

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses (1. Dīgha Nikāya)

3. The Chapter on Pāthika (3. Pāthikavaggaṇṇapāli)

7. The Discourse on the Marks of a Great Man
(7. Lakkhaṇasuttaṇṇ)

[DN 30, PTS 3.142–3.179]



PaliVerse

1. The Collection of the Long Discourses

3. The Chapter on Pāthika

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

The Thirty-Two Characteristics of a Great Man

198. Thus have I heard - On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvattṥi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks - "Monks." "Venerable sir," those monks assented to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this -

199. "Monks, these are the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, possessed of which a great man has only two destinations, no other. If he dwells in a house, he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a righteous king of righteousness, ruler of the four quarters, victorious, who has established the security of his realm, possessed of the seven treasures. He has these seven treasures; as follows: the wheel treasure, the elephant treasure, the horse treasure, the jewel treasure, the woman treasure, the householder treasure, and the adviser treasure as the seventh. And he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy armies. He dwells having conquered this earth bounded by the ocean, without rod, without sword, by righteousness. But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world.

200. "And what, monks, are those thirty-two characteristics of a great man, possessed of which a great man has only two destinations, no other? If he dwells in a house, he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world.

"Here, monks, a great man has firmly established feet. That a great man has firmly established feet, this too, monks, is a characteristic of a great man for this great man.

"Furthermore, monks, on the soles of a great man's feet, wheels have arisen with a thousand spokes, with rims, with hubs, complete in every aspect. That on the soles of a great man's feet, wheels have arisen with a thousand spokes, with rims, with hubs, complete in every aspect, this too, monks, is a characteristic of a great man for this great man.

"Furthermore, monks, a great man has projecting heels... etc. he has long fingers... he has soft and tender hands and feet... he has webbed hands and feet... he has high-raised ankles... he has legs like an antelope... while standing and without bending down, he touches and strokes his knees with both palms... he has his male organ enclosed in a sheath... he is golden-coloured, with skin resembling gold... he has subtle skin; because of the subtleness of his skin, dust and dirt do not adhere to his body... he has single hairs; single hairs have arisen in each pore... he has hairs with upward-pointing tips; hairs have arisen with upward-pointing tips, blue, the colour of collyrium, curling in ringlets, turning to the right... he has a divinely straight body... he

has seven convex surfaces... he has a body like the front half of a lion...he has a filled-in space between the shoulders... he has proportions like a banyan tree; as much as his body, so much is his arm-span, as much as his arm-span, so much is his body... he has an evenly rounded neck... he has supreme taste-buds... he has a jaw like a lion... he has forty teeth... he has even teeth... he has teeth without gaps... he has very white canine teeth... he has a large tongue... he has a voice like Brahmā, speaking like a cuckoo... he has deep blue eyes... he has eyelashes like a cow... a tuft of hair has arisen between the eyebrows, white, resembling soft cotton. That a great man has a tuft of hair arisen between the eyebrows, white, resembling soft cotton, this too, monks, is a characteristic of a great man for this great man.

"Furthermore, monks, a great man has a head like a turban. That a great man has a head like a turban, this too, monks, is a characteristic of a great man for this great man.

"These, monks, are the thirty-two characteristics of a great man, possessed of which a great man has only two destinations, no other. If he dwells in a house, he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world.

"These, monks, thirty-two characteristics of a great man are also held by the seers outside, but they do not know: 'Because of the doing of this action, this characteristic is obtained.'

The Characteristic of Well-Established Feet

201. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one of firm undertaking in wholesome mental states, of steadfast undertaking in bodily good conduct, good verbal conduct, good mental conduct, in giving and sharing, in undertaking morality, in observing the Observance day, in filial love towards one's mother, in filial piety, in respect for ascetics, in respect for brahmins, in honouring elders in the family, and in various other highly wholesome mental states. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, its abundance, its extensiveness, upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in a fortunate realm, in a heavenly world. There he surpasses the other gods in ten respects: in divine life span, in divine beauty, in divine happiness, in divine fame, in divine authority, in divine forms, in divine sounds, in divine odours, in divine flavours, in divine tangible objects. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man. He has firmly established feet. He places his foot on the ground evenly, he lifts it evenly, he touches the ground evenly with all parts of the soles of his feet.

