

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 -
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07. Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts
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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

07. Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts

3. The Minor Chapter

1. Commentary on the Abhijjamāna Ghost Story

387-407. "On the water not breaking": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, referring to a certain hunter-ghost. In Bārāṇasī, it is said, in the western direction, on the far side of the Ganges, having passed beyond Vāsabhagāma, in a village named Cundaṭṭhila, there was a certain hunter. He, having killed deer in the forest, having cooked the choice meat on embers, having eaten it, having wrapped the remainder in a leaf-container, having taken it with a carrying pole, comes to the village. Young children, having seen him at the village entrance, stretching out their hands, run up to him saying "Give me meat, give me meat." He gives them meat little by little. Then one day, not having obtained meat, having adorned himself with uddālaka flowers and having taken many in his hand, as he was going to the village, the children, having seen him at the village entrance, stretching out their hands, ran up saying "Give me meat, give me meat." He gave them each one flower cluster.

Then at a later time, having died, reborn among the ghosts, naked, of deformed appearance, frightful to behold, not knowing food and drink even in a dream, with a bunch of uddālaka flower garlands tied on his head, thinking "I shall obtain something near my relatives in Cundaṭṭhila," he goes on foot upstream on the water of the Ganges, not breaking it. And at that time, a chief minister of King Bimbisāra named Koḷiya, having appeased the rebellious borderland, returning, having sent the retinue force of elephants, horses, and so on by the land route, himself coming downstream on the river Ganges by boat, having seen that ghost going thus, asking -

387. "On the water not breaking, here on the Ganges you go;
Naked, like a ghost in the upper half, wearing garlands, adorned;
Where will you go, ghost, where will your dwelling be?"

He spoke a verse. Therein, "not breaking" means not breaking by the placing of steps, that is, on the compact water. "On the water of the Ganges" means in the water of the river Ganges. "Here" means in this place. "Like a ghost in the upper half" means by the upper half of the body, as if departed, like one born in the ghost realm, like a young god. How? "Wearing garlands, adorned" means having bedecked himself with garlands, with the top of the head adorned. This is the meaning. "Where will your dwelling be" means in which village or region will your abode be? Tell that. This is the meaning.

Now, to show what was then said by that ghost and by Koḷiya, the compilers of the recitation -

388. "I shall go to Cundaṭṭhila," that ghost thus speaks;

In between Vāsabhagāma and near Bārāṇasī.

389. And having seen him, the chief minister, renowned as Koḷiya;
Gave flour and food to the ghost, and a pair of yellow garments.
390. While the boat was standing still, he had it given to the barber;
When it was given to the barber, it appeared on the ghost at that very place.
391. "Then well-clothed, wearing garlands, adorned;
For the ghost established in that state, the offering was beneficial;
Therefore one should give to the departed, out of compassion again and
again." They spoke the verses.

388. Therein, "Cundaṭṭhila" means a village so named. "In between Vāsabhagāma and near Bārāṇasī" means in the middle of Vāsabhagāma and Bārāṇasī. For this is an accusative expression used in the sense of proximity by connection with the word "antarā." For that village is near Bārāṇasī. For the meaning here is this: The village named Cundaṭṭhila, which is in between Vāsabhagāma and Bārāṇasī, not far from Bārāṇasī - "I shall go to that village."

389. "Renowned as Koḷiya" means one whose name was thus made known as "Koḷiya." "Flour and food" means flour and also food. "And a pair of yellow garments he gave" means he gave a golden-coloured pair of garments.

390. If one asks "When did he give?" - he said "while the boat was standing still." "He had it given to the barber" means having stopped the moving boat, he had it given there to a certain barber who was a lay follower; the explanation is: when the pair of garments was given. "At that place" means at that very place, at that very moment. "It appeared on the ghost" means it became visible on the ghost's body; his inner and outer robes came into being. Therefore he said "Then well-clothed, wearing garlands, adorned" - well-clothed means well adorned and decorated with garlands and ornaments. "For the ghost established in that state, the offering was beneficial" means because this offering, established in a state worthy of offerings, was beneficial for that ghost, it reached its application. "Therefore one should give to the departed, out of compassion again and again" means out of compassion for the departed, one should give offerings dedicated to the departed again and again - this is the meaning.

Then that chief minister Koḷiya, having compassion for that ghost, having accomplished the procedure of giving, having come downstream, arrived at Bārāṇasī as the sun was rising. And the Blessed One, for the purpose of assisting them, having come through space, stood on the bank of the Ganges. The chief minister Koḷiya too, having disembarked from the boat, joyful and delighted, invited the Blessed One - "May the Blessed One consent to accept a meal from me today, venerable sir, out of compassion." The Blessed One consented by silence. He, having known the Blessed One's acceptance, at that very moment, having had a great branch-pavilion built in a delightful piece of ground, adorned above and on the four sides with various garments variegated with diverse bright colours, having prepared a seat there for the Blessed One, gave it. The Blessed One sat down on the prepared seat.

Then that chief minister, having approached the Blessed One, having venerated with scents, flowers and so on, having paid homage, seated to one side, reported to the Blessed One the words spoken by himself below and the reply of the ghost. The Blessed One thought "Let the Community of monks come." Immediately after thinking, the Community of monks, urged by the power of the Buddha, like a flock of golden swans surrounding the king of the Dhataratṭha swans, surrounded the King of the Teaching. At that very moment the great multitude gathered together, thinking "There will be a lofty proclamation of the Teaching." Having seen that, the chief minister, with a gladdened mind, satisfied the Community of monks headed by the Buddha with superior solid and soft food. The Blessed One, having finished the meal, out of compassion for the great multitude, determined "Let the villagers dwelling near Bārāṇasī gather together." And all those great multitudes gathered together by supernormal power, and he made the lofty ghosts visible. Among them, some wearing pieces of torn and tattered rags, some with their private parts covered only by their own hair, some naked in their natural form, overcome by hunger and thirst, with skin clinging to their bones, with bodies of mere bones, wandering here and there, became visible before the eyes of the great multitude.

Then the Blessed One performed such a feat of supernormal power that they, having gathered together, declared to the great multitude the evil deeds done by themselves. Making known that matter, the compilers of the recitation -

392. "Some clothed in torn rags, others with hair as their covering;
Ghosts go for food, they depart in every direction.
393. "Some, having run far, returned without obtaining anything;
Hungry, fainted, wandering, they fell to the ground.
394. "Some, having fallen down there, collapsed on the ground;
Having not done good before, like those burnt by fire in the sun's heat.
395. "We were formerly of bad character, housewives, mothers of families;
Though there were gifts to be given, we made no refuge for ourselves.
396. "Abundant food and drink, so much so that it was thrown away;
To those gone forth who have gone the right way, we gave nothing."
397. "Unwilling to work, lazy, lovers of sweet things, gluttonous;
Givers of mere morsels of almsfood, we abused those who received them.
398. "Those houses and those female slaves, and those very ornaments of ours;
Others enjoy them, we are sharers in suffering.
399. "They become basket-weavers or despised, and chariot-makers treacherous;
They become caṇḍālī women, wretched, and barbers again and again.
400. "Whatever families are low and wretched,
In those very ones they are born - this is the destination of the stingy.
401. "Those who have done good deeds before, donors free from avarice;

They fill heaven, and illuminate Nandana.

402. "And in the Vejayanta mansion, having delighted, those who desire sensual pleasures;
They are born in high families, with wealth, having passed away from there.
403. "In pinnacle buildings and mansions, on divans spread with woollen carpets;
Their limbs fanned with peacock-feather fans, born in families, famous ones.
404. "They go from lap to lap, wearing garlands, adorned;
Nurses attend upon them, morning and evening, seeking their comfort.
405. "This is not for those who have not made merit, this is only for those who have made merit;
Sorrowless, delightful, charming, the great forest of the Thirty-three.
406. "Happiness for those who have not made merit, there is not here nor in the hereafter;
But happiness for those who have made merit, both here and in the hereafter.
407. "For those who desire companionship with them, much wholesome should be done;
For those who have made merit rejoice, in heaven endowed with wealth."They spoke the verses.

392. Therein, "wearing torn garments" means wearing inner robes of cut, broken, ragged fragments. "Some" means certain ones. "Hair-clothed" means with their private parts covered only by their hair. "They go for food" means thinking "Perhaps having gone from here, here or there we might obtain some leftover food or vomited food or afterbirth filth and such," having stood somewhere, they go for the purpose of sustenance. "They depart in every direction" means they depart from direction to direction, to places many yojanas apart.

393. "Far" means in a distant place. "Some" means certain ghosts. "Having run forth" means having run up for the purpose of food. "Returned without obtaining" means without obtaining any food or drinking water, they turn back. "Swooned" means unconsciousness arisen through the suffering of hunger and thirst and so on. "Wandering" means roaming about. "Collapsed on the ground" means having remained standing through the onset of that very unconsciousness, like lumps of clay thrown down, having dried up, they fell on the earth.

