

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā)

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

5. The Collection of Minor Texts (5. Khuddaka Nikāya -
Aṭṭhakathā)

07. Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts
(07. Petavatthu-aṭṭhakathā)

1. The Chapter on the Snake (1. Urugavaggo)



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

07. Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One

In the Collection of Minor Texts

Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts

Introductory Discussion on the Undertaking of the Work

The greatly compassionate protector, who has gone beyond the ocean of the knowable;

I pay homage to him whose teaching is subtle, profound, and varied in method.

Accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, by which they are led forth from the world;

I pay homage to that highest Teaching, venerated by the Perfectly Enlightened One.

Accomplished in virtues beginning with morality, established in the paths and fruits, whoever he be;

I pay homage to that noble Community, the unsurpassed field of merit.

Whatever merit has been generated by this homage to the Triple Gem;

By the power of that, may I be one whose obstacles are destroyed everywhere.

Whatever action was done by ghosts in their previous births;

Each and every one bringing about the state of being a ghost, according to the distinction of their results.

The teaching of the Buddhas which distinctively;

Generates a sense of urgency, making evident the fruit of action.

Known by the name "Stories of Ghosts," with well-comprehended subject matter;

Was recited together in the Minor Collection by the great sages.

Having properly relied upon the method of the ancient commentary of that;

Making clear the introductions in each and every place distinctively.

Well purified, unmixed, with judgment of subtle meaning;

Not opposing the doctrine of the dwellers of the Great Monastery.

According to my strength I shall compose the beautiful explanation of the

meaning;

Listen well, O good people, to that of mine speaking carefully.

Therein, "Stories of Ghosts" means the action that was the cause of the state of being a ghost of each and every being such as the merchant's son and so on; but by way of making that known, the scriptural teaching beginning with "Worthy Ones are like a field" and so on is what is intended here by "Stories of Ghosts."

Now this Stories of Ghosts - by whom was it spoken, where was it spoken, when was it spoken, and why was it spoken? It is said - For this Stories of Ghosts proceeded in a twofold manner - by way of the occasion of its arising, and by way of question and answer. Therein, that which proceeded by way of the occasion of its arising was spoken by the Blessed One; the other was questioned by the Elder Nārada and others and spoken by those various ghosts. But since the Teacher, when each question and answer was reported by the Elder Nārada and others, making each one the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived, therefore all this Stories of Ghosts is indeed to be regarded as spoken by the Teacher. For when the Teacher had set in motion the excellent wheel of the Teaching, while dwelling in various places such as Rājagaha and so on, for the most part by way of those various occasions through question and answer, for the purpose of making evident the fruit of action to beings, each and every ghost story was taken up in the teaching - this is for now the answer to the terms beginning with "by whom was it spoken" from the common standpoint. But from the uncommon standpoint, it will come in the explanation of meaning of each and every story itself.

But this Stories of Ghosts, among the three Canons - the Canon of Monastic Discipline, the Canon of Discourses, and the Canon of the Higher Teaching - is included in the Canon of Discourses; among the five Collections - the Long Collection, the Middle Collection, the Collection of the Connected Discourses, the Numerical Collection, and the Minor Collection - is included in the Minor Collection; among the nine factors of the Dispensation - discourse, mixed prose and verse, explanation, verse, inspired utterance, thus-it-is-said, birth story, wonderful phenomena, and catechism - is the classification of verse.

"Eighty-two thousand I received from the Buddha, two thousand from monks; Eighty-four thousand teachings are occurring for me."

Thus, among the eighty-four thousand aggregates of the Teaching acknowledged by the treasurer of the Teaching, it is a classification of several aggregates of the Teaching; by recitation section, measuring only four recitation sections; by chapter - the Uruga Chapter, the Ubbarī Chapter, the Minor Chapter, and the Great Chapter - a classification of four chapters. Among those, in the first chapter twelve stories, in the second chapter thirteen stories, in the third chapter ten stories, in the fourth chapter sixteen stories - thus by story, adorned with fifty-one stories. Of that, among the chapters the Uruga Chapter is the beginning; among the stories the Khettūpama Ghost Story is the beginning; and of that too, this verse "Worthy Ones are like a field" is the beginning.

1. The Chapter on the Snake

1. The Commentary on the Story of the Ghost with the Field Simile

1-3. Now the Blessed One, while dwelling at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground, spoke this story referring to a certain merchant's son who had become a ghost. At Rājagaha, it is said, there was a certain wealthy millionaire of great riches, of great possessions, with abundant means and provisions, with an accumulation of wealth amounting to many tens of millions. Because of his accomplishment of great wealth, the designation "Mahādhana the Millionaire" arose for him. He had an only son, dear and beloved. When he had attained discretion, his mother and father thought thus - "Even if our son were to spend a thousand and a thousand in expenses day after day, this accumulation of wealth would not come to utter elimination even in a hundred years; what is the use of the toil of learning a craft for him? Let him consume his wealth comfortably as he pleases, with body and mind unwearied" - and they did not have him trained in a craft. But when he had come of age, they brought a maiden accomplished in family, beauty, youth, and charm, inclined towards sensual pleasures and turning away from the perception of the Teaching. He, delighting together with her, without arousing even a thought's worth regarding the Teaching, being disrespectful towards ascetics, brahmins, teachers, and elders, surrounded by cheats, finding pleasure in attachment, devoted to and greedy for the five types of sensual pleasure, being blind through delusion, having spent his time thus, when his mother and father had died, giving as they wished to dancers, actors, singers, and so on, having squandered his wealth, before long having reached loss, taking on debts to earn his livelihood, then not obtaining even debts, being accused by his creditors, having given them his own fields, sites, houses, and so on, with bowl in hand, going about for almsfood and eating, he dwelt in a poorhouse in that very city.

Then one day thieves came together and said to him thus - "Hey man, what use is this miserable life to you? You are young, accomplished in strength, speed, and power; why do you sit like one with crippled hands and feet? Come, together with us, by theft, having taken others' property, earn your livelihood happily." He said "I do not know how to commit theft." The thieves said "We shall train you; only do our bidding." He, having accepted saying "Very well," went together with them. Then those thieves, having given a great club into his hand, having broken through the wall and entering the house, having stationed him at the opening of the breach, said - "If anyone else comes here, having struck him with this club, kill him with a single blow." He, a blind fool, not knowing what was beneficial and harmful, looking only for the coming of others, stood there. But the thieves, having entered the house, having taken the goods fit to be seized, as soon as they were noticed by the household people, fled here and there. The household people, having risen up, running very quickly, looking here and there, having seen that man standing at the opening of the breach, saying "Seize the wicked thief!" having seized him, having beaten his hands and feet with clubs and so on, showed him to the king - "This thief, Sire, was caught at the opening of the breach." The king commanded the mayor "Have this one's head cut off." "Very well, Sire," the mayor, having had him seized, having had him bound with his hands tied behind his back with tight binding, with a garland of red-coloured sparse flowers bound around his neck, with his head smeared with brick powder, with the road indicated by the drum beaten for the condemned, having had him led from road to road, from crossroads to crossroads, striking him with whips, leads him towards the

place of execution. There was an uproar: "This plundering thief has been caught in this city."

Now at that time in that city, a city-belle named Sulasā, standing in a mansion, looking through a window, having seen him being led away thus, being one who had previously been acquainted with him, having aroused compassion for him, thinking "This man, having experienced great success in this very city, has now come to such harm, to calamity and disaster," sent four sweet-meats and drinking water. And she had it announced to the mayor - "Let the noble one wait so long, until this man, having eaten these sweet-meats, will drink the drinking water."

Now in the meantime, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, looking with the divine eye, having seen his attainment of disaster, with a mind urged by compassion - "This man has not done merit and has done evil; therefore he will be reborn in hell. But when I have gone, having given the sweet-meats and drinking water, he will arise among the terrestrial gods. What if I were to become a support for him?" - having thought thus, while the drinking water and sweet-meats were being brought, he appeared before that man. He, having seen the Elder, with a gladdened mind, having thought "What use to me, who is about to be killed, are these sweet-meats when eaten? But this will be provisions for one going to the world beyond," had the sweet-meats and drinking water given to the Elder. The Elder, for the purpose of increasing his confidence, while he was watching, having sat down at such a place, having consumed the sweet-meats, having drunk the drinking water, having risen from his seat, departed. But that man, having been led by the executioners of thieves to the place of execution, having been brought to the cutting off of his head, although worthy of being reborn in a lofty heavenly world by the merit done in the unsurpassed field of merit, the Elder Mahāmoggallāna, because the thought "Through Sulasā this gift was obtained by me" - by the affection directed towards Sulasā, at the time of death his mind was defiled. Therefore, being reborn in an inferior bodily existence, he was reborn as a tree deity in a great banyan tree of dense shade, arisen in a mountain thicket.

It is said that if he had been zealous in establishing the family lineage in the first stage of life, he would have been the foremost among the millionaires in that very city; in the middle stage of life, a middling one; in the last stage of life, the lowest. If, however, he had gone forth in the first stage of life, he would have been a Worthy One; in the middle stage of life, he would have been a once-returner or a non-returner; in the last stage of life, he would have been a stream-enterer. But through association with evil friends, having become one who indulges in women, a drunkard, devoted to misconduct, and disrespectful, he gradually declined from all prosperity and reached great disaster, so they say.

Then at a later time, he, having seen Sulasā gone to the park, with sensual lust arisen, having created darkness, having led her to his own dwelling, lived together with her for a week, and revealed himself to her. Her mother, not seeing her, weeping, wandered about here and there. Having seen that, the public said "The noble Mahāmoggallāna, of great supernormal power, of great might, would know her destination; having approached him, you should ask." She, saying "Good, noble sir," having approached the elder, asked him about that matter. The elder said "On the seventh day from now, at the great monastery in the Bamboo Grove, when the Blessed One is expounding the Teaching, at the edge of the assembly, you will see

her." Then Sulasā said to that young god - "It is inappropriate for me to be dwelling in your abode; today is the seventh day; my mother, not seeing me, will be overcome with lamentation and sorrow. Please, god, take me back there." He, having led her and placed her at the edge of the assembly while the Blessed One was expounding the Teaching in the Bamboo Grove, stood in an invisible form.

Thereupon the public, having seen Sulasā, said thus - "Dear Sulasā, where have you gone for so many days? Your mother, not seeing you, overcome with lamentation and sorrow, has become as if gone mad." She related that incident to the public. And when the public said "How does that man, so devoted to evil, who has done no wholesome deed, obtain rebirth among the gods?" Sulasā said "Having given the sweet-meats and drinking water that I had arranged to the noble Elder Mahāmoggallāna, by that merit he obtains rebirth among the gods." Having heard that, the public was filled with wonder and amazement - "Worthy Ones are indeed an unsurpassed field of merit for the world; in whom even a small act of service done brings about rebirth among the gods for beings" - and experienced lofty joy and pleasure. The monks reported that matter to the Blessed One. Thereupon the Blessed One, on this occasion -

1. "Worthy Ones are like a field, donors are like farmers;
The gift is like a seed, from this the fruit arises.
2. "This seed, ploughing, and field, are for the ghosts and for the donor;
The ghosts consume that, the giver grows through merit.
3. "Having done wholesome right here, and having honoured the ghosts;
And having done good action, they go to the heavenly state." He spoke these verses.

1. Therein, "like a field" - "it protects" means a field protects the seed that has been sown by making it rich in result, it is the place where rice seeds and so on grow. "That is the simile for these" - thus "like a field" means similar to arable land. This is the meaning. "Worthy Ones" means those who have eliminated the mental corruptions. For they are called "Worthy Ones" because of having destroyed the enemies that are mental defilements and the spokes of the wheel of the round of rebirths, because of being far from that very thing, because of being worthy of requisites and so on, and because of the absence of secrecy in evil-doing. Therein, just as a field free from the faults of grass and so on, when a well-prepared seed is sown in it, endowed with the supporting conditions of season, water, and so on, is rich in result for the farmer, so too one whose continuity has eliminated the mental corruptions, free from the faults of greed and so on, when the seed of the gift is well prepared and sown, together with the supporting conditions of proper time and so on, is rich in result for the donor. Therefore the Blessed One said "Worthy Ones are like a field." This is a superior designation, since it does not reject the state of being a field for learners and others as well.

"Donors" means those who give, who relinquish requisites such as robes and so on; through that relinquishment, those who relinquish and cut off greed and so on in their own continuity; or thereby those who purify and protect their own continuity. This is the meaning. "Like farmers" means similar to farmers. Just as a farmer, having

ploughed rice fields and so on, and being diligent at the proper time with sowing, watering, giving, removing, storing, protecting, and so on, obtains a lofty and extensive crop of grain, so too a donor, being diligent in the relinquishment of gifts to the Worthy Ones and in service, obtains a lofty and extensive fruit of giving. Therefore it was said "donors are like farmers."

"The gift is like a seed" is said with a change of gender; the meaning is the gift is similar to a seed. For this is the name for the tenfold material to be given, beginning with food and drink. "From this the fruit arises" means from this relinquishment of the gift by the donor and the recipient, the fruit of giving arises and is produced, and it continues by way of a longer-lasting succession. This is the meaning. And here, since the existence of the material thing such as food and drink is conditioned by the volition of relinquishment, and not of the other, therefore the term "gift" was used in "the gift is like a seed." Therefore, by the designation of the gift, the state of being a seed should be seen as belonging to the very volition of relinquishment that has the material object of the gift as its domain. For that volition is the producer of the fruit, which is of the variety beginning with conception and of the variety of support and object, not the gift itself.

