

# AGGATHERĪVATTHU

THE STORIES ABOUT

## THE FOREMOST ELDER NUNS



EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

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# **Aggathērīvatthu**

(AN 1.14.5.1-13 and its Commentary)

the stories about  
**The Foremost Elder Nuns**

edited and translated by

**Ānandajoti Bhikkhu**

(March 2015)

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## Texts

SHB: Śrī Laṃkan edition, from the Simon Hewavitarne Bequest series, Vol. XV (Colombo, 1923, reprinted Colombo, 2007).

BJT (for the quotes from Tipiṭaka texts): Śrī Laṃkan edition, from the Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka series, relevant volumes.

PTS: European edition, Manorathapūraṇī, Vol. I (Pali Text Society, London 1924, reprinted London, 1973). Also relevant volumes for the Tipiṭaka quotations.

RTE: Royal Thai edition, as found on Budsir for Windows CD-ROM (version 2.0, Bangkok, 1996).

ChS: Burmese edition as found on the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM (version 3, Igaṭpuri, no date but = 1999).

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Translation: Mabel Bode, Women Leaders of the Buddhist Reformation (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1893).

See also: The Great Chronicles of Buddhas, by Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivaṃsa, translated from Burmese (Singapore, 2008).

There are a great many variations in the text, and I recorded around 1,000 just for this short section of the commentary, which is much more than I would have expected had the text been canonical.

I thought at one time about taking them into a separate document for the establishment of the text, as I have indeed done with some other texts, but in the end I thought it might be better to leave them here, so that students who are learning Pāḷi can get an idea of how many variations there are in the commentaries as they read.

The variations range from blocks of text, to differences in sentence structure, as well as the normal differences in readings for the words. Some of the minor variations, like alternations between class nasal and *niggahīta* I have not recorded, as they add nothing much to our understanding of what is in any case a very complex set of readings.

All substantial variations, though, are recorded, but as they are so many I have abandoned my usual practice of explaining why I have chosen one reading over another, which would have required the writing of around a thousand explanatory notes.

## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful indeed to Dr. Junko Matsumura, whose superb knowledge of Pāḷi has once again helped prevent me from falling into error, and who made a number of valuable suggestions for improving the text.

I am once again indebted to Ayyā Tathālokā for reading through the text and making many good suggestions for improvement, as well as picking up some corrections along the way.

I am also grateful indeed to Sudhammā Bhikkhunī, whose meticulous reading of the text has helped correct my English and eliminate inconsistencies.

The work would be much poorer without the help of these generous scholars, but if any mistakes now remain then they are my fault alone.

Ānandajoti Bhikkhu  
March 2015

## Introduction

In the Book of the Ones in the Numerical Collection (Aṅguttaranikāya, 1.14) there is a bare list of seventy-four monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen whom the Buddha singled out as excelling in a certain spiritual quality they had developed.<sup>1</sup>

No more information is given about them there, or the circumstances that led up to their being given these positions. Although some of them are known from other places in the discourses to have held these positions, like the eldest disciples, others would be unknown today, if they were not named here.

The commentary on the Numerical Discourses, a section of which is translated here, tries to fill in this lacuna by providing detailed histories of the disciples, telling when and where they made an aspiration to hold the position; the good deeds they did, and the story of their last life.

In the case of the nuns this more or less follows this pattern:

- they made their aspiration at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, normally after seeing him appoint one of his own nuns to that position
- then comes a more or less detailed intermediate section, which records their past lives, and the good deeds they did, normally to Paccekabuddhas or Buddhas
- their last lives detail where they were born and their circumstances at the time of the Buddha Gotama, and their appointment to the aspired-for position

Some of the life histories given here are long and detailed, while others are brief and hardly accomplish their aim of explaining why they were appointed to their position; a number are justly famous, while a few are short and easily forgotten.

All the stories, however, play a very important role in the teaching, as they show that people with very different backgrounds – both fortunate and unfortunate – were capable of attaining the highest aim in life when given the right teachings at the right time, and they therefore serve as inspirations and role models for us today.

A few of the nuns are named as characters in the previous lives of the Bodhisatta recorded in the Jātaka Birth Stories, where Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, Uppalavaṇṇā, Khemā and Bhaddā Kaccānā (Yasodharā) particularly are frequently identified. Bhaddā Kāpilānī and Kisāgotamī are also identified there, but none of the others as far as I could discover.

I have given introductions to each of the stories as they occur, and pointed out some of the key features therein, and also some of the anomalies that are found, and therefore needn't review them again here.

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<sup>1</sup> Some, as in the case of Ānanda, were appointed to more than one position, excelling in various qualities.

The stories of the nuns as they are recorded here seek only to show why they were placed by the Buddha in such a high and exemplary position, and do not purport to give full biographies of the nuns, and we can often find more information in the Traditions (*Apadāna*) about them, or in their recorded paeans of joy in the Therīgāthā and its commentary.

Other materials like this are sometimes referred to in the text, and I have included some to fill out parts of the story where appropriate and serve the purpose of helping to explain why they acquired their positions. This is either done in-line, or, sometimes, if they are larger works, they are made available elsewhere on this website and links are provided.

One thing I think worth bringing to notice is that none of the women involved aspire to become men, as it was not seen as necessary – or even useful – to change gender while aspiring to Awakening and positions of great rank. Gender seems never to have been considered an issue in these matters.

I have started with the translations of the nun disciples, not because the others are less important, but because I think it is useful to try and recover these role models for Buddhist women of today who are sometimes struggling to get their voice heard and their role acknowledged in the Sāsana.

In this sense we seem to have gone backward in recent centuries, as the Buddha's generation, and even the commentarial generation, were happy to record the deeds of these great women, and encourage more to aspire for the same ideals, and found no problem acknowledging their contribution to the Sāsana.

I began work on these translations around 2011, but many other works called for my attention in the meantime, and I am happy to see at least this section completed. I hope to return to these texts one day and continue the work by translating first the stories of the lay disciples, and eventually the male monastic disciples, which is by far the longest section of this part of the commentary.

After I had translated about half of the text I found that a previous translation existed, done as early as 1893 by Mabel Bode, and this helped me correct some passages, and was a help in making the rest of the translation.

I also had the help of the English translation of *The Great Chronicles of Buddhas* (sic), originally written in Burmese, which is a monumental work by Bhaddanta Vicittasārābhivamsa (Mingun Sayadaw), who was one of the foremost scholars in Myanmar in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As is normal in the Text and Translation section of the website I have normally taken the text and translation line by line. Occasionally it has proved necessary to take two lines together for the purposes of translation, this is then signified by the insertion of the symbol ° at the beginning of the first line affected.

Texts supplementary to the titles and main translations have been marked in purple and green. They are sometimes Canonical, as with quotes from the Apadāna, Dhammapada and Suttanipāta texts; sometimes from other commentaries, as with the Dhammapada commentary; and in the case of one section (in Bhaddā Kāpilānī's story), from an earlier part of the same commentary, to which we are referred. They are identified in the notes as they appear.

# Aggathērīvatthu

## The Stories about the Foremost Nuns

(AN 1.14.5.1-13 and its Commentary)

### Mahāpājāpatigotamītherīvatthu<sup>2</sup>

## 1. The Story about the Elder Nun Mahāpājāpatī Gotamī

### Introduction

The first of the foremost nun disciples is the root and the most important also, as Mahāpājāpatī was the founding member of the nuns' monastic order, and this story tells how she reached such an eminent position. It was a position that is not attained in one life alone, but over a great period of time, just as the Buddha's Awakening was also built on the acts performed during a great succession of lives.

The story of how she came to the title as senior-most of the nuns in many ways sets the pattern for the others that follow: she was born at the time of the previous Buddha Padumuttara,<sup>3</sup> and saw that Buddha appoint a nun to a foremost position,<sup>4</sup> did a great deed, normally consisting of some considerable personal sacrifice, and made an aspiration for the same position herself.

The pattern then records the good deeds that she did in the interim, before meeting the present Buddha Gotama. These take two forms, either good deeds done under former Buddhas, or good deeds done to Independent Buddhas (*Pacceka Buddha*). In this case we see that after being born in the higher worlds only, amongst gods and humans, she was eventually reborn and encountered a group of Independent Buddhas, who were trying to get help from the lay people in preparing for the Rains Retreat, which required building suitable huts.

They were initially turned down by the rich folk in the city. Therefore the earlier incarnation of Mahāpājāpatī Gotamī (nameless here, as are nearly all the nuns in their earlier lives), herself a slave, offered to build them and organised a large group of 500 female slaves to give their help by offering to provide food for the Retreat and getting their husbands to donate the manual labour needed to prepare the huts.

This good deed of the 500 slaves binds them together kammically for the rest of their time in saṃsāra (the round of births and deaths), and at the time of Gotama Buddha, they will go forth with Mahāpājāpatī Gotamī, and attain Liberation.

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<sup>2</sup> SHB omits titles altogether; PTS: *Mahā-Gotamī*.

<sup>3</sup> Who was the 13th of the 28 Buddhas that culminated in Gotama Buddha, it seems most of the Foremost Disciples started their career under this Buddha. Gotama began his under Buddha Dīpaṅkara, who was 4th in line, so it appears that Disciples can attain their state with less effort than a Buddha.

<sup>4</sup> In this case as foremost in seniority. This is the normal pattern, but Ven. Khemā aspired to her position after meeting Sujāta, the Buddha's Chief Disciple, who was foremost in great wisdom.

## The Elder Nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī - 10

One thing we should notice about this episode is that it shows that the Independent Buddhas have no problem at all in taking donations from slaves, who were held to be the lowest in society. Indeed, it is this lack of discrimination of the Independent Buddhas that gives the slaves the chance to rise in the scale of existence.

A similar story is recorded next, when Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was a weaver's wife near Bārāṇasī. There she organised the feeding of 500 Independent Buddhas, who again had failed to find offerings from the rich folk of the city.

The good deeds that have been recorded are, of course, just some examples from the immense number of lives she lived between the two Buddhas mentioned at the beginning and the end of her career, and we have to understand them as exemplary acts building up her perfections just as the Buddha had accumulated his.

In her last life Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was the younger sister of the Bodhisatta's Mother, Mahā Māyā, both of whom were given in marriage to the Sākiyan King Suddhodana. When the elder sister died shortly after giving birth, the younger gave her own recently born son Nanda out to a wet-nurse, and took on the nursing of Siddhattha herself.<sup>5</sup> She was therefore the foster Mother of the boy who would eventually reach Buddhahood, and would have been engaged in all aspects of his up-bringing, including his education and early marriage.<sup>6</sup>

Five years after the Buddha's Awakening, her husband the King attained Liberation, died straight afterwards and left her a widow. At this point she decided to dedicate the remainder of her life to the spiritual path, and requested the Buddha to start a nuns' order, similar to the monks' order, which had been founded at the beginning of the Sāsana.

She was joined in making this request by the 500 women who had been her slave companions in the previous life. They had been reborn in the Sākiyan state, and their husbands had gone forth after the Buddha had resolved a quarrel and taught them Dhamma on the banks of the Rohinī river.

All of them went to Vesālī, where the Buddha was residing, and eventually attained entry into the newly founded order, with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī being the first, and thereby the most senior nun, being the female equivalent of the first monk in the Sāsana, Ven. Aññā Koṇḍañña.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the traditional timings, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī was 120 years old when she attained Final Liberation, which was in the last year of the Buddha's life, so that would make her forty at the time of the Buddha's birth. Mahāmāyā was her older sister, but how much older is not clear.

<sup>6</sup> Something Ven. Ānanda would remind the Buddha of when she requested ordination for women.

**AN 1.5.1**

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**rattaññunam,, yad-idam Mahāpajāpatigotamī.**

amongst those who are senior, that is to say, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī.

**AA 1.5.1**

(commentary)

**Theripāliyam<sup>7</sup> paṭhame, “Yad-idam Mahāpajāpatigotamī” ti,<sup>8</sup>**

In the first of the texts concerning the Elder Nuns, “That is to say, Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī,”

**Mahāpajāpatigotamī<sup>9</sup> Therī, rattaññunam aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows how the Elder Nun Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, amongst those who were senior, was said to be the foremost.<sup>10</sup>

**Tassā pañhakamme<sup>11</sup> ayam-anupubbikathā:**

This is the exposition concerning the enquiry into her (previous) deeds:

**Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Ayam kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Haṃsavatiyam kulagehe paṭisandhim gaṇhitvā,**

she was conceived in a good family home in Haṃsavatī,<sup>12</sup>

**aparena samayena, Satthu Dhammadesanam suṇantī,**

and at another time, while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**Satthāram ekam bhikkhunim rattaññunam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentam disvā,**

seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost in seniority,

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<sup>7</sup> ChS: *Theripāliyā*.

<sup>8</sup> SHB: *Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī ti*; PTS omits: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī ti*.

<sup>9</sup> SHB: *Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī*; PTS: *Mahā-Gotamī*.

<sup>10</sup> *Rattaññū*, means *endowed with (many) nights*; it refers to her seniority as being the first of the nuns who was ordained.

<sup>11</sup> RTE, ChS adds: *pana*.

<sup>12</sup> This was Buddha Padumuttara’s birthplace. All of the nuns (and a number of the monks) are said to have made their initial aspiration under this Buddha in this place.

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.<sup>13</sup>**

she did a great deed<sup>14</sup> and aspired for that position herself.<sup>15</sup>

**Sā yāvajīvaṃ dānaṃ datvā, sīlaṃ rakkhitvā,<sup>16</sup>**

She gave donations for the rest of her life, protected her virtue,

**tato cuto, devaloke nibbattitvā,**

passed away from there, was reborn in the world of the gods,

**pana ekasmiṃ Buddhantare, devalokato cavitvā,**

and spending one period when there was no Buddha<sup>17</sup> (there), she passed away (again) from the world of the gods,

**Bārāṇasīyaṃ pañcannaṃ dāsisatānaṃ jeṭṭhikā<sup>18</sup> hutvā nibbatti.**

was reborn, and became the chief amongst five hundred female slaves in Bārāṇasī.

**Atha Vassūpanāyikasamaye,<sup>19</sup>**

Then, as the time for the Rains Retreat was approaching,

**pañca Paccekabuddhā<sup>20</sup> Nandamūlakapabbhārato Isipatane otaritvā,**

five Independent Buddhas descended from Mount Nandamūlaka to Isipatana,<sup>21</sup>

**nagare piṇḍāya caritvā, Isipatanam-eva gantvā,**

wandered for alms in the city, and after going (back) to Isipatana,

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<sup>13</sup> RTE: *paṭṭhesi*; and similarly throughout.

<sup>14</sup> The sort of great deed is characterised in Khemā's story: she sold her hair and gave a donation to Sujāta, one of the Buddha Padumuttara's Chief Disciples. Compare also the sub-commentary on Dhammadinnā's story, which says a similar thing about her resolution.

<sup>15</sup> It is worthwhile noting here that all the women make an aspiration to become a bhikkhunī who is foremost in one thing or another. Not one of them wishes to change her sex, or seems to think that might give her a better chance in life and in regard to Awakening.

<sup>16</sup> SHB, PTS: *sīlaṃ samādiyitvā uposathaṃ upavasitvā, kappasatasahassaṃ atikkamma Bārāṇasīyaṃ.nibbatti*; *having established virtue, having observed the observance, after one hundred thousand aeons had passed she was reborn in Bārāṇasī.*

<sup>17</sup> Lit: a Buddha-interval; it means a long period of time when no Buddha awakens on earth. These are said to be much longer than the periods when a Buddha, or his teaching, is available.

<sup>18</sup> RTE, ChS: *jeṭṭhakadāsī.*

<sup>19</sup> SHB: *Vassūpanāyikāsamaye.*

<sup>20</sup> RTE: *pañcasata-Paccekabuddhā.*

<sup>21</sup> Nandamūlaka was a mountain in the Himālaya, near to Mt. Kelasa (Kailash); Isipatana is outside of Bārāṇasī, and was the site where Gotama Buddha gave his first sermon.

**‘Vassūpanāyikakuṭiyā atthāya hatthakammaṃ yācissāmā,’ ti.<sup>22</sup>**

they thought: ‘We will ask for manual labour in order to prepare the huts for spending the Rains,’

**cīvaram̐ pārupitvā, sāyaṇhasamaye<sup>23</sup> nagaram̐ pavisitvā**

and after wrapping their robes, they entered the city in the evening time

**seṭṭhissa gharadvāre aṭṭham̐su.**

and stood at the gate of the treasurer’s house.

**Jeṭṭhakadāsī, kuṭam̐<sup>24</sup> gahetvā udakatittham̐ gacchantī**

The chief female slave took a waterpot and while going to the reservoir

**Paccekabuddhe nagaram̐ pavisante addasa.**

saw the Independent Buddhas entering the city.

**Seṭṭhi, tesam̐ āgatakāraṇam̐ sutvā,**

The treasurer, after hearing why they had come,

**“Amhākam̐ okāso natthi, gacchantū!” ti āha.**

said: “You do not have our permission, please go!”

**Atha, te nagarā nikkhamante,<sup>25</sup>**

Then, as they were leaving the city,

**jeṭṭhakadāsī, kuṭam̐ gahetvā, pavisantī disvā,**

the chief female slave, took her waterpot and while entering she saw them,

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<sup>22</sup> RTE and ChS insert a long Ṭīkā-like section here: *cintesuṃ. Kasmā? Vassam̐ upagacchantena hi, Nālakaṭṭipadam̐ ṭṭipannenāpi, pañcannaṃ chadanānaṃ aññatarena chadanena channe, sadvārabaddhe senāsane upagantabbaṃ. Vuttañ-hetaṃ: “Na bhikkhave asenāsanikena Vassam̐ upagantabbaṃ, yo upagaccheyya, āpatti dukkaṭṭassā.” ti Tasmā vassakāle upakaṭṭhe sace senāsanam̐ labhati, iccetaṃ kusalam̐. No ce labhati, hatthakammaṃ pariyesitvāpi kātabbam̐. Hatthakammaṃ alabhanṭena, sāmam-pi kātabbam̐, na tveva asenāsanikena Vassam̐ upagantabbaṃ. Ayam-anudhammatā. Tasmā te Paccekabuddhā: ‘Hatthakammaṃ yācissāmā.’ ti; Why? Because with the entering into the Rains, even for one practising the Nālaka practice, he should enter a dwelling place which is roofed with one of the five types of roofs, and with a lockable door. Therefore it is said: “Monks, one should not enter the Rains without a (proper) dwelling place, he who does enter, for him there is an offence of wrong-doing.” Therefore when the time for the Rains is approaching if he receives a dwelling place, that is good. If he doesn’t receive (one), after looking for manual labour, it could be built. If manual labour is not found, he should make it himself, but he should not enter the Rains without a (proper) dwelling place. This is in conformity with the rules. Therefore the Independent Buddhas thought: ‘We will ask for manual labour’.*

<sup>23</sup> ChS: *sāyanhasamaye*.

<sup>24</sup> SHB: *kūṭam̐*; and similarly elsewhere.

<sup>25</sup> RTE, ChS: *nikkhante*.

**kuṭaṃ otāretvā, vanditvā, onamitvā,<sup>26</sup> mukhaṃ ukkhipivā,<sup>27</sup>**  
put down the waterpot, worshipped, bent down, lifted up her face,

**“Ayyā, nagaraṃ pavitṭhamattā va, nikkhamantā<sup>28</sup> kiṃ nu kho?” ti pucchi.**  
and asked: “Noble Ones, having just entered the city, why are you (now) leaving?”

**“Vassūpanāyikakuṭiyā<sup>29</sup> hatthakammaṃ yācitum āgatamhā.” ti**  
“We came to ask for manual labour to prepare the huts for spending the Rains.”

**“Laddhaṃ Bhante?” ti**  
“Did you receive it, reverend Sirs?”

**“Na laddhaṃ upāsike.” ti**  
“We did not receive it, lay woman.”

**“Kiṃ panesā kuṭi issareheva kātabbā,**  
“But can these huts only be made by the powerful,

**udāhu<sup>30</sup> duggatehi pi<sup>31</sup> sakkā kātun?”-ti**  
or is it possible also for the lowly to build (them)?”

**“Yena kenaci sakkā kātun.”-ti<sup>32</sup>**  
“It is possible for anyone to build (them).”

**“Sādhu Bhante mayaṃ karissāma,**  
“Very well, reverend Sirs, we will build (them),

**sve mayhaṃ bhikkhaṃ gaṇhathā,” ti nimantetvā,<sup>33</sup>**  
tomorrow please accept our alms food,” and after inviting (them),

**puna kuṭaṃ gahetvā, āgamanatitthamagge<sup>34</sup> ṭhatvā,**  
she took the waterpot, placed it on the road going to the reservoir,

**āgatāgatā<sup>35</sup> avasesadāsiyo:<sup>36</sup> “Ettheva hothā,” ti vatvā,**  
and every time the other female slaves came, she said: “Wait here,”

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<sup>26</sup> SHB: *oṇamitvā*.

<sup>27</sup> SHB, PTS: *pidhāya*.

<sup>28</sup> RTE, ChS: *nikkhantā*.

<sup>29</sup> SHB: *Vassūpanāyikakuṭiyā*.

<sup>30</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *udāhu*.

<sup>31</sup> RTE omits: *pi*.

<sup>32</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *kātun*.

<sup>33</sup> SHB, PTS adds: *udakaṃ netvā*.

<sup>34</sup> SHB, PTS: *āgamma titthamagge*.

<sup>35</sup> RTE: *āgatā*.

<sup>36</sup> PTS: *avasesā dāsiyo*.

**sabbāsaṃ āgatakāle āha:**

and when everyone had assembled, she said:

**“Ammā, kiṃ niccam-eva parassa dāsikammaṃ<sup>37</sup> karissatha,**

“Ladies, will we always be doing slave-work for another,

**udāhu dāsibhāvato<sup>38</sup> muccituṃ icchathā?” ti**

or do you wish to be free of this slavery?”

**“Ajjeva muccituṃ icchāma, Ayye.” ti**

“Noble Lady, today itself we wish to be free.”

**“Yadi evaṃ, mayā pañca<sup>39</sup> Paccekabuddhā hatthakammaṃ alabhantā**

“If you so wish, as the five Independent Buddhas didn’t receive manual labour

**svātanāya nimantitā.**

they were invited by me for tomorrow.

**Tumhākaṃ sāmikehi ekadivasaṃ hatthakammaṃ dāpethā.” ti**

Have your husbands give manual labour for a day.”

**Tā: “Sādhū!” ti, sampañcchitvā,**

They replied: “Very well!”

**sāyaṃ aṭavito āgatakāle sāmikānaṃ ārocesuṃ.**

and informed their husbands when they returned from the forest.

**Te: “Sādhū!” ti, jeṭṭhakadāsassa<sup>40</sup> gehadvāre sannipatiṃsu.**

They (also) said: “Very well!” and assembled at the chief male slave’s door.

**Atha ne jeṭṭhakadāsī:**

Then the chief female slave said to them:

**“Sve Tātā Paccekabuddhānaṃ hatthakammaṃ dethā,” ti**

“Tomorrow, Dears, you must give manual labour to the Independent Buddhas,”

**ānisaṃsaṃ ācikkhitvā, ye pi na kātukāmā,**

and she explained the advantages, and even those who did not desire to do it (at first),

**te gāḷhena ovādena tajjetvā, sabbe pi sampañcchāpesi.<sup>41</sup>**

after she had given them strong advice, they all agreed.

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<sup>37</sup> SHB, PTS: *dāsakammaṃ*.

<sup>38</sup> SHB: *dāsabhāvato*.

<sup>39</sup> RTE adds: *sata*; ChS omits: *pañca*.

<sup>40</sup> RTE: *jeṭṭhakadāsīyā*; at the chief female slave’s (door).

<sup>41</sup> SHB, PTS: *ovādena tajjetvā pañcchāpesi*.

**Sā punadivase Paccekabuddhānam bhattam datvā,**  
On the next day, after giving food to the Independent Buddhas,

**sabbesam dāsaputtānam saññam adāsi.**  
she gave a sign to all of the slaves.

**Te tāvad-eva araññam pavisitvā, dabbasambhāre samodhānetvā,**  
They entered the wilderness straight away, assembled the timber,

**satam satam hutvā, ekekaṃ kuṭim caṅkamanādiparivāram<sup>42</sup> katvā,**  
gathered in hundreds, made each of them a hut together with a walking meditation path,

**mañcapīṭhapānīyaparibhojanīyādīni<sup>43</sup> ṭhapetvā,**  
and placed suitable beds, chairs and drinks,

**Paccekabuddhānam<sup>44</sup> temāsam tattheva<sup>45</sup> vasanatthāya paṭiññam kāretvā,**  
and got a promise from the Independent Buddhas to spend the three months<sup>46</sup> right there,

**vārabhikkham paṭṭhapesum.<sup>47</sup>**  
and prepared alms food (for each of them) in turn.

**Yā<sup>48</sup> attano vāradivase dātum<sup>49</sup> na sakkoti,**  
For those who were not able to take the opportunity to give on their day,

**tassā<sup>50</sup> jeṭṭhakadāsī sakagehato nīharitvā deti.**  
the chief female slave took (food) from her own house and gave it.

**Evaṃ temāsam paṭijaggivā,<sup>51</sup>**  
After looking after them for three months,

**jeṭṭhakadāsī ekekaṃ dāsim ekekaṃ sāṭakam<sup>52</sup> sajjāpesi,<sup>53</sup>**  
the chief female slave had each of the female slaves prepare cloth,

**pañca thūlasāṭakasatāni ahesum.**  
and they made five-hundred coarse cloths.

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<sup>42</sup> RTE: *caṅkamanādipariveṇam*.

<sup>43</sup> PTS: *-paribhojanādīni*.

<sup>44</sup> SHB, PTS: *Paccekabuddhe*.

<sup>45</sup> SHB, PTS: *tattha*.

<sup>46</sup> The period of the Rains Retreat.

<sup>47</sup> RTE: *vārakam bhikkham upaṭṭhapesum*.

<sup>48</sup> SHB: *Yo*.

<sup>49</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS omit: *dātum*.

<sup>50</sup> SHB, PTS: *tassa*.

<sup>51</sup> SHB, PTS: *jaggivā*.

<sup>52</sup> RTE: *ekam ekekasāṭakam*.

<sup>53</sup> PTS: *vissajjāpesi*.

**Tāni parivattāpetvā, pañcannaṃ Paccekabuddhānaṃ<sup>54</sup> ticīvarāni katvā adāsi.**

After exchanging them, and having the three robes made, she gave (a set to each of) the five Independent Buddhas.

**Paccekabuddhā tāsāṃ passantīnaṃ yeva**

And even as they watched, the Independent Buddhas

**ākāsenā Gandhamādanapabbataṃ agamaṃsu.**

went through the air to Mount Gandhamādana.<sup>55</sup>

### Another Life: Giving Donations

**Tā pi sabbā yāvajīvaṃ kusalaṃ katvā, devaloke nibbattiṃsu.**

After doing good deeds for the rest of their lives, they were reborn in the world of the gods.

**Tāsāṃ<sup>56</sup> jeṭṭhikā, tato cavitvā,**

The chief female, having passed away from there,

**Bārāṇasiyā avidūre pesakāragāme pesakārajeṭṭhakassa gehe nibbatti.**

was reborn to the chief weaver in a weaver's village not far from Bārāṇasī.<sup>57</sup>

**Athekadivasāṃ, Padumavatiyā puttā, pañcasatā Paccekabuddhā,**

Then one day, Padumavatī sons, the five-hundred Independent Buddhas,<sup>58</sup>

**Bārāṇasīrañṇā<sup>59</sup> nimantitā, Rājadvāraṃ āgantvā,**

being invited by the King of Bārāṇasī, after going to the King's Gate,

**kañci olokentam-pi adisvā,**

and not seeing anyone there,

**nivattitvā nagaradvārena nikkhamitvā,**

turned back and left via the city gate,

**taṃ pesakāragāmaṃ<sup>60</sup> agamaṃsu.**

and went to the weaver's village.

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<sup>54</sup> RTE: *Paccekabuddhasatānaṃ*.

<sup>55</sup> The text is indicating that they returned to where they had previously been living.

<sup>56</sup> RTE, ChS: *Tāsu*.

<sup>57</sup> Being a weaver was considered a very low profession, and therefore the village was kept outside the city.

<sup>58</sup> See Ven. Uppalavaṇṇā's Story for information on these Independent Buddhas.

<sup>59</sup> ChS: *Bārāṇasi-*.

<sup>60</sup> SHB, PTS: *-gāmakarī*.

**Sā itthī,<sup>61</sup> Paccekabuddhe disvā,**

Those women saw the Independent Buddhas,

**sampiyāyamānā,<sup>62</sup> sabbe<sup>63</sup> vanditvā, bhikkham adāsi.**

treated them kindly, and after worshipping them all, gave them alms food.

**Te bhattakiccaṃ katvā, Gandhamādanam-eva agamaṃsu.**

After taking their food, they left for Gandhamādana.

### Her Last Life

**Sā pi yāvajīvam kusalam katvā, devamanussesu saṃsarantī,**

After doing good deeds for the rest of her life, and being reborn amongst gods and humans (only),<sup>64</sup>

**amhākaṃ Satthu nibbattito puretaram-eva,**

she was reborn prior to our Teacher,

**Devadahanagare Mahāsuppabuddhassa gehe paṭisandhim gaṇhi,**

and was conceived in the house of Mahāsuppabuddha in the city of Devadaha,

**Gotamī tissā nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**

and was given the name Gotamī.

**Mahāmāyāya kaniṭṭhabhaginī hoti.**

She was Mahāmāyā's younger sister.

**Mantajjhāyakabrāhmaṇā,<sup>65</sup> lakkhaṇāni pariggaṇhantā,<sup>66</sup>**

The brāhmaṇas learned in the scriptures, examining the characteristics,

**“Imāsaṃ dvinnam-pi<sup>67</sup> kucchiyaṃ vasitadārakā**

° declared: “The children who dwell in these two wombs

**cakkavattino bhavissantī,” ti byākarīṃsu.**

will become universal monarchs.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> RTE: *atthī*; PTS: *itthi*.

<sup>62</sup> PTS: *sayam-piyāyamānā*.

<sup>63</sup> RTE: *sabbe va*.

<sup>64</sup> This phrase occurs in each of the stories, and it means that she was *only* born amongst gods and humans, in a good destination, from the time of her aspiration.

<sup>65</sup> ChS: *Mantajjhāyakā brāhmaṇā*.

<sup>66</sup> SHB: *paṭigaṇhantā*; PTS: *paṭigaṇhantā*.

<sup>67</sup> RTE: *dvinnam*.

<sup>68</sup> This is odd, as none of them did. Mahāmāyā gave birth to Siddhattha, who became the Buddha; and Mahāpajāpatī gave birth to Nanda and Nandā, who both ordained and became Liberated Ones.

**Suddhodanamahārājā, vayappattakāle,**

The great King Suddhodana, when they had reached maturity,

**tā dve pi maṅgalaṃ katvā attano gharaṃ ānesi.**

married the two of them and led them to his home.

**Aparabhāge amhākaṃ Bodhisatto Tusitapurā cavitvā,**

Later, after our Buddha-to-be had passed away from Tusita Heaven,

**Mahāmāyāya Deviyā<sup>69</sup> kucchiyaṃ paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi.**

he took conception in the womb of Queen Mahāmāyā.

**Mahāmāyā, tassa jātadivasato sattame divase,**

Mahāmāyā, seven days from the day she delivered him,

**kālaṃ katvā<sup>70</sup> Tusitasure nibbatti.**

died and was reborn in Tusita Heaven.<sup>71</sup>

**Suddhodanamahārājā Mahāsattassa mātucchaṃ,**

° The great King Suddhodana placed the Great Being's Mother's sister,

**Mahāpajāpatim Gotamim<sup>72</sup> Aggamahesiṭṭhāne ṭhapesi.**

Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, in the position of Chief Consort.

**Tasmiṃ kāle Nandakumāro jāto.**

At that time prince Nanda was born.<sup>73</sup>

**Ayaṃ Mahāpajāpatī Nandakumāraṃ dhātīnaṃ datvā**

Mahāpajāpatī gave prince Nanda to a wet-nurse

**sayam Bodhisattaṃ parihari.<sup>74</sup>**

and took care of the Buddha-to-be herself.

**Aparena samayena Bodhisatto mahābhinnikkhamaṇaṃ nikkhamitvā,**

On another occasion, the Buddha-to-be left on his Great Renunciation,

**sabbaññutaṃ patvā, lokānuggahaṃ karonto,**

attained omniscience, and while working for the benefit of the world,

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<sup>69</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Deviyā*.

<sup>70</sup> RTE: *karitvā*.

<sup>71</sup> As the god Setaketu, who was also called Santusita. Later the Buddha would go and teach the Abhidhamma to her.

<sup>72</sup> PTS: *Mahāpajāpatim*; ChS: *Mahāpajāpatigotamim*.

<sup>73</sup> Two or three days after Siddhattha.

<sup>74</sup> RTE: *samparicarati*.

**anukkamena Kapilapuram<sup>75</sup> patvā nagaram piṇḍāya pāvisi.**

gradually reached the city of Kapilavatthu and went into the city for alms.

**Athassa Pitā Suddhodanamahārājā,<sup>76</sup>**

Then his Father the Great King Suddhodana,

**antaravīthiyam yeva Dhammakatham sutvā Sotāpanno ahoṣi.**

hearing a talk about Dhamma on the highway became a Stream-Enterer.<sup>77</sup>

**Atha<sup>78</sup> dutiyadivase Nando pabbaji, sattame divase Rāhulo.**

Then on the second day Nanda went forth,<sup>79</sup> and Rāhula on the seventh day.<sup>80</sup>

**Satthā aparena samayena Vesālīm upanissāya Kūṭāgārasālāyaṃ viharati.**

On another occasion the Teacher was living in the vicinity of Vesālī in the Gabled Hall.<sup>81</sup>

**Tasmiṃ samaye Suddhodanamahārājā,**

At that time the Great King Suddhodana,

**setacchattassa<sup>82</sup> heṭṭhā Arahattam sacchikatvā Parinibbāyi.**

realised Liberation under the white parasol and was Completely Emancipated.<sup>83</sup>

**Tadā Mahāpajāpatī<sup>84</sup> pabbajjāya cittam uppādesi.**

Then the thought of ordination occurred to Mahāpajāpatī.

**Tato Rohiṇīnadītīre Kalahavivādasuttapariyosāne nikkhamitvā,**

After leaving the bank of the river Rohiṇī at the conclusion of the Discourse on Quarrels and Disputes,<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> ChS: *Kapilavattum*; RTE: *Kapilavattupuram*.

<sup>76</sup> PTS: *mahārājā*.

<sup>77</sup> According to the Dhammapada Commentary (DhpA 1.9) Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī also became a Stream-Enterer during the same teaching session.

