

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)

1. Commentary on the Book with Verses (1. Sagāthāvagga-
aṭṭhakathā)

8. Connected Discourses with Vaṅgīsa (8. Vaṅgīsasamṃuttam)



PaliVerse

3. The Collection of the Connected Discourses - Commentaries

1. Commentary on the Book with Verses

8. Connected Discourses with Vaṅgīsa

1. Commentary on the Nikkhanta Sutta

209. In the first discourse of the Vaṅgīsa Connected Discourses, "at the Aggāḷava shrine" means at the chief shrine in Āḷavī. Before a Buddha had arisen, the Aggāḷava, Gotamaka, and other places were dwellings of yakkhas, nāgas, and others, and were shrines. When a Buddha had arisen, having removed those, people made monasteries. Those same names arose for them. "With Nigrodhakappa" means with the Elder Kappa, who dwelt at the root of a banyan tree. "Ohiyyako" means one left behind. "Monastery guardian" means he, it is said, was at that time newly ordained and not skilled in the taking up of bowl and robes. Then the elder monks - having made him the monastery guardian, saying "Friend, sit here looking after these umbrellas, sandals, walking sticks, and so on," entered for almsfood. Therefore it was said "monastery guardian." "Having adorned themselves" means having adorned themselves with adornment in accordance with their own wealth. "Assails the mind" means destroys, ruins the wholesome consciousness. "How could it be obtained here" means when this lust has arisen, from where could that reason be obtained? "That another might" means by what reason another person or teaching might dispel my discontent and arouse contentment in me right now - even my teacher and preceptor have gone, having left me at the monastery.

"From home" means one who has gone forth from the household life. "To homelessness" means one who has entered upon the going forth - this is the meaning. "From the dark side" means they run up from the dark faction, from Māra's faction. "Sons of nobles" means sons of the eminent, influential, of warrior status. "With firm bows" means with firm bows, bearing the teacher's bow of the highest measure. "A thousand who do not flee" means those who would surround one on all sides with arrows; showing the reckoning of those who do not flee, he said "a thousand." "More than these" means exceeding that thousand. "They will never disturb me" means they will not be able to shake me. "Established in the Teaching" means established in one's own teaching of the Dispensation, which is capable of dispelling discontent and arousing contentment. This is what is meant - When a thousand archers surround one on all sides with arrows, a trained man, having taken a stick, striking all the arrows before they fall on his body, knocks them down at his feet. Therein, not even one archer throws two arrows at once, but these women throw five arrows at once by way of visible objects and so on. Even if these, throwing thus, are more than a thousand, they will indeed not be able to shake me.

"For I have heard this face to face" means for this was heard by me face to face."The path leading to Nibbāna" - he said this with reference to insight. For that is the preliminary path to Nibbāna, but he said "magga" with a change of gender. Therein, "my" means my mind delights in that path leading to Nibbāna, which is termed one's own tender insight. "Evil One" - he addresses the mental defilement. "Death" too - he addresses that very same thing. "You will not even see my path" means I shall act in such a way that just as you do not see even the path I have gone in existences, modes of generation, and so on. The first.

2. Commentary on the Aratī Sutta

210. In the second, "comes out" means comes out from the dwelling. "Or the following day at the proper time" means on the second day or at the time for going on alms round. The elder was, it is said, one who valued the dwelling. "Discontent and delight" means discontent in the Dispensation and delight in the types of sensual pleasure. "And altogether thought connected with the household life" means having abandoned in every way evil thought dependent on the household of the five types of sensual pleasure. "Craving" means the great forest of mental defilements. "Anywhere" means in any object. "Free from craving" means free from the forest of mental defilements. "Without delight" means devoid of the delight of craving.

"On earth and in the sky" means the beauty of women's and men's garments, ornaments, and so on established on earth, and the radiance of the moon, sun, and so on situated in the sky. "Material form" means matter itself. "Grounded in the world" means grounded upon the earth; the meaning is gone to the region of the serpents within the earth. "Decays" means wears away. "All is impermanent" means all that is impermanent. They say this is the elder's great insight. "Thus having understood" means thus having come together. "The wise ones live" means those who have understood their individual existence dwell.

"In clings" means in the aggregates, mental defilements, and volitional activities. "Attached" means greedy. "In what is seen and heard" means in forms seen with the eye, in sounds heard with the ear. "To aversion and what is sensed" - here, by the term "impingement," odours and flavours are taken; by the term "sensed," the tangible object. "Whoever here does not cling" means whoever does not cling to these five types of sensual pleasure through the smearing of craving and wrong view.

"Then dependent on the six sense bases, with applied thought, various unwholesome states are established among people" means then various unwholesome thoughts dependent on the six objects are established among people - this is the meaning. "One should not go to any faction anywhere" means by the influence of those, one should not become one gone to the faction of mental defilements anywhere. "Nor should one be a speaker of lewd words" means one should not be a speaker of lewd words either. "That is a monk" means he of such a nature is indeed called a monk.