202. "He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a righteous king of righteousness, ruler of the four quarters, victorious, who has established the security of his realm, possessed of the seven treasures. He has these seven treasures; as follows: the wheel treasure, the elephant treasure, the horse treasure, the jewel treasure, the woman treasure, the householder treasure, and the adviser treasure as the seventh. And he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy armies. He dwells having conquered this earth bounded by the ocean, without barrenness, without danger,

without thorns, prosperous, flourishing, secure, safe, without tumult, without rod, without sword, by righteousness. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is unshakeable by any human being who is an adversary or enemy. Being a king, he obtains this. "But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is unshakeable by internal or external adversaries and enemies, by lust or hate or delusion, or by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

203. Herein this is said -

"In truth and in the teaching, in self-control and in restraint,
In purity, morality, attachment to the Observance, and
In giving, in non-violence, in non-harshness delighted,
Having firmly accepted, he practised completely.

"He by that action ascended to heaven,
And experienced happiness and delights of play;
Having passed away from there, he came back here again,
With even feet he touched the earth.

"The interpreters of marks, having assembled, declared,
For one with even standing there is no obstruction;
Whether for a householder or for one gone forth,
That characteristic illuminates that meaning.

"He is unshakeable while dwelling in a house,
An overlord of others, not crushed by enemies;
Here as a human being by anyone,
He is unshakeable by the fruit of that action.

"And if such a one goes forth into the homeless life,
Wise, delighting in the desire for renunciation;
That foremost one never goes to obstruction,
The highest of men - for this is his natural order."

The Characteristic of Wheels on the Soles of the Feet

204. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who brought happiness to many people, one who dispelled the fear of excitement and fright, one who arranged righteous protection, shelter and safeguarding, and one who gave gifts with accompaniments. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, its abundance, its extensiveness, upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in a fortunate realm, in a heavenly world. Etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man. On the soles of his feet, wheels have arisen with a thousand spokes, with rims, with hubs, complete in every aspect, with well-divided spaces between.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a

wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He has a great retinue; great are his retinues: brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, tributary kings, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this. But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He has a great retinue; great are his retinues: monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

205. Herein this is said -

"Formerly, in the past, in previous births,
Being a human, he brought happiness to many;
One who dispelled the fear of excitement and fright,
Zealous in protection, safeguarding and shelter.

"He by that action ascended to heaven,
And experienced happiness and delights of play;
Having passed away from there, he came back here again,
He obtains wheels on both feet.

"With rims all around and a thousand spokes,
The interpreters of marks, having assembled, declared,
Having seen the boy with the marks of a hundred merits,
'He will have a retinue, a crusher of enemies.

For thus the wheels with rims all around,
If such a one does not go forth into the homeless life;
He turns the wheel, he rules the earth,
Warriors here become his followers.

"They surround him of great fame,
And if such a one goes forth into the homeless life;
Wise, delighting in the desire for renunciation;
Gods, humans, titans, Sakkas and demons.

"Gandhabbas, serpents, birds and quadrupeds,
The unsurpassed one, venerated by gods and humans;
They surround him of great fame."

The Three Characteristics Beginning with Long Heels

206. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned the killing of living beings, abstained from killing living beings; with rod laid down, with knife laid down, conscientious, compassionate, he dwelt concerned for the welfare of all living beings. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, its abundance, its

extensiveness, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these three characteristics of a great man. He has projecting heels, and long fingers, and a divinely straight body.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is long-lived, lasting long, he preserves his long life span; it is not possible for him to be deprived of life in between by any human being who is an adversary or enemy. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is long-lived, lasting long, he preserves his long life span; it is not possible for him to be deprived of life in between by adversaries or enemies, or by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

207. Herein this is said -

"Having understood the fear of death and murder for oneself,
He abstained from killing others;
By that good conduct he went to heaven,
He experienced the resultant fruit of good deeds.

