

THE PALIVERSE PROJECT

The Universe of Buddha's Wisdom

The Triple Canon (Tipiṭaka)

The Canon of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)

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

07. The Book of Stories about Ghosts (07. Petavatthupāḷi)

4. The Great Chapter (4. Mahāvaggo)

[Pv 36-51, PTS 64-94]



PaliVerse

5. The Collection of Minor Texts

07. The Book of Stories about Ghosts

4. The Great Chapter

1. The Story of the Mango-Sugar Ghost

- 517.** There is a city named Vesālī of the Vajjis, there was a Licchavi named Ambasakkara;
Having seen a ghost outside the city, right there he questioned him, desiring to know the reason.
- 518.** "There is no sleeping place nor sitting for him, there is no going forward nor going back;
The enjoyment of food eaten, drunk, and chewed, and clothing - even an attendant for him there is not.
- 519.** "Those relatives, friends seen and heard of, compassionate ones who were his before;
Even to see him they now do not obtain, for his nature is abandoned by those people.
- 520.** "There are no friends for one whose self has departed, friends abandon him having known him to be defective;
And seeing benefit they surround him, many friends there are for one whose self has risen.
- 521.** "Deprived of all possessions, in distress, smeared with blood, body pierced through;
Clinging like a dewdrop, today or tomorrow comes the cessation of life.
- 522.** "One such as this, having reached the utmost distress, impaled on a stake of the margosa tree;
Then by what reason do you say, demon, 'Live, friend, life itself is better'?"
- 523.** "He was a blood relation of mine, I remember from a former birth;
And having seen him, compassion arose in me, O king, may this one of bad character not fall into hell.
- 524.** "Passed away from here, this Licchavi man, to hell teeming with beings, of terrible form;
He is reborn, the doer of wrongful deeds, to great torment, painful and frightening.
- 525.** "By many a portion of virtue this stake is better than that hell;

Exclusively painful, bitter, frightening, exclusively sharp is the hell he may fall into.

- 526.** "And if this one, having heard my word, afflicted by suffering, should give up life;
Therefore I do not speak near him, lest the cessation of life be caused by me."
- 527.** "This matter of the man has been understood, but we wish to ask you something else;
If you give us permission, we ask you, and you should not be angry."
- 528.** "Certainly there was an acknowledgment from me then, there is no telling for one who is not devoted;
Having made me one of trustworthy speech unwillingly, ask me as you wish, as I am able to bear."
- 529.** "Whatever I shall see with my eye, all that I would believe in;
But if having seen that I should not believe, you should perform the legal act of guidance on me, demon."
- 530.** "May this acknowledgment of yours be true to me, having heard the Teaching, obtain excellent confidence;
Seeking to understand, and not with a corrupted mind, whatever Teaching you have heard and also not heard;
I would tell all, as they understand."
- 531.** "With a white horse, adorned, he approached near the one impaled on the stake;
This vehicle is wonderful, beautiful to behold - of what action is this the result?"
- 532.** "In the middle of the city of Vesālī, on a muddy road there was a pit;
One day, with a gladdened mind, having taken yellow sandalwood, I placed it in the pit."
- 533.** "Having placed our feet on this, both we and others crossed over;
This vehicle is wonderful, beautiful to behold - this is the result of that very action."
- 534.** "Your beauty illuminates all directions, and your fragrance pervades all directions;
You have attained the supernormal power of a spirit, of great majesty, yet you are naked - of what is this the result?"
- 535.** "Without wrath, with a mind constantly serene, I approach people with smooth words;
This is the result of that very action - my divine beauty constantly shines."
- 536.** "Having seen the fame and renown of those established in the Teaching, I speak with a gladdened mind;

This is the result of that very action - my divine fragrance constantly pervades.

- 537.** "While friends were bathing at the ford, having taken the cloth to dry land, I hid it;
Seeking amusement, and not with a corrupted mind, by that I am naked and difficult is my livelihood."
- 538.** "Whoever playing does evil, they have said such is the result of action for him;
But whoever does it not playing, what result of that action have they said?"
- 539.** "Those human beings with minds of corrupt thought, defiled by body and by speech;
Upon the collapse of the body, in the future life, without doubt they go to hell.
- 540.** "But others, hoping for a fortunate world, delighting in giving, with a nature inclined to kindness;
Upon the collapse of the body, in the future life, without doubt they go to a fortunate world."
- 541.** "How could I know that certainly, this is the result of good and evil?
Or what having seen would I believe in, or who would make me believe in that?"
- 542.** "Having seen and heard, believe this: this is the result of good and evil;
If both good and evil were non-existing, would beings be fortunate or ill-fated?"
- 543.** "If mortals did not perform actions here, good and evil, in the human world;
Beings would not be fortunate or ill-fated, inferior or superior in the human world.
- 544.** "Because mortals perform actions, good and evil, in the human world;
Therefore beings are fortunate or ill-fated, inferior or superior in the human world.
- 545.** "Today they speak of the twofold result of actions, that which is to be experienced as pleasure and as pain;
Those deities enjoy themselves, while fools who do not see the dyad are cooked.
- 546.** "I have no actions done by myself, and even having given, there is no one who would dedicate to me;
Clothing, sleeping place, food and drink, by that I am naked and difficult is my livelihood."
- 547.** "Could there be any reason, demon, by which you might obtain clothing?
Tell me, if there is a cause, we would hear words with reason that can be believed."
- 548.** "There is here a monk named Kappitaka, a meditator, virtuous, a Worthy One,

liberated;

With guarded faculties, restrained in the principal monastic code, become cool, attained to the highest view.

