "Mahimaṃ" means this greatness. "Piyavadū hitasukhataṃ jigīsamāno" means having become one who speaks pleasantly, seeking welfare and happiness.

"Vacanapaṭikarassābhīppasannā" means those devoted to his words are full of confidence. "Dhammānudhammaṃ" means the Teaching and conformity with the Teaching.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with High-Arched Feet

212. "Connected with benefit" means based upon the welfare of this world and the world beyond. "Connected with the Teaching" means based upon the ten wholesome courses of action. "He instructed many people" means he spoke a talk of instruction to many people. "Of beings" means of living beings. "Foremost" and so on are all mutual synonyms. Here, the action is speech connected with benefit, leading upwards, spoken for a long time. The action's counterpart is that whoever does not speak such lofty speech, so that people may know his non-speaking of lofty speech by this reason, he has ankles low down and hairs with downward-pointing tips. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of the Truth-finder's having spoken such lofty speech for a long time, the characteristic of high-raised ankles and the characteristic of hairs with upward-pointing tips arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. The state of being highest is the benefit.

213. "Speaking" means uttering. "He instructed many people" means he shows the welfare of many people. "Teaching-sacrifice" means the sacrifice of the gift of the Teaching.

"Like a hare with hair standing upward" means that one has hair with tips turned upwards. "The ankle-joints" means the ankles were. "Well-formed" means properly established. "Heaped with flesh and blood" means heaped with flesh and with blood. "Covered with skin" means enveloped and concealed by skin. "Goes" means proceeds. "Of superior conduct" means one who dwells in a superior manner, one who dwells in the foremost manner.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Antelope-Like Legs

214. In "a craft or" and so on, craft is of two kinds -inferior craft and superior craft. Inferior craft is the craft of basket-making, the craft of pottery, the craft of weaving, and the craft of barbering. Superior craft is writing, seal-stamping, and arithmetic. "True knowledge" means of many kinds such as snake-charming and so on. "Conduct" means the five precepts, the ten precepts, and the morality of Pātimokkha restraint. "Work" means the wisdom of knowing that one is the owner of one's actions. "Would be wearied" means would become weary. The duty of a pupil is suffering; he thought "May that not last long for them."

"Worthy of a king" means suitable for a king, such as elephants, horses and so on; those very things, because of being constituents of the king's army, are called "constituents of a king." "Enjoyments of a king" means the king's articles for use and consumption, and also the seven treasures. "Befitting a king" means befitting the king. This is the collective term for all of those very things. "Worthy of an ascetic" means suitable for ascetics, such as robes and so on. "Constituents of an ascetic" means the four assemblies that form the portions of ascetics. "Enjoyments of an ascetic" means the requisites for use by ascetics. "Befitting an ascetic" is a designation for those very same things.

Here, however, the action is the teaching of crafts and so on carefully for a long time. The action's counterpart is that whoever, not teaching the craft carefully in this way, wearies his pupils with squatting, running errands on foot, and so on, for him it is as if the flesh of his calves has been scraped off and made to fall. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of the Truth-finder's having taught carefully, the characteristic of antelope legs, gradually rising and well-rounded, arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. The obtaining of what is befitting is the benefit.

215. "Which is not for the harm of anyone" means which craft is not for the destruction of anyone. "Is wearied" means will become weary. "Covered with fine skin" means enveloped by fine skin. But does a different characteristic arise by a different action? It does not arise. But whatever arises, that is a feature, therefore it is stated here.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Subtle Skin

216. "An ascetic or" means an ascetic in the meaning of having calmed evil. "A brahmin or" means a brahmin in the meaning of having warded off evil.

In "of great wisdom" and so on, the meaning is that he is endowed with great wisdom and so on. Here is the diversity of great wisdom and so on.

Therein, what is great wisdom? One comprehends the great aggregate of morality - this is great wisdom; one comprehends the great aggregate of concentration, the aggregate of wisdom, the aggregate of liberation, the aggregate of knowledge and vision of liberation - this is great wisdom. One comprehends the great possible and impossible, the great dwelling attainments, the great noble truths, the great establishments of mindfulness, the right strivings, the bases for spiritual power, the great faculties, the powers, the great factors of enlightenment, the great noble paths, the great fruits of asceticism, the great direct knowledges, the great ultimate reality, Nibbāna - this is great wisdom.