"Having passed away and come here again,
He obtains here three characteristics;
He has broad and long heels,
Like Brahmā, upright, beautiful, with well-born limbs.

"With beautiful arms, youthful, well-proportioned, well-born,
His fingers are soft and tender;
Long, with these three characteristics of the best of men,
They indicate the prince for long sustenance.

"If he becomes a householder, he sustains himself for long,
If he goes forth, even longer than that;
And he sustains himself through mastery and development of supernormal power,
Thus that is the sign of longevity."

The Characteristic of Seven Prominences

208. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was a giver of superior, flavourful solid food, soft food, food to be tasted, food to be licked, and beverages. Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man: he has seven convex surfaces, there are seven convex surfaces of a being; there are convex surfaces on both hands, there are convex surfaces on both feet, there are convex surfaces on both shoulders, there is a convex surface on the back.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is an obtainer of superior, flavourful solid food, soft food, food to be tasted, food to be licked, and

beverages. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is an obtainer of superior, flavourful solid food, soft food, food to be tasted, food to be licked, and beverages. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

209. Herein this is said -

"Solid food and edible food, and also lickable and tasteable,
He was a donor of the highest and best flavours;
By that good conduct and action,
He rejoices for a long time in Nandana.

"A being here attains seven excellences,
And obtains softness of hands and feet;
Those skilled in signs and characteristics have said,
This is because of obtaining the flavours of solid and edible food.

"That which illuminates that purpose even for a layman,
And even one going forth attains that;
The highest obtainer of the flavours of solid and edible food,
They have said, cuts all the bonds of the layman."

The Characteristics of Soft Hands and Feet and Webbed Fingers and Toes

210. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who supported people by the four ways of supporting others - by giving, by endearing speech, by beneficent conduct, and by impartiality. Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has soft and tender hands and feet, and he has webbed hands and feet.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He has a well-supported retinue; well-supported by him are brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, tributary kings, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He has a well-supported retinue; well-supported by him are monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

211. Herein this is said -

"Giving and beneficent conduct,
And pleasant speech and impartiality;
Having done and practised good inclusion of many,
By unsighted virtue one goes to heaven.

"Having passed away and come here again,
With soft hands and feet and webbed fingers;

Exceedingly beautiful, lovely, fair to behold,
The young, tender boy obtains.

"He becomes obedient to his attendants, amenable,
Dwelling in this greatness, well included;
Speaking pleasantly, seeking welfare and happiness,
He practises pleasing virtues.

"And if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,
The Conqueror delivers a talk on the Teaching to the people;
Those devoted to his words,
Having heard, practise the Teaching in accordance with the Teaching."

The Characteristics of High Ankles and Upward-Pointing Body Hair

212. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was a speaker of speech connected with benefit, connected with the Teaching, he instructed many people, one who brings welfare and happiness to beings, a sacrificer of the Teaching. Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has high-raised ankles and hairs with upward-pointing tips.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is the foremost and the best and the chief and the highest and the most excellent among those who enjoy sensual pleasures. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is the foremost and the best and the chief and the highest and the most excellent among all beings. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

213. Herein this is said -

"Speech connected with benefit and the Teaching, formerly,
Speaking, he instructed many people;
He was one who brings welfare and happiness to beings,
A sacrificer of the Teaching-sacrifice, without stinginess.

"By that good conduct and action,
He goes to a happy destination, there he rejoices;
And having come here, he obtains two characteristics,
For the sake of the highest pre-eminence.

"Like a hare with hair standing upward,
The ankle-joints were well-formed;
Heaped with flesh and blood, covered with skin,
The upper parts of the feet were beautiful.

"If such a one dwells in a house,
He goes to the foremost among enjoyers of sensual pleasures;
None more superior than him is found,

Having overcome the Indian subcontinent, he moves about.

"And even going forth, of superior conduct,
He goes to the foremost among all beings;
None more superior than him is found,
Having overcome the whole world, he dwells."