2. "This seed, ploughing, and field" means the seed as stated before, and the field as stated before, and the ploughing reckoned as the effort of sowing that seed in that field. This is the meaning. To show for whom this triad is to be desired, he said "for the ghosts and for the donor." If the donor gives a gift dedicated to the ghosts, it is for the benefit of both the ghosts and the donor; if he does not give a gift dedicated to the ghosts, this seed, this ploughing, and this field are for the benefit of the donor alone. This is the intention. Now, to show that benefit, it was said "The ghosts consume that, the giver grows through merit." Therein, "the ghosts consume that" means when a gift is given by the donor dedicated to the ghosts, whatever accrues to the ghosts through the achievement of the aforesaid field, ploughing, and seed, and through their thanksgiving, that fruit of giving the ghosts consume. "The giver grows through merit" means the giver, however, increases through the fruit of merit, such as the achievement of wealth and so on among gods and humans, on account of his merit consisting of giving. For even the fruit of merit is called "merit" in such passages as "Monks, because of undertaking wholesome mental states, thus this merit increases" and so on.

3. "Having done wholesome right here" means having accumulated merit consisting of giving, which is wholesome in the sense of being blameless and having pleasant results, by way of dedicating to the ghosts, right here in this very individual existence. "And having honoured the ghosts" means having honoured the ghosts by giving dedicated to them, having freed them from the suffering being experienced. For a gift being given dedicated to the ghosts is called veneration to them. Therefore he said - "And veneration has been made to us," and "lofty veneration has been made to the ghosts." By the word "and" in "and the ghosts," he includes the benefits of giving visible in the present life such as "one becomes dear and agreeable, one becomes approachable and trustworthy, one becomes esteemed and worthy of respect, one becomes praiseworthy and commendable by the wise" and so on. "And having done good action, one goes to the heavenly state" means having done good wholesome action, one goes to the heavenly world, the place of rebirth for those who

have made merit, which has obtained the name "heaven" because of its thorough pre-eminence in the ten respects of divine life span and so on - one goes by way of being reborn there.

Here, having said "having done wholesome," the further statement "having done good action" should be understood as being for the purpose of showing that "just as the relinquishment of a gift, so too the relinquishment of the gift-teaching by way of transference of merit is itself wholesome action consisting of giving." Some here, however, say "by 'ghosts' Worthy Ones are intended." That is merely their opinion, because there is no occurrence whatsoever of the term "ghosts" referring to those who have eliminated the mental corruptions, because the state of being seeds and so on is not applicable to them as it is to the donor, and because it is applicable to those in the realm of ghosts. At the conclusion of the teaching, beginning with the young god and Sulasā, there was the full realisation of the teaching by eighty-four thousand living beings.

The commentary on the story of the ghost with the field simile is concluded.

2. The Commentary on the Story of the Pig-Faced Ghost

4-6. "Your body is entirely golden": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling in dependence on Rājagaha at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground, referring to a certain pig-faced ghost. In the past, it is said, in the Dispensation of the Blessed One Kassapa, one monk was restrained by body but unrestrained by speech; he reviled and abused monks. He, having died, was reborn in hell, having been tormented there for one interval between Buddhas, having passed away from there, in this arising of a Buddha, at the foot of the Vulture's Peak mountain near Rājagaha, by the remainder of the result of that very action, having become a ghost overcome by hunger and thirst, he was reborn. His body was gold-coloured, his face was like a pig's face. Then the Venerable Nārada, dwelling on the Vulture's Peak mountain, right early, having attended to his toilet, taking his bowl and robe, going to Rājagaha for almsfood, on the way, having seen that ghost, asking about the deed done by him -

4. "Your body is entirely golden, it illuminates all directions;
But your face is like a pig's, what action did you do before?"

He spoke a verse. Therein, "your body is entirely golden" means your body, your person, is entirely gold-coloured, resembling molten gold. "It illuminates all directions" means by its radiance all directions all around shine and gleam. Or alternatively, "obhāsate" is a term with the cause included within it, and the meaning should be understood as "your body, entirely golden, illuminates and makes all directions shine." "Your face is like a pig's" means but your face is like that of a pig; the meaning is your face is similar to a pig's face. "What action did you do before" - he asks "what kind of action did you do formerly in a past birth?"

Thus that ghost, asked by the elder about the deed done, answering in verse -

5. "I was restrained by body, but unrestrained by speech;
By that is such beauty mine, as you see, Nārada."

He said. Therein, "I was restrained by body" means I was self-controlled by bodily self-control, restrained by restraint through the body-door. "But unrestrained by speech" means unrestrained by speech, I was possessed of verbal non-restraint. "By that" means by that twofold self-control and non-self-control. "Me" means for me (mayham). "Such beauty" means of this kind. The explanation is: as you, Nārada, see directly, of such form, with human shape in body, gold-coloured, with face similar to a pig's, I was. For the word "vaṇṇa" here should be understood in the sense of skin and shape.

Thus the ghost, asked by the elder, having answered that matter, making that very thing the reason, giving exhortation to the elder -

6. "Therefore I tell you, Nārada, this has been seen by you yourself;
Do not do evil with the mouth, lest you become pig-faced."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "taṃ" means therefore. "To them I" means "to them, I." "Nārada" - he addresses the elder. "Brūmi" means I say. "Sāmaṃ" means by oneself. "This" - he speaks with reference to his own body. For the meaning here is this: Since, venerable sir Nārada, this body of mine, from the neck downwards has a human form, and above has a pig's form, has been seen by you with your own eyes, therefore I speak to you by way of exhortation. And what does he say? "Do not do evil with the mouth, lest you become pig-faced." Therein, "mā" is an indeclinable particle of prohibition. "Mukhasā" means by the mouth. "Kho" is a particle of emphasis; do not do evil action by speech, do not do it. "Lest you become pig-faced" means do not indeed become pig-faced like me. If, however, you, being garrulous, were to do evil by speech, you would certainly become pig-faced; therefore "do not do evil with the mouth" - by prohibiting the result, he prohibits the cause itself.

Then the Venerable Nārada, having walked for almsfood in Rājagaha, after the meal, having returned from his alms round, reported that matter to the Teacher who was seated in the midst of the fourfold assembly. The Teacher, having said "Nārada, that being was already seen by me before," expounded the Teaching, making known the danger connected with verbal misconduct in various ways, and the benefit connected with good verbal conduct. That teaching was beneficial to the assembly that had arrived.

The commentary on the story of the pig-faced ghost is concluded.

3. The Commentary on the Story of the Putrid-Mouthed Ghost

7-9. "You bear a divine, beautiful colour": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Feeding Ground, referring to a certain foul-mouthed ghost. In the past, it is said, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, two sons of good family, having gone forth in his Dispensation, accomplished in morality and good conduct, of austere practice, lived together in harmonious living in a certain village residence. Then a certain monk of evil disposition, delighting in divisive speech, approached their dwelling place. The elders, having exchanged friendly welcome with him, having given him a dwelling place, on the second day, having taken him along, entered the village for almsfood. The people, having seen them, having shown exceedingly supreme respect towards those elders, honoured them with rice gruel, meals, and so on. He, having entered the monastery, thought -

"Delightful indeed is this village as food resort, and the people have faith and confidence, they give increasingly superior almsfood, and this monastery is endowed with shade and water; it is possible for me to live here comfortably. But while these monks are dwelling here, there will be no comfortable dwelling for me; it will be like dwelling as a pupil. Well then, let me divide these against one another so that they will not dwell here again; thus shall I act."

Then one day, when the great elders, having given exhortation to both, had entered their own dwelling place, the slanderous monk, having let a short time pass, having approached the great elder, having paid homage, and when the elder said "Why, friend, have you come at an improper time?" having said "Yes, venerable sir, there is something to be said," being permitted by the elder saying "Speak, friend," he said - "This, venerable sir, your friend elder, having shown himself like a friend to your face, behind your back blames you like a foe." When asked "What does he say?" he said "Listen, venerable sir, 'This great elder is fraudulent, deceitful, a cheat, he earns his livelihood by wrong livelihood' - thus he speaks of your faults." "Do not, friend, speak thus; that monk will not blame me thus; he knows my intrinsic nature from the time of lay life - 'well-behaved, of good morality.'" "If, venerable sir, you think thus because of the purity of your own mind, that is befitting only for you; but I have no enmity with him; why would I say what was not said by him as 'said'? Let it be; in the course of time you will know for yourself," he said. The elder too, through the fault of being a worldling, with uncertain mind, having become apprehensive at heart thinking "Perhaps it might be so," became somewhat weakened in trust. That fool, having first divided the great elder, divided the other elder too in the very same manner as stated. Then both those elders, on the second day, without speaking to each other, having taken their bowls and robes, having walked for almsfood in the village, having taken their almsfood, having eaten at their own dwelling place itself, without performing even the slightest proper courtesy, having stayed right there that day, and when the night became light, without even informing each other, went to a comfortable place.

But the people, having seen the slanderous monk whose wish was fulfilled, having entered the village for almsfood, said - "Venerable sir, where have the elders gone?" He said - "Having quarrelled with each other the whole night, even though I was saying 'Do not quarrel, be united; quarrel is indeed bringing harm, producing future suffering, conducive to the unwholesome; even formerly, through quarrel, many have fallen away from great welfare' and so on, not heeding my words, they departed." Thereupon the people requested "Let the elders go for now; but you, out of compassion for us, dwell right here without being anxious." He, having assented "Very well," dwelling right there, after a few days thought - "By me, monks who are virtuous, of good character, have been divided through greed for a residence; much evil action indeed has been produced by me" - overcome by intense remorse, having become ill through the force of sorrow, before long, having died, was reborn in Avīci.

The other two friend elders, wandering on a journey through the country, having met together at a certain residence, having exchanged friendly greetings with each other, having reported to each other the divisive words spoken by that monk, having known their untruthfulness, having become united, gradually returned to that very same residence. The people, having seen the two elders, full of joy, with pleasure arisen,

attended upon them with the four requisites. And the elders, dwelling right there, with concentrated minds through obtaining suitable food, having developed insight, before long attained arahantship.

The slanderous monk, having been tormented in hell for one interval between Buddhas, in this arising of a Buddha, having become a foul-mouthed ghost not far from Rājagaha, was reborn. His body was gold-coloured, but worms, having come out from his mouth, ate his mouth here and there; a foul smell wafted from him, pervading even a distant area. Then the Venerable Nārada, descending from the Vulture's Peak mountain, having seen him -

7. "You bear a divine, beautiful colour, you stand in the sky in mid-air;
But worms eat your foul-smelling mouth, what action did you do before?"

With this verse he asked about the deed done. Therein, "divine" means existing in heaven, included in the state of a divine body. Here, however, "divine" means as if divine. "Beautiful" means attractive, or the state of being beautiful. "Colour element" means complexion. "You bear" means you carry. "You stand in the sky in mid-air" means you stand in the sky called the aerial space. Some, however, stating the reading "vihāyaṣaṃ tiṭṭhasi antalikkhe," explain the meaning by completing the sentence as "you stand in the sky illuminating the aerial space." "Foul-smelling" means the smell of a corpse; the meaning is bad smell. "What action did you do before" - he asked: worms eat your supremely foul-smelling mouth, and your body is gold-coloured; what kind of action, being the cause of such an individual existence, did you formerly do?

Thus that ghost, asked by the elder about the deed done by himself, answering that matter -

8. "I was an evil ascetic with corrupt speech, having the appearance of an austere ascetic, unrestrained with my mouth;
And my colour element was obtained through austerity, but my mouth is rotten through slander."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "I was an evil ascetic" means I was an inferior ascetic, an evil monk. "With corrupt speech" means with corrupt words, one who speaks transgressing and overstepping others; the meaning is one whose words destroy the virtues of others. "Atidukkhavāco" is also a reading, meaning exceedingly harsh in speech, devoted to verbal misconduct such as lying and divisive speech and so on. "Having the appearance of an austere ascetic" means an imposter of an ascetic. "Mukhasā" means by the mouth. "Obtained" means received. The particle "ca" has the meaning of combination. "By me" means by me. "By austerity" means by the holy life. "Through slander" means through divisive speech. "Rotten" means foul-smelling.

Thus that ghost, having told of the deed done by himself, now giving exhortation to the elder -

9. "This has been seen by you yourself, Nārada,
What the compassionate, the skilful would say;
Do not speak slander nor falsehood,
You will become a demon who possesses sensual pleasures as desired."

She spoke the concluding verse. Therein, "this" means that this, my form. "What the compassionate, the skilful would say" means those who are habitually compassionate, merciful, skilled and accomplished in the practice for the welfare of others, such as the Buddha and so on, whatever they would say, that very thing I say - this is the intention. Now, showing that exhortation, he said "Do not speak slander nor falsehood, you will become a demon who possesses sensual pleasures as desired." Its meaning is - Do not speak slander, that is, malicious speech, and falsehood; do not say them. For if you, having abandoned false speech and divisive speech, were to become restrained in speech, you will become a demon or a god or an inferior deity; having obtained the desirable, lofty divine success as wished for, one habitually delighting therein, comfortably, with the nature of delighting in the indulgence of the faculties.

Having heard that, the elder, having gone from there to Rājagaha, having walked for almsfood, after the meal, having returned from his alms round, reported that matter to the Teacher. The Teacher, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching. That teaching was beneficial to the assembly that had arrived.

The commentary on the story of the putrid-mouthed ghost is concluded.

