



Discourse on Atanatiya Protection

with the Protection in Pali as well

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*A condensed version based on various
translations from the Pali*

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PREFACE

The Atanatiya Paritta (protection) is commonly regarded by informed Buddhists as a ghost-busting/exorcist paritta. Nevertheless, a short extract of it—commonly found in more complete Pali chanting books—is also traditionally chanted on other special occasions by Theravada Buddhists.

This *paritta* is originally contained *within* the Atanatiya Sutta (Discourse on the Atanatiya Protection), the 32nd *sutta* in the Digha Nikaya of the Pali Canon. As you can read from the discourse itself, the *paritta* is recommended by the Yakkha King Vessavana “for the guarding, protection and freedom from harm as well as comfortable living of *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*,

upasakas and *upasikas*.” It is then sanctioned by our Blessed One, Gotama Buddha, in the words, “*Bhikkhus*, learn the Atanatiya Paritta, master it, remember it.”

However, according to the Commentary to the Atanatiya Sutta, when a Buddhist is possessed or harassed by a malevolent human-like being, the Atanatiya Sutta should not be immediately recited. Metta Sutta (Khp 9), Dhajagga Sutta (SN XI.3) and Ratana Sutta (Khp 6) should first be recited for 7 days. If the victim is released by then, it is well. Otherwise, and only then, should the Atanatiya Sutta be recited.

The *bhikkhu* who is reciting it should not eat meat or food made from powdered grains. Nor should he stay in the cemetery. Why? Because human-like beings can get the opportunity (to retaliate, since those things are to their liking). The place of recitation should be made clean by smearing fresh cowdung and the *bhikkhu* should sit on a clean seat.

People armed with wooden weapons should surround the *bhikkhu* when accompanying him from the monastery. He should not sit in the open to recite. Rather, he should recite with loving-kindness, surrounded by people armed with wooden weapons and seated in a room with all the doors and windows closed.

He should first establish the victim in the five precepts before making the protection. If he cannot release the victim in this way, he should take the victim to the monastery and make him/her lie down, on the *stupa* terrace, to be offered as a seat (for the Buddha). Then after having had lamps lighted and the terrace swept, he should speak on blessings.

An announcement should be made for all *bhikkhus* to be assembled. The biggest tree around the monastery should be located and its resident *deva* summoned: "The Bhikkhu Sangha awaits your coming." The *deva* cannot

refuse to come to a place where all *bhikkhus* have gathered.

Then (the spirit possessing) the victim should be asked: “Who are you?” If the spirit reveals its name, then it should be addressed accordingly. “So-and-so, this is your share of merits from the offering of flowers and perfumes, of a seat, and of alms food. The Bhikkhu Sangha has spoken on great blessings as a gift for you. Out of respect for the Bhikkhu Sangha, release this person.”

If it does not release the victim, the *devas* should be informed: “Please be informed that this human-like being does not heed our words. We shall impose the Buddha’s authority.” Then the protection should be made. This is the procedure for lay victims.

If a *bhikkhu* is possessed by a human-like being, the procedure is similar but less complicated. After the seats have been washed clean, all *bhikkhus* assembled, and merits from the

offering of flowers, perfumes, etc. shared, the protection should be recited.

The Sub-commentary adds that a *bhikkhu* should speak on blessings before reciting the sutta with loving-kindness. If this does not work, all *bhikkhus* should be assembled and the Bhikkhu Sangha shall have to handle the matter with the cooperation of the most powerful *deva* around the monastery, as explained above.

One may wonder if the above procedure recommended by the Commentary contradicts the advice of our Blessed One who said, “Bhikkhus, learn the Atanatiya Paritta, master it, remember it.” Does it also contradict King Vessavana’s assurance that any *bhikkhu*, *bhikkhuni*, *upasaka* or *upasika* who has learned well this Atanatiya Paritta and mastered it thoroughly will be protected?

Here, it must be stressed that the Atanatiya Paritta given by the Yakkha King Vessavana comprises *only* the verses revering the seven

Buddhas and extolling the Four Great Kings and their respective kingdoms. In this booklet, we have given both the original Pali and the English translation of these verses. These are to be learned and mastered by Buddhists who desire protection, freedom from harm and comfortable living with respect to human-like beings. In other words, they can freely recite the Paritta at any time, without following the procedure recommended by the Commentary.

The Atanatiya Sutta, on the other hand, comprises the above verses *as well as* the assurances and threats made by the Four Guardian Kings. It also includes an invocation to the great *yakkhas* and their commanders and commanders-in-chief to punish the malevolent human-like being harassing a Buddhist. As this is a grave action, it should be, as the Commentary aptly suggests, the last resort.

For that reason, we have not given the original Pali for these threatening parts of the

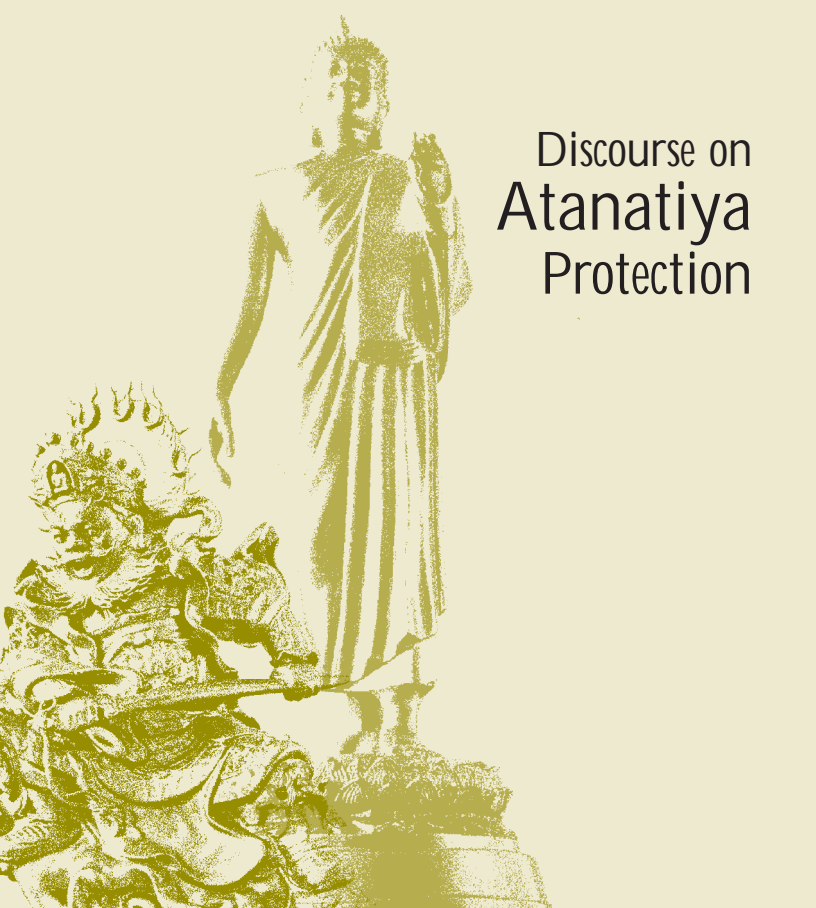
sutta. The actual recitation of the whole Atanatiya Sutta should be left to the discretion of knowledgeable and experienced members of the Bhikkhu Sangha.