"Capable" means one of intelligent nature, a wise person. "Concentrated for a long time" means one whose mind is concentrated for a long time. "Prudent" means endowed with discretion, one of mature wisdom. "Not greedy" means free from craving. "The peaceful state" means Nibbāna. "The sage has attained" means the sage has attained. "Dependent on it, attained final Nibbāna, he awaits the time" means dependent on Nibbāna, having attained final Nibbāna through the final

extinguishment of the mental defilements, he awaits the time of final Nibbāna. The second.

3. Commentary on the Pesala Sutta

211. In the third, "despises" means "What are these old men? They have no canonical text, no commentary, no sweetness of terms and phrasing, but for us both the canonical text and the commentary are at hand with a hundred methods and a thousand methods" - thus having surpassed them, he imagines. "Gotama" means he addresses himself thus because of being a disciple of the Buddha Gotama. "The path of conceit" means the states that are the object of conceit and the states that coexist with conceit. "Was remorseful" means was remorseful; the meaning is "he was." "A conqueror by the path" means one whose mental defilements have been conquered by the path. "Fame and happiness" means the speaking of praise and bodily and mental happiness. "Here without barrenness, one with striving" means without barrenness here, one with striving, accomplished in energy. "Pure" means would be pure. "Entirely" means without remainder, the ninefold. "A maker of an end through true knowledge" means one who makes an end of mental defilements through true knowledge. "One who has quieted himself" means one who has quieted himself through the quieting of lust and so on. The third.

4. Commentary on the Ānanda Sutta

212. In the fourth, "lust" - the Venerable Ānanda was one of great merit and esteemed; kings, viceroys, chief ministers and so on, having invited him, would have him seated inside their dwellings. Even women adorned with all ornaments, having approached the elder and having paid homage, would fan him with a palm-leaf fan, and having sat close to him, would ask questions and listen to the Teaching. There, for the Venerable Vaṅḡsa, who was newly ordained and unable to comprehend his object of meditation, lust assailed his mind regarding the visual object of women's forms. He, being a son of good family of upright nature who had gone forth through faith, having thought "This lust of mine, having grown, might destroy my welfare pertaining to the present life and the future life," while seated right next to the elder, making himself known, said beginning with "by sensual lust" and so on.

Therein, "quenching" means the cause for the quenching of lust. "Through perversion" means through illusion. "The beautiful connected with lust" means a desirable object that is a basis for lust. "See as alien" means see as impermanent. "And not as self" means do not see as self. "Let mindfulness directed to the body be yours" means let mindfulness directed to the body be yours. "And develop the signless" - because of the removal of the signs of permanence and so on, insight is called signless; he says "develop that." "Through the full realisation of conceit" means through the full realisation of seeing conceit and the full realisation of abandoning conceit. "At peace" means at peace because of the stilling of lust and so on. The fourth.

5. Commentary on the Subhāsita Sutta

213. In the fifth, "with factors" means with causes, or with constituents. For abstention from lying and so on are the four causes of well-spoken speech, and truthful speech and so on are the four constituents. And when the word "factor" is

used in the sense of cause, "with four" is an ablative expression; when used in the sense of constituent, it is an instrumental expression. "Possessed of" means endowed with, occurring, and connected with. "Speech" means conversational speech, which has come as "speech, utterance, verbal path" and as "gentle, pleasant to the ear." "Whatever action done by speech" - thus intimation, and "whatever abstinence from the four kinds of verbal misconduct" etc. "This is called right speech" - thus abstinence, and "harsh speech, monks, when practised, developed, and cultivated, is conducive to hell" - thus volition too has come as speech; that is not intended here. Why? Because it is not something to be spoken. "Well spoken" means rightly spoken. By that he explains its quality of bringing benefit. "Not badly spoken" means not wrongly spoken. By that he explains its quality of abandoning the bringing of harm. "Blameless" means free from the fault of lust and so on. By this he explains its purity of cause and the absence of the four faults. "Beyond reproach" means free from censure. By this he explains its achievement in all respects. "Of the wise" means of the learned. By that he explains that the foolish are of no account in matters of blame and praise.