4. The Commentary on the Story of the Flour-Doll Ghost

10-13. "Having made whatever as an object": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove in Sāvattihī, spoke this referring to the giving of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika. It is said that the nurse of the granddaughter of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika's daughter gave a flour doll to the girl, saying "This is your daughter, take her and play." She produced the perception of a daughter towards it. Then one day, while she was playing having taken it, through carelessness it fell and broke. Thereupon the girl wailed "My daughter has died." No one in the household was able to convince her while she was crying. And at that time the Teacher was seated on a prepared seat in the house of the householder Anāthapiṇḍika, and the great millionaire was seated near the Blessed One. The nurse, having taken that girl, went to the presence of the millionaire. The millionaire, having seen her, said "Why is this girl crying?" The nurse reported that incident to the millionaire. The millionaire, having caused that girl to sit on his lap, having convinced her saying "I shall give you a daughter-gift," reported to the Teacher - "Venerable sir, I wish to give a gift dedicated to a flour doll for my granddaughter. Please accept that from me together with five hundred monks for the morrow." The Blessed One consented by silence.

Then the Blessed One on the second day, having gone to the millionaire's house together with five hundred monks, having done the meal duty, while giving thanksgiving -

10. "Having made whatever as an object, one without stinginess should give a gift; Referring to deceased ancestors, or else to site deities.
11. "And the four great kings, the glorious guardians of the world; Kuvera and Dhātaraṭṭha, Virūpakka and Virūhaka; They are venerated, and the donors are not without fruit.
12. For neither weeping nor sorrow, nor any other lamentation;

Is for the benefit of the departed, thus do relatives remain.

13. "And this offering given, well established in the monastic community;
For a long time for his welfare, with reason it is beneficial." He spoke these verses.

10. Therein, "having made whatever as an object" means referring to, with reference to, whatever among blessings and so on. "Should give" means one would give. "Without stinginess" means without stinginess due to the absence of stinginess, which has the characteristic of being unable to bear the state of one's own success being shared in common with others; the intention is that one of generous disposition, having put far away the mental stains of stinginess, greed, and so on, should give a gift. "Referring to deceased ancestors" means with reference to the departed of former times. "Site deities" means the explanation is: referring to deities inhabiting house-sites and so on. "Or else" - by this he shows that one should give a gift referring to whatever others such as gods, human beings, and so on.

11. Therein, first showing certain well-known gods among the gods, having said "and the four great kings," then again taking them by name, he said beginning with "Kuvera." Therein, "Kuvera" means Vessavaṇa. "Dhātaraṭṭha" and so on are the names of the remaining three guardians of the world. "They are venerated" means those great kings and the deceased ancestors and site deities become recipients through the act of dedication. "And the donors are not without fruit" means those who give gifts, those donors, merely by dedicating to others, are not without fruit; they are indeed sharers in the fruit of their own giving.

12. Now, in order to show that "those who weep, lament, and grieve on account of the death of their own relatives, for them that is useless, merely self-torment alone," he spoke the verse "For neither weeping nor." Therein, "weeping" means crying, the shedding of tears; "should indeed not be done" is the remainder of the expression. "Sorrow" means sorrowing, mental burning; the meaning is inner pondering. "And any other lamentation" means whatever lamentation other than weeping and sorrow, confused talk such as "Where are you, only son?" and so on; that too should not be done - this is the meaning. Everywhere the word "vā" has the meaning of alternative. "That is not for the benefit of the departed" means since weeping or sorrow or lamentation - all that is not for the benefit, for the help of the departed, the deceased one, therefore that should indeed not be done; yet even so, thus do relatives remain, being fools - this is the intention.

13. Having thus shown the uselessness of weeping and so on, now showing the usefulness of the offering given by the donor to the Community referring to deceased ancestors and so on, he spoke the verse "And this offering." Therein, "this" - he speaks showing directly the gift given by the donor. The word "ca" is in the sense of contrast; by that, just as weeping and so on is not for anyone's benefit for the departed, this is not so; but this offering is for his welfare for a long time - thus it illuminates the very distinction about to be stated. "Kho" is in the sense of emphasis. "Offering" means gift. "Well established in the Community" means well established in the Community, the unsurpassed field of merit. "For a long time for his welfare" means for the welfare, for the benefit of that departed one for a long time. "With

reason it is beneficial" means it is produced at that very moment, not after an interval of time - this is the meaning. For this indeed is the natural order therein - when a gift is given dedicated to the departed, if the departed rejoice in it, at that very moment the departed are released by the fruit of that.

Thus the Blessed One, having expounded the Teaching, having made the public with minds delighting in giving dedicated to the departed, rose from his seat and departed. On the following day, the merchant's wife and the remaining relatives, conforming to the merchant, thus carried on a great giving for a period of three months. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala, having approached the Blessed One, asked "Why, venerable sir, did the monks not come to my house for a month?" When the reason was explained by the Teacher, the king too, conforming to the merchant, carried on a great giving to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha; having seen that, the citizens, conforming to the king, carried on a great giving for a month. Thus for two months a great giving originating from a flour doll was carried on.

The commentary on the story of the flour-doll ghost is concluded.

5. The Commentary on the Story of the Outside-the-Walls Ghost

14-25. "They stand outside the walls": the Teacher, while dwelling at Rājagaha, spoke this referring to many ghosts.

Herein this is the detailed account - Ninety-two cosmic cycles from now, there was a city named Kāśi. There a king named Jayasena exercised kingship. His queen was named Sirimā. In her womb the Bodhisatta named Phussa was conceived and gradually fully awakened to the perfect enlightenment. King Jayasena, having aroused selfish attachment thinking "My son, having gone forth in the great renunciation, has become a Buddha; the Buddha is mine alone, the Teaching is mine, the Community is mine," attended upon him himself at all times and did not give others the opportunity.

The Blessed One's younger brothers, three half-brothers from a different mother, thought - "Buddhas arise for the welfare of the entire world, not for the sake of one alone. And our father does not give others the opportunity. How might we obtain the chance to attend upon the Blessed One and the community of monks?" This occurred to them - "Come, let us devise some stratagem." They caused the borderland to appear as if in revolt. Then the king, having heard "The borderland is in revolt," sent the three sons too to appease the borderland. They, having gone and having appeased it, returned. The king, pleased, gave a boon: "Whatever you wish, take that." They said: "We wish to attend upon the Blessed One." The king said: "Setting that aside, take something else." They said: "We have no need of anything else." "If so, having set a limit, take it." They requested seven years. The king did not give it. Thus, having said "six, five, four, three, two, one, seven months, six, five, four," they requested down to three months. Then the king gave it, saying "Take it."

They, having approached the Blessed One, said - "We wish, venerable sir, to attend upon the Blessed One for three months. May the Blessed One consent to a rains residence for us, venerable sir, for these three months." The Blessed One consented by silence. Those three sent a letter to the man appointed in their province: "For these three months the Blessed One is to be attended upon by us; beginning with a monastery, prepare all the requisites for attending upon the Blessed One." He, having

prepared everything, sent back a reply. They, having clothed themselves in ochre robes, with thousands of men as stewards, attentively attending upon the Blessed One and the community of monks, having led him to the province, having handed over the monastery, made him dwell there for the rains retreat.

Their storekeeper was a certain householder's son, together with his wife, faithful and devoted. He attentively gave the constant giving of alms to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha. The man appointed in the province, having taken him along, together with about eleven thousand country-folk, had the giving carried out attentively indeed. Therein, some country-folk were of hostile minds. They, having created an obstacle to the giving, consumed the gifts themselves, and burnt the meal hall with fire. When the invitation to admonish was completed, the princes, having made honour to the Blessed One, having put the Blessed One in front, returned to the very presence of their father. Having gone there, the Blessed One attained final Nibbāna. The princes and the man appointed in the province and the storekeeper, having gradually passed away, together with their retinue, were reborn in heaven; the people of hostile minds were reborn in hell. Thus, for those two groups of people, being reborn from heaven to heaven, from hell to hell, ninety-two cosmic cycles passed.

Then, in this fortunate cosmic cycle, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, those people of hostile minds arose among the ghosts. At that time, human beings, having given gifts for the benefit of their own respective departed relatives who were ghosts, dedicated them: "Let this be for our relatives." They obtained success. Then these ghosts too, having seen that, having approached the Perfectly Enlightened One Kassapa, asked - "Could we too, venerable sir, obtain such success?" The Blessed One said - "Now you do not obtain it. But in the future there will be a Perfectly Enlightened One named Gotama; in the time of that Blessed One there will be a king named Bimbisāra. He was your relative ninety-two cosmic cycles from now. He, having given a gift to the Buddha, will dedicate it to you; then you will obtain it." When this was said, it is said, for those ghosts that statement was as if it had been said "Tomorrow you will obtain it."

Then, when one interval between Buddhas had passed, our Blessed One arose. Those three princes too, together with the thousand men, having fallen away from the heavenly world, having been reborn in a brahmin family in the country of Magadha, having gradually gone forth in the going forth of hermits, were the three matted-hair ascetics at Gayāsīsa; the man appointed in the province became the king Bimbisāra; the storekeeper became the householder's son, a millionaire named Visākha; his wife was a millionaire's daughter named Dhammadinnā; but the remaining retinue were reborn as the very retinue of the king.

Our Blessed One too, having arisen in the world, having passed beyond seven weeks, having gradually come to Bārāṇasī, having set in motion the wheel of the Teaching, beginning with the group of five, having trained the three matted-hair ascetics with their retinue of a thousand, went to Rājagaha. And there, on that very day of his approach, he established King Bimbisāra in the fruition of stream-entry, together with eleven myriads of brahmins and householders who were inhabitants of Aṅga and Magadha. Then, having been invited by the king with a meal for the morrow, having consented, on the second day, with Sakka, the lord of the gods, in the appearance of

a young man, going in front -

"Tamed, together with the tamed, the former matted-hair ascetics, free,
together with the free;
With the colour of refined gold, the Blessed One entered Rājagaha." -

Being praised with such and other verses, having entered Rājagaha, he received the great offering at the king's dwelling. But those ghosts, with the hope "Now the king will dedicate the gift to us, now he will dedicate it," having surrounded, stood there.

The king, having given the gift, thought only of a dwelling place for the Blessed One, "Where indeed might the Blessed One dwell?" and did not dedicate that gift to anyone. Thus, not obtaining that gift, the ghosts, being without hope, at night made an exceedingly terrifying cry of distress at the king's dwelling. The king, having been overcome by fear, terror, and religious emotion, when the night became light, reported to the Blessed One - "I heard such a sound; what indeed will happen to me, venerable sir?" The Blessed One said: "Do not fear, great king, nothing evil will happen to you. But rather, there are your former relatives who have arisen among the ghosts. They, for one interval between Buddhas, expecting just this, wandering about thinking 'Having given a gift to the Buddha, he will dedicate it to us,' because you, having given a gift yesterday, did not dedicate it, being without hope, made such a cry of distress." "But, venerable sir, if given now, would they receive it?" "Yes, great king." "Then, venerable sir, may the Blessed One consent to a gift from me today; I shall dedicate it to them." The Blessed One consented by silence.

The king, having gone to his dwelling, having had a great offering prepared, had the time announced to the Blessed One. The Blessed One, having gone to the royal inner palace, sat down on the prepared seat together with the Community of monks. Those ghosts, thinking "Perhaps today we might receive," having gone, stood outside the walls and so on. The Blessed One acted in such a way that they all came into the range of the king's sight. The king, while pouring the water of dedication, dedicated it saying "May this be for my relatives." At that very moment, ponds covered with lotuses and water-lilies arose for the ghosts. They, having bathed and drunk there, with their disturbance, fatigue, and thirst allayed, became gold-coloured. The king, having given rice gruel, solid food, and edibles, dedicated them. At that very moment, divine rice gruel, solid food, and edibles arose for them. They, having consumed those, became full in their faculties. Then, having given cloth and lodgings, he dedicated them. Divine garments, mansions, bed-coverings, sleeping places, and other kinds of ornaments arose for them. And the Blessed One determined in such a way that all that success of theirs became visible to the king. The king, having seen that, was exceedingly delighted. Then the Blessed One, having eaten and been invited to admonish, for the purpose of thanksgiving to King Bimbisāra, spoke the Tirokuṭṭa Ghost Story -

14. They stand outside the walls, and at junctions and crossroads;
They stand by the door-posts, having come to their own home.
15. When food and drink are abundant, when solid food and edibles are at hand;
No one remembers those beings, because of their kamma.

16. Thus they give to relatives, those who are compassionate;
Pure, superior, in proper time, allowable drink and food.
17. "May this be for your relatives, may the relatives be happy;
And they, having come together there, the deceased relatives assembled;
When food and drink are abundant, they give thanks attentively.
18. "May our relatives live long, because of whom we receive;
And veneration has been made to us, and the donors are not without fruit."
19. "For there is no farming there, cow-keeping is not found;
There is no such trade, buying and selling with gold;
By what is given from here they sustain themselves, the deceased ghosts
there.
20. "Just as water rained upon high ground flows down to the low ground;
Just so what is given from here is beneficial to the ghosts.
21. "Just as full water-carriers fill the ocean;
Just so what is given from here is beneficial to the ghosts.
22. "He gave to me, he did for me, relatives, friends and companions to me;
One should give offerings to the departed, recollecting what was done before.
23. For neither weeping nor sorrow, nor any other lamentation;
Is for the benefit of the departed, thus do relatives remain.
24. "And this offering given, well established in the monastic community;
For a long time for his welfare, with reason it is beneficial.
25. "This duty to relatives has been pointed out, and lofty veneration has been
made to the ghosts;
And strength has been given to the monks, much merit has been produced by
you."

14. Therein, "outside the walls" means in the outer parts of the walls. "They stand" - this is an expression designating standing, by way of rejecting sitting and so on; the meaning is they stand just outside the doors of the walls of houses and enclosing walls. "And at junctions and crossroads" means at junctions and at crossroads. "Junctions" means four-cornered streets; house-junctions, wall-junctions, and windows are also called thus. "Crossroads" means three-cornered streets. "They stand by the door-posts" (dvārabāhāsu tiṭṭhanti) means they stand in dependence on the posts of city gates and house doors. "Having come to their own home" - "one's own home" means both the house of former relatives and also a house inhabited by oneself as owner; since they come to both of those with the perception of it being their own home, therefore he said "having come to their own home."

