

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses -
Commentaries (3. Saṃyutta Nikāya - Aṭṭhakathā)

5. Commentary on the Great Book (5. Mahāvagga-aṭṭhakathā)

7. Connected Discourses on the Bases for Spiritual Power
(7. Iddhipādasamuttam)



PaliVerse

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses - Commentaries

5. Commentary on the Great Book

7. Connected Discourses on the Bases for Spiritual Power

1. The Chapter on Cāpāla

1. Commentary on the Apāra Sutta

813. In the first discourse of the Iddhipāda Saṃyutta, concentration that has occurred in dependence on desire is concentration due to desire. Activities that are striving are volitional activities of striving. "Possessed of" means endowed with those phenomena. The basis of spiritual power, or the basis that has become spiritual power - this is the basis for spiritual power. The same method applies in the remaining ones too. This is the summary here; the detail, however, has come in the Analysis of the Bases for Spiritual Power. But its meaning has been explained in the Visuddhimagga. Likewise, in the Magga, Bojjhaṅga, and Satipaṭṭhāna Saṃyuttas and here, there is but one single chapter.

5. Commentary on the Iddhipadesa Sutta

817. In the fifth, "a region of supernormal power" means the three paths and three fruitions.

6. Commentary on the Samatta Sutta

818. In the sixth, "complete supernormal power" means the fruition of arahantship itself. But from the beginning, in all nine discourses, the bases for spiritual power are spoken of as serving as the basis for the end of the round of rebirths.

10. Commentary on the Cetiya Sutta

822. In the tenth, "sitting cloth" means a piece of leather is intended. "Udena shrine" means the monastery built at the shrine site of the demon Udena is what is meant. The same method applies for Gotamaka and so on too. "Developed" means cultivated. "Cultivated" means done again and again. "Made a vehicle" means made like a yoked vehicle. "Made a foundation" means made like a foundation in the meaning of a support. "Established" means determined. "Accumulated" means heaped up on all sides, well cultivated. "Well undertaken" means thoroughly undertaken.

Having thus spoken in an unspecified manner, then specifying and showing, he said beginning with "of the Truth-finder, indeed" and so on. Here, "a cosmic cycle" means a duration of life; whatever the life-span of human beings is at any given time, he could remain fulfilling that completely. "Or the remainder of a cosmic cycle" means exceeding the stated hundred years by "a little more." But the Elder Mahāsīva said

"For Buddhas there is no thundering in an impossibility. For just as he suppressed the death-bordering feeling that arose at the village of Veḷuva for ten months, so, by attaining that attainment again and again, suppressing it for ten months each time, he could remain for this very fortunate cosmic cycle."

But why did he not remain? The clung-to body is indeed overcome by broken teeth and so on; Buddhas, without reaching the state of broken teeth and so on, attain final Nibbāna in the fifth portion of the life-span, at a time when they are still dear and agreeable to many people. And when the great disciples who had awakened following the Buddha have attained final Nibbāna, he would have to remain like a single stump, or surrounded by young novices; thereupon - He would incur the state of being despised, thinking "Alas, the assembly of the Buddhas!" Therefore he did not remain. Even though this was said, that is not accepted; "duration of life" alone is what is defined in the commentary.

In "as his mind was possessed by Māra" (yathā taṃ mārena pariyuṭṭhitacitto), here "taṃ" is merely a particle. Just as any other worldling whose mind was possessed by Māra, whose mind was overwhelmed, would not be able to penetrate it, even so he was not able to penetrate it - this is the meaning. For Māra pervades the mind of one for whom all twelve illusions are entirely not abandoned. And four illusions were not abandoned in the Elder; therefore Māra pervaded his mind. But what does he do when effecting the prepossession of the mind? He shows a frightful visual object or makes heard a sound as object; thereupon beings, having seen or heard that, giving up mindfulness, become open-mouthed; having inserted his hand through their mouths, he crushes their hearts; they, having become unconscious, remain so. But would he be able to insert his hand through the Elder's mouth? However, he shows a frightful object; having seen that, the Elder did not penetrate the sign and indication. The Blessed One, already knowing, for what purpose did he address him up to the third time? For the purpose of reducing sorrow by attributing fault, saying "this is your wrong-doing, this is your failure," when later he would request "Let the Blessed One remain, venerable sir."