- 549.** "Kindly in speech, bountiful, easy to admonish, fair-faced, well-learned, with well-released speech;
A field of merit, dwelling without conflict, worthy of offerings from gods and humans.
- 550.** "Peaceful, smokeless, free from trouble, desireless, released, free from the dart, unselfish, not crooked;
Without clinging, with all obsession eliminated, having attained the three true knowledges, brilliant.
- 551.** "Unknown, even having seen him, he is not easily known, 'A sage' - thus the Vajjians call him;
The demons know him, without longing, of good character, wandering in the world.
- 552.** "If you, having dedicated to me, were to give one pair or two to him;
And if those were to be accepted, you would see me clothed in garments."
- 553.** "In which region, having gone, may we now see the ascetic dwelling,
Who today might dispel uncertainty and doubt, and the wriggings of views?"
- 554.** "He is seated in the place of the monkeys' dancing, surrounded by many deities;
He speaks a talk on the Teaching, true in name, diligent in his own hermitage."
- 555.** "Thus I shall do, having gone now, I shall clothe the ascetic with a pair;
And if those were to be accepted, may we see you clothed in garments."
- 556.** "Do not approach the one gone forth at an inopportune moment, this is good for you, Licchavi, this is not the principle;
But having approached at the proper time, right there you will see him seated in a secret place."
- 557.** Having said "So be it", he went there, the Licchavi surrounded by a group of slaves;
He, having approached that city, took up residence in his own dwelling.
- 558.** Then at the proper time, having done household duties, having bathed and drunk and having obtained a moment;
Having selected eight pairs of garments from the chest, the Licchavi had them taken by a group of slaves.
- 559.** He, having approached that place, saw that ascetic with peaceful mind;
Withdrawn from his alms-round, returned, become cool, seated at the foot of a tree.

- 560.** Having approached, he spoke to him, and asked about his health and comfortable abiding;
"I am a Licchavi in Vesālī, venerable sir, the Licchavis know me as Ambasakkara.
- 561.** "These eight pairs of garments of mine are beautiful, accept them, venerable sir, I give them to you;
For that very purpose I have come here, so that I might be delighted."
- 562.** "From afar ascetics and brahmins avoid your dwelling;
Bowls are broken in your dwelling, and double robes too they tear apart.
- 563.** "And then others with foot-axes, headlong they throw down the ascetics;
Such harming of the gone forth, done by you, the ascetics receive.
- 564.** "You did not give even oil with grass, you did not point out the path to one who was lost;
You yourself took the stick from the blind, such a miser, unrestrained are you;
Then by what reason, having seen what,
Do you share with us?"
- 565.** "I acknowledge, venerable sir, what you say, I harassed ascetics and brahmins;
Seeking amusement, and not with a corrupted mind, yet this too was a wrongdoing of mine, venerable sir.
- 566.** "Having produced evil through play, the demon experiences suffering, one of incomplete enjoyment;
A young youth, a partaker of nakedness, what indeed could be more painful than that?
- 567.** "Having seen that, I obtained religious emotion, venerable sir, and because of that I give this gift;
Accept, venerable sir, eight pairs of garments, may these offerings go to the spirit."
- 568.** "Certainly giving is praised in many ways, and may the state of non-decay be yours as you give;
I accept your eight pairs of garments, may these offerings go to the spirit."
- 569.** Then the Licchavi, having rinsed his mouth, having given eight pairs of garments to the elder;
"And if those were to be accepted, you would see the demon clothed in garments."
- 570.** He saw him anointed with the essence of sandalwood, mounted on a thoroughbred of excellent beauty;
Adorned, well-dressed in cloth, surrounded - the demon who had attained great supernatural power.
- 571.** He, having seen that, delighted and elated, with joyful mind and of beautiful

appearance;
And having seen the great result of action, visible here and now, having realised it with his own eye.

- 572.** Having approached, he spoke to him: "I will give a gift to ascetics and brahmins;
And there is nothing of mine that should not be given, and you, demon, are very helpful to me."
- 573.** "And you, Licchavi, gave me a portion, gifts that are not futile;
So I will make friendship with you, a non-human with a human."
- 574.** "You are my destination and kinsman and ultimate goal, you are my friend and also my deity;
I request you, having become one with joined palms, I wish to see you again, O demon."
- 575.** "If you will be faithless, miserly in nature, with a wrongly directed mind;
You will indeed not obtain me for seeing, and having seen you I will not even converse with you.
- 576.** "But if you will be one who respects the Teaching, delighting in giving, one whose individuality is well-collected;
A well-spring for ascetics and brahmins, thus you will obtain me for seeing.
- 577.** "And having seen you I will converse with you, venerable sir, and release this one quickly from the stake;
From which source we made friendship, I imagine for the sake of the one impaled on the stake.
- 578.** "We made friendship with each other, and this one was quickly released from the stake;
Attentively practising the teachings, he would be freed from that hell;
The action would be to be experienced elsewhere.
- 579.** "And having approached Kappitaka, having shared with him at the proper time;
Sit down yourself face to face and ask, he will declare this matter to you.
- 580.** "Having approached that very monk, ask him, seeking to understand and not with a corrupted mind;
Whatever Teaching you have heard and also not heard,
All that he will declare, as he understands."
- 581.** Having conversed there in secret, having made a witness with the non-human;
He departed to the presence of the Licchavis, then he spoke to the assembly seated together.
- 582.** "Let the venerable sirs hear my one word, wishing for a boon, I shall obtain my purpose;

A man impaled on a stake, of cruel deeds, with punishment imposed, of an attached nature.

