

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)

2. Commentary on the Book of Causation (2. Nidānavagga-
aṭṭhakathā)

8. Connected Discourses with Lakkhaṇa (8. Lakkhaṇasaṃyuttaṃ)



PaliVerse

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses - Commentaries

2. Commentary on the Book of Causation

8. Connected Discourses with Lakkhaṇa

1. The First Chapter

1. Commentary on the Bone Discourse

202. In the Lakkhaṇa Saṃyutta, this Venerable Lakkhaṇa who is mentioned as "the Venerable Lakkhaṇa," he should be understood as one great disciple who was fully ordained by the "Come, monk" ordination among the thousand matted-hair ascetics, and who attained arahantship at the conclusion of the Fire Sermon exposition. But because he was endowed with an individual existence complete in all respects, endowed with auspicious characteristics, and equal to Brahmā, therefore he came to the reckoning as "Lakkhaṇa." Mahāmoggallāna, however, attained arahantship on the seventh day from the day of going forth, and was the second chief disciple.

"Manifested a smile" means he manifested a gentle smile; the meaning is that he made known, he showed. But having seen what did the elder manifest a smile? Having seen a being reborn in the ghost realm as a skeleton, which is mentioned later in the canonical text. And that indeed with the divine eye, not with the eye of sensitive matter. For these individual existences do not come into the range of the eye of sensitive matter. But having seen such an individual existence, when compassion should be shown, why did he manifest a smile? Because of recollecting the achievement of himself and of the Buddha's knowledge. For having seen that, the elder, having recollected his own achievement thus: "Such individual existences are to be obtained by a person who has not seen the truth; I am freed from them. It is a gain for me indeed, it is well-gained for me indeed" - "Oh, the achievement of the knowledge of the Buddha, the Blessed One! He taught 'The result of action, monks, is incomprehensible, not to be pondered upon.' Buddhas indeed teach having made it evident; well-penetrated by the Buddhas is the element of phenomena" - thus having recollected the achievement of the Buddha's knowledge as well, he manifested a smile.

Then why did the Elder Lakkhaṇa not see? Is it that he does not have the divine eye? No, it is not that he does not have it; but Mahāmoggallāna saw by advertent, while the other did not see through non-advertent. But since those who have eliminated the mental corruptions do not smile without reason, therefore the Elder Lakkhaṇa asked him: "What now, friend Moggallāna, is the cause, what is the condition for the manifestation of a smile?" But the elder, since those by whom this rebirth has not been seen by themselves are hard to convince, therefore, out of the desire to explain having made the Blessed One a witness, said beginning with "It is not the right time, friend." Then, being asked in the presence of the Blessed One, he explained by the method beginning with "Here I, friend."

Therein, "skeleton" means a white assemblage of bones devoid of flesh and blood. "Vultures, crows, and hawks" - these too should be understood as demon-vultures, demon-crows, and demon-hawks. But for ordinary vultures and so on, this form does not even come into their range. "Having pursued and pursued" means having followed and followed. "Pecking" means having pierced and pierced with sharp metal beaks resembling sword-edges, they move about, they go here and there. "It was making a cry of distress" - here "sudaṃ" is an indeclinable particle; the meaning is that the skeleton was making a cry of distress, a cry of anguish. It is said that for the purpose of experiencing the results of unwholesome action, such individual existences arise even measuring a yojana in size, and they are abundant in sensitive matter, resembling a ripe boil. Therefore that skeleton, afflicted by intense feeling, made such a sound.