What is broad wisdom? Knowledge proceeds in the various different aggregates - this is broad wisdom. In the various different elements, in the various different sense bases, in the various different dependent originations, in the various different emptinesses and non-obtainings, in the various different meanings, phenomena, languages, and discernments. In the various different aggregates of morality, in the various different aggregates of concentration, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and vision of liberation, in the various different possible and impossible, in the various different dwelling attainments, in the various different noble truths, in the various different establishments of mindfulness, right strivings, bases for spiritual power, faculties, powers, factors of enlightenment, in the various different noble paths, fruits of asceticism, direct knowledges, having surpassed phenomena common to worldlings, knowledge proceeds in Nibbāna, the ultimate reality - this is broad wisdom.

What is joyful wisdom? Here a certain one, abundant in mirth, abundant in inspiration, abundant in contentment, abundant in gladness, fulfils morality, fulfils restraint of the faculties, moderation in eating, pursuit of wakefulness, the aggregate of morality, the aggregate of concentration, the aggregate of wisdom, the aggregate of liberation, the aggregate of knowledge and vision of liberation - this is joyful wisdom. Abundant in mirth, etc. abundant in gladness, penetrates the possible and impossible - this is joyful wisdom. Abundant in mirth, fulfils the dwelling attainments - this is joyful wisdom. Abundant in mirth, penetrates the noble truths - this is joyful wisdom. Develops the establishments of mindfulness, the right strivings, the bases for spiritual power, the faculties, the powers, the factors of enlightenment, the noble path - this is joyful wisdom. Abundant in mirth, realises the fruits of asceticism - this is joyful wisdom. Penetrates the direct knowledges - this is joyful wisdom. Abundant in mirth, abundant in inspiration, contentment, and gladness, realises Nibbāna, the ultimate reality - this is joyful wisdom.

What is swift wisdom? Whatever materiality, past, future, or present, whether far or near, all that materiality quickly hastens as impermanent - this is swift wisdom. Quickly hastens as suffering, quickly hastens as non-self - this is swift wisdom. Whatever feeling... etc. whatever consciousness, past, future, or present, all that consciousness quickly hastens as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self - this is swift wisdom. Eye... etc. ageing and death, past, future, or present, quickly hastens as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self - this is swift wisdom. Materiality, past, future, or present, is impermanent in the meaning of destruction, suffering in the meaning of

fear, non-self in the meaning of being coreless - having weighed, having determined, having made clear, having made manifest, quickly hastens to Nibbāna, the cessation of materiality - this is swift wisdom. Feeling, perception, activities, consciousness, eye, etc. ageing and death, past, future, or present, is impermanent in the meaning of destruction, etc. having made manifest, quickly hastens to Nibbāna, the cessation of ageing and death - this is swift wisdom. Materiality, past, future, or present. The eye... etc. ageing and death is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, having the nature of falling, subject to fading away, having the nature of cessation - having weighed, having determined, having made clear, having made manifest, quickly hastens to Nibbāna, the cessation of ageing and death - this is swift wisdom.

What is sharp wisdom? One quickly cuts off mental defilements - this is sharp wisdom. One does not accept an arisen sensual thought, an arisen thought of anger, an arisen thought of violence, whatever evil unwholesome mental states have arisen - arisen lust, hate, delusion, wrath, hostility, contempt, insolence, envy, stinginess, deceit, fraudulence, obstinacy, rivalry, conceit, arrogance, vanity, negligence, all mental defilements, all misconducts, all volitional activities, all actions leading to existence - one does not accept them, abandons them, dispels them, puts an end to them, brings them to obliteration - this is sharp wisdom. In one sitting, the four noble paths, the four fruits of asceticism, the four analytical knowledges, and the six higher knowledges are attained, realised, touched by wisdom - this is sharp wisdom.

What is penetrative wisdom? Here a certain one is full of agitation regarding all activities, full of fright, full of dissatisfaction, full of discontent, full of non-delight, turned outward, one does not delight in all activities; one pierces and breaks through the mass of greed never before pierced, never before broken through - this is penetrative wisdom. The mass of hate never before pierced, never before broken through, the mass of delusion, wrath, hostility, etc. one pierces and breaks through all actions leading to existence - this is penetrative wisdom.

217. "Having attended upon one gone forth" means having approached a wise person gone forth and attended upon him. "With the meaning within" means just as some fault-finders, with a mind of censure, having made a fault the inner focus, attend to it - not attending in that way, but having made the meaning the inner focus, he heeded and reflected upon the talk connected with meaning.

"Directed towards the attainment" means by that which has gone for the purpose of attainment. "Skilled in signs of birth" means clever in birth and in signs. "Having understood, will see" means having known, he will see.