May interested Buddhists learn and master the Atanatiya Paritta for their protection, freedom from harm and comfortable living with respect to human-like beings.

Aggacitta Bhikkhu

FEBRUARY 2003





Discourse on Atanatiya Protection

— Buddhaghosa —

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living on the Vulture's Peak near Rajagaha (Rajgir).

Then, the Four Great Kings,¹ having placed a defensive force to guard and watch over the four quarters, approached the Blessed One with a large army of *yakkhas*, of *gandhabbas*, of *kumbhandas*, and of *nagas* when the night was far advanced, illuminating the entire Vulture's Peak with their surpassing radiance. Having approached and bowed down before the Blessed One, they sat on one side. Some of the *yakkhas* bowed down before the Blessed One, and sat on one side. Some exchanged courtesies with him, some saluted him with clasped hands, some announced their name and clan, and sat on one side. Some sat on one side in silence.

¹ They are Dhatarattha, Virulha, Virupakkha, and Vessavana, presiding over the four directions of their celestial region.

Then, seated on one side, the Great King Vessavana² said to the Blessed One:

“*Bhante* (Venerable Sir), there are some eminent *yakkhas* who have no faith in the Blessed One, while some others have. And likewise there are *yakkhas* of middle and lower rank who have no faith in the Blessed One, while some others have. But as a rule, *bhante*, the *yakkhas* have no faith in the Blessed One. What is the reason for this?

“The Blessed One teaches the Dhamma to establish abstention from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from alcohol, liquor and intoxicants that cause negligence. But as a rule, *bhante*, the *yakkhas* do not abstain from such things. To them that (teaching) is distasteful and unpleasant.

² Vessavana, king of the North direction, according to the Commentary, was familiar with the Buddha, expert in conversation and well-disciplined, and thus he became the spokesman. He is also known as Kuvera.

“Now, *bhante*, there are disciples of the Blessed One in the forest who frequent remote lodgings of woodland wilderness where there is little noise or shouting, where the breezes are void of human contact, and which are suitable for human privacy and retreat. And there are eminent *yakkhas* living there who have no faith in the word of the Blessed One.

“*Bhante*, in order to instill faith in them, may the Blessed One learn the Atanatiya³ protection for the guarding, protection, safety and comfortable living of *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas*.”

The Blessed One consented with his silence. Then the Great King Vessavana, noting the Blessed One’s consent, recited the Atanatiya protection:

³ According to the Sub-commentary to the *sutta*, King Vessavana had a town by the name of Atanata, where the four kings assembled and recited this Paritta which speaks of the virtues of the seven Buddhas: Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa, Gotama. They approached the Buddha with the intention of obtaining his approval, in which event, they felt that this Paritta will attain a revered position.

ATANATIYA PROTECTION

- 1 Vipassissa ca namatthu,
cakkhumantassa sirāmato.
sikhissapi ca namatthu,
sabbabhātānukampino.
- 2 Vessabhussa ca namatthu,
nhātakassa tapassino;
namatthu kakusandhassa,
mārasenāpamaddino.



GANDHABBA KING DHATARATTHA



KUMBHANDA KING VIRULHA

ATANATIYA PROTECTION

- 1 Homage to Vipassi (Buddha),
glorious one with the eye (of wisdom).
Homage to Sikhi (Buddha),
compassionate towards all beings.
- 2 Homage to Vessabhu (Buddha),
ascetic bathed in purity.
Homage to Kakusandha (Buddha),
conqueror of Mara's armies.




NAGA KING VIRUPAKKHA



YAKKHA KING VESSAVANA

- 3 Koõàgamanassa namatthu,
bràhmaõassa vusāmato;
kassapassa ca namatthu,
vipparamuttassa sabbadhi.
- 4 Aī gārasassa namatthu,
sakyaputtassa sirāmato;
yo imaū dhammaū desesi,
sabbadukkhàpanàdanaū.
- 5 Ye càpi nibbutà loke,
yathàbhàtaū vipassisuū;
te janà apisuõàtha,
mahantà vātasàradà.
- 6 Hitaū devamanussànaū,
yaū namassanti gotamaū;
vijjàcaraõasampannaū,
mahantaū vātasàradaū.



- 
- 3 Homage to Konagamana (Buddha),
Brahmin perfect in holiness.
Homage to Kassapa (Buddha),
liberated from all defilements.
 - 4 Homage to the radiant one,
glorious son of the Sakyas,
who proclaimed the Dhamma
that dispels all suffering.
 - 5 In the world those who have quenched
(defilements)
perceive according to reality.
They do not speak to disunite,
Mighty and fearless are they.
 - 6 To him who benefits *devas* and men,
to Gotama, they too do homage,
the wise one of virtuous conduct,
the mighty and fearless one.

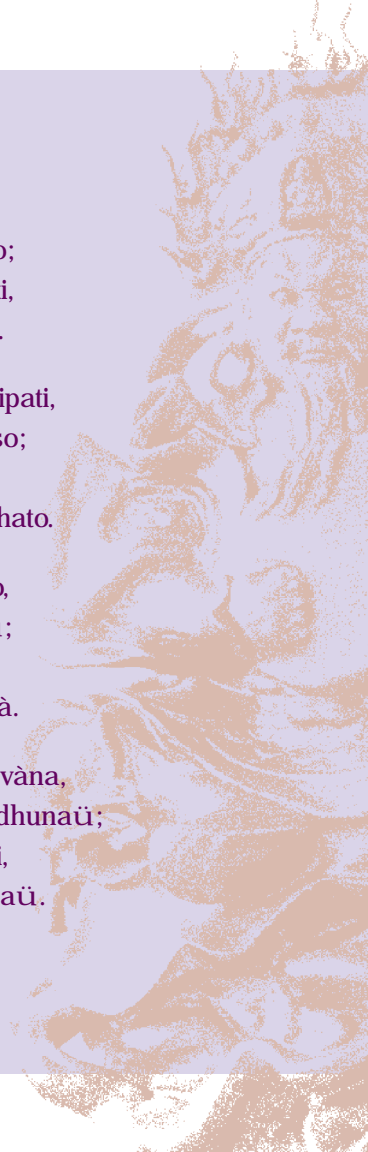


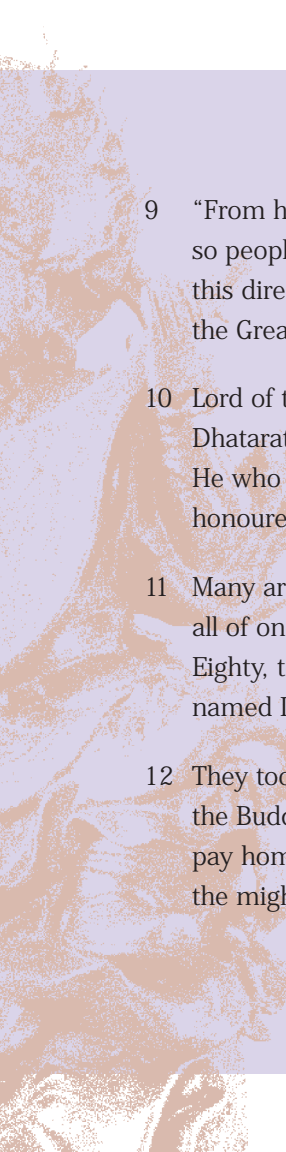
KING DHATARATTHA

- 7 Yato uggacchati sàriyo,
àdicco mañóalā mahà.
yassa cuggacchamànassa,
saüvarāpi nirujjhati;
yassa cuggate sàriye,
'divaso'ti pavuccati.
- 8 Rahadopi tattha gambhāro,
samuddo saritodako;
evaü taü tattha jànantì,
'samuddo saritodako'.