<sup>78</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Atha*.

<sup>79</sup> Nanda was born to King Suddhodana and Mahāpajāpatī and is therefore the Buddha's half-brother; his going forth is told in Ud. 3.2, and also at great length in Ven. Aśvaghoṣa's Saundarananda.

<sup>80</sup> The Buddha's son.

<sup>81</sup> In the Mahāvana, or Great Wood.

<sup>82</sup> SHB, PTS: *setacchattasseva*.

<sup>83</sup> According to the commentary on the Therīgāthā (Verses of the Elder Nuns) he was already a Non-Returner, and when he was dying the Buddha visited him and he became an Arahant. He died the same day and was never ordained.

<sup>84</sup> ChS: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī*.

<sup>85</sup> Sn 4.11, The Discourse about Quarrels and Disputes. At the conclusion of the discourse five hundred young men went forth.

**pabbajitānaṃ pañcannaṃ kumārasatānaṃ pādapariṇāṇikā sabbā va ekacittā hutvā:**  
all the wives of the five-hundred young men who had gone forth, had but one thought:

**‘Mahāpajāpatiyā santikaṃ gantvā, sabbā va Satthu santike pabbajissāmā.’ ti**  
‘After going into Mahāpajāpatī’s presence, all of us will go forth in the presence of the Teacher.’

**Mahāpajāpatiṃ jeṭṭhikaṃ katvā,**  
Making Mahāpajāpatī their chief,

**Satthu santikaṃ gantvā, pabbajitukāmā ahesuṃ.**  
and going into the presence of the Teacher, they expressed their desire to go forth.

**Ayañ-ca Mahāpajāpatī<sup>86</sup> paṭhamam-eva ekavāraṃ**  
The first time Mahāpajāpatī

**Satthāraṃ pabbajjaṃ yācamānā nālattha.**  
requested the going forth from the Teacher it was not granted.

**Tasmā, kappakaṃ pakkosāpetvā, kese chinnāpetvā,<sup>87</sup> kāsāyāni acchādetvā,**  
Therefore, she summoned the barber, had her hair removed, donned the yellow robes,

**sabbā tā Sākiyāniyo ādāya Vesāliṃ gantvā,**  
took all the Sākiyan women and went to Vesālī,

**Ānandatherena<sup>88</sup> Dasabalaṃ yācetvā,<sup>89</sup>**  
and the One of Ten Powers was requested by the Elder Ānanda,

**aṭṭhahi garudhammehi pabbajjañ-ca upasampadañ-ca alattha.**  
and she received the going forth and the higher ordination with the eight serious rules.<sup>90</sup>

**Itarā pana sabbā pi ekato va<sup>91</sup> upasampannā ahesuṃ.**  
All the others also received their higher ordination together.

**Ayam-ettha saṅkhepo, vitthārato panetaṃ vatthupāliyaṃ<sup>92</sup> āgataṃ-eva.**  
This (is told) in brief here, but the elaboration comes from the story in the text.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> ChS: *Mahāpajāpati*.

<sup>87</sup> PTS: *chindāpetvā*.

<sup>88</sup> RTE, ChS: *Ānandattherena*.

<sup>89</sup> RTE, ChS: *yācāpetvā*.

<sup>90</sup> The giving of the *aṭṭhagarudhamma*, the *eight heavy or serious rules*, constituted her ordination.

<sup>91</sup> PTS omits: *va*.

<sup>92</sup> PTS: *vatthuṃ pāliyaṃ*.

<sup>93</sup> From AN 8.51, also part of the Vinayaṭṭakā, the Basket of the Discipline, The Chapter on Bhikkhunīs (Cullavagga 10, Bhikkhunikkhandaka).

**Evam upasampannā pana Mahāpajāpatī,**  
Then, after her higher ordination, Mahāpajāpatī,

**Satthāraṃ upasaṅkamtīvā abhivādetvā, ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi,**  
after approaching the Teacher and worshipping him, stood on one side,

**athassā Satthā Dhammaṃ desesi.**  
and the Teacher taught the Dhamma to her.

**Sā Satthu santike va<sup>94</sup> kammaṭṭhānaṃ gahetvā, Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**  
After taking a meditation subject in the presence of the Teacher, she attained Liberation.<sup>95</sup>

**Sesā pañcasatā bhikkhuniyo Nandakovādasuttapariyosāne Arahattaṃ pāpuṇiṃsu.**  
All five hundred nuns at the conclusion of the Discourse on Nandaka's Advice (also) attained Liberation.<sup>96</sup>

**Evam-etam vatthu samuṭṭhitam.**  
This is the story of what happened.

**Aparabhāge, Satthā Jetavane nisinno, bhikkhuniyo ṭhānantaresu<sup>97</sup> ṭhapento,**  
Later, when the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood, when placing the nuns in their different positions,

**Mahāpajāpatim rattaññūnaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī. ti**  
he placed Mahāpajāpatī as the foremost amongst those who were senior.

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<sup>94</sup> ChS omits: *va*.

<sup>95</sup> While listening to the Saṅkhattasuttaṃ, AN 8.53.

<sup>96</sup> MN 146. See elsewhere on this website for a text and translation. Nandakattheravatthu in the Aṅguttara Commentary also says they attained Liberation, but in the discourse itself, and in the Majjhima Commentary, it mentions that the least of the nuns only attained Stream Entry, not full Liberation, so there is a discrepancy between the two sources.

<sup>97</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## Khemātherīvatthu<sup>98</sup>

### 2. The Story about the Elder Nun Khemā

#### Introduction

Like Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, and indeed all the nuns singled out in these stories, Khemā's story begins at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, who was the 13th of the 28 most recent Buddhas culminating in our Gotama Buddha.

At that time she saw one of Buddha Padumuttara's Chief Disciples, Sujāta,<sup>99</sup> and having sold her hair for cash, made a donation to the Elder on the same day. This is an example of one of the great deeds that all the disciples do before confirming their aspiration. Khemā's aspiration in this case was to be foremost in great wisdom.

One thing to note is that most of the aspirants see a nun being appointed to a position of great eminence, and aspire to the same position, but here Khemā sees the Buddha's Chief male disciple, and aspires to a similar wisdom as he has. In the Traditions (*Apadāna*), however, it says she saw the Buddha appoint a nun to the position of great wisdom, and then made her aspiration.

As with Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, she was in that life born as a slave girl and was owned by another.<sup>100</sup> Again rank had no bearing on what the person could achieve if their aspirations were good and the energy sufficient, and, as in all of these life stories, the energy for doing good deeds over many lives must have been dedicated indeed.

After she had completed a life of good deeds, she was reborn many times over a period of many thousands of aeons, where we must understand that she was also engaged in doing good deeds and abstaining from bad ones, which provided the foundation for her later achievements.

She was then reborn at the time of the Buddha Kassapa,<sup>101</sup> the Buddha directly before our Gotama Buddha, in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi,<sup>102</sup> as one of seven sisters. Five of these seven sisters appear in these stories about the nuns, they are Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Paṭācārā, Dhammadinnā and Nandā.<sup>103</sup> The future Rāhula was also their brother in that life, it seems.

In her last life because of her previous good deeds her skin glowed with a golden hue, and she was so beautiful she was married to King Bimbisāra. Her beauty proved to be

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<sup>98</sup> PTS omit *vatthu*, and similarly throughout.

<sup>99</sup> The other was Devala. They were both cousins of Buddha Padumuttara.

<sup>100</sup> However in the Traditions about her it appears she was the daughter of a wealthy merchant.

<sup>101</sup> The Traditions mention other lives at the time of the Buddha Vipassī, under whom she ordained and attained great excellence, and Buddha Koṇāgamana, for whom, as a lay woman, she donated a monastery.

<sup>102</sup> A name for the kingdom that had Bārāṇasī for its capital.

<sup>103</sup> The other two were the foremost lay disciples Mahāmāyā and Visākhā.

## The Elder Nun Khemā - 24

something of an obstacle, because she believed the Buddha would find fault with her, and didn't wish to meet with him.

The King, however, didn't find this suitable, and first had poets compose songs in praise of the Bamboo Wood where the Buddha was staying, and then, when she agreed to go to see the wood, told his men not to let her return without meeting the Buddha.

When she finally did meet the Buddha he created the appearance of a heavenly angel whom he caused to go quickly through the ages of life, until she fell down dead right in front of Khemā. Thus she gained insight into the transient nature of things, including her own body, and attained Liberation.

Khemā's great wisdom was renowned, especially her knowledge and understanding of the Abhidhamma,<sup>104</sup> and she was indeed appointed as the Elder Nun foremost in having great wisdom, a position equivalent to that of Ven. Sāriputta for the monk disciples.

I fill out the story in-line with some verses from the Traditions about her, and elsewhere on this website you can read the discourse (Khemāsuttaṃ, SN 44.1) that was held to have earned her this position.

### **AN 1.5.2**

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**mahāpaññānaṃ, yad-idaṃ Khemā.**

amongst those who have great wisdom, that is to say, Khemā.

### **AA 1.5.2**

(commentary)

**Dutiye, “Khemā” ti evaṃnāmikā<sup>105</sup> bhikkhunī.**

In the second (story), “Khemā” is the name of this nun.

**Ito paṭṭhāya ca: “Panassā<sup>106</sup> pañhakamme<sup>107</sup> ayam-anupubbikathā,” ti avatvā,**

From here on, without saying: “This is the exposition concerning the enquiry into her (previous) deeds,”

**sabbattha abhinīhāraṃ ādiṃ katvā, vattabbam-eva vakkhāma.**

placing the resolution at the beginning each time, we will say what should be said.

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<sup>104</sup> According to the Traditions even during the time of Buddha Kassapa she had memorised the Mahānidānasuttanta (Great Discourse on Origins, DN 15); and in her final life she was again taught the same discourse, and also the Kathāvatthu.

<sup>105</sup> PTS: *evaṃnāmika-*.

<sup>106</sup> SHB, PTS: *Pana*.

<sup>107</sup> RTE: *pañhākamme*.

## Previous Lives

**Atīte kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

In the past, at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Hāmsavatīnagare<sup>108</sup> ayam parapariyāpannā<sup>109</sup> hutvā nibbatti.**

she was reborn in the city of Hāmsavatī, and was owned by another.<sup>110</sup>

**Athekadivasam̐ tassa Bhagavato aggasāvakaṃ,<sup>111</sup>**

° Then one day, she saw that Fortunate One's chief disciple,

**Sujātatheram̐<sup>112</sup> nāma, piṇḍāya carantaṃ<sup>113</sup> disvā,**

the Elder named Sujāta,<sup>114</sup> walking for alms,

**tayo modake datvā, taṃ divasam-eva attano kese<sup>115</sup> vissajjtvā,**

gave him three sweetmeats, had her hair shorn on that very day,

**Therassa<sup>116</sup> dānaṃ datvā,**

gave a donation to the Elder,<sup>117</sup>

**‘Anāgate Buddhuppāde tumhe viya mahāpaññā bhaveyyan’-ti patthanam̐<sup>118</sup> katvā,**

and made this aspiration: ‘When a Buddha has arisen in the future may I, like you, have great wisdom,’

**yāvajīvaṃ kusalakamme<sup>119</sup> appamattā hutvā,**

she did good deeds for the rest of her life,

**kappasatasahassam̐ devamanussesu saṃsaraṅtī,<sup>120</sup>**

and being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

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<sup>108</sup> ChS: *Hāmsavatiyaṃ*.

<sup>109</sup> PTS: *pariyāpannā*.

<sup>110</sup> I.e. she was a slave-girl.

<sup>111</sup> RTE, ChS: *aggasāvikaṃ*.

<sup>112</sup> RTE, ChS: *Sujātatheriṃ*, i.e. a nun called Sujātā; the Buddha Padumuttara's chief disciple though was Sujāta, a monk.

<sup>113</sup> RTE: *carantiṃ*.

<sup>114</sup> This Buddha had two chief disciples, named Sujāta and Devala; his chief female disciples were called Amitā and Asamā.

<sup>115</sup> RTE: *gehe*; *having left home*.

<sup>116</sup> RTE, ChS: *Theriyā*.

<sup>117</sup> With the proceeds from selling her hair.

<sup>118</sup> RTE: *paṭṭhanam̐*.

<sup>119</sup> RTE, ChS: *kusalakammesu*; PTS: *kusalakammena*.

<sup>120</sup> SHB, PTS: *saṃsaritvā*.

**Kassapabuddhakāle Kikissa<sup>121</sup> Kāsirañño gehe paṭisandhiṃ gahetvā,**  
she was conceived in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi, in the time of the Buddha  
Kassapa,<sup>122</sup>

**sattannaṃ bhaginīnaṃ abbhantarā hutvā,**  
and became (one) amongst seven sisters,<sup>123</sup>

**vīsativassasahassāni gehe yeva komāribrahmacariyaṃ<sup>124</sup> caritvā,**  
lived as a celibate in the house for twenty-thousand years,

**tāhi bhaginihi saddhiṃ Dasabalassa vasanapariveṇaṃ kāretvā,**  
together with her sisters had a dwelling place made for the One of Ten Powers,

**ekam Buddhantaram devamanussesu saṃsaranṭī,<sup>125</sup>**  
and being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) during one period when there was no  
Buddha,

**Imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde**  
when this (Gotama) Buddha arose

**Maddaraṭṭhe Sāgalanagare Rājakule paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi,**  
she was conceived in a Royal family in the city of Sāgala in the country of Madda,

**Khemā tissā nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**  
and given the name Khemā.

## Her Last Life

**Tassā sarīravaṇṇo suvaṇṇarasapiṇjaro viya<sup>126</sup> ahoṣi.**  
The radiance of her body glowed as it were with a golden hue.

**Sā<sup>127</sup> vayappattā<sup>128</sup> Bimbisārarañño gehaṃ agamāsi.**  
When she had reached maturity she was taken to King Bimbisāra's house.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> PTS: *Kikissa Rañño*, and similarly throughout; RTE: *Kimkissa rañño*, and similarly throughout; ChS normally writes *Kikissa Kāsirañño*; SHB wavers between *Kikissa Kāsirañño* and *Kikissa Rañño*.

<sup>122</sup> In the Therīgāthā Commentary stories about her lives in the times of the Buddhas Vipassī, Kakusandha and Koṇāgamana are also related.

<sup>123</sup> These sisters are mentioned a number of times below. They eventually became the future disciples, Khemā, Uppalavaṇṇā, Paṭācārā, Kuṇḍalakesī, Kisā Gotamī, Dhammadinnā and Visākhā.

<sup>124</sup> SHB, PTS: *komāra-*.

<sup>125</sup> SHB, PTS: *saṃsaritvā*.

<sup>126</sup> SHB omits: *viya*.

<sup>127</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Sā*; RTE adds: *pana*.

<sup>128</sup> SHB, PTS add: *ca pana*.

<sup>129</sup> This is an idiom which often occurs, it means she was married to the King.

**Sā Tathāgate Rājagaham upanissāya Veḷuvane viharante,**

When the Realised One was living near to Rājagaha in the Bamboo Wood,

**‘Satthā kira rūpe dosaṃ dassetī,’ ti<sup>130</sup> rūpamadammattā hutvā,**

(she), being intoxicated with her own beauty, and thinking: ‘The Teacher, it appears, sees fault in beauty,’

**‘Mayham-pi rūpe dosaṃ dasseyyā,’ ti**

and: ‘He will see fault in my beauty,’

**bhayaena Dasabalaṃ<sup>131</sup> dassanāya na gacchati.**

through fear, didn’t go to see the One of Ten Powers.

**Rājā cintesi: “Ahaṃ Satthu aggupaṭṭhāko,**

The King thought: ‘I am the Teacher’s foremost attendant,<sup>132</sup>

**mādisassa ca nāma Ariyasāvakaṃ,**

and for one like me who is known as a Noble Disciple,<sup>133</sup>

**Aggamaheṣi<sup>134</sup> Dasabalaṃ dassanāya na gacchati, na me etaṃ ruccati.’ ti**

(that) my Chief Consort does not go to see the One of Ten Powers, is not pleasing to me.’

**So kavīhi Veḷuvanuyyānassa vaṇṇaṃ bandhāpetvā:**

After having the praises of the Bamboo Grove composed by the poets:

**“Khemāya Deviyā savanūpacāre gāyathā,” ti āha.**

he said: “Recite (the poems) within the hearing of Queen Khemā.”

**“Rammaṃ Veḷuvanaṃ yena na diṭṭhaṃ Sugatālayaṃ,**

“He who has not seen the delightful Bamboo Wood,<sup>135</sup> the Happy One’s residence,

**na tena Nandanaṃ diṭṭhaṃ, iti maññāmaṃ<sup>136</sup> mayaṃ.**

has also not seen Nandana (in Tāvātimsa Heaven), such was my thinking.

**Yena Veḷuvanaṃ diṭṭhaṃ, naranandanandananaṃ,**

He who has seen the Bamboo Wood, rejoicing in the rejoicer of men,

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<sup>130</sup> PTS: *dasseti*.

<sup>131</sup> RTE: *Dasabalassa*.

<sup>132</sup> Interestingly this position was not given him in the *Etad-aggā* chapter, where the position is unassigned. Hatthigāma Uggata was named as the foremost attendant on the Community.

<sup>133</sup> He became a Stream-Enterer when the Buddha fulfilled his promise and returned to teach the King shortly after his Awakening.

<sup>134</sup> PTS: *Aggamaheṣi*.

<sup>135</sup> These are the verses that were recited according to Khemātheriyāpadānaṃ, Therī-Apadānaṃ, 2: 329-332.

<sup>136</sup> PTS: *maññemahe*; RTE: *maññamhase*.

**sudīṭṭhaṃ Nandanam tena Amarindasunandanam.**

has also seen Nandana, greatly rejoiced in by the Lord of the Gods (Sakka).

**Vihāya Nandanam devā, otarivā Mahītaṃ,<sup>137</sup>**

The gods, having abandoned Nandana, and descended to the surface of the Earth,

**rammaṃ Veḷuvanam disvā, na<sup>138</sup> tappanti suvimhitā.**

after seeing the delightful Veḷuvana, astonished, are not satiated (with it).

**Rājapuññaena nibbattaṃ, Buddhapuññaena bhūsitam,**

Through the King's merit it appeared, it is decorated with the Buddha's merit,

**ko vattā tassa nissesam Vanassa guṇasañcayam?"**

who could describe the great quantity of virtues of that Wood?"

**Sā Uyyānassa vaṇṇam sutvā, gantukāmā hutvā, Rājānam paṭipucchi.**

After hearing the praise of the Grove, and gaining a desire to go, she put the question to the King.

**Rājā: "Uyyānam gaccha,<sup>139</sup>**

The King said: "Go to the Grove,

**Satthāram pana adisvā, āgantum na labhissasī," ti<sup>140</sup> āha.**

but without having seen the Teacher, you will not receive (permission) to return."

**Sā Rañño paṭivacanam adatvā va,<sup>141</sup> maggam paṭipajji.**

Without having given a reply to the King, she took the path (to the Grove).

**Rājā tāya saddhim gacchante purise āha:**

The King said to the men who were going with her:

**"Sace Devī, uyyānato nivattamānā, Dasabalam passati, iccetaṃ kusalam;**

"If the Queen, returning from the garden, sees the One of Ten Powers, that is good;

**sace na passati, Rājāṇāya nam dassethā." ti**

(but) if she does not see (him), the Royal command is you must point him out."

**Atha kho sā Devī divasabhāgam Uyyāne caritvā,**

Then the Queen, after walking in the Grove in the daytime,

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<sup>137</sup> PTS, RTE: *Mahītale*.

<sup>138</sup> PTS writes as one word: *disvāna*.

<sup>139</sup> SHB: *gaccham*.

<sup>140</sup> PTS: *labhissatī ti*.

<sup>141</sup> PTS omits: *va*.

**nivattantī Dasabalam adisvā va, gantum āraddhā.**

and returning without seeing the One of Ten Powers, was ready to go.

**Atha nam Rājapurisā, attano aruciya va, Devim<sup>142</sup> Satthu santikam nayimsu.**

Then the King's men, against her liking, led the Queen into the presence of the Teacher.

**Satthā tam āgacchantim disvā, iddhiyā ekam devaccharam nimminivā,**

The Teacher saw her coming, and with his spiritual power made an image of a heavenly angel,

**tālavaṇṭam<sup>143</sup> gahetvā, bījamānam viya akāsi.**

which took up a palm-fan, and he made (it look) like she was fanning him.

**Khemā<sup>144</sup> Devī tam disvā cintesi:**

Having seen her, Queen Khemā thought:

**“Mānamhi<sup>145</sup> natthā, evarūpā nāma devaccharappaṭibhāgā<sup>146</sup> itthiyo,**

“My conceit has perished, such beautiful women, like unto heavenly angels,

**Dasabalassa avidūre tiṭṭhanti, aham etāsam paricārikā pi nappahomi,**

are standing not far from the One of Ten Powers, I am not fit to be their servant,

**mānamadam<sup>147</sup> hi nissāya<sup>148</sup> pāpacittassa vasena natthā.” ti**

my wicked mind supported by mad conceit has perished.”

**Tam<sup>149</sup> nimittam gahetvā tam-eva itthim olokayamānā atthāsi.**

Grasping the image she stood there looking at the woman.

**Athassā<sup>150</sup> passantiyā va, Tathāgatassa adhiṭṭhānabalena,**

Then, as she was watching, through the power of the Realised One's resolve,

**sā itthi<sup>151</sup> paṭhamavayam atikkamma,**

that angel passed beyond her youth,

**majjhimavaye ṭhitā viya majjhimavayam atikkamma,**

and from being in middle-age, she passed beyond middle-age,

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<sup>142</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Devim*.

<sup>143</sup> RTE: *tālavaṇṭam*.

<sup>144</sup> RTE adds: *ca*.

<sup>145</sup> SHB: *Mānam vatamhi*; PTS: *Manāvat' amhi*; RTE: *Ahañcamhi*.

<sup>146</sup> SHB, RTE: *dibbaccharappaṭibhāgā*.

<sup>147</sup> RTE: *aham*.

<sup>148</sup> SHB, PTS: *manam hi akāraṇā*; RTE: *aham hi nikkāraṇā*.

<sup>149</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Tam*.

<sup>150</sup> RTE: *Atha nam tassā*.

<sup>151</sup> PTS: *itthi*.

**pacchimavaye ʘhitā viya ca valittacāpalitakesā<sup>152</sup> khaṇḍasithiladantā<sup>153</sup> ahosi.**  
and was like one in old-age having wrinkled skin, grey hair and broken and loose teeth.

**Tato tassā passantiyā va,<sup>154</sup> saddhiṃ tālavaṇṇena<sup>155</sup> parivattitvā<sup>156</sup> papati.<sup>157</sup>**  
Then as she was watching, (the angel) stumbled about together with her fan and fell down.

**Tato Khemā pubbahetusampannattā,**  
Then Khemā, being endowed with the former conditions,<sup>158</sup>

**tasmiṃ ārammaṇe āpāthagate, evaṃ cintesi:**  
as that sense-object came within range, reflected thus:

**‘Evaṃvidham-pi nāma sarīraṃ evarūpaṃ vipattiṃ pāpuṇāti,**  
‘Even such a beautiful body comes to misfortune,

**mayham-pi sarīraṃ evaṃgatikam-eva bhavissatī.’ ti**  
my body will also come to the very same (misfortune).’

**Athassā evaṃ cintitakkhaṇe Satthā imaṃ Dhammapade gātham-āha:**  
At the instant that she had that thought, the Teacher spoke this verse found in the Dhammapada:<sup>159</sup>

**“Ye rāgarattānupatanti sotam,**  
“Those impassioned with passion run along with the stream,

**sayamkatam makkaṭako va jālam,**  
just as a spider (runs along) the web she has made herself,

**etam-pi chetvāna, vajanti dhīrā<sup>160</sup>**  
after cutting that off, the wise journey on

**anapekkhino, sabbadukkhā<sup>161</sup> pahāyā.” ti**  
without expectation, having abandoned all suffering.”

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<sup>152</sup> PTS: *valittacā phalitakesā*.

<sup>153</sup> ChS: *khaṇḍasithilaviraḷaā*; RTE: *khaṇḍitapatitadantā*.

<sup>154</sup> RTE: *va*.

<sup>155</sup> RTE: *tālavaṇṇena*.

<sup>156</sup> RTE: *parivattitvā*.

<sup>157</sup> ChS: *paripati*.

<sup>158</sup> This is a phrase that is many times used in these contexts; it means the requisite conditions for attaining Awakening in this life.

<sup>159</sup> DhP 347.

<sup>160</sup> SHB is unreadable here, but maybe, *paribbajanti*; PTS: *paripajjanti*.

<sup>161</sup> SHB, PTS: *kāmasukkhā*.

**Sā gāthāpariyosāne ʘhitapade<sup>162</sup> ʘhitā yeva,**

At the conclusion of the verse, while standing on that very spot,

**saha paʘisambhidāhi Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**

she attained Liberation together with the analytic knowledges.<sup>163</sup>

**Agāramajjhe vasantena<sup>164</sup> nāma Arahattaṃ pattena**

For one who attains Liberation while dwelling in the midst of the home life

**taṃ divasam-eva Parinibbāyitabbaṃ vā pabbajitabbaṃ vā hoti.**

she should either that very day attain Final Nibbāna or go forth.

**Sā pana attano āyusaṅkhārānaṃ pavattanabhāvaṃ<sup>165</sup> ṇātvā,**

(The Buddha), understanding the life span of her existence,

**“Attano pabbajjaṃ anujānāpessāmi.” ti**

said: “I will cause her to receive permission to go forth.”

**Satthāraṃ vanditvā Rājanivesanaṃ gantvā,**

After worshipping the Teacher and going to the King’s residence,

**Rājānaṃ anabhivādetvā va aṭṭhāsi.**

she stood there without having worshipped the King.

**Rājā iṅgiteneva<sup>166</sup> aññāsi: “Ariyadhammaṃ<sup>167</sup> pattā bhavissatī,” ti**

Through that sign, the King understood: “She must have attained Nobility,”

**atha naṃ āha: “Devi, gatā nu kho Satthu dassanāyā?” ti<sup>168</sup>**

then he said to her: “Queen, have you been to see the Teacher?”

**“Mahārāja, tumhehi diṭṭhadassanaṃ parittaṃ,<sup>169</sup>**

“Great King, only a little insight has been gained by you,

**ahamā pana Dasabalaṃ sudiṭṭham-akāsiṃ,**

but I have gained the One of Ten Power’s true insight,

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<sup>162</sup> SHB, PTS: *paṭiṭṭhitapade*.

<sup>163</sup> In the Traditions it says she heard some more teachings, then she purified the Dhamma-Eye, which normally indicates the attainment of Stream-Entry, requested ordination and went forth and two weeks later attained full Liberation.

<sup>164</sup> SHB: *Agāramajjhāvasantena*; PTS: *Agāramajjhe ca*.

<sup>165</sup> PTS: *pavattanaka-*.

<sup>166</sup> RTE: *iṅgitasaññāṇena*.

<sup>167</sup> SHB, PTS: *Ariyadhammaṃ Arahattaṃ*.

<sup>168</sup> SHB, PTS: *nu kho si Satthāraṃ dassanāyā ti?*

<sup>169</sup> SHB, PTS: *parittakaṃ*; RTE: *caritaṃ*.

**pabbajjam me anujānāthā!” ti**  
you must allow me to go forth!”

**Rājā: “Sādhu Devī!” ti sampaṭicchitvā,**  
The King, answered: “Very well, Queen!”

**suvaṇṇasivikāya bhikkhunī-upassayaṃ upanetvā,<sup>170</sup> pabbājesi.**  
and had her carried in a golden palanquin to the nunnery, and had her go forth.

**Athassā: “Khemā Therī<sup>171</sup> nāma, gihibhāve ʃatvā<sup>172</sup> Arahattaṃ pattā,” ti**  
Then it was said of her: “The Elder Nun called Khemā, while still a householder, attained Liberation,”

**mahāpaññabhāvo pākaṭo ahoṣi.<sup>173</sup>**  
and she became famous for her great wisdom.

(Khemā speaks:)<sup>174</sup>

**Nibbinnā sabbasaṅkhāre, paccayākāra-kovidā,**  
Wearied of all processes, skilled in the modes of conditions,

**caturoghe atikkamma, Arahattaṃ-apāpuṇiṃ.**  
having overcome the four floods, I attained Liberation.

**Iddhīsu ca vasī āsiṃ, dibbāya sotadhātuyā,**  
I have mastery over spiritual power, the divine ear-element,

**cetopariyaññassa vasī cāpi bhavāṃ-ahaṃ.**  
I have mastery in knowledge of mind-reading.

**Pubbenivāsaṃ jānāmi, dibbacakkhu visodhitam,**  
I know my previous lives, have clarified the divine eye,

**sabbāsavaparikkhīṇā, natthi dāni punabbhavo.**  
destroyed all the pollutants,<sup>175</sup> there is no continuation of existence.

**Atthadhammaniruttīsu paṭibhāne tatheva ca**  
Right there, in meanings, conditions, language and improvisation<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> SHB, PTS: *pesetvā*.

<sup>171</sup> SHB, PTS: *Khemā*.

<sup>172</sup> SHB, PTS: *ʃhitā va*.

<sup>173</sup> RTE: *ahosīti*.

<sup>174</sup> From Khemātheriyāpadānaṃ, Therī-Apadānaṃ, 1.8, near the end.

<sup>175</sup> This indicates her attainment of the six deep knowledges (*cha abhiññā*).

<sup>176</sup> These are the four analytic knowledges (*paṭisambhidā*).

**parisuddham mama ñāṇam, uppannam Buddhasāsane.**  
my knowledge was purified, (it) arose within the Buddha's Teaching.

**Kusalāham visuddhīsu, kathāvatthuvisāradā,**  
I was proficient in purification, mature in subjects for discussion,

**Abhidhammanayaññū ca, vasippattāmi Sāsane.**  
a knower of the Abstract Teaching method, attained to mastery in the Teaching.

**Tato Torāṇavatthusmiṃ, Raññā Kosalasāminā**  
Later on the grounds in Torāṇa, by the Lord King of Kosala

**pucchitā nipuṇe pañhe, byākarontī yathātatham.**  
I was questioned with deep questions, and I answered just as it is.

**Tadā sa Rājā Sugatāṃ upasaṅkamma pucchatha,**  
Then the King approached the Happy One and questioned him,

**tatheva Buddho byākāsi, yathā te byākatā mayā.**  
right there the Awakened One answered, just as I had answered.<sup>177</sup>

**Idam-ettha vatthu.**<sup>178</sup>

This is the story here.

**Atha Sathā aparabhāge Jetavane nisinno,**  
Then later, when the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood,

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu**<sup>179</sup> **ṭhapento,**  
in placing the nuns successively in their different positions,

**Khemātherim**<sup>180</sup> **mahāpaññānam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī. ti**  
he placed the Elder Nun Khemā at the foremost of those having great wisdom.

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<sup>177</sup> These two verses summarise Khemāsuttam, SN 44.1, for a text and translation of which, see elsewhere on this website.

<sup>178</sup> SHB, PTS: *etthakam vatthum*; RTE: *Idametthapi vatthum*.

<sup>179</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

<sup>180</sup> SHB, PTS: *Khemam therim*.

## Uppalavaṇṇātherīvatthu

### 3. The Story about the Elder Nun Uppalavaṇṇā

#### Introduction

Uppalavaṇṇā Therī's story is not only the longest in this collection, but also the most complicated and fantastical. She made the usual aspiration under the Buddha Padumuttara, and was later reborn in Buddha Kassapa's time, where she was one of the seven sisters who built a residence for the Community.

Later, she was reborn again and became a manual worker. While working in the fields she saw an Independent Buddha and gave a donation of 500 pieces of puffed rice, and a lotus flower, and made an aspiration to have 500 children in the future and for lotus flowers to appear under her feet when she walked about.

Afterwards she was reborn in Heaven, where lotus flowers did indeed spring forth under her feet, and was later reborn inside a lotus flower back on earth. She was adopted by a hermit, from whose thumb milk miraculously sprang forth, and she was brought up in the seclusion of the forest, and named Padumavatī.<sup>181</sup>

Her beauty was once again outstanding, surpassing that of normal humans, and when she was seen by a forester he mentioned the matter to the King, who came and claimed her for his Chief Queen.

Her exaltation to such a high position upset the other women in the harem and they plotted against her. She became pregnant, but the King was called away to a border dispute, and she gave birth in the meantime, to one main son (Mahāpaduma), and 500 other sons, said to be moisture-born.

The jealous concubines bribed the midwife to replace the child with a blood-stained log and to make out that Padumavatī was not a real human being. The King returned from the battle and heard that she had had an unnatural birth and without enquiring into it banished her from the Palace.

The women wished to hold water sports, and took the 500 children with them in baskets and set them afloat on the river, apparently to dispose of them. However, the baskets were caught in nets and brought to the King, who, through the intervention of Sakka, discovered the women's deceit, and reinstated Padumavatī.

The King made the women Padumavatī's slaves, but she freed them in her magnanimity, and even gave her sons to them to be cared for. The sons, in turn, once grown up, realised the impermanence of life and became Independent Buddhas, at which point Padumavatī, overcome by grief and illness at their departure, died and was reborn in a poor family nearby.

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<sup>181</sup> It means: one who is like a lotus, and is one of only a few names we know from previous lives in this cycle of stories.

## The Elder Nun Uppalavannā - 35

One time she saw eight Independent Buddhas, her former sons, and offered them a meal for the following day. They recognised her as their former Mother, and brought the others along for the meal too, so that she could earn more merit, and both the food she had prepared and the house she gave it in expanded to accommodate the larger number. Satisfied with her gift she aspired to have the colour of a blue lily's heart in a future life.

In her last life this wish was fulfilled, and they named her Uppalavaṇṇā because of her skin colour.<sup>182</sup> She was so desirable it is said that all the Kings and merchants asked for her in marriage. Her Father, not wishing to anger any of them by choosing one over the others, arranged for her ordination instead.

She went forth and soon attained Liberation, together with the spiritual power of transformation. Before the Buddha performed the double miracle, she offered to perform a miracle of transformation herself, and was later placed foremost of the female disciples who had spiritual power.

Such is a synopsis of the story, and it is a long one, spun out with many details, and we see how her strong aspirations for particular bodily characteristics seem to underpin her eventual ability to attain spiritual power and especially the power of bodily transformation.

Her appointment to this position makes her the counterpart to Ven. Moggallāna, as one of the two Chief disciples on the female side.

The story is long and intricate and one thing it demonstrates is that people who have close family ties, or who are kammically linked in a strong enough fashion, generally get reborn in proximity to their former acquaintances,<sup>183</sup> just as Padumavatī was reborn close to her children after they became Independent Buddhas.

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<sup>182</sup> It is the name of the Blue Lily flower.

