

The Law of Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppada) said that if one is ignorant of the four noble truths – one cannot be in control of one's destiny; and so will end in the vicious cycle of birth and rebirth. So we said, **Ignorance leads to Karma formation; and karma formation leads to consciousness, and so on in the end it leads to old age and death.**

1. **Avijja** - ignorance or delusion
2. **Sankhara** - kamma-formations
3. **Vinnana** - consciousness
4. **Nama-rupa** - mind and matter
5. **Salayatana** - six sense bases
6. **Phassa** - contact or impression
7. **Vedana** - Feeling
8. **Tanha** - craving
9. **Upadana** - clinging
10. **Bhava** - becoming
11. **Jati** - rebirth
12. **Jara-marana** - old age and death

The doctrine of Paticcasamuppada can be categorized as i.e.

- ? *avijja* and *sankhara* are described as the causes in the **past life**,
- ? *vinnana*, *nama-rupa*, *phassa* and *vedana* as the consequences in the **present life**; *upadana* and *bhava* as the causes in the **present life** and
- ? *jati* and *jaramarana* (old age and death) as the consequences that will occur in the **future life**.

To know the **Four Noble Truths (Thitsar Lay Par)** and the **Eightfold Noble Path – (Maggin Shit Par)** is as good as having a road map to the Destination - **Nibbana**.

1.0 Samsara –

Samsara is a Pali word which means the cycle of existences. It is based on life, death and rebirth and the chain of cause and effect. Because we die with desire, aversion and confusion we can't let go of the present life, this desire for living propels us into a new existence depending on death bed vision (see **paticcasamuppada - Dependent Origination**) at the time of death. This vision determines the quality of the next existence and so we may be reborn into a pleasant or unpleasant existence. We are reborn with a pre-existing disposition or inclination which explains why we all have an individual character right from birth. The Buddha fully understood the natural way that beings constantly perpetuate their own suffering from one life to the next. (**Paticcasamuppada**) He taught us that if we can completely purify the mind of selfish attachment we will be able to liberate and be freed from the cycle of existence - Nibbana (enlightenment), the cessation of suffering and the end of rebirth, the end of samsara.

2.0 The Thirty One Planes of Existence (Thonse Tha Phon)

The thirty one [lanes of existence is the composition of this Universe. It is how we Buddhist look at our cosmology.

Here existence means, life or living, and plane means realms, levels or worlds. In Pali we use the word **Loka**, it's the best word to describe in English. Human beings like to put things in order so here is the order of the realms of all beings. For example, if your mind is evil, nasty or unwholesome then you will live in or be reborn in a place of suffering, a hell realm. If you are honest, virtuous and your mind is quite pure, then you will live in or be reborn in a clean, beautiful and pure place, a heaven realm. This cosmology and natural "law" applies to all beings.

One commonality of all living beings is that ALL of the beings living in the 31 planes are impermanent; they don't live forever in one realm. That Universal Law is – **Anicca, Dukha** and **Anatta**. (Impermanence, Unsatisfactory, and No-Self). Some beings in the heavens can live for aeons but once its life span has ended, you must be reborn in another realm. This will continue on and on until you have accrued enough wholesome deeds and has completed your requirements of **Sila** (Virtue) , **Samadhi** (Concentration) and **Panna** (Wisdom) to enter Nibbana.

3.0 NIRAYA - HELL

Many considered Hell as a place below the ground and heaven as up in the cloud. We could understand these realms of existence as states of being, in another way of thought.

Hell, **Niraya** is the worst place of all to be reborn. Here in this realm, beings are reborn spontaneously, unlike in human world. There is no happiness (**sukkha**) at all, only suffering (**dukkha**). In this life, if you do very harmful things, like killing with hatred, then your mind is negative, unwholesome. If you die with that state of mind, you will be reborn in a realm to join with all the other negative minded beings where you will have to suffer for a long time, until your wicked mind has been made cleansed. You will then be reborn in another realm. Thus, you are being put through the process of the law of “**Cause and Effect**”. You reap what you have sown. The Universal law of cause and effect applies to all beings in all Realms.

4.0 TIRACCHANA - ANIMALS

The animal world is also not a pleasant place; it is a place where beings cannot think with intelligence. But often we think that it is. They are also subject to predators that could eat them alive.

Animals' lives are not so great; they have no choice but to search for food, fight and kill to stay alive. They must mark and guard their territory and then become hostile to intruders. We think that some animals are lucky, like house pets but are they

really happy? Maybe they would prefer to be out in the wild or catching their own food, we don't know. I know that they are dependent upon us and when we go away, they fret and worry.