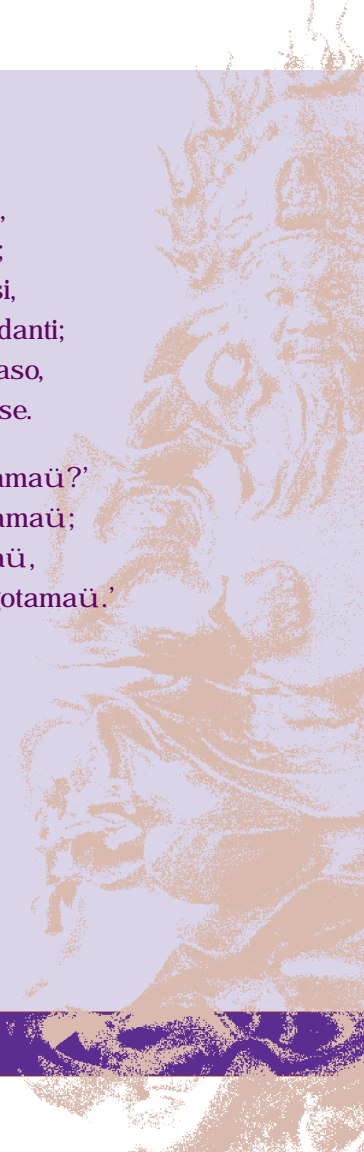
Verses 7-14 describe Gandhabba King Dhatarattha, his kingdom that covers the East quarter of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, and his subjects' reverence toward the Buddha.

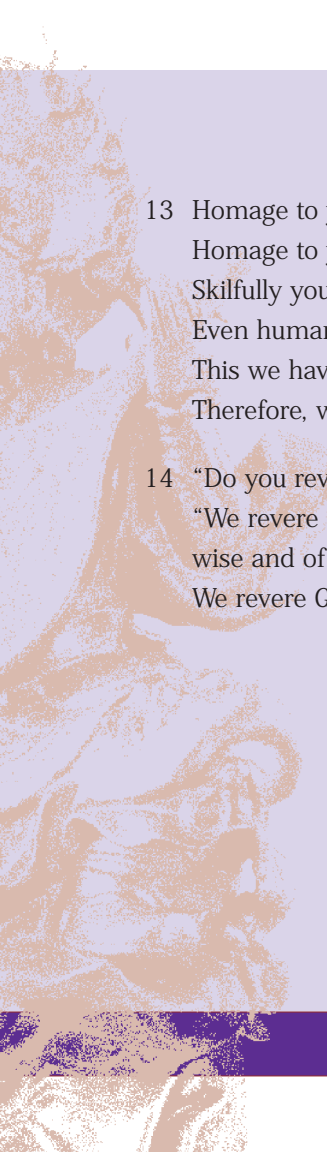
- 7 From where the sun rises—
Aditi's child, the great disc,
as it arises,
the night also ceases;
when the sun has risen
it is said to be day—
- 8 There the lake is deep,
an ocean where rivers have entered.
Thus, there people know it as
“an ocean where rivers have entered”.

- 
- 9 'Ito sà purimà disà,
iti naü àcikkhatā jano;
yaü disaü abhipàleti,
mahàràjà yasassi so.
- 10 Gandhabbànaü adhipati,
'dhataramho'ti nàmaso;
ramatā naccagāhehi,
gandhabbehi purakkhato.
- 11 Puttāpi tassa bahavo,
ekanàmāti me sutaü;
asāti dasa eko ca,
indanàmā mahabbalā.
- 12 Te càpi buddhaü disvāna,
buddhaü àdiccabandhunaü;
dàratova namassanti,
mahantaü vātasàradaü.

- 
- 9 “From here that is the East direction,”
so people call it—
this direction he governs,
the Great King, the famous one,
- 10 Lord of the *gandhabbas*
Dhatarattha by name.
He who delights in dances and songs,
honoured is he by the *gandhabbas*.
- 11 Many are his sons,
all of one name, so have I heard.
Eighty, ten and one,
named Inda, the mighty ones.
- 12 They too, beholding the Buddha—
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun—
pay homage to him from afar,
the mighty and fearless one.

- 13 Namo te purisàjaṃṃa,
namo te purisuttama;
kusalena samekkhasi,
amanussàpi taü vandanti;
sutaü netaü abhiõhaso,
tasmà evaü vademase.
- 14 ‘Jinaü vandatha gotamaü?’
‘Jinaü vandàma gotamaü;
vijjàcaraõasampannaü,
buddhaü vandàma gotamaü.’





13 Homage to you, noble steed of a man.
Homage to you, foremost among men.
Skilfully you look after (us).
Even human-like beings revere you.
This we have often heard.
Therefore, we say thus (when asked)

14 “Do you revere Gotama the Conqueror?”
“We revere Gotama the Conqueror
wise and of virtuous conduct
We revere Gotama the Buddha.”