<sup>183</sup> These may be connected by love, like Siddhattha and Yasodharā; or by enmity like Siddhattha and Devadatta.

**AN 1.5.3**  
(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**  
This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics, amongst those

**iddhimantinam,<sup>184</sup> yad-idam Uppalavaṇṇā.**  
who have spiritual powers, that is to say, Uppalavaṇṇā.

**AA 1.5.3**  
(commentary)

**Tatiye, “Uppalavaṇṇā”, ti**  
In the third (story), about “Uppalavaṇṇā”,

**nīluppalagabbhasadiseneva<sup>185</sup> vaṇṇena samannāgatattā evaṃ laddhanāmā Therī.**  
as she was endowed with a colour similar to a blue lily’s heart<sup>186</sup> the Elder Nun received this name.

**Her Aspiration**

**Sā kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**  
At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Hamsavatiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhim gaṇhitvā,**  
she was conceived in a good family home in Hamsavatī,

**aparabhāge mahājanena saddhim Satthu santikaṃ gantvā, Dhammaṃ suṇantī,**  
and later, after going with the populace into the presence of the Teacher, while listening to the Dhamma,

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhunim iddhimantinam<sup>187</sup> aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**  
seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost in spiritual powers,

**sattāhaṃ Buddhappamukhassa bhikkhusaṅghassa<sup>188</sup> mahādānam datvā,**  
and giving a great donation to the Community of monastics with the Buddha at their head for seven days,

**taṃ ṭhānantaram patthesi.**  
she aspired for that position herself.

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<sup>184</sup> RTE, PTS: *iddhimantānam*.

<sup>185</sup> SHB, PTS: *nīluppalagabbhasadisena*.

<sup>186</sup> Lit: the calyx, or leaves surrounding the flower.

<sup>187</sup> RTE, PTS: *iddhimantānam*.

<sup>188</sup> PTS: *saṅghassa*.

## Building a Residence for Buddha Kassapa's Monks

**Sā yāvajīvaṃ kusalaṃ katvā devamanussesu saṃsarantī,**

She did good deeds for the rest of her life and being reborn amongst gods and humans (only),

**Kassapabuddhakāle Bārāṇasīnagare,<sup>189</sup>**

in the city of Bārāṇasī, at the time of the Buddha Kassapa,

**Kikissa Kāsirañño gehe paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhitvā,**

she was conceived in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi,

**sattannaṃ bhaginīnaṃ abbhantarā hutvā,**

and became (one) amongst seven sisters,

**vīsativassasahassāni brahmacariyaṃ caritvā,**

lived as a celibate for twenty-thousand years,

**Bhikkhusaṅghassa pariveṇaṃ kāretvā,<sup>190</sup> devaloke nibbattā.**

had a residence made for the Community of monks, and was reborn in the world of the gods.

## Feeding a Paccekabuddha with Puffed Rice

**Tato cavitvā, puna manussalokaṃ āgacchantī,<sup>191</sup>**

Passing away from there,<sup>192</sup> and coming again to the world of humans,

**ekasmiṃ gāmake,<sup>193</sup> sahatthā kammaṃ katvā jīvanakaṭṭhāne nibbattā.**

she was reborn in a certain little village, and made a living in that place by doing<sup>194</sup> manual labour.

**Sā ekadivasaṃ khettakuṭiṃ gacchantī,**

One day, while going to the hut in the field,

**antarāmagge ekasmiṃ sare pāto va,**

on the highway near a lake in the morning time,

**pupphitaṃ padumapupphaṃ disvā taṃ saraṃ oruyha,**

she saw a blossoming lotus flower and descended into the lake,

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<sup>189</sup> RTE: *Bārāṇasi-*; and similarly in compounds throughout.

<sup>190</sup> RTE, ChS: *katvā*.

<sup>191</sup> RTE: *gacchantī*.

<sup>192</sup> In the Traditions several lives are mentioned at this point, including one under the Buddha Vipassī. None of these are mentioned here. The life which herein follows is disposed of in one verse in the Traditions.

<sup>193</sup> ChS: *gāme*.

<sup>194</sup> Here we see the absolutive used in its original instrumental sense.

**tañ-ceva puppham lājapakkhipanattāya paduminipattañ-ca<sup>195</sup> gahetvā,**  
and took that flower in a lotus leaf used to wrap puffed rice,

**kedāre sālīsāni chinditvā, kuṭikāya<sup>196</sup> nisinnā, lāje bhajjitvā,**  
cut the tips of rice in the field, and while sitting in the field, she roasted the rice,

**pañca lājasatāni gaṇesi.**  
and counted five-hundred pieces of puffed rice.

**Tasmim khaṇe Gandhamādanapabbate nirodhasamāpattito vuṭṭhito,**  
At that time, having arisen from the attainment of cessation on Mount Gandhamādana,

**eko Paccekabuddho āgantvā tassā avidūre<sup>197</sup> aṭṭhāsi.**  
a certain Independent Buddha came and stood not far away from her.

**Sā Paccekabuddham disvā,**  
Having seen the Independent Buddha,

**lājehi saddhim padumapuppham gahetvā, kuṭito oruyha,**  
she took a lotus flower together with the puffed rice, descended from her hut,

**lāje Paccekabuddhassa patte pakkhipitvā,<sup>198</sup>**  
placed the puffed rice in the Independent Buddha's bowl,

**padumapupphena pattam pidhāya adāsi.**  
and covered the bowl over with the lotus flower.

**Athassā Paccekabuddhe thokam gate, etad-ahosi:**  
When the Independent Buddha had departed a short way she thought:

**‘Pabbajitā nāma pupphena anattikā,**  
‘One who has gone forth surely has no use for a flower,

**aham puppham gahetvā piḷandhissāmī.’ ti**  
I will take the flower and adorn (myself).’

**Gantvā Paccekabuddhassa hatthato puppham gahetvā, puna<sup>199</sup> cintesi:**  
She went to the Independent Buddha and took the flower from his hand, but thought again:

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<sup>195</sup> RTE, ChS: *paduminiyā pattañ-ca*.

<sup>196</sup> RTE: *kuṭiyam*.

<sup>197</sup> SHB, PTS: *avidūraṭṭhāne*.

<sup>198</sup> RTE: *khipitvā*.

<sup>199</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *puna*.

**‘Sace Ayyo pupphena anattiko abhaviṣṣa,<sup>200</sup>**

‘If this Noble One had no use for a flower,

**pattamatthake ṭhapetuṃ na adassa,<sup>201</sup>**

he wouldn’t have allowed me to place it on the top of the bowl,

**addhā Ayyassa<sup>202</sup> attho bhaviṣṣatī,’ ti puna gantvā,**

indeed there will be a use for the Noble One,’ and she went back again,

**pattamatthake ṭhapetvā, Paccekabuddhaṃ khamāpetvā,**

placed it (back) on the top of the bowl, and begged the Independent Buddha for forgiveness,

**‘Bhante, imesaṃ me<sup>203</sup> lājānaṃ nissandena lājagaṇanāya puttā assu,**

saying: “Reverend Sir, may the result of my puffed rice be as many sons as there were pieces of rice,

**padumapupphanissandena<sup>204</sup> nibbattanibbattaṭṭhāne<sup>205</sup>**

and the result of (giving) the lotus flower be that wherever I am reborn

**me<sup>206</sup> pade pade padumapupphaṃ uṭṭhahatū.” ti Patthanaṃ akāsi.**

lotus flowers arise under my feet.” She made this aspiration.

**Paccekabuddho tassā passantiyā va**

As she was watching him, that Independent Buddha

**ākāseṇa Gandhamādanapabbataṃ<sup>207</sup> gantvā,**

went through the air to Mount Gandhamādāna,

**taṃ padumaṃ Nandamūlakapabbhāre**

° and washing his feet near to the Independent Buddhas’ rope ladder,

**Paccekabuddhānaṃ akkamanasopānasamīpe pādapuñchanaṃ katvā ṭhapesi.**

he placed the lotus on Mount Nandamūlaka.

**Sā pi tassa kammaṣṣa nissandena, devaloke paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi,**

As a result of that deed, she gained conception in the world of the gods,

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<sup>200</sup> RTE adds: *taṃ*.

<sup>201</sup> RTE: *ṭhapituṃ na adāsa*.

<sup>202</sup> SHB, PTS: *assa*.

<sup>203</sup> SHB, PTS: *me imesaṃ*.

<sup>204</sup> ChS: *padumapupphassa nissandena*.

<sup>205</sup> RTE: *nibbattaṭṭhāne*.

<sup>206</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *me*.

<sup>207</sup> SHB, PTS: *Gandhamādanaṃ*.

**nibbattakālato paṭṭhāya cassā pade pade mahāpadumapuppham uṭṭhāsi.**  
and from the time of her rebirth great lotus flowers appeared under her feet.

### **Padumavatī's Early Life**

**Sā tato cavitvā pabbatapāde ekasmiṃ padumassare padumagabbhe nibbatti.**

She passed away from there and was reborn on a lotus heart in one lotus lake at the foot of a mountain.<sup>208</sup>

**Tam nissāya eko tāpaso vasati, so pāto va,**

A certain ascetic lived near there, and in the morning time,

**mukhadhovanatthāya saram gantvā, tam puppham disvā cintesi:**

he went to the lake in order to wash his face, saw the flower and thought:

**‘Idam puppham sesehi mahantataram sesāni ca pupphitāni,**

‘This flower’s head is the largest of (all) the heads of flowers,

**idam makuḷitam-eva bhavitabbam-ettha kāraṇenā?’ ti**

through what reason did the bud come to be here?’

**Udakaṃ otarivā, tam puppham gaṇhi.**

After descending into the water he took the flower.

**Tam tena gahitamattam-eva pupphitam,**

As soon as he had taken it it flowered,

**tāpaso antopadumagabbhe nipannaṃ dārikam<sup>209</sup> addasa.**

and the ascetic saw a young girl lying in the heart of the lotus.

**Diṭṭhakālato paṭṭhāya ca dhītusineham labhitvā,**

From the time of (first) seeing her, paternal love<sup>210</sup> arose,

**padumeneva saddhim paṇṇasālam netvā mañcake nipajjāpesi.**

and he carried her with the lotus to his leaf-hut and lay her down on his couch.

**Athassā<sup>211</sup> puññānubhāvena aṅguṭṭhake khīraṃ nibbatti.**

Through the power of her merit milk sprung from his thumb.

**So tasmim pupphe milāte, aññaṃ navam puppham<sup>212</sup> āharitvā tam nipajjāpesi.**

When that flower had faded, he brought a new flower and lay her in that.

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<sup>208</sup> Again in the Traditions, this life, which is so elaborated here, is recounted in just three verses.

<sup>209</sup> RTE, ChS: *nipannadārikam*.

<sup>210</sup> Lit: *daughter love*.

<sup>211</sup> SHB, PTS: *Athassa tassā*.

<sup>212</sup> RTE, ChS: *navapuppham*.

**Athassā ādhāvanavidhāvanena<sup>213</sup> kīlitum samatthakālato<sup>214</sup> paṭṭhāya**

Then from the time she began to play by running around here and there

**padavāre padavāre<sup>215</sup> padumapuppham uṭṭhāsi,<sup>216</sup>**

at every step there arose a lotus flower,

**kuṅkumarāsissa viyassā sarīravaṇṇo ahosi.<sup>217</sup>**

and the colour of her body was like rays of saffron.

**Sā appattā devavaṇṇam atikkantā mānusavaṇṇam<sup>218</sup> ahosi.**

Without having attained the radiance of a god she (nevertheless) surpassed the radiance of a human.

**Sā pitari phalāphalattthāya gate paṇṇasālāyam ohīyati.<sup>219</sup>**

When her Father had gone to gather various kinds of fruit she remained behind in the leaf-hut.

**Athekadivasam, tassā vayappattakāle,**

Then one day, when she had reached maturity,

**pitari phalāphalattthāya gate, eko vanacarako tam disvā cintesi:**

her Father having gone to gather various kinds of fruit, a certain forester saw her and thought:

**“Manussānam nāma evamvidham rūpam natthi, vīmaṃsissāmi nan,”-ti**

“Amongst mankind there is none as beautiful as this, I will enquire about her,”

**tāpasassa āgamanam udikkhanto nisīdi.**

and he sat down looking for the coming of the ascetic.

**Sā pitari āgacchante, paṭipatham gantvā,**

As her Father was coming, she went out to meet (him),

**tassa hatthato kācakamaṇḍalum<sup>220</sup> aggahesi,**

took the carrying pole and water pot from his hand,

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<sup>213</sup> RTE: *-vidhāvanavasena.*

<sup>214</sup> PTS: *samatthabhāvato.*

<sup>215</sup> RTE: *pade pade.*

<sup>216</sup> SHB, PTS: *uṭṭhāti.*

<sup>217</sup> PTS: *hoti.*

<sup>218</sup> SHB: *mānusam vaṇṇam*; RTE: *manussa-*.

<sup>219</sup> RTE: *paṇṇasālāya ohiyati.*

<sup>220</sup> ChS: *kājaka-*; RTE: *kājeka-*.

**āgantvā,<sup>221</sup> nisinnassa cassa attanā<sup>222</sup> karaṇavattam<sup>223</sup> dassesi.**

and after he had come, while sitting she showed him the duties she had done.

**Tadā so vanacarako manussabhāvaṃ ñatvā,**

Then the forester understood she was human,

**tāpasam abhivādetvā, nisīdi.**

worshipped the ascetic, and sat down.

**Tāpaso taṃ vanacarakam vanamūlaphalāphalehi<sup>224</sup> ca pānīyena ca nimantetvā,**

The ascetic invited the forester with forest roots and various kinds of fruits and water,

**“Bho purisa! Imasmiṃ yeva ṭhāne vasissasi,<sup>225</sup> udāhu gamisassī?” ti pucchi.**

and asked: “Good sir! Will you stay in this place, or will you go?”

**“Gamissāmi, Bhante, idha kiṃ karissāmī?” ti**

“I will go, reverend Sir, what will I do here?”

**“Idam tayā diṭṭhakāraṇam etto<sup>226</sup> gantvā, akathetum sakkhissasī?” ti**

“After going from here will you be able to keep quiet<sup>227</sup> about the things you saw?”

**“Sace Ayyo na icchati,<sup>228</sup> kiṃ kāraṇā kathessāmī?” ti**

“If the Noble One does not wish (it), for what reason will I speak?”

**Tāpasam vanditvā, puna āgamanakāle maggasañjānanattham,**

And after worshipping the ascetic, so as to recognise the path again when he returned,

**sākhāsaññañ-ca<sup>229</sup> rukkhasaññañ-ca karonto pakkāmi.**

he went away making marks on the branches and on the trees.

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<sup>221</sup> RTE: *sayam āgantvā.*

<sup>222</sup> RTE: *tāpasassa attano.*

<sup>223</sup> SHB, PTS: *kāravattam.*

<sup>224</sup> SHB, PTS: *vanamūlaphalena.*

<sup>225</sup> SHB, PTS: *bhavissasi.*

<sup>226</sup> SHB, PTS add: *va*; RTE: *ettha.*

<sup>227</sup> Lit: *not speak.*

<sup>228</sup> SHB, PTS: *Ayyā na icchanti.*

<sup>229</sup> RTE: *sākhāñ-ca padañ-ca.*

## Padumavatī's Marriage to the King

So<sup>230</sup> Bārāṇasim gantvā Rājānam addasa, Rājā: “Kasmā āgatosī?” ti pucchi.<sup>231</sup>

After going to Bārāṇasī he saw the King, and the King asked: “Why have you come?”

“Ahaṃ Deva tumhākaṃ vanacarako,

“God-King, your forester,

pabbatapāde acchariyaṃ itthiratanam<sup>232</sup> disvā, āgatomhī,” ti

having seen a wonderful treasure of a woman at the foot of a mountain, has returned,”

sabbaṃ pavattim<sup>233</sup> kathesi.

and he told him all that had happened.

So tassa vacanam sutvā, vegena pabbatapādam gantvā,

(The King) heard his report and quickly went to the foot of the mountain,

avidūre ṭhāne khandhāvāram nivesetvā,

set up camp not far from that place,

vanacarakena ceva aññehi<sup>234</sup> ca purisehi saddhim,

together with the forester and the other men,

tāpasassa bhattakiccaṃ katvā,

and after the ascetic had finished his meal duties,

nisinnavelāya tattha gantvā abhivādetvā,

at a time when he was sitting, he went and worshipped him there,

paṭisanthāram<sup>235</sup> katvā, ekamantaṃ nisīdi.

was received in a friendly manner, and sat down on one side.

Rājā tāpasassa pabbajitaparikkhārabaṇḍam pādamūle ṭhapetvā,

The King, after placing the requisite goods for one gone forth at the feet of the ascetic,

“Bhante imasmiṃ ṭhāne kiṃ karoma, gacchissāmā?” ti<sup>236</sup> āha.

said: “Reverend Sir, what will we do in this place, shall we go?”

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<sup>230</sup> SHB, PTS add: *pi*.

<sup>231</sup> RTE: *pucchati*.

<sup>232</sup> RTE: *itthī-*.

<sup>233</sup> RTE: *pavuttim*.

<sup>234</sup> SHB, PTS: *appehi*.

<sup>235</sup> RTE: *paṭisanthāram*.

<sup>236</sup> RTE, ChS: *gacchāmā ti*.

**“Gaccha Mahārājā.” ti**

“Please go, Great King.”

**“Āma,<sup>237</sup> gacchāmi, Bhante,**

“Yes, I will go, reverend Sir,

**‘Ayyassa pana samīpe visabhāgaparīsā atthī,’ ti assumha,**

(but) we have heard: ‘The Noble One has the company of the opposite sex nearby’,

**asāruppā esā pabbajitānaṃ,<sup>238</sup> mayā saddhiṃ gacchatu, Bhante.” ti**

and this is unsuitable for those gone forth, please let her go with me, reverend Sir.”

**“Manussānaṃ cittaṃ nāma duttosayaṃ,<sup>239</sup>**

“People’s minds are surely hard to please,

**kathaṃ bahūnaṃ majjhe vasissatī?” ti**

how will she live in the midst of so many (people)?”

**“Amhākaṃ<sup>240</sup> rucitakālato paṭṭhāya,**

“Beginning from any time we please,

**sesānaṃ jeṭṭhakaṭṭhāne ṭhapetvā paṭijaggissāmi,<sup>241</sup> Bhante.” ti**

I will place (her) in a position senior to the rest and look after (her), reverend Sir.”

**So Rañño kathaṃ sutvā, daharakāle gahitanāmaseneva,**

Having heard the King’s speech, because of the name she had taken in her youth,

**“Amma Padumavatī,” ti dhītaraṃ pakkosi.**

he called his daughter, saying: “Dear Padumavatī.”

**Sā ekavacaneneva paṇṇasālato nikkhamitvā Pitaraṃ abhivādetvā aṭṭhāsi.**

She emerged from the leaf hut at that single word, worshipped her Father and stood (there).

**Atha naṃ Pitā āha: “Tvam Amma vayappattā imasmim<sup>242</sup> ṭhāne,**

Then her Father said: “Dear, you have reached maturity in this place,

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<sup>237</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Āma*.

<sup>238</sup> SHB, PTS: *papañco eso pabbajitānaṃ*; RTE: *papañcā esā pabbajitānaṃ*.

<sup>239</sup> RTE: *Manussānaṃ nāma cittaṃ duttaṃ ayaṃ*.

<sup>240</sup> RTE: *Tumhākaṃ*.

<sup>241</sup> SHB, PTS: *paṭijaggitum sakkhissāmā*.

<sup>242</sup> PTS adds: *ca*.

**Raññā diṭṭhakālato paṭṭhāya, vasitum ayuttā,**<sup>243</sup>

(but) from the time you were seen by the King, it has been inappropriate to live (here),

**Raññā saddhim<sup>244</sup> gaccha, Ammā.” ti**

you should go with the King, Dear.”

**Sā: “Sādhu Tātā,”<sup>245</sup> ti Pitu vacanam sampaṭicchitvā,**

She replied to this word of her Father, saying: “Very well, Father,”

**abhivādetvā parodamānā aṭṭhāsi.**<sup>246</sup>

worshipped (him), and stood there crying.

**Rājā: ‘Imissā Pitu cittaṃ gaṇhāmī,’ ti**

The King, (thinking): ‘I will win over her Father’s heart,’

**tasmim yeva ṭhāne kahāpaṇarāsīmhi ṭhapetvā abhisekaṃ akāsi.**

placed a heap of money in that place and anointed her.

**Atha naṃ gahetvā, attano nagaram ānetvā,**<sup>247</sup>

Then after taking her, and leading her to the city,

**āgatakālato paṭṭhāya, sesitthiyo<sup>248</sup> anoloketvā, tāya saddhim yeva ramati.**

from the time they returned, without even looking at the rest of the women, he took delight with her alone.

### **Padumavatī’s Disgrace**

**Tā itthiyo, issāpakatā,**

Those women, being jealous by nature,

**taṃ Rañño antare paribhīditukāmā evam-āhaṃsu:**

and desiring to break her close connection with the King, said this:

**“Nāyaṃ Mahārāja manussajātikā!**

“This is not one born of humans, Great King!

**Kahaṃ nāma tumhehi manussānaṃ**

° Where in the past did you see amongst humans

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<sup>243</sup> SHB, PTS: *aphāsukaṃ*; RTE: *aphāsukā*.

<sup>244</sup> SHB, PTS adds: *yeva*.

<sup>245</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Tātā*.

<sup>246</sup> RTE: *rodamānā gacchati*.

<sup>247</sup> RTE: *netvā*.

<sup>248</sup> RTE, ChS: *sesa-itthiyo*.

**vicaraṇaṭṭhāne padumāni uṭṭhahantāni diṭṭhapubbāni?**  
that lotuses would arise in the place they were walking?

**Addhā ayaṃ yakkhinī, nīharatha<sup>249</sup> naṃ Mahārājā!” ti**  
Surely this is a demoness, you must drive her away, Great King!”

**Rājā tāsāṃ kathāṃ sutvā tuṅhī ahosi.**  
The King listened to their speech but was silent.

**Athassa aparena samayena paccanto kupito.**  
Then at another time there was a border disturbance.

**So: ‘Garugabbhā<sup>250</sup> Padumavatī,’ ti**  
Thinking: ‘Padumavatī is advanced in pregnancy,’<sup>251</sup>

**taṃ nagare ṭhapetvā paccantaṃ agamāsi.**  
he left her in the city and went to the border area.

**Atha tā itthiyo, tassā upaṭṭhāyikāya lañcam<sup>252</sup> datvā:**  
Then those women, having given a bribe to her nurse,

**“Imissā dāraṃ jātamattam-eva apanetvā,**  
said: “Remove her child as soon as it is born,

**ekaṃ dārugaṭṭikāṃ lohiteṇa makkhetvā, santike ṭhapehī,” ti āhaṃsu.**  
and having smeared a log of wood with blood, place it near her.”

**Padumavatiyā pi na cirasseva gabbhavuṭṭhānaṃ ahosi.**  
Not long after Padumavatī was delivered (of her child).

**Mahāpadumakumāro ekako va kucchiyaṃ vasi,<sup>253</sup>**  
The prince Mahāpaduma alone dwelt in her womb,

**avasesā ekūnapañcasatā dāraṃ,**  
another four-hundred and ninety-nine sons,

**Mahāpadumakumārassa Mātukucchito nikkhamitvā nipannakāle,**  
after the boy Mahāpaduma exited his Mother’s womb and was laying there,

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<sup>249</sup> RTE: *haratha*.

<sup>250</sup> SHB, PTS: *Garubhārā*.

<sup>251</sup> Lit: *heavy in the womb*.

<sup>252</sup> ChS: *lañjam*.

<sup>253</sup> ChS: *paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi*.

**saṃsedajā hutvā, nibbattimsu.**

were reborn from moisture.<sup>254</sup>

**Ath’:** ‘Assā na tāvāyam<sup>255</sup> satim paṭilabhatī,’ ti<sup>256</sup> ñatvā,

Then understanding: ‘(I must act) before she recovers her mindfulness,’

**sā<sup>257</sup> upaṭṭhāyikā ekam dāruḡhaṭikam lohitenā makkhetvā,**

the nurse smeared a log of wood with blood,

**samīpe ṭhapetvā tāsam itthīnam saññam adāsi.**

placed it near her, and signalled to those women.

**Tā pañcasatāpi itthiyo ekekā ekekaṃ dāraḡam gaḡetvā,**

Those five hundred women each took a child,

**cundakāraḡanam<sup>258</sup> santikaṃ<sup>259</sup> pesetvā,**

employed nearby weavers,<sup>260</sup>

**karaṇḡake<sup>261</sup> āḡarāpetvā, attanā attanā gaḡitadāraḡe,**

had them bring baskets, and each took her own child,

**tattha nipaḡḡetvā, bāhi lañchanam katvā ṭhapayimsu.**

lay him down there, made a seal on the outside and placed them aside.

**Padumavatīpi kho saññam labhitvā**

When Padumavatī had recovered her senses

**taṃ upaṭṭhāyikaṃ: “Kiṃ vijātami Ammā?” ti pucchi.**

she asked her nurse: “What have I delivered, Lady?”<sup>262</sup>

**Sā taṃ santajjetvā: “Kuto tvaṃ dāraḡam labhissasī?” ti**

Menacing her she said: “Where will your son be found?”

**Vatvā: “Ayaṃ te kucchito nikkhantadāraḡo,” ti**

Saying: “This is the child that exited from your womb,”

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<sup>254</sup> This is one of the four ways creatures were thought to be born: *aṇḡaja*, *egg-born*, *jalābuja*, *womb-born*, *saṃsedaja*, *moisture-born*, *opapātika*, *spontaneously born*.

<sup>255</sup> SHB: *tāva ayaṃ*.

<sup>256</sup> SHB, PTS: *labhatī ti*.

<sup>257</sup> RTE, ChS omit: *sā*.

<sup>258</sup> SHB, PTS: *cundānam*.

<sup>259</sup> RTE: *santike*.

<sup>260</sup> *Cundakāra* is defined as *turner* in PED, on the basis of one reading. Here the context makes it clear it must mean a weaver of baskets.

<sup>261</sup> PTS: *karaṇḡakam*.

<sup>262</sup> Meaning was it a girl or a boy?

**lohitamakkhitam dārughaṭikam purato ṭhapesi.**

she placed the blood-smearred log of wood in front of her.

**Sā taṃ disvā domanassappattā:**

Seeing that she became depressed

**“Sīgham nam phāletvā apanehi, sace koci passeyya, lajjitabban bhaveyyā,” ti āha.**

and said: “Having chopped it up, quickly remove it, if someone should see it, it would be a cause of shame.”

**Sā tassā katham sutvā atthakāmā viya,**

She listened to her speech as though wishing her well,

**dārughaṭikam phāletvā uddhane pakkhipi.**

chopped it up and threw it on the fire-place.

**Rājā pi paccantato āgantvā, nakkhattam paṭimānento bahinagare,**

Returning from the border areas, the King waited outside the city for the auspicious time,<sup>263</sup>

**khandhāvāram bandhitvā<sup>264</sup> nisīdi.**

made camp and sat down.

**Atha tā pañcasatā itthiyo Raṅṅo paccuggamanam āgantvā āhamsu:**

Then the five-hundred women went out to meet the King as he was coming and said:

**“Tvam Mahārāja amhākam<sup>265</sup> na saddhasi, amhehi vuttam akāraṇam viya hoti.**

“You do not have faith in us, Great King, as though we speak without reason.

**Tvam Mahesiyā upaṭṭhāyikam pakkosāpetvā,**

After calling your Consort’s nurse,

**paṭipuccha dārughaṭikam te<sup>266</sup> Devī vijātā!” ti<sup>267</sup>**

ask whether your Queen delivered a log of wood!”

**Rājā taṃ kāraṇam na upaparikkhitvā<sup>268</sup> va:**

The King, without properly investigating the reason,

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<sup>263</sup> Lit: waiting for the right constellation.

<sup>264</sup> SHB, PTS: *māpetvā*.

<sup>265</sup> ChS: *na amhākam*.

<sup>266</sup> RTE: *kho*.

<sup>267</sup> ChS omits: *ti*.

<sup>268</sup> SHB, PTS: *anupaparikkhitvā*; omit following *va*.

**‘Amanussajātikā<sup>269</sup> bhavissatī,’ ti taṃ gehato nikkadḍhi.**

thinking: ‘She must be a non-human being,’ drove her from the house.

**Tassā Rājagehato saha nikkhamaneneva padumapupphāni antaradhāyimsu,**  
With her departure from the Palace (all) the lotus flowers<sup>270</sup> disappeared,

**sarīracchavi pi vivaṇṇā<sup>271</sup> ahoṣi.**  
and her skin lost its radiance.

**Sā ekikā va antaravīthiyā pāyāsi.**  
She went by herself along the middle of the street.

**Atha naṃ ekā vayappattā mahallikā itthī disvā, dhītusinehaṃ uppādetvā:**  
Then a certain old and aged woman saw her and maternal<sup>272</sup> love arose,

**“Kahaṃ gacchasi Ammā?” ti āha.**  
and she said: “Where are you going, Lady?”

**“Āgantukamhi vasanaṭṭhānaṃ olokeṇī carāmī.” ti<sup>273</sup>**  
“I am a stranger roaming around looking for somewhere to live.”

**“Idhāgaccha,<sup>274</sup> Ammā,” ti**  
She said: “Come here, Lady,”

**vasanaṭṭhānaṃ datvā bhojanaṃ paṭiyādesi.**  
and she gave her a place to live and served her food.

**Tassā iminā va<sup>275</sup> niyāmena tattha vasamānāya,**  
As she was residing like this in that place,

**tā pañcasatā itthiyo, ekacittā hutvā, Rājānaṃ āhaṃsu:**  
those five-hundred women, having one thought, said to the King:

**“Mahārāja, tumhesu khandhāvāraṃ<sup>276</sup> gatesu,**  
“Great King, when you had gone to the camp,

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<sup>269</sup> PTS: *manussajātikā*? Printer’s mistake? RTE adds: *ca*.

<sup>270</sup> That used to appear under her feet.

<sup>271</sup> RTE: *sarīraṇ-ca vivaṇṇaṃ*.

<sup>272</sup> Lit: *daughter love*.

<sup>273</sup> ChS: *vicarāmī ti*.

<sup>274</sup> SHB: *Idha āgaccha*.

<sup>275</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

<sup>276</sup> ChS: *yuddhaṃ*.

**amhehi Gaṅgādevatāya: ‘Amhākaṃ Deve vijitasāṅgāme āgate,**  
(we said) to the goddess of the Ganges: ‘When our God-King returns victorious from battle,

**balikammaṃ katvā, udakakīlaṃ karissāmā.’ ti**  
we will make an oblation and hold water sports.’

**Patthitaṃ atthi, etam-attham̐ Deva jānāpemā.” ti**  
This was our aspiration, and this matter, God-King, we now make known.”

**Rājā tāsam̐ vacanena tuṭṭho, Gaṅgāyam<sup>277</sup> udakakīlaṃ<sup>278</sup> kātum̐ agamāsi.**  
The King, being satisfied with their statement, went to the Ganges to sport in the water.

**Tā pi attanā attanā gahitaṃ karaṇḍakaṃ,<sup>279</sup>**  
All of them took their baskets,

**paṭicchannaṃ katvā, ādāya nadiṃ gantvā,**  
covered them over, went to the stream,

**tesam̐ karaṇḍakānaṃ paṭicchādanattham̐ pārūpitvā pārūpitvā,<sup>280</sup>**  
wrapped up the baskets in order to disguise them,

**udake patitvā karaṇḍake vissajjesum̐.**  
dropped them in the water and sent the baskets off.

**Te pi kho karaṇḍakā sabbe saha<sup>281</sup> gantvā<sup>282</sup> heṭṭhāsote pasāritajālamhi laggimsu.**  
All those baskets went off together and got caught in nets that had been fastened under the stream.

**Tato udakakīlaṃ kīlitvā, Rañño uttiṇṇakāle,**  
Then after playing at water sports, at the time the King was emerging,

**jālaṃ ukkhipantā te karaṇḍake disvā, Rañño santikaṃ ānayimsu.<sup>283</sup>**  
seeing the baskets suspended in the net, they were brought to the King.

**Rājā karaṇḍake disvā:<sup>284</sup> “Kim̐ Tātā karaṇḍakesū?” ti āha.**  
The King, seeing the baskets, said: “What is in the baskets, Dears?”

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<sup>277</sup> RTE: *Gaṅgāya*.

<sup>278</sup> SHB, PTS: *Gaṅgāya udakakīlikam̐*.

<sup>279</sup> RTE, PTS: *gahitakaraṇḍakam̐*.

<sup>280</sup> RTE omits: *pārūpitvā*.

<sup>281</sup> SHB, PTS: *sabbe pi*.

<sup>282</sup> RTE: *sabbeva samāgantvā*.

<sup>283</sup> SHB, PTS: *nayimsu*.

<sup>284</sup> SHB, PTS: *oloketvā*.

**“Na jānāma Devā.” ti**

“We do not know, God-King.”

**So te karaṇḍake vivarāpetvā olokento,**

The baskets were opened while he was watching,

**paṭhamam Mahāpadumakumārassa karaṇḍakam<sup>285</sup> vivarāpesi.**

and they first opened the boy Mahāpaduma’s basket.

**Tesam pana sabbesam-pi karaṇḍakesu nipajjāpitadivase yeva,**

For all of them as they were laying in the baskets during the day,

**puññiddhiyā aṅguṭṭhato<sup>286</sup> khīram nibbatti.**

milk had sprung from their thumbs through the power of their merit.

**Sakko Devarājā tassa Rañño nikkaṅkhabhāvattham,**

Sakka, the King of the Gods, in order to dispel the King’s doubts,

**antokaraṇḍake akkharāni likhāpesi:**

had had these words<sup>287</sup> written inside the baskets:

**“Ime kumārā Padumavatiyā kucchimhi<sup>288</sup> nibbattā, Bārāṇasirañño puttā,**

“These boys were reborn in Padumavatī’s womb, and are the King of Bārāṇasī’s sons,

**atha ne Padumavatiyā sapattiyo pañcasatā itthiyo,**

then the five-hundred women, who are Padumavatī’s rivals,

**karaṇḍakesu pakkhipitvā uduke khipimsu.**

placed them in baskets and threw them in the water.

**Rājā imam kāraṇam jānātū.” ti**

Let the King understand the reason.”