The Characteristic of Antelope-Like Legs

214. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who taught carefully - whether a craft or true knowledge or conduct or work - 'How might they quickly understand, quickly proceed, and not be wearied for long.' Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man. He has legs like an antelope.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? Those things worthy of a king, those constituents of a king, those enjoyments of a king, those things befitting a king - he quickly obtains them. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? Those things worthy of an ascetic, those constituents of an ascetic, those enjoyments of an ascetic, those things befitting an ascetic - he quickly obtains them. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

215. Herein this is said -

"In crafts, in true knowledge and conduct, in works,
He wishes 'How might they quickly understand';
Which is not for the harm of anyone,
He teaches quickly, not long is he wearied.

"Having done that wholesome action yielding happiness,
He obtains delightful, well-formed calves;
Round, well-born, gradually rising,
With hairs pointing upward, covered with fine skin.

"'One with antelope-like calves' they call that person,
Here they declared the characteristic of quick success;
When he desires things conforming to household life,
Not going forth, he quickly attains them here.

"And if such a one goes forth into the homeless life,
Wise, delighting in the desire for renunciation;
Whatever is conforming to what is befitting,
That he obtains quickly, with superior mental strength."

The Characteristic of Subtle Skin

216. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having approached an ascetic or a brahmin, was one who inquired - "What, venerable sir, is wholesome, what is unwholesome, what is blameworthy, what is blameless, what should be cultivated, what should not be cultivated, what action done by me would be for my harm and suffering for a long time, or what action done by me would be for my welfare and happiness for a long time?" Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man. He has subtle skin; because of the subtleness of his skin, dust and dirt do not adhere to his body.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is of great wisdom; there is no one equal to him or superior to him in wisdom among those who enjoy sensual pleasures. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is of great wisdom, of broad wisdom, of joyful wisdom, of swift wisdom, of sharp wisdom, of penetrative wisdom; there is no one equal to him or superior to him in wisdom among all beings. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

217. Herein this is said -

Formerly, in the past, in previous births,
Desirous to know, he was one who inquired;
Having listened, having attended upon one gone forth,
With the meaning within, he heeded the explanation of meaning.

"By action directed towards the attainment of wisdom,
Having become a human being, he was one of subtle skin;
Those skilled in signs of birth declared,
'He will see subtle meanings, having understood.'

"If such a one does not go forth into the homeless life,
He turns the wheel, he rules the earth;
And in instructions on meaning and in discernments,
None better or equal to him is found.

"And if such a one goes forth into the homeless life,
Wise, delighting in the desire for renunciation;
He obtains the unsurpassed, distinguished by wisdom,
He attains enlightenment, one of excellent, abundant wisdom."

The Characteristic of Golden Colour

218. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was without wrath, abundantly serene, even when spoken to much did not become attached, did not become angry, was not repelled, did not become obstinate, and did not manifest irritation, hate, and displeasure. And he was a giver of subtle, soft coverings and cloaks, of fine linen, fine

cotton, fine silk, fine wool. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man. He is golden-coloured, with skin resembling gold.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is an obtainer of subtle, soft coverings and cloaks, of fine linen, fine cotton, fine silk, fine wool. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is an obtainer of subtle, soft coverings and cloaks, of fine linen, fine cotton, fine silk, fine wool. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

219. Herein this is said -

"He determined non-wrath and gave,
And gifts of subtle cloths with fine texture;
Established in an earlier existence, he gave forth,
Like a god raining upon the great earth.

"Having done that, passing away from here, divine,
He was reborn, having experienced the result of well-done fruit;
Resembling one with a golden body, here he overcomes,
Like Indra among the best of divine trees.

"And if a man dwells in a house, not going forth,
He rules the great earth rightly;
Having conquered, together with the seven treasures here,
He obtains spotless, subtle skin and purity.

"He becomes an obtainer of coverings, garments, finest robes and cloaks,
If he goes to the homeless life;
Together with that, he experiences the fruit of former deeds,
There is no destruction of what has been done."