394. "There" means in the place where they had gone. "Collapsed on the ground" means like those fallen off a precipice, through inability to stand due to the suffering of hunger and so on, they fell on the ground; or in the place where they had gone, having become without hope through not obtaining food and so on, as if struck face to face by someone, as if beaten, they fall on the ground - this is the meaning. "Not having done good formerly" means not having done what is wholesome in a former existence. "Like those burnt by fire in the sun's heat" means like those burnt by fire in a place of sunshine during the drought season; being consumed by the fire of hunger and thirst, they experience great suffering - this is the meaning.

395. "Formerly" means in a past existence. "Of bad character" means of inferior nature through the state of being envious, stingy, and so on. "Housewives" means mistresses of the house. "Mothers of families" means mothers of the children of the family, or mothers of the men of the family. "An island" means a support; the meaning is merit. For that is called "support" because of being the basis of support for beings in fortunate worlds. "We did not make" means we did not do.

396. "Abundant" means much. "Food and drink too" means food and drink. "So much so that it was thrown away" - "sū" is merely a particle; "api avakiriyati" means it was discarded. "To those who have gone the right way" means to those rightly gone, rightly practising, to one rightly practising. "To one gone forth" means to one who has gone forth. For this is a locative expression used in the dative sense. The meaning is: when one who has gone the right way or one gone forth is available. "And we did not give anything" - overcome by remorse, they say "We did not give even the slightest gift."

397. "Unwilling to work" (akammakāmā) means those who desire (kāmenti) action (kammaṃ) that ought not to be done (akattabbaṃ), that is unwholesome - thus "unwilling to work"; or alternatively, those who desire wholesome action that ought to be done by good people are "willing to work" (kammakāmā); not willing to work means unwilling to work; the meaning is: without desire for wholesome mental states. "Lazy" (alasā) means idle, without energy in performing wholesome actions. "Desiring what is pleasant" (sādukāmā) means fond of things that are comfortable, sweet, and agreeable. "Gluttonous" (mahagghasā) means great eaters; it shows that by both means, having obtained food that is both fine and sweet, without giving anything to those in need, they ate it themselves alone. "Givers of a morsel of almsfood" (ālopapiṇḍadātāro) means donors of even a mere morsel of food. "In receiving" (paṭiggahe) means in those who receive it. "We abused" (paribhāsimhase) means we spoke with contempt, we despised and we mocked. This is the meaning.

398. "Those houses" (te gharā) - the intention is: where we formerly made selfish attachment thinking "These are our houses," those houses remain just as they were, but now nothing is of any benefit to us. "And those female slaves, and those very ornaments of ours" (tā ca dāsiyo tānevābharaṇāni no) - here too the same method applies. Therein, "no" means "our." "Te" means those houses and so on. "Others enjoy them" means they make use of them by way of enjoyment and so on. This is the meaning. "We are sharers in suffering" (mayaṃ dukkhassa bhāgino) - they speak censuring themselves, saying: but we, formerly having been solely engaged in amusement, having abandoned our property, not knowing how to make it something that goes along with one, something that follows, now we are sharers in the suffering of hunger, thirst, and so on.

399. Now, since beings who, having passed away from the realm of ghosts and being reborn among human beings, are for the most part of low birth and of wretched livelihood due to the remainder of the result of that very action, therefore to show that meaning, two verses were spoken beginning with "veṇivā." Therein, "veṇivā" means of the basket-maker caste; the meaning is: they become bamboo-strip workers and reed workers. The word "vā" has the meaning of non-restriction. "Avaññā" means despicable, to be looked down upon - this is what is said. "Vambhanā" is also a reading; the meaning is: to be oppressed by others. "Rathakārī"

means leather workers. "Dubbhikā" means treacherous to friends, harmful to friends. "Caṇḍālī" means of outcast birth. "Kapaṇā" means paupers, those who have reached an exceedingly pitiable state. "Kappakā" means of barber caste; everywhere the explanation is "they are born again and again"; it is said that they are born again and again in these low families.

400. "In those very ones they are born" (tesu tesveva jāyanti) means whatever other families too, such as those of hunters, refuse-removers, and so on, that are wretched, exceedingly contemptible, and in the utmost misery - in those very low families, having been reborn among ghosts through the stain of stinginess, having passed away from there, they are reborn. Therefore it is said "this is the destination of the stingy."

401. Having thus shown the destination of beings who have not made merit, now to show the destination of those who have made merit, seven verses were spoken beginning with "those who have done good deeds before." Therein, "they fill heaven" (saggaṃ te paripūrenti) means those who formerly in a previous birth have done good deeds, who are donors, who delight in the merit of giving, who are free from the stain of stinginess - they fill heaven, the world of the gods, and make it complete, through the achievement of their own beauty and the achievement of their retinue. "And they illuminate Nandana" (obhāsentī ca nandanam) means not only do they fill it, but indeed the Nandana grove, which is already radiant by its own nature through the radiance of the wish-fulfilling trees and so on, they outshine and illuminate and make resplendent with the lustre of their own garments and ornaments and with the radiance of their bodies.

402. "Those who desire sensual pleasures" means those who enjoy as they wish among the types of sensual pleasure as desired. "In high families" means in high families such as families of the warrior caste and so on. "With wealth" means in great prosperity. "Passed away from there" means passed away from there, from the world of gods.

403. "In pinnacle buildings and mansions" means in pinnacle buildings and in mansions. "With limbs being fanned" means with bodies being fanned. "With peacock-hands" means with fan-handles adorned with peacock feathers. "Famous" means those with retinue's delight. This is the intention.

404. "They go from lap to lap" means even in childhood they go from the lap of relatives and nurses to another lap, not to the ground surface. This is the intention. "They attend" means they render attendance. "Seekers of happiness" means those desiring happiness; the intention is that they attend while warding off even a little suffering, thinking "Let there be neither cold nor heat."

405. "This is not for those who have not made merit" means this Nandana, the Nandana grove, which is sorrowless due to the absence of any basis for sorrow, delightful, charming, the great forest of the Thirty-three, of the Tāvātimsa gods, which has become a great pleasure garden, is not for those who have not made merit; the meaning is that it cannot be obtained by them.

406. "Here" means in this human world merit is especially made; with reference to that, he said. Or "here" means in the present life. "In the hereafter" means in the future state.

407. "Of them" means by those aforesaid gods. "Of those desiring companionship" means by those wishing for the state of being together. "Endowed with wealth" means endowed with wealth, furnished with the five divine types of sensual pleasure, they rejoice. This is the meaning. The remainder is of clear meaning.

Thus, when the destination of the deeds done by themselves and the destination of meritorious deeds had been declared in common by those ghosts, the Blessed One expounded the Teaching in detail, suited to the disposition of the great multitude that had assembled there, headed by the minister Koliya, whose minds were stirred with a sense of urgency. At the conclusion of the teaching, there was the full realisation of the teaching by eighty-four thousand living beings.

The commentary on the Abhijjamāna Ghost Story is concluded.

2. Commentary on the Elder Sāṇavāsī Ghost Story

408-438. "The elder from Kuṇḍi city": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, referring to the deceased relatives of the Venerable Elder Sāṇavāsī. In the past, it is said, in Bārāṇasī, the son of a king named Kitava, having amused himself with park amusements and returning, having seen an Individually Enlightened One named Sunetta who had walked for almsfood and was departing from the city, being intoxicated with the pride of supremacy, with a corrupted mind thinking "How indeed can this shaveling go without making a salutation with joined palms to me," having descended from the elephant's back, addressing him "Have you obtained your almsfood?" having taken the bowl from his hand, having thrown it on the ground, he broke it. Then, with a mind corrupted by resentment at an improper place towards him who, through the attainment of the state of suchness everywhere, was looking at him unchangingly, with a mind clear through the descent of pleasure from the diffusion of compassion, having said "Do you not know me, the son of King Kitava? What will you do to me by looking at me?" he departed laughing. As soon as he had departed, a violent bodily burning resembling the burning of hellfire arose in him. He, with body overcome by that great torment, exceedingly overwhelmed by painful feeling, having died, was reborn in the great hell of Avīci.

There, having turned over in many ways - on the right side, on the left side, face up, face down - having been tormented for eighty-four thousand years, having passed away from there, having experienced for an immeasurable time among the ghosts the suffering of hunger, thirst, and so on, having passed away from there, in this arising of a Buddha, he was reborn in a fishermen's village near the city of Kuṇḍi. The knowledge of remembering past births arose in him; therefore he, recollecting the suffering previously experienced by himself, even though he had come of age, through fear of evil, did not go with his relatives for the purpose of catching fish. When they went, not wishing to kill fish, he hid himself; and having gone, he tore the

nets; or having taken living fish, he released them in the water. His relatives, reporting that action of his, expelled him from the house. But one brother of his had a heart bound by affection.

Now at that time the Venerable Ānanda was dwelling on Sāṇa mountain in dependence on the city of Kuṇḍi. Then that fisherman's son, having been abandoned by his relatives, wandering here and there, having reached that region, at mealtime approached the elder's presence. The elder, having questioned him, having known his state of being in need of food, having given him a meal, having finished the meal, having known all that incident, having known his gladdened mind through a talk on the Teaching, said "Will you go forth, friend?" "Yes, venerable sir, I shall go forth." The elder, having given him the going forth, went together with him to the Blessed One's presence. Then the Teacher said to him - "Ānanda, you should have compassion for this novice." And he, because of not having done wholesome deeds, was one of little gain. Then the Teacher, helping him, assigned him to the filling of water pots for the use of the monks. Having seen that, the lay followers established many regular meals for him.