"Speaks only what is well spoken" - in the teaching based on the standpoint of the person, this is a faultless statement regarding one of the four factors of speech. "Not what is badly spoken" is the prevention of speaking the opposite of that very factor of speech. "Not what is badly spoken" - by this he explains the abandoning of wrong speech. "Well spoken" - by this, the characteristic of speech that should be spoken by one who has abandoned wrong speech. But here, for the purpose of explaining the factors, without first stating what should not be spoken, he stated only what should be spoken. This same method applies also to "speaks only what is in accordance with the Teaching" and so on. And here, by the first, speech that is free from the fault of divisiveness and that brings about harmony is stated; by the second, wise speech that is free from the fault of idle chatter and not deviating from the Teaching; by the other two, pleasant and truthful speech free from harshness and falsehood. By "with these" and so on, showing those factors directly, he concludes that speech. And whatever others consider to be well spoken - speech that is endowed with constituents such as proposition and so on, with terms such as nouns and so on, and with the achievement of gender, number, case-ending, tense, and grammatical relation, even though it is speech of lying and so on - that he rejects. For speech of such a kind, even though endowed with constituents and so on, is indeed badly spoken, because it brings harm to oneself and others. But speech possessed of these four factors, even if it is included in a barbarian language, even if it is included in a song of a pot-maker's maid servant, is nevertheless well spoken, because it brings mundane and supramundane welfare and happiness. For thus, about sixty monks practising insight, walking along the road, having heard the sound of a Sinhalese maid servant guarding crops beside the road, singing a song in Sinhalese itself connected with birth, ageing, and death, attained arahantship. Likewise, a monk named Tissa, who had begun insight practice, going near a lotus pond, having broken lotuses in the lotus pond -

"Right early the fully bloomed red lotus, by the light of the sun is destroyed;
Thus beings who have come to human existence, are crushed by the force of
ageing."

Having heard this song sung by a maid servant, he attained arahantship.

In the interval between Buddhas too, a certain man, having come from the forest together with seven sons, while a certain woman was pounding rice-grain with a pestle -

"Crushed by ageing is this, dependent on withered skin and hide;
By death this is destroyed, food and sustenance for Death.

"This is a dwelling place of worms, filled with various corpses;
This is a vessel of impurity, like a plantain trunk is this."

Having heard this song, reviewing it, together with his sons he attained individual enlightenment. Thus speech possessed of these four factors, even if it is included in a barbarian language, even if it is included in a song of a pot-maker's maid servant, even so it should be understood as well spoken. And precisely because of being well spoken, it is blameless and beyond reproach by the wise who seek benefit, who take meaning as their refuge, not phrasing as their refuge.

"With fitting ones" means with befitting ones. "Praised" means commended. "Would not torment" means would not scorch, would not afflict with remorse. "Others" means dividing among others, he would not overcome, would not obstruct. Thus by this verse he extols the Blessed One by way of non-divisive speech. "Welcomed" means held dear. "Which, not taking up" means whichever speech one speaks, not taking up the evil, unpleasant, harsh words of others, one speaks only what is sweet in meaning and phrasing, only what is pleasant - one should speak that speech; thus he praised by way of pleasant speech.

"Deathless" means similar to the Deathless by virtue of its excellent nature. For this too was said - "Truth indeed is sweeter among flavours" - or deathless because of being a condition for the Deathless, Nibbāna. "This is an eternal principle" means that which is called truthful speech, this is an ancient principle, a conduct, a tradition. For this indeed was the practice of the ancients; they did not speak falsehood. Therefore he said - "In truth, in meaning, and in the Teaching, the good have said they are established."

Therein, it should be understood that precisely because of being established in truth, they are established in the welfare of oneself and of others; and precisely because of being established in welfare, they are established in the Teaching. Or this is merely a qualification of truth. For this is what is said: Established in truth - of what kind? In meaning and in the Teaching - because of not departing from the welfare of others, it does not obstruct welfare; because of not departing from the Teaching, it accomplishes only righteous welfare in accordance with the Teaching. Thus by this verse he praised by way of truthful speech.

"Secure" means free from fear, without mishap. If one asks, "For what reason?" For the attainment of Nibbāna, for making an end of suffering, because it causes one to reach the quenching of mental defilements and leads to the making an end of the suffering of the round of rebirths - this is the meaning. Or alternatively, the speech that the Buddha speaks as secure "for the attainment of Nibbāna, for making an end of suffering" - because of illuminating the secure path for the sake of the two Nibbāna elements, he speaks secure speech; "that indeed is the highest of speeches" means

that speech is the foremost of all speeches - thus the meaning here should be understood. Thus by this verse, praising the Blessed One by way of wise speech, he concluded the teaching with the pinnacle of arahantship. The fifth.

6. Commentary on the Sāriputta Sutta

214. In the sixth, "polished" (poriyā) means complete in syllables and so on. "Distinct" (vissaṭṭhāya) means unbound, unhindered. For when the General of the Teaching is speaking, his utterance is unhindered by the influence of bile and so on; it emanates like the sound from a bronze cymbal struck with an iron rod. "Free from drooling" (anelagalāya) means faultless (anelā), without drooling (agalā), free from defects, and with unfaltering terms and phrasing. For when the Elder is speaking, neither a term nor a phrase falls away. "Capable of making the meaning clear" (atthassa viññāpaniyā) means capable of conveying the meaning. "Bhikkhuna" means "of the monks" (bhikkhūnaṃ).