- 583.** "For so long, about twenty nights, since he was impaled, he neither lives nor is dead;
I will release him now, let the Community allow as it sees fit."
- 584.** "Release this one and others quickly, who would speak against one acting thus;
As you understand, so do, the Community allows as it sees fit."
- 585.** He, having approached that place, released the one impaled on the stake very quickly;
"Do not fear, my dear" - and he said this to him, and he provided physicians.
- 586.** "And having approached Kappitaka, having shared with him at the proper time;
The Licchavi, sitting down himself face to face, questioned him in the same way, desiring to know the reason.
- 587.** "A man impaled on a stake, of cruel deeds, with punishment imposed, of an attached nature;
For so long, about twenty nights, since he was impaled, he neither lives nor is dead.
- 588.** "He has been released, having gone, by me now, because of this demon's word, venerable sir;
Could there be any reason whatsoever, by which he might not go to hell?
- 589.** "Tell me, venerable sir, if there is a cause, we would hear trustworthy words with reason;
There is no destruction of those actions, without experiencing them here there is no end."
- 590.** "If he were to practise the teachings, attentively, day and night, heedful;
He would be freed from that hell, the action would be to be experienced elsewhere."
- 591.** "This matter of the man has been understood, now have compassion on me too, venerable sir;
Instruct me, exhort me, O one of extensive wisdom, so that I might not go to hell."
- 592.** "Go for refuge to the Buddha this very day, and to the Teaching and the Community, with a gladdened mind;
Likewise undertake the five training rules, unbroken and complete.
- 593.** "Quickly abstain from killing living beings, avoid what is not given in the world;
Abstain from intoxicants and do not speak falsehood, and be satisfied with your own wife;

And take upon yourself this noble, wholesome, yielding happiness, endowed with the eight excellent factors.

- 594.** "Robes and almsfood, requisites and lodgings;
Food, drink, solid food, cloth and lodgings;
Give to the upright, with a clear mind.
- 595.** "But monks accomplished in morality, without lust, very learned;
Satisfy them with food and drink, merit always increases.
- 596.** "And thus practising the teachings, attentively, day and night, heedful;
You would be freed from that hell, the action would be to be experienced elsewhere."
- 597.** "This very day I go for refuge to the Buddha, and to the Teaching and the Community, with a gladdened mind;
Likewise I undertake the five training rules, unbroken and complete.
- 598.** "I quickly abstain from killing living beings, I avoid what is not given in the world;
I abstain from intoxicants and do not speak falsehood, and I am satisfied with my own wife;
And I undertake this noble, wholesome, yielding happiness, endowed with the eight excellent factors.
- 599.** "Robes and almsfood, requisites and lodgings;
Food, drink, solid food, cloth and lodgings.
- 600.** "But monks accomplished in morality, without lust, very learned;
I give, I do not waver, delighted in the Buddhas' Dispensation."
- 601.** Such was the Licchavi Ambasakkara, a certain lay follower in Vesālī;
Faithful, gentle, and a doer of service to monks, he then attentively attended upon the Community.
- 602.** And the one impaled on the stake, having become healthy, independent and happy, approached the going forth;
And having come to the monk Kappitaka, the excellent one, both attained the fruits of asceticism.
- 603.** Such is the association with good persons, of great fruit for the wise who understand;
The one impaled on a stake touched the highest fruit, but Ambasakkara the lesser fruit.

The Story of the Mango-Sugar Ghost is first.

2. The Story of the Serīsaka Ghost

- 604.** Listen to where the meeting of the demon and the merchants then took place;
And how the discussion went between them, listen all to that well-spoken

exchange.

- 605.** "He who was the king named Pāyāsi, famous, gone to the company of the terrestrial gods;
He, rejoicing in his own mansion, a non-human, addressed the humans."
- 606.** "In the perilous forest, a place of non-human spirits, in the wilderness with little water and little food;
In the midst of the sandy waste, difficult to traverse, humans with lost minds through fear of peril.
- 607.** "Here there are no fruits nor anything made of roots, there is no fuel - from where then food here?
Apart from dust and sand, hot and harsh and cruel.
- 608.** "Barren, like a heated pan, without prosperity, equal to the world beyond;
This is an ancient dwelling of the cruel, a piece of land as if accursed.
- 609.** "Then by what reason, hoping for what, into this region indeed;
Have you entered suddenly, coming together, through greed, through fear, or else bewildered?"
- 610.** "Caravan leaders in Magadha and Aṅga, having loaded various merchandise;
We travel to the land of Sindhu and Sovīra, desiring wealth, aspiring for profit.
- 611.** "Unable to endure the thirst by day, and considering compassion for the draught animals,
With this speed we all came, having set out on the path at night at the improper time.
- 612.** "We, having gone astray, having missed the path, blind and confused, lost in the forest;
In the midst of the sandy waste, difficult to traverse, we do not know the direction, bewildered in mind.
- 613.** "Having seen this never seen before, the excellent mansion and you, demon;
Hoping for life beyond that, having seen, we are delighted, glad, and elated."
- 614.** "The far shore of the ocean and this sandy desert, the path traversed by cane and the road of stakes;
And rivers and the difficult passes of mountains, you go to various directions on account of wealth.
- 615.** "Having entered the realm of others, looking at people from foreign lands;
Whatever you have heard or also seen, that is wonderful, let us hear it from you, dear ones."
- 616.** "More wonderful than this, young man, neither heard by us nor also seen;
Having seen all this surpassing human experience, we are not satisfied by one of superior beauty.

- 617.** "Lotus ponds flow through the sky, abundant with garlands, with many white lotuses;
And these trees are endowed with perpetual fruit, odours blow forth exceedingly fragrant.
- 618.** "The pillars of lapis lazuli, raised a hundred, with long sides of stone and coral;
Made of emerald together with ruby, these pillars are radiant, free from illness.
- 619.** "With a thousand pillars, of incomparable splendour, above them this excellent mansion;
Interspersed with jewels, combined with golden railings, and well covered with refined gold plates.
- 620.** "This mansion, shining like molten gold from the Jambu river, well-polished,
endowed with palace steps and platforms;
Firm and lovely and well-joined, exceedingly pleasing to contemplate,
delightful.
- 621.** "Within the jewelled mansion, with abundant food and drink, surrounded by a company of nymphs;
Resounding with tambourines, drums, and musical instruments, you are honoured with praise and homage.
- 622.** "He rejoices, awakened by the company of women, in the excellent, delightful mansion-palace;
Inconceivable, possessed of all virtues, like King Vessavaṇa at Naḷinī.
- 623.** "Were you a god or were you a demon, or the lord of gods who has become a human being?
The merchants, the caravan leaders, ask you, tell us what is your name, demon?"
- 624.** "I am the demon named Serīsaka, appointed as guardian of the sandy waste in the wilderness;
I protect this region, obedient to King Vessavaṇa."
- 625.** "Was it obtained by chance, born of transformation, made by yourself, or given by the gods?
The merchants, the caravan leaders, ask you, how was this delightful thing obtained by you?"
- 626.** "Not obtained by chance, not born of transformation for me, not made by myself, nor indeed given by the gods;
Through my own actions, non-evil, through merit, this delightful thing was obtained by me."
- 627.** "What was your religious duty, what then was your holy life, of what well-practised deed is this the result;
The merchants, the caravan leaders, ask you, how was this mansion obtained by you?"