"And in instructions on meaning and in discernments" means those discernments in the instructions on meaning, the knowledges that discern benefit and harm - in those, this is the meaning.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Golden Colour

218. "Without wrath" means not because wrath has been abandoned by the path of non-returning, but rather because of being one who has mastery over non-wrath thus: "Even if wrath should arise in me, I would quickly dispel it." "Did not become attached" means like a crooked thorn piercing vital spots here and there, he did not

stick. Among "did not become angry, was not repelled" and so on, irritation is what arises first. Stronger than that is anger. Stronger than that is obstinacy. Not doing all of that, he did not become angry, was not repelled, did not become obstinate. "Displeasure" means mental distress. "Did not manifest" means he did not make it obvious either by bodily alteration or by verbal alteration.

Here, the action is the state of being without wrath for a long time and also the giving of subtle coverings and so on. The action's counterpart is that for one prone to wrath, the complexion is turbid, the face is unpleasant to look at, and there is no adornment resembling cloth coverings. Therefore, whoever is prone to wrath and also a non-giver of cloth coverings, so that people may know his state of being prone to wrath and so on by this reason, he is ugly and ill-formed. But the face of one without wrath shines, and the complexion becomes bright. For beings become pleasing by four reasons: by the giving of material gifts, or by the giving of cloth, or by sweeping, or by the state of being without wrath. All four of these reasons were indeed done by the Truth-finder for a long time. Therefore, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of these having been done by him, the characteristic of the great man of golden colour arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. The obtaining of subtle coverings and so on is the benefit.

219. "Abhivissajī" means he gave forth. "Like a god raining upon the great earth" - "sura" is called a god; like a god raining upon the great earth.

"Like Indra, the best of the gods" means like Indra, the most excellent among the gods.

"Desiring non-going-forth" means wishing for non-going-forth, the state of a householder. "Mahatimahim" means the great earth.

"Of coverings, garments, finest robes and cloaks" means of coverings, and of garments, and of the finest cloaks. "Panāso" means destruction.

Commentary on the Characteristic of the Sheath-Enclosed Private Parts

220. "He brought together a mother with her son" - this action is possible to be done by one established in kingship. Therefore the Bodhisatta too, while exercising kingship, appointed people at crossroads and other places within the city, at the four city gates, and outside the city in the four directions, saying "Do this work." They, having seen a mother lamenting "Where is my son?" and searching, not seeing her son, saying "Come, mother, you will see your son," taking her, going, having bathed her, having fed her, having searched for her son, show him to her. This same method applies everywhere.

Here, the action is the bringing together of relatives for a long time. The action's counterpart is that relatives, being united, conceal each other's faults. Although indeed they make disputes at the time of disputes, yet when a fault has arisen in one of them, they do not wish to make it known to others. When it is said "This person has such and such a fault," all rise up saying "By whom was it seen? By whom was it heard? Among our relatives there is no such doer." And by the Truth-finder, while performing that good treatment towards kinsmen, this action of concealing faults has been done for a long time. Then, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of such an action having been done, the characteristic of the male

organ enclosed in a sheath arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. Having many sons is the benefit.

221. "Sheathed private parts" means the private parts that should be concealed by a cloth.

"Tormenters of enemies" means the tormenting of enemies. "Generating joy for the householder" means the generating of joy for one who is a householder.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with Proportionate Form

222. "Knows equally" means he knows equally by comparing with this and that, thus: "This one is equal to Tārukkha, this one is equal to Pokkharasāti." "Knows by himself" means he knows by himself. "Knows the person" means he knows the person thus: "This one is considered the best." "Knows the distinction of persons" means without treating green peas as equal to beans, he knows the distinction of one who is distinguished in virtues. "This one deserves this" means this person deserves this gift and honour. "He was one who made distinctions among persons" means having known the distinction of persons, he was a doer. Whoever deserves whatever, to that very one he gave that very thing. For whoever gives half to one who deserves a coin, he removes the other's half. Whoever gives two coins, he removes his own coin. Therefore, without doing either of these two, whoever deserves whatever, to that one he gave that very thing. In the passage beginning with "the treasure of faith" and so on, the state of being treasure of faith and so on should be understood in the sense of attaining success.

Here, the action is the action of equally supporting others, done for a long time having known the distinction of persons. The action's counterpart is so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the action of that one - these two characteristics arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. The achievement of wealth is the benefit.