"Māra the Evil One" - here, one who kills by urging beings towards harm, thus he is "Māra." "The Evil One" is a synonym for that very one. For he is called "the Evil One" because of being endowed with evil qualities. The Dark One, the Ender, Namuci, the Kinsman of the Heedless - these too are names of that very one. "For this speech was spoken" - for this one, having come to the seat of enlightenment itself in the eighth week after the Blessed One's attainment of highest enlightenment - having said "Blessed One, the purpose for which the perfections were fulfilled by you, that purpose has been reached by you, the knowledge of omniscience has been penetrated, what is there for you in wandering about the world?" just as today, in the very same way - requested "Let the Blessed One now attain final Nibbāna, venerable sir, let the Fortunate One attain final Nibbāna." And the Blessed One, having said "I will not yet" and so on, rejected it. With reference to that, he said beginning with "For this speech was spoken, venerable sir."

Therein, "learned" means learned by means of the path. Likewise "disciplined." Likewise "confident." "Very learned" means they are very learned because much has been learnt by them by means of the three Canons. "Bearing that very Teaching" means bearers of the Teaching. Or alternatively, very learned in the Scriptures and

very learned in penetration; "bearers of the Teaching" because of bearing the teachings of the Scriptures and penetration themselves - thus the meaning here should be understood. "Practicing in accordance with the Teaching" means practicing the teaching of insight, which is in conformity with the noble Teaching. "Practicing properly" means practicing a befitting practice. "Living in conformity with the Teaching" means habitually conducting oneself in conformity with the Teaching. "Their own teacher's doctrine" means the doctrine of one's own teacher. "Will tell" and so on - all are synonyms of one another. "With reason" means with a statement that has grounds and has cause. "With the wondrous effect of liberation" means until they will expound the Teaching having made it leading to liberation.

"Holy life" means the entire holy life of the Dispensation included in the threefold training. "Successful" means prosperous by means of the enjoyment of meditative absorption. "Prosperous" means having reached growth, like a tree fully in fruit and blossom, by means of the achievement of direct knowledge. "Widespread" means extended, by means of being established in each and every region. "Known to many" means known by many, penetrated by means of the full realisation of the multitude. "Become widespread" means having attained a state of broadness in every respect. How? "Well proclaimed among gods and humans" means the meaning is that it is well proclaimed by all whatever intelligent gods and humans there are.

"Be at ease" means free from attachment. For you, Evil One, from the eighth week onwards wandered about crying out "Let the Blessed One now attain final Nibbāna, venerable sir, let the Fortunate One attain final Nibbāna." He says: from today onwards, be without endeavour; do not make effort for the purpose of my final Nibbāna.

"Mindful and fully aware, relinquished the life principle" means having well established mindfulness, having discerned with knowledge, he gave up, abandoned the life principle. Therein, the Blessed One did not relinquish the life principle like a clod of earth with the hand; but rather, having attained the fruition attainment for just three months, he produced the thought "Beyond that I shall not attain." With reference to that it was said "relinquished." "Ussajī" is also a reading. "Great earthquake" means a great trembling of the earth. At that time, it is said, the ten-thousand-fold world system trembled. "Terrifying" means fear-producing. "And the divine drums resounded" means the divine drums resounded, the rain god thundered with dry thunder, untimely lightning flashes went forth, momentary rain fell - thus it has been said.

"Uttered an inspired utterance" - why did he utter it? Someone might say - "The Blessed One, having been followed from behind again and again - 'Attain final nibbāna, venerable sir, attain final nibbāna, venerable sir' - troubled by fear, gave up the life principle." May there be no occasion for that. For one who is frightened there is no such thing as an inspired utterance - thus he uttered an inspired utterance released by the force of joy.

Therein, "measurable" means weighed and defined because of being evident to all, even dogs and jackals and so on. What is that? Sensual-sphere action. Not measurable, or there is no other mundane action similar to the measurable - thus "immeasurable." What is that? Exalted action. Or alternatively, sensual-sphere and

fine-material-sphere is measurable, immaterial-sphere is immeasurable. That of little result is measurable, that of much result is immeasurable. "Origination" means being the cause of origination, making a mass, making a heap - this is the meaning. "Activity of becoming" means the activity of renewed existence. "Relinquished" means gave up. "Sage" means the Buddha-sage. "Delighting internally" means delighting internally by oneself. "Concentrated" means concentrated by means of access and absorption concentration. "Broke through like armour" means he broke through like armour. "Self-existence" means the mental defilement arisen in oneself. This is what is meant - He relinquished the mundane action reckoned as measurable and immeasurable, which had obtained the name "origination" in the sense of having result, and "activity of becoming" in the sense of producing becoming; and like a great warrior at the head of the battlefield breaks through armour, having been delighting internally and concentrated, he broke through the self-arisen mental defilement.