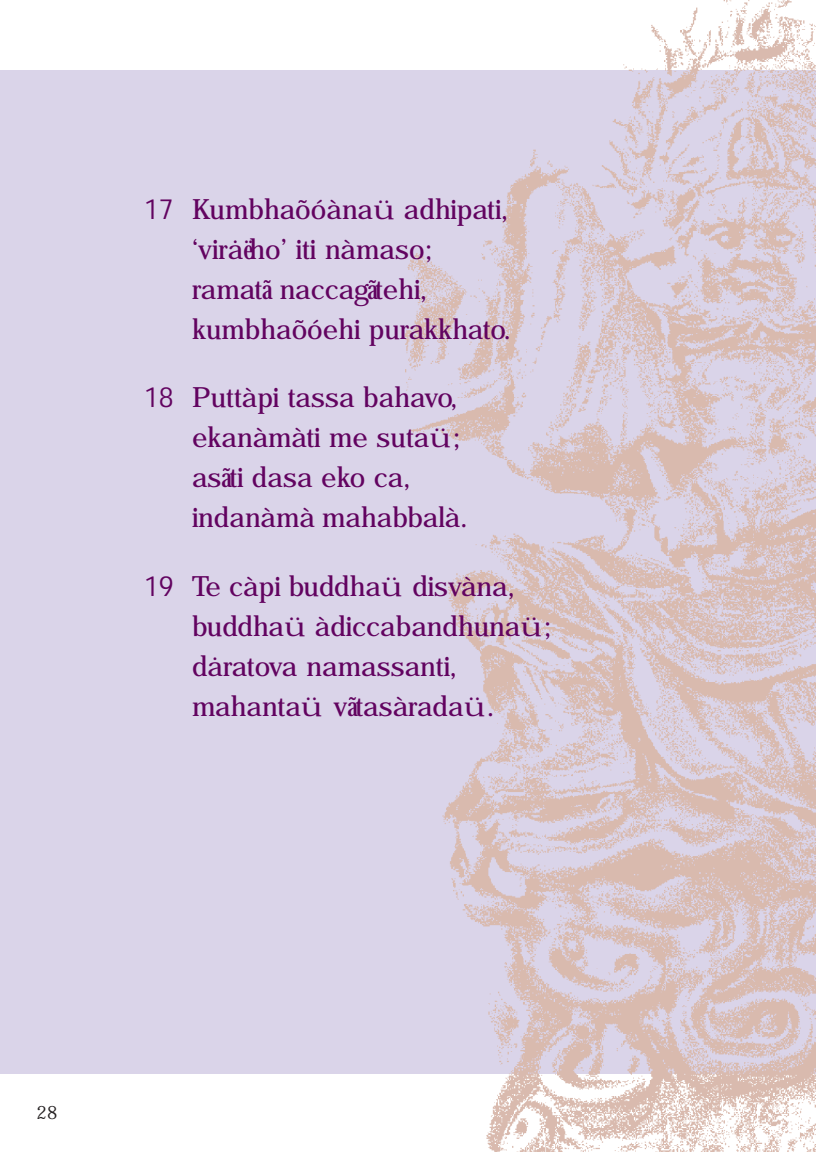
KING VIRULHA

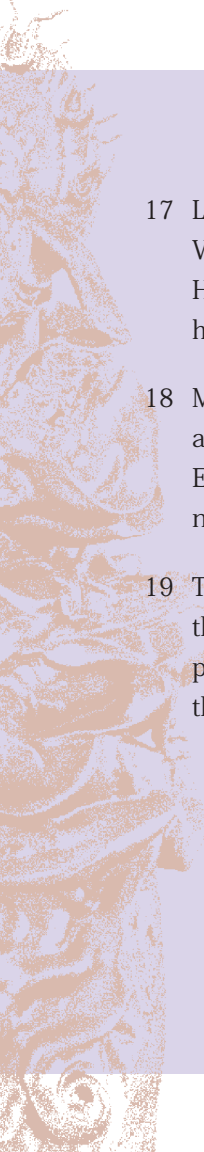
15 Yena petà pavuccanti,
pisuṇā piṇḍhimaṇṣikā.
pāṇātipātino luddā,
corā nekatikā janā.

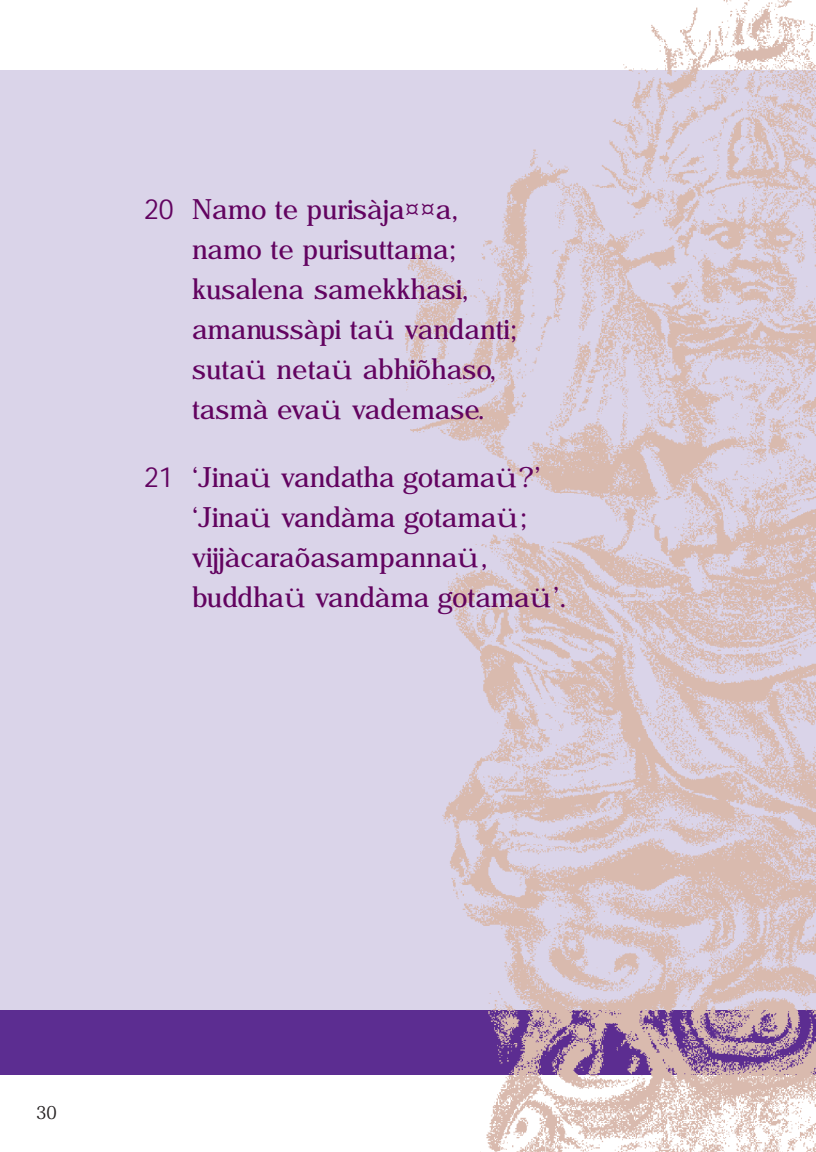
16 ‘Ito sà dakkhiṇā disā,’
iti naṁ ācikkhatā jano;
yaṁ disaṁ abhipāleti,
mahārājā yasassi so.

Verses 15-21 describe Kumbhanda King Virulha, his kingdom that covers the South quarter of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, and his subjects' reverence toward the Buddha.

- 15 From where the deceased are said
(to be removed),
speakers of disunity, backbiters,
cruel murderers,
robbers and cheats too;
- 16 “From here that is the South direction,”
so people call it—
this direction he governs,
the Great King, the famous one,

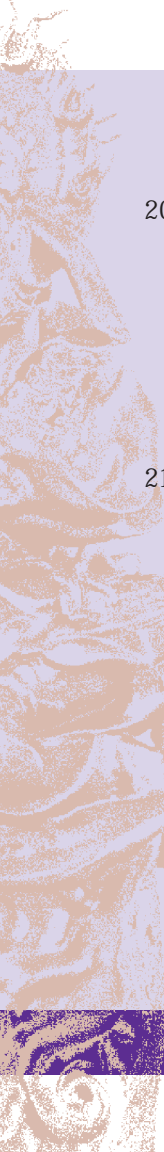
- 
- 17 Kumbhaõóànaü adhipati,
'virácho' iti nàmaso;
ramatã naccagãtehi,
kumbhaõóehi purakkhato.
- 18 Puttãpi tassa bahavo,
ekanàmàti me sutaü;
asãti dasa eko ca,
indanàmà mahabbalà.
- 19 Te càpi buddhaü disvãna,
buddhaü àdiccabandhunaü;
dàratova namassanti,
mahantaü vãtasàradaü.

- 
- 17 Lord of the *kumbhandas*,
Virulha by name.
He who delights in dances and songs,
honoured is he by the *kumbhandas*.
- 18 Many are his sons,
all of one name, so have I heard.
Eighty, ten and one,
named Inda, the mighty ones.
- 19 They too, beholding the Buddha—
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun—
pay homage to him from afar,
the mighty and fearless one.