5.0 PETA - GHOSTS

The next realm is that of the **peta**, often referred to as hungry ghosts. It is said that hungry ghosts have big, fat stomachs and tiny, little mouths. They are never satisfied, always hungry and can never get enough to eat. So if people are very greedy and don't practice **Dana** (sharing), then they might become one of these beings. Sometimes people have pity for the petas because they can't do good deeds for themselves so they try to help them by doing good deeds and sharing the merits with them, particularly if they think that their departed relative may have been reborn as one. **Offerings to relatives and loved one who had passed away is also an act of Dana in the Buddhist routine** - See Appendix – B **Khuddakapatha** - the short discourses - **Tirokudda Kanda -- Hungry Shades Outside the Walls**

Generally speaking, ghosts are the humans who have a very strong attachment to human existence or a particular place and although they are dead, they can't leave. I think that friendly ghosts exist in this realm too, the ones who have lost their way. Or those who died suddenly and don't know that they're dead yet or who have "unfinished business" to do. For these "trapped" beings we can just do metta (loving kindness) for them to help them along. There are many places which are haunted by ghosts. Some have the six senses to know where Ghosts live in houses. Ghosts can do no harm to human; unless they are being driven by witch doctor to perform Voodoo witch-craft.

Some live in Antics together with us, human; and some live on tree and they have to be fed or snatch food from us. They appear to some in the mostly unshapely form.

6.0 ASURA - DEMONS

Asura demons or titans are powerful and warlike but it seems that they don't harm humans. Some people are afraid of these beings but few beings can go from one realm to another. As human, we can't just go and visit heaven or hell. In Burmese, for those who have lived in Yangon, know that there are guardian spirits – **Kandawmin Thaik**, **Thwezekan Thaik**, etc. Those Spirits that live around the famous stupa of **Shwedagon**. Those who practice concentration are able to see them and communicate with them. However, ordinary people cannot see them.

These beings are under the four Guardian Devas administration, we called the Four as – Deva of the Four Kings – **Dataratha**, **Weruraka**, **Werupetkha** and **Kuwera**. The four are also known as **Lawkapala nat Min Gyi**.

The sutta recitation – **Mahasamaya Sutta** – recited by Monks was given to Buddha's disciples for them to recite whenever the Monks need helps from the **Deva of the**

four Kings (Lawkapala Nat Min Gyi). This recitation of Mahasamaya Tote is an invocation for helps to the four deva kings. Many lay people do not understand the sutta, because it was chanted by Monks in Pali.

7.0 MANUSSA - HUMAN BEINGS

The human world has a mixture of dukkha and sukkha but also, upekkha which means balance, neutral or equanimity. Humans can live very different lives. Some might be born in a poor village or country, without food, clean water, clothes, money etc., it's like hell on earth, all dukkha. We are average, we have good families, clothes, school, we're not rich, not poor and everything is OK. While some other people are reborn as a prince or princess and have the best of everything, very little dukkha and lots of sukkha, like heaven. Only in this human realm, there is pleasant and unpleasant, happy and unhappy, good and bad, and everything in between, therefore beings can only really understand the true nature of existence from the human realm. We can realize the imbalance of existence and restore the balance, particularly in our own mind. Thus, Buddha taught us to develop concentration (**Samadhi**) and Insight wisdom (**Panna**) and live a virtuous life, so that we could one day attain our liberation from **samsara**. The Buddha's Eightfold Noble path is the path to our liberation that leads to the cessation of suffering.

Noble Eightfold Path

The Eightfold Path consists of the following eight factors;

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Right Understanding { Samma-ditthi } | } | Wisdom Group
<i>Pañña</i> |
| 2. Right Thought { Samma-sankappa } | | |
| 3. Right speech { Samma-vaca } | } | Morality Virtue
Group <i>Sila</i> |
| 4. Right Action { Samma-kammanta } | | |
| 5. Right Livelihood { Samma-ajiva } | | |
| 6. Right Effort { Samma-vayama } | } | Mental Culture
Concentration
Group <i>Samadhi</i> |
| 7. Right Mindfulness { Samma-sati } | | |
| 8. Right Concentration { Samma-samadhi } | | |

8.0 DEVA LOKA - LOWER HEAVENS

There are many different realms included in this group. Here, there is very little **dukkha**, it's mostly very pleasant. Beings are being born spontaneously, unlike human being that must stay in mother's womb for 9 months full term to become a human baby. The beings here are not born as babies, they are already adults and they stay the same age until they die. There may be beautiful golden mansions with gardens and angels playing lovely music. A person might end up in these realms by following their religion correctly. Buddhists who practice a little bit of **dana** (sharing), **sila** (morality) and **bhavana** (meditation), particularly metta (loving kindness) bhavana may be reborn in the deva loka.