"In brief also" means he teaches in brief thus: "There are these four noble truths, friends. What are the four? The noble truth of suffering, etc. These, friends, are the four noble truths; therefore, friends, exertion should be made thus: 'This is the noble truth of suffering'" - thus he teaches in brief also. "In detail also" means analysing those very same by the method beginning with "What, friends, is the noble truth of suffering," he also speaks in detail. The same method applies in the teachings on the aggregates and so on too. "Like the sound of a myna bird" means just as the sound of a myna bird that, having tasted a sweet ripe mango, having fanned herself with her wings, utters a sweet voice, so the sweet sound of the Elder when expounding the Teaching. "He utters inspiration" means infinite inspiration arises, like waves from the ocean. "Odhenti" means they lend an ear (odahanti). The sixth.

7. Commentary on the Pavāraṇā Sutta

215. In the seventh, "tadahu" means "on that day" (tasmim ahu); the meaning is "on that day" (tasmim divase). "They dwell in it" (upavasanti ettha) thus "Observance" (uposatha). And "they dwell" (upavasanti) means the meaning is "having become endowed with morality or with fasting, they dwell." And this Observance day is threefold by the distinction of the eighth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth; therefore, for the purpose of excluding the remaining two, "the fifteenth" was said. "For the invitation ceremony to admonish" means for the invitation ceremony to admonish of those who have completed the rains retreat. "Purification invitation ceremony to admonish" is also a name for this very same thing. "Was seated" means in the evening time, having expounded the Teaching suited to the time to the assembly that had arrived, having bathed his limbs in the water-porch, having dressed in his inner robe, having arranged the Fortunate One's great robe on one shoulder, leaning against the middle pillar, on the excellent Buddha-seat that had been prepared, surpassing in splendour the splendour of the disc of the moon rising in the eastern direction, he was seated. "Silent, completely silent" means wherever he surveys, there it is completely silent. For therein, not even of a single monk was there any restlessness of the hands or restlessness of the feet; all, without sound, sat in a peaceful deportment. "Having surveyed" means having surveyed with eyes possessing the five kinds of visible sensitive matter. "Well then" (handā) is an indeclinable particle used in the sense of release. In "Do you censure anything in

me," here "na ca kiñci" - the syllable "na" is used in the sense of questioning. Do you censure anything in me? If you censure, speak; I wish to allow you to speak - this is the meaning. "Bodily or verbal" - by this he invites to admonish only through the body-door and speech-door, not through the mind-door. Why? Because it is not obvious. For a fault at the body-door and speech-door is obvious, not at the mind-door. "Even for one lying on the same bed, indeed, what did you think?" One knows the disposition of the mind only by asking. Thus he does not invite to admonish regarding the mind-door because it is not obvious, not because it is impure. For even when he was a Bodhisatta, during the times of Bhūridatta, Chaddanta, Saṅkhaṇḍikā, Dhammapāla and so on, the mind-door was pure; now here there is nothing at all to be said.

"Said this" means because of being established in the position of General of the Teaching, bearing the burden of the Community of monks, he said this. "We do not, venerable sir" means venerable sir, we do not censure anything in the Blessed One. "Bodily or verbal" - the elder said this with reference to the four things not to be guarded against. For the Blessed One has four things not to be guarded against. As he said -

"There are, monks, these four things of the Truth-finder not to be guarded against. What are the four? The Truth-finder, monks, is of pure bodily conduct; there is no bodily misconduct of the Truth-finder that the Truth-finder should guard against, thinking: 'Let not another know this of me.' The Truth-finder, monks, is of pure verbal conduct; there is no verbal misconduct of the Truth-finder that the Truth-finder should guard against, thinking: 'Let not another know this of me.' The Truth-finder, monks, is of pure mental conduct; there is no mental misconduct of the Truth-finder that the Truth-finder should guard against, thinking: 'Let not another know this of me.' The Truth-finder, monks, is of pure livelihood; there is no wrong livelihood of the Truth-finder that the Truth-finder should guard against, thinking: 'Let not another know this of me.'

Now, speaking of the Blessed One's virtues as they really are, he said beginning with "For the Blessed One, venerable sir." Therein, "of the unarisen" means not previously produced by any other ascetic or brahmin beginning from the Perfectly Enlightened One Kassapa. "Of the unproduced" - this is merely a synonym for "unarisen." "Of the undeclared" means not pointed out by another. "Having become endowed with it afterwards" means having followed after the Blessed One who had gone first. Thus, since all the virtues of the Blessed One beginning with morality came about in dependence on the path of arahantship itself, the elder spoke of the virtues in dependence on the path of arahantship itself. By that, all virtues are as if spoken of. "And I, venerable sir" - this the elder said while inviting the foremost person in the world with its gods to admonish him regarding the bodily and verbal conduct of both himself and the Community.

