Pv 27 — Sānuvāsī Sutta: The Monk from Mount Sanuvasi

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

There was once an arahant named Potthapada living in the city of Kundi, on Mount Sanuvasi. He possessed many good qualities.

His mother, father, and brother passed away and were reborn in the ghost world because of the bad deeds they committed in the human world. They were very tired, thin, and naked. They experienced pain as if they were being pierced by needles. They were always scared and would not show themselves.

However, one day the brother revealed himself to Potthapada Bhante while standing on his hands and feet like an animal. But Potthapada Bhante just walked past the ghost without saying anything. The ghost spoke to him saying,

Ghost:

I am your brother who was reborn in the ghost world. Your mother and father are also there right now. Having done evil deeds, now we have to suffer there. They are pierced with needles and are very tired, thin, and naked. They are always scared and do not show themselves.

You are very compassionate, Bhante. Please have pity on us. Please offer alms and dedicate that merit to us. That is the only way we will be happy.

Potthapada Bhante and twelve other monks searched for alms and soon gathered at the same place with the purpose of sharing their meals.

Potthapada Bhante:

Give me the food that you have collected. I want to offer it to the community of monks out of compassion for my departed relatives.

The monks gave their food to Potthapada Bhante. The Bhante offered the food to the Sangha and dedicated the merit to his mother, father, and brother by saying, "Let this merit go to my departed relatives. May my relatives be happy."

The merit he dedicated instantly became a well prepared, good quality curry and other food for the monk's departed relatives. The brother then appeared in front of the monk looking healthy, fresh, and happy, saying,

Brother:

Bhante, there is lots of food for us to eat. But we are still naked. Please do something so we can have some clothes.

Potthapada Bhante then collected some scraps of cloth. Once he had collected enough, he made a robe and offered it to the Sangha by saying, "Let this merit be for my departed relatives. May my relatives be happy."

The fruit of his donation immediately turned to clothing for his relatives. The brother appeared again in front of the monk dressed in fine clothes and said,

Brother:

There are more clothes here than there are in King Nanda's realm, made from silk and wool, linen and cotton. There are so many that they hang down from the sky. We can wear as many clothes as we want. But we are still homeless, please find a way for us to have a home now.

Potthapada Bhante built a hut from leaves and donated it to the Sangha. When he had offered it, he dedicated the merit by saying, "Let this merit be for my departed relatives. May my relatives be happy." Immediately the merit that he shared came into the form of a large multi-story house.

The brother appeared in front of him once again saying,

Brother:

The house that we have right now cannot be found anywhere in the human world, but it is like the houses where devas live. The house shines in all directions. But Bhante, we are still thirsty. Please find a way to get us some water to drink.

Potthapada Bhante filled a water pot and offered it to the Sangha saying, "Let this merit be for my relatives. May my relatives be happy."

The merit he shared immediately became lotus ponds for the family. These ponds had clear water, beautiful banks, and were filled with sweet fragrance. The water was cool and covered with lotuses, water lilies, and lotus petals.

The relatives of the monk bathed, drank, and enjoyed the water. They then appeared once again in front of Potthapada Bhante saying,

Relatives:

Bhante, we have plenty of water now, but our feet are dried and cracked. We have to walk around on gravel and other sharp objects in our bare feet. Please find a way so we can get something so to ride on.

The elder monk found some sandals and offered them to the Sangha saying, “Let this merit be for my departed relatives. May my relatives be happy.” The merit immediately went to the relatives in the form of a carriage. The relatives approached the monk in their carriage and said,

Relatives:

You have shown us compassion, Bhante. You helped us to get food to eat, clothing, houses, water to drink, and vehicles to ride in. We are here now to pay homage to the compassionate Potthapada Bhante.