- 628.** "My designation was Pāyāsi, when I exercised kingship over the Kosalans;
I held the view of nihilism, was miserly, of bad character, and was an
annihilationist then.
- 629.** "And there was the ascetic Kumārakassapa, very learned, a brilliant speaker,
eminent;
He then spoke to me a talk on the Teaching, he dispelled my wriggling views.
- 630.** "Having heard his talk on the Teaching, I declared my state as a lay follower;
I was abstaining from killing living beings, I avoided what is not given in the
world;
I abstained from intoxicants and did not speak falsehood, and I was satisfied
with my own wife.
- 631.** "That was my religious duty, that then was my holy life, of that well-practised
deed this is the result;
Through those very actions, non-evil, through merit, this mansion was
obtained by me."
- 632.** "Truly, indeed, wise men have said, not otherwise is the word of the wise;
Wherever the one of meritorious action goes, there he rejoices, one who
possesses sensual pleasures as desired.
- 633.** "Wherever there is sorrow and lamentation, murder and imprisonment and
affliction;
There goes the one of evil action, never is he freed from an unfortunate
realm."
- 634.** "The people became as if completely deluded, in this moment as if turned to
mud;
For this people and for you, young man, by what indeed was there
displeasure?"
- 635.** "And from this Sirīsa grove, dear ones, divine odours, fragrant, blow forth;
They pervade this mansion, by day and by night, having dispelled the
darkness.
- 636.** "And with the passing of a hundred years of these, one by one a seed-pod
splits open;
A human hundred years has passed, since I was reborn here in this realm.
- 637.** "Having seen that I shall remain in this mansion for five hundred years, dear
ones;
Due to the exhaustion of life-span and the exhaustion of merit I shall pass
away, by that very sorrow I have fainted."
- 638.** "How could such a one grieve, having obtained an incomparable mansion for a
long time;
But those who have been reborn in a brief state, they indeed would grieve,
being of little merit."

- 639.** "That is fitting and to be advised to me, that you speak kind words to me;
And you, dear ones, protected by me, go safely wherever you wish."
- 640.** "Having gone to the land of Sindhu and Sovīra, desiring grain, aspiring for
profit;
With undertakings according to our promise, with generosity fulfilled, we shall
make a grand Serīsa festival."
- 641.** "Do not make a Serīsa festival for me, and all that you speak will come to be
for you;
Avoid evil actions, and undertake the pursuit of the Dhamma.
- 642.** "There is a lay follower in this group, very learned, endowed with morality;
Faithful and generous and well-behaved, discerning, contented, and wise.
- 643.** "Knowing, one should not speak falsehood, and one should not intend for the
harm of others;
One should not engage in divisive slander, and one should speak smooth and
kindly speech.
- 644.** "Respectful, deferential, disciplined, without evil, pure in higher morality;
That being supports his mother and father too, righteously, with noble
conduct.
- 645.** "I imagine he seeks wealth for the sake of his mother and father, not for his
own sake;
And he who, after the passing of his mother and father, inclined to
renunciation, will live the holy life.
- 646.** "Upright, not crooked, honest, without deceit, and he should not speak with
trickery;
Such a one, a doer of well-done deeds, established in the Dhamma, how could
he obtain suffering?
- 647.** "For that reason I have manifested myself, therefore see the Teaching, O
merchants;
Without him you would have become ashes here, blind and confused, lost in
the forest;
With one who is quick and swift, with another, happy indeed is the meeting
with a good person."
- 648.** "What is his name and what work does he do, what is his appellation and what
then is his clan;
We too wish to see him, demon, for whose compassion you have come here;
Indeed it is a gain for him, for whom you have affection."
- 649.** "The barber named Sambhava, a lay follower living by the fruit of the comb;
Know him, he is your servant, do not despise him, he is well-behaved."
- 650.** "We know what you declare, demon, but we did not know he was such;

We too shall honour him, demon, having heard your noble word."

- 651.** "Whatever human beings are in this caravan, young, great, or else middling;
Let them all ascend the mansion, let the miserly see the fruit of merits."
- 652.** All of them there, each saying 'I first', having put that barber in front there;
They all ascended the mansion, like the Masakkasāra of Vāsava.
- 653.** All of them there, each saying 'I first', declared their state as lay followers;
They abstained from killing living beings, they avoided what is not given in the world;
They abstained from intoxicants and did not speak falsehood, and they were satisfied with their own wives.
- 654.** All of them there, each saying 'I first', having declared their state as lay followers;
The caravan departed, giving thanks, approved by the demon's supernormal power again and again.
- 655.** Having gone to the land of Sindhu and Sovīra, desiring wealth, aspiring for profit;
With undertakings according to their efforts, with gains fulfilled, they returned to Pāṭaliputta unharmed.
- 656.** Having gone to their homes safely, endowed with sons and wives;
Joyful, delighted, glad, elated, they made a grand Serīsa festival;
They built a residential compound called Serīsaka.
- 657.** Such is the association with good persons, of great benefit is the association with the qualities of the Dhamma;
For the sake of one lay follower, all beings became happy.