### **Padumavatī’s Redemption**

**Karaṇḍake vivaritamatte<sup>289</sup> Rājā akkharāni vācetvā,**

As soon as the baskets were opened the King had the words<sup>290</sup> read out,

**dārake disvā, Mahāpadumakumāram ukkhipitvā:**

and seeing his sons, he raised up the boy Mahāpaduma, and said:

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<sup>285</sup> RTE: *Mahāpadumakumārakaraṇḍakam.*

<sup>286</sup> SHB, PTS: *aṅguṭṭhake*; RTE: *aṅguṭṭhakesu.*

<sup>287</sup> Lit: *these letters.*

<sup>288</sup> SHB, PTS: *kucchimim.*

<sup>289</sup> SHB, PTS: *vivaṭamatte.*

<sup>290</sup> Lit: *letters.*

“Vegena<sup>291</sup> rathe yojetha,<sup>292</sup> asse kappetha, ahaṃ ajja antonagaram pavisitvā,  
“Quickly prepare the chariot, harness the horses, I will enter the city today

**ekaccānaṃ mātuḡāmānaṃ piyaṃ karissāmī.” ti**  
and endear some of those women.”

**Pāsādam<sup>293</sup> āruya, hatthigīvāya<sup>294</sup> saḡassabhaṇḡikam<sup>295</sup> ṡhapetvā,**  
He ascended the palace, placed a bag with a thousand coins on an elephant’s neck,

**bherim<sup>296</sup> carāpesi: “Yo Padumavatim passati, so<sup>297</sup> imam saḡassam gaṇhatū.” ti**  
and had the drum beat, (announcing): “He who finds Padumavatī, can take this thousand (coins).”

**Tam katham sutvā Padumavatī Mātu<sup>298</sup> saññam adāsi:**  
Hearing that announcement Padumavatī informed her (adopted) Mother,

“**Hatthigīvato saḡassam gaṇha, Ammā.” ti**  
saying: “Take the thousand (coins) from the elephant’s neck, Lady.”

“**Nāham evarūpaṃ gaṇhitum visahāmī.” ti<sup>299</sup>**  
“I do not dare to take such a thing.”

**Sā dutiyam-pi tatiyam-pi vutte,**  
Having said it a second and a third time,

“**Kim vatvā, gaṇhāmi Ammā?” ti āha.**  
she said: “After saying what, Lady, shall I take it?”

“**‘Mama dhītā Padumavatim Devim passatī,’ ti<sup>300</sup> vatvā, gaṇhāhī.” ti**  
“‘My daughter has found Queen Padumavatī,’ after saying that, take (it).”

**Sā: ‘Yaṃ vā tam vā hotū,’ ti<sup>301</sup> gantvā saḡassacaṅkoṡakam<sup>302</sup> gaṇhi.**  
She, thinking: ‘What will be, will be,’ went and took the box with a thousand (coins).

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<sup>291</sup> SHB: *Vegavegena*.

<sup>292</sup> PTS: *yojetvā*.

<sup>293</sup> SHB, PTS: *Pāsādavaram*.

<sup>294</sup> RTE: *hatthigīvāyam*.

<sup>295</sup> RTE: *saḡassakaraṇḡakam*.

<sup>296</sup> SHB: *nagare bherim*.

<sup>297</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *so*.

<sup>298</sup> ChS: *Mātuyā*.

<sup>299</sup> ChS: *Aham evarūpaṃ gaṇhitum na visahāmī ti*.

<sup>300</sup> SHB, PTS: *Padumavatī Devī nāmā ti*.

<sup>301</sup> PTS: *yaṃ hotu tam hotū ti*.

<sup>302</sup> SHB, PTS: *-caṅkoṡakam*.

**Atha nam manussā pucchimsu: “Padumavatim Devim passasi, Ammā?” ti**  
Then the men questioned her: “Did you find Queen Padumavatī, Lady?”

**“Aham na passāmi, dhītā kira me passatī,” ti āha.**  
She said: “I did not find (her), but it seems my daughter found (her).”

**Te: “Kaham pana sā Ammā?” ti vatvā,**  
They said: “But where is she, Lady?”

**tāya saddhim gantvā Padumavatim sañjānitvā, pādesu nipatimsu.**  
and going with her and recognising Padumavatī, they fell at her feet.

**Tasmim kāle sā: ‘Padumavatī Devī ayan!’-ti ñatvā,**  
At that time understanding: ‘This is Queen Padumavatī!’

**“Bhāriyam vata itthiyā kammaṃ katam,**  
she said: “Indeed, a really serious thing was done to the woman,

**yā evamvidhassa Rañño Mahesī samānā, evarūpe thāne nirārakkhā vasī!” ti āha.**  
she being a Consort to such a King, and she dwelt in such a place without protection!”

**Te pi Rājapurisā Padumavatiyā nivesanam<sup>303</sup> setasāñhi parikkhipāpetvā,**  
The King’s men set up white curtains around Padumavatī’s residence,

**dvāre ārakkham<sup>304</sup> thāpetvā gantvā<sup>305</sup> Rañño ārocesum.**  
placed a guard at the door and went and informed the King.

**Rājā suvaṇṇasivikam pesesi.**  
The King sent a golden palanquin.

**Sā: “Aham evam na gamissāmi!**  
She said: “I will not go in this way!

**Mama vasanaṭṭhānato paṭṭhāya yāva Rājageham etthantare**  
From my dwelling place all along the way until the Palace

**varapotthakacittattharaṇe<sup>306</sup> attharāpetvā,**  
spread noble and beautiful carpets made of cloth,

**upari suvaṇṇatāarakavicittam celavitānam<sup>307</sup> bandhāpetvā,**  
have canopies set up adorned with golden stars above,

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<sup>303</sup> RTE adds: *netvā*.

<sup>304</sup> RTE: *rakkham*.

<sup>305</sup> ChS omits: *gantvā*.

<sup>306</sup> SHB, PTS: *-cittattharake*.

<sup>307</sup> RTE: *sovaṇṇatāarakavicittacelavitānam*.

**pasādhanatthāya<sup>308</sup> sabbālaṅkāresu pahitesu, padasā va gamissāmi.**  
and when all ornaments are sent for my adornment, I will go by foot.

**Evaṃ me nāgarā sampattiṃ passissantī!” ti āha.**  
Thus the city-folk will see my good fortune!”

**Rājā: “Padumavatiyā yathārucim<sup>309</sup> karothā,” ti āha.**  
The King said: “Do it according to Padumavatī’s pleasure.”

**Tato Padumavatī, sabbapasādhanam<sup>310</sup> pasādhetvā,**  
Then Padumavatī was adorned with all ornaments,

**“Rājageham gamissāmi,” ti maggam paṭipajji.**  
and saying: “I will go to the Palace,” proceeded along the path.

**Athassā akkanta-akkantaṭṭhāne,<sup>311</sup>**  
Then at each place she stepped,

**varapothhakacittattharaṇāni<sup>312</sup> bhinditvā, padumapupphāni utṭhahimsu.**  
after breaking through the noble and beautiful carpets made of cloth, lotus flowers arose.

**Sā mahājanassa attano sampattiṃ dassetvā, Rājanivesanam āruyha,**  
After she had shown off to the populace her good fortune, she ascended the Palace,

**sabbe cittattharaṇe,<sup>313</sup> tassā mahallikāya posāvanikamūlam<sup>314</sup> katvā, dāpesi.**  
and by way of giving an allowance to the old lady for her expenses, had all those beautiful carpets given (to her).

**Rājā pi kho<sup>315</sup> tā pañcasatā itthiyo pakkosāpetvā,**  
The King had the five-hundred women summoned,

**“Imā<sup>316</sup> te Devi dāsiyo katvā, demī,” ti āha.**  
and said: “After making these slaves, I give them to the Queen.”

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<sup>308</sup> SHB: *pasādhānatthāya*.

<sup>309</sup> SHB: *rucim*.

<sup>310</sup> SHB: *sabbapasādhānam*; Thai: *sabbam pasādhanam*.

<sup>311</sup> Thai: *akkantākkantaṭṭhāne*.

<sup>312</sup> SHB, PTS: *-cittattharakam*.

<sup>313</sup> SHB, PTS: *sabbe pi te cittattharake*.

<sup>314</sup> SHB, PTS: *posāvanikamūle*.

<sup>315</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *kho*.

<sup>316</sup> ChS: *Imāyo*.

**“Sādhu Mahārāja etāsam mayham<sup>317</sup> dinnabhāvaṃ sakalanagare<sup>318</sup> jānāpehī.” ti**  
“Very good, Great King, please make known to the whole city your gift to me of these (women).”

**Rājā nagare bherim carāpesi:**

The King had the drum beat in the city (announcing):

**“Padumavatiyā dubbhikā pañcasatā itthiyo etissā eva<sup>319</sup> dāsiyo katvā, dinnā.” ti**  
“After making these five-hundred treacherous women slaves, I have given them to Padumavatī.”

**Sā: ‘Tāsam sakalanagarena<sup>320</sup> dāsibhāvo sallakkhito,’ ti ñatvā,**  
Understanding: ‘Their slavery has been seen by the whole city,’

**“Aham mama dāsiyo bhujissā kātuṃ labhāmi Devā,” ti Rājānaṃ pucchi.**  
she made a request of the King, saying: “I desire to give freedom to my slaves, God-King.”

**“Tava icchā Devī!” ti**  
“As you wish, Queen!”

**Evam sante, tam-eva bhericārikam<sup>321</sup> pakkosāpetvā,**  
This being so, he summoned the drummer,

**“Padumavatideviyā attano dāsiyo katvā,**  
° and said: “ ‘After (these women) were made slaves to Padumavatī,

**dinnā pañcasatā itthiyo sabbā va bhujissā katā,’ ti**  
she has given freedom to all five-hundred of them,’

**puna bherim carāpethā,” ti<sup>322</sup> āha.**  
beat the drum (and announce this).”

**Sā tāsam bhujissabhāve kate,**  
When they were given their freedom,

**ekūnāni pañcaputtasatāni<sup>323</sup> tāsam yeva hatthe posanattāyā datvā,**  
she gave the four-hundred and ninety-nine sons into their hands for bringing up,

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<sup>317</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *mayham*.

<sup>318</sup> RTE: *-nagāre*.

<sup>319</sup> SHB: *dūbhikā pañcayatā (sic) itthiyo etissā va*.

<sup>320</sup> SHB, RTE: *-nāgarena*.

<sup>321</sup> SHB, PTS: *bherivādakam*.

<sup>322</sup> RTE: *cārāpethā ti*.

<sup>323</sup> ChS: *pañcasataputtāni*.

**sayam Mahāpadumakumāram yeva gaṇhi.**  
and took the boy Mahāpaduma herself.

### **Padumavatī's Loss**

**Atha aparabhāge, tesam kumārānam kīlanavaye sampatte,**  
Then later, when those boys had reached playing age,

**Rājā uyyāne nānāvidham kīlanatṭhānam kāresi.**  
the King had various types of playgrounds made in the garden.

**Te attano soḷasavassuddesikakāle sabbe va ekato hutvā,**  
When they were sixteen years of age they all came together,

**uyyāne<sup>324</sup> padumasañchannāya maṅgalapokkharāṇiyā kīlantā,**  
and while playing in the royal bathing pool covered with lotuses in the garden,

**navapadumāni pupphitāni<sup>325</sup> purāṇapadumāni ca vaṇṭato patantāni disvā,**  
having seen new lotuses blossoming and old lotuses falling from their stalks,

**‘Imassa tāva anupādinakassa<sup>326</sup> evarūpā jarā pāpuṇāti,**  
they thought: ‘When even a thing such as this, which is not produced by previous deeds,<sup>327</sup>  
undergoes decay,

**kim-aṅgam<sup>328</sup> pana amhākam sarīrassa idam-pi hi evamaṅgatikam-eva bhavissatī!’ ti**  
how much more then will our bodies be subject to the same destiny!’

**Ārammaṇam gahetvā, sabbe va Paccekabodhiñāṇam<sup>329</sup> nibbattetvā,**  
Grasping this meditation object they all produced the knowledge characterising the  
Independent Awakening,<sup>330</sup>

**uṭṭhāyutṭhāya padumakaṇṇikāsu pallaṅkena nisīdimsu.**  
And, after rising (from there), sat down cross-legged in the heart of the lotuses.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *uyyāne*.

<sup>325</sup> SHB, PTS: *pupphantāni*.

<sup>326</sup> SHB: *anupādiṇṇakassa*.

<sup>327</sup> It means they are not creatures developed enough to have intentional life.

<sup>328</sup> SHB, PTS: *aṅga*.

<sup>329</sup> RTE: *Paccekabuddhañāṇam*.

<sup>330</sup> I.e. they became Paccekabuddhas.

<sup>331</sup> Lit: in the pericarps.

**Atha tehi saddhiṃ āgatā Rājapurisā,<sup>332</sup> bahugataṃ<sup>333</sup> divasaṃ ñatvā,**

Then the King's men who had come with them, understanding that most of the day had passed,

**“Ayyaputtā tumhākaṃ velaṃ jānāthā?” ti āhaṃsu.**

said: “Noble Children, do you know the time?”

**Te tuṅhī<sup>334</sup> ahesuṃ.**

They remained silent.

**Te<sup>335</sup> purisā gantvā Rañño ārocesuṃ: “Kumārā Deva padumakaṇṇikāsu nisinnā,**

Those men went to the King and informed him: “The princes, God-King, are sitting in the hearts of the lotuses,

**amhesu kathentesu pi vacībhedāṃ na karontī.” ti**

and when we speak they make no reply.”

**“Yathāruciyaṃ tesāṃ nisīdituṃ dethā.” ti**

“Allow them to sit as they wish.”

**Te sabbarattim gahitārakkhā,**

The whole night a guard was set,

**padumakaṇṇikāsu nisinnaniyāmeneva aruṇaṃ uṭṭhāpesuṃ.**

and they sat in this way in the hearts of the lotuses until dawn arose.

**Purisā<sup>336</sup> punadivase upasaṅkamtivā, “Devā velaṃ jānāthā” ti āhaṃsu.<sup>337</sup>**

The men approached on the following day and said: “Princes, do you know the time?”

**“Na mayāṃ Devā Paccekabuddhā nāma mayan.”-ti**

“We are not Princes, we are now Independent Buddhas.”

**“Ayyā tumhe bhāriyaṃ kathaṃ kathetha,**

“Noble Sirs, you are saying something very grave,

**Paccekabuddhā nāma tumhādisā na<sup>338</sup> honti,**

Independent Buddhas are surely not like you are,

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<sup>332</sup> SHB, PTS: *saddhiṃ gatapurisā*; RTE: *saddhiṃ āgatapurisā*.

<sup>333</sup> RTE: *bahutaram*.

<sup>334</sup> RTE: *Te sabbe tuṅhī*.

<sup>335</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Te*.

<sup>336</sup> RTE: *Purisā gantvā*.

<sup>337</sup> RTE omits: *āhaṃsu*.

<sup>338</sup> SHB, PTS: *na tumhādisā*.

**dvaṅgulakesamassudharā,<sup>339</sup> kāye paṭimukka-aṭṭhaparikkhārā<sup>340</sup> hontī.” ti**  
they have hair and beard (only) up to two inches long, and on their bodies are fastened the eight requisites.”<sup>341</sup>

**Te<sup>342</sup> dakkhiṇahatthena sīsam parāmasimsu, tāvad-eva gihilingam antaradhāyi,**  
They stroked their heads with their right hands, and at that moment the signs of home life vanished,

**aṭṭha parikkhārā kāye paṭimukkā<sup>343</sup> va ahesum.**  
and the eight requisites appeared on their bodies.

**Tato passantasseva mahājanassa ākāsenā Nandamūlakapabbhāram agamaṃsu.**  
As the populace was watching they went through the air to Mount Nandamūlaka.

**Sā pi kho Padumavatī Devī: ‘Ahaṃ bahuputtā hutvā, niputtā<sup>344</sup> jātā!’ ti**  
Queen Padumavatī thought: ‘After having so many children, I have become childless!’

**Hadaysokam<sup>345</sup> patvā, teneva rogena<sup>346</sup> kālam katvā,**  
Her heart having been overcome by grief, she died from this illness,

**Rājagahanagaradvāragāmake**  
and in a small village near the gate of the city of Rājagaha<sup>347</sup>

**sahatthena kammaṃ katvā jīvanakaṭṭhāne<sup>348</sup> nibbatti.**  
she was reborn, and made a living in that place by doing manual labour.

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<sup>339</sup> SHB: *dvaṅgulakesamassū pana.*

<sup>340</sup> RTE: *paṭimukkāṭṭhaparikkhārā.*

<sup>341</sup> The eight requisites are the three robes, the bowl, a razor, a needle, a belt and a water-strainer.

<sup>342</sup> SHB, PTS: *tena tumhe bhāriyam kathethā ti.*

<sup>343</sup> RTE: *kāyapaṭimukkā.*

<sup>344</sup> RTE: *niyuttā.*

<sup>345</sup> PTS: *Hadaysosam.*

<sup>346</sup> ChS: *sokena.*

<sup>347</sup> The Traditions specify that it was on the slope of Mt. Isigili, one of the seven mountains surrounding Rājagaha. This life again only requires four verses in the Traditions.

<sup>348</sup> RTE, PTS: *jīvanakaṭṭhāne.*

## Feeding 500 Paccekabuddhas

**Aparabhāge,<sup>349</sup> kulagharam gantvā,<sup>350</sup>**

Later she went to a good family home,<sup>351</sup>

**ekadivasam sāmikassa khettam<sup>352</sup> yāgum haramānā,**  
and while carrying rice-porridge one day to her husband's field,

**tesam attano puttānam antare,**  
in the midst of her children,

**aṭṭha Paccekabuddhe bhikkhācāavelāya<sup>353</sup> ākāsenā gacchante<sup>354</sup> disvā,**  
she saw eight Independent Buddhas going through the air at the time they went for alms,

**sīgham sīgham<sup>355</sup> gantvā, sāmikassa ārocesi:**  
and going quickly, she informed her husband,

**“Passa Ayya<sup>356</sup> Paccekabuddhe ete nimantevā bhojeyyāmā.” ti<sup>357</sup>**  
saying: “Look, Noble Sir, let us invite these Independent Buddhas and feed (them).”

**So āha: “Samaṇasakuṇā nāmete aññatthā pi<sup>358</sup> evam caranti,**  
He said: “These are birds (who look like) ascetics who are flying somewhere,

**na ete Paccekabuddhā.” ti**  
they are not Independent Buddhas.”

**Te tesam kathentānam<sup>359</sup> yeva avidūre ṭhāne<sup>360</sup> otarimsu.**  
As they were talking they descended to a spot not far away.

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<sup>349</sup> SHB, PTS: *Atha aparabhāge*.

<sup>350</sup> SHB, PTS: *gatā*.

<sup>351</sup> That is, she got married.

<sup>352</sup> RTE: *khette*.

<sup>353</sup> PTS: *-velāyam*.

<sup>354</sup> SHB, PTS: *ākāsenā āgacchante*.

<sup>355</sup> SHB: *sīghasīgham*.

<sup>356</sup> PTS: *Ayyo*; RTE: *Passatha Ayye*.

<sup>357</sup> ChS: *bhojessāmā ti*; RTE: *bhojanam dassāmā ti*.

<sup>358</sup> PTS: *nāma te aññadāpi*.

<sup>359</sup> RTE: *katham kathentānam*.

<sup>360</sup> SHB, PTS: *avidūraṭṭhāne*.

**Sā itthi<sup>361</sup> tam divasaṃ attano<sup>362</sup> bhattakhajjabhojanam<sup>363</sup> tesam datvā,**  
That woman on that day gave her own rice and other solid food to them herself,

**“Sve pi aṭṭha<sup>364</sup> janā mayham bhikkham gaṇhathā,” ti āha.**  
and said: “Tomorrow, eight people can take my alms food.”

**“Sādhu upāsike tava sakkāro<sup>365</sup> ettako va hotu, āsanāni ca aṭṭheva hontu,**  
“Well said, lay woman, such is your hospitality, let there be just eight seats then,

**aññe pi bahū<sup>366</sup> Paccekabuddhe disvā, tava cittaṃ sandhāreyyāsī.” ti<sup>367</sup>**  
but seeing a great many Independent Buddhas, your heart would be uplifted.”

**Sā punadivase, aṭṭha āsanāni paññāpetvā,**  
On the following day she prepared eight seats,

**aṭṭhannaṃ sakkārasammānaṃ paṭiyādetvā, nisīdi.**  
arranged them with great respect for the eight of them, and sat down.

**Nimantitā Paccekabuddhā<sup>368</sup> sesānaṃ saññaṃ adamsu:**  
The Independent Buddhas who were invited informed the rest,

**“Mārisā ajja aññattha agantvā,<sup>369</sup>**  
saying: “Sirs, without going anywhere else today,

**sabbe va tumhākaṃ Mātu saṅghaṃ karothā.” ti**  
all of you show your regard for your Mother.”

**Te<sup>370</sup> tesam vacanaṃ sutvā, sabbe va ekato, ākāsenā āgantvā,<sup>371</sup>**  
Hearing their words, they all came through the air together,

**Mātugehadvāre pātur-ahesuṃ.**  
and appeared at the gate of their Mother’s house.

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<sup>361</sup> RTE: *itthī*.

<sup>362</sup> SHB, PTS: *attanā*.

<sup>363</sup> SHB, PTS: *labhanakaṃ khajjabhojjaṃ*.

<sup>364</sup> SHB, PTS: *aṭṭha pi*.

<sup>365</sup> RTE adds: *ca*.

<sup>366</sup> SHB, PTS: *aññe pana bahū pi*.

<sup>367</sup> ChS: *pasādeyyāsī ti*.

<sup>368</sup> RTE, ChS: *Nimantitapaccekabuddhā*.

<sup>369</sup> PTS: *anāgantvā*.

<sup>370</sup> RTE omits: *Te*.

<sup>371</sup> RTE: *gantvā*.

**Sā pi paṭhamam̐ laddhasaññatāya<sup>372</sup> bahū pi<sup>373</sup> disvā, na kampittha,**

Having seen a great many more than those whom she had perceived at first and, without wavering,

**sabbe pi<sup>374</sup> te<sup>375</sup> geham̐ pavesetvā āsanesu<sup>376</sup> nisīdāpesi.**

she ushered them all into the house and made them sit down on the seats.

**Tesu<sup>377</sup> paṭipāṭiyā nisīdantesu,**

As they were sitting down in order,

**navamo<sup>378</sup> aññāni aṭṭha āsanāni māpetvā sayam̐ dhurāsane nisīdi.<sup>379</sup>**

a further eight seats appeared through supernatural power and the ninth sat himself down on the nearest seat.

**Yāva āsanāni vaḍḍhanti, tāva geham̐ vaḍḍhati.**

As the seats increased, so did the house increase (in size).

**Evam̐ tesu sabbesu pi<sup>380</sup> nisinnesu,**

When they were all thus seated,

**sā itthi<sup>381</sup> aṭṭhannam̐ Paccekabuddhānam̐ paṭiyāditaṃ sakkāram̐<sup>382</sup>**

° the woman respectfully offered what was prepared for the eight Independent Buddhas

**pañcasatānam-pi yāvad-attham̐ datvā,**

to the five hundred,

**aṭṭha nīluppalahatthake āharitvā,**

and bringing eight handfuls of blue lilies in her hand,

**Nimantitapaccekabuddhānam̐<sup>383</sup> yeva pādamūle ṭhapetvā āha:**

she placed them at the feet of the Independent Buddhas she had invited and said:

**“Mayham̐ Bhante nibbattanibbattaṭṭhāne**

“Reverend Sirs, in whatever place I am reborn

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<sup>372</sup> PTS: *laddhasaññā tāya*.

<sup>373</sup> RTE omits: *pi*.

<sup>374</sup> SHB, PTS: *sabbe va*.

<sup>375</sup> RTE omits: *te*.

<sup>376</sup> RTE, PTS: *āsane*.

<sup>377</sup> SHB: *Tesu pi*.

<sup>378</sup> SHB, PTS: *navamo navamo*.

<sup>379</sup> SHB, PTS: *nisīdati*.

<sup>380</sup> RTE omits: *pi*.

<sup>381</sup> RTE: *itthī*.

<sup>382</sup> RTE: *paṭiyāditasakkāram̐*.

<sup>383</sup> RTE: *Nimantitaṃ paccekabuddhānam̐*.

**sarīravaṇṇo imesaṃ nīluppalānaṃ antogabbhavaṇṇo viya<sup>384</sup> hotū.” ti**  
may the colour of my body be like the colour of the inside of this blue lily’s heart.”

**Patthanaṃ akāsi.**<sup>385</sup>  
She made this aspiration.

**Paccekaḥ Buddhā Mātu anumodanaṃ katvā Gandhamādanaṃ yeva agamaṃsu.**  
The Independent Buddhas rejoiced with their Mother and returned to Gandhamādana.

### Her Last Life

**Sā pi yāva jīvaṃ kusalaṃ katvā, tato cutā devaloke nibbattivā,**  
She did good deeds for the rest of her life, and after passing away from there and being reborn in the world of the gods,

**imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde, Sāvattiyaṃ seṭṭhikule paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi,**  
when this (Gotama) Buddha arose, she was conceived in a merchant’s family in Sāvattihī,

**nīluppalagabbhasamānavāṇṇatāya, cassā Uppalavaṇṇā tveva nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**  
and as she was the same colour as the heart of a blue lily, she was given the name Uppalavaṇṇā.<sup>386</sup>

**Athassā vayappattakāle**  
When she had reached maturity

**sakala-Jambudīpe rājāno<sup>387</sup> ca seṭṭhino ca seṭṭhissa santikaṃ<sup>388</sup> paṇiṃsu:**  
all the Kings in the Rose-Apple Isle<sup>389</sup> and the merchants also sent (a message) to the merchant, saying:

**“Dhītaraṃ amhākaṃ detū.” ti**  
“Please give us your daughter.”

**Apahiṇanto nāma nāhosi.**  
There were none known to be not sending (this message).

**Tato seṭṭhi cintesi:**  
Then the merchant thought:

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<sup>384</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *viya*.

<sup>385</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *patthanaṃ akāsi*.

<sup>386</sup> *Uppala* = blue water-lily; *vaṇṇa* = colour.

<sup>387</sup> ChS: *Jambudīparājāno*.

<sup>388</sup> RTE: *sakalajambūdīparājāno va seṭṭhissa santika*.

<sup>389</sup> The normal designation for what we now roughly call India.

‘Ahaṃ sabbesaṃ manaññā gahetuṃ na sakkhissāmi, upāyaṃ panekaññā karissāmi,’ ti  
‘I will not be able to satisfy<sup>390</sup> all of them, I will have to employ some skilful means,’

dhītaraṃ pakkosāpetvā,<sup>391</sup> “Pabbajituṃ Amma sakkhissasī?” ti āha.  
and after summoning his daughter, he said: “Will you be able to go forth, Daughter?”

Tassā pacchimabhavikattā, taṃ<sup>392</sup> vacanaṃ sīse āsittasatapākatelaṃ viya ahoṣi,  
(Because of) being in her last rebirth, that word was like medicated oil sprinkled on her  
head,

tasmā<sup>393</sup> pitaraṃ: “Pabbajissāmi, Tātā” ti āha.  
therefore she said to her Father: “Father, I will go forth.”

So tassā sakkāraṃ katvā, bhikkhunī-upassayaṃ netvā, pabbājesi.  
He paid respects to her, led her to the nunnery, and had her go forth.<sup>394</sup>

Tassā acirapabbajitāya eva, uposathāgāre kālavāro<sup>395</sup> pāpuṇi.  
Not long after she had gone forth,<sup>396</sup> her turn (to work) in the observance hall arose.

Sā dīpaṃ jāletvā, uposathāgāraṃ sammajjitvā,  
She lit the lamp, swept the observance hall,

padīpasikhāya<sup>397</sup> nimittaṃ gaṇhitvā,<sup>398</sup>  
and grasping the sign of the crest of the lamp,

punappunaṃ olokayamānā,  
while looking at it again and again,

tejokasiṇārammaṇaññā jhānaṃ<sup>399</sup> nibbattetvā,  
and producing absorption on the fire meditation subject,

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<sup>390</sup> Lit: *grab the mind*.

<sup>391</sup> SHB, PTS: *pakkosivā*.

<sup>392</sup> ChS: *Pitu*.

<sup>393</sup> RTE: *tasmā taṃ*.

<sup>394</sup> In Buddhist countries these days, at the ordination the postulant will pay respects to their parents for the last time, and straight after the ordination, the parents pay respect to the socially elevated child. Here it seems the Father paid respects as soon as she agreed to ordination.

<sup>395</sup> PTS: *tālavāro*.

<sup>396</sup> The Traditions state it was less than two weeks.

<sup>397</sup> RTE, ChS: *dīpasikhāya*.

<sup>398</sup> SHB, PTS: *gaṇhitvā thatvā va*.

<sup>399</sup> RTE: *tejokasiṇajjhānaṃ*.

**tad-eva pādakaṃ katvā, Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**

and making that a basis, she attained Liberation.

**Arahattaphalena saddhiṃ yeva ca<sup>400</sup> iddhivikubbane ciṅṇavasī ahoṣi.**

Together with the fruit of Liberation she also mastered the spiritual power of transformation.<sup>401</sup>

**Sā aparabhāge Satthu yamakapāṭihāriyaṃ karaṇadivase,<sup>402</sup>**

Later, on the day the Teacher performed the double miracle,<sup>403</sup>

**“Ahaṃ Bhante pāṭihāriyaṃ karissāmī,” ti sīhanādaṃ nadi.**

she roared a lion’s roar, saying: “I will perform a miracle, reverend Sir.”<sup>404</sup>

**“Kathaṃ karissasī?” ti puṭṭhā**

Being asked “What miracle will you perform?”

**āha: “Ahaṃ, Bhante, samantā dvādasayojanāṃ<sup>405</sup> parisāṃ dassetvā,**

she said: “Reverend Sir, after showing (myself) before an assembly for twelve leagues on all sides,

**āvaṭṭato chattimsayojanāya parisāya parivuto,**

surrounded by an assembly that is thirty-six leagues from front to back,

**Cakkavattirājā hutvā āgantvā, tumhe vandissāmī.” ti**

after taking the form of a Universal Monarch and approaching, I will worship you.”<sup>406</sup>

**Satthā: “Jānāmi te ānubhāvan,”-ti.**

The Teacher said: “I know your power.”

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<sup>400</sup> PTS omits: *ca*.

<sup>401</sup> This is the power to transform oneself into many beings, and from many to become one again.

<sup>402</sup> RTE, ChS: *yamakapāṭihāriyakaraṇadivase*.

<sup>403</sup> Performed to confute the heretics, it consisted of emitting fire and water from his body.

<sup>404</sup> Along with others on that day, Uppalavaṇṇā offered to perform a miracle. However, the Buddha didn’t allow her, or anyone else, to perform any miracles at that time. The following few lines are from the Dhammapada Commentary to vs. 181.

<sup>405</sup> PTS: *dvādasayojanikāṃ*.

<sup>406</sup> The Traditions record a different miracle whereby she fashioned a chariot and four horses.

**Satthā idaṃ kāraṇaṃ, aṭṭhuppattim katvā,**

For this reason the Teacher, as the occasion had arisen,

**Jetavanavihāre<sup>407</sup> nisinno, paṭipāṭiyā bhikkhuniyo ṭhānantaresu<sup>408</sup> ṭhapento,**

while sitting in Jeta's Wood, in placing the nuns successively in their different positions,

**imaṃ Therim iddhimantīnaṃ<sup>409</sup> aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī. ti**

placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position of those possessing spiritual power.

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<sup>407</sup> RTE: *Jetavanamahāvihāre*.

<sup>408</sup> ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

<sup>409</sup> RTE, PTS: *iddhimantānaṃ*.

## Paṭācārātherīvatthu

### 4. The Story about the Elder Nun Paṭācārā

#### Introduction

This nun disciple's story is certainly one of the most memorable in Buddhist literature, and is also one of the most celebrated. Like the others she was born during Buddha Padumuttara's time, and made her aspiration to become a foremost disciple, in this case in bearing the discipline in mind. She was also one of the seven sisters born to Kiki, the King of Kāsi.

The story, however, deals quickly with her past lives and then moves on to her last life, when she was reborn in a good family home in Sāvattī. Against all family conventions, and outside of marriage she had a liaison with one of the household's workers, fell in love and eloped, rather than marrying the man her family had arranged for her.<sup>410</sup>

When she became pregnant she decided to go back to her family for help with the delivery, but her husband kept putting off the time for departure, and departing late she eventually had the child on the way. She therefore returned home with the child. A second time the same thing happened, and she gave birth on the road.<sup>411</sup>

Just then a great storm blew up and she asked her husband to prepare a shelter, which he did. But as he went to get materials for a roof he was bitten by a cobra and died. When she discovered the body in the morning, she lamented but decided to continue to her parent's home.

On the way, while crossing a ford, one of her children was snatched away by a hawk, and the other one was swept away by the current and drowned. She made it to the city, but only to find that her family home had collapsed during the storm, and all inside were lost and were awaiting their cremation. This meant that within one day she had lost husband, children, parents and siblings.

At that point she lost her mind completely, threw off her clothes and went around naked and senseless, until one day she met the Buddha who suffused her with loving-kindness and admonished her, whereat she regained her senses, covered herself up and listened to his Dhamma teaching.

The Buddha taught her with a memorable verse and she attained the First Stage of Awakening and ordained. In a story which is not included in this commentary, but is brought in here from another, while contemplating the fading away of water in the ground she gained insight, realised that life was impermanent, and attained Liberation.

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<sup>410</sup> Cf. the story as retold in the Dhammapada Commentary, which is told in an even more dramatic and convincing form than the one told here.

<sup>411</sup> Up to this point the story is similar to that of Cūḷa- and Mahāpanthaka, see AA 1.2.1.

## The Elder Nun Patācārā - 67

Later the Buddha appointed her as the one who was foremost in bearing the discipline in mind. The connection of her story to her position is presumably because of her conversion from being a woman who refused to abide by the rules of society to one who later became the most diligent in Discipline.

She therefore appears as the counterpart of Ven. Upāli, who answered the questions on discipline at the First Recitation.

**AN 1.5.4**

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**Vinayadharanam, yad-idam Paṭācārā.**

amongst those who bear the Discipline in mind, that is to say, Paṭācārā.

**AA 1.5.4**

(commentary)

**Catutthe, “Vinayadharanam, yad-idam Paṭācārā,” ti**

In the fourth (story), “Amongst those who bear the Discipline in mind, that is to say, Paṭācārā,”

**Paṭācārā Therī Vinayadharanam aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows (why) the Elder Nun Paṭācārā, amongst those who bore the Discipline in mind, was said to be foremost.

**Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Sā kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Haṃsavatīyam kulagehe paṭisandhim gaṇhitvā,<sup>412</sup>**

after being conceived in a good family home in Hāmsavatī,

**aparabhāge, Satthu Dhammadesanam suṇantī,**

and later, while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**Satthāram ekam bhikkhunim Vinayadharanam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentam disvā,**

seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who bore the Discipline in mind,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaram patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

**Sā yāvajīvam kusalam katvā, devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,<sup>413</sup>**

She did good deeds for the rest of her life, was reborn amongst gods and humans (only),

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<sup>412</sup> SHB, PTS: *gaṇhitvā*.

