

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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PaliVerse

2. Commentary on the Book of Analysis

9. Analysis of Bases for Spiritual Power

1. Commentary on the Suttanta Classification

431. Now, in the analysis of the bases for spiritual power that follows immediately after, "four" is a delimitation by number. Herein, regarding "bases for spiritual power" (iddhipādā): "iddhi" means "it succeeds" (ijjhati); the meaning is "it is accomplished, it is achieved." Or "iddhi" means "by means of this, beings succeed - they become prosperous, grown, and attained to excellence." By the first meaning, spiritual power itself is the basis, thus "basis for spiritual power" (iddhipādo); the meaning is "a portion of spiritual power." By the second meaning, the basis for spiritual power is "the foundation of spiritual power" (iddhipādo); "basis" (pādo) means "foundation," the meaning is "the means of attainment." For since they proceed to and attain the supernormal power reckoned as progressively higher and higher distinctions, therefore it is called "basis." Thus, for now, the meaning herein of "four bases for spiritual power" should be understood.

Now, to show them by way of analysis, the passage beginning with "here a monk" is commenced. Therein, "here a monk" means a monk in this dispensation. Herein, regarding "possessing concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving" (chandasaṃādhipadhānaṣaṅkhārasaṃannāgatam): concentration caused by desire or predominated by desire is "concentration due to desire" (chandasaṃādhi). This is a designation for concentration obtained by making desire-to-act (kattukamyatāchanda) the predominant factor. Activities that are striving are volitional activities of striving. This is a designation for the energy of right striving that accomplishes the four functions. "Possessed of" means endowed with concentration due to desire and with volitional activities of striving. "Basis for spiritual power" (iddhipādam): by way of accomplishment, or in the sense of succeeding, or by the method that "by means of this, beings succeed - they become prosperous, grown, and attained to excellence" - the meaning is the remaining aggregate of mental factors that serves as the foundation, in the sense of a support, for the concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving that are associated with wholesome consciousness of access concentration, meditative absorption, and so forth, which have come to be reckoned as "spiritual power" (iddhi). For what is stated further on: "the basis for spiritual power means the aggregate of feeling of one in such a state" etc. "the aggregate of consciousness" - that accords with this meaning. By this method the meaning should be understood in the remaining ones too. Just as concentration obtained by making desire the predominant factor is called "concentration due to desire," so too energy etc. mind. Concentration obtained by making investigation the predominant factor is called "concentration due to investigation."

Now, to show by way of analysis the terms beginning with "concentration due to desire," the passage beginning with "and how does a monk" is commenced. Therein, "if a monk, having made desire the predominant factor" means: if a monk, having made desire the predominant factor, desire the chief, desire the leader, desire the forerunner, obtains and produces concentration, then the concentration thus produced is called "concentration due to desire" - this is the meaning. The same method applies in the cases beginning with "if energy" and so forth. "These are called volitional activities of striving" - by this much, the energy that accomplishes the four tasks, reckoned as the volitional activities of striving, of a monk who is developing the basis for spiritual power of desire, has been stated. "Having heaped them together" (tadekajjhaṃ abhisaññūhitvā) means having gathered all of that together into one mass - this is the meaning. "Comes under the reckoning" (saṅkhyam gacchati) means it should be understood as "comes under this designation" - this is the meaning.

433. Now, in order to analyse and show the states beginning with desire in the group of words "concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving", the passage beginning with "Therein, what is desire?" is commenced. That is of manifest meaning.

"Is endowed" means one is endowed with the aggregate of states reckoned as the basis of spiritual power. "Of those states" means of those associated states beginning with desire. "Spiritual power, success" and so forth are all synonyms for accomplishment. Even so, it is spiritual power in the sense of succeeding. Complete spiritual power is success; or the word is augmented by a prefix. The mode of succeeding is succeeding. "Full succeeding" - the word is augmented by a prefix. Obtaining by way of manifestation in one's own continuum is gain. Gaining again through the arousal of energy even for those who have declined is recovery; or the word is augmented by a prefix. "Attainment" means achievement. "Success" means proper attainment by way of non-decline. "Reaching" means the reaching of recovery. "Realisation" should be understood as the realisation of recovery itself. "Accomplishment" should be understood as the accomplishment of recovery itself.