"Set in motion by his father" means when the wheel-turning monarch has either died or gone forth, after the elapse of seven days the wheel disappears; then, for the son who sits having fulfilled the tenfold or twelvefold duty of a wheel-turning monarch, another one appears, and he sets it in motion. But because it is made of jewels, by the meaning of similarity, having performed that very same duty, it is said "set in motion by his father." Or because he says "May you, Sire, live at ease; I shall advise,"

therefore he is said to keep turning the wheel of command set in motion by his father. "Rightly keeps turning" means he kept turning rightly, by method, by cause, by reason indeed. For the Blessed One expounds the Teaching of the four truths, and the elder teaches that very same thing after him; therefore he spoke thus. "Liberated in both ways" means liberated in two ways: liberated from the material body by the immaterial-sphere attainment, and from the mental body by the highest path. "Liberated by wisdom" means liberated by wisdom, those who have eliminated the mental corruptions but have not attained the state of the threefold true knowledge and so on.

"For purification" means for the purpose of purity. "Cutters of the bonds and fetters" means those who stand having cut the mental defilements termed as mental fetters and termed as bondage. "Victorious in battle" means one in whom the battle against lust, hate, and delusion has been won; also victorious in battle because of having conquered the forces of Māra. "Caravan leader" - having placed the caravan of those accessible to instruction upon the chariot of the eightfold path, he conveys them and helps them cross the wilderness of the round of rebirths - thus the Blessed One is a caravan leader; that caravan leader. "Chaff" means one who is hollow within, immoral. "Kinsman of the sun" - he says "I pay homage to the kinsman of the sun, the Teacher, the one of ten powers." The seventh.

8. Commentary on the Parosahassa Sutta

216. In the eighth, "more than a thousand" means exceeding a thousand. "Fearless from any quarter" means in Nibbāna there is no fear from any quarter, or for one who has attained Nibbāna there is no fear from any quarter - thus Nibbāna is named "fearless from any quarter." "The seventh sage among sages" means the seventh sage among sages beginning from Vipassī.

"Were these, Vaṅgīsa" - this the Blessed One said by way of the arising of the occasion. It is said that a discussion arose in the midst of the Community: "The Elder Vaṅgīsa has abandoned his duties; he does no work in recitation, nor in questioning, nor in wise attention; he goes about composing verses and making polished phrases." Then the Blessed One thought - "These monks do not know Vaṅgīsa's achievement of inspiration; they imagine he speaks after thinking and thinking again; I shall make them know his achievement of inspiration" - having thought thus, he said beginning with "Were these, Vaṅgīsa."

"Devious path" means the hundreds of emergences of defilements; but it is called "path" because it is a path of the round of rebirths. "Having broken through the barrenness" means having broken the five kinds of barrenness beginning with the barrenness of lust, he walks. "See him" means see the Buddha who walks having thus overcome and broken through. "The releaser from bonds" means one who effects the release from bondage. "Unattached" means independent. "Analysing in parts" means analysing the Teaching by way of sections such as the establishments of mindfulness and so on. Or the reading is "pavibhajjā"; the meaning is: having analysed and classified by way of sections of major and minor limbs, see him.

"Of the flood" means of the fourfold flood. "Of many kinds" means of various kinds by way of the establishments of mindfulness and so on. "When that Deathless has been declared" means when the Deathless declared by him has been declared. "Seers of

the Teaching" means those who see the Teaching. "Stand unshakable" means having become unshakeable, they are established.

"Having penetrated" means having penetrated through. "Of all states of existence" means of all standpoints for views or of all stations of consciousness. "Saw the transcendence" means he saw Nibbāna, which is the transcendence. "The highest" means the highest Teaching. Or the reading is "agge"; the meaning is "first of all." "To the five" means to five; the highest Teaching to the group of five, or he expounded the Teaching to the group of five first - this is the meaning. "Therefore" means because one who knows that this Teaching has been well-expounded should not be negligent, therefore. "Should train" means one should train in the three trainings. The eighth.

9. Commentary on the Koṇḍañña Sutta

217. In the ninth, "Aññāsikoṇḍañña" means the elder whose name was thus taken because he was the first to have final liberating knowledge of the Teaching. "After a very long time" means how long? Twelve years. Where did he dwell for so long a time? At the Chaddanta elephant domain, on the bank of the Mandākinī pond, at the dwelling place of the Individually Enlightened Ones. Why? Because of his regard for the dwelling. For he was a wise great disciple. Just as of the Blessed One, so too his virtues were spread among the gods and humans in the ten-thousand world-systems. Gods and humans, having gone to the presence of the Truth-finder, having made offerings with scents, garlands and so on, thinking "the disciple who has penetrated the highest Teaching," immediately afterwards approached the elder and venerated him. For those who have come to one's presence, a suitable talk on the Teaching or hospitality should be offered. And the elder valued the dwelling; therefore that appeared to him like an obsession. Thus, because of his regard for the dwelling, having gone there, he dwelt.