223. "Tuliyā" means having weighed. "Paṭivicayā" means having investigated. "Mahājanasaṅgāhakan" means the welfare of the public. "Samekkhamāno" means looking at evenly. "Exceedingly skilled men" means exceedingly skilled, of subtle wisdom, men who are experts in interpreting marks. "Many various things befitting householders" means he obtains many various things suitable for householders. "The young, tender boy" - they declared "this young boy will obtain" - "of the king" means of the monarch.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with a Lion-Like Front Body

224. "Wishing for freedom from bondage" means wishing for security from bondage. "In wisdom" means in the wisdom of the ownership of one's actions. Here, the action is the desire for the welfare of the public. The action's counterpart is so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the state of having expected only growth through the desire for the welfare of the public - these three characteristics arise, complete on all sides and not fallen away. The characteristic is this very triad of characteristics. Non-decline in wealth and so on and in faith and so on is the benefit.

225. "By faith" means by faith of conviction and faith of confidence. "By morality" means by the five precepts and the ten precepts. "By learning" means by hearing of the Scriptures. "By higher intelligence" means by higher intelligence regarding these; the meaning is that he thought thus: "How might they grow by these?" "By righteousness" means by mundane righteousness. "By many good qualities" means by many other excellent qualities as well. "With qualities not subject to decline" means with qualities not fallen away.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Supreme Taste Sensitivity

226. "Conveying evenly" means just as even a sesame seed's amount placed on the tip of the tongue pervades everywhere, so they convey evenly. Here, the action is the action of non-harassing. The action's counterpart is that for one who has received blows with the hand and so on, here and there blood remains, becoming knot after knot, inside it takes on pus, inside it breaks open; thus he becomes one of many illnesses. But the Truth-finder performed this health-producing action for a long time. So that the world with its gods may know by this reason, the health-producing characteristic of having supreme taste-buds arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. Freedom from illness is the benefit.

227. "With death-dealing murder" means with death-dealing murder by way of commanding thus: "Kill this one, slay this one." "With imprisonment" means by confinement in a prison.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with Deep Blue Eyes

228. "Nor with eyes protruding" means he did not look with eyes thrust out like a crab, through the power of anger. "Nor did he look askance" means he did not look even with the corner of a crooked eye. "Nor did he look with discrimination" means: looking with discrimination is when one, having become angry, whenever the other looks at him, then closes his eyes and does not look, but again looks angrily at him as he goes away; he was not of such a kind. "Vineyyapekkhitā" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "Upright, thus with an open upright mind" means having an upright mind, he looked uprightly; and just as he looked uprightly, so he looked openly, extensively, broadly. "Pleasant to behold" means to be seen by those who hold him dear.

Here, the action is the action of looking upon the public with an amiable eye for a long time. The action's counterpart is that one who looks angrily becomes like a one-eyed person, like a crow-eyed one; and one with crooked eyes and turbid eyes indeed. But for one with a gladdened mind who looks, a five-coloured lustre of the eyes appears. And the Truth-finder looked thus. Then, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason his state of having looked with an amiable eye for a long time, these two characteristics of a great man that produce the excellence of the eyes arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. Being pleasant to behold is the benefit. "Practitioners" means those skilled in the science of characteristics.

Commentary on the Characteristic of the Turbaned Head

230. "Was a leader of many people" means he was a forerunner of many people, a chief of the group. Others followed the example of what they had seen of him. Here, the action is the leadership. The action's counterpart is that whoever, having been a forerunner, performs wholesome actions such as giving and so on, he, unabashed, having raised his head, goes about with his head filled with joy and gladness, and he is a great man. And the Truth-finder did so. Then, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason this action of leadership, the characteristic of a head like a turban arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. The following of the multitude is the benefit.

231. "He will be for many people" means it will be for many people. "Attendants" means stewards; the meaning is that there will be many stewards for him. "They bring offerings then" means even in his young age they then thus declare. "Service" means the state of being a steward. "Masterful" means one who has practised mastery.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with One Hair per Pore

232. "Follows" means conforms to the disposition. Here, the action is speaking the truth for a long time. The action's counterpart is: so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of having spoken with uncontradictory talk and pure talk for a long time, the characteristic of single hairs and the characteristic of the tuft of hair arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. The conforming in accordance with the disposition of the public is the benefit. "One whose limbs are covered with single hairs" means one whose body is covered with single hairs.

Commentary on the Characteristics Beginning with Forty Teeth

234. "One whose assembly cannot be divided" means one whose assembly cannot be split. Here, the action is the speaking without divisive speech for a long time. The action's counterpart is that for one of divisive speech, because of breaking the state of unity, teeth are both incomplete and with gaps. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the Truth-finder's freedom from divisive speech for a long time, this pair of characteristics arises. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. Having an assembly that cannot be divided is the benefit. "Four tens" means four tens is forty.