9.0 BRAHMA LOKA - UPPER HEAVENS - GODS

In Buddhism, we don't say that there is just one God but we say that there are many gods, in many godly realms. Some Buddhists don't pray or worship Devas or Brahmas in heavenly world. There are some Buddhists who do worship Gods and Deities to gain worldly wealth and good living. One example being, many students worship and pray to Pitaka Mae Daw (Tuyatadi Mae Daw) to excel in scholastic achievement. We can see **Pitaka Mae Daw (Saraswati)** Statue placed on their private shrine. It probably was a spin off from **Hindu or Brahmanism** routine of worshipping many deities (Gods).

Those who practice intensive concentration practice must deal with Gods or deities. We can see this practice both by Monks and lay person equally all across the Golden land of Myanmar. Those who practice Concentration observed vegetarian in order to be close to Deities and they have attained miraculous power through these deities. However, those who practice Vipassana will frown on the concentration practice, because concentration could lead one to either the Deva or the Brahma world. **Vipassana is the path to gain wisdom and enlightenment, if practice within the time frame prophesied by the Buddha; however, in the post Sasana year 2500, attainment has been getting harder and harder.** (See **Buddha prophecy in Anagatavamsa Desana**)

If we examine the **Eleven Mahaparitta sutta** – Payeikgyi Sat ta Tote – all the recitations are invocation for Deities in heaven for help. **Mahasamaya Tote, Yatana Tote** and **Mingala Tote**, etc. are all the same. People who practice Vipassana will frown on worshipping Deities, because they said that they could attain Sotapanna by practicing Vipassana or even Arahantship. This claim is partly true in theory, if we examine the Dhammapada 423 verses. When Buddha was practicing Austerities, he was fainted and his mother from Tusita came down to encourage him to persevere on as he has come close to enlightenment. Another example can be drawn on Sapputta and Balika and many others from **Dhammapada** – in Sutta Pitaka.

The greatest Vipassana teacher in Myanmar, **Mahasi Sayadaw** used to consult the spiritual mediums for consultation and critique of his writings with **Shin Kise Maha Thera**, the Arahant in Heaven. Buddha said in the Dhammapada that Arahants are worthy of worship by Buddhist.

10. ARUPA LOKA - FORMLESS REALMS

These are the most pure of them all. Arupa means no-bodily form at all, these beings have only mind, no body. If you have no body, then you have no physical dukkha. Life here is very pleasant but it's extremely long and when you die you have to be reborn again, boring. One may be reborn in such a realm by practicing strong and **deep absorption concentration meditation techniques known as jhana** in Pali. These states are very pure and light and having become adept at entering into

these states one may, upon death, choose to die in this state and be reborn in such a realm.

11. Summary

According to Ven. Ledi Sayadaw – in his book – The Manual of Factors Leading to the Enlightenment there are four classes of people that will encounter in this Buddha dispensation - sasana:

The first one thousand years of Buddha sasana, was for arahat possessing analytical knowledge to attain arahantship. The present Buddha Sasana comprises the times for the **neyya** and **padaparama** classes of individuals alone. At the present day, **only these two classes of individuals remain.**

Of These Two Classes of Individuals

Neyya-Puggala:

Of these two classes of individuals, an individual of the neyya class can become a sotapanna in this present life if he faithfully practices the enlightenment-dhamma comprising **satipatthana** (four applications of mindfulness), with right exertion). If he or she is lax in his practice, he can become a **sotapanna only in his next existence after being reborn in the deva planes.** If he dies while still aloof from these enlightenment dhamma, such as satipatthana, etc., he will become a total loss so far as the present Buddha Sasana is concerned, but he can still attain release from worldly ills if he encounters the Sasana of the next Buddha.

If such a neyya individual, knowing what is good for him according to his age, discards what should be discarded, searches for the right teacher, and obtains the right guidance from him and puts forth sufficient effort, he can obtain release from worldly ills in this very life.