And having said thus, again the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, showing the sense of religious urgency arisen dependent on compassion towards beings, thinking "Beings going along in the round of rebirths are not freed from such individual existences," said beginning with "This occurred to me, friend - wonderful indeed, friend." Then the Blessed One, making known the power of the elder, said beginning with "Disciples indeed dwell possessing vision, monks." Therein, "the eye has come to be, has been born, has arisen for these" - thus "possessing vision"; the meaning is "those possessing the eye that has come to be, those possessing the eye that has arisen, having produced the eye, they dwell." In the second term too, the same method applies. "Yatra hi nāma" - here "yatra" is a word expressing reason. Herein, this is the interpretation of meaning - Since indeed even a disciple will know or see or bear witness to such a thing, therefore we said - "Disciples indeed dwell possessing vision, monks; disciples indeed dwell possessing knowledge, monks." "That being was seen by me before, monks" - he says "that being was seen by me before" by me who, at the seat of enlightenment, through the penetration of omniscient knowledge, was making evident the immeasurable orders of beings, the existences, destinations, modes of generation, stations of consciousness, and abodes in immeasurable world-systems.

"Cattle butcher" means a being who earned his livelihood by killing cattle, separating the meat from the bones, and selling it. "By the remainder of the result of that very action" means of that action accumulated by various volitions, which is action to be experienced in successive existences. For therein, when the result of the volition by which conception was generated in hell has been exhausted, conception arises again among ghosts and so on, having made the remaining action or the sign of action as object; therefore that conception, by similarity of action or by similarity of object, is called "the remainder of the result of that very action." And this being arose thus. Therefore he said - "By the remainder of the result of that very action." For him, it is said, at the time of passing away from hell, the sign was just a heap of bones of cattle that had been stripped of flesh. He, as though making that concealed action obvious to the wise, was born as a skeleton ghost. The first.

2. Commentary on the Slice Discourse

203. In the story of the slice of flesh, "cattle butcher" means he made slices of beef, dried them, and earned his livelihood for many years by selling dried flesh. Because of that, at the time of his passing away from hell, a slice of flesh itself was the sign for

him. He was born as a slice-of-flesh ghost. The second.

3. Commentary on the Almsfood Discourse

204. In the story of the lump of meat, "fowler" means he earned his livelihood by catching birds and, at the time of selling, stripping them of their wing-skin and making them into mere lumps of meat for sale. Because of that, at the time of his passing away from hell, a lump of meat itself was the sign for him. He was born as a lump-of-meat ghost. The third.

4. Commentary on the Skinless Discourse

205. In the story of the skinless one, for that sheep-butcher who earned his livelihood by killing goats again and again and skinning them, by the former method just the skinless goat body was the sign. He was born as a skinless ghost. The fourth.

5. Commentary on the Sword-Haired Discourse

206. In the story of the sword-haired one, that pig-butcher earned his livelihood for a long time by killing again and again with a sword the pigs nourished with fodder for a long time; for him the state of having a raised sword itself was the sign. Therefore he was born as a sword-haired ghost. The fifth.

6. Commentary on the Satti Discourse

207. In the story of the Spear-haired One, that deer-hunter, having taken one deer and a spear, having gone to the forest, killed the deer that came and went near that deer by piercing them with the spear; for him, the very state of piercing with the spear was the sign. Therefore he was born as a spear-haired ghost. The sixth.

7. Commentary on the Arrow-Haired Discourse

208. In the story of the arrow-haired one, "a torturer" means a man whose task was killing, having oppressed those who had offended against the king with many tortures, and at the end having shot them with an arrow. He, it is said, having known "when pierced in such and such a spot, one dies," would shoot. For him, having earned his livelihood thus and having arisen in hell, by the remainder of the ripened result from there, at the time of rebirth here, the very state of being pierced by arrows was the sign. Therefore he was born as an arrow-haired ghost. The seventh.

8. Commentary on the Sūciloma Sutta

209. In the story of the needle-haired one, "a charioteer" means a horse-trainer. They also call him an ox-trainer. For him, the very state of being pierced by the goad-needle was the sign. Therefore he was born as a ghost with needle-like hair. The eighth.

9. Commentary on the Second Needle-Haired Discourse

210. In the second, in the story of the needle-haired one, "an informer" means one who engages in divisive speech. It is said that he divided people against each other, and in the royal family, by repeatedly informing "this one has such and such, by this one such and such was done," he brought them to calamity and disaster. Therefore,

just as people were divided by his informing, so, with the action itself as the sign for experiencing the suffering of being pierced by needles, he was born as a ghost with needle-like hair. The ninth.