The Story of the Serīsaka Ghost is second.

The third recitation section is concluded.

3. The Story of the Nandaka Ghost

- 658.** A king named Piṅgalaka was the lord of the Surattṭha people;
Having gone to attend upon the Moriyas, he returned again to Surattṭha.
- 659.** In the hot midday time, the king approached the mire;
He saw a delightful path, that sandy waste of the ghosts.
- 660.** The king addressed the charioteer -
"This path is delightful, secure, safe, and sheltering;
By this path, charioteer, let us go, near to the Surattṭha people from here."
- 661.** By that the Sorattṭha king set out, with his fourfold army;
A frightened man said this to the Sorattṭha king.

- 662.** "We have entered upon a wrong path, terrifying, hair-raising;
The path is seen in front, but behind it is not seen.
- 663.** "We have entered upon a wrong path, near the men of Yama;
A non-human odour blows, a severe sound is heard."
- 664.** Agitated, the Soraṭṭha king said this to the charioteer:
"We have entered upon a wrong path, terrifying, hair-raising;
The path is seen in front, but behind it is not seen.
- 665.** "We have entered upon a wrong path, near the men of Yama;
A non-human odour blows, a severe sound is heard."
- 666.** Having climbed up onto the elephant's back, looking around at the four
directions;
He saw a delightful banyan tree, a tree endowed with shade;
Similar in colour to a blue cloud, resembling the splendour of a cloud's hue.
- 667.** The king addressed the charioteer, "What is this that appears so lofty;
Resembling the colour of a dark cloud, shining with the splendour of a cloud's
hue?"
- 668.** "That, great king, is a banyan tree, a tree accomplished in shade;
Resembling the colour of a dark cloud, shining with the splendour of a cloud's
hue?"
- 669.** By that the Soraṭṭha king set out, towards where that lofty one appears;
Resembling the colour of a dark cloud, shining with the splendour of a cloud's
hue.
- 670.** Having descended from the elephant's back, the king approached the tree;
He sat down at the root of the tree, together with his ministers and retinue;
He saw a drinking vessel full of water, and delightful cakes.
- 671.** And a man with a divine appearance, adorned with all ornaments;
Having approached the king, said this to the Soraṭṭha king.
- 672.** "Welcome to you, great king, and also your coming is not unwelcome;
Let your majesty drink the drinking water, eat the cakes, O tamer of enemies."
- 673.** Having drunk the water, the king, together with his ministers and retinue;
Having eaten the cakes and drunk, the Soraṭṭha king said this.
- 674.** "Are you a deity, a gandhabba, or Sakka, the first of givers?
Not knowing you, we ask, how may we know you?"
- 675.** "I am not a god nor a gandhabba, nor Sakka, the first of givers;
I am a ghost, great king, come here from Surāṭṭha."
- 676.** "Of what morality, of what conduct, were you before in Surāṭṭha;

By what holy life of yours, is this power yours?"

- 677.** "Listen to that, great king, tamer of enemies, increaser of the realm;
The ministers and councillors, and the brahmin chaplain.
- 678.** "In Suratt̥tha I, Sire, was a person evil-minded;
Having wrong view and immoral, miserly, abusive.
- 679.** "I hindered many people who were giving and doing meritorious deeds;
I was one who created obstacles for others who were giving.
- 680.** "There is no result of giving, how can there be fruit of self-control?
There is no such thing as a teacher, who will tame the untamed?
- 681.** "'Beings are all equal, whence is respect for elders?
There is no power or energy, whence is industrious effort?
- 682.** "'There is no such thing as the fruit of giving, it does not purify one who is
hostile;
What is to be obtained a mortal obtains, born of fate and transformation.
- 683.** "'There is not mother, father, brother, there is not a world beyond this;
There is not what is given, there is not what is offered, what is well-deposited
is not found.
- 684.** "'Even one who would kill a person, who cuts off another's head;
No one kills anyone, among the openings between the seven.
- 685.** "'For the soul is unbreakable and indivisible, octagonal and spherical all round;
Five hundred yojanas, who is worthy to cut the soul?
- 686.** "'Just as when a ball of string is thrown, it runs along unwinding;
Just so that soul runs along unwinding.
- 687.** "'Just as having left from a village, one enters another village;
Just so that soul enters another body.
- 688.** "'Just as having left from a house, one enters another house;
Just so that soul enters another body.
- 689.** 'Eighty-four hundred thousand great cosmic cycles indeed;
Those who are foolish and those who are wise, having spent the round of
rebirths;
Will make an end of suffering.
- 690.** "'Happiness and suffering are measured, by bushels and baskets;
The Conqueror understands all,' the other generation is deluded.
- 691.** "I was formerly of such a view, deluded, covered by delusion;
Having wrong view and immoral, miserly, abusive.