If, however, he becomes addicted to wrong views and wrong ways of conduct, if he finds himself unable to discard sensual pleasures, if although able to discard sensual pleasures he does not obtain the guidance of a good teacher, if although obtaining the guidance of a good teacher, he is unable to evoke sufficient effort, if although inclined to put forth effort he is unable to do so through old age, if although young he is liable to sickness, he cannot obtain release from worldly ills in this present life.

Note the statement – unable to discard the sensual pleasure – means one must take the life of a recluse – ascetic – homeless – Monk.

Padaparama-Puggala :

An individual of the padaparama class can attain release within the present Buddha Sasana after rebirth in the deva planes in his next existence, if he can faithfully practice the enlightenment dhamma his present existence.

The Age of Ariyas (Noble Ones) still:

The five thousand years of the present Buddha Sasana constitute, all of them, the age of ariyas. This age of ariyas will continue to exist so long as the Tipitaka remain in the world. The padaparama class of individuals has to utilize the opportunity afforded by the encountering of the present Buddha Sasana to accumulate as much of the nuclei or seeds of parami as they can within this lifetime.

- a. They have to accumulate **the seeds of sila (morality)**.
- b. They have to accumulate **the seeds of samadhi (concentration)**.
- c. They have to accumulate **the seeds of panna (wisdom)**.

Sila:

Of these three kinds of accumulations, **sila (morality)**, **samadhi (concentration)**, **panna (wisdom)**, the seeds of sila mean: **panca-sila**, (five precepts) in respect of ordinary laymen and women, and the **bhikkhu-sila** in respect of the bhikkhus.

Samadhi:

The seeds of samadhi means the effort to achieve preparatory concentration through one or other of the forty objects of meditation, such as the ten kasina (meditation devices), or, if further effort can be evoked, the effort to achieve upacara-samadhi (access concentration), or, if still further effort can be evoked, the effort to achieve appana-samadhi (attainment concentration.)

Panna:

The seeds of panna means the cultivation of the ability to analyze the characteristics and qualities of **rupa** (material phenomena), **nama** (mental phenomena), **khandha** (constituent groups of existence) (the five aggregates, ayatana (bases), dhatu (elements), sacca (truths), and the **paticcasamuppada** (dependent origination), and the cultivation of insight into the three characteristics of existence (lakkhana), namely, **anicca** (impermanence), **dukkha** (suffering), **anatta** (impersonality).

To attain the first stage of holiness, one still has to go through at least seven more rebirths either in the Deva realm or in the human realm before they could enter Nibbana. Although, he or she has entered the stream, this Sotapanna still has to go through the space of time where one could still encounter the world cycle where there is no Buddha Sasana (Sunna world cycle) One could only acquire panna in the where Buddha sasana exists. It is recommended that in this Gotama Sasana, one

should attempt to obtain an insight into how the four great primaries (mahabhuta)--**pathavi, apo, tejo** and **vayo** are constituted in one's body.

If an individual has acquired a good insight into the four great elements, (**pathavi, apo, tejo** and **vayo**) they obtain a sound collection of **the seeds of panna** which are most difficult of acquisition, and this is so even though they may not acquire any knowledge of the other portions of the Abhidhamma. It can then be said that the difficult attainment of rebirth within a Buddha Sasana has been made worthwhile.

Vijja (Knowledge) And Carana (Conduct):

Sila and **samadhi** constitute **carana**, while **panna** constitutes **vijja**..

a. A person who is endowed with morality and concentration, (**carana**) but lacks wisdom, is like one who possesses complete and whole limbs but blind of both eyes.

b. A person who is endowed with **vijja** (knowledge), but lacks carana (conduct), is like one who has good eyesight but is defective in his limbs,

c. A person who is endowed with both **vijja** and **carana** is like a normally whole person possessing both good eyesight and healthy limbs.

d. A person who lacks both **vijja** and **carana** is like one defective in eyes and limbs, and is not one worthy of being called a living being.

Consequences of Having (Sila & Samadhi) Carana Only:

Amongst the persons living within the present Buddha Sasana, there are some who are fully endowed with morality and concentration, but do not possess the seeds of **vijja** (knowledge), such as insight into the nature of material qualities, mental qualities and constituent groups of existence. **Because they are strong in carana, they are likely to encounter the next Buddha Sasana, but because they lack the seeds of vijja, they cannot attain enlightenment, even though they hear the discourse of the next Buddha in person.**

Of Having (Wisdom or Panna) Vijja Only:

There are others who are endowed with **vijja**, such as insight into the material and mental qualities and the constituent groups of existence, but who lack carana, such as **dana, nicca-sila** (permanent morality) and **uposatha-sila** (precepts observed on fasting days). **Should these persons get the opportunity of meeting and hearing the discourses of the next Buddha, they can attain enlightenment because they possess vijja, but since they lack carana, it would be extremely difficult for them to get the opportunity of meeting the next Buddha. This is so because there is an antara -kappa (intervening world-cycle) between the present Buddha Sasana and the next.**

Those persons whose acts of dana (alms-giving) in this life are few, who are ill-guarded in their bodily acts, unrestrained in their speech, and unclean in their thoughts, and who thus are deficient in carana (conduct), possess a strong tendency to be reborn in the four lower worlds when they die. If through some good fortune they manage to be reborn in the happy course of existence, wherever they may be reborn, they are, because of their previous lack of carana, such as dana, likely to be deficient in riches, and likely to meet with hardships, trials, and tribulations in their means of livelihood, and thus encounter tendencies to rebirth in the apaya loka. Because of their lack of carana of nicca-sila and uposatha-sila, they are likely to meet with disputes, quarrels, anger and hatred in their dealings with other persons, in addition to being susceptible to diseases and ailments, and thus encounter tendencies towards rebirth in the apaya lokas. Thus will they encounter painful experiences in every existence, gathering undesirable tendencies, leading to the curtailment of their period of existence in the happy course of existence and causing rebirth in the four lower worlds. In this way, the chances of those who lack carana meeting the next Buddha are very few indeed.

The Essential Point:

In short, the essential fact is, only when one is endowed with the seeds of both vijja and carana can one obtain release from worldly ills in one's next existence. If one possesses the seeds of vijja alone, and lacks the seeds of carana, such as dana and sila, one will fail to secure the opportunity of meeting the next Buddha Sasana. If, on the other hand, one possesses the seeds of carana but lacks the seeds of vijja, one cannot attain release from worldly ills even though one encounters the next Buddha Sasana.

Hence, those padaparama individuals of today, be they men or women, who look forward to meeting the next Buddha Sasana, should attempt to accumulate within the present Buddha Sasana **the seeds of carana by the practice of dana, sila and samatha- bhavana (practice of calm), and should also, in the least, with respect to vijja try to practice insight into the four great primaries, and thus ensure meeting the next Buddha Sasana, and having met it, to attain release from worldly ills.**

Those persons who wish to attain the Paths and the Fruits thereof in this very life must fulfill the first eleven carana-dhamma, i.e. sila, indriya-samvara, bhojanemattannuta, jagariyanuyoga, and the seven saddhamma.

- a. Herein, sila means ajivatthamaka-nicca-sila (permanent practice of morality ending with right livelihood);
- b. indriya-samvara means guarding the six sense-doors--eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind;
- c. bhojanemattanuta means taking just sufficient food to preserve the balance of the corporeality group in the body and being satisfied therewith;

- d. jagariyanuyogo means not sleeping during the day, and sleeping only during one period (of the three periods) of the night, practicing bhavana (mental concentration) during the other two periods.

Saddhamma means:

1. saddha (faith)
2. sati (mindfulness)
3. hiri (moral shame)
4. ottappa (moral dread)
5. bahusacca (great learning)
6. viriya (energy; diligence)
7. panna (wisdom).

For those who wish to become **sotapannas** **during this life**, there is no special necessity to practice **dana** (alms-giving). But let those who find it unable to evoke sufficient effort towards acquiring the ability to obtain release from worldly ills during the present Buddha Sasana make special attempts to **practice dana (alms-giving) and uposatha (precepts observed on fasting days)**.

The time period between this Gotama sasana and the next Metreyye Sasana, **there is an antara-kappa (intervening world-cycle) between the present Buddha Sasana and the next**. That is a long time in waiting. However, there is a statement that said: -

“ An individual of the padaparama class can attain release within the present Buddha Sasana after rebirth in the deva planes in his next existence, if he can faithfully practice the enlightenment dhamma in his present existence” .

There is a group of chosen people who are to participate in the event called “Yaung Daw Pyan Paya Pwe” in the Deva world. This event will take place at the end of this Buddha sasana when all relics are no longer revered by the people, they will be gathered in one place to form a effigy of Buddha Image and then deliver the last summon to the group of Deva and Brahmas. These Devas and Brahmas will enter Nibbana in millions and there will have no human in this event. There are Devas and Brahmas who are calling on their relatives here in the human world to be on alert for this event. (See Anagatavamsa Desana Mula Kyan Sar).