The Characteristic of the Private Parts Concealed in a Sheath

220. Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who brought together relatives and friends, companions and comrades who had long been lost, who had long been away from home. He brought together a mother with her son, he brought together a son with his mother, he brought together a father with his son, he brought together a son with his father, he brought together a brother with his brother, he brought together a brother with his sister, he brought together a sister with her brother, he brought together a sister with her sister, and having united them, he rejoiced. Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man - he has his male organ enclosed in a sheath.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He has many sons, and he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy

armies. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He has many sons, and he has many thousands of sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy armies. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

221. Herein this is said -

"Formerly, in the past, in previous births,
Those long lost, those long away from home;
He brought together relatives, companions and friends,
Having united them, he gave thanks.

"He by that action ascended to heaven,
And experienced happiness and delights of play;
Having passed away from there, he came back here again,
He obtains sheathed private parts.

"Such a one has many sons,
And more than a thousand are born from him;
Brave and heroic, tormenters of enemies,
Generating joy for the householder, speaking kindly.

"More numerous for one gone forth who conducts himself,
Are sons who follow his words;
Whether for a householder or for one gone forth,
That characteristic arises, illuminating that meaning."

The first recitation section is concluded.

The Characteristics of Proportionate Body and Touching the Knees Without Bending

222. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, considering the welfare of the public, knows equally, knows by himself, knows the person, knows the distinction of persons - 'This one deserves this, this one deserves this' - in each case he was one who made distinctions among persons. Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He is proportioned like a banyan tree, and while standing and without bending down, he touches and strokes his knees with both palms.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is wealthy, of great riches, of great possessions, with abundant gold and silver, with abundant means and provisions, with abundant wealth and grain, with full treasuries and storehouses. Being a king, he obtains this, etc. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is wealthy, of great riches, of great possessions. He has these treasures, as follows: the treasure of faith, the treasure of morality, the treasure of shame, the treasure of moral fear, the treasure of learning, the treasure of generosity, the treasure of wisdom. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

223. Herein this is said -

"Having weighed and investigated, having considered,
Considering the welfare of the public;
'This one deserves this' in each case,
He was one who made distinctions among persons in the past.

"And standing on the earth, without bending down,
He touches his knees with both hands;
He was proportioned like a tree,
By the remaining result of good conduct.

"Those who know many various signs and marks,
Exceedingly skilled men declared;
Many various things befitting householders,
The young, tender boy obtains.

"And here, for the king, enjoying sensual pleasures,
There are many things befitting a householder;
And if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,
He obtains the unsurpassed, the highest wealth."

The Three Characteristics Beginning with a Lion-Like Front Body

224. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who wished for the welfare of many people, who wished for their benefit, who wished for their comfort, who wished for their freedom from bondage - 'How may these people grow in faith, grow in morality, grow in learning, grow in generosity, grow in the teachings, grow in wisdom, grow in wealth and grain, grow in fields and sites, grow in bipeds and quadrupeds, grow in children and wife, grow in slaves, workmen and servants, grow in relatives, grow in friends, grow in kinsmen.' Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these three characteristics of a great man. He has a body like the front half of a lion, and he has a filled-in space between the shoulders, and he has an evenly rounded neck.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is not subject to decline, he does not decline in wealth and grain, in fields and sites, in bipeds and quadrupeds, in children and wife, in slaves, workmen and servants, in relatives, in friends, in kinsmen, he does not decline in any success. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is not subject to decline, he does not decline in faith, in morality, in learning, in generosity, in wisdom, he does not decline in any success. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

225. Herein this is said -

"By faith, by morality, by learning, by higher intelligence,
By generosity, by righteousness, by many good qualities;
By wealth, by grain, and by fields and sites,
By children, by wife, and by quadrupeds.

"By relatives, by friends, and by kinsmen,
By power, by beauty, by happiness, and by both;
He wishes 'How might they not decline' and goes beyond,
And yet the torpid one longs for benefit.

"He was well-formed like the front half of a lion,
With an evenly rounded neck and a filled-in space between the shoulders;
By well-practised action done in the past,
That was the advanced sign of his non-decline.