15. Thus the Blessed One, showing to the king the many ghosts who had come with the perception of it being their own home to Bimbisāra's dwelling, which was the house of former relatives though never previously inhabited by him, standing outside

the walls and so on, experiencing the fruit of jealousy and stinginess, with exceedingly ugly, deformed, and frightful appearances, having spoken the verse "They stand outside the walls," then showing the severe nature of the action done by them, spoke the second verse beginning with "when food and drink are abundant."

Therein, "abundant" (pahūta) means not little, much; the meaning is "as much as one wishes." For the syllable "ba" can become "pa," as in "pahu santo na bharatī" and so on. Some, however, read "bahuke"; but that is a corrupt reading. "In food and drink" (annapānamhi) means in food and in drink. "Solid food and edibles" (khajjabhojje) means solid food and edibles. By this he shows the fourfold nutriment by way of what is eaten, drunk, chewed, and tasted. "At hand" (upaṭṭhita) means having approached and standing, prepared; the meaning is arranged. "No one remembers those beings" (na tesaṃ koci saratī sattānaṃ) means no one - neither mother, nor father, nor son, nor grandson - remembers those beings who have arisen in the sphere of ghosts. Why? "Because of their kamma" (kammapaccayā) means because of the miserly action done by oneself, of the type consisting of not giving, preventing others' giving, and so on. For that action does not allow their relatives to remember them.

16. Thus the Blessed One, having shown the absence of even the mere remembrance by relatives, due to the fruit of action, of the ghosts who were expecting their relatives even when no small amount of food, drink, and so on was available, now praising the gift given by the king dedicated to relatives reborn in the sphere of ghosts, spoke the third verse beginning with "thus they give to relatives."

Therein, "thus" (evaṃ) is a word of comparison. Its connection is twofold - Even though no one remembers because of the kamma condition of those beings, some give to relatives, those who are thus compassionate; and great king, just as was given by you, thus they give pure, superior, in proper time, allowable drink and food to relatives, those who are compassionate. Therein, "they give" (dadanti) means they bestow, they dedicate, they hand over. "To relatives" (ñātīnaṃ) means to those connected through the mother's side and the father's side. "Those who" (ye) means whatever sons and so on. "Are" (honti) means they are. "Compassionate" (anukampakā) means well-wishing, seeking their welfare. "Pure" (suciṃ) means clean, charming, and righteous. "Superior" (paṇītaṃ) means lofty. "At the time" (kālena) means at the time suitable for use by those worthy of offerings, or at the time when the departed relatives have come and are standing outside the walls and so on. "Allowable" (kappiyaṃ) means suitable, proper, worthy of use by noble ones. "Drink and food" (pānabhojanaṃ) means drink and food; and by that designation he here speaks of all gifts.

17. Now, showing the manner in which what is given becomes given to those ghosts, he spoke the first half of the fourth verse: "May this be for your relatives, may the relatives be happy." That should be connected with the first half of the third verse -

Thus they give to relatives, those who are compassionate;
May this be for your relatives, may the relatives be happy."

Thereby, by the word "thus" in the sense of manner in the passage "they give in this manner saying 'May this be for your relatives,' not otherwise," an illustration of the manner in which it should be given has been made.

Therein, "this" is an indication of the gift. "Vo" is merely an indeclinable particle, just as in such passages as "by which you noble ones" and so on. "May it be for the relatives" means may it be for the relatives who have arisen in the sphere of ghosts. Some also read "no ñātina," the meaning being "for our relatives." "May the relatives be happy" means may those relatives reborn in the sphere of ghosts, experiencing this fruit, be happy, having attained happiness.

Since even though it is said "May this be for your relatives," an action done by one does not give fruit to another, but rather that material thing being given dedicated thus becomes a condition for wholesome action for the deceased relatives, therefore, showing how wholesome action that produces fruit at that very moment in that very material thing arises for them, he said beginning with "And they there" etc.

Therein, "they" means the deceased relatives. "There" means there where the gift is being given. "Having come together" means having assembled there for the purpose of thanksgiving, thinking "These relatives of ours are dedicating a gift for our benefit." "When food and drink are abundant" means in that material thing being given dedicated to oneself. "They give thanks attentively" means believing in the fruit of action, not abandoning respect, having become undistracted in mind, they rejoice and give thanks saying "May this gift of ours be for our welfare and happiness," they become filled with joy and pleasure.

18. "May they live long" means may they be long-lived, of long life span. "Our relatives" means our kin. "Because of whom" means for whose reason, in dependence on whom. "We receive" means we obtain such success. For this is a display of the manner of praise by the ghosts who are experiencing the success obtained through dedication, towards their own relatives. For through three factors - by the ghosts' own thanksgiving, by the dedication of the donors, and by the accomplishment of those worthy of offerings - the offering produces fruit at that very moment. Therein, the donors are the special cause. Therefore he said "because of whom we receive." "And veneration has been made to us" means by those donors dedicating thus "May this be for your relatives," veneration has been made to us too, and those donors are not without fruit, because in whichever continuity the action consisting of relinquishment arose, fruit is given right there to that one.

Here one asks - "Do only relatives reborn in the sphere of ghosts obtain the success of causes, or do others also?" This need not be stated by us here, since it has been thus explained by the Blessed One. For this was said:

"We, Master Gotama, being brahmins, give gifts, we perform meritorious deeds, saying 'May this gift be beneficial to the departed relatives and blood-relations, may the departed relatives and blood-relations consume this gift.' Does that gift, Master Gotama, benefit the departed relatives and blood-relations? Do those departed relatives and blood-relations consume that gift?" "In a suitable state, brahmin, it is beneficial, not in an unsuitable state."

"But what, Master Gotama, is the suitable state, what is the unsuitable state?" "Here, brahmin, a certain one is one who kills living beings, etc. holds wrong view; upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in hell. Whatever is the food of beings in hell, by that he sustains himself there, by that he remains there. This, brahmin, is an unsuitable state where, for one established there, that gift does not benefit.

"Here again, brahmin, a certain one is one who kills living beings, etc.holds wrong view; upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in the animal realm. Whatever is the food of beings in the animal realm, by that he sustains himself there, by that he remains there. This too, brahmin, is an unsuitable state where, for one established there, that gift does not benefit.

"Here again, brahmin, a certain one abstains from killing living beings, etc.holds right view; upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in the company of human beings, etc. he is reborn in the company of the gods.Whatever is the food of the gods, by that he sustains himself there, by that he remains there. This too, brahmin, is an unsuitable state where, for one established there, that gift does not benefit.

"Here again, brahmin, a certain one is one who kills living beings, etc.holds wrong view; upon the body's collapse at death, he is reborn in the sphere of ghosts. Whatever is the food of beings in the sphere of ghosts, by that he sustains himself there, by that he remains there. Or whatever friends and colleagues or relatives and blood-relations give from here, by that he sustains himself there, by that he remains there. This, brahmin, is the state where, for one established there, that gift is beneficial."

"But if, Master Gotama, that ghost who is a relative or blood-relation has not arisen in that state, who consumes that gift?" "Other ghosts who are relatives and blood-relations have arisen in that state, brahmin; they consume that gift."

"But if, Master Gotama, that ghost who is a relative or blood-relation has not arisen in that state, and other ghosts who are relatives and blood-relations have not arisen in that state, who consumes that gift?" "This is impossible, brahmin, there is no chance that that state would be empty during this long period of time, that is to say, of ghosts who are relatives and blood-relations. Further, brahmin, the donor too is not without fruit."

19. Now, in order to show the absence of any other cause for obtaining success such as farming, cow-keeping, and so on for those reborn in the sphere of ghosts there, and the fact of being sustained by what is given from here, "for indeed" and so on was stated.

Therein, "for there is no farming there" means in that sphere of ghosts there is indeed no farming, in dependence on which ghosts might live happily. "Cow-keeping is not found here" means here in the sphere of ghosts not only farming alone is absent, but cow-keeping too is not found, in dependence on which they might live happily. "There is no such trade" means there is no such trade either, which might be the cause for their obtaining success. "Buying and selling with gold" means there is no such buying and selling with gold there either, which might be the cause for their obtaining success. "By what is given from here they sustain themselves, the deceased ghosts there" means they sustain themselves only by what is given from here by relatives or friends and colleagues; they maintain their individual existence. "Ghosts" means beings reborn in the sphere of ghosts."Deceased" means gone by their own time of death. Or the reading is "kālakatā," meaning those whose time has been done, whose death has been done, those who have reached death. "There" means in that sphere of ghosts.

20-21. Now, in order to make known the aforesaid meaning by similes, he spoke a pair of verses beginning with "Upon high ground water rained." Its meaning is - Just as water rained upon by clouds on high ground, on dry land, on an elevated place, flows down to the low ground - whatever piece of ground is low, sloping down, to that it approaches; just so a gift given from here is beneficial to the ghosts, it is applied for the acquisition of fruition. For indeed the realm of ghosts is like a low-lying place for the flowing of water, for the benefiting of gifts. As he said - "This, brahmin, is the state where, for one established there, that gift is beneficial." And just as by water flowing down through ravines, gorges, branches, sub-branches, small streams, and great streams, the water-carriers, the great rivers, having become full, fill the ocean, so a gift given from here is beneficial to the ghosts in the manner stated previously.

22. Since the ghosts, overpowered by the hope "We shall obtain something from here," even having come to the house of relatives, are unable to ask "Give us such and such a thing," therefore, showing that a son of good family, recollecting these grounds for remembrance concerning them, should give an offering, he spoke the verse "He gave to me."

Its meaning is - "He gave me such and such wealth or grain," "He did such and such a duty for me, undertaking the exertion himself," and "Such a one is my relative through connection on the mother's side or the father's side, such a one is my friend through affection by reason of the ability to provide shelter, such a one is my companion who played in the dust together with me" - thus recollecting all this, one should give an offering to the ghosts, one should hand over a gift. "Dakkhinā dajjā" is also a reading; an offering for the ghosts should be given; by that, by the method beginning with "He gave to me," it is said that one recollecting what was done before recollects. For this is the nominative case used in the instrumental sense.

23-24. But those beings who, having become overcome by weeping, sorrow and so on due to the death of relatives, remain thus and do not give anything for their benefit - for them that weeping, sorrow and so on is merely self-torment alone, and it does not accomplish any benefit for the ghosts - showing this, having spoken the verse "For neither weeping nor," then again, in order to show the usefulness of the offering given by the King of Magadha, he spoke the verse "And this." Their meaning has been stated above.

25. Now, since by the king giving this offering, the duty to relatives has been pointed out by way of performing the duties that should be done by relatives for relatives, it has been made known to the multitude of people, an example has been made known, "By you too the duty to relatives should be fulfilled in just the same way towards relatives." And by causing those ghosts to attain heavenly success, lofty veneration has been made to the ghosts; by satisfying the community of monks headed by the Buddha with food, drink, and so on, strength has been given to the monks; and by producing the volition of generosity accompanied by qualities such as compassion and so on, much merit has been produced - therefore the Blessed One, gladdening the king with these qualities conforming with the truth, spoke the concluding verse "This duty to relatives."

Therein, "the duty to relatives" means the performing of duties that should be done by relatives for relatives. "Lofty" means prosperous, successful. "Strength" means bodily strength. "Produced" means accumulated. And here, by this "This duty to relatives has been pointed out," the Blessed One instructed the king with a talk on the Teaching. The showing of the duty to relatives is here the instruction. By this "And lofty veneration has been made to the ghosts," he encouraged. "Lofty" being praise, here is the encouragement to perform veneration again and again. By this "And strength has been given to the monks," he inspired. The giving of strength to the monks is here the inspiration through the increase of enthusiasm in such giving of strength. By this "Much merit has been produced by you," he gladdened. The praising of the production of merit is here the gladdening through being an exposition of his qualities conforming with the truth - thus the explanation here should be understood.

And at the conclusion of the teaching, through the exposition of the dangers of rebirth in the sphere of ghosts and so on, there was the full realisation of the teaching by eighty-four thousand living beings whose hearts were stirred and who wisely strove. On the second day too he expounded this very Tirokuṭṭa teaching to gods and humans. Thus up to seven days there was likewise the full realisation of the teaching.

The commentary on the story of the outside-the-walls ghost is concluded.

6. The Commentary on the Story of the Female Ghost Who Devoured Five Children

26-34. "You are naked, of ugly appearance": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattthī, referring to the female ghost who devoured five sons. It is said that in a small village not far from Sāvattthī, the wife of a certain householder was barren. His relatives said this to him: "Your wife is barren; we shall bring another maiden for you." He, out of affection for his wife, did not wish it. Then his wife, having heard that news, said thus to her husband: "Master, I am barren; another maiden should be brought; let not your family lineage be cut off." He, being pressured by her, brought another maiden. She, at a later time, became pregnant. The barren woman - overcome by jealousy, thinking "This one, having obtained a son, will become the mistress of this house," seeking a means for causing her abortion, having won over a certain female wandering ascetic with food, drink, and so on, had her cause the abortion of that one. She, when the embryo had been destroyed, informed her own mother; the mother, having gathered together her own relatives, reported that matter. They said this to the barren woman: "Was the embryo of this woman destroyed by you?" "I did not destroy it." "If the embryo was not destroyed by you, take an oath." "If the embryo was destroyed by me, may I be destined for an unfortunate realm, overcome by hunger and thirst, and having given birth to five sons in the evening and five in the morning, having eaten them, may I not reach satisfaction; and may I always be foul-smelling and surrounded by flies" - having spoken falsely, she took an oath. She, before long, having died, was reborn as a female ghost of ugly appearance not far from that very village.