This one statement is in line with the Pali Canon and the Buddha prophecy of his last day of his dispensation after a gradual disappearance – the Five Disapperances..

This is Samsara, we should know how to steer ourselves through in this long and dreary journey from one existence to another until the journey ends. May all the chosen few be able to take their next rebirth in the Deva world.

Until we all meet again there.

References:

1. Samsara and Plane of existence – by Ven/ Dhammarakkhuta
2. Thirty one planes of existence – by U Tin Htut.
3. The Manuel of the factors Leading to Enlightenment by Ledi Sayadaw
4. Anagatavamsa Desana – The Sermon of the Chronicle to be ”
- 5 “ Buddhist Texts Through the Ages” – Translation by Edward Conze

Appendix – A

Invitation to Deities (*Devaradhana*

)

May devas (deities) of all world systems assemble here, and listen to that sublime Dhamma of the Great Sage (Buddha) which confers the bliss of heaven and deliverance (Nibbana).

Good friends, now is time for listening to the Dhamma.

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At the end of the recital of each discourse the reciters bless the listeners thus:

By the asseveration of this truth may you ever be well.

By the asseveration of this truth may you be free from illness.

By the asseveration of this truth may all blessings be upon you.

By the (protective) power of all Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and all Arahants I secure my (your) protection in every way.

(The preceding stanza is recited at the moment the thread is being tied round the arm.)

May all misfortunes be warded off, may all ailments cease; may no calamities befall you; may you live long in peace.

May all blessings be upon you. May all devas (deities) protect you.

By the protective power of all the *Buddhas* may safety ever be yours.

By the protective power of all the *Dhamma* may safety ever be yours.

By the protective power of all the *Sangha* may safety ever be yours.

By the power of this paritta (protection) may you be free from all dangers arising from malign influences of the planets, demons, and spirits. May thy misfortunes vanish.

By the power of the *Buddha* may all evil omens and untoward circumstances, the ominous cry of birds, the malign conjunctions of the stars, and evil dreams be rendered nugatory.

By the power of the *Dhamma*... (as before) be rendered nugatory.

By the power of the *Sangha*... (as before) be rendered nugatory.

May those beings who suffer be free from suffering.

May those beings who are in fear be free from fear.

May those beings who are in grief be free from grief.

May the rains fall in due season; may there be a rich harvest; may the world prosper; may the ruler be righteous.

May beings, celestial and terrestrial, Devas and Nagas of mighty power, share this merit of ours. May they long protect the Dispensation.

May all beings share this merit which we have thus acquired. May it redound to their happiness.

Let this (merit) accrue to my relatives; may they be well and happy.

From the highest realm of existence to avici hell, whatever beings that are born -- those with form and the formless ones, those with or without consciousness -- may they all be free from suffering! May they attain Nibbana!

By the power of the immense merit I have acquired by paying homage to the "Triple Gem" (the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha) which is eminently worthy of reverence, may all dangers cease!

Appendix – B
Khuddakapatha
The Short Passages

Tirokudda Kanda -- Hungry Shades Outside the Walls ♪

Outside the walls they stand,
 & at crossroads.
At door posts they stand,
 returning to their old homes.
But when a meal with plentiful food & drink is served,
 no one remembers them:
Such is the kamma of living beings.

Thus those who feel sympathy for their dead relatives
give timely donations of proper food & drink
 -- exquisite, clean --
[thinking:] "May this be for our relatives.
 May our relatives be happy!"

And those who have gathered there,
 the assembled shades of the relatives,
with appreciation give their blessing
for the plentiful food & drink:
 "May our relatives live long
 because of whom we have gained [this gift].
 We have been honored,
 and the donors are not without reward!"

For there [in their realm] there's
 no farming,
 no herding of cattle,
 no commerce,
 no trading with money.
They live on what is given here,
 hungry shades
 whose time here is done.

As water raining on a hill
flows down to the valley,
 even so does what is given here

**benefit the dead.
As rivers full of water
fill the ocean full,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.**

**"He gave to me, she acted on my behalf,
they were my relatives, companions, friends":
Offerings should be given for the dead
when one reflects thus
on things done in the past.
For no weeping,
no sorrowing
no other lamentation
benefits the dead
whose relatives persist in that way.
But when this offering is given, well-placed in the Sangha,
it works for their long-term benefit
and they profit immediately.**

**In this way the proper duty to relatives has been shown,
great honor has been done to the dead,
and monks have been given strength:**

**The merit you've acquired
isn't small.**