He, at a later time, having obtained full ordination, having attained arahantship, having become an elder, dwelt on Sāṇa mountain together with twelve monks. But his relatives, about five hundred, who had not accumulated wholesome actions and had accumulated evil qualities such as stinginess and so on, having died, were reborn among the ghosts. But his mother and father, being ashamed thinking "This one was previously expelled from the house by us," not approaching him, sent the brother who had affection bound towards him. He, at the time when the elder had entered the village for almsfood, having placed his right kneecap on the ground, with joined palms, having shown himself, spoke the verses beginning with "Your mother and father, venerable sir." But the five verses beginning with "The elder from Kuṇḍi city" were placed by the compilers of the scriptures from the beginning for the purpose of showing the connection between them.

408. "The elder from Kuṇḍi city, a dweller on Sāṇa mountain;
Poṭṭhapāda by name, an ascetic with developed faculties.
409. "His mother, father, and brother, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.
410. They, ill-fated, afflicted by needle-like hunger, exhausted, naked, emaciated;
Trembling with great fear, the cruel ones do not show themselves.
411. His brother, having overcome fear, naked, alone on the path;
Having become one who moves on four limbs, showed himself to the elder.
412. The elder, not paying attention, passed by in silence;
And he informed the elder, "I am your brother, gone to the ghost realm."
413. "Your mother and father, venerable sir, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.
414. Therefore they, ill-fated, afflicted by needle-like hunger, exhausted, naked,

emaciated;

Trembling with great fear, the cruel ones do not show themselves.

415. "Have compassion, O compassionate one, having given, dedicate it to us;
Through the gift given by you, the cruel ones will sustain themselves."

408-409. Therein, "the elder from Kuṇḍī city" means the elder born and brought up in the city so named; "the elder of Kuṇḍīka city" is also a reading; the meaning is the same. "A dweller on Sāṇa" means a dweller on Sāṇa mountain. "Poṭṭhapāda by name" means by name he was called Poṭṭhapāda. "Ascetic" means one who has calmed evil. "With developed faculties" means one whose faculties of faith and so on have been developed through the development of the noble path; the meaning is a Worthy One. "His" means of that Elder Sāṇavāsi. "Ill-fated" means gone to an unfortunate realm.

410. "Afflicted by needle-like hunger" means emaciated ones with putrid, rough bodies; afflicted, oppressed by hunger and thirst which obtained the name "needle." Some read "sūcikaṇṭhā" (needle-throated); the meaning is those whose mouth openings are similar to the eye of a needle. "Exhausted" means exhausted in body and mind. "Naked" means of naked appearance, without clothes. "Emaciated" means of lean bodies due to having bodies of mere bones and skin. "Trembling" means falling into terror through moral fear, thinking "this ascetic is our son." "With great fear" means with great fear arisen dependent on the deeds done by themselves in the past. "Do not show" means they do not show themselves, they do not come into his presence. "The cruel ones" means those of cruel deeds.

411. "His brother" means the brother of the Elder Sāṇavāsi. "Having crossed over" means having gone through; the meaning is the fear of moral shame and terror. Or "vīturitvā" is the reading; having been quick, having been in a hurry - this is what is meant. "On a single path" means on a foot-path. "Alone" means solitary, without a companion. "Having become one who moves on four limbs" means one who moves on four limbs, who propels his individual existence with four limbs - thus "four-limbed"; going and standing on two knees and two hands; having become thus - this is the meaning. For indeed, in this way there is concealment of the private parts from the front - thus he did so. "Showed himself to the elder" means he pointed out and showed himself to the elder.

412. "Without paying attention" means without attending to the thought "This is so-and-so," without adverting. "And he" means that ghost. "I am a brother gone to the ghost realm" - the explanation is that he informed the elder by saying "In a past existence I was your brother; now, having become a ghost, I have come here."

413-415. But to show how he informed, three verses were spoken beginning with "Mother and father." Therein, "your mother and father" means your mother and your father. "Have compassion" means help, show sympathy. "Dedicate" means dedicate. "No" means our. "By your giving" means by that given by you.

Having heard that, to show how the elder proceeded -

416. "The elder, having walked for almsfood, and twelve other monks;
Gathered together in one place, for the purpose of participation in a meal.

417. "The elder said to all of them: 'Give me whatever you have obtained;
I will make a meal for the Community, out of compassion for my relatives.'
418. "They handed over to the elder, the elder invited the Community;
Having given, the elder dedicated, for mother, father and brother;
"May this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."
419. Immediately after the offering was dedicated, food arose;
Pure, superior, accomplished, with various flavours and vegetables.
420. Then the brother showed himself, of good complexion, powerful, happy;
"Abundant is the food, venerable sir, but see, we are naked;
So, venerable sir, make effort, that we may obtain cloth.
421. The elder, having picked out rags from the rubbish heap,
Having made a cloth from the scraps, he gave it to the monastic community of
the four directions.
422. Having given, the elder dedicated, for mother, father and brother;
"May this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."
423. Immediately after the offering was dedicated, garments arose;
Then well-clothed, he showed himself to the elder.
424. "As far as there were coverings in King Nanda's realm;
More numerous than that, venerable sir, are our cloths and coverings.
425. Silks and woollen blankets, linens and cottons too;
Extensive and very costly, they hang in the sky.
426. "We put on whatever is dear to the mind;
So, venerable sir, make effort, that we may obtain a dwelling.
427. The elder, having made a leaf hut, gave it to the monastic community of the
four directions;
Having given, the elder dedicated, for mother, father and brother;
"May this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."
428. Immediately after the offering was dedicated, houses arose;
Pinnacle-chambered dwellings, divided into sections, measured.
429. "There are no such houses among human beings, as our houses here;
Even among the divine, such as those are, such are our houses here.
430. Shining brightly they illuminate, all around the four directions;
So, venerable sir, make effort, that we may obtain drinking water.
431. The elder, having filled a water vessel, gave it to the monastic community of
the four directions;
Having given, the elder dedicated, for mother, father and brother;

"May this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."

432. Immediately after the offering was dedicated, drinking water arose;
Deep and quadrangular, well-fashioned lotus ponds.
433. With cool water, with good fords, cool, without foul odour;
Covered with lotuses and water lilies, filled with water and pollen.
434. Having bathed and drunk there, they showed themselves to the elder;
Abundant is the drinking water, venerable sir, our feet are painful, they are splitting.
435. "Wandering about we hobble, on gravel and kusa-grass thorns;
So, venerable sir, make effort, that we may obtain a vehicle.
436. The elder, having obtained a sandal, gave it to the monastic community of the four directions;
Having given, the elder dedicated, for mother, father and brother;
"May this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."
437. "Immediately after the offering was dedicated, the ghosts came by chariot;
We have been shown compassion, venerable sir, with food and with clothing.
438. "By the house, by the gift of drinking water, by the gift of a vehicle, and by both;
We have come to pay homage to the compassionate sage in the world, venerable sir." They spoke the verses;

416-417. Therein, "the elder, having walked for almsfood" means the elder, having walked on his almsfood round. "And twelve other monks" means the other twelve monks dwelling together with the elder gathered together in one place. If one asks why? "For the purpose of participation in a meal" means for the purpose of the meal duty, on account of eating. "Te" means those monks. "Whatever was obtained" means whatever was received. "Give" means hand over.

418. "They handed over" means they gave. "He invited the Community" means he invited those very twelve monks to give that food by way of designation to the Community. "He dedicated" means he announced. Therein, to show those for whom he dedicated, it was said "for mother, father and brother, may this be for my relatives, may the relatives be happy."

419. "Immediately after the offering was dedicated" means immediately after the dedication. "Food arose" means food arose for those ghosts. "Of what kind?" - he said "pure" and so on. Therein, "with various flavours and vegetables" means furnished with vegetables of various flavours; or alternatively, of many flavours and of many vegetables. "Then" means after the obtaining of food.

420. "The brother showed himself" means the ghost who was the brother showed himself to the elder. "Of good complexion, powerful, happy" means at that very moment, through that obtaining of food, having become accomplished in beauty, accomplished in strength, and happy indeed. "Abundant is the food, venerable sir"

means venerable sir, by the power of your giving, abundant, not trifling food has been obtained by us. "See, we are naked" means look; but we are naked, therefore so, venerable sir, make effort, make an endeavour. "That we may obtain cloth" means in whatever manner, by whatever kind of endeavour all of us might obtain garments, so strive - this is the meaning.

421. "From the rubbish heap" means from the refuse places here and there. "Having picked out" means having taken by way of searching. "Rags" means discarded cloth fragments with cut edges. But since those, being fragments, are called rags, and the elder, having made a robe from them, gave it to the monastic community, therefore he said "having made a cloth from the scraps, he gave it to the monastic community of the four directions." Therein, "gave to the monastic community of the four directions" means he gave to the community of monks who had come from all four directions. For this is a locative expression used in the dative sense.