- 692.** "Within six months, death will occur for me;
I will fall into hell, extremely painful and terrible.
- 693.** "Rectangular, with four doors, divided into sections, measured;
Surrounded by an iron wall, covered over with iron.
- 694.** "Its floor is made of iron, blazing, endowed with heat;
Having pervaded a hundred yojanas all around, it stands always.
- 695.** "For a hundred thousand years, a sound is heard at that moment;
This is the measure, great king, a hundred portions of ten million years.
- 696.** "Hundreds of thousands of crores of people are tormented in hell;
Those having wrong views and the immoral, and those who revile noble ones.
- 697.** "There I shall experience painful feeling for a long duration;
The fruit of evil action, therefore I grieve exceedingly."
- 698.** "Listen to that, great king, tamer of enemies, increaser of the realm;
My daughter, great king, Uttarā - may there be good fortune for you.
- 699.** "She does good action, delighting in morality and Observance;
Restrained and generous, bountiful, free from avarice.
- 700.** "One who does not break the training, a daughter-in-law among other families;
A female lay follower of the Sage of the Sakyans, the glorious Perfectly
Enlightened One.
- 701.** "A monk accomplished in morality, entered the village for almsfood;
With eyes downcast, mindful, with guarded doors, well-restrained.
- 702.** Walking successively, he went to that dwelling;
Uttarā saw him, great king - may there be good fortune for you.
- 703.** "She gave a drinking vessel full of water, and delightful cakes;
'My father is deceased, venerable sir, may this be beneficial to him.'
- 704.** Immediately after the offering was dedicated, the result arose;
I enjoy sensual pleasures as I desire, like King Vessavaṇa.
- 705.** "Listen to that, great king, tamer of enemies, increaser of the realm;
Of the world with its gods, the Buddha is called the foremost;
Go for refuge to that Buddha, together with your sons and wife, O tamer of
enemies.
- 706.** "By the eightfold path, they reach the Deathless state;
Go for refuge to that Teaching, together with your sons and wife, O tamer of
enemies.
- 707.** "Four practising and four established in the fruit;
This is the Community, upright, concentrated in wisdom and morality;

Go for refuge to that Community, together with your sons and wife, O tamer of enemies.

708. "Quickly abstain from killing living beings, avoid what is not given in the world; Abstain from intoxicants and do not speak falsehood, and be satisfied with your own wife."

709. "You are a well-wisher to me, demon, you desire my welfare, O deity; I will do your word, you are my teacher."

710. "I go to the Buddha for refuge, and also to the unsurpassed Teaching; And to the Community of the king of men, I go for refuge.

711. "I quickly abstain from killing living beings, I avoid what is not given in the world;
I abstain from intoxicants and do not speak falsehood, and I am satisfied with my own wife.

712. "I winnow in a strong wind, in a swift-flowing river;
I vomit out the evil view, delighted in the Buddhas' Dispensation."

713. Having said this, the Soraṭṭha king, having refrained from evil views;
Having paid homage to the Blessed One, the chief one mounted his chariot.

The Story of the Nandaka Ghost is third.

4. The Story of the Revatī Ghost

714. "Rise up, Revatā, of very evil character, for whom the door stands open, not fond of giving;
We shall lead you where the ill-fated groan, those doomed to hell, afflicted with suffering."

715. Having thus spoken, Yama's messengers, those two demons, red-eyed and gigantic;
Having seized Revatā by each arm, they departed to the presence of the host of gods.

716. "Sun-coloured, beautiful and luminous, a divine mansion, beautiful, covered with a golden net;
Whose is this mansion thronged with people, shining like the rays of the sun?

717. "Groups of women anointed with the essence of sandalwood, on both sides beautify the mansion;
It appears with a colour like the sun, who rejoices in the mansion, having attained heaven?"

718. "In Bārāṇasī there was one named Nandiya, a lay follower, without stinginess, a master of giving, bountiful;
His is this mansion thronged with people, shining like the rays of the sun.

- 719.** "Groups of women anointed with the essence of sandalwood, on both sides beautify the mansion;
It appears with a colour like the sun, he rejoices in the mansion, having attained heaven."
- 720.** "I am Nandiya's wife, the housewife, lord of the whole family;
I shall delight in my husband's mansion, having given gifts, I do not wish for hell even to see it."
- 721.** "This is hell for you, of very evil character, merit was not made by you in the world of the living;
For a stingy one, an irritator, of bad character, does not obtain the company of those who have gone to heaven."
- 722.** "What is this faeces and urine, this impurity that is seen?
What is this foul-smelling excrement, what is this that blows towards me?"
- 723.** "This is called the Saṃsavaka, deep, of the height of a hundred men;
Where for thousands of years, you will be cooked, Revatā."
- 724.** "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By what was the Saṃsavaka obtained, deep, of the height of a hundred men?"
- 725.** "Towards ascetics and brahmins, and also other paupers;
You deceived them with lying, that evil was done by you."
- 726.** "By that the Saṃsavaka was obtained, deep, of the height of a hundred men;
There for thousands of years, you will be cooked, Revatā."
- 727.** "They cut off hands and also feet, they cut off ears and also the nose;
And also flocks of ravens, having come together, having assembled, eat while she is trembling."
- 728.** "Good indeed, lead me back, I will do much wholesome;
By giving, by righteous conduct, by self-control and by taming;
Which having done they are happy, and do not feel remorse afterwards."
- 729.** "Having been negligent before, now you lament;
You will experience the result of actions done by yourself."
- 730.** "Who, having gone from the world of gods to the human world, when asked by me would say thus:
'Give gifts to those who have laid down the rod, clothing, sleeping place, food and drink;
For a stingy one, an irritator, of bad character, does not obtain the company of those who have gone to heaven.'
- 731.** "Surely I, having gone from here, having obtained a human womb;
Bountiful, accomplished in morality, I will do much wholesome;
By giving, by righteous conduct, by self-control and by taming."

- 732.** "And I would plant parks, and bridges in difficult places;
And drinking halls and wells, with a clear mind.
- 733.** "The fourteenth, the fifteenth, and the eighth of the fortnight;
And the extra holiday, well endowed with the eight factors.
- 734.** "I observed the Observance, always restrained in morality;
And I shall not be negligent in giving, this has been seen by me myself."
- 735.** Thus wailing, trembling here and there;
They threw her into the terrible hell, feet upward, head downward.
- 736.** "I was formerly stingy, an abuser of ascetics and brahmins;
And having deceived my husband with falsehood, I am being cooked in a hell
of terrible form."

The Story of the Revatī Ghost is fourth.