<sup>413</sup> ChS: *saṃsarantī*.

**Kassapabuddhakāle Kikissa Kāsirañño gehe paṭisandhim gaṇhitvā,**<sup>414</sup>

and in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, she was conceived in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi,

**sattannaṃ bhaginīnaṃ abbhantarā hutvā,**

and became (one) amongst seven sisters,

**vīsativassasahassāni brahmacariyaṃ caritvā,**

lived as a celibate for twenty-thousand years,

**Bhikkhusaṅghassa pariveṇaṃ kāretvā,**<sup>415</sup>

had a residence made for the Community of monks,

**puna devaloke nibbattivā,**

was reborn once again in the world of the gods,

**ekaṃ Buddhantaraṃ sampattiṃ anubhavitvā,**

and enjoyed good fortune during one period when there was no Buddha,

**imasmim Buddhuppāde, Sāvattiyaṃ seṭṭhigehe paṭisandhim gaṇhi.**

and when this (Gotama) Buddha arose, she was conceived in a merchant's home in Sāvattihī.

## Her Last Life

**Sā aparabhāge, vayappattā,**

Later, when she was mature,

**attano gehe ekena kammakārena saddhim santhavaṃ katvā,**

after becoming intimate with a certain worker in her own home,

**aparabhāge attano samānajātikaṃ kulaṃ gacchantī,**

as she was going to someone from a family of her own standing,<sup>416</sup>

**katasanthavassa**<sup>417</sup> **purisassa**<sup>418</sup> **saññaṃ adāsi:**

she informed the man that she had been intimate with,

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<sup>414</sup> SHB, PTS: *gaḥetvā*.

<sup>415</sup> ChS: *katvā*.

<sup>416</sup> I.e. as she was being married off to one of equal rank.

<sup>417</sup> SHB, PTS: *tassa katasanthavassa*.

<sup>418</sup> RTE: *tassa santhavapurisassa*.

**“Tvam<sup>419</sup> sve<sup>420</sup> paṭṭhāya maṃ pāṭihārasatena<sup>421</sup> pi daṭṭhum na<sup>422</sup> labhissasi,**  
saying: “From tomorrow even if you beat on the door a hundred times you will not be able to see me,

**sace te kammaṃ atthi, idāni<sup>423</sup> maṃ gaṇhitvā gacchāhī.” ti<sup>424</sup>**  
if this is a (worthy) deed for you, take me right now and let us go.”

**So: “Evaṃ hotū!” ti anucchavikaṃ hatthasāraṃ gahetvā,**  
Saying: “So be it!” he grabbed the most valuable and suitable things,

**taṃ ādāya nagarato, tīpi cattāri yojanāni paṭikkamitvā,**  
took her from the city, retired for three or four leagues,

**ekasmiṃ gāmake vāsaṃ kappesi.**  
and set up home in one village.

**Atha<sup>425</sup> aparabhāge tassā kucchiyaṃ gabbho paṭiṭṭhāsi.**  
Then later an embryo was established in her womb.

**Sā gabbhe paripakke:**  
When her foetus was mature,

**“Idaṃ amhākaṃ anāthaṭṭhānaṃ,<sup>426</sup> kulagehaṃ gacchāma, Sāmī,” ti āha.**  
she said: “Husband, we are without protection in this place, let us go to my family’s home.”

**So: “Ajja gacchāma”, “Sve gacchāmā,” ti**  
He said: “Today let us go”, and: “Tomorrow let us go,”

**gantum asakkonto, kālaṃ vītināmesi.**  
and being unable (to decide when) to go, he let the time pass by.

**Sā tassa kāraṇaṃ ñatvā: ‘Nāyaṃ bālo maṃ nessatī,’ ti**  
She understood his reasoning, and thinking: ‘This fool will not take me,’

**tasmim̐ bahi gate:**  
therefore when he had gone outside,

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<sup>419</sup> ChS reads: *Na tvam̐* here, omits: *na* before *labhissasi*.

<sup>420</sup> RTE: *sveva*.

<sup>421</sup> RTE: *pahārasatena*; ChS: *paṭihāra-*; AT: *pāṭihārasatena pī ti dvārasatena pī*.

<sup>422</sup> ChS omits: *na*.

<sup>423</sup> SHB, PTS: *idānimeva*.

<sup>424</sup> SHB, PTS: *gacchā ti*.

<sup>425</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Atha*.

<sup>426</sup> RTE: *aṭṭhānaṃ*.

**‘Ekikā va kulagehaṃ<sup>427</sup> gamissāmī,’ ti maggaṃ paṭipajji.**

thinking: ‘I will go to my family home by myself,’ she set out on the path.

**So āgantvā, taṃ gehe apassanto, paṭivissake pucchitvā,**

He returned and not seeing her in the home, he asked the neighbours,

**“Kulagehaṃ gatā,” ti sutvā,**

and hearing: “She is going to her family home,”

**‘Maṃ nissāya kuladhītā anāthā jātā,’ ti<sup>428</sup>**

he thought: ‘It is because of me that this daughter of a good family is without protection,’

**padānupadikaṃ gantvā, sampāpuṇi.**

and he followed in her steps and caught up (with her).

**Tassā antarāmagge va gabbhavuṭṭhānaṃ ahosi.**

As she was on the highway she was delivered (of her child).

**Tato: ‘Yassatthāya mayaṃ gaccheyyāma, so attho antarāmagge va nipphanno,**

Then, thinking: ‘That thing for which we set out, has happened right here on the highway,

**idāni gantvā, kiṃ karissāmā?’ ti paṭinivattimsu.**

having gone (there) now, what would we do?’ and they turned back.

**Puna: ‘Tassā kucchiyaṃ gabbho paṭiṭṭhāsī,’ ti**

And again: ‘An embryo was established in her womb,’

**purimanayeneva vitthāretabbaṃ.**

and it should be elaborated according to what was said above.<sup>429</sup>

**Antarāmagge panassā gabbhavuṭṭhāne jātamatte yeva,**

But as she was delivering on the highway, at the very moment of birth,

**catūsu disāsu mahāmegho uṭṭhahi.<sup>430</sup>**

a great storm arose in all four quarters.

**Sā taṃ purisaṃ āha: “Sāmi, avelāya catūsu disāsu megho uṭṭhito,<sup>431</sup>**

She said to the gentleman: “Husband, an out of season storm has arisen in all four quarters,

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<sup>427</sup> PTS: *kulagāmaṃ*.

<sup>428</sup> PTS: *anāthajātā ti*.

<sup>429</sup> Lit: *according to the earlier method*. It means it all happened in the same way as was related for her first pregnancy.

<sup>430</sup> SHB: *uṭṭhahimsu*; PTS: *vuṭṭhahimsu*.

<sup>431</sup> SHB, PTS: *meghā vuṭṭhitā*; RTE: *mahāmegho uṭṭhito*.

**anovassakaṭṭhānam<sup>432</sup> kātum vāyamāhī.” ti**  
please endeavour to make a wooden shelter.”

**So: “Evaṃ karissāmī!” ti daṇḍakehi kuṭīkam<sup>433</sup> katvā,**  
He said: “I will do so!” and he made a little hut with sticks,

**“Chadanatthāya tiṇaṃ āharissāmī,” ti**  
and said: “I will go and bring grass to thatch it,”

**ekasmiṃ mahāvammikapāde<sup>434</sup> tiṇaṃ chindati.**  
and he cut the grass near the foot of a certain great anthill.

**Atha naṃ vammike nipanno kaṇhasappo pāde ḍaṃsi<sup>435</sup>**  
Then a black snake<sup>436</sup> that was lying in the anthill bit him on the foot

**so tasmīṃ yeva ṭhāne patito.**  
and through that he fell down (dead) on the spot.

**Sā pi: ‘Idāni āgamissati, idāni āgamissatī,’ ti sabbarattim khepetvā:**  
She, however, spent the whole night thinking: ‘Now he will come, now he will come,’

**“Addhā maṃ so: ‘Anāthā esā,’ ti magge chaḍḍetvā<sup>437</sup> gato bhavissatī.” ti**  
and said: “Certainly, he is thinking: ‘She is helpless,’ and he will have abandoned me on the road and gone away.”

**Āloke sañjāte padānusārena olokenṭī vammikapāde patitaṃ disvā:**  
The light appeared while she was searching (for him) by following his footsteps and, seeing he had fallen at the foot of an anthill,

**“Maṃ nissāya naṭṭho puriso,” ti paridevitvā,**  
she lamented: “Because of me this man perished,”

**daharadārakam passenādāya, mahallakam aṅgulīhi<sup>438</sup> gāhāpetvā,**  
and having taken her young boy on her side and made the elder one grasp her fingers,

**maggena gacchantī antarāmagge ekam uttānanadim<sup>439</sup> disvā,**  
while going along the road, she saw a certain shallow river across the highway,

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<sup>432</sup> RTE, ChS: *attano vasanaṭṭhānam*.

<sup>433</sup> SHB, PTS: *kuṭīm*.

<sup>434</sup> SHB, PTS: *vammikapāde*.

<sup>435</sup> SHB, PTS: *ḍasi*.

<sup>436</sup> A cobra, the most deadly of the deadly snakes.

<sup>437</sup> PTS: *chaḍḍetvā*.

<sup>438</sup> RTE: *aṅgulim*.

<sup>439</sup> SHB, PTS: *-nadikam*.

**‘Dve pi<sup>440</sup> dārake ekappahārenea<sup>441</sup> ādāya gantuṃ na sakkhissāmī,’ ti<sup>442</sup>**  
and realising: ‘I will not be able to go over in one go with both the boys,’

**jeṭṭhakaṃ orimatīre ṭhapetvā, daharaṃ<sup>443</sup> paratīraṃ netvā,**  
she placed the eldest on the near shore, and carried the youngest to the far shore,

**pilotikacumbaṭake<sup>444</sup> nipajjāpetvā, puna nivattitvā,**  
lay him down on a cloth pillow, crossed back again,

**‘Itaraṃ<sup>445</sup> gahetvā gamissāmī,’ ti nadim̐ otari.**  
and entered the river, thinking: ‘I will go and fetch the other (child).’

**Athassā nadīmajjhaṃ pattakāle eko seno:**  
Then at the time she reached the middle of the river, one hawk,

**‘Mamsapiṇḍo<sup>446</sup> ayan,’-ti saññāya, dāraḥkaṃ vijjhituṃ<sup>447</sup> āgacchati.**  
thinking: ‘This is a piece of meat,’ came to peck at the (youngest) child.

**Sā hatthaṃ pasāretvā senaṃ palāpesi.**  
She waved her hand to drive the hawk off.

**Tassā taṃ hatthavikāraṃ disvā, mahallakadārako:**  
Having seen the gesture of her hand, the eldest child,

**‘Maṃ pakkosatī,’ ti saññāya, nadim̐ otarivā,**  
thinking: ‘She is summoning me,’ descended into the river,

**sote patito yathāsotaṃ agamāsi.**  
fell into the stream and was borne away with the current.

**So pi seno tassā asampattāya eva,**  
The hawk, before she could reach him,

**taṃ daharadāraḥkaṃ<sup>448</sup> gaṇhitvā agamāsi.**  
grabbed the youngest child and bore him away.

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<sup>440</sup> SHB, PTS: *dve pi dāni*.

<sup>441</sup> PTS: *ekappahārenea*.

<sup>442</sup> SHB, PTS: *sakkhissāmī*, omit *ti*.

<sup>443</sup> RTE: *daharaṃ dāraḥkaṃ*; PTS: *daharakaṃ*.

<sup>444</sup> RTE: *-cumbaṭake*; PTS: *-cumbaṭe*.

<sup>445</sup> RTE: *Imaṃ*.

<sup>446</sup> SHB, PTS: *-piṇḍako*.

<sup>447</sup> RTE: *gaṇhitvā*.

<sup>448</sup> SHB, PTS: *dāraḥkaṃ*.

**Sā balavasokābhībūtā antarāmagge imam vilāpagītam<sup>449</sup> gāyantī gacchati:**  
She, overcome with great grief, went along the highway wailing this mournful song:

**“Ubho puttā kālaṅkatā,<sup>450</sup> panthe mayham Patī mato.” ti**  
“Both my sons have died, and my Husband is dead on the path.”

**Sā evam vilappamānā<sup>451</sup> va<sup>452</sup> Sāvattim patvā, kulasabhāgam gantvā pi,**  
She reached Sāvattī wailing like this, went to the good families district,

**sokavaseneva attano geham vavatthapetum asakkontī:**  
and through grief was unable to find her own home,

**“Imasmim thāne evamvidham nāma kulam atthi,**  
° and asked: “In this place there is such and such a family,

**kataram tam gehan?”-ti paṭipucchi.**  
(but) where is the house?”

**“Tvam tam kulam paṭipucchivā,<sup>453</sup> kim karissasi?**  
(They answered): “Having enquired about that family, what will you do?

**Tesam vasanageham vā tappahārena patitam,**  
The home they dwelt in fell down owing to being hit by the wind,

**tattheva<sup>454</sup> te sabbe pi jīvitakkhayaṃ pattā,**  
and right there and then all of them reached the end of their lives,

**atha ne<sup>455</sup> khuddakamahallake ekacitakasmim yeva jhāpenti.**  
now they are (all), young and old, burning on a funeral pyre.

**Passa: esā dhūmavaṭṭi paññāyatī.” ti**  
Look: you can make out the rising smoke.”

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<sup>449</sup> SHB, PTS: *vilāpagītakam*; RTE: *vilāpam gītakam*.

<sup>450</sup> SHB, PTS, RTE: *kālakatā*.

<sup>451</sup> PTS: *vilappamānā*.

<sup>452</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

<sup>453</sup> SHB, PTS: *pucchivā*.

<sup>454</sup> SHB, PTS: *tattha*.

<sup>455</sup> PTS: *nesam*.

**Sā taṃ katham̐ sutvā va: “Kiṃ tumhe vadathā?” ti**

When she heard this, she said: “What did you say?”

**Attano nivatthasāṭakam̐<sup>456</sup> sandhāretum̐ asakkontī,**

Being unable to bear being clothed in her robe,

**jātaniyāmeneva, bāhā paggayha kandaṃānā,**

just as when she was born,<sup>457</sup> stretching out her arms and crying,

**ñātīnaṃ citakaṭṭhānaṃ gantvā,**

she went to her relatives’ funeral pyre,

**taṃ vilāpagītaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ katvā, paridevamānā:**

and filled out her mournful song, lamenting:

**“Ubho puttā kālaṅkatā, panthe mayhaṃ Patī mato;**

“Both my sons have died, and my Husband is dead on the path;

**Mātā Pitā ca Bhātā ca, ekacitake<sup>458</sup> ḍayhare.” ti āha.**

Mother, Father and Brothers too, burn upon the funeral pyre.”

**Aññena janena paṭam̐<sup>459</sup> dinnam-pi phāletvā phāletvā<sup>460</sup> chaḍḍeti.**

Though she was given a cloth by other people, each time she tore it off, and threw it away.

**Atha naṃ diṭṭhadiṭṭhaṭṭhāne mahājano parivāretvā carati,<sup>461</sup>**

Then everywhere she was seen the populace walked surrounding her,

**athassā: “Ayaṃ paṭācāraṃ paṭapariharaṇaṃ vinā caratī,” ti<sup>462</sup>**

and said: “This cloth-wanderer wanders without a cloth for protection,”

**Paṭācārā teva nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**

and they made the name Paṭācārā.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> RTE: *nivaṭṭha-*.

<sup>457</sup> I.e. naked.

<sup>458</sup> SHB, RTE, ChS: *ekacitakasmīṃ*.

<sup>459</sup> RTE, ChS: *sāṭakam̐*.

<sup>460</sup> RTE omits: *phāletvā*.

<sup>461</sup> RTE: *vicarati*.

<sup>462</sup> RTE: *paṭācārā paṭavicāraṇaṃ vinā vicaratī ti*.

<sup>463</sup> This is an odd explanation, she is called cloth-wanderer because she has no clothes? We might have expected the name to be Apaṭācārā, clothless wanderer. There is a second explanation of the name below, also unconvincing, which suggests that the origin of the name had been forgotten.

**Yasmā cassā so<sup>464</sup> naggabhāvena alajjī-ācāro<sup>465</sup> pākaṭo ahosi,**  
Because she became famous for shamelessly wandering around with nothing on,

**tasmā: “Patito<sup>466</sup> ācāro assā,” ti<sup>467</sup> Paṭācārā teva nāmaṃ akamsu.**  
therefore (they said): “Her (good) conduct has fallen away,” and they made the name Paṭācārā.

**Sā ekadivasam Sathhari mahājanassa Dhammam desente,**  
One day as the Teacher was teaching Dhamma to the populace,

**vihāram pavisitvā, parisapariyante aṭṭhāsi.**  
she entered the monastery, and stood at the edge of the assembly.

**Satthā mettāpharaṇena<sup>468</sup> pharivā:**  
The Teacher, having suffused her with a suffusion of loving-kindness,

**“Satiṃ paṭilabha, Bhagini, satiṃ paṭilabha, Bhaginī.” ti āha.**  
said: “Regain your mindfulness, Sister, regain your mindfulness, Sister.”

**Tassā Satthu vacanam sutvā balavahirottappam āgataṃ,**  
Having heard the Teacher’s word she regained a strong sense of modesty and shame,

**sā tattheva bhūmiyam nisīdi.**  
and she sat down on the ground right there.

**Avidūre ṭhito puriso<sup>469</sup> uttarisāṭakam khipivā adāsi.**  
A gentleman who was standing not far away threw her an upper robe.

**Sā tam nivāsetvā Dhammam assosi.**  
She dressed herself and listened to the Dhamma.

**Satthā tassā cariyavasena, imā Dhammapade gāthā āha:**  
The Teacher, on account of her, spoke this verse found in the Dhammapada:

**“Na santi puttā tāṇāya, na Pitā na pi<sup>470</sup> bandhavā,**  
“Not in children is there refuge, not in Father or in kin,

**Antakenāhipannassa natthi ñātisu tāṇatā.**  
for one attacked by the End-Maker<sup>471</sup> there is no refuge in relatives.

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<sup>464</sup> RTE: *panassā*.

<sup>465</sup> RTE: *alajjī va ācāro*.

<sup>466</sup> PTS: *Paṭu*.

<sup>467</sup> SHB: *Paṭu ācāro assā ti patito ācāro assā ti*.

<sup>468</sup> RTE: *mettāya*.

<sup>469</sup> SHB, PTS: *ṭhitapuriso*.

<sup>470</sup> ChS: *nāpi*.

**Etam-atthavasam̐ ñatvā, paṇḍito sīlasam̐vuto,**  
Having understood the consequence, the wise one who protects his virtue,

**Nibbānagamanam̐ Maggam̐ khippam-eva visodhaye.” ti**  
quickly purifies the Path that leads to Nibbāna.”<sup>472</sup>

**Sā gāthāpariyosāne yathāḥhitā va sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhāya,**  
At the conclusion of that verse as she stood there she was established in Stream-Entry,

**Satthāram̐ upasaṅkamtivā vanditvā<sup>473</sup> pabbajjam̐ yāci.**  
and having approached and worshipped the Teacher, she asked for the going forth.

**Satthā<sup>474</sup> tassā: “Bhikkhunī-upassayam̐<sup>475</sup> gantvā pabbajā,” ti**  
The Teacher said to her: “Go to the nunnery and go forth,”

**pabbajjam̐ sampaṭicchi.**  
and he allowed her going forth.<sup>476</sup>

**Sā ekadivasam̐ kuṭena udakam̐ ādāya, pāde dhovantī udakam̐ āsiñci,**  
One day she took water in her waterpot, and pouring it while washing her feet,

**taṃ thokam̐ gantvā pacchiḥji.**  
it went (but) a little way and stopped.

**Dutiyavāre āsittam̐ tato dūrataram̐ agamāsi.**  
She poured it a second time and it went a little further.

**Tatīyavāre āsittam̐ tato pi dūrataran-ti.**  
She poured it a third time and it went even further than that.

**Sā tad-eva ārammaṇam̐ gahetvā, tayo vaye paricchinditvā,**  
Having taken that as a meditation object, and defining the three ages (of life),

**‘Mayā paṭhamam̐ āsittam̐ udakam̐ viya ime sattā paṭhamavaye pi maranti;**  
° she thought: ‘Like the first pouring of the water by me, (some of) these beings die in the first age (of life);

**tato<sup>477</sup> dūrataram̐ gataṃ,**  
those who go further than that,

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<sup>471</sup> Another name for Māra, or death.

<sup>472</sup> Dhp. 288-289.

<sup>473</sup> SHB, PTS add: *ḥhitā*.

<sup>474</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Satthā*.

<sup>475</sup> RTE: *bhikkhunūpassayam̐*.

<sup>476</sup> The following lines are from near the end of the Dhammapada Commentary to verse 113.

<sup>477</sup> RTE: *tato pi*.

**dutiyavāre āsittam udakam<sup>478</sup> viya, majjhimavaye pi maranti;**  
like the second time I poured out the water, die in middle age;

**tato pi dūrataram gatam, tatiyavāre āsittam udakam viya,**  
those who go further than that, like the third time I poured out the water,

**pacchimavaye pi maranti yevā,' ti cintesi.**  
surely die in the last age (of life).'

**Satthā Gandhakuṭiyam nisinno va obhāsam pharivā,**  
The Teacher, sitting radiant in the Perfumed Cottage,

**tassā sammukhe ṭhatvā kathento viya,**  
(appeared) as though standing and speaking with her face to face,

**“Evam-etam Paṭācārē,**  
° saying: “Thus Paṭācārā,

**pañcannam-pi<sup>479</sup> khandhānam udayabbayam apassantassa**  
better than not seeing the rise and fall of the five constituents (of mind and body)

**vassasatam jīvanato,<sup>480</sup> tesam udayabbayam passantassa**  
while living for a hundred years, is seeing rise and fall

**ekāham-pi ekakkhaṇam-pi jīvitam seyyo,” ti vatvā,**  
for even a day or for even a moment,”

**anusandhim ghaṭetvā, Dhammam desento, imam<sup>481</sup> gātham-āha:**  
and after making the connection, teaching Dhamma, he spoke this verse:

**“Yo ca vassasatam jīve apassam udayabbayam,**  
“He who lives for a hundred years not seeing rise and fall,

**Ekāham jīvitam seyyo passato udayabbayan.”-ti**  
is surpassed by one living for one day seeing rise and fall.”<sup>482</sup>

**Desanāvasāne Paṭācārā saha paṭisambhidāhi Arahattam pāpuṇi.**

At the conclusion of the teaching Paṭācārā attained Liberation together with the analytic knowledges.

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<sup>478</sup> PTS: *āsittaudakam*; also below.

<sup>479</sup> RTE: *pañcannam hi*.

<sup>480</sup> RTE: *jīvitato*; PTS adds: *pi*.

<sup>481</sup> ChS omits: *imam*.

<sup>482</sup> Dh. 113. It means seeing the rising and falling away of everything in existence, but particularly of one's own constituent parts.

**Sā pabbajitvā na cirasseva Arahattaṃ patvā,<sup>483</sup>**

Not long after her going forth, and her attainment of Liberation,

**Buddhavacanaṃ gaṇhanti<sup>484</sup> Vinayapiṭake ciṅṇavasī ahoṣi.**

grasping the Buddha's words she became one who had mastered the Basket of Discipline.

**Aparabhāge Satthā Jetavane nisinno,**

Later, while sitting in Jeta's Wood,

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu<sup>485</sup> ṭhapento,**

in placing the nuns successively in their different positions,

**Paṭācāraṃ Vinayadharānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī. ti**

he placed Paṭācāra in the foremost position of those who bore the Discipline in mind.

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<sup>483</sup> PTS: *pattā*.

<sup>484</sup> RTE: *uggaṇhi*.

<sup>485</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## Dhammadinnātherīvatthu

### 5. The Story about the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā

#### Introduction

The story in the commentary about this great nun is somewhat anomalous, as her story is said to have been similar to Ven. Khemā's, even down to doing a deed for the Chief Disciple of the Buddha Padumuttara, the Elder Sujāta, and aspiring for a similar position herself. But the commentary here seems somewhat confused, as in her Traditional verses, it clearly says she did a good deed for the Elder Sujāta, and at a later time heard Buddha Padumuttara place a nun in foremost position of those who talk about Dhamma, and aspired to that position herself, which is indeed the position she fulfilled, being the counterpart of Ven. Mantāniputta.

Later she was also one of the seven sisters who built a monastery for the Buddha Kassapa's monks, and was eventually reborn into her last life. Her birthplace is not stated here, but the Tradition states it was in Giribbaja (another name for Rājagaha), and she did indeed marry the merchant Visākha who was living in that city, and who was a close friend of King Bimbisāra.

Her husband Visākha was amongst the crowds of people who went out to greet the Buddha when he returned to Rājagaha around nine months after his Awakening, and there and then he attained the First Path, and later on he progressed through to the Third Path.

At that point he became incapable to living a normal household life, having transcended sensual desire, and he therefore informed his wife and gave her permission to choose her own future. Dhammadinnā, not wishing to take up what he had thrown away, chose to go forth and after ordination went to a hermitage in the countryside, where she quickly attained Liberation.

Visākha was surprised by her quick return to Rājagaha and didn't know whether it was because she was dissatisfied with the life or not, so he decided to visit her to find out. Rather than asking what could be an embarrassing question though, he skilfully asked her about the teaching, deepening the questions as he received answers.

This showed him beyond doubt, that not only was she satisfied, but that her own personal experience was beyond his own; when he reported his conversation to the Buddha he confirmed Dhammadinnā's greatness and attainment, and made her teaching his own by approving it as being the same as he himself would have taught.

The discourse that was recorded on that occasion, the Small Discourse giving an Elaboration (MN 44), is one of the most outstanding discourses spoken by a disciple in the Tipiṭaka, and is justly famous.<sup>486</sup> It was owing to this discourse that Ven. Dhammadinnā was appointed to the position of foremost amongst those who talk on Dhamma.

#### AN 1.5.5

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<sup>486</sup> I have translated it elsewhere on this website.

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**Dhammakathikānaṃ, yad-idaṃ Dhammadinnā.**

amongst those who talk about Dhamma, that is to say, Dhammadinnā.

**AA 1.5.5**

(commentary)

**Pañcame, “Dhammakathikānaṃ,”-ti**

In the fifth (story), “Amongst those who talk about Dhamma,”

**Dhammakathikānaṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ<sup>487</sup> Dhammadinnā aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows (why) Dhammadinnā, amongst those who talked about Dhamma, was said to be foremost.

### **Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Sā kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Haṃsavatiyaṃ parāyattaṭṭhāne nibbattivā,**

she was reborn in a place belonging to others in Haṃsavatī,<sup>488</sup>

**Padumuttarassa Bhagavato aggasāvakassa Sujātatherassa<sup>489</sup>**

° and after doing a great deed for the Elder Sujāta,<sup>490</sup>

**adhikārakammaṃ<sup>491</sup> katvā,**

the Chief Disciple of the Gracious Padumuttara,

**taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she aspired for that position herself.

**Sā yāvajīvaṃ kusalaṃ katvā, Sagge nibbatti,**

She did good deeds for the rest of her life, and was reborn in Heaven,

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<sup>487</sup> SHB, PTS: *Dhammakathikabhikkhunīnaṃ*.

<sup>488</sup> It means she was born to a servant in someone else's house.

<sup>489</sup> RTE, ChS: *Sujātatherassa*.

<sup>490</sup> In the Traditions it says she gave him a cake, led him to her master's house and fed him again.

<sup>491</sup> SHB, PTS: *adhikāraṃ*.

**sabbaṃ heṭṭhā Khemātheriyā abhinīhāraseneva veditabbaṃ.**

and everything below should be understood in accordance with the Elder Khemā's resolution.<sup>492</sup>

### **Various Good Deeds under Different Buddhas**

**Phussabuddhakāle panesā,**

But at the time of the Buddha Phussa she,

**Satthu vemātikānaṃ tiṇṇaṃ bhātikānaṃ,**

° while living with the Teacher's three brothers by different Mothers,

**dānādhikāre ṭhapitakammikassa gehe vasamānā,**

being placed as a servant in the house of the one in charge of almsgiving,

**“Ekaṃ dehī,” ti vuttā dve adāsi.**

when told: “Give one,” gave two.<sup>493</sup>

**Evam sabbaṃ aparihāpentī datvā, dvenavutikappe atikkamma,**

Thus, having given all, but without causing decline, ninety-two aeons having passed by,

**Kassapabuddhakāle Kikissa Kāsirañño gehe paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhitvā,**

she was conceived in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi, in the time of the Buddha Kassapa,

**sattannaṃ bhaginīnaṃ abbhantarā hutvā,**

and became (one) amongst seven sisters,

**vīsativassasahassāni brahmacariyaṃ caritvā,**

lived as a celibate for twenty-thousand years,

**Bhikkhusaṅghassa vasanapariveṇaṃ<sup>494</sup> kāretvā,**

had a dwelling place made for the Community of monks,

**ekaṃ Buddhantaraṃ devamanussesu saṃsaraṅtī,**

and being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) during one period when there was no Buddha,

**imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhitvā,**

when this (Gotama) Buddha arose was conceived in a good family home,

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<sup>492</sup> It is not easy to see how to apply this instruction as after Khemā's aspiration the story at the time of Buddha Kassapa is told. But here that comes after the following story during the period of Buddha Phussa.

<sup>493</sup> This life is unrecorded in her Apadāna.

<sup>494</sup> SHB, PTS: *vasanaka*-.

**aparabhāge Visākhaseṭṭhino gehaṃ gatā.**<sup>495</sup>

and later went to the home of the merchant Visākha.<sup>496</sup>

### Her Last Life

**Visākhaseṭṭhi nāma Bimbisārassa sahāyako,**

The merchant Visākha, (King) Bimbisāra's friend,

**Raññā saddhiṃ Dasabalassa paṭhamadassanaṃ gantvā, Dhammaṃ sutvā,**

went with the King and for the first time saw the One of Ten Powers, listened to the Dhamma,

**Sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhito, aparabhāge Anāgāmiṭṭhalaṃ sacchākāsi.**

was established in the Fruit of Stream-Entry, and later realised the Fruit of Non-Returner.

**So taṃ divasaṃ gharaṃ gantvā,**

That day, after going home,

**sopānamatthake ṭhitāya Dhammadinnāya hatthe pasārite,**

Dhammadinnā was standing at the top of the stairs with outstretched hands,

**hatthaṃ anālambitvā va pāsādaṃ abhiruhi.**

(but) without taking her hand he ascended the mansion.

**Bhuñjamāno pi: “Imaṃ detha, imaṃ harathā,” ti**<sup>497</sup> **na byāhari.**

Also while eating he did not speak saying: “Give this, bring that.”

**Dhammadinnā kaṭacchuṃ gahetvā, parivisaṃmānā cintesi:**

Dhammadinnā, having taken a spoon, reflected while serving:

**“Ayaṃ me hatthālambakaṃ**<sup>498</sup> **dentiyā pi hatthaṃ na ālambi,**<sup>499</sup>

“He did not take my hand as I was giving him my hand,

**bhuñjamāno pi kiñci na katheti, ko nu kho mayhaṃ doso?” ti**

and while eating he does not talk, I wonder what is my fault?”

**Atha naṃ bhuttāviṃ “Ko nu kho me, Ayya,**<sup>500</sup> **doso?” ti pucchi.**

Then, when he had eaten, she asked him: “Noble Sir, I wonder what is my fault?”

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<sup>495</sup> RTE: *paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi. Sā aparabhāge visākhaseṭṭhino bhariyā hutvā gehaṃ gatā.*

<sup>496</sup> I.e. she married the merchant of this name.

<sup>497</sup> RTE: *āharathā ti.*

<sup>498</sup> SHB, PTS: *hattho-*.

<sup>499</sup> RTE: *nālambi.*

<sup>500</sup> RTE: *Ayyaputta.*

**“Dhammadinne, tuyhaṃ doso natthi,**  
“Dhammadinnā, you have no fault,

**ahaṃ<sup>501</sup> pana ajja<sup>502</sup> paṭṭhāya santhavavasena tumhākaṃ,**  
but from today forward intimacy with you,

**santike nisīdituṃ vā ṭhātuṃ vā,<sup>503</sup>**  
to sit or to stand near,

**āharāpetvā<sup>504</sup> khādituṃ vā bhuñjituṃ vā abhabbo.**  
or to chew and eat after you have brought (food) is no longer possible.

**Tvaṃ sace icchasi imasmiṃ gehe vasa.**  
If you wish you can dwell in this home.

**No ce icchasi, yattakena te dhanena attho taṃ gaṇhitvā,**  
But if you do not wish, take however much wealth you need,

**kulagharaṃ gacchā.” ti<sup>505</sup>**  
and go to your family’s house.<sup>506</sup>

### **Her Renunciation and Attainments**

**“Ayyaputta, evaṃ sante,**  
“Noble Sir, that being so,

**ahaṃ tumhehi chaḍḍitakheḷaṃ, vamiṭavamaṇaṃ,<sup>507</sup>**  
on that which has been spat aside, or vomited up,

**sīsena ukkhipivā na<sup>508</sup> carissāmi,<sup>509</sup>**  
I could not live with my head held high,

**mayhaṃ pabbajjaṃ anujānāthā.” ti**  
please allow my going forth.”

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<sup>501</sup> PTS: *mayhaṃ*.

<sup>502</sup> RTE: *ajjato*.

<sup>503</sup> PTS omits: *ṭhātuṃ vā*.

<sup>504</sup> SHB: *āharāpetvā āharāpetvā*.

<sup>505</sup> ChS: *gacchāhi ti*.

<sup>506</sup> This story of Visākha’s and Dhammadinnā’s renunciation is told in much greater detail in the Majjhima Commentary on Cūḷavedallasuttaṃ (MN 44), a translation of which is found elsewhere on this website.

<sup>507</sup> RTE: *nāhaṃ tumhehi chaḍḍitaṃ kheḷamiva kacavaraṃ*.

<sup>508</sup> RTE omits: *na*.

<sup>509</sup> SHB, PTS: *na sīsena ukkhipivā vicarissāmi*.

**Visākho: “Sādhu, Dhammadinne!” ti Rañño ārocetvā,**

Visākha said: “Very good, Dhammadinnā!” and after announcing it to the King,

**Dhammadinnaṃ suvaṇṇasivikāya bhikkhunī-upassayaṃ pabbajjathāya pesesi.**

he sent Dhammadinnā in a golden palanquin to the nunnery for the going forth.