423-424. "Beautifully clothed" means wearing beautiful garments. "Showed himself to the elder" means he showed himself, displayed himself to the elder; he became manifest. "Coverings" means that which conceals here.

428-429. "Pinnacled mansions and dwellings" means houses that are pinnacled buildings and those reckoned as other dwellings. For this is said by way of change of gender. "Divided" means divided by way of regular square, oblong, circular shapes and so on. "Measured in sections" means delimited by portions. "No" means our. "Here" means in this ghost realm. "Even among the divine" - "api" is merely an indeclinable particle; the meaning is "in the heavenly worlds."

431. "Vessel" means a water strainer. "Having filled" means having filled with water. "Filled with water and pollen" means filled by way of being covered here and there on the water surface with masses of pollen of lotuses, water-lilies and so on. "They burst open" means they bloom; the meaning is splitting open at the heels and other extremities.

435-436. "Wandering about" means going about. "We hobble" means we go by way of hobbling. "On gravel and kusa-grass thorns" means on a piece of ground having gravel and having kusa-grass thorns; the meaning is treading upon gravel and kusa-grass thorns. "Vehicle" means any vehicle whatsoever such as a chariot, a litter and so on. "Sandal" means a single-soled sandal.

437-438. "Rathena māgamun" - the letter "m" serves as a word-connector; they came by chariot. "Both" means by both gifts, by the gift of a vehicle and by the gift of the four requisites beginning with food. By the gift of drinking water, the gift of medicine is also included herein. The remainder is clear in itself since the method has been stated above.

The Elder reported that incident to the Blessed One. The Blessed One, making that the occasion, having said "Just as these are now, so you too, having become a ghost in the immediately preceding past individual existence from here, experienced great suffering," being requested by the Elder, having spoken the Sutta Ghost Story, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived. Having heard that, the public, with a sense of urgency arisen, became devoted to meritorious actions such as giving, morality, and so on.

3. Commentary on the Chariot-Maker Female Ghost Story

439-446. "With lapis lazuli pillars, beautiful and luminous": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattṭhī, referring to a certain female ghost. In the past, it is said, in the time of the Blessed One Kassapa, a certain woman accomplished in morality and good conduct, through dependence on a good friend, devoted to the Dispensation, having built a single residence with well-arranged, variegated walls, pillars, steps, and floor surfaces, exceedingly beautiful, having caused monks to sit down there, having served them with superior food, dedicated it to the Community of monks. She, at a later time, having died, by the power of another evil deed, was reborn as a mansion-dwelling female ghost in dependence on the Rathakāra lake in the Himalayas, the king of mountains. For her, by the power of the merit of giving a residence to the Community, a mansion arose - made of all jewels, lofty, exceedingly pleasing on all sides, captivating, delightful, with ponds, adorned like the Nandana grove - and she herself was gold-coloured, lovely, beautiful, and pleasing.

She dwelt there experiencing divine success without any men. For her, dwelling there without men for a long time, discontent arose. She, having become dissatisfied, having thought "There is this stratagem," threw divine ripe mangoes into the river. All this should be understood according to the method that has come in the Kaṇṇamuṇḍa female ghost story. Here, however, a certain young man dwelling in Bārāṇasī, having seen one mango fruit among them in the Ganges, searching for its origin, gradually having gone to that place, having seen the river, following along it, went to her dwelling place. She, having seen him, having led him to her own dwelling place, making friendly welcome, sat down. He, having seen the splendour of her dwelling place, asking -

439. "Having ascended the mansion with lapis lazuli pillars, beautiful and luminous, variegated;
There you dwell, goddess of great majesty, like the moon on the fifteenth day in the mid-sky.
440. "Your beauty is like gold, with a molten form, exceedingly fair to behold;
Seated on the finest divan, incomparable, you are alone and there is no husband for you.
441. "And these ponds of yours all around, abundant with garlands, with many white lotuses;
Spread over all around with gold powder, therein no mud nor water plants are found.
442. "And these swans, beautiful and delightful, move about in the water always;
Having come together, they all sing sweetly, with melodious voices like the sound of drums.
443. "Shining brightly with fame, one of fame, and you stand leaning on a boat;
With curling eyelashes, smiling, speaking sweetly, beautiful in every limb, you shine exceedingly.

444. "This mansion, stainless, standing on level ground, with a pleasure grove,
increasing delight and joy;
I wish, woman of superior appearance, to rejoice here in the Nandana grove
together with you."

He spoke these verses.

439. "There" means in that mansion. "You dwell" means you sit at whatever time you wish. "Goddess" - he addresses her. "Of great majesty" means endowed with great divine power. "In the mid-sky" means on the path that is one's own highway; the meaning is the pathway of the expanse of the sky. "Like the moon on the fifteenth day" means the meaning is shining like the moon with its full orb on the full moon day.

440. "Your beauty is like gold" means your beauty is similar to refined gold and is exceedingly charming. Therefore he said "with a molten form, exceedingly fair to behold." "Incomparable" means very precious. Or "incomparable" is a term of address to the deity; the meaning is of incomparable form. "There is no husband for you" means and there is no husband for you.

441. "Abundant with garlands" means abounding in many kinds of flowers such as lotuses and water lilies. "With gold powder" means with golden sand. "Spread over all around" means strewn all around. "Therein" means in those ponds. "Mud and water plants" means neither mire nor water slime is found.

442. "These swans, beautiful and delightful" means these swans are pleasing to behold and delightful. "Move about" means they wander around. "Always" means in all seasons. "Having come together" means having assembled. "Sweetly" means melodiously. "Sing" means they warble. "With melodious voices" means with unscattered voices, with compact voices. "Like the sound of drums" means the meaning is the sound of the swans in your pond is like that of drums, by virtue of their sweet melodious voices.

443. "Shining brightly" means exceedingly blazing. "With fame" means with divine power. "In a boat" means in a canoe. For having seen the female ghost sitting on a very precious divan in a golden boat in the lotus pond of the pool, playing water-sports, he said thus. "Leaning" means having leaned against a back-rest. "You stand" - this is a word of rejection of movement, because the word for standing has the meaning of cessation of going. "Nisajjasī" is also a reading; its meaning should be understood as simply "you sit." "With long eyelashes" means with curled, long, dark eyelashes. "Smiling" means with a face of smiles and laughter. "Speaking pleasantly" means one who speaks agreeably. "Beautiful in all limbs" means beautiful in all limbs; the meaning is one with beautiful major and minor limbs. "You shine" means you are resplendent.

444. "Stainless" means free from defilement, faultless. "Standing on level ground" means standing on a level piece of ground, or standing on an even area by virtue of being adorned with a quadrangular shape; the meaning is completely auspicious. "With a pleasure grove" means together with a Nandana grove. "Increasing delight and joy" means it increases delight and joy, thus "increasing delight and joy"; the meaning is the growth of happiness and rapture. "Woman" is a term of address to

her. "Of superior appearance" means of blameless appearance by virtue of the completeness of major and minor limbs. "In Nandana" means in that which produces delight. "Here" means in the Nandana grove, or in the mansion. "To rejoice" - the explanation is: I wish to delight in.

When thus spoken by that young man, that mansion-ghost deity, giving him a reply -

445. "Do action that is to be experienced here, and let your mind be fixed here;
Having done action that is to be experienced here, thus you will obtain me, O
desirer of sensual pleasures."

He spoke a verse. Therein, "do action that is to be experienced here" means here in this divine place, do wholesome action that ripens and gives result - you should generate it. "Fixed here" means directed here; or the reading is "slanting towards here" - let your mind be slanting towards, sloping towards, inclining towards this place. "Mamaṃ" means me. "You will obtain" means you will get.

That young man, having heard the words of that mansion-ghost, went from there to the path of humans, having directed his mind there, having done meritorious action arising from that, before long having died, was reborn there in the company of that female ghost. Making known that matter, the compilers of the recitation -

446. "Good!" he, having promised her,
Did action that is to be experienced there;
Having done action that is to be experienced there,
That young man was reborn in her company.

They spoke the concluding verse. Therein, "good" is an indeclinable particle of accepting. "Of her" means of that mansion-ghost. "Having promised" means having accepted her words. "That is to be experienced there" means wholesome action whose pleasant result is to be experienced together with her in that mansion. "In company with" means the state of being together. The explanation is: that young man was reborn in her company. The remainder is clear in itself.

Thus, while they were experiencing divine success there for a long time, the man died through the utter elimination of his action, but the woman, due to the state of her meritorious action having become a field, having completed one interval between Buddhas there, dwelt. Then, when our Blessed One had arisen in the world and had set in motion the excellent wheel of the Teaching, while he was in due course dwelling at Jeta's Grove, one day the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, wandering on a mountain journey, having seen that mansion and the mansion ghost, asked with verses beginning with "With lapis lazuli pillars, beautiful and luminous." And she reported to him all her own experience from the beginning. Having heard that, the elder, having come to Sāvattihī, reported to the Blessed One. The Blessed One, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived. Having heard that, the great multitude became devoted to meritorious qualities such as giving and so on.