20 Namo te purisàjaṃṃa,
namo te purisuttama;
kusalena samekkhasi,
amanussàpi taü vandanti;
sutaü netaü abhiõhaso,
tasmà evaü vademase.

21 ‘Jinaü vandatha gotamaü?’
‘Jinaü vandàma gotamaü;
vijjàcaraõasampannaü,
buddhaü vandàma gotamaü’.



20 Homage to you, noble steed of a man.
Homage to you, foremost among men.
Skilfully you look after (us).
Even human-like beings revere you.
This we have often heard.
Therefore, we say thus (when asked)

21 “Do you revere Gotama the Conqueror?”
“We revere Gotama the Conqueror,
wise and of virtuous conduct.
We revere Gotama the Buddha.”



KING VIRUPAKKHA

- 22 Yattha coggacchati sàriyo,
àdicco maõóalā mahà.
yassa coggacchamànassa,
divasopi nirujjhati;
yassa coggate sàriye,
‘saüvarãti pavuccati.
- 23 Rahadopi tattha gambhãro,
samuddo saritodako;
evaü taü tattha jànantì,
‘samuddo saritodako’.

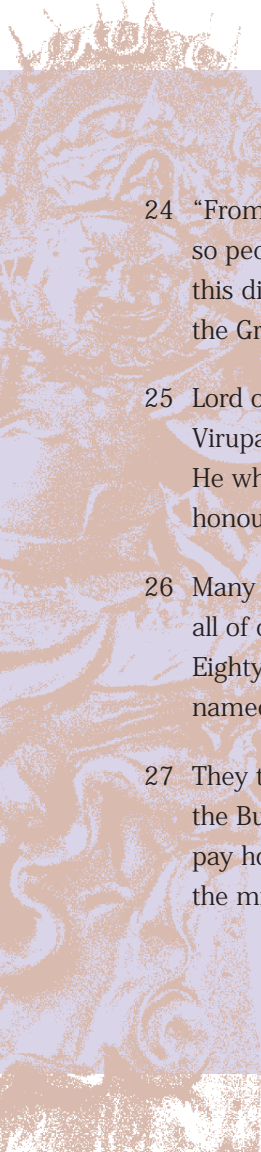
Verses 22-29 describe Naga King Virupakkha, his kingdom that covers the West quarter of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, and his subjects' reverence toward the Buddha.

22 From where the sun sets—
Aditi's child, the great disc,
as it sets,
the day also ceases;
when the sun has set
it is said to be night—

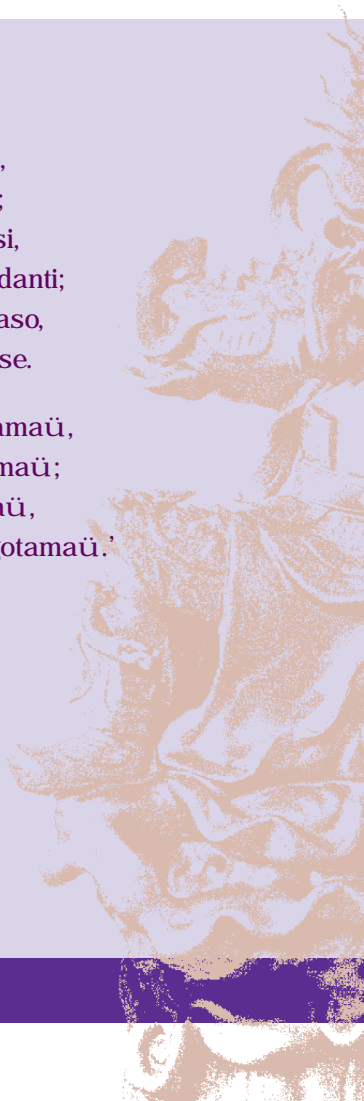
23 There the lake is deep,
an ocean where rivers have entered.
Thus there people know it as
“an ocean where rivers have entered”.

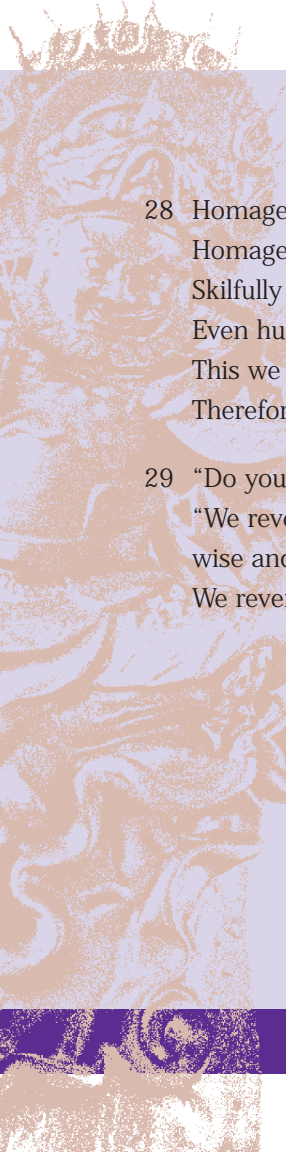
- 24 'Ito sà pacchimà disà,
iti naü àcikkhatā jano;
yaü disaü abhipàleti,
mahàràjà yasassi so.
- 25 Nàgàna^ṃca adhipati,
'virāpakkho'ti nàmaso;
ramatā naccagā^ṃtehi,
nàgeheva purakkhato.
- 26 Puttāpi tassa bahavo,
ekanāmāti me sutaü;
asāti dasa eko ca,
indanāmà mahabbalà.
- 27 Te cāpi buddhaü disvāna,
buddhaü àdiccabandhunaü;
dāratova namassanti,
mahantaü vātasàradaü.



- 
- 24 “From here that is the West direction,”
so people call it—
this direction he governs,
the Great King, the famous one,
- 25 Lord of the *nagas*,
Virupakkha by name.
He who delights in dances and songs,
honoured is he by the *nagas*.
- 26 Many are his sons,
all of one name, so have I heard.
Eighty, ten and one,
named Inda, the mighty ones.
- 27 They too, beholding the Buddha—
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun—
pay homage to him from afar,
the mighty and fearless one.

- 28 Namo te purisàjaṃṃa,
namo te purisuttama;
Kusalena samekkhasi,
amanussàpi taü vandanti;
sutaü netaü abhiõhaso,
tasmà evaü vademase.
- 29 ‘Jinaü vandatha gotamaü,
jinaü vandàma gotamaü;
vijjàcaraõasampannaü,
buddhaü vandàma gotamaü.’





28 Homage to you, noble steed of a man.
Homage to you, foremost among men.
Skilfully you look after (us).
Even human-like beings revere you.
This we have often heard.
Therefore, we say thus (when asked)

29 “Do you revere Gotama the Conqueror?”
“We revere Gotama the Conqueror,
wise and of virtuous conduct.
We revere Gotama the Buddha.”