Or alternatively, "measurable" means weighing, determining. "And the immeasurable origination" means Nibbāna and existence. "Activity of becoming" means action leading to existence. "The sage relinquished" means the Buddha-sage, weighing by the method beginning with "the five aggregates are impermanent, the cessation of the five aggregates is Nibbāna, which is permanent," having seen the danger in existence and the benefit in Nibbāna, relinquished that activity of becoming which is the root of the aggregates, by the noble path that brings about the elimination of action, as stated thus "it leads to the elimination of action." How? Delighting internally, concentrated, he broke through self-existence like armour. For he, delighting internally by means of insight, concentrated by means of serenity - thus, beginning from the preliminary stage, by the power of serenity and insight, he broke through the entire mass of mental defilements that had stood enveloping individuality like armour, and which had obtained the name "self-existence" because of originating in oneself. And through the absence of mental defilements, action, being incapable of producing rebirth-linking, is called relinquished - thus through the abandoning of mental defilements he abandoned action. For one whose mental defilements have been abandoned there is no fear. Therefore, being fearless, he relinquished the life principle. And it should be understood that he uttered the inspired utterance for the purpose of making known his fearless state.

The Cāpāla Chapter is the first.

2. The Chapter on the Shaking of the Mansion

1-2. Commentary on the Pubba Sutta and so on

823-824. In the first discourse of the Second Chapter, the terms beginning with "not too slack" will become clear further on. In this discourse, the bases for spiritual power serving as the foundation for the six direct knowledges are spoken of, and likewise in the second.

3. Commentary on the Chandasamādhī Sutta

825. In the third, "desire" means the desire to act. "In dependence on" means having made it the support, the meaning is having made it predominant. "Volitional activities of striving" means activities that are striving; this is a designation for the energy of

right striving that accomplishes the four functions. Thus in "this desire" and so on, desire is endowed with concentration due to desire and with volitional activities of striving, concentration due to desire is endowed with desire and with volitional activities of striving, and the volitional activities of striving too are endowed with desire and with concentration due to desire. Therefore, combining all those mental states together, it was said "this is called, monks, 'the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving.'" But in the Analysis of the Bases for Spiritual Power, by the method beginning with "whatever aggregate of feeling there is of one so constituted," the remaining immaterial mental states endowed with these mental states are said to be the bases for spiritual power.

Further, these three mental states are both supernormal powers and bases for spiritual power. How? For when one develops desire, desire is called supernormal power, and concentration and volitional activities of striving are called the basis for the supernormal power of desire. For one developing concentration, concentration is called supernormal power, and desire and volitional activities of striving are called the basis for the supernormal power of concentration. For one developing the volitional activities of striving, the volitional activities of striving are called supernormal power, and concentration due to desire is called the basis for the supernormal power of the volitional activities of striving; for when one among associated mental states succeeds, the rest also succeed.

Further, the state of being bases for spiritual power of these should be understood also by way of the preliminary stage of those various mental states. For the first meditative absorption is called supernormal power, and desire and so on associated with the preliminary work of the preliminary stage of the first meditative absorption are called the basis for spiritual power. By this method, the method should be applied up to the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, beginning with the various kinds of supernormal power up to the direct knowledge of the divine eye, and beginning with the path of stream-entry up to the path of arahantship. In the remaining bases for spiritual power too, the same method applies.

Some, however, say "Desire that is not produced is the basis for spiritual power." Here, for the purpose of crushing their doctrine, the section called the Uttaracūḷa in the higher teaching has come -

"Four bases for spiritual power - the basis for spiritual power of desire, the basis for spiritual power of energy, the basis for spiritual power of developed mind, the basis for spiritual power of investigation. Therein, what is the basis for spiritual power of desire? Here, a monk, at whatever time he develops supramundane meditative absorption, leading to liberation, leading to non-accumulation, for the abandoning of wrong views, for the attainment of the first plane, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, etc. enters and dwells in the first meditative absorption, which is of difficult practice and sluggish direct knowledge; whatever at that time is desire, desirousness, wish to do, wholesome desire for mental states - this is called the basis for spiritual power of desire. The remaining mental states are associated with the basis for spiritual power of desire."

These, however, have come by way of the supramundane only.

Therein, the Elder Raṭṭhapāla, having made desire his responsibility, produced the

supramundane mental state. The Elder Soṇa, having made energy his responsibility; the Elder Sambhūta, having made mind his responsibility; the Venerable Mogharāja, having made investigation his responsibility. Therein, just as when four sons of ministers, having aspired to a position of rank, were dwelling in dependence on the king, one, with desire arisen for attendance, having known the king's disposition and preference, attending by day and by night, having pleased the king, attained a position of rank. Thus one who produces the supramundane mental state by the responsibility of desire should be understood.