The commentary on the Chariot-Maker Female Ghost Story is concluded.

4. Commentary on the Bhusa Ghost Story

447-452. "One with chaff, another with rice": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Sāvattthī, referring to four ghosts. It is said that in a certain small village not far from Sāvattthī, a dishonest trader earned his livelihood by false measures and so on. He, having taken rice chaff, having treated it with red clay, having made it heavier, mixed it together with red rice and sold it. His son, angry that "he does not show respect to my friends and companions who have come to the house," having taken a yoke-strap, gave a blow on his mother's head. His daughter-in-law, having eaten by theft the meat set aside for the benefit of all, when again being questioned by them, took an oath: "If that meat was eaten by me, may I in existence after existence cut and eat the flesh of my own back." But his wife, having said "There is not" to those requesting some requisite or other, being pressured by them, took an oath with lying: "If I say 'there is not' when there is, may I be a dung-eater in whatever place I am reborn."

All four of those persons, at a later time, having died, were reborn as ghosts in the Vindhya forest. There the dishonest trader, by the fruit of action, having taken blazing chaff with both hands and having scattered it on his own head, experiences great suffering; his son, having split his own head with iron clubs by himself, experiences no small suffering. His daughter-in-law, by the fruit of action, having cut the flesh of her own back with exceedingly sharp and very long nails, eating it, experiences boundless suffering; for his wife, fragrant, well-purified, stainless rice-meal, the very moment it is brought near, turns into faeces swarming with various kinds of worms, supremely foul-smelling and loathsome; she, having taken it up with both hands, eating it, experiences great suffering.

Thus, while those four persons, having been reborn as ghosts, were experiencing great suffering, the Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, wandering on a mountain journey, one day went to that place. Having seen those ghosts -

447. "One with chaff, another with rice, and this woman with her own flesh and blood;
And you consume faeces, impure and unpleasant - of what is this the result?"

With this verse he asked about the deed done by them. Therein, "chaff" means husks. "One" means a single one. "Rice" means of rice. For this is an accusative expression used in the sense of the genitive; the intention is that he scatters blazing husks of rice on his own head. "And again another" means again another. For he who struck his mother's head, he, having struck his own head with iron clubs, reaches the splitting of the head; he speaks with reference to that. "One's own flesh and blood" - the explanation is that she consumes the flesh of her own back and blood. "Unpleasant" means disagreeable, loathsome. "Of what is this the result" - the meaning is: of which evil deed is this the fruit, which is now being experienced by you?

Thus, when the elder had asked about the deed done by them, the wife of the dishonest trader, declaring the deed done by all of them -

448. "This one formerly harmed his mother, this one is a dishonest trader;
This one, having eaten the meat, deceives with lying.

449. "When I was a human being among human beings, the housewife, lord of the whole family;
I concealed what was there, and I gave nothing from here.
450. "I conceal with lying, 'There is not this in my house;
If I hide what exists, may excrement be my food.'
451. "By the result of that action, and of lying, both;
Fragrant rice food turns to excrement for me.
452. "Actions are not barren, for action does not perish;
Foul-smelling excrement with worms, I eat and I drink." He spoke these verses.

448. Therein, "this one" - she speaks showing the son. "Harms" means afflicts with force; the meaning is strikes with a club. "Dishonest trader" means a fraudulent trader, one who conducts trade by deception. This is the meaning. "Having eaten the meat" means having eaten the meat that was common with others, she deceives them with lying, saying "I did not eat it."

449-450. "Housewife" means mistress of the house. "When existing" means with regard to the very requisites that were present and requested by others. "I conceal" means I concealed. For this is said by way of change of tense. "And I gave nothing from here" means from here, from my own property, I did not give even the slightest amount to another who was in need. "I conceal" means I concealed with lying, saying "There is not this in my house."

451-452. "Turns to excrement for me" means fragrant rice food, by the power of my action, turns and transforms into the state of excrement. "Not barren" means not futile, not fruitless. "For action does not perish" means action accumulated as such does not perish without giving its fruit. "With worms" means possessing worms, with a mass of worms that has arisen. "Excrement" means faeces. The remainder is clear in itself since the method has been stated above.

Thus the Elder, having heard the words of that female ghost, reported that incident to the Blessed One. The Blessed One, 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 Bhusa Ghost Story is concluded.

5. Commentary on the Boy Ghost Story

453-463. "Wonderful is the knowledge of the Fortunate One" - this is the story of the boy ghost. What is its origin? It is said that in Sāvattthī, many lay followers, having formed a group for the Teaching, having had a great pavilion built in the city, having adorned it with cloths of various colours, having invited the Teacher and the community of monks early in the morning, having caused the community of monks headed by the Buddha to sit down on seats spread with very precious and excellent coverings, having venerated with scents, flowers, and so on, they carried on a great giving. Having seen that, a certain man whose mind was pervaded by the stain of stinginess, not enduring that honour, said thus - "It would be better if all this were

thrown on a rubbish heap, rather than given to these shavelings." Having heard that, the lay followers, with stirred minds, thinking "A weighty evil indeed has been produced by this man, by which he has thus offended against the community of monks headed by the Buddha," having reported that matter to his mother, said "Go, ask forgiveness from the Blessed One together with the community of disciples." She, having assented "Very well," having frightened and convinced her son, having approached the Blessed One and the community of monks, having confessed the transgression committed by her son, having asked forgiveness, made an offering to the Blessed One and the community of monks for seven days with the giving of rice gruel. Her son, before long, having died, was reborn in the womb of a courtesan who earned her living by a defiled occupation. And she, having known him to be a boy as soon as he was born, had him thrown away in a cemetery. He, there, protected by the power of his own merit alone, unharmed by anyone, slept happily as if in his mother's lap. And they say that deities took up his protection.

Then the Blessed One, towards the break of dawn, having emerged from the attainment of great compassion, surveying the world with the Buddha-eye, having seen that boy abandoned in the charnel ground, went to the charnel ground at the time of sunrise. "The Teacher has come here, there must be a reason here" - the great multitude gathered together. The Blessed One, having said to the assembled assembly "This boy should not be looked down upon; even though now he stands abandoned in a cemetery, without a protector, yet in the future, in this very life and in the future life, he will obtain lofty success," being asked by those people "What action, venerable sir, was done by him in a previous birth?" -

"The populace made a noble offering to the community of monks headed by the Buddha;

There his mind underwent alteration, he spoke harsh, vulgar speech."

Having made known by this and other methods the deed done by the boy and the success to be attained in the future, having expounded the Teaching suited to the disposition of the assembled assembly, he gave the progressive proclamation of the Teaching further above. At the conclusion of the truths there was the full realisation of the teaching by eighty-four thousand living beings, and one householder possessing wealth of eighty million, in the very presence of the Blessed One, took that boy saying "He is my son." The Blessed One, thinking "By this much this boy has been protected, and assistance has been given to the great multitude of people," went to the monastery.

He, at a later time, when that householder had died, having come into the wealth handed over by him, establishing the family, having become a householder of great wealth in that very city, was devoted to giving and so on. Then one day the monks raised up a discussion in the Teaching hall - "Ah, surely the Teacher is compassionate towards beings! That very boy who then stood without a protector now experiences great success and performs lofty meritorious deeds." Having heard that, the Teacher declared "No, monks, his success is not only this much; rather, at the end of his life span, he will be reborn as a son of Sakka, the king of gods, in the Tāvātimsa realm, and will obtain great divine success." Having heard that, the monks and the great multitude of people, having praised the Teacher's distinction of knowledge, saying

"Having seen this reason indeed, the far-seeing Blessed One, having gone there to him who had just been born and was abandoned in the charnel grove for fresh corpses, gave assistance," related his story in that individual existence. Making known that matter, the compilers of the recitation -

453. "Wonderful is the knowledge of the Fortunate One, as the Teacher explained concerning the person;
Some become abundant in merit, some become limited in merit.
454. This boy, abandoned in the charnel ground, sustains himself through the night by the moisture from his thumb;
Neither demons nor spirits nor reptiles would harm the boy who has made merit.
455. Dogs licked his feet, crows and jackals turn him over;
Flocks of birds carry away the womb-filth, and crows carry away the eye-filth.
456. No one arranged protection for him, nor medicine, nor fumigation with mustard;
They did not take the conjunction of planets, nor did they scatter all kinds of grain.
457. Such a one, having reached the utmost distress, brought by night and abandoned in the charnel ground;
Trembling like a lump of fresh butter, with life remaining in doubt.
458. Him saw the one worshipped by gods and humans, and having seen him, the one of extensive wisdom declared;
"This boy will become of the foremost family in this city, and in wealth."
459. "What was his religious duty, what then was his holy life, of what well-practised deed is this the result;
Having reached such disaster, he will experience such supernormal power."

They spoke six verses.

453. Therein, "wonderful in nature" means of a marvellous intrinsic nature. "The knowledge of the Fortunate One" means the knowledge not shared with others, of the Perfectly Enlightened One; it is said with reference to the omniscient knowledge, namely the knowledge of inclinations and underlying tendencies and so on. As to how this, being beyond the domain of others, is knowledge, he said "as the Teacher explained concerning the person." By this he shows that the marvellous nature of the knowledge is understood through the Teacher's teaching itself.