"Of one who has become thus" means of one who has become in that manner; the meaning is of one who stands having obtained those states beginning with desire. By "the aggregate of feeling" and so forth, all four aggregates are spoken of, including the states beginning with desire within them. "Those states" means those four immaterial aggregates; or it is also said to mean the three states beginning with desire. "Cultivates" and so forth are clear in meaning as already stated. In the expositions of the remaining bases of spiritual power too, the meaning should be understood in this same way.

What has been taught by this much? The meditation subject that has reached perfection for four monks has been taught. For one monk relies on desire; when there is accomplishment of the goal through the desire-to-act and wholesome desire for mental states, thinking 'I shall produce the supramundane state, there is no burden for me in producing it', making desire the chief, making desire the leader, making desire the forerunner, he produces the supramundane state. One relies on energy. One relies on consciousness, one relies on wisdom. When there is accomplishment of the goal through wisdom, thinking 'I shall produce the supramundane state, there is no burden for me in producing it', making wisdom the chief, making wisdom the leader, making wisdom the forerunner, he produces the supramundane state.

How? Just as when four ministers' sons were going about aspiring for a position, one relied upon attendance, one upon valour, one upon birth, and one upon counsel. How? Among them, the first thought: 'If there is accomplishment of the purpose through diligence in attendance, I shall obtain this position that is to be obtained,' and so he relied upon attendance. The second thought: 'Even though one is diligent in attendance, a certain person is unable to stand firm when a battle arises; surely the king's border region will become disturbed; when it is disturbed, by performing service at the front of the chariot and pleasing the king, I shall bring about this position,' and so he relied upon valour. The third thought: 'Even when one has valour, a certain person is of low birth; those who give positions after verifying birth will give it to me,' and so he relied upon birth. The fourth thought: 'Even one of good birth may be unfit for counsel; when a task requiring counsel arises, I shall bring about this position,' and so he relied upon counsel. All of them attained their positions through the strength of their respective reliances.

Therein, just as one who was diligent in attendance attained a position, so one who, relying upon desire, when there is accomplishment of the purpose through the desire-to-act and wholesome desire for mental states, thinks 'I shall produce the supramundane dhamma, there is no burden for me in producing it,' and making desire the chief, desire the leader, desire the forerunner, should be seen as one who produces the supramundane dhamma, like the Elder Raṭṭhapāla. For that venerable one, making desire the leader, produced the supramundane dhamma. Just as one who pleased the king through valour and attained a position, so one who, making energy the chief, energy the leader, energy the forerunner, should be seen as one who produces the supramundane dhamma, like the Elder Soṇa. For that venerable one, making energy the leader, produced the supramundane dhamma.

Just as one who attained a position through excellence of birth, so one who, making consciousness the chief, consciousness the leader, consciousness the forerunner, should be seen as one who produces the supramundane dhamma, like the Elder Sambhūta. For that venerable one, making consciousness the leader, produced the supramundane dhamma. Just as one who relied upon counsel and attained a position, so one who, making investigation the chief, investigation the leader, investigation the forerunner, should be seen as one who produces the supramundane dhamma, like the Elder Mogharāja. For that venerable one, making investigation the leader, produced the supramundane dhamma.

And here, the three states reckoned as desire, concentration, and volitional activities of striving are both success and bases of success. But the remaining associated four aggregates are only bases of success. The three states reckoned as energy, consciousness, investigation, concentration, and volitional activities of striving are also both success and bases of success. But the remaining associated four aggregates are only bases of success. This is the discussion without distinction for now.

But with distinction, 'desire' is called success. The four aggregates developed with desire as the leader are called the base of success through desire. The two states, concentration and volitional activities of striving, enter into the base of success through desire by way of the aggregate of volitional activities; it is also proper to say

they have entered into the base. Therein itself, 'concentration' is called success. The four aggregates developed with concentration as the leader are called the base of success through concentration. The two states, desire and volitional activities of striving, enter into the base of success through concentration by way of the aggregate of volitional activities; it is also proper to say they have entered into the base. Therein itself, 'volitional activities of striving' is called success. The four aggregates developed through volitional activities of striving are called the base of success through volitional activities of striving. The two states, desire and concentration, enter into the base of success through volitional activities of striving by way of the aggregate of volitional activities; it is also proper to say they have entered into the base. Therein itself, 'energy' is called success, 'consciousness' is called success, 'investigation' is called success, etc. it is also proper to say they have entered into the base. This is called the discussion with distinction.