**Sā pabbajivā cintesi:**

After the going forth she thought:

**“Ayaṃ tāva seṭṭhi gharamajjhe ṭhito va dukkhassantaṃ<sup>510</sup> akāsi,**

“This merchant while still in the midst of his house has made an end to suffering,<sup>511</sup>

**pabbajjaṃ laddhakā lato paṭṭhāya pana**

but from the time I received the going forth

**mayā pi dukkhassantaṃ kātum vaṭṭatī.” ti**

(till now) I have yet to make an end to suffering.”

**Ācariyupajjhāyānaṃ santikaṃ gantvā:**

She went to her teacher and preceptor,

**“Ayye, mayhaṃ ākiṇṇaṭṭhāne cittaṃ na ramati,<sup>512</sup>**

° and said: “Noble Ladies, my mind does not delight in this crowded place,

**gāmakāvāsaṃ gacchāmi,” ti āha.**

I would go to a village dwelling.”<sup>513</sup>

**Therīyo tassā mahākulā nikkhamma pabbajitabhāvena,**

The Elders, because she had renounced a great family through her going forth,

**cittaṃ kopetum<sup>514</sup> asakkontiyo, taṃ gahetvā gāmakāvāsaṃ agamaṃsu.**

felt unable to find fault with her thought, and they took her and went to a village dwelling.

**Sā atīte majjitasāṅkhāratāya<sup>515</sup>**

As she had prepared the right conditions in the past

**na cirasseva saha paṭisambhidāhi Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**

not long after she attained Liberation together with the analytic knowledges.

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<sup>510</sup> RTE: *dukkhassa antaṃ*.

<sup>511</sup> This usually indicates Liberation, but here we have to understand it as indicating a *relative* end to suffering, as Visākha was a Non-Returner, still at the third stage of the path.

<sup>512</sup> RTE: *ākiṇṇaṭṭhāne cittaṃ namati*.

<sup>513</sup> Since the incident when Arahāt Uppalavaṇṇā was raped nuns were not allowed to live by themselves in the wilderness (*araññā*), so she asks to go and live somewhere at least not so crowded as a town.

<sup>514</sup> RTE, PTS: *kopetum*.

<sup>515</sup> RTE, ChS: *maddita-*.

## Her Teaching

**Athassā etad-ahosi:**

Then it occurred to her:

**“Mayham̐ kiccaṃ matthakaṃ pattam̐, idha vasitvā kiṃ karissāmi?**

“I have attained the summit of what was to be done, living here what will I do?”

**Rājagaham-eva gacchāmi,**

I shall go to Rājagaha,

**tatra maṃ nissāya bahu ñātisaṅgho puññāni karissatī,” ti**

and there on account of me a large company of (my) relatives will make merit,”

**Therīyo gahetvā nagaram-eva paccāgatā.**

and with the Elders she returned to the city.

**Visākho tassā āgatabhāvaṃ<sup>516</sup> sutvā,<sup>517</sup>**

Visākha, hearing that she had come, thought:

**‘Sīgham̐ āgatā ukkaṅṭhitā nu kho bhavissatī?’ ti**

‘Quickly she came, is it because she is dissatisfied?’

**Sāyanhasamaye tassā santikaṃ gantvā abhivādetvā, ekamantaṃ nisinno:**

In the evening time, he went into her presence and worshipped, and sat down at one side,

**‘Ukkaṅṭhitabhāvaṃ pucchitum̐ ayuttan,’-ti**

thinking: ‘It is inappropriate to ask about her dissatisfaction,’

**pañcakkhandhādivasena pañhe pucchi,**

(and instead) he asked a question about the five constituent parts and so forth,<sup>518</sup>

**Dhammadinnā khaggena uppalanāle<sup>519</sup> chindantī viya,**

and Dhammadinnā, like one who cuts through a lily stalk with a sword,

**pucchitaṃ pucchitaṃ<sup>520</sup> vissajjesi.**

answered each of the questions.

**Upāsako Dhammadinnātheriyā ñāṇassa sūrabhāvaṃ<sup>521</sup> ñatvā,**

The devotee, understanding how sharp was the Elder Nun Dhammadinnā’s knowledge,

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<sup>516</sup> SHB, PTS: *āgamanabhāvaṃ*.

<sup>517</sup> RTE, ChS: *ñatvā*.

<sup>518</sup> This refers to the Cūḷavedallasuttaṃ (MN 44).

<sup>519</sup> RTE, ChS: *uppalanālaṃ*.

<sup>520</sup> SHB: *pucchitapucchitaṃ*.

<sup>521</sup> RTE: *ñāṇasūrabhāvaṃ*.

**attano<sup>522</sup> adhigataṭṭhāne paṭipāṭiyā tīsu maggesu sabbākārena pañhe pucchivā,**  
after asking questions in order about all the conditions for the three paths of his own attainment,

**uggahavasena Arahattamagge<sup>523</sup> pi pucchi.**  
asked about learning the Path to Liberation.

**Dhammadinnā Therī pi upāsakassa yāva Anāgāmiphālā va visayabhāvaṃ ñatvā:**  
The Elder Nun Dhammadinnā understanding that the devotee had only reached the state up to the Fruit of Non-Returner,

**‘Idāni attano visayaṃ atikkamivā dhāvati,’ ti taṃ nivattentī:**  
thinking: ‘Now he is going beyond his own state and running on,’ stopping him,

**“Accasarā, āvuso<sup>524</sup> Visākha, pañhe<sup>525</sup> nāsakkhi pañhānaṃ pariyaṇaṃ gahetuṃ,**  
° said: “You are not able to grasp, friend Visākha, answers to questions that are beyond your limits,

**Nibbānogaḍḍhaṃ hi, āvuso Visākha,**  
like immersion in Nibbāna, friend Visākha,

**brahmacariyaṃ Nibbānaparāyaṇaṃ, Nibbānapariyosānaṃ.**  
the spiritual life that ends in Nibbāna, that has a conclusion in Nibbāna.

**Ākaṅkhamāno ca tvaṃ, āvuso Visākha,**  
Desiring this, friend Visākha,

**Bhagavantaṃ upasaṅkamivā etam-atthaṃ puccheyyāsi,**  
approach the Fortunate One and you can ask him about this matter,

**yathā ca te Bhagavā byākaroti, tathā naṃ dhāreyyāsi,” ti āha.**  
and just as the Fortunate One explains, so you should bear it in mind.”

**Visākho Satthu santikaṃ gantvā sabbaṃ pucchāvissajjananayaṃ kathesi.**  
Visākha went into the presence of the Teacher and told him the questions and answers (that had been given).

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<sup>522</sup> PTS: *attanā*.

<sup>523</sup> PTS: *-maggesu*.

<sup>524</sup> SHB, PTS: *Accasarāvuso*; RTE: *Tvaṃ āvuso*.

<sup>525</sup> RTE omits: *pañhe*.

**Satthā tassa vacanam sutvā,**

The Teacher listened to his words,

**“Mama dhītāya atītānāgatapaccuppannesu khandhesu taṇhā natthī,” ti vatvā,**  
and saying: “My daughter has no craving for past, future or present constituents,”

**Dhammapade imam gātham-āha:**

spoke this verse found in the Dhammapada:<sup>526</sup>

**“Yassa pure ca pacchā ca majjhe ca natthi kiñcanam,**

“The one who has nothing in the past, the future or the present,

**akiñcanam anādānam, tam-aham brūmi brāhmaṇan.”-ti**

and is unattached to this nothing, that one I call a spiritual person.”

**Tato Dhammadinnāya sādhu-kāram datvā, Visākham upāsakam etad-avoca:**

Then having given approval to Dhammadinnā, he said this to the devotee Visākha:

**“Paṇḍitā, Visākha, Dhammadinnā bhikkhunī,**

“Wise, Visākha, is the nun Dhammadinnā,

**mahāpaññā, Visākha, Dhammadinnā bhikkhunī,**

having great wisdom, Visākha, is the nun Dhammadinnā,

**maṃ ce<sup>527</sup> pi tvam, Visākha, etam-attham puccheyyāsi,**

if you were to ask me, Visākha, the same matter,

**aham-pi taṃ evam-evam<sup>528</sup> byākareyyam,<sup>529</sup>**

I would answer it in the same way,

**yathā taṃ Dhammadinnāya bhikkhuniyā byākataṃ,**

in the same way as the nun Dhammadinnā has answered,

**eso cevetassa<sup>530</sup> attho, evañ-ca naṃ dhārehī.” ti**

for this is indeed the meaning, and so should you bear it in mind.”

**Evam-etam vatthu samuṭṭhitam.**

Thus did the story unfold.

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<sup>526</sup> Dhp 421.

<sup>527</sup> RTE: *sace*.

<sup>528</sup> RTE, ChS: *evam-eva*.

<sup>529</sup> RTE: *etam-attham byākareyyāmi*.

<sup>530</sup> RTE: *eso ceva tassa*; PTS: *eso ve tassa*.

**Aparabhāge<sup>531</sup> Satthā Jetavane nisinno,<sup>532</sup>**

Later as the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood,

**paṭipāṭiyā bhikkhuniyo ṭhānantaresu<sup>533</sup> ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**idam-eva Cūḷavedallam,<sup>534</sup> aṭṭhuppattim<sup>535</sup> katvā,**

regarding this Small (Discourse giving an) Elaboration,<sup>536</sup> as the occasion had arisen,

**Therim imasmiṃ Sāsane Dhammakathikānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position in the Dispensation amongst those who talked about Dhamma.

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<sup>531</sup> SHB, PTS adds: *pana*.

<sup>532</sup> RTE: *viharanto*.

<sup>533</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

<sup>534</sup> SHB, PTS: *Culla-*.

<sup>535</sup> RTE: *atthuppattim*.

<sup>536</sup> A text and translation of this discourse can be found elsewhere on this website.

## Nandātherīvatthu

### 6. The Story about the Elder Nun Nandā

#### Introduction

This is one of the slighter stories regarding the nuns in this section: having made her aspiration during Buddha Padumuttara's time, and being reborn amongst god and men for a hundred thousand aeons, she was reborn through Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī some time before the Bodhisatta, and was the elder sister of Nanda and elder half-sister to the Buddha himself.

In the Aṅguttara commentary translated here, it is clear that she had several names: Nandā, Rūpānandā and Janapadakalyāṇī. In the Suttanipāta commentary (to Sn 1.11), however, Ven. Dhammapāla distinguishes three Elders having these names, and gives different stories for each. It seems that there was quite some confusion about this Elder in the tradition.

She went forth into the homeless life shortly after her Mother, Brother and half-Brother's wife did, but not out of faith, it seems, and she did not like to meet with the Buddha, as she thought he would blame her for her great beauty. She therefore avoided contact even when the time for the fortnightly instruction came round.<sup>537</sup>

The Buddha then gave an order saying that everyone must come and see him personally for the instruction, and when she came he created a beautiful woman with his spiritual power who attended on Him, and this caused her regret for her reluctance to come before.

The Buddha then gave her two teachings on the impermanent and unsatisfactory nature of the body, a verse now recorded in the Dhammapada, and a discourse now in the Suttanipāta. Hearing these teachings she soon attained Liberation.

As she had gained deep insight through these teachings and took great delight in meditation thereafter, the Buddha appointed her as the foremost nun amongst those who meditate.

With her story compare Ven. Khemā's above, which it resembles in many respects. Her male counterpart was Kaṅkhā Revata.

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<sup>537</sup> Qualified monks were and are required to give instruction to the nuns on the Full Moon and New Moon dates.

**AN 1.5.6**  
**(text)**

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**jhāyīnam, yad-idam Nandā.**

amongst those who meditate, that is to say, Nandā.

**AA 1.5.6**  
**(commentary)**

**Chaṭṭhe, “Jhāyīnam, yad-idam Nandā,” ti**

In the sixth (story), “Amongst those who meditate, that is to say, Nandā,”

**jhānābhiratānam Nandā Therī aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why the Elder Nun Nandā, amongst those who delighted in meditation, was said to be foremost.

**Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Sā kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Hamsavatiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gahetvā,<sup>538</sup>**

she was conceived in a good family home in Hamsavatī,

**aparabhāge, Satthu Dhammadesanam<sup>539</sup> suṇantī,**

and later, while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**Satthāram ekaṃ bhikkhunim jhānābhiratānam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**

seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who meditate,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaram patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

**Her Last Life**

**Sā<sup>540</sup> tato kappasatasahassam devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

She was reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**amhākam Satthu nibbattito<sup>541</sup> puretaram-eva,**

and was reborn (at a time) before our Teacher,<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> ChS: *gaṇhitvā*.

<sup>539</sup> SHB, PTS: *Dhamman*; RTE omits: *Satthu*; reads: *Dhammakatham*.

<sup>540</sup> PTS omits: *Sā*.

<sup>541</sup> RTE: *uppattito*.

**Mahāpajāpatigotamiyā<sup>543</sup> kucchimim<sup>544</sup> paṭisandhim gaṇhi,**  
being conceived in the womb of Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī,

**Nandā tissā nāmaṃ akaṃsu, Rūpanandā ti pi vuccati,**  
and was given the name Nandā, also Beautiful Nandā was said,

**sā aparabhāge uttamarūpabhāvena Janapadakalyāṇī nāma jātā.**  
and later, because of her supreme beauty, the name Janapadakalyāṇī<sup>545</sup> arose.

**Sā amhākaṃ Dasabale sabbaññutaṃ patvā,**  
After our One of Ten Powers had attained omniscience,

**anupubbena Kapilavatthum āgantvā,**  
and gradually come to Kapilavatthu,

**Nandañ-ca Rāhulañ-ca pabbājetvā,**  
given the going forth to Rāhula and Nanda,

**pakkante Suddhodanamahārājassa parinibbutakāle:**  
and was leaving after the time of the Great King Suddhodana's Final Nibbāna,

**‘Mahāpajāpatim Gotamim Rāhulamātāñ-ca<sup>546</sup> nikkhamitvā,**  
° she understood: ‘After Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī and Rāhula's Mother had renounced,

**Satthu santike pabbajitā,’ ti ñatvā:**  
they received the going forth in the presence of the Teacher,’

**‘Imāsaṃ pabbajitakālato paṭṭhāya, mayhaṃ idha kiṃ kamman?’-ti**  
and she thought: ‘After their going forth, what work is there for me here?’<sup>547</sup>

**Mahāpajāpatiyā<sup>548</sup> santikaṃ gantvā pabbaji.**  
And she went into the presence of Mahāpajāpatī and (also) went forth.

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<sup>542</sup> The Traditions say she was the Buddha's younger sister. Both here and in the Therīgāthā Commentary though, she is said to be the elder.

<sup>543</sup> RTE: *Mahāpajāpatiyā Gotamiyā.*

<sup>544</sup> ChS: *kucchimhi.*

<sup>545</sup> Lit: *the Country Beauty.*

<sup>546</sup> RTE, PTS: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī ca Rāhulamātā ca.*

<sup>547</sup> In the Traditions she is persuaded to go forth by her Mother.

<sup>548</sup> RTE: *Mātu Mahāpajāpatiyā.*

**Pabbajitadivasato paṭṭhāya: ‘Satthā rūpaṃ garahatī,’ ti<sup>549</sup>**

From the day of her going forth, thinking: ‘The Teacher finds fault with beauty,’

**Satthu upaṭṭhānaṃ na gacchati,**

she didn’t go to attend on the Teacher,

**ovādavāre sampatte, aññaṃ pesetvā ovādaṃ āharāpeti.<sup>550</sup>**

and when an occasion for instruction arrived,<sup>551</sup> having sent another, she had her bring the instruction.

**Satthā tassā rūpamadamaṃ attabhāvaṃ<sup>552</sup> ñatvā:**

The Teacher, understanding that she was intoxicated with her own beauty,

**“Attano ovādaṃ attanā va āgantvā gaṇhantu,**

° said: “Let each one receive the instruction herself after coming,

**na bhikkhunīhi aññā pesetabbā,” ti āha.**

she should not send another from amongst the nuns.”

**Tato Rūpanandā, aññaṃ maggaṃ apassantī, akāmā, ovādaṃ agamāsi.**

Then Beautiful Nandā, not seeing another way, went unwillingly for her instruction.

**Satthā tassā caritavasena iddhiyā ekaṃ itthirūpaṃ nimminivā,**

The Teacher, because of her conduct, created a beautiful woman with his spiritual power,

**tālavaṇṇaṃ<sup>553</sup> gahetvā, bījamānaṃ viya akāsi.**

who held a palmyra fan, and seemed to be fanning him.

**Rūpanandā taṃ disvā cintesi:**

Seeing that Beautiful Nandā thought:

**‘Ahaṃ akāraṇeneva pamattā hutvā nāgacchāmi,**

‘Without reason I was heedless and I did not come,

**evarūpā pi itthiyo Satthu santike vissatthā caranti.<sup>554</sup>**

yet such beautiful women go about confidently in the presence of the Teacher.

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<sup>549</sup> RTE: *garahī ti.*

<sup>550</sup> RTE: *āharāpesi.*

<sup>551</sup> This was given before the fortnightly recitation of the Bhikkhuni Pātimokkha or Rules of Discipline.

<sup>552</sup> RTE: *rūpamadamaṃ-attama-eva.*

<sup>553</sup> RTE: *tālavaṇṇaṃ.*

<sup>554</sup> RTE: *vissatthā vicaranti.*

**Mama rūpaṃ etāsaṃ rūpassa kalamā nāgghati soḷasim,**  
My beauty is not worth even a sixteenth part of the beauty of their beauty,

**ajānitvā va ettakamā kalamā na āgatamhī!’ ti**  
not knowing this for such a (long) time I did not come!’

**Tam-eva itthinimittam<sup>555</sup> gaṇhitvā oloketi aṭṭhāsi.**  
She stood there gazing at the woman’s form.

**Satthā tassā pubbahetusampannāya:<sup>556</sup>**  
The Teacher, (knowing) she was endowed with (all) the former conditions,

**“Aṭṭhīnam nagaram katan.”-ti Dhammapade gātham vatvā:**  
recited the verse found in the Dhammapada:<sup>557</sup> “This citadel is made of bones.”

**Aṭṭhīnam nagaram katham, maṃsalohitalepanam,**  
This citadel is made of bones, smeared over with flesh and blood,

**yattha jarā ca maccu ca, māno makkho ca ohito.**  
where old age and death, conceit and anger are lying hidden.

**“Caram vā yadi vā tiṭṭham, nisinno uda vā sayan.”-ti Suttam abhāsi.**  
and he spoke the Discourse:<sup>558</sup> “Whether going or standing, sitting or lying.”

**Caram vā yadi vā tiṭṭham, nisinno uda vā sayam**  
Whether going or standing, whether sitting or lying,

**sammiṇjeti<sup>559</sup> pasāreti, esā kāyassa iñjanā.**  
it moves, it stretches, this is the movement of the body.

**Aṭṭhinahārusamyutto,<sup>560</sup> tacamaṃsāvalepano,**  
Bones and sinews conjoined, smeared with skin and flesh,

**chaviyā kāyo paṭicchanno, yathābhūtam na dissati.**  
the body is covered with skin, the reality is not seen.

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<sup>555</sup> RTE: *itthīnimittam*; SHB, PTS: *itthim nimittam*.

<sup>556</sup> RTE, ChS: *pubbahetusampannāya*.

<sup>557</sup> Dhp 150, I have added it in here. In the Traditions the story is quite different: the Buddha makes a beautiful woman appear and Nandā entranced lies in her lap; just then the image is bitten by a poisonous spider and rots away from the inside, giving Nandā insight into the impermanent nature of the body.

<sup>558</sup> Sn 1.11 Vijayasuttam, The Discourse on Success.

<sup>559</sup> PTS: *samiṇjeti*.

<sup>560</sup> RTE: *Aṭṭhinhāruhi samyutto*.

**Antapūro, udarapūro,**<sup>561</sup> **yakanapeḷassa,**<sup>562</sup> **vatthino,**  
Full of intestines, full of undigested food, having a lumpy liver, a bladder,

**hadayassa, papphāsassa, vakkassa, pihakassa ca;**  
heart, lungs, kidney and spleen;<sup>563</sup>

**siṅghāṇikāya, kheḷassa,**<sup>564</sup> **sedassa ca**<sup>565</sup> **medassa ca,**  
mucus, spit, sweat and fat,

**lohitassa, lasikāya, pittassa ca vasāya ca.**  
blood, synovial fluid, bile and grease.

**Athassa navahi sotehi asucī savati sabbadā,**  
Always there are impurities flowing from its nine orifices,

**akkhimhā akkhigūthako, kaṇṇamhā kaṇṇagūthako,**  
eye-defecation from the eyes, ear-defecation from the ears,

**siṅghāṇikā ca nāsato,**<sup>566</sup> **mukhena vamatekadā**  
mucus from the nose, from the mouth vomit is

**pittaṃ semhañ-ca vamati, kāyamhā sedajallikā,**  
vomited, also bile and phlegm, perspiration and dirt from the body,

**athassa susiraṃ sīsiraṃ matthaluṅgassa pūritaṃ.**  
and its hollow head is filled with the brain.

**Subhato naṃ maññati bālo avijjāya purakkhato,**  
A fool, honouring ignorance, thinks of it as beautiful,

**yadā ca so mato seti, uddhumāto vinīlako,**  
but when it lies dead, bloated and discoloured,

**apavidhho**<sup>567</sup> **susānasmim, anapekkhā**<sup>568</sup> **honti ñātayo.**  
cast aside in the charnel ground, (even) his relatives have no further expectation (of it).

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<sup>561</sup> BJT: *Antapūrodarapūro*.

<sup>562</sup> BJT, RTE: *yakapeḷassa*.

<sup>563</sup> These are solid organs, a list of liquids follows. Cf. also the *Dvattamsākāra*, Khp 3.

<sup>564</sup> PTS: *kheḷassa*.

<sup>565</sup> BJT, PTS omit: *ca*.

<sup>566</sup> PTS: *nāsāto*.

<sup>567</sup> RTE: *apaviṭṭho*.

<sup>568</sup> PTS: *anapekkhā*.

**Khādanti nam suvānā<sup>569</sup> ca siṅgālā ca<sup>570</sup> vakā kimī,**  
Dogs, hyenas, wolves and worms eat it,

**kākā giṅghā ca khādanti, ye caññe santi pāṇino.<sup>571</sup>**  
crows, vultures also eat, and whatever other breathing beings there are.

**Sutvāna Buddhavacanam, bhikkhu paññāṇavā idha,**  
Having heard the Word of the Buddha, the monastic endowed with wisdom here,

**so kho nam pariṇāṇāti, yathābhūtam hi passati.**  
the one who understands it, sees as it really is.

**‘Yathā idam tathā etaṃ, yathā etaṃ tathā idam,’**  
(Thinking:) ‘As is this, so is that, as is that, so is this,’

**ajjhatañ-ca bahiddhā ca, kāye chandaṃ virājaye.**  
inside and outside, he should remove delight for the body.

**Chandarāgaviratto so, bhikkhu paññāṇavā idha**  
Having removed passion and delight, the monastic endowed with wisdom here

**ajjhagā amataṃ santim, Nibbānapadam-accutaṃ.<sup>572</sup>**  
has passed over to the deathless peace, the immovable state of Nibbāna.

**Dvipādakoyaṃ<sup>573</sup> asuci duggandho parihīrati,<sup>574</sup>**  
He cares for this stinking, impure two legged (body),

**nānākuṇapaparipūro vissavanto tato tato.**  
(but) it is full of various corpses flowing out from here and there.

**Etādisena kāyena yo maññe uṇṇametaṃ,**  
He who would think to be proud of such a body,

**paraṃ vā avajāneyya: kim-aññatra adassanā? ti**  
or would despise another (because of theirs): what is this except a lack of insight?

**Sā tasmim yeva rūpe khayavayaṃ<sup>575</sup> paṭṭhapetvā Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**  
With that she was established (in knowledge) about the dissolution and destruction of beauty and attained Liberation.

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<sup>569</sup> BJT, RTE: *suvāṇā*; PTS: *supāṇā*.

<sup>570</sup> BJT: *siṅgālā ca*; ChS omits: *ca*.

<sup>571</sup> PTS: *pāṇayo*.

<sup>572</sup> ChS: *Nibbānaṃ padam-accutaṃ*.

<sup>573</sup> RTE, PTS: *Dipād-*.

<sup>574</sup> ChS: *parihārati*.

<sup>575</sup> SHB: *khayaṃ vayaṃ*.

**Imasmim<sup>576</sup> ṭhāne idaṃ vatthum<sup>577</sup> heṭṭhā**

In this place the story below

**Khemātheriyā vatthunā sadisam-evā ti<sup>578</sup> na vitthāritam.**

is the same as the Elder Nun Khemā's story, and is not elaborated further.<sup>579</sup>

**Tato paṭṭhāya Rūpanandā jhānābhiratānaṃ antare dhurappattā ahoṣi.**

From thence onwards Beautiful Nandā was chief amongst those delighting in meditation.

**Satthā aparabhāge Jetavane nisinno,**

Later as the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood,

**paṭipāṭiyā bhikkhuniyo ṭhānantaresu<sup>580</sup> ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**Nandātherim jhāyīnaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed the Elder Nun Nandā in the foremost position amongst those who meditate.

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<sup>576</sup> SHB: *Imasmim hi.*

<sup>577</sup> SHB, RTE, ChS: *vatthu.*

<sup>578</sup> RTE: *vatthusadisam-evā ti.*

<sup>579</sup> Again it is hard to see how this applies here, in Khemā's case she attained while still in the lay life, and afterwards ordained, and the story is then brought to a conclusion, but here Nandā is already ordained, and there is no more story to be added in.

<sup>580</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare.*

## Soṇātherīvatthu

### 7. The Story about the Elder Nun Soṇā

#### Introduction

This is one of the most touching stories of the collection. Soṇā, also known as Many-Children Soṇā, after raising ten children, seeing them all married off, and distributing her wealth to them, finds herself despised by her children, and decides to go forth.<sup>581</sup>

Even when she has gone forth no one respected her, so she took up insight meditation on the nature of the body and worked at it with great zeal. One day while working at her meditation subject, the Buddha projected an image of himself standing in front of her, and gave her encouragement.

She then attained Liberation, but realised she hadn't carried out her assigned duty to warm the water for the nuns' bath when they returned from alms round. Thinking that if someone spoke badly of her they may make demerit, upon their return she warmed the water through miraculous power, and this convinced them of her attainment.

The nuns begged for forgiveness and Ven. Soṇā became at long last a highly respected member of the Community, known as being zealous in making effort, and when the Buddha was placing the nuns in position, she was made foremost amongst those who were energetic.

Her male counterpart also had the same first name, and was known as Ven. Soṇa Koḷivisa.

#### AN 1.5.7 (text)

**Etad-aggam̐ bhikkhave mama sāvikanam̐ bhikkhunīnam̐**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**āradhviriyānam̐, yad-idaṃ Soṇā.**

amongst those who are energetic, that is to say, Soṇā.

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<sup>581</sup> In the Traditions the story is quite different: there her husband and ten sons all decide to go forth, and she, being left alone, also decided to go forth.

**AA 1.5.7**  
**(commentary)**

**Sattame “Āraddhaviriyānaṃ,”-ti<sup>582</sup>**

In the seventh (story), “Amongst those who are energetic,”

**paggaḥitaparipuṇṇaviriyānaṃ Soṇā aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why Soṇā, amongst those who have held up and fulfilled energy, was said to be foremost.

**Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Ayaṃ kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Hāmsavatiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gahetvā,**

she was conceived in a good family home in Hāmsavatī,

**aparabhāge, Dhammaṃ<sup>583</sup> suṇantī,**

and later, while listening to the Dhamma,

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhuniṃ āraddhaviriyānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**

seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who were energetic,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

**Her Last Life**

**Sā kappasatasahassaṃ devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

She was reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde Sāvatthiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gahetvā,**

and when this (Gotama) Buddha arose she was conceived in a good family home in Sāvattthī,

**aparabhāge, gharāvāse patiṭṭhitā,<sup>584</sup> bahū puttadhītaro labhitvā,**

and later, she was established in the household life and had many sons and daughters,<sup>585</sup>

**sabbe pi visuṃ visuṃ gharāvāse patiṭṭhāpesi.**

and set them all up individually in the household life.<sup>586</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> RTE: *Sattame Āraddhaviriyānaṃ, yad-idaṃ Soṇā ti*; ChS writes *vīriy-* throughout.

<sup>583</sup> PTS: *Dhammadesanaṃ*.

<sup>584</sup> RTE: *vuṭṭhā*; ChS: *vutthā*.

<sup>585</sup> The commentaries say she had ten children.

<sup>586</sup> She divided up her property and gave it to them, see the Dhammapada Commentary to vs. 115.

**Te<sup>587</sup> tato paṭṭhāya: ‘Ayaṃ amhākaṃ kiṃ karissatī?’ ti**

From thence onwards, thinking: ‘What can she do for us?’

**taṃ attano santikaṃ āgataṃ ‘Mātā’ ti saññam-pi na karīṃsu.**

when she came into their presence, they did not even designate her as ‘Mother.’

**Bahuputtikasoṇā tesam attani agāravabhāvaṃ<sup>588</sup> ñatvā:**

And Many-Children Soṇā, understanding their lack of respect towards herself, thinking:

**‘Gharāvāseṇa kiṃ karissāmī,’ ti nikkhamitvā pabbaji.**

‘What will I do dwelling in a house,’ renounced and went forth.

**Atha naṃ bhikkhuniyo: ‘Ayaṃ vattaṃ<sup>589</sup> na jānāti, ayuttaṃ karotī,’ ti**

Then the nuns, thinking: ‘She does not know the (minor) duties, she behaves improperly,’

**daṇḍakammaṃ karonti.**

gave her punishment.

**Puttadhītaro taṃ daṇḍakammaṃ āharantiṃ disvā:**

Her sons and daughters saw her being punished, and thinking:

**‘Ayaṃ yāvajjādivasā sikkhāpadamattaṃ-pi<sup>590</sup> na jānāti,’ ti**

‘Till this very day she does not know the training rules,’

**diṭṭhadiṭṭhaṭṭhāne uppaṇḍesum.<sup>591</sup>**

and they ridiculed her on the spot wherever she was seen.

**Sā tesam vacanaṃ sutvā, uppannaṃ saṃvegā:**

Having heard their words, with spiritual anxiety aroused,

**‘Attano gativisodhanaṃ kātuṃ vaṭṭatī,’ ti**

thinking: ‘It is fitting to make a course to purification for myself,’

**nisinnaṭṭhāne pi ṭhitaṭṭhāne pi Dvattimsākāraṃ sajjhāyati.**

she rehearsed the Thirty-Two Fold Nature in whatever place she was sitting and whatever place she was standing.

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<sup>587</sup>SHB, PTS omit: *Te*.

<sup>588</sup>RTE: *agāravam*.

<sup>589</sup>SHB, PTS: *mattam*.

<sup>590</sup>RTE, PTS, ChS: *sikkhāmattam-pi*.

<sup>591</sup>RTE: *upphaṇḍenti*; SHB, PTS: *ujjhāyanti*.

**Atthi imasmim kāye:**

There are in this body.<sup>592</sup>

**kesā, lomā, nakhā, dantā, taco,**  
hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin,

**maṃsam, nahāru, aṭṭhi,<sup>593</sup> aṭṭhimiñjā,<sup>594</sup> vakkam,**  
flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys,

**hadayam, yakanam, kilomakam, pihakam, papphasam,**  
heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs,

**antam, antagunam, udariyam, karisam,**  
intestines, mesentery, undigested food, excrement,

**pittam, semham, pubbo, lohitaṃ, sedo, medo,**  
bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat,

**assu, vasā, kheḷo, siṅhānikā, lasikā, muttan-ti.**  
tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, urine.

**Sā yatheva pubbe Bahuputtikasoṇattherī ti paññāyittha,**  
And just as formerly she had been known as Many-Children Soṇā,

**evam pacchā<sup>595</sup> Āraddhaviriyasoṇattherī ti pakaṭṭhā jātā.**  
so later she became well known as the Elder Nun Energetic Soṇā.

**Athekadivasam bhikkhuniyo vihāram gacchantiyo**  
Then one day as the nuns were going to the (monks') monastery

**‘Bhikkhunisaṅghassa udakam tāpeyyāsi Soṇe,’ ti vatvā agamaṃsu.**  
after saying: ‘Heat some water for the Community of Nuns, Soṇā,’ they departed.

**Sā pi udakatāpanato puretaram-eva aggisālāyam,<sup>596</sup>**  
Before the water was heated in the fire house,

**caṅkamitvā caṅkamitvā Dvattimsākāram sajjhāyantī, vipassanam vaḍḍhesi.**  
while reciting the Thirty-Two Fold Nature as she was walking in meditation, she developed insight.

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<sup>592</sup> This is a separate text at Khp. 3, and is found *passim* throughout the discourses.

<sup>593</sup> RTE: *aṭṭhī*.

<sup>594</sup> SHB: *aṭṭhimiñjam*.

<sup>595</sup> SHB: *pacchā sā*.

<sup>596</sup> RTE, ChS: *aggisālāya*.

**Satthā Gandhakuṭṭiyam nisinno va imam obhāsagātham abhāsi:**

The Teacher, while sitting in the Fragrant Cottage (appeared to her and) recited this illustrious verse:<sup>597</sup>

**“Yo ca vassasatam jīve apassam Dhammam-uttamam,**

“The one who lives for a hundred years not seeing the Supreme Dhamma,

**ekāham jīvitam seyyo passato Dhammam-uttaman.”-ti**

is surpassed by one living for one day (only) who sees the Supreme Dhamma.”<sup>598</sup>

**Sā<sup>599</sup> gāthāpariyosāne Arahattam patvā cintesi: ‘Aham Arahattam pattā,**

She attained Liberation at the conclusion of the verse, and thought: ‘I have attained Liberation,

**āgantukajano ca, anupadhāretvā va, mayi avaññāya<sup>600</sup> kiñci<sup>601</sup> vatvā,**

but when they return, without considering, they will speak dispraise of me,

**bahum pāpam<sup>602</sup> pasaveyya,**

and will accumulate much demerit,

**tasmā<sup>603</sup> samlakkhaṇakāraṇam<sup>604</sup> kātuṃ vaṭṭatī.’ ti**

therefore it is fitting to do something as a sign.’

**Sā udakabhājanam uddhanam<sup>605</sup> āropetvā, heṭṭhā aggim na akāsi.**

She placed the water pot over the fire-place, but she didn’t make the fire underneath.

**Bhikkhuniyo āgantvā uddhanam olokentiyo aggim adisvā:**

After the nuns had returned, seeing the fire-place, but not seeing a fire,

**“Imam mahallikam: ‘Bhikkhunisaṅghassa udakam tāpehī,’ ti avocumha,**

° they said: “We told this old lady: ‘Heat the water for the Community of Nuns,’

**ajjā pi uddhane aggim-pi na karotī,” ti āhamṣu.**

but today she did not make the fire in the fire-place.”

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<sup>597</sup> This teaching comes after her attainment of Liberation in the Traditions.

<sup>598</sup> DhP 115.