Commentary on the Characteristic of the Broad Tongue and So On

236. "He is one whose words are to be heeded" means he is one whose words are to be accepted. Here, the action is the abstinence from harsh speech for a long time. The action's counterpart is that those who are speakers of harsh speech, so that people may know the fact of their having spoken harsh speech by this reason through turning their tongue again and again, they become either bound-tongued, or hidden-tongued, or forked-tongued, or stammerers. But those who do not speak harsh speech by turning their tongue again and again, they do not become bound-tongued, hidden-tongued, or forked-tongued. Their tongue is soft and of the colour of a red woollen blanket. Therefore, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of the Truth-finder's not having spoken harsh speech by turning the tongue for a long time, the characteristic of a large tongue arises. And the sound of those who speak harsh speech is broken. So that people may know the fact of their having

spoken harsh speech by making a breaking of the sound, they become either cut-voiced, or broken-voiced, or crow-voiced. But those who do not speak harsh speech that causes breaking of the voice, their sound is sweet and affectionate. Therefore, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of the Truth-finder's not having spoken harsh speech that causes breaking of the voice for a long time, the characteristic of a voice like Brahmā arises. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. Having words that are to be heeded is the benefit.

237. "Troublesome" means causing affliction because of being connected with reviling. "Crushing many people" means the crushing of many people. In "he did not speak harsh words that were severe," here the prefix "a" should be connected with the word "spoke" that follows. "Severe" means powerful, excessively harsh. "He did not speak severe words" - this is the meaning here. "Well-connected" means well joined with affection. "Kindly" means soft. "Speech" means speeches. "Pleasant to the ear" means pleasant to the ears. "Pleasant to the ear" is also a reading; the meaning is he utters in such a way that there is pleasure to the ears. "Experienced" means he experienced. "The state of having a Brahma-voice" means the state of having a Brahma-voice. "Much to many" means much to many people. "Much to many" is also a reading; the meaning is much to many people.

Commentary on the Characteristic of the Lion Jaw

238. "He is not to be violated" means he is unable to be violated or dislodged either in virtue or in position. Here, the action is the not speaking of idle chatter. The action's counterpart is that those who speak it, so that people may know the fact of their having spoken idle chatter by this reason through moving their jaw again and again, they become either sunken-jawed, or crooked-jawed, or protruding-jawed. But the Truth-finder did not speak thus. Therefore, so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of his not having spoken idle chatter by moving the jaw for a long time, the characteristic of a lion-jaw arises. The characteristic is this very characteristic. The state of being not to be violated is the benefit.

239. "Whose path of speech was not scattered" means his path of speech was like that of former Bodhisattas whose speech was not scattered - thus "whose path of speech was not scattered." "He obtained the highest jaw-power of the best among those that go by twos" means: one that goes by twos is "dvidugama"; "by twos and twos" means by fours; the meaning is that he obtained the jaw-power of the lion, the most excellent among quadrupeds. "Ruler of men" means the lord of humans. "Of such a nature" means of a true intrinsic nature.

Commentary on the Characteristic of Even Teeth and So On

240. "Pure retinue" means one with a pure retinue. Here, the action is right livelihood. The action's counterpart is that whoever earns his living by unrighteous and defiled livelihood, his teeth are uneven and his canine teeth are stained. But so that the world with its gods may know by this reason the fact of the Truth-finder having earned his living by righteous and pure livelihood, the characteristic of even teeth and the characteristic of very white canine teeth arise. The characteristic is this very pair of characteristics. Having a pure retinue is the benefit.

241. "Avassajī" means he abandoned. "Tidivapuravarasamo" means equal to Sakka, the lord of the celestial city. "Lapanaja" means born from the mouth; the meaning is teeth. "Dijasamasukkasucisobhanadanto" means because of being born twice, they are called "twice-born"; white, pure, and beautiful teeth he would have - thus "one with teeth like a twice-born, even, white, pure, and beautiful." "Na ca janapadatudana" means whatever province of his is bounded by the world-circle, there is no pricking by another, no oppression or affliction of that province. "Hitamapi ca bahujana sukhañca carantī" means many people, having become sharers of the same happiness and suffering, practise what is beneficial and what is for the happiness of one another in that province. "Vipāpo" means one from whom evil has disappeared. "Vigatadarathakilamatho" means one from whom bodily disturbance and weariness have disappeared. "Malakhilakalikilese panudehī" means dispel the stains beginning with lust, the barrenness beginning with lust, the misfortune of hate, and all defilements. The remainder is of manifest meaning everywhere.

In the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, the Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya,

the explanation of the Discourse on the Marks of a Great Man is finished.



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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