

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

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PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

07. The Book of Stories about Ghosts

3. The Minor Chapter

1. The Story of the Unbreaking Ghost

- 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?"
- 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.
- 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.** And they, having fallen there, fell to 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."

The Story of the Unbreaking Ghost is first.

2. The Story of the Ghost of the Elder Sāṇavāsī

- 408.** The elder from Kuṇḍī 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.** 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."
- 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;
I have come to pay homage to the compassionate sage in the world, venerable sir."

The Story of the Ghost of the Elder Sāṇavāsī is second.

3. The Story of the Female Ghost of the Chariot-Maker

- 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."
- 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."
- 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.

The Story of the Female Ghost of the Chariot-Maker is third.

The second recitation section is concluded.

4. The Story of the Chaff Ghost

- 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?"
- 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."

The Story of the Chaff Ghost is fourth.

5. The Story of the Boy Ghost

- 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."
- 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.

The Story of the Boy Ghost is fifth.

6. The Story of the Serīṇī Ghost

- 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?"

- 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."
- 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?"
- 467.** "At the open fords, I searched for half a māśaka;
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."
- 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, she has 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, she has 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 she 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 Story of the Serinī Ghost is sixth.

7. The Story of the Deer-Hunter Ghost

- 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?"
- 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."

The Story of the Deer-Hunter Ghost is seventh.

8. The Second Story of the Deer-Hunter Ghost

- 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?"
- 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."

The Second Story of the Deer-Hunter Ghost is eighth.

9. The Story of the Corrupt Judge Ghost

- 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 do you eat the flesh of your own back,
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 Story of the Corrupt Judge Ghost is ninth.

10. The Story of the Relic-Disparager Ghost

- 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."

The Story of the Relic-Disparager Ghost is tenth.

The Minor Chapter is concluded as third.

Its summary:

Abhijjamāna, Kuṇḍī, the chariot-maker, and with chaff;
The boy and the courtesan, two hunters, the back-worshipper;
By that the chapter is called.



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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