"Even a householder grows in grain and wealth,
In children, in wife, and in quadrupeds;
One who owns nothing, gone forth, the unsurpassed,
Attains enlightenment, with qualities not subject to decline."

The Characteristic of Supreme Taste Sensitivity

226. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was one who did not harass beings with the hand, or with a clod, or with a stick, or with a knife. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man: he has supreme taste-buds, taste conductors arise in his throat with tips turned upward, conveying evenly.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is free from illness, free from disease, endowed with digestion that is even, neither too cold nor too hot. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is free from illness, free from disease, endowed with digestion that is even, neither too cold nor too hot, middling, capable of striving. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

227. Herein this is said -

"Not with the hand, nor with a stick, nor with a clod,
Nor with a knife, nor with death-dealing murder;
Nor with imprisonment, nor with threatening,
He did not harass the people, he was one who did not harass.

"By that very deed, having reached a happy destination, he rejoices,
Having done what has happiness as its fruit, he experiences pleasures;
The taste conductor, full of nutritive essence, well-formed,
Having come here, he obtains the excellence of the finest flavours.

"Therefore the exceedingly skilled and wise say of him,
'This man will be one with abundant happiness;
Whether for a householder or for one gone forth,
That characteristic illuminates that meaning.'"

The Characteristics of Deep Blue Eyes and Cow-Like Eyelashes

228. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, did not look with eyes protruding, nor did he look askance, nor did he look with discrimination, but upright, thus with an open upright mind, he looked upon many people with an amiable eye. Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has deep blue eyes and has eyelashes like a cow.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is pleasant to behold for many people, he is dear and agreeable to brahmins and householders, to townspeople and country-folk, to accountants and ministers, to military officers, to doorkeepers, to councillors, to courtiers, to kings, to wealthy men, and to princes. Being a king, he obtains this, etc. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is pleasant to behold for many people, he is dear and agreeable to monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

229. Herein this is said -

"Not with eyes protruding, nor looking askance, nor with discriminating gaze;
Upright, thus with an open upright mind, he looked upon many people with an amiable eye.

"In fortunate worlds he experiences the resultant fruit,
There he rejoices;
And here he has eyelashes like a cow,
With deep blue eyes, pleasant to behold.

"And those who practise are subtle,
And many are skilled in signs;
Men skilled in subtle vision,
They designate him as 'pleasant to behold'.

"Being pleasant to behold, even as a householder, and being virtuous,
He becomes beloved by many people;
And if he does not become a householder, he becomes an ascetic,
Dear to many, a destroyer of sorrow."

The Characteristic of a Turbaned Head

230. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, was a leader of many people in wholesome mental states, a chief of many people in bodily good conduct, good verbal conduct, good mental conduct, in giving and sharing, in undertaking morality, in observing the Observance day, in filial love towards one's mother, in filial piety, in respect for ascetics, in respect for brahmins, in honouring elders in the family, and in various other highly wholesome mental states. Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man - he has a head like a turban.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? Great is his following of people: brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, tributary kings, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? Great is his following of people: monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

231. Herein this is said -

"He was a forerunner in good conduct,
Delighting in righteous living among teachings;
He was a follower of many people,
He experienced the fruit of merit in the heavens.

"Having known the fruit of good conduct,
He attained here the state of a turbaned head;
The bearers of marks and characteristics declared,
'He will be a forerunner for many people.'

"Attendants among humans here,
They bring offerings to him beforehand then;
If he becomes a warrior caste lord of the earth,
He obtains service among many people.

"But if that human goes forth,
He becomes well-practised and masterful in the teachings;
Delighting in the virtue of his instruction,
Many people become his followers."

The Characteristics of Single Hairs and the Tuft of Hair Between the Eyebrows

232. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned false speech, abstained from false speech; he spoke the truth, was devoted to truth, reliable, trustworthy, not a deceiver of the world. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has single hairs, and a tuft of hair has arisen between the eyebrows, white, resembling soft cotton.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? Great is his following of people: brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, kings, wealthy men, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? Great is his following of people: monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

233. Herein this is said -

"One who acknowledged truth in previous births,
Of unambiguous speech, he avoided falsehood;
He never deceived anyone,
He spoke what was factual, actual, and true.