5. The Story of the Sugar-Cane Ghost

- 737.** "This great sugar-cane grove of mine, arises as the fruit of merit, not trifling;
That now does not come to my enjoyment, tell me, venerable sir, of what is
this the result?
- 738.** "I am struck, I am consumed, and I strive, I endeavour to consume something;
Thus I, with strength cut off, a miserable wretch, lament - of what action is this
the result?
- 739.** "And I, vexed, fall down on the ground, I roll about like a water creature in the
heat;
And as I weep, tears flow from me, tell me, venerable sir, of what is this the
result?
- 740.** "Hungry, weary and thirsty, extremely parched, I find no pleasant happiness;
I ask you about this matter, venerable sir, how might I obtain the enjoyment of
sugar-cane?"
- 741.** "Before you did an action by yourself, when you were a human being in a
former birth;
And I tell you this matter, having heard, understand this matter.
- 742.** "You set out eating sugar-cane, and a man followed behind you;
And he, hoping for something from you, spoke, but you said nothing to him.
- 743.** "And he requested from you who were not speaking, 'Please give sugar-cane' -
and he said this to you;
To him you gave sugar-cane from behind, this is the result of that action.
- 744.** "Come now, having gone, you should take from behind, having taken, eat that
as much as you like;
By that very thing you will be delighted, joyful and elated and glad."

- 745.** Having gone, he took from behind, having taken, he ate that as much as he liked;
By that very thing he was delighted, joyful and elated and glad.

The Story of the Sugar-Cane Ghost is fifth.

6. The Story of the Boy Ghost

- 746.** "Sāvatthī is the name of the city, in sight of the Himalayas;
There were two princes there, sons of the king, so I have heard.
- 747.** "Intoxicated by enticing things, delighting in the gratification of sensual pleasures;
Greedy for present happiness, they did not see the future.
- 748.** "They, having passed away from human existence, have gone from here to the world beyond;
They here cry out unseen, for their own wrong-doing before.
- 749.** "Though many worthy recipients were present, though gifts were at hand;
We were not able to make ourselves even a small protection that brings happiness.
- 750.** "'What could be more evil than this, that we, having passed away from the royal family,
Reborn in the sphere of ghosts, afflicted by hunger and thirst.
- 751.** "Having been masters here, they become non-masters there;
They wander about from hunger and thirst, human beings raised up and brought low.
- 752.** "Having known this danger, originating from the intoxication of lordship;
Having abandoned the intoxication of lordship, a man would be gone to heaven;
Upon the collapse of the body, the wise one is reborn in heaven."

The Story of the Boy Ghost is sixth.

7. The Story of the Prince Ghost

- 753.** The result of actions done before may disturb the mind;
In forms, sounds, flavours, odours, and delightful tangible objects.
- 754.** Having experienced not a little dancing, singing, delight and play;
Having enjoyed in the park, entering Giribbaja.
- 755.** He saw the sage Sunetta, self-tamed, concentrated;
Of few wishes, accomplished in shame, delighting in what had come into his bowl through gleaning.
- 756.** Having descended from the elephant's back, he said, "Have you obtained

alms, venerable sir?"

Having taken his bowl, having raised it high, the warrior.

- 757.** Having broken the bowl on the hard ground, laughing he departed;
"I am the son of King Kitava, what will you do to me, monk?"
- 758.** Of that harsh action, the result was painful;
Which the prince experienced, consigned to hell.
- 759.** Only six times eighty-four thousand years, and ninety thousand too;
He underwent exceedingly suffering, in hell, having done wrong.
- 760.** Lying on his back he was tormented, face down, on left and right;
Standing with feet upward too, for a long time the fool was tormented.
- 761.** For many thousands of years, heaps and myriads;
He underwent exceedingly suffering, in hell, having done wrong.
- 762.** Such indeed is the bitter suffering, for those who offend against the
unoffending;
Evil doers are cooked, having insulted a sage of good conduct.
- 763.** There for many years, having experienced much suffering;
Destroyed by hunger and thirst, he was a ghost, having passed away from
there.
- 764.** Having known this danger, originating from the intoxication of lordship;
Having abandoned the intoxication of lordship, one should conform to
humility.
- 765.** Praiseworthy in this very life is he who is respectful towards the Buddhas;
Upon the collapse of the body, the wise one is reborn in heaven."

The Story of the Prince Ghost is seventh.

8. The Story of the Excrement-Eater Ghost

- 766.** "Having risen up from the cesspit, who indeed are you, wretched one, standing
there?
Without doubt an evil-doer, what indeed do you believe?"
- 767.** "I, venerable sir, am a ghost, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts."
- 768.** "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you undergo this suffering?"
- 769.** "There was a resident monk of mine, envious, stingy with families;
Attached to my house, miserly, abusive.
- 770.** "Having heard his word, I abused the monks;

By the result of that action, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts."

- 771.** "The enemy in the guise of a friend, who was your family attendant;
Upon the collapse of the body, the unwise one, what destination has he gone
to after death?"
- 772.** "I stand on the head, on the top of that very evil-doer;
And he, having reached another realm, is my very attendant.
- 773.** "Whatever others defecate, venerable sir, that becomes food for me;
And whatever I defecate, on that he lives."

The Story of the Excrement-Eater Ghost is eighth.

9. The Story of the Female Excrement-Eater Ghost

- 774.** "Having risen up from the cesspit, who indeed are you, wretched one, standing
there?
Without doubt an evil-doer, what indeed do you believe?"
- 775.** "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."
- 776.** "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you undergo this suffering?"
- 777.** "There was a resident monk of mine, envious, stingy with families;
Attached to my house, miserly, abusive.
- 778.** "Having heard his word, I abused the monks;
By the result of that action, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts."
- 779.** "The enemy in the guise of a friend, who was your family attendant;
Upon the collapse of the body, the unwise one, what destination has he gone
to after death?"
- 780.** "I stand on the head, on the top of that very evil-doer;
And he, having reached another realm, is my very attendant.
- 781.** "Whatever others defecate, venerable sir, that becomes food for me;
And whatever I defecate, on that he lives."

The Story of the Female Excrement-Eater Ghost is ninth.