There is yet another reason - At the time of the alms round, all disciples go by seniority of rains retreats. But at the time of expounding the Teaching, when the Teacher was seated on the decorated Buddha-seat in the central place, the General of the Teaching sat on the right-hand side, the Elder Mahāmoggallāna sat on the left-hand side, and behind them they prepared a seat for the Elder Aññāsikoṇḍañña. The remaining monks sat surrounding him. The two chief disciples, because of having penetrated the highest Teaching and because of being senior, respectful towards the elder, regarding the elder as if he were the Great Brahmā, as if he were a great mass of fire, as if he were a venomous snake, sitting in the front seats, felt moral fear and were ashamed. The Elder thought - "By these ones, for the sake of the front seat, perfections were fulfilled for an incalculable period exceeding a hundred thousand cosmic cycles; they, now sitting in the front seats, feel moral fear and are ashamed of me; I shall make a comfortable abiding for them." He, at a suitable time, having approached the Truth-finder, said "I wish, venerable sir, to dwell in the country," and the Teacher gave permission.

The Elder, having set in order his lodging, taking his bowl and robes, went to the bank of the Mandākinī in the Chaddanta elephant domain. Eight thousand large bull elephants, who had become familiar through previous service to the Individually Enlightened Ones, upon seeing the elder, thinking "Our field of merit has come,"

having cleared the walking path of grass with their nails, having removed the obstructing branches, having looked after the elder's dwelling place, having performed their duties, all having assembled together, consulted - "If we proceed thus: 'this one will do what is to be done for the elder, this one will do it,' the elder will go as if with an unwashed bowl, like one gone to a village of many relatives; we shall look after him by turns, but when one's turn has come, the rest too should not be negligent" - and they established turns. The elephant on duty right early places water for washing the face and a wooden toothbrush for the elder, and performs the duties.

This Mandākinī pond is fifty yojanas in extent. In the area of twenty-five yojanas of it, there is neither moss nor aquatic plants; there is only water of crystal colour. Beyond that, however, in waist-deep water, a grove of white lotuses half a yojana in breadth stood encircling the fifty-yojana lake. Next to that, an equally great grove of red lotuses; next to that, a grove of red water-lilies; next to that, a grove of white water-lilies; next to that, a grove of blue water-lilies; next to that, a grove of red water-lilies; next to that, a grove of fragrant red rice; next to that, sweet-flavoured creeper-fruits such as cucumbers, gourds, pumpkins and so on; next to that, a grove of sugar-cane also half a yojana in breadth, therein the sugar-canes were the size of areca palm trunks; next to that, a grove of plantains, from which two persons eating the ripe fruits become wearied; next to that, a grove of jackfruit trees with fruits the size of jars; next to that, a grove of rose-apple trees; next to that, a grove of mango trees; next to that, a grove of wood-apple trees. In brief, it is not to be said that in that lake there is no fruit suitable for eating. At the time of the blossoming of the flowers, the wind raises up a swirl of pollen and deposits it on the lotus leaves; there drops of water fall upon it. Then, having been cooked by the heat of the sun, it stands like a well-cooked thick preparation; this is called lotus-honey; they bring it and give it to the elder. The lotus root is the size of a ploughshare; that too they bring and give. The lotus stem is the size of the surface of a great drum; in one joint of it there is milk the measure of a quarter-pot; they bring it and give it. They mix lotus stalks with honey-sugar and give them. They place sugar-cane on the surface of a rock and tread upon it with their feet. Then the juice, having flowed forth, having filled the natural rock-pools and hollows, having been cooked by the heat of the sun, stands like a lump of milk-stone; they bring it and give it. Of ripe jackfruit, plantains, mangoes and so on, there is not even any discussion.

On Mount Kelāsa there dwells a young god named Nāgadatta. The elder from time to time goes to the door of his mansion. He fills the bowl with waterless milk-rice combined with fresh ghee, lotus honey, and bath powder, and gives it. It is said that in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, for twenty thousand years he gave milk-rice tickets with fragrant ghee. Because of that, this food arises for him. Thus the elder, having dwelt for twelve years, looking at his own life principle, having known its state of exhaustion, having thought "Where shall I attain final Nibbāna?" - "A difficult deed was done by the large bull elephants who attended on me for twelve years; having obtained permission from the Teacher, I shall attain final Nibbāna in the presence of those very ones" - through the sky he went to the presence of the Blessed One. Therefore it was said "after a very long time, he approached the Blessed One."