KING VESSAVANA

30 Yena uttarakuruvho,
mahàneru sudassano.
manussà tattha jàyanti,
amamà apariggahà.

31 Na te bājaü pavapanti,
napi nāyanti naī galà;
akaṃhapàkimaü sàliü,
paribhujanti mànusà.

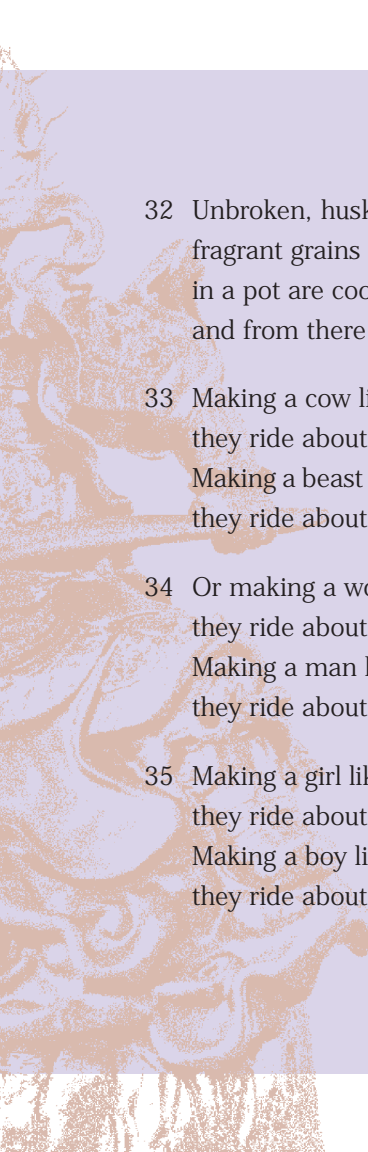
Verses 30-51 describe Yakkha King Vessavana, his kingdom that covers the North quarter of the Realm of the Four Great Kings, and his subjects' reverence toward the Buddha.

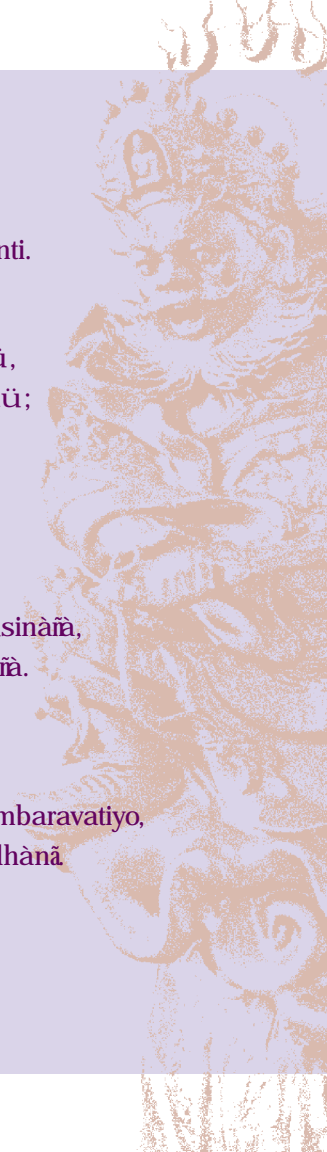
30 Where lie Uttarakuru so-named,
and Mighty Meru, a lovely sight,
there are born people
unpossessive and unmarried.

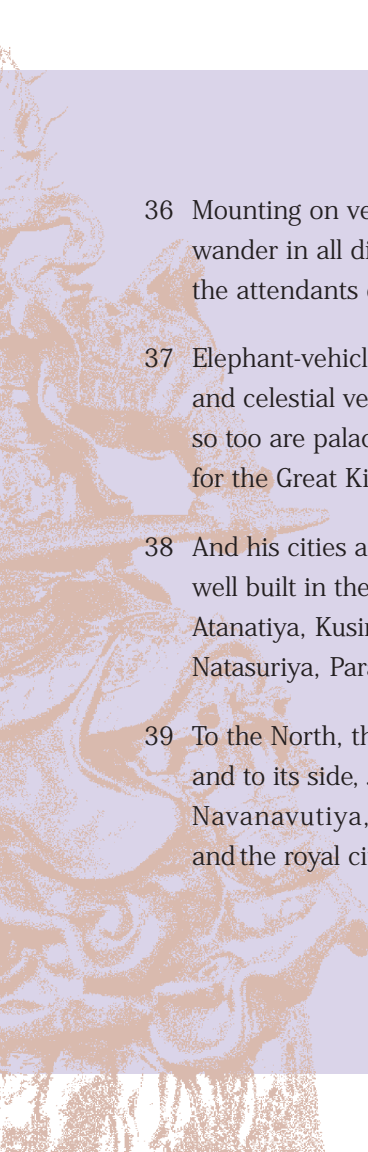
31 They do not sow seeds,
and the ploughs are not drawn.
There is wild ripened rice
that the people enjoy.

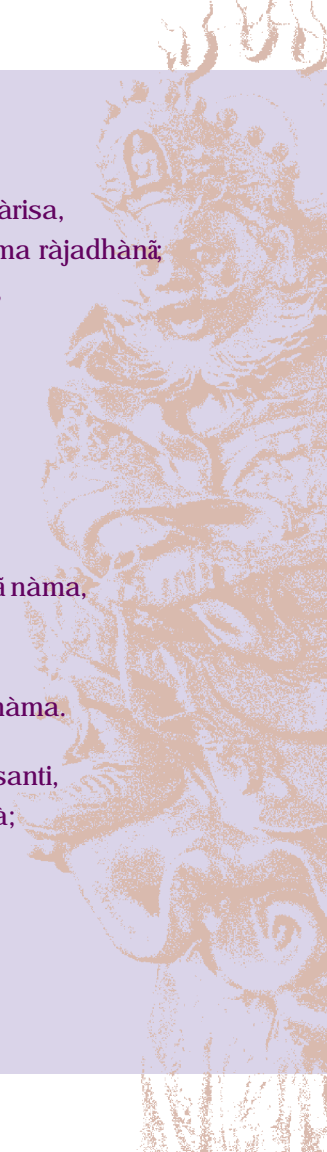
- 32 Akaõaü athusaü suddhaü,
sugandhaü taõóulapphalaü;
tuõóikãre pacitvãna,
tato bhuṃjanti bhojanaü.
- 33 Gàviü ekakhuraü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü;
pasuü ekakhuraü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü.
- 34 Itthiü và vãhanaü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü.
purisaü vàhanaü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü.
- 35 Kumãriü vàhanaü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü;
kumãraü vàhanaü katvã,
anuyanti disodisaü.

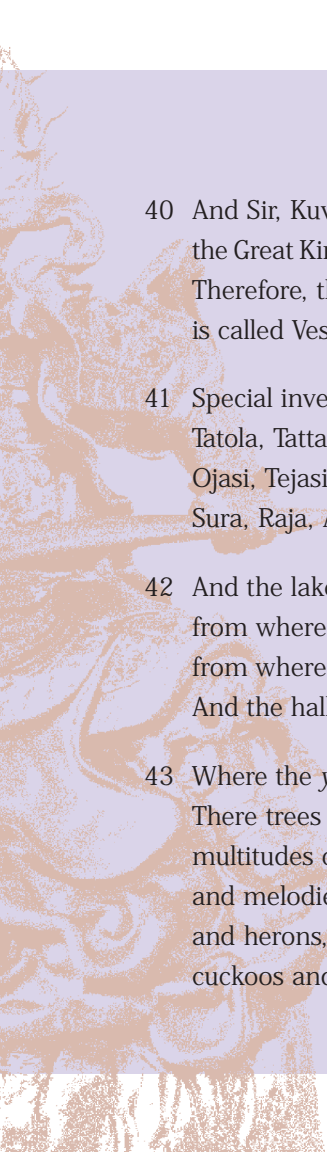


- 
- 32 Unbroken, husked, clean,
fragrant grains of rice
in a pot are cooked,
and from there (only) do they enjoy food.
- 33 Making a cow like a “single-hoofed mount”,
they ride about from place to place.
Making a beast like a “single-hoofed mount”,
they ride about from place to place.
- 34 Or making a woman like a vehicle,
they ride about from place to place.
Making a man like a vehicle,
they ride about from place to place.
- 35 Making a girl like a vehicle,
they ride about from place to place.
Making a boy like a vehicle,
they ride about from place to place.