Now, showing the explanation, he said "some become abundant in merit, some become limited in merit." Its meaning is - Even those abundant in wholesome mental states, here certain persons become low through birth and so on, by the power of demerit that has obtained its condition; and even those of limited merit, even those of lesser meritorious mental states, some beings become lofty through the excellence of the field and so on, due to the great radiance of that merit.

454. "In the charnel ground" means in the cemetery. "By the moisture from the thumb" means by the moisture flowing from the thumb; the meaning is by the milk dripping from the thumb of a deity. "Neither demons nor spirits nor reptiles" means whether goblins or demons or reptiles, whatever ones crawling or going, would not harm, would not afflict.

455. "Licked his feet" means they licked his feet with their own tongues. "Dhañkā" means crows. "Turn him over" means protecting him thinking "Let no one vex this boy," they turn him over again and again for the purpose of ascertaining his state of health. "Womb-residue" means the afterbirth. "Flocks of birds" means groups of birds such as vultures, hawks, and so on. "Carry away" means they remove. "Eye-dirt" means eye-excrement.

456. "Anyone" means any human beings; but non-human beings arranged the protection. "Medicine" means a drug that brings health both then and in the future. "Or fumigation with mustard" means the fumigation with mustard that they perform for the protection of a new-born child - they indicate that there were none performing even that for him. "They did not take the conjunction of planets" means they did not take even the astrological conjunction. "This one was born under such and such a constellation, on such and such a lunar day, at such and such a moment" - the meaning is that no one performed even the birth ceremony for him in this way. "Nor did they scatter all kinds of grain" means when performing a blessing, as a medicinal measure, the grain such as rice and so on mixed with mustard oil that they scatter - they did not do even that for him. This is the meaning.

457. "Such" means of such a form. "Reached the utmost distress" means having fallen into extreme difficulty, exceedingly stricken with suffering. "Brought at night" means brought during the night. "Like a lump of fresh butter" means resembling a lump of fresh butter; it is said thus because of being merely a lump of flesh. "Trembling" means shaking due to feebleness. "With doubt" means full of doubt because of the state of being doubted "Is he alive or is he not alive?" "With only life remaining" means with only bare life left over, due to the absence of the means that are the causes for the maintenance of life.

458. "Will become of the foremost family in wealth" means by reason of wealth, by virtue of wealth, he will become of the foremost family, of the highest family. This is the meaning.

459. "Of what ascetic practice" - this verse was spoken by the lay followers standing near the Teacher, by way of questioning about the action done by him. And that should be understood as spoken by those assembled at the charnel ground. Therein, "of what" means what is his. "Ascetic practice" means the undertaking of ascetic practices. "Again, of what" - the explanation is by changing the grammatical case: of what kind of well-practised ascetic practice and holy life. "Such" means of such a form as being born in the womb of a courtesan and being abandoned in a cemetery. "Disaster" means harm. "Such" means of that kind, of the manner stated by "sustains himself through the night by the moisture from his thumb" and so on, and by "This boy will become of the foremost family in this city" and so on. This is the meaning. "Power" means divine power; it is said to mean heavenly success.

Now, showing how the Blessed One, when asked by those lay followers, explained at

that time, the compilers of the recitation -

460. "The populace made a noble offering to the community of monks headed by the Buddha;
There his mind underwent alteration, he spoke harsh, vulgar speech.
461. "He, having dispelled that thought, having afterwards obtained joy and confidence;
Attended upon the Truth-finder dwelling in Jeta's Grove with rice gruel for a week.
462. "That was his religious duty, that then was his holy life, of that well-practised deed this is the result;
Having reached such disaster, he will experience such supernormal power.
463. "Having remained here for a hundred years, endowed with all sensual pleasures;
Upon the collapse of the body, in the future life, he goes to the company of Vāsava."

They spoke four verses.

460. Therein, "the populace" means a multitude of people; the intention is a group of lay followers. "There" means at that offering. "His" means of that boy. "His mind underwent alteration" means in the former existence there was alteration of mind, disrespect, disregard, and displeasure. "Vulgar" means he spoke harsh speech inappropriate to be announced in an assembly of the good.

461. "He" means this very one. "That thought" means that evil thought. "Having dispelled" means having appeased it through the persuasion made by his mother. "Having obtained joy and confidence" means having obtained and aroused joy and confidence. "Attended upon with rice gruel" means attended upon with the giving of rice gruel. "For a week" means for seven days.

462. "That was his religious duty, that then was his holy life" means that which was of the manner stated by me below - the clarification of one's own mind and giving - was this person's religious duty and holy life, and there is nothing else. This is the meaning.

463. "Having remained" means having stayed right here in the human world until the end of his life span. "In the future life" means in renewed existence. "He goes to the company of Vāsava" means he will go to the state of being together with Sakka, the lord of the gods, as his son. For this is a present tense expression used in the sense of the future. The remainder is clear everywhere.

The commentary on the Boy Ghost Story is concluded.

6. Commentary on the Seriṇī Female Ghost Story

464-477. "You are naked, of ugly appearance": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at Jeta's Grove, referring to the female ghost Seriṇī. In the Kuru country, it is said, in Hatthinipura, there was a certain harlot named Seriṇī. And there, for the

purpose of performing the Observance ceremony, monks gathered together from here and there. Again there was a great assembly of monks. Having seen that, people, having prepared abundant requisites for giving such as sesame seeds, rice grains and so on, and ghee, butter, honey and so on, carried on a great giving. And at that time, that courtesan, faithless, without confidence, with a mind obsessed by the stain of stinginess, even though encouraged by those people saying "Come now, give thanks for this gift," expressed only distrust to them, saying "What is the use of what is given to those shaveling ascetics?" - let alone the relinquishment of even a trifle.

She, at a later time, having died, was reborn as a female ghost on the back of the moat of a certain borderland city. Then a certain lay follower, a resident of Hatthinipura, having gone to that city for trade, went to the back of the moat towards the break of dawn for such a purpose. She there, having seen him and having recognised him, naked, with a body having nothing remaining but bones and skin, exceedingly horrifying in appearance, standing not far away, showed herself. He, having seen her -

464. "You are naked, of ugly appearance, emaciated, with veins showing all over your body;
With protruding ribs, so thin, who are you standing here?"

Asked in verse. She too answered him -

465. "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."

Made herself known in verse. Again by him -

466. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action have you gone from here to the realm of ghosts?"

Asked in verse about the deed done -

467. "At the open fords, I searched for half a māsa;
Though there were gifts to be given, I made no refuge for myself.
468. "I approach the river thirsty, it turns void;
I approach the shade in the heat, it turns to sunshine.
469. "And a wind of fire-colour blows towards me, burning;
This, venerable sir, I deserve, and other evil beyond that.
470. "Having gone to Hatthini city, you should tell my mother;
'Your daughter has been seen by me, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, she has gone from here to the realm of ghosts.'
471. "There is something deposited by me here, and that was not declared by me;
Four hundred thousand, beneath the divan.
472. "From that let her give a gift to me, and let there be livelihood for her;
And having given a gift, let my mother dedicate the offering;
Then I shall be happy, endowed with all sensual pleasures."

With these six verses she declared both the deed done by herself and also the purpose to be done for her by him.

467. Therein, "at the open fords" means at the ford areas of rivers, lakes, and so on, not obstructed by anyone, where people bathe and perform water-functions, in such places. "I searched for half a māśaka" means overcome by greed, thinking "Perhaps I might obtain something here that was left behind forgotten by people," I searched for and sought even as little as half a māśaka. Or alternatively, "at the open fords" means when there existed ascetics and brahmins who were fords, not obstructed by anyone from approaching, being a cause for the purification of beings' actions and intentions. "I searched for half a māśaka" means with a mind obsessed by the stain of stinginess, not giving anything to anyone, I particularly accumulated even half a māśaka; I did not accumulate merit. Therefore she said "Though there were gifts to be given, I made no refuge for myself."

468. "Thirsty" means parched with thirst. "Void" means the river, even though flowing full enough for a crow to drink from, by my evil deed, having become devoid of water, empty, nothing but sand, turns about. "In the heat" means in the hot seasons. "It turns to sunshine" means when I have approached the shady place, sunshine arises.

469-470. "Of fire-colour" means like fire in its contact. Therefore it was said "blows towards me, burning." "This, venerable sir, I deserve" - "venerable sir" - she addresses that lay follower with respect. The intention is: venerable sir, I deserve this suffering of thirst and so on as stated, and also other evil, cruel suffering beyond that, because of having done the corresponding evil. "You should tell" means you should say.

471-472. "Deposited here, not declared" means "so much deposited here" was not told. Now, showing the measure of that and the place where it was deposited, she said "four hundred thousand, beneath the divan." Therein, "of the divan" means of her own sleeping divan formerly. "From that" means having taken a portion from the deposited wealth, let her give a gift dedicated to me. "For her" means for my mother.

When the female ghost had spoken thus, that lay follower, having accepted her words, having finished his own business there, having gone to Hatthini city, reported that matter to her mother. To show that meaning -

473. "Good!" he, having replied, having gone to Hatthini city;
He said to her mother -
"Your daughter has been seen by me, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.