"And his name" - why does he announce his name? For some recognised the elder, some did not recognise him. Therein the elder thought - "Those who, not knowing me, will corrupt their minds thinking 'Who is this white-headed, broken down, bent like a rafter, old man exchanging friendly welcome with the Teacher?' - they will become ones who fill the realms of misery. But those who, knowing me - 'A great disciple recognised and renowned like the Teacher in the ten-thousand world-systems' - will gladden their minds, they will become ones who go to heaven" - closing the path to the realms of misery for beings and opening the path to heaven, he announces his name.

"Awakened following the Buddha" - first the Teacher understood the four truths, afterwards the elder; therefore he is called "awakened following the Buddha." "Of keen energy" means of strong energy. "Of seclusions" means of the three kinds of seclusion. "Possessor of the threefold true knowledge, skilled in the ways of others' minds" - among the six direct knowledges, he mentions four. Although the other two were not mentioned, the elder was indeed a possessor of the six higher knowledges. And at the conclusion of this verse, the assembly became quiet. Having known the state of the assembly having become quiet, the elder, having exchanged friendly welcome with the Teacher, requested permission for the time of final Nibbāna, saying "My life principle is exhausted, venerable sir; I shall attain final Nibbāna." "Where will you attain final Nibbāna, Koṇḍañña?" "A difficult deed was done, venerable sir, by my attendant large bull elephants; in their presence." The Teacher gave permission.

The elder, having circumambulated the One of Ten Powers - "That was my first seeing of you, venerable sir; this is the last seeing" - while the great multitude was lamenting, having paid homage to the Teacher, having departed, standing at the gateway - "Do not grieve, do not lament; whether they be Buddhas or disciples of the Buddha, there are no arisen activities that are not subject to breaking up" - having thus exhorted the great multitude, while the great multitude was watching, having risen up into the sky, having descended at the bank of the Mandākinī, having bathed in the pond, having dressed in his inner robe, having arranged his upper robe, having set in order his lodging, having spent the three watches in fruition attainment, at the time approaching the break of dawn, he attained final Nibbāna. Simultaneously with the elder's final Nibbāna, all the trees on the Himalayas were bent and bowed down with flowers and fruits. The duty-elephant, not knowing the elder's state of having attained final Nibbāna, right early, having set up water for washing the face and wooden toothbrushes, having performed the duty, having brought edible fruits, stood at the end of the walking path. He, not seeing the elder come out until sunrise, thought "What indeed is this? Previously the noble one walks up and down right early, washes his face. But today he does not even come out from the leaf-hut" - having shaken the door of the hut, looking in, having seen the elder just sitting there, having stretched out his trunk, having touched him, searching for in-breath and out-breath, having known their state of non-occurrence - "The elder has attained final Nibbāna" - having put his trunk in his mouth, he cried out with a great roar. The whole of the Himalayas was one resounding sound. Eight thousand elephants, having assembled together, having caused the elder to sit on the head of the chief elephant, having taken branches of trees fully in bloom, having surrounded him, having traversed the whole of the Himalayas, came back to their own place.

Sakka addressed Vissakamma - "Dear son, our elder brother has attained final Nibbāna; we shall make an honour; construct a pinnacle chamber of nine yojanas, made of all jewels." He, having done so, having laid the elder down there, gave it to the large bull elephants. They, having lifted up the pinnacle chamber, circled the three-thousand-yojana Himalaya again and again. From their hands the sky-dwelling gods, having taken it, performed a worthy celebration. Thereupon the rain cloud gods, the cold rain cloud gods, the hot rain cloud gods, the gods ruled by the four great kings, the Thirty-three gods - by this method the pinnacle chamber went as far as the Brahmā world; then the Brahmās to the gods, and so gradually they gave the pinnacle chamber back to the large bull elephants themselves. Each deity brought a piece of sandalwood measuring four finger-breadths; the funeral pyre was nine yojanas high. They placed the pinnacle chamber upon the funeral pyre. Five hundred monks, having come through the sky, recited throughout the whole night. The Elder Anuruddha expounded the Teaching; there was full realisation of the Teaching for many deities. On the following day, at the very time of the break of dawn, having extinguished the funeral pyre, having filled the strainer with relics the colour of jasmine buds, having departed from the Blessed One, having brought them when they arrived at the porch of the Bamboo Grove monastery, they placed them in the Teacher's hands. The Teacher, having taken the relic-strainer, stretched out his hand towards the earth; having split the great earth, a shrine resembling a silver bubble emerged. The Teacher deposited the relics in the shrine with his own hand. Even today, it is said, that shrine still endures. The ninth.

10. Commentary on the Moggallāna Sutta

218. In the tenth, "investigates" means seeks, reviews. "Of the mountain" means of the mountain. "The sage" means the Buddha-sage. "Who has gone beyond suffering" means one who has gone to the far shore of suffering. "Investigating" means investigating. "Thus accomplished in all qualities" means thus accomplished in all virtues. "Accomplished in many ways" means endowed with many virtues. The tenth.