At that time, eight elders who had finished keeping the rains retreat in the country, coming to Sāvattthī for the purpose of seeing the Teacher, took abode in a forest place endowed with shade and water not far from that village. Then that female ghost

showed herself to the elders. Among them, the senior monk of the Community, to that female ghost -

26. "You are naked, of ugly appearance, foul-smelling, you emit a putrid odour; Surrounded by flies, who are you standing here?"

asked in return with a verse. Therein, "naked" means without clothes. "Of ugly appearance" means deformed; you are endowed with an exceedingly hideous appearance. "Foul-smelling" means of undesirable odour. "You emit a putrid odour" means you emit the smell of a corpse from your body. "Surrounded by flies" means strewn all around with blue flies. "Who are you standing here" means who indeed of such appearance are you standing in this place, wandering here and there - this is the meaning.

Then that female ghost, thus questioned by the Great Elder, making herself known, generating religious emotion in beings -

27. "I, venerable sir, am a female ghost, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world; Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.
28. "In the morning five children, in the evening five more again; Having given birth I eat them, yet they are not enough for me.
29. "My heart is burnt and smokes from hunger; I cannot get drinking water to drink, see me gone to disaster."

She spoke these three verses.

27. Therein, "venerable sir" - she addresses the elder with respect. "Ill-fated" means gone to an unfortunate realm. "Belonging to Yama's world" means known as being included in the ghost realm which has received the name "Yama's world." "Gone from here" means gone from here, from the human world, to the realm of ghosts by way of being reborn; the meaning is "reborn."

28. "In the morning" means at the time of dawn of the night. For this is an instrumental expression used in the locative sense. "Five children" means five sons. For this is said by way of change of gender. "In the evening five more again" - the explanation is: in the evening time I eat again another five sons. "Having given birth" means having given birth to ten sons each day. "Yet they are not enough for me" means even those ten sons in one day are not adequate for me to ward off my hunger. Here "nā" is said by making it long for the sake of metrical ease in the verse.

29. "My heart is burnt and smokes from hunger" means when afflicted by hunger, by starvation, my heart region burns from all around by the digestive fire, smokes, and is scorched. "I cannot get drinking water to drink" means overcome by thirst, wandering here and there, I cannot get even drinking water to drink. "See me gone to disaster" means see me who has reached this kind of disaster, both common and uncommon to rebirth as a ghost - "venerable sir" - thus she declared to the elder the suffering being experienced by herself.

Having heard that, the elder, asking about the deed done by her -

30. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you eat the flesh of your sons?"

He spoke a verse. Therein, "wrong-doing" means misconduct. "By the result of what action" means by the result of what kind of action - whether of killing living beings, or of one among taking what is not given and so on. This is the meaning. Some read "by the result of what action."

Then that female ghost, telling the elder of the deed done by herself -

31. "My co-wife was pregnant, towards her I conceived evil;
I, with corrupted mind, caused an abortion.
32. "Her embryo was two months old, it flowed forth as just blood;
Then her mother, angry, brought together my relatives;
And she made me take an oath, and she caused me to be reviled.
33. "I spoke a terrible oath, a lie;
'May I eat the flesh of my sons, if that was done by me.'
34. "By the result of that action, and of lying, both;
I eat the flesh of my sons, smeared with pus and blood."She spoke verses.

31-32. Therein, "co-wife" means a woman having the same husband. "Towards her I conceived evil" means I conceived evil, cruel action towards that co-wife. "With corrupted mind" means with a corrupted consciousness, or with a corrupted mind. "Two months old" means having arisen and become established for two months, thus two months old. "Flowed forth as just blood" means being destroyed, having become just blood, it overflowed. "Then her mother, angry, brought together my relatives" means then that co-wife's mother, angry with me, assembled her own relatives. "Tatassā" is also a reading, with the word-analysis being "tato assā" (then of her).

33-34. "Oath" means a swearing. "Made to revile" means she threatened her with fear. "Spoke an oath, a lie" means "if that was done by me, may I become such" - thus showing the very evil that was done as if undone, I spoke a lie, an untrue oath. "I eat the flesh of my sons, if that was done by me" - this is the showing of the manner in which the oath was made at that time. The meaning is: if this evil of causing an abortion was done by me, in the future, in the rebirth of a new existence, may I eat only the flesh of my sons. "Of that action" means of the action of killing living beings committed by way of causing an abortion. "And of lying" means and of the action of lying. "Both" means by the result of both, of both actions. For this is the nominative case used in the instrumental sense. "Smeared with pus and blood" - the explanation is: having become smeared with pus by way of oozing and with blood by way of breaking apart, I eat the flesh of my sons.

Thus that female ghost, having declared the result of her own actions, again said thus to the elders - "I, venerable sir, in this very village, having been the wife of such-and-such a householder, having become overcome by jealousy, having done evil action, was thus reborn in the realm of ghosts. It would be good, venerable sir, if you would go to that householder's house; he will give you a gift; you should have that offering dedicated to me; thus there will be freedom for me from this realm of ghosts." The

elders, having heard that, having compassion for her, established in the nature of rescuing, entered that householder's house for almsfood. The householder, having seen the elders, with confidence arisen, having gone forward to meet them, having taken their bowls, having caused the elders to sit on seats, began to feed them with superior food. The elders, having reported that incident to the householder, had that gift dedicated to that female ghost. And at that very moment, that female ghost, freed from that suffering, having obtained lofty success, showed herself to the householder at night. Then the elders, having gone gradually to Sāvattthī, reported that matter to the Blessed One. And the Blessed One, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived. At the conclusion of the teaching, the great multitude, having gained a sense of urgency, abstained from jealousy and stinginess. Thus that teaching was beneficial to the great multitude.

The commentary on the story of the female ghost who devoured five children is concluded.

7. The Commentary on the Story of the Female Ghost Who Devoured Seven Children

35-45. "You are naked, of ugly appearance": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattthī, referring to the female ghost who devoured seven sons. It is said that in a certain small village not far from Sāvattthī, a certain lay follower had two sons - in the first stage of life, endowed with beauty, possessed of morality and good conduct. Their mother, thinking "I have sons," despised her husband by the power of her sons. He, disrespected by his wife, with a wearied mind, brought another maiden. She before long became pregnant. Then his chief wife, overcome by jealousy, having enticed a certain physician with material gains, through him caused the destruction of her three-month embryo. Then she, when questioned by the relatives and the husband "Was the embryo of this woman destroyed by you?" having spoken falsely "I did not destroy it," when told by those who did not believe her "Take an oath," took an oath: "May I, having given birth to seven sons in the evening and seven in the morning, eat the flesh of my sons, and may I always be foul-smelling and surrounded by flies."

She, at a later time, having died, by the very result of that abortion and lying, having been reborn in the realm of ghosts, eating the flesh of her sons in the manner of sons, wandered not far from that very village. And at that time several elders, having finished keeping the rains retreat at a village residence, coming to Sāvattthī for the purpose of seeing the Blessed One, made their dwelling for the night at a certain place not far from that village. Then that female ghost showed herself to those elders. The great elder asked her in verse -

35. "You are naked, of ugly appearance, foul-smelling, you emit a putrid odour;
Surrounded by flies, who are you standing here?"

She, questioned by the elder, gave a reply with three verses -

36. "I, venerable sir, am a female ghost, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.
37. "In the morning seven children, in the evening seven more again;
Having given birth I eat them, yet they are not enough for me.

38. "My heart is burnt and smokes from hunger;
I do not attain peace, like one burnt by fire in the sun's heat."

38. Therein, "peace" means the appeasement of the suffering of hunger and thirst. "Do not attain" means I do not obtain. "Like one burnt by fire in the sun's heat": the explanation is, like one being burnt by fire in exceedingly hot sunshine, I do not attain peace.

Having heard that, the great elder, asking about the deed done by her -

39. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you eat the flesh of your sons?" He spoke a verse.

Then that female ghost, telling of her rebirth in the ghost world and the reason for eating the flesh of her sons -

40. "I had two sons, both having attained youth;
I, endowed with the power of sons, despised my husband.

41. "Then my husband, angry, brought a co-wife for me;
She conceived an embryo, towards her I conceived evil.

42. "I, with corrupted mind, caused an abortion;
Her embryo was three months old, it fell as putrid blood.

43. "Then her mother, angry, brought together my relatives;
And she made me take an oath, and she caused me to be reviled.

44. "I spoke a terrible oath, a lie;
'May I eat the flesh of my sons, if that was done by me.'

45. "By the result of that action, and of lying, both;
I eat the flesh of my sons, smeared with pus and blood." He spoke these verses.

40-45. Therein, "endowed with the power of sons" means endowed with the power of sons, having obtained strength by virtue of her sons. "Despised" means having transgressed, she looked down upon, she despised. "It fell as putrid blood" means having become corpse-blood, the embryo fell away. All the remainder is similar to the preceding one. There, eight elders; here, several. There, five sons; here, seven - this alone is the distinction.

The commentary on the story of the female ghost who devoured seven children is concluded.

8. The Commentary on the Story of the Ox Ghost

46-53. "Why, as if mad" - the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this referring to a certain householder whose father had died. It is said that in Sāvattihī, the father of a certain householder died. He, with a heart scorched by sorrow on account of his father's death, weeping, mad, wandering about as if dear, whomever

he sees, he asks - "Have you seen my father?" No one was able to dispel his sorrow. But in his heart, like a lamp in a pot, the decisive support for the fruition of stream-entry blazes.

The Teacher, towards the break of dawn, surveying the world, having seen his decisive support for the fruition of stream-entry, having thought "It is fitting to bring up a past story for him, to appease his sorrow, and to give him the fruition of stream-entry," on the following day, after the meal, having returned from his alms round, without taking an attendant monk, went to his house door. He, having heard "The Teacher has come," having gone out to meet him, having ushered the Teacher into the house, when the Teacher was seated on the prepared seat, having himself paid homage to the Blessed One, seated to one side, said "Do you know, venerable sir, the place where my father has gone?" Then the Teacher said to him "Lay follower, do you ask about your father in this individual existence, or in the past?" He, having heard that word, thinking "It seems I have had many fathers," with sorrow diminished, attained a little equanimity. Then the Teacher, having given a talk on the Teaching for the dispelling of sorrow, having known that his sorrow had departed and his mind was pliant, having established him in the fruition of stream-entry through the gradual proclamation of the Teaching, went to the monastery.

Then the monks raised up a discussion in the Teaching hall - "See, friends, the majestic power of the Buddha! A lay follower so overcome with sorrow and lamentation was disciplined by the Blessed One in the fruition of stream-entry in just a moment." The Teacher, having gone there, seated on the excellent Buddha-seat that had been prepared, asked "What discussion were you having as you sat together here, monks?" The monks reported that matter to the Blessed One. The Teacher, having said "Not only now, monks, has this one's sorrow been removed by me; in the past too it was removed indeed," being requested by them, brought up the past.

In the past, in Bārāṇasī, the father of a certain householder died. He, overcome with sorrow and lamentation on account of his father's death, with tearful face, with red eyes, weeping, circumambulates the funeral pyre. His son, a prince named Sujāta, wise, experienced, endowed with higher intelligence, thinking of a means to remove his father's sorrow, one day, having seen a dead bull outside the city, having brought grass and drinking water and having placed them before it, stood saying "Eat, eat, drink, drink." Those who came one after another, having seen him, say "Dear Sujāta, are you mad, you who bring grass and water to a dead bull?" He does not reply anything. People, having gone to his father's presence, said "Your son has gone mad; he is giving grass and water to a dead bull." Having heard that, the sorrow that had been standing regarding the householder's father departed. He, thinking "My son, it seems, has gone mad," struck with religious emotion, having gone quickly, reproving him - "Are you not, dear Sujāta, wise, experienced, endowed with higher intelligence? Why did you give grass and water to a dead bull?" -

46. "Why, as if mad, having mowed green grass,
Do you prattle 'Eat, eat!' to an old bull whose life has departed?
47. "For indeed not by food or drink, will a dead bull rise up;
You are a fool and imprudent, just as that other fool."

He spoke a pair of verses. Therein, "why" is a word of inquiry. "As if mad" means as if having the nature of a madman, as if having reached derangement of the mind. "Having mowed" means having cut. "Green grass" means fresh grass. "Prattle" means talk nonsense. "Whose life has departed" means whose life has gone. "Old bull" means an ox, an aged bull. "With food and drink" means with the green grass or drinking water given by you. "A dead bull will rise up" means a deceased bull, having obtained life, would indeed not rise up. "You are a fool and imprudent" means you are a fool by reason of folly, and imprudent due to the absence of wisdom reckoned as intelligence. "Just as that other fool" means just as that - another devoid of wisdom too might talk nonsense - so you talk nonsense in vain. This is the meaning. "Yathā taṃ" is merely a particle.

Having heard that, Sujāta, making known his own intention in order to convince his father -

48. "These feet, this head, this body with its tail;
The eyes remain just so, this bull should rise up.
49. "The grandfather's hands and feet, body and head are not seen;
Crying at a clay stupa, are you not yourself the fool?"

He spoke a pair of verses. Its meaning is - This bull has these four feet, this head, and this body exists together with its tail - thus "with its tail" means this body. And these eyes, the organs of sight, remain in their unbroken form just as before death. "This bull should rise up" means for this reason my thought would be that this bull should rise up, should get up. Some read "Methinks the bull should rise up"; the intention is that for that reason I might think that this bull might even suddenly raise up its body; thus such an imagination might arise in me. But the grandfather's - my paternal grandfather's - hands and feet, body and head are not seen; yet crying at a stupa made of clay into which his bones were placed, a hundredfold, a thousandfold more, dear father, you yourself are the fool, devoid of wisdom; activities subject to breaking break up; for those who understand, what lamentation is there? - thus he expounded the Teaching to his father.