"White, very bright, resembling soft cotton,
A well-born tuft of hair was between the eyebrows;
Two did not arise in the pores,
He had limbs endowed with single hairs in each.

"Many knowers of characteristics, having assembled,
Those skilled in signs of birth declared;
As the tuft of hair and body hairs are well-established,
Many people attend upon such a one.

"Even when he is a householder, people attend upon him,
By much action done previously;
One who owns nothing, gone forth, unsurpassed,
Even when he is a Buddha, people attend upon him."

The Characteristics of Forty Evenly-Spaced Teeth

234. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned divisive speech, abstained from divisive speech. He did not repeat elsewhere what he had heard here to divide these people, nor did he repeat here what he had heard elsewhere to divide those people; thus he was one who reunites those who are divided, a promoter of those who are united, rejoicing in concord, delighting in concord, taking delight in concord, he was a speaker of words that create concord. Because of the doing of that action, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has forty teeth and has teeth without gaps.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He has an assembly that cannot be divided, his assemblies cannot be divided: brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, tributary kings, wealthy nobles, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this... Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He has an assembly that cannot be divided, his assemblies cannot be divided: monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

235. Herein this is said -

"Divisive speech that causes breach among the united,
That causes increase of breach and creates contention;
That causes increase of dispute and creates improper action,
That causes breach among the united - he did not speak.

"Speech that does not increase contention, well-spoken,

That causes reconciliation among the divided - he spoke;
Endowed with harmony, he dispelled dispute among people,
He rejoices and delights with those who are united.

"In fortunate worlds he experiences the resultant fruit,
There he rejoices;
Here his teeth are close-set and united,
Four times ten, mouth-born, well-established.

"If he becomes a warrior caste lord of the earth,
His assembly becomes undivided;
And if he becomes an ascetic, stainless and spotless,
His assembly becomes devoted and unshakeable."

The Characteristics of a Broad Tongue and a Brahma-Like Voice

236. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned harsh speech, abstained from harsh speech. He spoke such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, affectionate, going to the heart, urbane, pleasing and agreeable to many people. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, etc. having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man. He has a large tongue and has a voice like Brahmā, speaking like a cuckoo.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is one whose words are to be heeded; his words are heeded by brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, kings, wealthy nobles, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is one whose words are to be heeded; his words are heeded by monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

237. Herein this is said -

"Speech that causes reviling, quarrelling, and harming,
Troublesome, crushing many people;
He did not speak harsh words that were severe,
He spoke what was sweet, well-connected, and kindly.

"Dear to the mind, going to the heart,
He utters speech that is pleasant to the ear;
He experienced the fruit of well-practised speech,
He experienced the fruit of merit in the heavens.

"Having known the fruit of good conduct,
He attained here the state of having a Brahma-voice;
His tongue is extensive and broad,
He becomes one whose words and speech are to be heeded.

"Even as a householder he succeeds in what he speaks,
But if that human goes forth;
The people heed his words,
Speaking much that is well-spoken to many."

The Characteristic of a Lion-Like Jaw

238. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned idle chatter, abstained from idle chatter; he spoke at the right time, spoke what is factual, spoke what is beneficial, spoke on the Teaching, spoke on the discipline; he spoke words worth treasuring, timely, reasonable, well-defined, connected with the goal. Because of the doing of that action, etc. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains this characteristic of a great man: he has a jaw like a lion.

"He, endowed with that characteristic, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. Etc. Being a king, what does he obtain? He is not to be violated by any human being who is an adversary or enemy. Being a king, he obtains this. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He is not to be violated by internal or external adversaries and enemies, by lust or hate or delusion, or by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

239. Herein this is said -

"Not idle chatter, not foolishness,
His path of speech was not scattered;
And he dispelled what was harmful,
And he spoke what was beneficial and for the happiness of many.