10. The Story of the Group of Ghosts

- 782.** "You are naked, of ugly appearance, emaciated, with veins showing all over
your body;
With ribs protruding, so thin, who are you here, sirs?"
- 783.** "We, venerable sir, are ghosts, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts."

- 784.** "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?"
- 785.** "At the open fords, I searched for half a māśaka;
Though there were gifts to be given, we made no refuge for ourselves.
- 786.** "We approach the river thirsty, it turns void;
We approach the shade in the heat, it turns to sunshine.
- 787.** "And a wind of fire-colour blows towards us, burning;
This, venerable sir, we deserve, and other evil beyond that.
- 788.** "Even for yojanas we go, hungry, greedy for food;
Without obtaining anything we return, alas, our lack of merit.
- 789.** "Hungry, fainted, wandering, they fell to the ground;
Lying on our backs we turn over, face downward we fall.
- 790.** "And they, having fallen right there, fell to the ground;
We strike our chests and heads, alas, our lack of merit.
- 791.** "This, venerable sir, we deserve, and other evil beyond that;
Though there were gifts to be given, we made no refuge for ourselves.
- 792.** "Surely we, having gone from here, having obtained a human womb;
Bountiful, accomplished in morality, we will do much wholesome."

The Story of the Group of Ghosts is tenth.

11. The Story of the Pāṭaliputta Ghost

- 793.** "Seen by you are the hells, the animal realm,
Ghosts, titans, or else humans and gods; You yourself have seen the result of
your own actions,
I will lead you to Pāṭaliputta unharmed; Having gone there, do wholesome
action."
- 794.** "You are a well-wisher to me, demon, you desire my welfare, O deity;
I will do your word, you are my teacher."
- 795.** "Seen by me are the hells, the animal realm, ghosts, titans, or else humans
and gods;
I myself have seen the result of my own actions, I will make merit, not trifling."

The Story of the Pāṭaliputta Ghost is eleventh.

12. The Story of the Mango Grove Ghost

- 796.** "And this pond of yours is delightful, level, with good landing places, and with
abundant water;
Covered with flowers, strewn with swarms of bees, how was this delightful
thing obtained by you?"

- 797.** "And this mango grove of yours is delightful, bearing fruits in all seasons;
Fully in bloom, strewn with swarms of bees, how was this mansion obtained by
you?"
- 798.** "Ripe mangoes, water, rice gruel, cool shade, delightful;
By the gift given by my daughter, by that it is obtained for me here."
- 799.** "See thus the action visible here and now, the result of giving, of self-control,
of restraint;
Having been a female slave in noble families, I am a daughter-in-law, lord of
the house."

The Story of the Mango Grove Ghost is twelfth.

13. The Story of the Akkhara Tree Ghost

- 800.** "What one gives, that does not remain the same, give indeed a gift, having
given one crosses over both;
Both one attains by that giving, be wakeful, do not be negligent."

The Story of the Akkhara Tree Ghost is thirteenth.

14. The Story of the Wealth-Gatherer Ghost

- 801.** "We collected wealth, by righteous and unrighteous means;
Others consume it, we are sharers in suffering."

The Story of the Wealth-Gatherer Ghost is fourteenth.

15. The Story of the Merchant's Son Ghost

- 802.** "Sixty thousand years, complete in every respect;
For those being tormented in hell, when will there be an end?"
- 803.** "There is no end, whence an end? No end is seen;
For such evil was done, by you and by me, sir.
- 804.** "We lived a wrong life, we who did not give while there were virtuous ones;
Though there were gifts to be given, we made no refuge for ourselves.
- 805.** "Surely I, having gone from here, having obtained a human womb;
Bountiful, accomplished in morality, I will do much wholesome."

The Story of the Merchant's Son Ghost is fifteenth.

16. The Story of the Sixty Thousand Hammer-Blows Ghost

- 806.** "Why, as if mad, do you run about like a frightened deer;
Without doubt an evil-doer, why indeed do you make such noise?"
- 807.** "I, venerable sir, am a ghost, ill-fated, belonging to Yama's world;
Having done evil deeds, I have gone from here to the realm of ghosts.

- 808.** "Sixty thousand hammers, complete in every respect;
Fall upon my head, and they break my skull."
- 809.** "What wrong-doing was done by body, by speech, by mind?
By the result of what action do you undergo this suffering?"
- 810.** "Sixty thousand hammers, complete in every respect;
Fall upon your head, and they break your skull."
- 811.** "Then I saw the Enlightened by himself, Sunetta, with developed faculties;
Seated at the root of a tree, meditating, fearless from any quarter.
- 812.** "With a stone-throwing blow, I broke his head;
By the result of that action, I underwent this suffering.
- 813.** "Sixty thousand hammers, complete in every respect;
Fall upon my head, and they break my skull."
- 814.** "Rightly for you, wretch, sixty thousand hammers, complete in every respect;
Fall upon your head, and they break your skull."

The Story of the Sixty Thousand Hammer-Blows Ghost is sixteenth.

The Great Chapter is concluded as fourth.

Its summary:

Ambasakkara, Serīsaka, Piṅgala, Revatī, Ucchu;
Two princes, two dungs, group, Pāṭali, mango grove.

Letter, tree, wealth, compilation, merchant's son, sixty, deceit;
Thus sixteen stories, by that the chapter is called.

Then the chapter summary:

Uraga, the upper chapter, Cūḷa and Mahā - thus fourfold;
Fifty-one stories, fourfold by recitation section.

The Pāḷi of the Stories of Ghosts is concluded.



ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

This translation is part of the PaliVerse Project - the first complete, unified English translation of the Pāli Canon together with its Commentaries (Aṭṭhakathā) and Subcommentaries (Tīkā), accompanied by interactive study tools. PaliVerse is an ongoing project. The AI translations are continuously improved through experts' revisions and feedback. This text is the latest translation as of the date of download.

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