Here, however, there is nothing new; what has been grasped has merely been made into an analysis of elements. How? Desire, concentration, and volitional activities of striving - these three states are both success and bases of success. The remaining associated four aggregates are only bases of success. For these three states, when succeeding, succeed only together with the four associated aggregates, not without them. The four associated aggregates, however, are called success in the sense of succeeding, and called base in the sense of foundation. 'Success' or 'base of success' is not a designation for anything else, but is a designation only for the four associated aggregates. Energy, consciousness, investigation-concentration-volitional activities of striving - three states etc. are a designation only for the four aggregates.

Furthermore, each preceding stage is called a base of success; each attainment should be understood as called success. This meaning should be illustrated by means of either access or insight. For the preliminary work for the first meditative absorption is called the base of success, the first meditative absorption is called success. The preliminary work for the second, third, fourth meditative absorption, the base of infinite space, the base of infinite consciousness, the base of nothingness, and the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is called the base of success, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is called success. Insight for the path of stream-entry is called the base of success, the path of stream-entry is called success. Insight for the path of once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship is called the base of success, the path of arahantship is called success. It is also fitting to illustrate this by means of attainment. For the first meditative absorption is called the base of success, the second meditative absorption is called success; the second meditative absorption is called the base of success, the third meditative absorption is called success etc. the path of non-returning is called the base of success, the path of arahantship is called success.

In what sense is it success? In what sense is it a base? It is success only in the sense of succeeding. It is a base only in the sense of foundation. Thus here too, 'success' or 'base' is not a designation for anything else, but is a designation only for the four associated aggregates. When this was said, however, they said this - it would be a designation only for the four aggregates, if the Teacher had not subsequently brought forth the further minor analysis. But in the further minor analysis it is stated: "Desire itself is the base of success through desire, energy itself, consciousness itself,

investigation itself is the base of success through investigation." Some, however, said: "Success is unproduced, the base of success is produced." Having rejected their statement, the conclusion was made that both success and the base of success are 'produced and subject to the three characteristics'. Thus in this Suttanta Analysis, bases of success that are a mixture of mundane and supramundane have been discussed.

Commentary on the Suttanta Classification.

2. Commentary on the Abhidhamma Classification

444. The Abhidhamma Classification is clear in meaning. However, the methods herein should be counted. For in the passage stated as "develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional activities of striving," four thousand supramundane methods are analysed. The same method applies to concentration due to energy and so forth as well. Likewise, in the Further Minor Classification, four thousand methods are analysed for the basis of spiritual power of desire, and four thousand each for the bases of spiritual power of energy, mind, and investigation - thus altogether, by way of eight tetrads, thirty-two thousand methods are analysed. It should be understood that in this way the Abhidhamma Classification is spoken of as adorned with thirty-two thousand methods by way of the bases for spiritual power that are exclusively produced supramundane states.

3. Commentary on the Questions Section

462. In the question-asking section, the wholesome and other nature of the bases for spiritual power should be understood following the sequence of the canonical text. However, in the object triads, all of these, having occurred with reference to the immeasurable nibbāna, are exclusively of immeasurable object, not of path-object; but by way of conascent condition, they are path-rooted, not path-predominant. For the four predominants do not give weight to one another. Why? Because each is itself a chief. Just as four princes of the same birth, the same age, the same strength, and the same skill do not show deference to one another because of their own respective seniority, so too these four predominants, each being individually of the nature of a chief, do not give weight to one another - thus they are definitely not path-predominant. They should not be spoken of as having a single object even in the past and so forth. However, since nibbāna is an external state, they are called of external object. Thus in this question-asking section, the bases for spiritual power are spoken of as exclusively the produced supramundane. For by the Perfectly Enlightened One, in the Suttanta analysis alone, the bases for spiritual power were spoken of as a mixture of mundane and supramundane, but in the Abhidhamma analysis and question-asking sections, as exclusively supramundane. Thus this analysis of the bases for spiritual power too has been shown having extracted it from the three rounds.

In the Sammohavinodanī, the Commentary on the Vibhaṅga,

the Exposition of the Analysis of the Bases of Spiritual Power 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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