474. "She instigated me there, 'You should tell my mother;
'Your daughter has been seen by me, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.

475. "'There is something deposited by me here, and that was not declared by me;
Four hundred thousand, beneath the divan.

476. "'From that let her give a gift to me, and let there be livelihood for her;
And having given a gift, let my mother dedicate the offering;

Then I shall be happy, endowed with all sensual pleasures.'

477. "Then she gave a gift, and dedicated the offering to her;
The female ghost was happy, and she had a good livelihood."

The compilers of the recitation said. Those are easily understood.

Having heard that, her mother, having given a gift to the community of monks, dedicated it to her. Thereby she, established in the attainment of requisites obtained, having shown herself to her mother, told that reason; the mother informed the monks, the monks reported that event to the Blessed One. The Blessed One, 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 Serīṇī Female Ghost Story is concluded.

7. Commentary on the Deer-Hunter Ghost Story

478-487. "Honoured by men and women, a youth": this was spoken while the Blessed One was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, referring to the deer-hunter ghost. At Rājagaha, it is said, a certain hunter earned his livelihood by killing deer day and night. He had one lay follower as a friend, who, being unable to turn him back from evil at all times, encouraged him in merit at night, saying "Come, my dear, let us refrain from killing living beings at night." He, having refrained at night, committed killing of living beings only during the day.

He, at a later time, having died, was reborn as a mansion ghost near Rājagaha; having experienced great suffering during the daytime, at night, endowed and furnished with the five types of sensual pleasure, he indulged himself. Having seen that, the Venerable Nārada -

478. "Honoured by men and women, a youth, you shine with enticing types of sensual pleasure;
During the day you experience torture, what did you do in a former birth?"

With this verse he asked in return. Therein, "honoured by men and women" means honoured and attended upon by young gods and young goddesses who are attendants. "A youth" means a young man. "With enticing" means with desirable things that are causes for the arising of lust. "With types of sensual pleasure" means with the portions of sensuality. "You shine" means you are resplendent through being endowed; the intention is "at night." Therefore he said "during the day you experience torture"; but during the daytime you undergo various kinds of torture, slaughter. "Rajani" means or at nights. "Yehi" is merely a particle. "What did you do in a former birth" means what action indeed, leading to happiness and suffering thus, did you perform in a former birth from here? Tell that - this is the meaning.

Having heard that, the ghost, telling the elder of the deed done by himself -

479. "I was in charming Rājagaha, in delightful Giribbaja;
Formerly I was a deer hunter, with bloody hands, cruel.
480. "Towards beings who caused no opposition, towards many creatures, with a

corrupted mind;
I wandered, very cruel, always, delighting in harming others, unrestrained.

481. "I had a friend, a good-hearted one, a faithful lay follower;
He too, having compassion for me, restrained me again and again.
482. "'Do not do evil action, dear son, do not go to an unfortunate realm;
If you wish for happiness after death, refrain from killing living beings, from
lack of self-control.
483. "Having heard the word of him, who desired happiness, who was
compassionate for my welfare;
I did not do the complete instruction, long delighting in evil, lacking wisdom.
484. "He, the one of abundant wisdom, again out of compassion established me in
self-control;
'If you kill living beings by day, then let there be self-control for you at night.'
485. "So I, having killed living beings by day, was abstaining, at night I was
restrained;
At night I indulge myself, by day I am consumed, ill-fated.
486. "Of that wholesome action, I experience at night a non-human state;
By day, like maddened dogs, they run up from all around to devour me.
487. "And those who are constantly practising, regularly engaged in the Fortunate
One's Dispensation;
I consider they attain only the Deathless, the unconditioned state."

He spoke these verses.

479-480. Therein, "hunter" means cruel. "Bloody-handed" means one whose hands are smeared with blood through frequent killing of living beings. "Cruel" means harsh; the meaning is one who injures beings. "Among those who do not cause opposition" means among deer, birds, and so on, who do not cause opposition to anyone.

482-483. "From lack of self-control" means from non-restraint, from immorality. "The complete instruction" means the entire instruction; the meaning is completely abstaining from killing living beings at all times. "Long delighting in evil" means delighting in evil for a long time.

484. "In self-control" means in good conduct. "Nivesayī" means he established. "If you kill living beings by day, then let there be self-control for you at night" is a showing of the manner in which he established him. It is said that he was also engaged in the killing of living beings at night by means of setting darts, snares, and so on.

485. "By day I am consumed, ill-fated" means having now gone to an unfortunate realm, having reached great suffering, during the daytime I am consumed. It is said that because he had deer devoured by dogs during the day, the result is similar in

consequence to the deed; during the daytime great dogs, having run up, reduce his body to nothing but a skeleton remaining. But when night has arrived, that becomes merely ordinary, and he experiences heavenly success. Therefore it was said -

486. "Of that wholesome action, I experience at night a non-human state;
By day, like maddened dogs, they run up from all around to devour me."

Therein, "maddened" means having become as if with hostile minds, like those bound for slaughter. "From all around to devour" means they run up to devour my body from all around. And this was stated having taken the time of their approaching, which is exceedingly frightful to oneself. But they, having run up, reduce the body to nothing but bones remaining, and go away.

487. "And those who are constantly practising" - this is the meaning in brief of the concluding verse - Even I, merely abstaining from the destruction of life at night, experience such success. But those men who are regularly engaged, firmly engaged, constantly at all times devoted to the pursuit of higher morality and so on in the Dispensation of the Fortunate One, the Buddha, the Blessed One - those possessors of merit, methinks, attain only the Deathless, unmixed with mundane happiness, which has obtained the name "the unconditioned state"; there is no fetter whatsoever for them in its achievement.

When this was said by that ghost, the Elder reported that incident to the Teacher. The Teacher, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived. All is by the same method as already stated.

The commentary on the Deer-Hunter Ghost Story is concluded.

8. Commentary on the Second Deer-Hunter Ghost Story

488-498. "In pinnacle buildings and mansions": this was spoken while the Blessed One was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, referring to another deer-hunter ghost. At Rājagaha, it is said, a certain young huntsman, although endowed with wealth, having abandoned the happiness of possessions, wandered about killing deer day and night. A certain lay follower who was his friend, out of sympathy - "Good, my dear, abstain from killing living beings, lest it be for your harm and suffering for a long time" - gave this exhortation. He did not heed that. Then that lay follower requested a certain elder who had eliminated the mental corruptions, who was pleasing to his mind - "It would be good, venerable sir, if you would expound the Teaching to such and such a person in such a way that he might abstain from killing living beings."

Then one day that elder, walking for almsfood in Rājagaha, stood at his house door. Having seen him, that huntsman, with esteem arisen, having gone forward to meet him, having ushered him into the house, having prepared a seat, offered it. The elder sat down on the prepared seat, and he too, having approached the elder, sat down. The elder made known to him the danger in killing living beings, and the benefit of abstinence from that. He, even having heard that, did not wish to abstain from that. Then the elder said to him - "If, friend, you are not able to abstain entirely, at least abstain at night." He, saying "Good, venerable sir, I shall abstain at night," abstained from that. The remainder is similar to the preceding story. In the verses, however -

488. "In pinnacle buildings and mansions, on divans spread with woollen carpets;

You delight in the five-part music, well played.

489. "Then at the end of the night, towards the rising of the sun;
Cast aside in the cemetery, you undergo much suffering.

490. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you undergo this suffering?"

With three verses the Elder Nārada asked him in return. Then the ghost to him -

491. "I was in charming Rājagaha, in delightful Giribbaja;
Formerly I was a deer hunter, cruel and unrestrained.

492. "I had a friend, a good-hearted one, a faithful lay follower;
A monk dependent on his family, was a disciple of Gotama;
He too, having compassion for me, restrained me again and again.

493. "'Do not do evil action, dear son, do not go to an unfortunate realm;
If you wish for happiness after death, refrain from killing living beings, from
lack of self-control.'

494. "Having heard the word of him, who desired happiness, who was
compassionate for my welfare;
I did not do the complete instruction, long delighting in evil, lacking wisdom.

495. "He, the one of abundant wisdom, again out of compassion established me in
self-control;
'If you kill living beings by day, then let there be self-control for you at night.'

496. "So I, having killed living beings by day, was abstaining, at night I was
restrained;
At night I indulge myself, by day I am consumed, ill-fated.

497. "Of that wholesome action, I experience at night a non-human state;
By day, like maddened dogs, they run up from all around to devour me.

498. "And those who are constantly practising, regularly engaged in the Fortunate
One's Dispensation;
I consider they attain only the Deathless, the unconditioned state."

He told that matter. Their meaning is by the same method as stated below.

The commentary on the Second Deer-Hunter Ghost Story is concluded.