<sup>599</sup> RTE omits: *Sā*.

<sup>600</sup> RTE: *avamaññāya*.

<sup>601</sup> SHB, PTS: *kiñci kiñci*.

<sup>602</sup> ChS: *apuññam-pi*.

<sup>603</sup> SHB: *tassa*.

<sup>604</sup> PTS: *tassa sallakkhaṇakāraṇam*.

<sup>605</sup> RTE omits: *uddhanam*.

**“Ayye, kiṃ tumhākaṃ agginā?**

“Noble Ladies, why do you need fire?

**Uṇhodakena nahāyitukāmā bhājanato udakaṃ gahetvā nahāyathā.” ti**

If you like to bathe with hot water, take water from the pot and bathe.”

**Tā pi:<sup>606</sup> ‘Bhavissati ettha kāraṇaṃ,’-ti gantvā udake hattham otāretvā,**

They, thinking: ‘There will be a reason here,’ went and put their hand into the water,

**uṇhabhāvaṃ ṇatvā, ekaṃ kuṭam<sup>607</sup> āharitvā, udakaṃ gaṇhanti,**

and understanding it was heated, brought a water pot and took the water,

**gahitagahitaṭṭhānaṃ paripūrati.<sup>608</sup>**

and as they took from it in that place it refilled.

**Tadā sabbā va tassā Arahatte ṭhitabhāvaṃ ṇatvā,<sup>609</sup>**

Then they all understood she was established in Liberation,

**daharatarā tāva pañcapatiṭṭhitena pādesu pativā:**

and those who were junior fell at her feet in the five-fold prostration, saying:

**“Ayye<sup>610</sup> ettakaṃ kālaṃ tumhe anupadhāretvā,**

“Noble Lady, for so long we disregarded you,

**viheṭhetvā,<sup>611</sup> viheṭhetvā kathayimha,<sup>612</sup> khamatha no,” ti khamāpesuṃ.**

injured and spoke injuriously, please forgive us,” and asked for forgiveness.

**Vuddhatarā pi<sup>613</sup> ukkuṭikaṃ nisīditvā:**

The seniors, having squatted down, said:

**“Khama<sup>614</sup> Ayye,” ti khamāpesuṃ.**

“Noble Lady, forgive us,” and asked for forgiveness.

**Tato paṭṭhāya, mahallakakāle pabbajivā pi:**

From then on, though she had gone forth in old age, they said:

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<sup>606</sup> PTS omits: *pi*.

<sup>607</sup> ChS: *ekakuṭam*.

<sup>608</sup> RTE: *pūrati*.

<sup>609</sup> SHB, PTS: *Arahattabhāve niṭṭham gantvā*.

<sup>610</sup> ChS: *Mayam Ayye*.

<sup>611</sup> SHB, PTS: *heṭhetvā*.

<sup>612</sup> RTE: *kathayimhā*.

<sup>613</sup> RTE: *Vuddhatarā pi Therī*; PTS: *Vuddhatarā ti*.

<sup>614</sup> RTE: *Khamatha*.

**“Āraddhaviriyabhāvena na cirasseva aggaphale patiṭṭhitā,” ti**

“She has been established in the highest fruit in no long time through being energetic,”

**Theriyā guṇo pākaṭo ahoṣi.**

and the virtue of the Elder Nun became well-known.

**Aparabhāge Satthā Jetavane nisīditvā,**

Later, after the Teacher had sat down in Jeta’s Wood,

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu<sup>615</sup> ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**Soṇattherim āraddhaviriyānam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed the Elder Nun Soṇā in the foremost position amongst those who were energetic.

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<sup>615</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## Sakulātherīvatthu<sup>616</sup>

### 8. The Story about the Elder Nun Sakulā

#### Introduction

This is the shortest of the stories, and the least informative too, which is strange, as a section of her story which is very relevant to her placement here has been omitted, even though it is found in the Traditions (*Apadāna*) about her. As it is crucial for an understanding of the story I have included the relevant section below.

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara<sup>617</sup> she made her aspiration to gain foremost position amongst those with the divine eye, and during the Buddha Kassapa's time, having received some oil, with a faithful heart, she lighted up the Buddha's shrine with it for the whole night.

Because of that her body also shone forth, and she was famous and had penetrating vision in her next life in the Tāvatiṃsa Heaven. Later, when she was reborn in Buddha Gotama's time she gained faith, went forth, and finally attained Liberation, and because of her past good deeds became adept in the divine eye, and attained the position as foremost in that skill in accordance with her aspiration.

The male disciple with this same quality was Ven. Anuruddha.

#### AN 1.5.8 (text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**dibbacakkhukānaṃ, yad-idaṃ Sakulā.**

amongst those who have the divine eye, that is to say, Sakulā.

#### AA 1.5.8 (commentary)

**Aṭṭhame, “Dibbacakkhukānaṃ,<sup>618</sup> yad-idaṃ Sakulā,” ti**

In the eighth (story), “Amongst those who have the divine eye, that is to say, Sakulā,”

**dibbacakkhukānaṃ Sakulātherī<sup>619</sup> aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why the Elder Nun Sakulā, amongst those who had the divine eye, was said to be foremost.

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<sup>616</sup> ChS: *Bakulā*. The name is unsure, and the story is also very slight.

<sup>617</sup> In the Traditions she is stated to be that Buddha's half-sister.

<sup>618</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Dibbacakkhukānaṃ*.

<sup>619</sup> RTE: *Sakulatherī*.

## Her Aspiration and Good Deeds

**Ayaṃ kira<sup>620</sup> Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Hamsavatiyaṃ kulagehe nibbattivā,**

she was reborn in a good family home in Hamsavatī,

**vayappattā<sup>621</sup> Satthu Dhammakathaṃ suṇantī,**

and when she was mature, while listening to the Teacher talk about Dhamma,

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhuniṃ dibbacakkhukānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**  
seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who have the  
divine eye,

**adhikāraḥkammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

(Sakulā speaks:)

**Imamhi bhaddake kappe, brahmabandhu mahāyaso,**

In this auspicious aeon,<sup>622</sup> a very famous brāhmaṇa

**Kassapo nāma gottena uppajji vadataṃ varo.**

arose in the noble and well-known Kassapa clan.<sup>623</sup>

**Paribbājakinī āsīm tadāhaṃ ekacārini,**

I was a female wanderer at that time, solitary,

**bhikkhāya vicarivāna alabhiṃ telamattakaṃ.**

and after wandering for alms I received a little oil.

**Tena dīpaṃ padīpetvā, upaṭṭhiṃ sabbasaṃvarim**

Having lighted a lamp with that (oil), I attended all night

**cetiyaṃ Dvipadaggassa vipasannena cetasā.**

with a confident mind at the Foremost Human's shrine.

**Tena kammaṃ sukatena cetanāpaṇidhīhi ca,**

Through performing that good deed with excellent intentions,

**jahitvā mānusaṃ dehaṃ Tāvatisam-agacchahaṃ.**

after throwing off the human body I went to the (Realm of) the Thirty Three.

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<sup>620</sup> SHB, PTS: *pi hi*.

<sup>621</sup> RTE: *aparabhāge*; ChS omits: *vayappattā*.

<sup>622</sup> These verses are from the Traditions about her (Therī-Apadāna, 3.4.17-23).

<sup>623</sup> I.e. the Buddha Kassapa.

**Yattha yatthūpapajjāmi tassa kammaṣṣa vāhasā,**  
On account of that deed I shone forth in whatever place I was,

**pajjalanti mahādīpā, tattha tattha gatāya me.**  
like a great light blazing, wherever I went.

**Tirokuḍḍaṃ tiroselam, samatiggayha pabbataṃ,**  
Beyond the walls, beyond the rocks, rising above the mountain,

**passāmaham yadicchāmi, dīpadānassidaṃ phalaṃ,**  
whatever I wanted (to see) I saw, as the result of that gift of light,

**visuddhanayanā homi, yasaṣā ca jalāmahaṃ,**  
I had a purified eye, I shone forth with fame,

**saddhāpaññavāṭī ceva, dīpadānassidaṃ phalaṃ.**  
I was endowed with faith and wisdom, as the result of that gift of light.

### Her Last Life

**Sā kappasatasahassaṃ devamanussesu<sup>624</sup> saṃsaritvā,**  
She was reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**imasmim Buddhuppāde Sāvattiyam kulagehe nibbattivā,<sup>625</sup>**  
and when this (Gotama) Buddha arose she was reborn in a good family home in Sāvattī,

**aparabhāge, Satthu Dhammadesanaṃ sutvā,**  
and later, while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**paṭiladdhasaddhā pabbajitvā, na cirasseva Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**  
she gained faith and went forth, and in no long time she attained Liberation.

**Sā<sup>626</sup> tato paṭṭhāya dibbacakkhumhi ciṇṇavasī ahosi.**  
From then on she became well-practiced in the divine eye.

**Aparabhāge Satthā Jetavane nisinno,<sup>627</sup>**  
Later, while the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood,

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<sup>624</sup> ChS: *devesu ca manussesu ca.*

<sup>625</sup> SHB: *nibbattā.*

<sup>626</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Sā.*

<sup>627</sup> SHB, PTS: *nisīditvā.*

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu<sup>628</sup> ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**imaṃ Theriṃ dibbacakkhukānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who had the divine eye.

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<sup>628</sup> PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## **Kuṇḍalakesātherīvatthu**

### **9. The Story about the Elder Nun Kuṇḍalakesā**

#### **Introduction**

Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā's story is one of the longer ones, showing a very capable and confident young woman. She began her career in the normal way under Buddha Padumuttara, and was also one of the seven sisters born to King Kiki.

In her last life she was reborn in a merchant's family on the same day her future husband was born, though the signs accompanying his birth were very inauspicious, and they nearly had him put to death there and then.

The boy however grew up in safety, but from an early age was a kleptomaniac, stealing whatever he could get his hands on, no matter how many times his parents scolded him and tried to guide him rightly, and eventually, as he had no further talent, his Father gave him the means to become a professional thief, and left him to his fate.

The young man eventually broke into nearly every house in the city, and when the King found out, he gave the Mayor only one day to find the person responsible or die himself. The Mayor caught the thief, and when he was brought before the King he was sentenced to death.

For reasons not properly explained in the story here, when Bhaddā saw him on his way to execution, she fell in love, and begged for his release, which her Father organised. He was brought back to the house to be her partner. Even then his passion for theft couldn't be assuaged, and he planned to kill Bhaddā and take her ornaments.

Bhaddā, however, turned out to be quick in wits and disposed of him before he disposed of her. Not able to return home after his death she renounced and became a Jaina nun. We notice here that nuns of other sects had their own hermitages and must have been a common sight in ancient India; these hermitages are mentioned again in the following story.

She excelled in debate and toured the country challenging others to debate with her, and finally came to Sāvattihī. There she met with Ven. Sāriputta who easily defeated her and asked her to meet with the Buddha. She went as asked, and the Buddha taught her in one verse, at the conclusion of which she attained Liberation, and went forth again in the nuns' Community.

It was because of this display of her quick and ready wit that she was placed in foremost position amongst those who were quick in deep knowledge. Her male counterpart was Ven. Bāhiya Dārucīriya.<sup>629</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> The canonical story about him can be found in the influential meditation discourse at Udāna 1.10, which is translated elsewhere on this website.

**AN 1.5.9**

(text)

**Etad-aggam̐ bhikkhave mama sāvikanānam̐ bhikkhunīnam̐**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**khippābhiññānam̐, yad-idaṃ Kuṇḍalakesā.<sup>630</sup>**

amongst those who are quick in deep knowledge, that is to say, Kuṇḍalakesā.

**AA 1.5.9**

(commentary)

**Navame, “Khippābhiññānam̐,”-ti**

In the ninth (story), “Amongst those who are quick in deep knowledge,”

**khippābhiññānam̐ bhikkhunīnam̐<sup>631</sup> Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, amongst those who were quick in deep knowledge, was said to be foremost.

**Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Ayam-pi hi<sup>632</sup> Padumuttarabuddhakāle, Hamsavatiyam̐ kulagehe nibbattā,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, being reborn in a good family home in Hamsavatī,

**Satthu Dhammakatham̐ sutvā,**

she listened to the Teacher talk about Dhamma,

**Satthāram̐ ekam̐ bhikkhunim̐ khippābhiññānam̐ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentam̐ disvā,**

and saw the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who are quick in deep knowledge,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā tam̐ ṭhānantaram̐ patthesi.**

and did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

**Various Good Deeds**

**Sā kappasatasahassam̐ devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

She was reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**Kassapabuddhakāle Kikissa Kāsirañño gehe,<sup>633</sup>**

and in the time of the Buddha Kassapa, in the home of Kiki, the King of Kāsi,

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<sup>630</sup> RTE, PTS: *Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā.*

<sup>631</sup> SHB, PTS: *khippābhiññābhikkhunīnam̐.*

<sup>632</sup> RTE: *Ayam kira.*

<sup>633</sup> The other formulas add here: *paṭisandhim̐ gaṇhitvā, after being conceived.*

**sattannaṃ bhaginīnaṃ abbhantarā hutvā,**  
she became (one) amongst seven sisters,

**vīsativassasahassāni dasasīlāni samādāya,**  
established the ten precepts for twenty-thousand years,

**komārikabrahmacariyaṃ<sup>634</sup> carantī,<sup>635</sup>**  
living as a celibate,

**Saṅghassa vasanapariveṇaṃ<sup>636</sup> kāretvā,**  
made a dwelling place for the Community,

**ekaṃ Buddhantaraṃ devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**  
was reborn amongst gods and humans (only) during one period when there was no Buddha,

**imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde**  
and when this (Gotama) Buddha arose

**Rājagahanagare seṭṭhikule paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhi,**  
she was conceived in a merchant's family in the city of Rājagaha,

**Bhaddā tissā nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**  
and they gave her the name Bhaddā (Auspicious).

### Her Last Life

**Taṃ divasaṃ yeva ca tasmaṃ nagare purohitaputto jāto.**  
That very day in the city the (King's) chaplain's son was born.

**Tassa jātavelāya Rājanivesanaṃ ādim katvā,**  
From the moment of his birth, beginning with King (Bimbisāra's) residence,

**sakalanagare āvudhāni pajjalimsu.**  
and throughout the whole city weapons blazed forth.

**Purohito pāto va Rājakulaṃ gantvā Rājānaṃ sukhaseyyaṃ pucchi.**  
In the morning the chaplain went to the King's family and asked if the King had slept comfortably.

**Rājā: “Kuto,<sup>637</sup> Ācariya, sukhaseyyo<sup>638</sup> ajja sabbarattim**  
The King said: “How can I sleep comfortably today, Teacher, when all night

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<sup>634</sup> SHB, PTS: *komārabrahmacariyaṃ*;

<sup>635</sup> RTE: *carati*.

<sup>636</sup> SHB, PTS: *vasanakapariveṇaṃ*.

<sup>637</sup> RTE, ChS adds: *me*.

<sup>638</sup> RTE: *sukhaseyyaṃ*; ChS: *sukhaseyyā*.

**Rājanivesane āvudhāni pajjalitāni<sup>639</sup> disvā bhayappattā ahumhā?” ti<sup>640</sup> āha.**  
we saw the weapons in the King’s residence blazing forth and we have become fearful?”

**“Mahārāja, tappaccayā<sup>641</sup> mā cintayittha,**  
“Great King, do not worry for this reason,

**na tumhākaṃ yeva gehe āvudhāni pajjalimsu, sakalanagare evaṃ ahoṣī.” ti**  
not only in your home did weapons blaze forth, it was so throughout the whole city.”

**“Kiṃ kāraṇā, Ācariyā?” ti**  
“What is the reason, Teacher?”

**“Amhākaṃ gehe coranakkhattena dārako jāto,**  
“In our home was born a child under the thieves’ star,

**so sakalanagarassa sattu hutvā uppanno,**  
he will become an enemy to the whole city,

**tassetam pubbanimittam,**  
this is the portent concerning him,

**tumhākaṃ upaddavo natthi, sace pana icchatha, hārema<sup>642</sup> nan.”-ti**  
there is no danger for you, but if you wish, let us bear him off.”

**“Amhākaṃ pīlāya asatiyā,<sup>643</sup> hāraṇakammaṃ natthī.” ti**  
“There being no intention to harm us, there is no need to bear him off.”

**Purohito: ‘Mama putto attano nāmaṃ gahetvā va āgato,’ ti**  
The chaplain, thinking: ‘My son has come bearing his own name,’

**Sattuko tevassa<sup>644</sup> nāmaṃ akāsi.**  
named him Sattuka (Little Enemy).

**Seṭṭhigehe pi<sup>645</sup> Bhaddā vaḍḍhati, purohitagehe pi Sattuko vaḍḍhati.**  
Bhaddā grew up in the merchant’s home, and Sattuka grew up in the chaplain’s home.

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<sup>639</sup> PTS: *pajjalantāni*.

<sup>640</sup> PTS: *ahesumhā ti*.

<sup>641</sup> PTS omits: *tappaccayā*.

<sup>642</sup> RTE: *hāretha*; omit following *nan ti*.

<sup>643</sup> RTE omits: *asatiyā*; SHB, PTS: *asati*.

<sup>644</sup> RTE: *tveva*.

<sup>645</sup> SHB, PTS omits: *pi*.

**So attano ādhāvanavidhāvanena kīlītuṃ samatthakālato<sup>646</sup> paṭṭhāya**

From the time he was able to play by running around here and there

**attano vicaraṇaṭṭhāne<sup>647</sup> yaṃ<sup>648</sup> yaṃ passati,**

whatever he saw in any place he had wandered to,

**taṃ taṃ<sup>649</sup> sabbam āharitvā, Mātāpitūnam geham pūreti.**

he took all of it away, and filled up his Mother and Father's home (with it).

**Pitā naṃ kāraṇasahassam-pi<sup>650</sup> vatvā, vāretuṃ nāsakkhi.**

His Father, although giving him a thousand reasons, was not able to restrain him.

**Aparabhāge panassa vayappattassa,**

Later, as he reached maturity,

**sabbākārena pi<sup>651</sup> vāretuṃ asakkuṇṇeyyabhāvaṃ ñatvā,**

understanding it was an impossibility to restrain him in any way,

**dve nīlasātake tassa<sup>652</sup> datvā,<sup>653</sup>**

he gave him a pair of blue robes,

**sandhicchedana-upakaraṇañ-ca siṅghāṭakayantañ-ca<sup>654</sup> hatthe datvā,**

and put into his hands all the requisites for housebreaking and a grapple,

**“Tvam iminā<sup>655</sup> kamma jīvāhī” ti naṃ vissajjesi.**

and sent him off, saying: “You can make a living through doing this work.”

**So taṃ divasato paṭṭhāya siṅghāṭakayantaṃ khipitvā,**

From that day forward, after throwing his grapple,

**kulānam pāsāde āruyha, sandhiṃ chinditvā,<sup>656</sup>**

ascending residences of good families, making a breach,

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<sup>646</sup> RTE: *samatthakabhāvato*.

<sup>647</sup> SHB: *vicaraṇaṭṭhānesu*.

<sup>648</sup> PTS: *sayam*.

<sup>649</sup> PTS omits: *taṃ taṃ*.

<sup>650</sup> PTS: *kāraṇam sayam pi*.

<sup>651</sup> RTE, ChS: *sabbākārenāpi*.

<sup>652</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS omits: *tassa*.

<sup>653</sup> SHB, PTS: *nivāsāpetvā*.

<sup>654</sup> SHB, PTS: *siṅghāṭakayantakañ-ca*.

<sup>655</sup> RTE adds: *ca*; ChS adds: *va*.

<sup>656</sup> PTS: *chindetvā*.

**parakulesu nikkhittabhaṇḍam<sup>657</sup> attanā ṭhapitaṃ viya gahetvā gacchati.**

and taking the goods that other families had stored there, as if he had put them there himself, he departed.

**Sakalanagare tena aviluttagehaṃ nāma nāhosi.**

There was not a home in the whole city that was not plundered by him.

**Ekadivasam Rājā rathena nagare vicaranto sārathim pucchi:**

One day as the King was travelling about the city in his chariot, he asked his charioteer:

**“Kiṃ nu kho imasmim nagare tasmim tasmim ghare chiddam-eva paññāyatī?” ti**

“Why is it that there appears to be a breach in every house in this city?”

**“Deva imasmim nagare Sattuko nāma coro**

“God-King, in this city there is a thief named Sattuka who,

**bhittim chindivā,<sup>658</sup> kulānaṃ santakaṃ haratī.” ti**

having broken through the wall, carries off the property of the good families.”

**Rājā Nagaraguttikaṃ pakkosāpetvā,**

The King summoned the Mayor,

**“Imasmim kira nagare evarūpo nāma coro<sup>659</sup> atthi,**

and said: “It seems that in this city there is such and such a thief,

**kasmā naṃ na gaṇhasī,” ti āha.<sup>660</sup>**

why have you not grabbed him?”

**“Mayaṃ, Deva, taṃ<sup>661</sup> coraṃ sahoḍḍhaṃ<sup>662</sup> passituṃ na sakkomā.” ti**

“We, God-King, are not able to find the thief together with the stolen property.”

**“Sace<sup>663</sup> ajja naṃ<sup>664</sup> coraṃ gaṇhasi jīvasi;<sup>665</sup>**

“If today you capture the thief you can live;

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<sup>657</sup> SHB, PTS: *-bhaṇḍakaṃ*.

<sup>658</sup> PTS: *bhindivā*.

<sup>659</sup> RTE: *jāto coro*.

<sup>660</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *āha*.

<sup>661</sup> PTS: *naṃ*.

<sup>662</sup> RTE: *mayam deva tam sahoḍḍham*; SHB, ChS: *sahoḍḍham*.

<sup>663</sup> SHB omits: *Sace*.

<sup>664</sup> RTE: *taṃ*.

<sup>665</sup> RTE: *sace ajja tam coram passasi, gaṇha*.

sace na gaṇhasi,<sup>666</sup> Rājāṇaṃ te karissāmī.” ti

but if you do not capture (him), I will issue a Royal command.”<sup>667</sup>

“Evaṃ Devā,” ti Nagaraguttiko sakalanagare manusse cāretvā,<sup>668</sup>

“Yes, God-King,” and the Mayor sent men all over the city,

taṃ bhittiṃ chinditvā,<sup>669</sup> parabhaṇḍaṃ avaharantaṃ,<sup>670</sup>

and after (Sattuka) had broken through a wall, and was making off with others’ goods,

sahoḍam-eva gahetvā<sup>671</sup> Rañño dassesi.

they captured (him) together with the stolen property and brought him to the King.

Rājā: “Imaṃ coraṃ dakkhiṇadvārena nīharitvā ghātethā!” ti āha.

The King said: “Take this thief out through the south gate and execute him!”

Nagaraguttiko Rañño paṭissuṇitvā,<sup>672</sup>

The Mayor gave his assent to the King,

taṃ coraṃ catukke catukke pahārasahassena tālento<sup>673</sup> gāhāpetvā,

and having that thief flogged with a thousand strokes at each of the crossroads,

dakkhiṇadvāraṃ gacchati.

and he went out<sup>674</sup> by the southern gate.<sup>675</sup>

## Her Marriage

Tasmiṃ samaye ayaṃ Bhaddā nāma seṭṭhidhītā,<sup>676</sup>

At that time the merchant’s daughter Bhaddā,

mahājanassa kolāhalasaddena<sup>677</sup> sīhapañjaraṃ ugghāṭetvā,

after opening the window because of the uproar of the populace,

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<sup>666</sup> PTS reads: *Sace ajja naṃ coraṃ na gaṇhasi Rājāṇaṃ te karissāmī.*” ti.

<sup>667</sup> I.e. he will give him capital punishment.

<sup>668</sup> RTE: *āṇāpetvā.*

<sup>669</sup> SHB, PTS: *bhinditvā.*

<sup>670</sup> SHB, PTS: *harantaṃ.*

<sup>671</sup> RTE: *sahoḍhameva netvā.*

<sup>672</sup> SHB, PTS: *paṭissutvā.*

<sup>673</sup> SHB, PTS: *tāletvā.*

<sup>674</sup> Present tense used in the sense of the immediate past.

<sup>675</sup> Executions always took place to the south of the city.

<sup>676</sup> SHB: *Bhaddā seṭṭhidhītā*; PTS: *Subhaddā seṭṭhidhītā.*

<sup>677</sup> SHB, PTS: *kalakalasaddena.*

**olokentī taṃ<sup>678</sup> Sattukaṃ coraṃ tathā<sup>679</sup> nīyamānaṃ disvā,**  
while looking around, saw the thief Sattuka being brought out,

**ubhoḥi hatthehi hadayaṃ sandhārentī,**  
and holding her two hands over her heart,

**gantvā sirisayane adhomukhā nipajji.**  
went and lay down on the couch with her head held low.

**Sā ca tassa kulassa ekadhītā<sup>680</sup>**  
She was the family's only daughter

**tenassā ñātakā appamattakam-pi mukhavikāraṃ sahituṃ na sakkonti.**  
and her relatives were not able to endure even a trifling contortion of her face.

**Atha naṃ Mātā<sup>681</sup> sayane nipannaṃ disvā, “Kiṃ karosi Ammā?” ti pucchi.<sup>682</sup>**  
Then her Mother, seeing her lying on the couch, asked: “What are you doing, Dear?”

**“Etaṃ vajjhaṃ katvā nīyamānaṃ coraṃ addasathā?” ti<sup>683</sup>**  
“Do you see this thief they have prepared and brought out to be executed?”

**“Āma, Amma, addasāmā.” ti<sup>684</sup>**  
“Yes, Lady, we do see (him).”

**“Etaṃ labhamānā jīvissāmi, alabhamānāya me maraṇam-evā.” ti<sup>685</sup>**  
“If I get him I will live, but if I don't get him there is surely death for me.”

**Te taṃ nānappakārena<sup>686</sup> pi saññāpetuṃ asakkontā:**  
They, being unable to convince her in any way,

**“Maraṇā jīvitaṃ seyyo,” ti sallakkhesuṃ.**  
considered: “Life is better than death.”

**Athassā Pitā Nagaraguttikassa santikaṃ gantvā, saḥassaṃ lañjaṃ<sup>687</sup> datvā,**  
Then her Father went into the Mayor's presence, and gave him a thousand in a bribe,

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<sup>678</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *taṃ*.

<sup>679</sup> RTE: *vadhatthāya*.

<sup>680</sup> PTS: *ekadhītikā*.

<sup>681</sup> RTE adds *taṃ*; SHB, PTS omits: *Mātā*.

<sup>682</sup> SHB, PTS: *pucchiṃsu*.

<sup>683</sup> RTE, ChS: *addasa, Ammā?* ti.

<sup>684</sup> ChS: *āma, ammā ti*.

<sup>685</sup> RTE: *varanti*.

<sup>686</sup> SHB, PTS: *anekapariyāyena*.

<sup>687</sup> RTE: *lañcaṃ*.

“Mayhaṃ dhītā core paṭibaddhacittā,

° saying: “My daughter is infatuated with this thief,

yena kenaci upāyena imaṃ muñcā,” ti āha.

please free him through some means or other.”

So: “Sādhū,” ti seṭṭhissa paṭissuṇitvā,<sup>688</sup> coraṃ gahetvā,

He, saying: “Very well,” assenting to the merchant, grabbed the thief,

yāva suriyassa<sup>689</sup> atthaṅgamaṇā<sup>690</sup> ito cito ca papañcāpetvā,

and delayed at the funeral bier until the sun was setting,

suriye<sup>691</sup> atthaṅgate,<sup>692</sup> cārakato ekaṃ manussaṃ nīharāpetvā,<sup>693</sup>

as the sun set, he drove a certain man from the prison,

Sattukassa bandhanaṃ<sup>694</sup> mocetvā, Sattukaṃ seṭṭhigehaṃ pesetvā,

and loosening Sattuka’s bonds, he sent Sattuka to the merchant’s home,

tena bandhanena itaraṃ bandhitvā,

and having the other man bound with (Sattuka’s) bonds,

dakkhiṇadvārena nīharitvā ghātesī.

he drove him through the southern door and had him executed.

Seṭṭhidāsā pi Sattukaṃ gahetvā seṭṭhino nivesanaṃ<sup>695</sup> āgamaṃsu.<sup>696</sup>

The merchant’s servants grabbed Sattuka and took him to the merchant’s residence.

Taṃ disvā seṭṭhi: “Dhītu manāṃ pūressāmī,” ti

Seeing him, the merchant, thinking: “I will fulfil my daughter’s desire,”

Sattukaṃ gandhodakena nahāpetvā,

had Sattuka bathed in scented water,

sabbābharaṇapaṭimaṇḍitaṃ<sup>697</sup> kāretvā, pāsādaṃ pesesi.

adorned with all decorations, and sent him to the mansion.

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<sup>688</sup> SHB, PTS: *paṭissutvā*.

<sup>689</sup> RTE, ChS: *sūriyassa*.

<sup>690</sup> SHB, PTS: *atthūpagamaṇā*.

<sup>691</sup> RTE, ChS: *sūriye*.

<sup>692</sup> SHB, PTS: *atthaṃ upagacchante*.

<sup>693</sup> RTE: *suriye atthaṃ upagate corabhāvaṃ katvā ekaṃ corakaṃ corakato nīharāpetvā*.

<sup>694</sup> RTE: *sattukaṃ bandhanaṃ*.

<sup>695</sup> SHB, PTS: *seṭṭhinivesanaṃ*.

<sup>696</sup> RTE: *āgamaṃsu*; ChS: *āgamaṃsu*.

<sup>697</sup> RTE, PTS: *sabbālaṅkārapatimaṇḍitaṃ*.

**Bhaddā pi:**<sup>698</sup> “Paripuṇṇo me saṅkappo,” ti<sup>699</sup>

Bhaddā, thinking: “My desire is fulfilled,”

**anekālaṅkārena**<sup>700</sup> alaṅkaritvā taṃ paricamānā carati.<sup>701</sup>

decorated (herself) with innumerable decorations and amused (herself) with him.

**Sattuko, katipāhaṃ vītināmetvā, cintesi:**

Sattuka, after a few days had passed, thought:

“**Imissā pasādhanabhaṇḍakam**<sup>702</sup> mayhaṃ bhavissati,

“Her decorative articles will be mine,

**kenaci**<sup>703</sup> upāyena imaṃ ābharaṇaṃ gahetuṃ vaṭṭatī?” ti

(but) by what means is it fitting to grab her ornaments?”

**Samīpe sukhena nisinnakāle**<sup>704</sup> Bhaddaṃ āha:

At a time they were sitting comfortably together, he said to Bhaddā:

“**Mayhaṃ ekaṃ vacanaṃ vattabbaṃ atthī.**” ti

“There is a word of mine I would like to speak.”

**Seṭṭhidhītā sahasalābhaṃ labhitvā viya tuṭṭhamānasā:**

The merchant’s daughter, like one who had received a thousand (coins), with a satisfied mind,

“**Vissatthaṃ vada,**<sup>705</sup> Ayyā,” ti āha.

said: “Speak freely, Noble Sir.”

“**Tvaṃ cintesi: ‘Maṃ nissāya iminā jīvitam laddhan,’-ti**

“You thought: ‘His life was saved because of me,’

**aham pana gahitam-atto va corapapātapabbate adhivatthāya devatāya,**<sup>706</sup>

but when they grabbed me on the mountain from where they throw down thieves I prayed to the god living there,

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<sup>698</sup> SHB omits: *pi*; PTS: *Subhaddā*.

<sup>699</sup> RTE: *Paripuṇṇā me saṅkappā ti*.

<sup>700</sup> SHB, PTS: *atirekālaṅkārena*.

<sup>701</sup> SHB: *vicarati*; ChS: *taṃ paricarati*.

<sup>702</sup> PTS: *pasādhanaka-*.

<sup>703</sup> SHB, PTS: *kenacid-eva*.

<sup>704</sup> PTS: *sukhanisinnakāle*.

<sup>705</sup> ChS: *vadehi*.

<sup>706</sup> SHB, PTS: *adhivatthadevatāya*.

**‘Sacāhaṃ jīvitaṃ labhissāmi, balikammaṃ te<sup>707</sup> dassāmi’ ti āyācim.**  
imploring: ‘If I receive my life, I will make an offering to you.’

**Taṃ nissāya mayā jīvitaṃ laddhaṃ, sīghaṃ balikammaṃ sajjāpehī.” ti**  
Because of that my life was saved, quickly get an offering ready.”

**Bhaddā:<sup>708</sup> ‘Ahaṃ<sup>709</sup> tassa manaṃ pūressāmi,’ ti balikammaṃ sajjāpetvā,**  
Bhaddā, thinking: ‘I will fulfil his desire,’ prepared the offering,

**sabbaṃ pasādhanam<sup>710</sup> pasādheta,**  
decorated herself with all decorations,

**ekayāne āruya sāmikena saddhiṃ, corapapātapabbataṃ<sup>711</sup> gantvā,**  
mounted a vehicle with her husband, and went to the mountain from where they throw  
down thieves,

**‘Pabbatadevatāya balikammaṃ karissāmi,’ ti abhiruhitaṃ āraddhā.**  
began to ascend, thinking: ‘I will make an offering to the god of the mountain.’

**Sattuko cintesi: ‘Sabbesu abhiruhantesu**  
Sattuka thought: ‘With all of us ascending

**mama imissā ābharaṇaṃ gahetuṃ<sup>712</sup> okāso na<sup>713</sup> bhavissatī,’ ti**  
I will not be able to grab her ornaments,’

**tam-eva balibhājanaṃ gāhāpetvā, pabbataṃ abhiruhi.**  
so after having her take the offering-vessel, he ascended the mountain.<sup>714</sup>

**So Bhaddāya<sup>715</sup> saddhiṃ kathento piyakathaṃ na katheti,**  
But while speaking with Bhaddā he spoke no endearing words,

**sā iṅgiteneva tassa<sup>716</sup> adhippāyaṃ aññāsi.**  
and from his gestures she understood his intention.

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<sup>707</sup> RTE: *vo*.

<sup>708</sup> PTS: *Subhaddā*.

<sup>709</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Ahaṃ*.

<sup>710</sup> SHB, PTS: *sabbapasādhanam*.

<sup>711</sup> RTE: *corapapātam*.

<sup>712</sup> RTE: *gahetvā*.

<sup>713</sup> RTE, ChS: *na okāso*.

<sup>714</sup> It mean he went with her alone, having dismissed the entourage.

<sup>715</sup> PTS: *Susbhaddāya*.

<sup>716</sup> RTE: *sā teneva corassa*.

**Atha nam so āha: “Bhadde, tava sāṭakam<sup>717</sup> omuñcitvā,**

Then he said to her: “Bhaddā, cast off your robe,

**kāyāruḷham te<sup>718</sup> pasādhanam ettha bhaṇḍikam karohī.” ti**

and make a bundle here of all the ornaments heaped up on you.”