- 
- 36 Te yàne abhiruhitvā,
sabbā disā anupariyāyanti.
pacārā tassa rājino.
- 37 Hatthiyānaü assayānaü,
dibbaü yānaü upaṁhitaü;
pàsādā sivikā ceva,
mahārājassa yasassino.
- 38 Tassa ca nagarā ahu,
antalikkhe sumāpitā;
àñṇanāñṇā kusiṇāñṇā parakusiṇāñṇā,
nāñṇasuriyā parakusiñṇanāñṇā.
- 39 Uttarena kasivanto,
janoghamaparena ca;
navanavutiyo ambara-ambaravatiyo,
àḥkamandā nāma rājadhāṇā.

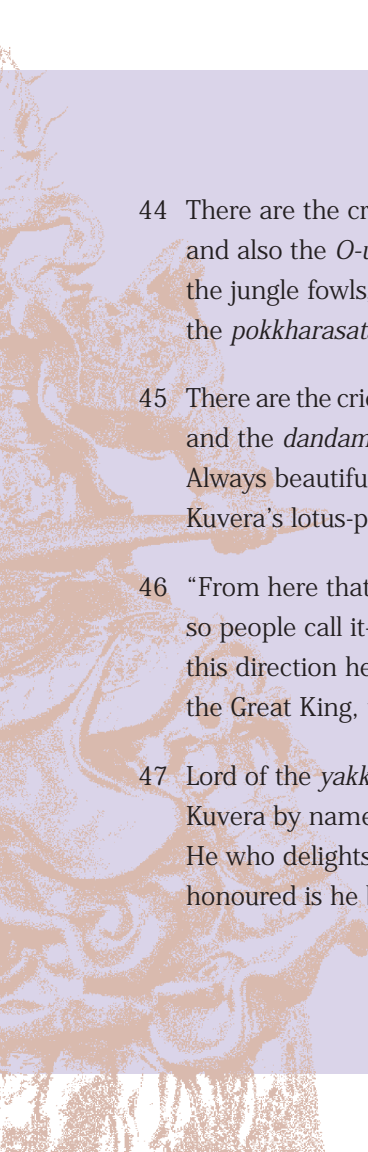
- 
- 36 Mounting on vehicles, they
wander in all directions,
the attendants of that king.
- 37 Elephant-vehicle, horse-vehicle,
and celestial vehicle are near at hand;
so too are palaces and palanquins
for the Great King, the famous one.
- 38 And his cities are
well built in the heavens:
Atanatiya, Kusinata, Parakusinata,
Natasuriya, Parakusitanata,
- 39 To the North, the city of Kasivanta,
and to its side, Janogha,
Navanavutiya, Ambara-ambaravatiya,
and the royal city named Alakamanda.

- 
- 40 Kuverassa kho pana, màrisa,
mahàràjassa visàõà nàma ràjadhànã;
tasmà kuvero mahàràjà,
'vessavaõo'ti pavuccati.
- 41 Paccesanto pakàsenti,
tatolà tattalà tatotalà;
ojasi tejasi tatojasã,
sàro ràjà ariĩho nemi.
- 42 Rahadopi tattha dharaõã nàma,
yato meghà pavassanti;
vassà yato patàyanti,
sabhàpi tattha sàlavatã nàma.
- 43 Yattha yakkhà payirupàsanti,
tattha niccaphalà rukkhà;
nànàdijagaõàyutà,
mayàrakoꣳcàbhirudà;
kokilādãhi vagguhi.

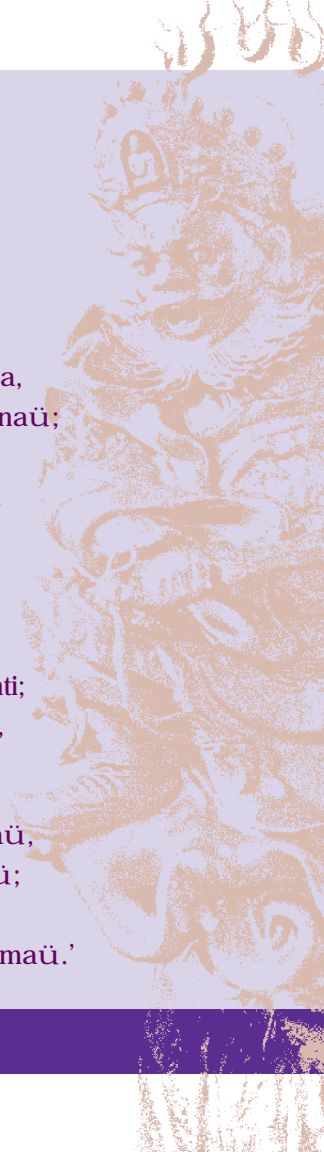
- 
- 40 And Sir, Kuvera
the Great King's royal city is named Visana.
Therefore, the Great King Kuvera
is called Vessavana.
- 41 Special investigators who inform him are
Tatola, Tattala, Tatotala,
Ojasi, Tejasi, Tatojasi,
Sura, Raja, Arittha, Nemi.
- 42 And the lake there is named Dharani,
from where clouds bring rain,
from where showers of rain spread.
And the hall there is named Salavati,
- 43 Where the *yakkhas* assemble.
There trees bear perpetual fruit,
multitudes of birds flock,
and melodies are sung by peacocks
and herons,
cuckoos and other birds.

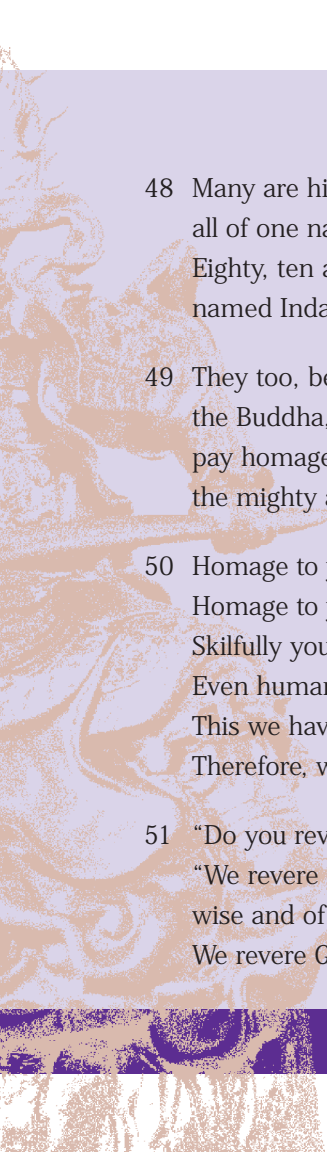
- 44 Jāvaṃjāvakasaddettha,
atho oṃhavadittakà;
kukkuṇakà kuṇṇakà,
vane pokkharasàtakà.
- 45 Sukasàṃkasaddettha,
daḍḍamāḍḍavakàni ca;
sobhati sabbakàlāṇi sà,
kuveranaṇṇā sadà.
- 46 'Itto sà uttarà disà,'
iti naṇṇi àcikkhatā jano;
yaṇṇi disaṇṇi abhipāleti,
mahārājā yasassi so.
- 47 Yakkhànaṃca adhipati,
'kuvero' iti nàmaso;
ramatā naccagātehi,
yakkheheva purakkhato.