10. Commentary on the Kumbhaṇḍa Discourse

211. In the story of the testicle-bearer, "village fraudster" means a minister of judgment. Due to the similarity of his action, his testicles were the size of water-pots, the measure of large vessels. For because in a secret, concealed place, having taken a bribe, by fraudulent judgment, making an obvious offence, he made owners into non-owners, therefore his secret limb arose as obvious. Because, imposing punishment, he placed an unbearable burden upon others, therefore his secret limb arose as an unbearable burden. Because in the position where, having stood, one should have been righteous, having stood there he was unrighteous, therefore on his secret limb there was only uneven sitting. The tenth.

The first chapter.

2. The Second Chapter

1. Commentary on the With-Head Discourse

212. In the case of the adulterer, that being, experiencing contact with another's guarded and protected wife who has an owner, having delighted the mind with the filthy pleasure of sensual pleasure, was reborn there to experience suffering while experiencing contact with excrement through the similarity of action. The first.

2. Commentary on the Dung-Eater Discourse

213. The story of the wicked brahmin is obvious. The second.

3. Commentary on the Skinless Woman Discourse

214. In the story of the skinless woman, since a woman is indeed without power over her own contact, and she, having stolen that contact belonging to her husband, gave rise to delight for others, therefore, by similarity of action, having turned from pleasant contact, she was reborn as a skinless woman to experience unpleasant contact. The third.

4. Commentary on the Ugly Woman Discourse

215. In the story of the hideous woman, "hideous" means deformed, ugly-featured, loathsome. It is said that she, performing the work of a female slave to demons, having taken scents, flowers and so on from the public by fraud, saying "When an oblation is made with this and that in this way, this indeed will be your profit," she caused the public to adopt wrong view, wrong view. Therefore, by that similarity of action, because of having stolen scents, flowers and so on, she was foul-smelling; because of having caused the adoption of wrong seeing, she was reborn having become ugly-featured, deformed, and loathsome. The fourth.

5. Commentary on the Scorched Woman Discourse

216. In the story of the Oozing Woman, "scorched, oozing, scattered" means she, it is said, lying down on a heap of embers, writhing and turning over, suffers. Therefore she is scorched, with a body cooked by the hot fire, and oozing, with a moist body, drops trickle from her body, and scattered, strewn about with embers. For beneath her too are embers the colour of kiṃsuka flowers, on both sides too, and from the sky they fall upon her from above. Therefore it was said - "Scorched, oozing, scattered." "She, overcome by jealousy, scattered embers from a pan of charcoal over her co-wife" means it is said that one dancing girl of that king, having placed a pan of charcoal nearby, wiped the water from her body, and with her hand applied a warming treatment. The king too engaged in conversation with her and showed signs of satisfaction. The chief queen, not enduring that, having become overcome by jealousy, not long after the king had departed, having taken that pan of charcoal, scattered the embers over her. She, having done that action, was reborn in the ghost realm to experience just such a result. The fifth.

6. Commentary on the Headless Discourse

217. In the story of the executioner of thieves, he, having cut off the heads of thieves for a long time by the king's command, being reborn in the ghost realm, was reborn as a headless trunk. The sixth.

7-11. Commentary on the Evil Monk Discourse and Others

218-222. In the story of the monk, "evil monk" means an inferior monk. He, it is said, having consumed the four requisites given in faith by the people, unrestrained through the doors of body and speech, of broken livelihood, went about playing at amusements of the mind. Thereupon, having been tormented in hell for one interval between Buddhas, being reborn in the ghost realm, he was reborn with an individual existence resembling that of a monk. In the stories of the nun, the female trainee, the novice, and the female novice too, this same judgment applies. The seventh and so on.

The commentary on the Lakkhaṇa Connected Discourses is completed.



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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