Having heard that, the Bodhisatta's father, having thought "My wise son did this deed in order to convince me," praising his son, saying "Dear Sujāta, 'all beings too are subject to death' - this is known by me; henceforth I shall not grieve; one should indeed be such a wise person capable of removing sorrow" -

50. "Indeed, as I was blazing, like a fire sprinkled with ghee;
Pouring down as if with water, he extinguished all my anguish.
51. "He has indeed drawn out my dart, the sorrow lodged in my heart;
He who, for me overcome with sorrow, dispelled my sorrow for my father.
52. "I have had the dart pulled out, I have become cool, quenched;
I do not grieve, I do not weep, having heard you, young man.
53. "Thus do the wise act, those who are compassionate;
They turn one away from sorrow, as Sujāta did his father."

He spoke four verses. Therein, "blazing" means blazing with the fire of sorrow, burning. "Santam" means existing. "Pāvaka" means fire. "Pouring down as if with water" means as if sprinkling with water. "He extinguished all anguish" means he extinguished all my mental disturbance. "He has indeed drawn out" means he has indeed taken out. "Dart" means the dart of sorrow. "Lodged in the heart" means that which had become a dart connected with the mind. "Overcome with sorrow" means of one overpowered by sorrow. "Sorrow for the father" means sorrow arisen referring to the father. "Dispelled" means removed. "Having heard you, young man" means: young boy, having heard your words, now however I do not grieve, I do not weep. "As Sujāta did his father" means just as this Sujāta turned his own father away from sorrow, so too others who are compassionate, who are disposed to supporting, those wise ones act thus, rendering help to fathers and others as well. This is the meaning.

Having heard the young man's words, the father, having become free from sorrow, having bathed his head, having eaten, having set his business activities going, having died, was destined for heaven. The Teacher, having brought this proclamation of the Teaching, made known the truths to those monks; at the conclusion of the truths, many became established in the fruition of stream-entry and so on. At that time Sujāta was the Lord of the World.

The commentary on the story of the ox ghost is concluded.

9. The Commentary on the Story of the Great Weaver Female Ghost

54-57. "Faeces and urine and blood and pus": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattihī, referring to a certain weaver's female ghost. About twelve monks, it is said, having taken a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, investigating a place suitable for dwelling, when entering the rains retreat was approaching, having seen a certain forest haunt endowed with shade and water, delightful, and a village as food resort neither too far nor too near from it, having stayed there one night, on the second day entered the village for almsfood. There eleven weavers were dwelling; they, having seen those monks, with pleasure arisen, having led them to their own respective houses, having served them with superior food, said "Where, venerable sirs, are you going?" "Wherever is convenient for us, there we shall go." "If so, venerable sirs, you should dwell right here" - they requested them to enter the rains retreat. The monks accepted. The lay followers, having had forest huts built for them there, gave them. The monks entered the rains retreat there.

There the chief weaver attended upon two monks carefully with the four requisites; the others attended upon one monk each. The wife of the chief weaver was faithless, without confidence, holding wrong views, and stingy; she did not attend upon the monks carefully. He, having seen that, having brought her own younger sister, handed over the authority in his house. She, being faithful and devoted, carefully looked after the monks. All those weavers gave one cloak each to each of the monks who had completed the rains retreat. There the stingy wife of the chief weaver, with a corrupted mind, abused her own husband - "Whatever gift of food and drink has been given by you to the ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, may that become faeces and urine and pus and blood for you in the world beyond, and may the cloaks become blazing iron sheets!"

There the chief weaver, at a later time, having died, was reborn in the Vindhya forest as a tree deity endowed with power. But his miserly wife, having died, was reborn as a female ghost not far from that very dwelling place. She, naked, of ugly appearance, overcome by hunger and thirst, having gone to the presence of that terrestrial god, said - "I, master, without clothes, exceedingly overcome by hunger and thirst, wander about; give me cloth and food and drink." He presented her with divine, superior food and drink. That, the very moment it was taken by her, became faeces and urine and pus and blood, and the cloak given, when put on by her, became a blazing iron sheet. She, experiencing great suffering, having thrown it away, wanders about crying.

And at that time a certain monk, having finished keeping the rains retreat, going to pay homage to the Teacher, together with a great caravan, proceeded into the Vindhya forest. The caravan members, having travelled the road at night, by day, having seen in the forest a place endowed with dense shade and water, having unyoked the vehicles, rested for a moment. But the monk, out of desire for seclusion, having withdrawn a little, at the root of a certain tree of dense shade, concealed by jungle thicket, having laid out his double robe, lying down, with body wearied by the fatigue of travelling the road at night, went to sleep. The caravan members, having rested, proceeded on the road; that monk did not wake up. Then, having risen in the evening time, not seeing them, having taken a certain wrong path, gradually he arrived at the dwelling place of that deity. Then that young god, having seen him, having approached in human form, having exchanged friendly welcome, having ushered him into his own mansion, having given foot ointment and so on, sat down attending upon him. And at that time that female ghost, having come, said "Give me, master, food and drink and a cloak." He gave those to her. And those, the very moment they were taken by her, became just faeces, urine, pus, blood, and blazing iron sheets. That monk, having seen that, with a sense of urgency arisen, to that young god -

54. "Faeces and urine and blood and pus, she consumes - of what is this the result?

What action did this woman do, she who always feeds on blood and pus?

55. "New garments, beautiful indeed, soft, pure, and hairy;

When given, they become mixed, like thorns, what action did this woman do?"

He asked in return with two verses. Therein, "of what is this the result" means of what kind of action is this the result, which she now experiences. "What action did this woman do" means what action did this woman do formerly. "She who always feeds on blood and pus" means she who at all times eats and consumes nothing but blood and pus. "New" means costly, having just appeared at that very moment. "Beautiful" means lovely, fair to behold. "Soft" means pleasant to the touch. "Pure" means of pure colour. "Hairy" means having fine hair, pleasant to the touch; the meaning is beautiful. "When given, they become mixed, like thorns" means they become like the thorns of the kitaka plant, like sheets of metal. "Kīṭakā bhavanti" is also a reading; the meaning is they become like biting insects in appearance.

Thus that young god, asked by that monk, making known the deed done in a former birth -

56. "She was my wife, venerable sir, not a giver, stingy, miserly;
She reviles and abuses me when I am giving to ascetics and brahmins.
57. "Faeces and urine and blood and pus, consume you this impurity at all times;
May this be yours in the world beyond, and may your garments become like
thorns;
Having practised such misconduct, having come here, she eats for a long
time."

He spoke two verses. Therein, "not a giver" means habitually not giving anything whatsoever to anyone. "Stingy, miserly" - the explanation is: first she was stingy by the intrinsic nature of the stain of stinginess, and through repeated practice of that she became obstinately stingy, and through that she was miserly. Now, showing that very miserliness of hers, he said beginning with "She, when I am giving." Therein, "such" means having practised such verbal misconduct and so on as stated above. "Having come here" means having come to this realm of ghosts, having reached the ghost state of existence. "Eats for a long time" means she eats nothing but faeces and so on for a long time. For in whatever manner she reviled, the result occurs in that very same manner. That at which the reviling was directed, elsewhere on earth, at what is reckoned as the end of the earth, like a thunderbolt falling upon the head, it falls upon oneself.

Thus that young god, having spoken of the deed done by her in the past, again said to that monk - "But, venerable sir, is there any means to release her from the realm of ghosts?" And when it was said "There is," "Speak, venerable sir." If, having given a gift to the Blessed One and the noble Community or even to a single monk, it is dedicated to her, and she rejoices in that, thus there will be freedom for her from this suffering. Having heard that, the young god, having given superior food and drink to that monk, dedicated that offering to that female ghost. Instantly that female ghost became satisfied, with faculties pleased, and contented with divine food. Again, having given a pair of divine cloths into the hand of that very monk with reference to the Blessed One, he dedicated that offering to the female ghost. And instantly she became clothed in divine garments, adorned with divine ornaments, endowed with all sensual pleasures, and comparable to a celestial nymph. And that monk, by the supernormal power of that young god, on that very day having reached Sāvattṥī, having entered Jeta's Grove, having approached the presence of the Blessed One, having paid homage, having given that pair of cloths, reported that incident. The Blessed One too, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived. That teaching was beneficial to the great multitude.

The commentary on the story of the great weaver female ghost is concluded.

10. The Commentary on the Story of the Bald-Headed Female Ghost

58-72. "Who are you inside the mansion": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattṥī, referring to a certain bald-headed female ghost. In the past, it is said, in Bārāṇasī there was a certain harlot, lovely, beautiful, pleasing, endowed with the highest beauty of complexion, with an exceedingly captivating mass of hair. For her hair was black, long, slender, soft, glossy, with curly tips, able to be grasped with both hands, and hanging down in tresses as far as the girdle. Having seen that

beauty of her hair, the young people were for the most part enamoured of her. Then several women, not enduring that beauty of her hair, overcome by jealousy, having consulted together, having enticed her very own attendant female slave with material gains, had her give a medicine for causing the falling out of her hair. It is said that that female slave, having prepared that medicine together with bath powder, gave it to her at the time of bathing in the river Ganges. She, having moistened the roots of her hair with it, plunged into the water; at the very moment of plunging, the hair fell out with the roots, and her head became like a bitter gourd. Then she, with hair completely cut off, with plucked head, having become ugly like a pigeon, being unable to enter the inner city out of shame, having wrapped her head with a cloth, making her dwelling at a certain place outside the city, after a few days, with shame gone, having returned from there, having pressed sesame seeds, carrying on oil trade and liquor trade, earned her livelihood. She, one day, when two or three people, intoxicated with liquor, were falling into deep sleep, stole their loosened worn garments.

Then one day she, having seen a certain elder who had eliminated the mental corruptions walking for almsfood, with a confident mind, having led him to her own house, having caused him to sit down on a prepared seat, gave him oil-mixed trough-scrapings of poonac. He, out of compassion for her, having accepted it, consumed it. She, with a devoted mind, holding an umbrella above, stood there. And that elder, gladdening her mind, having given thanksgiving, departed. And that woman, at the very time of the thanksgiving, made an aspiration: "May my hair be long, slender, glossy, soft, and with curly tips."

She, at a later time, having died, by the fruit of mixed action, was reborn alone in a golden mansion in the middle of the ocean. Her hair came to be in the very form she had wished for. But because of stealing the cloaks of human beings, she was naked. She, having been reborn again and again in that golden mansion, spent one interval between Buddhas being just naked. Then, when our Blessed One had arisen in the world and had set in motion the excellent wheel of the Teaching, while he was gradually dwelling at Sāvattthī, seven hundred merchants dwelling in Sāvattthī set out by boat into the great ocean bound for Suvaṇṇabhūmi. The boat embarked upon by them, tossed about by the force of uneven winds, wandering here and there, came to that region. Then that mansion-ghost, together with the mansion, showed herself to them. Having seen that, the chief merchant, asking -

58. "Who are you standing inside the mansion, not coming out?
Come out, good lady, let us see you standing outside."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "who are you standing inside the mansion" means: you who are standing inside, within the mansion, who are you? He asks whether she is a human woman or a non-human woman. "Not coming out" means she did not come out from the mansion. "Come out, good lady, let us see you standing outside" means: good lady, we wish to see you standing outside; therefore come out from the mansion. "Come out, venerable one" is also a reading; the meaning is "may there be good fortune for you."

Then she, making known her inability to go outside -

59. "I am troubled, I am ashamed, to go out naked;
I am covered by my hair, little merit was done by me."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "I am troubled" means I am distressed, afflicted at going out naked. "I am ashamed" means I feel shame. "I am covered by my hair" means by my hair I am concealed, with my body wrapped. "Little merit was done by me" means little, slight wholesome action was done by me; the intention is merely the giving of oil-cake.

Then the merchant, wishing to give her his upper garment -

60. "Come, I give you my cloak, put on this cloth;
Having put on this cloth, come, go out, beautiful one;
Come out, good lady, let us see you standing outside."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "come" (handa) means take. "Cloak" (uttarīya) means the outer covering, the upper garment - this is the meaning. "I give you" (dadāmi te) means I give to you. "Put on this cloth" means you put on this upper garment of mine. "Beautiful one" (sobhane) means one of beautiful appearance.

And having said thus, he presented his upper garment to her. She, showing both the unsuitability for herself of what was being given in that way, and how what was being given could be suitable -

61. "What is given by your hand to my hand, does not benefit me;
Here is a lay follower with faith, a disciple of the Perfectly Enlightened One.
62. "Having clothed him with this, dedicate the offering to me;
Thus I shall be happy, endowed with all sensual pleasures."

He spoke a pair of verses. Therein, "what is given by your hand to my hand, does not benefit me" means, sir, what is given by you, by your hand to my hand, does not benefit me, is not applicable, does not become suitable for use - this is the meaning. "Here is a lay follower with faith" means this one who is a lay follower through going for refuge with reference to the Triple Gem, and faithful through being endowed with faith in the fruit of action, is here in this group of people. "Having clothed him with this, dedicate the offering to me" means having had this lay follower put on the cloth being given to me, dedicate that offering to me, give the transference of merit. "Thus I shall be happy" means when it is done thus, I shall be happy, clothed in divine garments, having attained happiness.

Having heard that, the merchants, having bathed that lay follower, having anointed him, clothed him with a pair of garments. Making known that matter, the compilers of the recitation -

63. "Having bathed him and having anointed him, the merchants;
Having clothed him with garments, dedicated the offering to her.
64. Immediately after the offering was dedicated, the result arose;
Food, clothing, and drink - this is the fruit of the offering.
65. "Then pure, with clean clothing, wearing the finest Kāsi cloth;

Laughing, she came out from the mansion, 'This is the fruit of the offering.'"