One, however - "I am not able to attend day after day; when a task has arisen, I shall succeed by effort" - sent by the king when the borderland was agitated, having crushed the enemies by effort, he attained. Just as he, so should one who produces the supramundane mental state by the responsibility of energy be understood. One, thinking "Even attendance day after day, even receiving spears and arrows on one's chest, is merely a burden; I shall win favour by the power of counsel" - because of having practised the science of statecraft, having pleased the king through the arrangement of counsel, he attained. Just as that one, so should be understood one who produces supramundane states by making mind the leading factor.

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

4. Commentary on the Moggallāna Sutta

826. In the fourth, "agitated" means having restlessness as one's nature, with a mind that is struggling. For through restlessness the mind struggles regarding a single object, like a flag struck by the wind on a flagpole. "Arrogant" means with risen reeds; what is meant is with arisen hollow conceit. "Fickle" means endowed with fickleness such as adorning bowl and robes and so on. "Garrulous" means harsh of mouth; what is meant is of harsh speech. "Of loose speech" means of unrestrained speech, prattlers of useless talk even for the whole day. "Unmindful" means those whose mindfulness is lost. "Not fully aware" means devoid of wisdom. "Unconcentrated" means devoid of access and absorption concentration. "With wandering minds" means with deranged minds, through restlessness which has gained opportunity through the absence of concentration. "With uncontrolled faculties" means with unrestrained faculties. "A feat of supernormal power" means having attained the water kasiṇa and having emerged, having determined the portion of earth on which the mansion was established as "water," having risen up into the sky to the mansion standing on the surface of the water, he struck it with his big toe. "With deep foundations" means with a deep pit; the meaning is having entered into a deep portion of ground. "Well planted" means well dug in, having been pounded and well placed. Here the supernormal power that serves as the basis for direct knowledge is spoken of.

5. Commentary on the Uṇṇābha Brahmin Discourse

827. In the fifth, "for the purpose of abandoning desire" means for the purpose of abandoning the desire of craving. Here too, the supernormal power that is the basis for the end of the round of rebirths is spoken of.

9. Commentary on the Discourse on the Teaching of Supernormal Power and Others

831. In the ninth, "whatever path, monks" means the fourth meditative absorption which is the foundation for direct knowledge is intended.

10. Commentary on the Discourse on Analysis

832. In the tenth, "accompanied by idleness" - here a monk, having aroused desire, sits down attending to the meditation subject. Then the sluggish mode enters his mind; he, having known "the sluggish mode has entered me," having frightened the mind with fear of the realms of misery, again having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject. Then again the sluggish mode enters. He, again having frightened the mind with fear of the realms of misery, having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject - thus, because his desire is covered with idleness, it is called desire accompanied by idleness. "Associated with idleness" is a synonym for that very thing.

"Accompanied by restlessness" - here a monk, having aroused desire, sits down attending to the meditation subject. Then his mind falls into restlessness. He, having adverted to the virtues of the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, having gladdened and pleased the mind, having made it workable, again having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject. Then again his mind falls into restlessness. He, again having adverted to the virtues of the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, having gladdened and pleased the mind, having made it workable, having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject - thus, because his desire is covered with restlessness, it is called desire accompanied by restlessness.

"Accompanied by sloth and torpor" - here a monk, having aroused desire, sits down attending to the meditation subject. Then sloth and torpor arises in him. He, having known "sloth and torpor has arisen in me," having wiped his face with water, having pulled his ears, having recited a well-practised teaching, or having attended to the perception of light taken during the day, having dispelled sloth and torpor, again having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject. Then again sloth and torpor arises in him. He, again having dispelled sloth and torpor by the method already stated, having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject - thus, because his desire is covered with sloth and torpor, it is called desire accompanied by sloth and torpor.

"Scattered about" - here a monk, having aroused desire, sits down attending to the meditation subject. Then his mind becomes distracted towards objects of the types of sensual pleasure. He, having known "my mind is distracted externally," reflecting upon the Anamatagga, Devadūta, Celopama, Anāgatabhaya discourses and so on, having frightened the mind with the stick of the discourses, having made it workable, again having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject. Then again his mind becomes distracted. He, again having made the mind workable with the stick of the

discourses, having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject - thus, because his desire is covered with sensual thoughts, it is scattered about, spread about, concerning the five types of sensual pleasure externally.