9. Commentary on the Fraudulent Judge Ghost Story

499-506. "Garlanded, crowned, with armlets": this was spoken while the Teacher was dwelling at the Bamboo Grove, referring to the fraudulent-judge ghost. At that time King Bimbisāra observed the Observance on six days of the month, and many people, conforming to him, observed the Observance. The king asked the people who came and went to his presence - "Has the Observance been observed by you, or has it not been observed?" There a certain man appointed in legal cases, of divisive

speech, deceitful, a bribe-taker, unable to say "I have not observed it," said "I have observed it, Sire." Then a friend said to him as he departed from the king's presence - "What, my dear, has the Observance been observed by you today?" "Out of fear, my dear, I spoke thus in the king's presence; I am not an Observance keeper."

Then his friend said to him - "If so, let there be at least a half-Observance for you today; undertake the Observance factors." He, having accepted his word saying "Very well," having gone home, without having eaten, having rinsed his mouth, having determined the Observance, having taken up residence for the night, with his life-activities cut off by a sharp pain caused by strong wind arisen from an empty stomach, immediately after death was reborn as a mansion ghost in the belly of a mountain. For by merely observing the Observance for one night, he obtained a mansion with a retinue of ten thousand maidens and great divine success. But because of his fraudulent judging and slandering, he himself descends upon and eats the flesh of his own back. The Venerable Nārada, descending from Vulture Peak, having seen him -

499. "Garlanded, crowned, with armlets, your limbs are full of sandalwood;
Your facial complexion is serene, you shine like the sun in beauty.
500. "Non-human councillors, who are these attendants of yours;
Ten thousand maidens, who are these female attendants of yours;
They wear conch-shell bracelets and armlets, adorned with golden
headdresses.
501. "You are of great majesty, with a form that causes hair to stand on end;
You eat the flesh of your own back, having cut it off yourself.
502. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action, the flesh of your own back,
Do you eat, having cut it off yourself?
503. "For my own harm, I conducted myself in the world of the living;
With divisive speech and false speech, and with fraud and deception.
504. "There, having gone to the assembly, when the time for truth arrived;
Having disregarded the good and the Teaching, I followed what was not the
Teaching.
505. "Thus he eats himself, whoever is a backbiter;
Just as I today eat the flesh of my own back.
506. "This has been seen by you yourself, Nārada, what the compassionate, the
skilful would say;
Do not speak slander nor falsehood, may you not be a backbiter."

The elder asked with four verses, and he too answered that matter for him with four verses.

499. Therein, "garlanded" means wearing garlands; the intention is adorned with divine flowers. "Crowned" means wearing headgear. "With armlets" means

possessing armlets; the meaning is adorned with arm ornaments. "Limbs" means bodily parts. "Full of sandalwood" means anointed with the essence of sandalwood. "You shine like the sun in beauty" means having become one of similar colour to the young sun, you are resplendent. "Araṇavaṇṇī pabhāsaī" is also a reading; "araṇa" means of similar colour to the araṇi gods, in the noble open space. This is the meaning.

500. "Councillors" means those included in the retinue; the meaning is attendants. "Tuva" means you. "Having a hair-raising appearance" means endowed with an appearance that causes horripilation in those who see. For this is said by way of being endowed with great majesty. "Ukkacca" means having cut out, having cut off. This is the meaning.

503. "Acārisa" means I conducted myself, I proceeded. "With divisive speech and false speech" means by divisive speech and by false speech. "And with fraud and deception" means by fraud and by deception, and by deception of others through showing a suitable appearance and through alteration.

504. "At the time for truth" means at the fitting time to speak the truth. "Benefit" means welfare of the kind pertaining to the present life and so on. "Teaching" means reason, the true method. "Having repudiated" means having thrown away, having abandoned. "He" means the being who practises divisive speech and so on. All the remainder is by the same method as stated above.

The commentary on the Fraudulent Judge Ghost Story is concluded.

10. Commentary on the Relic-Disparager Ghost Story

507-516. "Standing in the sky" - this is the story of the ghost who disparaged the relics. When the Blessed One had attained final Nibbāna between the twin Sāla trees in the Sāla grove of the Mallas at Upavattana in Kusinārā, and the distribution of relics had been made, King Ajātasattu, having taken the portion of relics obtained by himself, for seven years, seven months, and seven days, recollecting the virtues of the Buddha, carried on a lofty devotional offering. There, incalculable, immeasurable human beings, having gladdened their minds, went to heaven; but about eighty-six thousand men, with deranged minds due to faithlessness and wrong view cultivated over a long time, having corrupted their own minds even in an inspiring place, arose among the ghosts. In that very Rājagaha, the wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law of a certain householder endowed with wealth, with confident minds, thinking "We shall make an offering to the relics," having taken scents, flowers, and so on, began to go to the place of the relics. That householder, having abused them saying "What is the use of venerating bones?" disparaged the offering to the relics. They too, not heeding his words, having gone there, having made an offering to the relics, having returned home, overpowered by such an illness, before long, having died, were reborn in the heavenly world. He, however, overpowered by wrath, before long, having died, by that evil deed was reborn among the ghosts.

Then one day the Venerable Mahākassapa, out of compassion for beings, performed such a feat of supernatural power that human beings could see those ghosts and those deities. And having done so, standing in the shrine courtyard, he asked that ghost who had disparaged the relics with three verses. That ghost answered him -

507. "Standing in the sky, foul-smelling, you emit a putrid odour;
But worms eat your foul-smelling mouth, what action did you do before?"
508. "Then having taken a knife, they cut again and again;
Having sprinkled with lye, they cut again and again.
509. "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you undergo this suffering?"
510. "I was in charming Rājagaha, in delightful Giribbaja;
Lord of wealth and grain, of great abundance, sir.
511. "This was my wife, and my daughter and my daughter-in-law;
They, with garlands and water lilies, and costly cosmetics;
I prevented them from bringing to the monument, that evil was done by me.
512. "Eighty-six thousand of us, each experiencing individual suffering;
Having disparaged the stupa worship, we are tormented in hell exceedingly.
513. "And those who, when the great festival of veneration of the stupa of the
Worthy One is taking place,
Make known the danger - separate them from that."
514. "And see these coming, wearing garlands, adorned;
Experiencing the result of garlands, prosperous and glorious are they.
515. "Having seen that marvel, wonderful, hair-raising;
The wise pay homage, they venerate that great sage.
516. "Surely I, having gone from here, having obtained a human womb;
I will make stupa worship, diligent again and again."

507-508. Therein, "foul-smelling" means an undesirable odour, meaning having the smell of a rotting corpse. Therefore he said "you emit a putrid odour." "Then" means above the emitting of foul smell and the being eaten by worms. "Having taken a knife, they cut again and again" means beings instigated by action, having taken a knife with a sharp edge, again and again cut into that wound surface. "Having sprinkled with lye, they cut again and again" means having poured alkaline water on the cut place, they cut again and again.

510. "Lord of wealth and grain, of great abundance" means lord and master of exceedingly abundant wealth and grain; the meaning is wealthy, of great riches.

511. "This was my wife, and my daughter and my daughter-in-law" means this was my wife in my former existence, this was my daughter, this was my daughter-in-law. He speaks showing that they, having become gods, were standing in the sky. "Costly" means new. "I prevented them from bringing to the monument" means while they were bringing offerings to venerate the monument, I rejected them, disparaging the relics. "That evil was done by me" - he speaks having reached remorse, meaning that evil of disparaging the relics was done, was practised by me.

512. "Eighty-six thousand" means eighty thousand plus six thousand. "We" - he speaks including those ghosts together with himself. "Experiencing individual suffering" means painful feeling being experienced separately, individually. "In hell" - he said this making the sphere of ghosts similar to hell because of the intensity of suffering.

513. "And those who, when the great festival of veneration of the stupa of the Worthy One is taking place" means when the great festival of veneration dedicated to the stupa of the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One, is taking place, those who, like me, make known the danger, the fault, of the veneration of the stupa. "Separate those persons from that, from that merit, cause them to be separated, make them outsiders" - by way of an indirect reference he makes clear his own nature as a thoroughbred.

514. "Coming" means coming through the sky. "The result of garlands" means the result, the fruit, of the veneration of garlands made at the stupa. "Prosperous" means prosperous with heavenly success. "Those glorious ones" means those having a retinue.

515. "And having seen that" means having seen the marvellous, wonderful, hair-raising, exceedingly noble, special result of that very slight merit of veneration. "The wise pay homage, they venerate that great sage" means: venerable Kassapa, these women venerate, pay respect to, pay homage to, and make salutation to that one who has become the highest field of merit. This is the meaning.

516. Then that ghost, with an agitated mind, showing what should be done by himself in the future in accordance with his sense of urgency, spoke the verse "Surely I." That is of manifest meaning.

Thus spoken to by the ghost, Mahākassapa, making that the occasion, expounded the Teaching to the assembly that had arrived.

The commentary on the Relic-Disparager Ghost Story is concluded.

Thus in the Khuddaka Commentary, in the Petavatthu,

Of the chapter adorned with ten stories,

The exposition of the meaning of the third Minor 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.

PDF Creation Date: 14 September 2026

HOW TO CITE

PaliVerse (2026). Commentaries. The Canon of Discourses - Commentaries. 5. The Collection of Minor Texts. 07. Commentary on the Book of Stories about Ghosts. 3. The Minor Chapter Retrieved from paliverse.org

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