They spoke three verses.

63. Therein, "taṃ" means that lay follower. The word "ca" is merely a particle. "Te" means those merchants - this is the explanation. "Having anointed" means having anointed with the finest fragrance. "Having clothed with garments" means having fed him food endowed with colour, fragrance, and flavour, with accompaniments, they clothed him with two garments, namely the inner robe and the upper robe; they gave two garments - this is the meaning. "Dedicated the offering to her" means they dedicated that offering to that female ghost.

64. "Immediately after the offering was dedicated" - "anu" is merely a particle; immediately after the offering was dedicated to her. "The result arose" means the result of the offering, the fruit, arose for that female ghost. "Of what kind?" - the female ghost said "food, clothing, and drink." Food of various kinds similar to divine food, and garments resplendent with various brilliant colours similar to divine garments, and drinks of many kinds - this is such a fruit of the offering that arose - this is the explanation.

65. "Then" means after the obtaining of the aforesaid food and so on. "Pure" means with body purified by bathing. "With clean clothing" means dressed in thoroughly pure garments. "Wearing the finest Kāsi cloth" means wearing garments even finer than Kāsi cloth. "Laughing" means she came out from the mansion laughing by way of making known "See now this special fruit of your offering."

Then those merchants, having thus seen the fruit of merit directly, filled with wonder and amazement, with respect and esteem arisen towards that lay follower, with joined palms, attended on him. He too, having gladdened them exceedingly with a talk on the Teaching, established them in the refuges and in the precepts. They, about the deed done by that mansion-ghost -

66. "Your mansion, beautifully variegated and pleasant, shines;
O deity, being asked, explain, of what action is this the fruit?"

Asked with this verse. Therein, "beautifully variegated" means well-arranged painted forms by way of elephants, horses, women, men and so on, and by way of garland-work, creeper-work and so on. "Pleasant" means delightful, beautiful. "Of what action is this the fruit" means of what kind of action - whether consisting of giving or consisting of morality - is this the fruit. This is the meaning.

She, thus questioned by them, declaring both - "This is the fruit of the small wholesome action done by me, but as for the unwholesome action, in the future such will be in hell" -

67. "To a monk walking for almsfood, a trough-scraper I
Gave to one upright, with a clear mind.

68. "Of that wholesome action, the result for a long interval;
I experience in the mansion, but that now is small.

69. "After four months, death will occur;

I will fall into hell, extremely painful and terrible.

70. "Rectangular, with four doors, divided into sections, measured;
Surrounded by an iron wall, covered over with iron.
71. "Its floor is made of iron, blazing, endowed with heat;
Having pervaded a hundred yojanas all around, it stands always.
72. "There I shall experience painful feeling for a long duration;
The fruit of evil action, therefore I grieve exceedingly." She spoke verses.

67. Therein, "of a monk walking about" means of a certain monk whose mental defilements were destroyed, walking about for almsfood. "Doṇinimmajjani" means oil-cake with oil flowing out. "Upright" means one who has attained the state of uprightness through the absence of mental defilements that make the mind crooked, bent, and twisted. "With a clear mind" means with a mind well pleased through faith in the fruit of action.

68-69. "Dīghamantaran" - the syllable "ma" serves as a word-connector; "dīgha-antara" means a long time. This is the meaning. "And that now is small" means and that fruit of merit, because the result of the action has ripened, is now small, with little remaining; the meaning is I shall pass away from here before long. Therefore she said "After four months, death will occur" - this shows that beyond four months, in the fifth month above the four months, my death will occur. "Absolutely bitter" means absolutely suffering, because of the state of having six sense-bases of undesirable contact absolutely. This is the meaning. "Terrible" means cruel. "Niraya" - having taken it as "there is no happiness (ayo) herein (ettha)," it is hell which has obtained the name "niraya." "Papatissahan" means I shall fall.

70. And since "hell" here is intended as the Avīci great hell, in order to show it in its own form, she said beginning with "rectangular." Therein, "rectangular" means four-cornered. "With four doors" means furnished with four doors in the four directions. "Divided" means well divided.

"In sections" means by portions. "Measured" means weighed. "Bounded by an iron wall" means encircled by a wall made of iron. "Covered over with iron" means closed above with an iron sheet alone.

71-72. "Endowed with heat" means continuously combined with flames by a great fire with flames arisen from all sides. "A hundred yojanas all around" means thus indeed outside all around in all directions a hundred yojanas, a hundred of yojanas. "Always" means at all times. "Stands pervading" means stands having spread throughout. "There" means in that great hell. "Shall experience" means I shall experience, I shall undergo. "And the fruit of evil action" means this such experience of suffering is the fruit of evil action thus greatly done. This is the meaning.

Thus, when she had made known the fruit of the deeds done by herself and the danger of hell in the future, that lay follower, with a mind urged by compassion, having thought "Well then, let me become a support for her," said - "Deity, you have become endowed with all sensual pleasures and possessed of the success of the eighteen kinds of adornment through the influence of a gift to me alone. But now,

having given a gift to these lay followers and having recollected the virtues of the Teacher, you will be freed from rebirth in hell." That female ghost, full of joy, having said "Excellent!" having satisfied them with divine food and drink, gave them divine garments and various kinds of jewels, and having given a divine suit of garments into their hands with reference to the Blessed One, she sent homage too, saying "A certain mansion-ghost, venerable sir, pays respect with her head at the Blessed One's feet - having gone to Sāvattthī, pay homage to the Teacher in my name," and she brought that boat by her own supernatural power to the port desired by them on that very day.

Then those merchants, from that port, gradually having reached Sāvattthī, having entered Jeta's Grove, having given that suit of garments to the Teacher and having reported the homage, reported that incident to the Blessed One from the beginning. The Teacher, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching in detail to the assembly that had arrived. That teaching was beneficial to the great multitude. And those lay followers, on the second day, having given a great gift to the Community of monks headed by the Buddha, dedicated the offering to her. And she, having passed away from that realm of ghosts, was reborn in a golden mansion in the Tāvātimsa realm, resplendent with various jewels, with a retinue of a thousand nymphs.

The commentary on the story of the bald-headed female ghost is concluded.

11. The Commentary on the Story of the Nāga Ghost

73-84. "In front he goes with a white elephant": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Jeta's Grove, referring to two brahmin ghosts. It is said that the Venerable Saṃkicca, seven years old, having attained arahantship at the very hall of tonsure, standing on the plane of a novice, dwelling in a forest haunt together with about thirty monks, having warded off even death that had come to those monks from the hands of five hundred thieves, and having tamed those thieves and given them the going forth, went to the Teacher's presence. The Teacher expounded the Teaching to those monks; at the conclusion of the teaching, those monks attained arahantship. Then the Venerable Saṃkicca, having completed the rains retreat and having obtained full ordination, together with those five hundred monks, having gone to Bārāṇasī, dwelt at Isipatana. People, having gone to the elder's presence, having heard the Teaching, with devoted minds, street by street, having formed into groups, gave a gift for the visitors. There a certain lay follower encouraged people to provide regular meals; they established regular meals according to their strength.

Now at that time in Bārāṇasī, a certain brahmin of wrong view had two sons and one daughter. Among them, the eldest son was a friend of that lay follower. He, having taken him, went to the presence of the Venerable Saṃkicca. The Venerable Saṃkicca expounded the Teaching to him. He was of tender heart. Then that lay follower said to him - "You should give a regular meal to one monk." "The giving of regular meals to ascetics, disciples of the Sakyan, is not practised by us brahmins; therefore I shall not give." "Will you not give a meal even to me?" "How would I not give?" he said. "If so, what you give to me, give that to one monk." He, having assented "Very well," on the second day, right early, having gone to the monastery, having brought one monk, fed him.

Thus as time went on, having seen the practice of the monks and having heard the Teaching, his younger brother and sister became devoted to the Dispensation and delighted in meritorious deeds. Thus those three persons, giving gifts according to their means, honoured, respected, revered, and venerated ascetics and brahmins. But their mother and father were faithless, without confidence, disrespectful towards ascetics and brahmins, indifferent to meritorious deeds, and without desire. The relatives proposed their daughter, the girl, for the sake of their maternal uncle's son. And he, having heard the Teaching in the presence of the Venerable Saṃkicca, being struck with religious emotion, having gone forth, constantly went to his own mother's house to eat. His mother enticed him with her brother's daughter, the girl. Because of that, he, having become dissatisfied, having approached his preceptor, said - "I shall leave the Order, venerable sir; allow me." The preceptor, having seen the achievement of his decisive support, said - "Novice, wait for just one month." He, having assented "Very well," when the month had passed, reported likewise. The preceptor again said "Wait for a fortnight." When the fortnight had passed, when he said likewise, he again said "Wait for a week." He assented "Very well." Then within that week, the house of the novice's maternal uncle's wife, with its roof destroyed, old, with weak walls, battered by wind and rain, collapsed. There the brahmin, the brahmin woman, the two sons, and the daughter, overwhelmed by the house, died. Among them, the brahmin and the brahmin woman were reborn in the realm of ghosts, and the two sons and the daughter among the terrestrial gods. Among them, for the eldest son an elephant vehicle arose, for the youngest a mule-drawn chariot, and for the daughter a golden palanquin. The brahmin and the brahmin woman, having taken very large iron clubs, beat each other; at the places struck, very large boils the size of pots arose, and in just a moment, having ripened, reached the point of bursting. They, having split each other's boils, overcome by wrath, merciless, threatening with harsh words, drink the pus and blood, and do not obtain satisfaction.

Then the novice, overcome by discontent, having approached his preceptor, said - "Venerable sir, the days promised by me have passed; I shall go home. Allow me." Then the preceptor, having said to him "Come when the sun has set on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight," went a little way behind the Isipatana monastery and stood. And at that time those two young gods together with their sister were going by that very path to attend an assembly of demons, but their mother and father, with clubs in hand, of harsh speech, of dark appearance, with tangled and matted and rough and fallen masses of hair, resembling trunks of palm trees burnt by fire, with pus and blood oozing out, with wrinkled bodies, exceedingly loathsome and horrifying in appearance, followed after them.

Then the Venerable Saṃkicca, having performed such a feat of supernormal power so that the novice could see them all going, said to the novice - "Do you see, novice, these ones going?" "Yes, venerable sir, I see." "Then ask these ones about the deed done by them." He asked in order those going by elephant carriage and so on. They said - "Ask those ghosts who come from behind." The novice addressed those ghosts in verses -

73. "In front he goes with a white elephant, in the middle with a mule-drawn chariot;

And behind a maiden is carried in a palanquin, illuminating the ten directions all around.

74. "But you, with clubs in your hands, with tearful faces, with bodies cut and broken;
When you were human beings, what evil did you do, that you drink each other's blood?"

Therein, "in front" means at the very first. "With a white" means with a pale one. "Goes" means proceeds. "In the middle" means in between the one who has mounted the elephant and the one who has mounted the palanquin. "With a mule-drawn chariot" - the explanation is: goes with a chariot yoked with mules. "Is carried" means is conveyed. "Illuminating the ten directions all around" means shining from all sides, all around, in all ten directions, with the radiance of her own body and with the radiance of garments, ornaments, and so on. "With clubs in their hands" - those in whose hands, that is to say palms, there are clubs, they are "with clubs in their hands"; because the conventional usage of "pāṇi" (palm) is found in contexts such as grinding stones and so on, the word "pāṇi" (palm) is specifically distinguished by the word "hattha" (hand). "With bodies cut and broken" means with bodies cut and broken here and there by the blows of clubs. "Pivātha" means "you drink."

Thus questioned by the novice, those ghosts all that

They replied about the incident with four verses -

75. "He who goes in front with an elephant, a white serpent with four legs;
He was our eldest son, having given gifts, happy he rejoices.
76. "He who in the middle with a mule-drawn chariot, yoked with four, well-moving;
He was our middle son, without stinginess, a master in liberality, he shines.
77. "And she who behind is carried in a palanquin, a wise woman with doe-like eyes;
She was our youngest daughter, by giving half of her share, happy she rejoices.
78. "These gave gifts formerly, with confident minds, to ascetics and brahmins;
But we were stingy, abusive to ascetics and brahmins;
These, having given, enjoy themselves, while we wither like a cut reed."

75. Therein, "he who goes in front" means whoever goes in front among these who are going. Or the reading is "yoso purato gacchatī"; its meaning is "he who goes in front." "With an elephant" means with an elephant that has obtained the name "kuñjara" because it wears away (jīrayati) the earth (kuṃ), or because it delights in and roams about in glens (kuñjesu). "With a serpent" means there is nothing that is not accessible to it, nothing that cannot be overcome by it, thus it is a nāga; with that serpent. "With four legs" means with a quadruped. "Eldest" means firstborn.

76-77. "With four" means with four mules. "Well-moving" means with beautiful gait, with graceful gait. "With doe-like eyes" means with gentle eyes like a hind. "By half of

her share" means by half of her share, by the giving of half of the portion she herself received, which was the cause. "Happy" means a happy woman. For this is said by way of change of gender.

78. "Abusive" means those who insult. "They enjoy themselves" means they direct their own faculties here and there as they please among the divine types of sensual pleasure, or they have themselves attended upon by their retinue through the outcome of the power of their own merit. "And we wither like a cut reed" means but we wither like a reed cut and thrown into the sun's heat; we become dried and withered through hunger and thirst and through mutual blows with sticks.

Having thus made known their own evil, they told him "We are your maternal uncle and maternal uncle's wife." Having heard that, the novice, with a sense of urgency arisen, asking "How do food provisions succeed for such wrongdoers?" -

79. "What is your food, what is your bed, and how do you sustain yourselves, you of very evil nature?
When there were abundant possessions, not few, having failed to attain happiness, you have now reached suffering."