"As before so after" - the state of before and after should be understood by way of the meditation subject and also by way of the teaching. How? Regarding the meditation subject first, the adherence to the meditation subject is called "before"; arahantship is called "afterwards." Therein, whatever monk, having focused on the root meditation subject, having prevented the falling of the mind into the four states beginning with too slack, like one who, having yoked unruly oxen, drives them along, like one who lowers a square peg, without getting stuck in even one of the four states, having contemplated activities, attains arahantship. This one too is called one who dwells as before so after. This is the state of before and after by way of the meditation subject. By way of the teaching, however, head hairs are called "before"; the brain is called "afterwards." Therein, whatever monk, having focused on the head hairs, discerning head hairs and so on by way of colour, shape, and so on, without getting stuck in the four states, brings the development up to the brain, this one too is called one who dwells as before so after. Thus the state of before and after by way of the teaching should be understood. "As after so before" - this is merely a synonym for the former.

"As below so above" - this should be understood by way of the body. Therefore he said "upwards from the soles of the feet, downwards from the top of the head." Therein, whatever monk, beginning from the soles of the feet up to the top of the head, by way of the thirty-two aspects, or standing from the topmost joints of the toes up to the skull, from the skull up to the topmost joint-bones of the toes, so far by way of the bones, brings the development to fulfilment, not getting stuck at even one of the four states. This is called one who dwells as above so below, as below so above.

"By whatever characteristics" means by whatever portions. "By whatever signs" means by whatever shapes. "By whatever marks" means by whatever presentations. "The perception of light is rightly taken" means whatever monk, having sat down in an open courtyard, attends to the perception of light, at times closing his eyes, at times opening his eyes. Then when, even while closing his eyes, it presents itself exactly the same as if he had opened his eyes and were looking, then the perception of light is called arisen. "Perception of day" is also a name for that very thing. And when that arises at night, it is called rightly taken. "Well determined" is also a synonym for that very thing. Well resolved, well established - this is called well determined. That, in meaning, is just rightly taken. Or whoever, having dispelled sloth and torpor by means of light, having aroused desire, attends to the meditation subject, for him even by day the perception of light is called rightly taken and well determined. Whether it be night or day, by whatever light one dispels sloth and torpor and attends to the meditation subject, the perception arisen in that light which dispels sloth and torpor is called just rightly taken. The same method applies to energy and so on as well. In this discourse, the basis of supernormal power as the foundation for the six direct knowledges is spoken of.

The Mansion-Shaking Chapter is the second.

3. The Chapter on the Iron Ball

2. Commentary on the Iron Ball Discourse

834. In the second discourse of the third chapter, "with this body made of the four primary elements" means with this body made of the four primary elements, thus heavy, weighty, even though being such. "Is able" means is adequate, is able. This is an unbroken phrase in the word of the Buddha in the three Canons. "Puts together the body in the mind" means having taken the body, he places it upon the mind, makes it based upon the mind, sends it forth by the going of the mind. "Mind" means the exalted mind; the going by the going of the mind is light. "Puts together the mind in the body" means having taken the mind, he places it upon the body, makes it based upon the body, sends it forth by the going of the body. "Body" means the material body; the going by the going of the body is slow. "The perception of happiness and the perception of lightness" means the perception conascent with the consciousness of direct knowledge. For because it is endowed with peaceful happiness, it is called the perception of happiness; and because of the absence of the sluggishness of mental defilements, it is called the perception of lightness.

"An iron ball heated all day becomes lighter" means for that iron ball, having been lifted up by two or three people and placed in a smith's furnace, being heated all day, with heat and air having entered through the openings, having become accompanied by air, accompanied by heat, and accompanied by fire, thus becomes light, so that a smith, having grasped it with large pincers, turns it about in one place, lifts it up, and takes it outside. And thus it becomes soft and workable. So that he cuts it piece by piece, and striking with a hammer, makes it into various shapes such as long and quadrangular and so on. In this discourse, the supernormal power of transformation is spoken of.

3-10. Commentary on the Monk Discourse and Others

835-842. In the third, the supernormal power that is the basis for the end of the round of rebirths is spoken of; likewise in the fourth. Furthermore, making the two fruitions as the starting point, the mixed bases for supernormal power are spoken of below; in the seven fruitions, they are preliminary. The four beginning with the seventh are just according to the method spoken of below.

11-12. Commentary on the Moggallāna Discourse and Others

843-844. In the eleventh and twelfth, the six direct knowledges are spoken of. The remainder is of manifest meaning everywhere.

The commentary on the Iddhipāda Saṃyutta 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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