"Having done that, passing away from here, he was reborn in heaven,
He experienced the resultant fruit of good deeds;
Having passed away and come here again,
He obtained the highest jaw-power of the best among four-footed creatures.

"He becomes a king, very difficult to assail,
Lord of men, ruler of men, of great majesty;
He becomes equal to the best city of the celestial abode,
Like Indra among the best of divine trees.

"By gandhabba, titans, yakkhas, demons,
By deities he is not easily assailed;
If he becomes of such a nature, of such a kind,
Here in the directions and opposite directions and intermediate directions."

The Characteristics of Even Teeth and Very White Canines

240. "Monks, that the Truth-finder in a former birth, a former existence, a former abode, when formerly being a human being, having abandoned wrong livelihood, earned his living by right livelihood, he abstained from false weighing, false metal,

false measure, bribery, cheating, fraud, crooked dealings, cutting, murder, bondage, highway robbery, plunder, and violent acts. Because of the doing of that action, its accumulation, its abundance, its extensiveness, upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in a fortunate realm, in a heavenly world. There he surpasses the other gods in ten respects: in divine life span, in divine beauty, in divine happiness, in divine fame, in divine authority, in divine forms, in divine sounds, in divine odours, in divine flavours, in divine tangible objects. Having passed away from there, having come to this state of being, he obtains these two characteristics of a great man: he has even teeth and very white canine teeth.

"He, endowed with those characteristics, if he dwells in a house, becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a righteous king of righteousness, ruler of the four quarters, victorious, who has established the security of his realm, possessed of the seven treasures. He has these seven treasures, as follows - the wheel treasure, the elephant treasure, the horse treasure, the jewel treasure, the woman treasure, the householder treasure, and the adviser treasure as the seventh. And he has more than a thousand sons, brave, heroic in form, crushers of enemy armies. He dwells having conquered this earth bounded by the ocean, without barrenness, without danger, without thorns, prosperous, flourishing, secure, safe, without tumult, without rod, without sword, by righteousness. Being a king, what does he obtain? He has a pure retinue, pure are his retainers: brahmins and householders, townspeople and country folk, accountants and chief ministers, military commanders, doorkeepers, ministers, councillors, tributary kings, and princes. Being a king, he obtains this.

"But if he goes forth from home into homelessness, he becomes a Worthy One, a Perfectly Enlightened One, one who removes the veil in the world. Being a Buddha, what does he obtain? He has a pure retinue, pure are his retainers: monks, nuns, male lay followers, female lay followers, gods, humans, titans, serpents, and gandhabbas. Being a Buddha, he obtains this." The Blessed One said this meaning.

241. Herein this is said -

"And he abandoned wrong livelihood through righteous conduct,
He generated that through purity and righteousness;
And he dispelled what was harmful,
And he practised what was beneficial and for the happiness of many.

"In heaven a man experiences the fruits of happiness,
Having done what is praised by the skilful, the wise, and the virtuous;
Equal to the lord of the celestial city,
He delights, endowed with pleasures and amusements.

"Having obtained human existence from there,
Having passed away from the result of good deeds;
By the remainder he obtains teeth,
Even, pure, and very white.

"Many interpreters of marks, having assembled,
Declared, men esteemed as skilful;
He has a group of pure people as retinue,

With teeth like a twice-born, white, pure, and beautiful.

"For a king there are many people,
A pure retinue, as he instructs the great earth;
Having conquered, without oppression of the country,
They practise what is beneficial and for the happiness of many.

"But if he goes forth, he becomes free from evil,
An ascetic with calmed defilement, one who removes the veil;
Gone is disturbance and weariness,
He sees both this world and the next.

"Those who follow his exhortation, many householders and those gone forth,
Shake off impure, blameworthy evil;
For he becomes surrounded by the pure,
Dispelling stains, barrenness, misfortune, and defilements."

This is what the Blessed One said. Those monks, delighted, rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said.

The Discourse on the Marks (of a Great Man) is concluded as seventh.



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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