He spoke this verse. Therein, "what is your food" means what kind is your food? "What is your bed" means what kind is your bed? Some read "kiṃ sayānā"; the meaning is what kind of beds, on what kind of beds do you sleep. "And how do you sustain yourselves" means in what manner do you sustain yourselves; "kathaṃ vo yāpethā" is also a reading; the meaning is how do you sustain yourselves. "Of very evil nature" means thoroughly, exceedingly of evil nature. "When there were abundant possessions" means when there were unlimited, excellent possessions. "Not few" means not few, that is, many. "Having failed to attain happiness" means through the non-performance of merit, which is the cause of happiness, having missed and failed to attain happiness. Some read "sukhassa virādhena" (by the failure to attain happiness). "Having now reached suffering" means having now, at present, reached this suffering included in the realm of ghosts.

Thus questioned by the novice, the ghosts, answering the matter asked by him -

80. "Having killed each other, we drink pus and blood;
Having drunk much, we are not satisfied, we do not find pleasure.
81. "Thus indeed mortals lament, non-givers, after death standing in Yama's realm;
Those who, having obtained and acquired wealth, neither enjoy it nor make merit.
82. "They, overcome by hunger and thirst in the hereafter, afterwards for a long time burn, being consumed;
Having done actions with painful consequences, they experience suffering with bitter fruits.
83. "For wealth and grain are brief, brief is life here;
Having known the brief as brief, the wise one should make an island.

84. "Those men who thus understand, skilled in the Teaching;
They are not negligent in giving, having heard the word of the Worthy Ones."

They spoke five verses.

80-81. Therein, "not satisfied" means we are not satisfied, content, or satiated. "We do not relish" means we do not find delight, we do not produce approval; the meaning is we shall not drink that of our own preference. "Thus indeed" means just so. "Mortals lament" means other people too, like us, who have committed wrongdoing, lament and cry out. "Non-givers" means habitually not giving, stingy. "Standing in Yama's domain" means habitually standing in the sphere of ghosts, in Yama's place, designated as the world of Yama. "Those who, having obtained and acquired wealth" means those who, having gained and received wealth that produces distinction of happiness both now and in the future. "Neither enjoy it nor make merit" means like us, they themselves do not enjoy it, nor do they make merit consisting of giving by giving to others.

82. "They, overcome by hunger and thirst in the hereafter" means those beings, in the hereafter, in the world beyond, in the sphere of ghosts, having been overcome by hunger and thirst. "For a long time they burn, being consumed" means being scorched by the fire of suffering caused by hunger and so on, and by the fire of remorse occurring as "Indeed wholesome was not done by us, evil was done" and so on, they burn, they lament - this is the meaning. "With painful consequences" means with painful results. "They experience suffering with bitter fruits" means having done evil deeds with undesirable fruits, they experience suffering, suffering in the realm of misery, for a long time.

83-84. "Brief" means not lasting for a long time, impermanent, subject to change. "Brief is life here" means here in the human world, the life of beings too is brief, limited, small. Therefore the Blessed One said - "One who lives long lives a hundred years or a little more." "Having known the brief as brief" means having examined with wisdom that the requisites such as wealth and grain, and the life of human beings, are brief, limited, momentary, and not lasting long. "The wise one should make an island" means a wise person should make an island, a support for oneself, a foundation for welfare and happiness in the world beyond. "Those who thus understand" means those people who know as it really is the brief nature of people's wealth and life, they are never negligent in giving. "Having heard the word of the Worthy Ones" means having heard the word of the noble ones beginning with the Buddha; the meaning is because of having heard. The remainder is well-known.

Thus those ghosts, questioned by the novice, having told that matter, declared "We are your maternal uncle and maternal aunt." Having heard that, the novice, with a sense of urgency arisen, having dispelled his discontent, having fallen with his head at the feet of his preceptor, said thus - "That, venerable sir, which is to be done by one who is compassionate, out of compassion, that has been done for me by you. Indeed I have been protected from a great fall into harm. Now I have no need of the household life; I shall find delight in the holy life." Then the Venerable Saṃkicca told him a meditation subject suited to his disposition. He, devoting himself to the meditation subject, before long attained arahantship. The Venerable Saṃkicca,

however, reported that incident to the Blessed One. The Teacher, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching in detail to the assembly that had arrived. That teaching was beneficial to the great multitude.

The commentary on the story of the nāga ghost is concluded.

12. The Commentary on the Story of the Snake Ghost

85-94. "Just as a snake, its worn-out skin": the Teacher, while dwelling at Jeta's Grove, spoke this referring to a certain lay follower. It is said that in Sāvattthī, the son of a certain lay follower died. He, overcome with lamentation and sorrow on account of his son's death, being unable to go outside and do any work, remained in his house alone. Then the Teacher, towards the break of dawn, having emerged from the attainment of great compassion, surveying the world with the Buddha-eye, having seen that lay follower, in the earlier period of the day, having dressed, taking his bowl and robe, having gone to his house, stood at the door. And the lay follower, having heard of the Teacher's arrival, quickly having risen and gone, having gone out to meet him, having taken the bowl from his hand, having ushered him into the house, having prepared a seat, offered it. The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat. The lay follower too, having paid homage to the Blessed One, sat down to one side. The Blessed One said to him "What is this, lay follower, you appear as if overcome with sorrow?" "Yes, Blessed One, my dear son has died; therefore I grieve." Then the Blessed One, dispelling his sorrow, related the Uruga Jātaka.

In the past, it is said, in the Kāsi country, in Bārāṇasī, there was a brahmin family named Dhammapāla. There the brahmin, the brahmin woman, the son, the daughter, the daughter-in-law, and the slave woman - all these were devoted to the development of the recollection of death. Among them, whoever went out from the house, having exhorted the remaining people, went out without attachment. Then one day the brahmin, having gone out from the house together with his son, having gone to the field, ploughs. The son sets fire to dry grass, leaves, and sticks. There a black snake, having come out from a hollow in a tree out of fear of the heat, bit this son of the brahmin. He, having fainted from the force of the poison, having fallen down right there, died, and was reborn as Sakka, the king of gods. The brahmin, having seen his son dead, said thus to a certain man passing near the work site - "My dear, having gone to my house, say thus to the brahmin woman: 'Having bathed, dressed in clean garments, having taken a meal for one and garlands, scents, and so on, let her come quickly.'" He, having gone there, announced accordingly, and the household members did likewise. The brahmin, having bathed, having eaten, having anointed himself, surrounded by his attendants, having placed his son's body on the funeral pyre, having lit the fire, as if burning a log of wood, free from sorrow, free from distress, attending to the perception of impermanence, stood there.

Then the brahmin's son was reborn as Sakka, and he was our Bodhisatta. He, having reviewed his former birth and the merit he had done, having compassion for his father and relatives, having come there in the guise of a brahmin, having seen the relatives not grieving, said "Hey, burn the deer, give us the meat, I am hungry." "It is not a deer, it is a human being, brahmin," he said. "Is he an enemy of yours?" "Not

an enemy; born at the breast, a legitimate, greatly virtuous young son," he said. "For what purpose do you not grieve when such a virtuous young son has died?" Having heard that, the brahmin, explaining the reason for not grieving -

85. "Just as a snake goes, leaving behind its worn-out skin;
So too when the body is useless, when the departed one has died.

86. "The one burning does not know the lamentation of relatives;
Therefore I do not weep for this, he has gone to whatever destination is his."

He spoke two verses.

85-86. Therein, "uraga" means because it goes on its chest (urena), it is a snake (uraga). This is a designation for a serpent. "Worn-out skin" means one's own skin, the slough, that is worn-out by the state of being decrepit, old. "Leaving behind, goes, its own body" means just as a snake, removing its worn-out skin between trees, or between pieces of wood, or between roots, or between rocks, as if taking off a mantle, having removed it from the body, having abandoned it, having discarded it, goes as it wishes, just so a being wandering in the round of rebirths, because of the exhaustion of ancient action, leaving behind its own body, its own form that has become decrepit, goes, goes according to its actions, is reborn by way of renewed existence. This is the meaning. "Thus" - he said this showing the son's body being burnt. "When the body is useless" means when, like his, the bodies of others too have become thus devoid of enjoyment, useless. "The departed one" means one from whom life, heat, and consciousness have departed. "When he has died" means when he has become dead. "Therefore" means because the burning body, due to consciousness having departed, does not know the crying and lamentation of relatives, just as it does not know the pain of burning; therefore I do not weep making this, my son, the occasion. "He has gone to whatever destination is his" means if dead beings are not annihilated, but whatever destination is to be expected by the power of the action for which the dead one had made opportunity, he has gone to that immediately after death; he does not look back for the crying or lamentation of former relatives, nor is there for the most part any accomplishment of purpose by the crying of former relatives. This is the intention.

Thus, when the brahmin had spoken of his reason for not grieving, when his skill in attention by way of indirect method had been made known, Sakka in the form of a brahmin said to the brahmin woman - "Mother, what was that dead one to you?" "Having carried him in the womb for ten months, having given him mother's milk, having set his hands and feet in place, he was my son who was brought up, master." "If so, the father at least, being a man, may not weep; but a mother's heart is indeed soft - why do you not weep?" Having heard that, she, explaining the reason for not weeping -

87. "Uninvited he came from there, not permitted he went from here;
As he came, so he went, what lamentation is there for that?

88. "The one burning does not know the lamentation of relatives;
Therefore I do not weep for this, he has gone to whatever destination is his."

He spoke a pair of verses. Therein, "uninvited" means uncalled; not summoned thus "Come, take up the state of being my son." "From there" means from where he formerly stood, from there, from the world beyond. "Āgā" means came. "Not permitted" means not approved; not sent off by us thus "Go, dear, to the world beyond." "From here" means from this world. "Gone" means departed. "As he came" means in whatever manner he came; the meaning is he came uninvited by us. "So he went" means he went in that very same manner. Just as he came by his own action alone, so he went by his own action alone. By this she shows the ownership of one's actions. "What lamentation is there for that" means thus, in the uncontrollable turning of the round of rebirths, what indeed is lamentation on account of death? She shows that it is inappropriate, not to be done by the wise.

Thus, having heard the brahmin woman's words, he asked his sister - "Mother, what was he to you?" "He was my brother, master." "Mother, sisters are by nature affectionate towards brothers; why do you not weep?" She too, telling the reason for not weeping -

89. "If I were to weep, I would become emaciated, what fruit would there be for me in that;
For relatives, friends and companions, there would only be more discontent.
90. "The one burning does not know the lamentation of relatives;
Therefore I do not weep for this, he has gone to whatever destination is his."

He spoke a pair of verses. Therein, "if I were to weep, I would become emaciated" means if I were to weep, I would become emaciated, with a dried-up body. "What fruit would there be for me in that" means in that weeping on account of my brother's death, what fruit indeed, what benefit would there be? The intention is: my brother would not come back by that, nor would he go to a fortunate destination by that. "For relatives, friends and companions, there would only be more discontent" means for our relatives, friends and dear-hearted ones, through my sorrowing, there would be even more discontent, only suffering beyond the suffering of the brother's death.

Thus, having heard the sister's words, he asked his wife - "What was he to you?" "He was my husband, master." "Good lady, women are by nature affectionate towards their husbands, and when he has died they become widows and destitute; why do you not weep?" She too, telling her reason for not weeping -

91. "Just as a child cries for the moon as it goes;
Such is this, whoever bewails the departed.
92. "The one burning does not know the lamentation of relatives;
Therefore I do not weep for this, he has gone to whatever destination is his."
Spoke a pair of verses.

Therein, "a child" means a young child. "The moon" means the disc of the moon. "Going" means ascending into the sky. "Cries for" means he cries "Take the chariot wheel and give it to me." "Such is this" means whoever bewails the departed, the

dead, his bewailing is of such accomplishment, of such a kind, similar to the desire to seize the moon going through the sky - it is the state of desire for an unobtainable thing. This is the intention.

Having thus heard the words of his wife, he asked the female slave -"Mother, what was he to you?" "He was my master, sir." "If so, you must have been made to perform service by him after being beaten; therefore, methinks, you do not weep thinking 'I am well released from him'?" "Master, do not say so to me; this is not befitting. My master's son was exceedingly accomplished in patience, friendliness, and compassion, speaking what is proper; he was like a son brought up on my breast." Then "Why do you not weep?" She too, telling her reason for not weeping -

93. "Just as, Brahmin, a water-pot, broken, cannot be joined together again;
Such is this, whoever bewails the departed.

94. "The one burning does not know the lamentation of relatives;
Therefore I do not weep for this, he has gone to whatever destination is his."

He spoke a pair of verses. Therein, "just as, Brahmin, a water-pot, broken, cannot be joined together again" means brahmin, just as a water-pot broken by a blow of a club and so on cannot be joined together again and does not become as before. The remainder here is of clear meaning since the method has been stated.

Sakka, having heard their talk, with a gladdened mind, having made their house filled with the seven precious things, saying "The recollection of death has been properly developed by you; henceforth there is no need for you to do work such as ploughing and so on," and having exhorted them "Being diligent, give gifts, observe morality, perform the Observance practice," and having made himself known to them, went to his own place. Those brahmins and others too, performing meritorious deeds such as giving, having remained as long as life lasted, were reborn in the heavenly world.

The Teacher, having brought this Jātaka, having extracted the dart of sorrow of that lay follower, made known the truths thereafter; at the conclusion of the truths, the lay follower became established in the fruition of stream-entry.

The commentary on the story of the snake ghost is concluded.

Thus in the Khuddaka Commentary, in the Petavatthu,

Of the fourth chapter adorned with twelve stories,

The exposition of the meaning of the first Uruga Chapter is concluded.



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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