- 
- 44 There are the cries of the *Live-on* birds;
and also the *O-uplift-your-hearts* birds,
the jungle fowls, the *kuliraka* (crab-birds?),
the *pokkharasataka* birds in the forest.
- 45 There are the cries of the parrots and mynas;
and the *dandamanavaka* birds.
Always beautiful is
Kuvera's lotus-pond in all seasons.
- 46 "From here that is the North direction,"
so people call it—
this direction he governs,
the Great King, the famous one,
- 47 Lord of the *yakkhas*,
Kuvera by name.
He who delights in dances and songs,
honoured is he by the *yakkhas*.

- 48 Puttàpi tassa bahavo,
ekanàmàti me sutaü;
asāti dasa eko ca,
indanàmà mahabbalà.
- 49 Te càpi buddhaü disvāna,
buddhaü àdiccabandhunaü;
dàratova namassanti,
mahantaü vātasàradaü.
- 50 Namo te purisàjaṃṃa,
namo te purisuttama;
kusalena samekkhasi,
amanussàpi taü vandanti;
sutaü netaü abhiõhaso,
tasmà evaü vademase.
- 51 ‘Jinaü vandatha gotamaü,
jinaü vandàma gotamaü;
vijjàcaraõasampannaü,
buddhaü vandàma gotamaü.’



- 
- 48 Many are his sons,
all of one name, so have I heard.
Eighty, ten and one,
named Inda, the mighty ones.
- 49 They too, beholding the Buddha –
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun –
pay homage to him from afar,
the mighty and fearless one.
- 50 Homage to you, noble steed of a man.
Homage to you, foremost among men.
Skilfully you look after (us).
Even human-like beings revere you.
This we have often heard.
Therefore, we say thus (when asked)
- 51 “Do you revere Gotama the Conqueror?”
“We revere Gotama the Conqueror,
wise and of virtuous conduct.
We revere Gotama the Buddha.”

“This, sir, is the Atanatiya protection for the guarding, protection, freedom from harm and comfortable living of *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas*.

“If any *bhikkhu*, *bhikkhuni*, *upasaka* or *upasika* has learned well this Atanatiya protection and mastered it thoroughly, then if any human-like being—a *yakkha* man or woman, a *yakkha* boy or girl, a great minister or assemblyman of the *yakkhas*, or a *yakkha* servant; a *gandhabba*... a *kumbhanda*... a *naga* man or woman, a *naga* boy or girl, a great minister or assemblyman of the *nagas*, or a *naga* servant—should maliciously walk or stand or sit or lie down with him or her, such a human-like being, sir, would not obtain honour or respect in my villages or towns. Such a human-like being, sir, would not obtain a dwelling site or residence in my royal city of Alakamanda. Such a human-like being, sir, would not be admitted to my *yakkhas*’ assembly. Moreover, sir, human-like

beings would even make him or her unacceptable for taking or giving in marriage. Moreover, sir, human-like beings would even abuse him or her with thorough, personal abuses. Moreover, sir, human-like beings would even turn an empty bowl upside down on his or her head. Moreover, sir, human-like beings would even split his or her head into seven pieces.

“There are, sir, human-like beings who are violent, hostile, given to retaliation. They do not heed the Great Kings, or their officers, or their attendants. These human-like beings, sir, are said to be in revolt against the Great Kings. Just as in the kingdom of Magadha, sir, the bandits do not heed the king of Magadha, or his officers, or their attendants, and are said to be in revolt against the king of Magadha; so there are human-like beings who behave similarly and are said to be in revolt against the Great Kings.

“Sir, if any human-like being—a *yakkha* man or woman, a *yakkha* boy or girl, a great

minister or assemblyman of the *yakkhas*, or a *yakkha* servant; a *gandhabba*... a *kumbhanda*... a *naga* man or woman, a *naga* boy or girl, a great minister or assemblyman of the *nagas*, or a *naga* servant—should maliciously walk or stand or sit or lie down with a *bhikkhu*, *bhikkhuni*, *upasaka* or *upasika*, then the *yakkhas*, the great *yakkhas*, their commanders and commanders-in-chief should be informed by calling out, by shouting:

‘This *yakkha* seizes (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* possesses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* harasses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* oppresses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* harms (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* torments (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* does not release (me/him/her)!’

“Who are the *yakkhas*, the great *yakkhas*, their commanders and commanders-in-chief?

Inda, Soma, and Varuna,
Bharadvaja, Pajapati,

Candana, Kamasettha too,
Kinnughandu, Nighandu,

Panada, Opamañña too,
Devasuta and Matali,
Cittasena and Gandhabba,
Nala, Raja, Janesabha,

Satagira, Hemavata,
Punnaka, Karatiya, Gula,
Sivaka, Mucalinda too,
Vessamitta, Yugandhara,

Gopala, Supparodha too,
Hiri, Netti, and Mandiya,
Pañcalacanda, Alavaka,
Pajjunna, Sumana, Sumukha,
Dadhimukha, Mani, Manivara, Digha,
With these Serisaka.

“These are the *yakkhas*, the great *yakkhas*,
their commanders and commanders-in-chief

who should be informed by calling out, by shouting: ‘This *yakkha* seizes (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* possesses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* harasses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* oppresses (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* harms (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* torments (me/him/her)! This *yakkha* does not release (me/him/her)!’

“And this, sir, is the Atanatiya protection for the guarding, protection, freedom from harm and comfortable living of *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas*.

“Well then, sir, we must go; we have many duties, many things to do.”

“Now, Great Kings, you (should) know the time for that.”

Then the Four Great Kings got up from their seats, bowed down before the Blessed One, paid homage and vanished. Some of the *yakkhas* got up from their seats, bowed down before the Blessed One, paid homage and

vanished. Some exchanged courtesies with him, some saluted him with clasped hands, some announced their name and clan, and vanished. Some vanished in silence.

And when the night was over, the Blessed One addressed the *bhikkhus*: “*Bhikkhus*, this night the Four Great Kings with a large army of...approached me.... (The Buddha related to the *bhikkhus* word for word what had been said by the Great King Vessavana, as above.)

“*Bhikkhus*, learn the Atanatiya protection, master it, remember it. This Atanatiya protection, *bhikkhus*, is for your welfare, for the guarding, protection, freedom from harm and comfortable living of *bhikkhus*, *bhikkhunis*, *upasakas* and *upasikas*.”

Thus said the Blessed One. Delighted, the *bhikkhus* rejoiced in the words of the Blessed One.



“Bhikkhus, learn the Atanatiya Protection,
master it, remember it. This Atanatiya
Protection, bhikkhus, is for your welfare,
for the guarding, protection, freedom from
harm and comfortable living of bhikkhus,
bhikkhunis, upasakas and upasikas.”

Lord Buddha
Atanatiya Sutta (DN 32)