11. Commentary on the Gaggarā Sutta

219. In the eleventh, "tyāssudan" is "te assudaṃ." "Assudan" is merely a particle. "In beauty" means in bodily beauty. "In glory" means with retinue. "Like the radiant sun free from stain" means like the sun free from stain. The eleventh.

12. Commentary on the Vaṅgīsa Sutta

220. In the twelfth, "venerable" is a term of endearment. "Vaṅgīsa" is that elder's name. He, it is said, formerly in the time of Padumuttara, having seen a disciple accomplished in inspiration, having given a gift, having made the aspiration, having fulfilled the perfections for a hundred thousand cosmic cycles, in the time of our Blessed One, out of desire for debate in the whole of Jambudīpa, having carried about a rose-apple branch, having engaged in debate with a certain wandering ascetic, by the power of victory and defeat in the debate, having lived together with that very wandering ascetic, having been born in the womb of a certain female wandering ascetic who was living with him, having reached the age of learning, having learnt a thousand debating methods - five hundred debating methods from his mother and five hundred debating methods from his father - he wandered about. And he knew one science, which science, having recited it, having struck the heads of the dead

with his finger - he knows "he was reborn in such and such a place." He, gradually wandering about in villages, market towns and so on, together with five hundred young men, having arrived at Sāvattthī, sits in a hall at the city gate.

And at that time the city-dwellers, having given a gift before the meal, after the meal, with clean upper robes, with perfumes, garlands and so on in hand, go to the monastery for hearing the Teaching. The young man, having seen them, asked "Where are you going?" He asked. They said "To the presence of the One of Ten Powers, for hearing the Teaching." He too, with his retinue, having gone together with them, having exchanged friendly welcome, stood to one side. Then the Blessed One said to him - "Vaṅgīsa, you know, it is said, an excellent craft." "Master Gotama, I know many crafts. Which one are you referring to?" The corpse-defiling craft. Yes, Master Gotama. Then the Blessed One, by his own power, having shown him the head of one reborn in hell, asked "Vaṅgīsa, where was this one reborn?" He, having recited the incantation, having struck with his finger, said "In hell." "Good, Vaṅgīsa, well spoken." He showed him the head of one reborn in the heavenly world. That too he answered in the same way. Then he showed him the head of one who had eliminated the mental corruptions. He, even having repeated the incantation again and again, even having struck with his finger, does not see the place of rebirth.

Then the Blessed One said to him "Are you wearied, Vaṅgīsa?" "Yes, Master Gotama. Try again and again. Even doing so, not seeing, he said "You, Master Gotama, know." Yes, Vaṅgīsa, in dependence on me this one has gone; I know his destination. Do you know by an incantation, Master Gotama? Yes, Vaṅgīsa, I know by just one incantation. Master Gotama, give me this incantation in exchange for my incantation. My incantation is without price, Vaṅgīsa. Give it, Master Gotama. It is not possible to give it to one who has not gone forth in my presence. He addressed his pupils - "Dear ones, the ascetic Gotama knows a surpassing craft. I, having gone forth in his presence, shall take the craft; then there will be no one in the whole of Jambudīpa who knows more than us. You, until I come back, wander about without being anxious." Having dismissed them, he said "Give me the going forth." The Teacher handed him over to Nigrodhakappa. The Elder, having led him to his own dwelling place, gave him the going forth. He, having gone forth, having come to the Teacher's presence, having paid homage, standing there, requested "Give me the craft." Vaṅgīsa, when you learn a craft, you learn it having done the preliminary work of eating saltless food, sleeping on bare ground, and so on. This craft too has preliminary work; do that first. Very well, venerable sir. Then the Teacher taught him the meditation subject of the thirty-two aspects. He, attending to it in forward and reverse order, having developed insight, gradually attained arahantship.

"Experiencing the bliss of liberation" means thus, having attained arahantship, experiencing the bliss of liberation. "Intoxicated with poetry" means intoxicated by poetry, by the making of verse. "The aggregates, sense bases, and elements" means he expounded the Teaching making known these aggregates and so on. "Those who have seen the fixed course of destiny" means those who have reached the fixed course and those who see the fixed course. "Welcome" means a good coming. "I am an attainer of supernormal power" - by this, the knowledge of various kinds of supernormal power is taken. "Skilled in the ways of others' minds" - by this, the

knowledge of others' mental states. But the divine ear, even though not mentioned, is also included. Thus he should be understood as a great disciple who has attained the six direct knowledges. The twelfth.

Thus in the Sāratthappakāsinī

Of the Commentary on the Saṃyutta Nikāya

the commentary on the Vaṅgīsa Saṃyutta is completed.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

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