Pv 34 — Kūṭavinicchayika Sutta: The Back Biter

English translation by Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monastery (Sutta Friends).

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Text

Narada Bhante:

You are wearing many garlands, a crown, and many other types of jewelry on your hands and legs. Your body is covered with sandalwood cream. Your facial expression is very pleasant and your body shines very brightly just like the sun.

You are surrounded by ten thousand divine maidens who serve you whatever you want.

They wear bracelets and have golden wreaths on their heads. You look very mighty and your appearance is very majestic. When people look at you they are stunned by your appearance and their body hairs stand on end.

But you eat the flesh off your own back. What evil deed have you committed by body speech or mind to make you eat your own flesh?

Ghost:

When I was living in the human world I lied, broke friendships using divisive words, cheated others, and did lots of cunning deeds. In the middle of large gatherings of people, when I was asked to tell the truth, I lied.

I insulted others behind their backs. As a result of speaking behind others backs, today I have to eat the flesh off my own back.

You have seen how I am suffering, Narada Bhante. Now I see the truth of the words of the wise and compassionate Buddhas. I can tell you now, do not break friendships, do not tell lies, and may you not have to eat the flesh off your own back like I do!