**“Sāmi, mayham ko aparādho?” ti**

“Husband, what is my fault?”

**“Kiṃ panāham, bāle,<sup>719</sup> balikammattham āgato?” ti, saññaṃ karosi.**

“Why, fool, do you think I have come to make offerings?” he said, making a sign.

**“Ahañ-hi imissā devatāya yakanam ubbaṭṭhetvā, dadeyyam<sup>720</sup> balikammāpadesena,**

“Having torn the liver out of that god I could give an offering in this place,

**pana tava ābharaṇam gaṇhitukāmo hutvā āgatomhī.” ti**

but I have come desiring your ornaments.”

**“Kassa pana, Ayya, pasādhanam kassa ahan?”-ti**

“Noble Sir, but whose are the ornaments, and whose am I?”

**“Mayam evarūpaṃ na jānāma,**

“We do not know of such a thing,

**aññaṃ tava santakam, aññaṃ mama santakan.”-ti<sup>721</sup>**

as your property is one thing, and my property is another.”

**“Sādhu, Ayya, ekam pana me adhippāyam pūretha,**

“Very well, Noble Sir, but let me fulfil one wish,

**alaṅkataniyāmeneva me<sup>722</sup> purato ca pacchato ca āliṅgitum dethā.” ti**

let me give you in all your finery a hug from in front and from behind.”

**So: “Sādhū” ti sampaṭicchi.**

Saying: “Very well,” he accepted.

**Sā tena sampaṭicchitabhāvaṃ ñatvā, purato āliṅgitvā,**

Understanding his acceptance, she hugged him from the front,

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<sup>717</sup> ChS: *uttarisāṭakam*.

<sup>718</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *te*.

<sup>719</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *bāle*.

<sup>720</sup> SHB: *ubbattetvā khādeyyam*; PTS: *ubbattetvā mādeyyam*; RTE: *ubbattetvā dadeyyam*.

<sup>721</sup> SHB: *ṭhantakan ti?*

<sup>722</sup> PTS omits: *me*.

**pacchato ālingantī viya hutvā, pabbatapapāte pātesi.**

made like she was hugging him from behind, and threw him from the mountain from where they throw down thieves.

**So patanto ākāse yeva<sup>723</sup> cuṇṇavicuṇṇo ahosi.**

He fell through the air and was crushed to pieces.

**Tāya kataṃ vicitrabhāvaṃ disvā,<sup>724</sup>**

Seeing the wondrous nature of her deed,

**pabbate adhivatthā devatā guṇakittanavasena imā gāthā āha:**

the goddess who dwelt on the mountain spoke this verse expounding her virtue:

**“Na so sabbesu ṭhānesu puriso hoti paṇḍito,**  
“Not on every occasion is it a man that is wise,

**itthī pi paṇḍitā hoti, tattha tattha vicakkhaṇā.**  
a woman is wise also, she is wise now and then.

**Na so sabbesu ṭhānesu puriso hoti paṇḍito,**  
Not on every occasion is it a man that is wise,

**itthī pi paṇḍitā hoti, muhuttam-api cintaye.” ti<sup>725</sup>**  
a woman is wise also, (if) she but think for a moment.”

### **Her First Ordination and Teaching**

**Tato Bhaddā<sup>726</sup> cintesi: ‘Na sakkā mayā iminā niyāmena puna gehaṃ gantuṃ.**

Then Bhaddā thought: ‘Because of this I am not able to return again to my home.

**Ito va<sup>727</sup> gantvā ekaṃ pabbajjaṃ pabbajissāmī,’ ti**

I will go from here and go forth in some going forth (or other),’

**Nigaṇṭhārāmaṃ gantvā, Nigaṇṭhe pabbajjaṃ yāci.**

and she went to the Nigaṇṭha’s monastery and requested to go forth amongst the Nigaṇṭhas.

**Atha nam te āhaṃsu: “Kena niyāmena pabbajjā hotū?” ti**

Then they said this to her: “What manner of going forth?”

**“Yaṃ tumhākaṃ pabbajjāya uttamaṃ, tad-eva karoṭhā.” ti**

Saying: “Please give your supreme going forth.”

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<sup>723</sup> SHB, PTS: *ākāse va*.

<sup>724</sup> RTE: *tāya katavicuṇṇabhāvaṃ disvā*; PTS: *ñatvā*.

<sup>725</sup> Also occurring at Kuṇḍalakesātheriyāpadāna, Ap. 2.3.31-32.

<sup>726</sup> PTS: *Subhaddā*.

<sup>727</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

**Te: “Sādhū,” ti tassā tālaṭṭhinā kese luñcivā pabbājesum.**

Saying, “Very well,” they pulled out her hair with the shell of a palm nut and gave her the going forth.<sup>728</sup>

**Kesā puna vaḍḍhantā<sup>729</sup> rāsirāsivasena kuṇḍalāvattā hutvā, vaḍḍhimsu,**

But her hair grew back in ringlets and wavy curls,

**sā teneva kāraṇena Kuṇḍalakesā nāma jātā.**

and because of that, the name Kuṇḍalakesā (Curly Hair) arose.

**Sā attano pabbajitaṭṭhāne sabbasippam uggaṇhitvā,**

She learned all the skills in the place of her going forth,

**‘Tesam<sup>730</sup> ito uttarim<sup>731</sup> viseso natthī,’ ti ñatvā,**

and knowing: ‘There is no further distinction beyond this,’<sup>732</sup>

**gāmanigamarājadhāniyo vicarantī,**

wandering from village to town to capital city,

**yattha yattha paṇḍitā atthi, tattha tattha gantvā**

wherever there were learned men, she went there

**tesam jānanasippam sabbam-eva uggaṇhāti.<sup>733</sup>**

and learned all the arts they knew.

**Athassā bahūsu ṭhānesu sikkhitabhāvena paṭivādam dātum samatthā na honti.**

And in many places, because she was so learned no one was able to give a reply to her.

**Sā attanā saddhim kathetum samattham adisvā,**

Then not seeing anyone who was able to dispute with her,

**yam gāmam vā nigamam vā pavisati, tassa dvāre vālukarāsim katvā,**

in whatever village or town she entered, she piled up sand at the gate,

**tattha jambusākham ṭhapesi,<sup>734</sup>**

and set up a branch of a rose-apple tree right there,

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<sup>728</sup> In the Traditions the story is very different from here on. There she is said to have lived in a cemetery and seeing a rotting corpse asked the Jainas about it, who couldn’t answer and sent her to the Buddha (!) where she heard the Teaching about impermanence, gained faith, went forth and soon after was Liberated.

<sup>729</sup> RTE adds: *pi*.

<sup>730</sup> ChS: *Etesam*.

<sup>731</sup> ChS: *uttari*.

<sup>732</sup> I.e. she had learned all they could teach.

<sup>733</sup> SHB, PTS: *gaṇhati*.

<sup>734</sup> PTS, ChS: *ṭhapeti*.

**“Yo mama vādam āropetum sakkoti, so imam sākham maddatū,”** ti  
saying: “Whoever is able to refute my word, he should trample down this branch,”

**samīpe ʘhitānam dārakānam<sup>735</sup> saññam deti.**  
and she informed the children standing nearby.

**Tam sattāham-pi maddantā na honti.**  
No one trampled it down even after seven days.

**Atha nam gahetvā, pakkamati.**  
Then taking it, she departed.

### **Her Conversion and Attainment**

**Tasmiṃ samaye ambhākam Bhagavā loke nibbattivā,**  
At that time our Fortunate One had been reborn in the world,

**Sāvattim upanissāya Jetavane viharati.**  
and was living in Jeta’s Wood at Sāvattihī.

**Kuṇḍalakesā pi kho anupubbena Sāvattim patvā,**  
Then Kuṇḍalakesā, after gradually reaching Sāvattihī,

**antonagaram<sup>736</sup> pavisamānā porāṇakaniyāmeneva,**  
and entering the city in the same way as before,

**vālukārāsimhi<sup>737</sup> sākham ʘhapetvā dārakānam saññam datvā pāvisi.**  
set her branch in the sand, informed the children and left.

**Tasmiṃ samaye Dhammasenāpati, Bhikkhusaṅghe pavitṭhe,**  
At that time (Ven. Sāriputta,) the General of the Dhamma, after the Community of monks had already entered (the city),

**ekako va nagaram pavisanto vālukāthūpe<sup>738</sup> jambusākham disvā,**  
saw the Rose-Apple branch in the sand heap while entering the town alone,

**“Kasmā ayam ʘhapitā?” ti pucchi.**  
and asked: “Why is this placed here?”

**Dārakā tam<sup>739</sup> kāraṇam aparihāpetvā, kathesum.**  
The children, without omitting anything, told him the reason.

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<sup>735</sup> SHB, PTS: *ʘhitadārakānam*.

<sup>736</sup> RTE: *antonagare*.

<sup>737</sup> RTE: *vālukārāsimhi*; PTS: *vālikārāsimhi*.

<sup>738</sup> RTE: *vālukathūpe*; PTS: *vālikapuñje*.

<sup>739</sup> RTE: *dārakā nam aparihāpetvā*.

**“Evaṃ sante imaṃ gaheṭvā, maddatha, dārakā.” ti**  
“That being so, take it and trample on it, children.”

**Tesu Therassa vacanaṃ sutvā ekacce maddituṃ na visahiṃsu,**  
They listened to the Elder’s word (but) some didn’t dare to trample on it,

**ekacce taṃ khaṇaṃ yeva<sup>740</sup> madditvā, cuṇṇavicuṇṇaṃ akaṃsu.**  
some others, after trampling on it in an instant, crushed it to powder.

**Kuṇḍalakesā bhattakiccaṃ katvā nikkhamantī,**  
Kuṇḍalakesā, while leaving after taking her meal,

**taṃ<sup>741</sup> sākhaṃ madditaṃ disvā: “Kassetāṃ kamman,”-ti pucchi.**  
saw the branch trampled down and asked: “Who did this deed?”

**Athassā Dhammasenāpatinā kārāpitabhāvaṃ kathayiṃsu.**  
Then they told her the General of the Dhamma had caused it to be done.

**Sā: ‘Attano thāmaṃ ajānanto**  
She thought: ‘He must be knowing his own strength

**imaṃ sākhaṃ maddāpetuṃ no visahissati,<sup>742</sup>**  
else he wouldn’t dare to have had the branch trampled down,

**addhā mahanto eso<sup>743</sup> bhavissati!**  
he must surely be a great man!

**Aham-pi pana khuddikā bhavantī, na sobhissāmi,<sup>744</sup>**  
But I am insignificant (in comparison), and I will not shine,

**‘Antogāmam-eva pavisitvā, parisāya saññaṃ dātuṃ vaṭṭatī,’ ti cintetvā,**  
° and (yet) thinking: ‘After entering the village, it is right to inform the people,’

**tathā akāsi.**  
that is what she did.

**Asītikulasahassanivāse nagare sabhāgasabhāgavasena<sup>745</sup> sabbe va<sup>746</sup>**  
All eighty thousand families residing in that city in their various neighbourhoods

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<sup>740</sup> ChS: *khaṇe yeva*.

<sup>741</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *taṃ*.

<sup>742</sup> SHB, PTS: *visahessati*.

<sup>743</sup> RTE: *addhā eso mahanto*; PTS: *eko*.

<sup>744</sup> SHB, PTS: *sohissāmi*.

<sup>745</sup> RTE: *sabhāgavasena*.

<sup>746</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

**sañjānimsū ti<sup>747</sup> veditabbaṃ.**

were informed, so it should be understood.

**Thero pi bhattakiccaṃ katvā, aññatarasmiṃ rukkhamūle nisīdi.**

The Elder, after the meal duties, sat down at the root of a certain tree.

**Athāyaṃ Kuṇḍalakesā mahājanaparivutā, Therassa santikaṃ gantvā,**

Then Kuṇḍalakesā, surrounded by the populace, went into the presence of the Elder,

**paṭisanthāraṃ katvā ekamantaṃ<sup>748</sup> ṭhatvā.**

exchanged greetings and stood on one side.

**“Bhante, tumhehi sākhaṃ maddāpitā?” ti pucchi.**

She asked: “Reverend Sir, did you have the branch trampled down?”

**“Āma, mayā<sup>749</sup> maddāpitā.” ti**

“Yes, I had it trampled down.”

**“Evaṃ sante, tumhehi saddhiṃ amhākaṃ vādo hotu, Bhante.” ti**

“That being so, reverend Sir, let there be (a discussion) on our doctrine, together with yours.”

**“Hotu, Bhadde.” ti**

“Let it be so, Bhaddā.”

**“Kassa pucchā hoti,<sup>750</sup> kassa vissajjanan?”-ti**

“But who should ask, and who should answer?”

**“Pucchā nāma amhākaṃ pattā, tvaṃ pana tuyhaṃ jānanakaṃ pucchā.” ti**

“Our questions are ready, you can ask according to your understanding.”

**Sā Therena dinna-anumatiyā<sup>751</sup>**

Consent having been given by the Elder

**sabbam-eva attanā<sup>752</sup> jānanakaṃ vādaṃ pucchi, Thero sabbamṃ vissajjesi,**

she asked everything according to the doctrine she understood, and the Elder answered it all,

**sā sabbamṃ pucchitvā, tuṅhī ahoṣi.**

and having asked everything, she fell silent.

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<sup>747</sup> SHB, PTS: *jānimsū ti*.

<sup>748</sup> PTS: *akamante*.

<sup>749</sup> PTS: *mayā mayā*.

<sup>750</sup> ChS: *hotu*.

<sup>751</sup> RTE: *dinnānumatiyā*.

<sup>752</sup> RTE, ChS: *attano*.

**Atha nam Thero āha:**

Then the Elder said to her:

**“Tayā bahum pucchitam, mayam-pi ekam pañham pucchāmā.” ti**

“You asked many things, but we will ask only one question.”

**“Pucchatha, Bhante.” ti**

“Ask away, reverend Sir.”

**“Ekam nāma kin?”-ti**

“What is said to be one?”

**Kuṇḍalakesā: “Na jānāmi, Bhante,” ti āha.**

Kuṇḍalakesā said: “I don’t know, reverend Sir.”

**“Tvam ettakam-pi na jānāsi, aññam kim jānissasi?” ti**

“If you don’t know even that much, how will you know anything else?”

**Sā tatheva<sup>753</sup> Therassa pādesu pativā:**

She fell at the Elder’s feet right there

**“Tumhākam saraṇam gacchāmi, Bhante,” ti āha.**

and said: “I go to you for refuge, reverend Sir.”

**“Mama saraṇagamanakammaṃ natthi,**

“There is no coming to me for refuge,

**sadevake loke Aggappuggalo dhuravihāre vasati, Tam saraṇam gacchā.” ti<sup>754</sup>**

the Greatest Person in the world with its gods dwells in a monastery nearby, go to Him for refuge.”

**Sā: “Evaṃ karissāmi, Bhante.” ti**

She said: “I will do so, reverend Sir.”

**Sāyanhasamaye, Satthu Dhammadesanāvelāya,**

In the evening time, at the time the Teacher was teaching Dhamma,

**Satthu<sup>755</sup> santikam gantvā,**

she went into the presence of the Teacher,

**pañcapatiṭṭhitena vanditvā, ekamantaṃ aṭṭhāsi.**

worshipped with the fivefold prostration and stood at one side.

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<sup>753</sup> RTE, ChS omit: *tatheva*.

<sup>754</sup> RTE, ChS: *gacchāhi ti*.

<sup>755</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Satthu*.

**Satthā, tassā madditasāṅkhārāya cariyāvasena,**<sup>756</sup>

The Teacher, by way of subjugating her (volitional) processes,

**Dhammapade imaṃ gātham-āha:**

spoke this verse found in the Dhammapada:

**“Sahassam-api ce gāthā anattapadasamhitā,**

“Even though one possesses a thousand lines from verses which are unbeneficial,

**ekam gāthāpadam seyyo, yaṃ sutvā, upasammati.” ti**<sup>757</sup>

they are surpassed by one line of verse, which, having heard, one is calmed.”

**Sā gāthāpariyosāne yathā ʒhitā va,**

At the conclusion of the verse, just as she was standing there,

**saha paṭisambhidāhi Arahattam patvā, pabbajjam yāci.**

after attaining Liberation together with the analytic knowledges, she asked for the going forth.

**Satthā tassā pabbajjam sampaṭicchi,**<sup>758</sup> **sā bhikkhunī-upassayam**<sup>759</sup> **gantvā pabbaji.**

The Teacher agreed to her going forth, and she went to the nunnery and went forth.

**Aparabhāge catuparisamajjhe kathā udapādi:**

Later this discussion arose in the midst of the four assemblies:<sup>760</sup>

**“Mahantā vatāyam Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā,**

“Great is this Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā,

**yā catuppadikagāthāvasāne Arahattam pattā!” ti**

in that she attained Liberation at the end of just four lines of verse!”

**Satthā tam kāraṇam, aṭṭhuppattim katvā,**

For this reason the Teacher, as the occasion had arisen,

**Therim khippābhiññānam aggaṭṭhāne ʒhapesī. ti**

placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who were quick in deep knowledge.

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<sup>756</sup> RTE: *cariyavasena*.

<sup>757</sup> Dhp 101. In the Dhammapada commentary it says that this verse was recited in regard to Bāhiya’s Awakening, and that Dhp 102 was the verse that is connected to Ven. Kuṇḍalakesī: *Yo ca gāthāsataṃ bhāse, anattapadasamhitā, ekam dhammapadam seyyo, yaṃ sutvā upasammati; The one who speaks a hundred verses which are unbeneficial, better still is one line of verse, which, having heard, she is calmed.*

<sup>758</sup> PTS: *paṭicchi*.

<sup>759</sup> ChS: *bhikkhunupassayam*.

<sup>760</sup> That is, the monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees.

## Bhaddākāpilānītherīvattu

### 10. The Story about the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kāpilānī

#### Introduction

Bhaddā, after the usual start with Buddha Padumuttara, had a rather uncharacteristic lapse, in that in an intervening life she first gave something to an Independent Buddha, then took it back, and finally gave it again, and made an aspiration to have a beautiful body, which came true in her last life.<sup>761</sup>

The commentary gives an abbreviated version of Bhaddā's final life story, referring the reader to the identical story given for her husband Pippali who would become famous as Mahā Kassapa. To make Bhaddā's story complete I have inserted the relevant section.

It tells a very touching story from the early life of Pippali and Bhaddā. Although betrothed to each other, neither wanted to marry and wrote to the other saying so, and that they intended ordaining instead. The letters were intercepted on the way, however, and they were tricked into marriage. They decided after the ceremony to maintain celibacy, and did not consummate the marriage.

After Pippali's parents died, the young couple were obliged to take on the tasks of householders and look after the considerable fortune that was their family property. One day, on noticing the killing of insects on their estate, they asked who is culpable for the deaths. They learned, to their dismay, that the responsibility belongs to them alone.

As far as I understand the workings of kamma they would bear either none or very little responsibility for the death of the creatures, but in the story here all the blame for the deaths is put on them alone, which puts sufficient fear into their hearts that they abandon their wealth and decide to go forth.

This took place soon after the Buddha had attained Awakening, and they left on their quest before meeting or hearing about the Buddha. After disposing of their wealth and giving freedom to their servants, they wandered off together until they realised that remaining together might attract blame, and decided to split up.

Taking the right hand road, Pippali almost immediately met the Buddha and soon became one of his great disciples. Yet more years would pass before the founding of the Buddha's Community of nuns, hence Bhaddā went forth amongst the Wanderers (Paribbājika); this again indicates that communities of female ascetics existed even before the Buddha founded his own Community.

Around five years later Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī went forth as the first of the nuns, and not long after Bhaddā received ordination from her, attained Liberation and was placed at foremost amongst those who could remember their former lives. The male disciple having this same quality was Ven. Sobhita.

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<sup>761</sup> The same thing happened with Uppalavaṇṇā in her previous life, see above.

The story which leads up to this position really gives no grounds for why she would attain to this particular position, which is odd, as the stories are meant to illustrate this. Another curious thing is that in the next story, about Bhaddā Kaccānā (the Buddha's former wife), she is said to excel all others in her attainment of recalling past lives, so it seems there is another anomaly here. Nevertheless, the story remains of great interest and is memorable in its own right.

The Traditions fail to mention her aspiration under Buddha Padumuttara, and indeed it seems her virtue is simply to support her husband (the future Mahā Kassapa) in his deeds, both here and in other future lives which are mentioned. Neither is it mentioned that she was placed in a foremost position in the Traditions, so again there is something of an anomaly in the story.

**AN 1.5.10**  
(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhunam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**pubbenivāsam anussarantīnam<sup>762</sup>, yad-idam Bhaddā Kāpilānī.**

amongst those who can recollect their former lives, that is to say, Bhaddā Kāpilānī.

**AA 1.5.10**  
(commentary)

**Dasame, “Pubbenivāsan,”-ti<sup>763</sup>**

In the tenth (story), “Amongst those who (have knowledge of) their former lives,”

**pubbe nivutthakhandhasantānam<sup>764</sup> anussarantīnam**

it shows why, amongst those who could recollect the succession of the great mass of former lives,

**Bhaddākāpilānī aggā ti dasseti.**

the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kāpilānī was said to be foremost.

### **Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Sā kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

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<sup>762</sup> ChS omits: *anussarantīnam*

<sup>763</sup> RTE: *pubbenivāsam anussarantīnan-ti.*

<sup>764</sup> ChS: *nivutthakkhandha-*.

**Haṃsavatīyaṃ kulagehe nibbattivā,<sup>765</sup>**

she was reborn in a good family home in Haṃsavatī,

**Satthu Dhammadesanaṃ suṇantī,**

and while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhuniṃ pubbenivāsaṃ**

° seeing the Teacher place a certain nun

**anussarantīnaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**

as being foremost amongst those who recollect their former lives,

**adhikāraḥkammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

### Her Good Deeds

**Sā kappasatasahassaṃ devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

After being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**anuppanne Buddhē, Bārāṇasiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gaṇhitvā,**

when there was no Buddha arisen, after being conceived in a good family home in Sāvattihī,

**attano attano bhātu jāyāya<sup>766</sup> saddhiṃ kalahaṃ karontī,**

during a quarrel with her brother's wife,

**tāya Paccekabuddhassa piṇḍapāte dinne,**

when (the sister) gave alms food to an Independent Buddha,

**“Ayaṃ imassa piṇḍapātaṃ datvā, attano vasaṃ vattetī,” ti**

thinking: “After giving alms food to him, she has him under her control,”

**Paccekabuddhassa hatthato pattaṃ gaṇhitvā,**

she grabbed the bowl from the Independent Buddha's hand,

**bhattaṃ chaḍḍetvā, kalalassa pūretvā adāsi.**

threw away the food, filled it with mud and gave (it back).

**Mahājano: “Bālā ayan,”-ti garahitvā,**

The people said: “She is a fool,” and blamed her,

**“Yāya te saddhiṃ kalaho kato, tassā kiñci na karosi,**

° saying: “You had a quarrel with her, but did nothing to her,

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<sup>765</sup> SHB, PTS: *nibbattā*.

<sup>766</sup> RTE: *attano bhaginiyā, her sister*; ChS: *sāmbhaginiyā; her husband's sister*.

**Paccekabuddho te kim aparajjhatī?” ti āha.**

what offence has the Independent Buddha done to you?”

**Sā tesam vacanena lajjāyamānā puna pattam gahetvā,**

Feeling shame at these words, she took the bowl again,

**kalalam hāretvā,<sup>767</sup> dhovitvā gandhacūṇṇena ubbaṭṭetvā,**

emptied the mud, washed and scrubbed it with fragrant soap powder,

**catumadhurassa pūretvā,**

filled it with the four sweet things,<sup>768</sup>

**upari āsittena padumagabbhavaṇṇena sappinā vijjotamānam,**

and sprinkling it with ghee shining the colour of a lotus calyx,

**Paccekabuddhassa hatthe ṭhapetvā,**

placed it in the hand of the Independent Buddha,

**“Yathā ayam<sup>769</sup> piṇḍapāto obhāsajāto, evam obhāsajātam me sarīram hotū.” ti**

saying: “Just as this alms food shines forth, so may my body shine forth.”

**Patthanam paṭṭhapesī. ti<sup>770</sup>**

She established this aspiration.

**Sabbam<sup>771</sup> Mahākassapatherassa<sup>772</sup> vatthumhi vuttanayeneva veditabban.**

And everything should be understood as it has been related in the Elder Mahā Kassapa’s story.<sup>773</sup>

## Her Last Life

**...amhākam Satthā loke uppajjivā,**

...after our Teacher had arisen in the world,

**Pavattitavara-Dhammacakko,<sup>774</sup> anupubbena Rājagaham pāvisi.**

and had Set Rolling the Noble Wheel of the Dhamma, he gradually entered Rājagaha.

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<sup>767</sup> RTE: *haritvā*.

<sup>768</sup> Ghee, honey, sugar and sesame oil.

<sup>769</sup> RTE: *Yathāyam*.

<sup>770</sup> SHB, PTS: *ṭhapesī ti*.

<sup>771</sup> RTE: *Sabbam-etam*.

<sup>772</sup> RTE, ChS: *-ttherassa*.

<sup>773</sup> The text of the relevant sections have been included here to complete the story.

<sup>774</sup> SHB: *Pavattavara-*.

**Satthari tattha vasante,<sup>775</sup> ayam Pippalimāṇavo,<sup>776</sup>**

While the Teacher was dwelling there, this young brāhmaṇa Pippali,<sup>777</sup>

**Magadharatṭhe, Mahātitthabrāhmaṇagāme,**

in the Magadha country, in the brāhmaṇa village called Great Ford,

**Kapilabrāhmaṇassa Aggamaheṣiyā kucchismiṃ<sup>778</sup> nibbatto.**

had been reborn in the brāhmaṇa Kapila's Queen's womb.

**Ayam Bhaddā Kāpilānī<sup>779</sup> Maddaratṭhe Sāgalanagare,**

And Bhaddā Kāpilānī, in the Madda country, in the Sāgala town,

**Kosiyagottabrāhmaṇassa Aggamaheṣiyā kucchismiṃ nibbattā.**

had been reborn in the brāhmaṇa Kosiya's Queen's womb.

**Tesaṃ anukkamena vaḍḍhamānānaṃ,**

Gradually they both grew up,

**Pippalimāṇavassa vīsatime vasse,<sup>780</sup> Bhaddāya soḷasame vasse sampatte,**

and when the young brāhmaṇa Pippali was twenty years old, and Bhaddā had come to sixteen,

**Mātāpitāro puttāṃ oloketvā,**

his Mother and Father, after examining their son,

**“Tāta, tvaṃ vayapatto,**

said: “Dear, you are now mature,

**kulavaṃso nāma patitṭhāpetabbo,” ti ativiya nippīlayimsu.**

you should keep up the family lineage,”<sup>781</sup> and they pressed him greatly.

**Māṇavo āha: “Mayhaṃ sotapathe evarūpaṃ kathaṃ mā kathetha,**

The young brāhmaṇa said: “It is not suitable to talk such talk in my ear,

**ahaṃ yāva tumhe dharatha<sup>782</sup> tāva paṭijaggissāmi,**

as long as you last I will look after you,

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<sup>775</sup> SHB, PTS: *paṭivasante*.

<sup>776</sup> SHB, RTE: *Pippali*-; and similarly throughout.

<sup>777</sup> The future Ven. Mahā Kassapa.

<sup>778</sup> ChS: *kucchimhi*; also just below.

<sup>779</sup> PTS: *Bhaddakāpilānī*.

<sup>780</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *vasse*.

<sup>781</sup> It means he should now get married and have children of his own.

<sup>782</sup> RTE: *jīvatha*.

**tumhākaṃ accayena<sup>783</sup> nikkhamitvā, pabbajissāmī.” ti**  
but after you have departed, I will go forth.”

**Te katipāhaṃ atikkamitvā<sup>784</sup> puna kathayimsu, so pi<sup>785</sup> tatheva paṭikkhipi.<sup>786</sup>**  
After a few days had passed they spoke again, and again he refused.

**Puna pi kathayimsu, puna pi paṭikkhipi.**  
Again they spoke, again he refused.

**Tato paṭṭhāya Mātā nirantaram kathesi<sup>787</sup> yeva.**  
From then on his Mother spoke incessantly about it.

**Māṇavo: ‘Mama Mātaram saññāpessāmī,’ ti**  
The young brāhmaṇa, thinking: ‘I must convince my Mother,’

**rattasuvaṇṇassa nikkhasahassam<sup>788</sup> datvā,**  
gave a thousand coins of red gold,

**suvaṇṇakārehi ekam itthirūpaṃ kārapetvā,<sup>789</sup>**  
had a woman’s form made by the goldsmiths,

**tassa majjanaghaṭṭanādikamma-pariyosāne,<sup>790</sup>**  
and at the end of the work he rubbed and polished it and so on,

**taṃ rattavattham<sup>791</sup> nivāsāpetvā,**  
dressed it in red clothes,

**vaṇṇasampannehi pupphehi ceva nānā-alaṅkārehi ca alaṅkārapetvā**  
had it adorned with various ornaments and colourful flowers,

**Mātaram pakkosāpetvā āha:<sup>792</sup>**  
summoned his Mother and said:

**“Amma, evarūpaṃ ārammaṇaṃ labhanto gehe vasissāmī,<sup>793</sup>**  
“Mother, finding someone of such a form I will live in a household,

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<sup>783</sup> SHB, PTS: *pacchato*.

<sup>784</sup> SHB, PTS: *atikkametvā*.

<sup>785</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *pi*.

<sup>786</sup> RTE: *paṭikkhipati*, similarly on the next line.

<sup>787</sup> RTE: *katheti*.

<sup>788</sup> RTE: *rattasuvaṇṇanikkhasahassam*.

<sup>789</sup> SHB, PTS: *kāretvā*.

<sup>790</sup> RTE: *samajjana-*.

<sup>791</sup> RTE: *rattavatthāni*.

<sup>792</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *āha*.

<sup>793</sup> SHB, PTS: *ṭhassāmī*.

**alabhanto na vasissāmī.” ti<sup>794</sup>**

but not finding her I will not live (there).”

**Paṇḍitā brāhmaṇī cintesi:**

The wise brāhmaṇī thought:

**“Mayham putto puñṇavā dinnadāno katābhinihāro,**

“My meritorious son must have formed a resolution and given gifts,

**puñṇam karonto na ekako va akāsi,**

he wasn’t making merit by himself alone,

**addhā etena saha katapuñṇā suvaṇṇarūpakapaṭibhāgā va<sup>795</sup> bhavissatī.” ti**

surely there will be a woman whom he made merit with who is like this golden statue.”

**Aṭṭha brāhmaṇe pakkosāpetvā sabbakāmehi santappetvā,**

She summoned eight brāhmaṇas and satisfied them with all they wished for,

**suvaṇṇarūpakam ratham<sup>796</sup> āropetvā:**

and mounted the golden statue on a chariot,

**“Gacchatha, Tātā, yattha amhākam jātigottabhogehi samānakule,<sup>797</sup>**

saying: “Go, Dears, and wherever there is a family similar to ours in birth, lineage and wealth,

**evarūpam dārikam passatha imam-eva<sup>798</sup> suvaṇṇarūpakam**

look for a girl who is like this golden statue,

**paṇṇākāram<sup>799</sup> katvā dethā,” ti uyyojesi.**

and after making a present, give it (to her),” and she sent them off.

**Te: ‘Amhākam nāma etaṃ kamman,’-ti nikkhamitvā,**

They (thought): ‘This is our work,’ and departed,

**‘Kattha gamissāmā?’ ti cintetvā,**

thinking: ‘Where will we go?’

**‘Maddaraṭṭham nāma itthākaro, Maddaraṭṭham gamissāmā,’ ti**

and: ‘The Madda country is a mine of women, let us go to the Madda country,’

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<sup>794</sup> SHB, PTS: *ṭhassāmī ti*.

<sup>795</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

<sup>796</sup> RTE: *rathe*.

<sup>797</sup> PTS: *samāne kule*.

<sup>798</sup> RTE: *idam-eva*.

<sup>799</sup> SHB: *saccakāram*.

**Maddaraṭṭhe Sāgalanagaraṃ agamaṃsu.**

they went to the Madda country and to the Sāgala town.

**Tattha taṃ<sup>800</sup> suvaṇṇarūpakam̐ nahānatitthe ṭhapetvā ekamante<sup>801</sup> nisīdim̐su.**

They set up the golden statue there at the bathing ghat and sat down on one side.

**Atha Bhaddāya dhātī Bhaddam̐ nahāpetvā alaṅkaritvā, sirigabbhe nisīdāpetvā,**

Then Bhaddā's nurse washed and decorated Bhaddā and made her sit in the royal bed chamber,

**nahāyitum̐ gacchantī,<sup>802</sup> taṃ rūpakam̐ disvā,**

and while going to bathe, she saw the statue,

**‘Ayyadhītā me idhāgatā,’ ti saññāya santajjetvā,<sup>803</sup>**

and thinking: ‘The Noble Lady has come here,’ she made a threatening gesture,

**‘Dubbinīte kim̐ tvaṃ idhāgatā?’ ti talasattikam̐ uggiritvā,**

saying: “Why are you so obstinate as to come here?” and lifting up her hand threateningly,

**‘Gaccha sīghan!’-ti gaṇḍapasse pahari.**

she said: “Go (back) quickly!” and slapped it on the side.

**Hattho pāsāṇe paṭihato viya vikampittha.<sup>804</sup>**

Her hand trembled like she had struck a rock.

**Sā paṭikkamitvā:<sup>805</sup> ‘Evaṃ thaddham̐ nāma!’**

Stepping back, she said: “It is so hard!”

**Mahāgīvaṃ disvā:<sup>806</sup> ‘Ayyadhītā me,’ ti saññam̐ uppādesim̐,**

Seeing her stiff neck, thinking: ‘My Noble Lady,’ she made a gesture,

**‘Ayyadhītāya hi me nivāsanapaṭiggāhikāya pi ayuttā,’ ti āha.**

and said: “This is inappropriate for a Noble Lady who is dressed by me!”

**Atha nam̐ te manussā parivāretvā: ‘Evarūpā te Sāmidhītā?’ ti pucchim̐su.**

Then those men surrounded her and asked: “Is your Master's daughter like this?”

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<sup>800</sup> RTE omits: *taṃ*.

<sup>801</sup> RTE: *ekam-antaṃ*.

<sup>802</sup> SHB, PTS, ChS: *āgacchantī*.

<sup>803</sup> PTS: *tajjetvā*.

<sup>804</sup> ChS: *kampittha*.

<sup>805</sup> SHB, PTS adds: *va*.

<sup>806</sup> RTE: *evaṃ thaddhabhāvaṃ ṇatvā pakkamitvā suvaṇṇarūpakam̐ disvā*.

**“Kiṃ eṣā imāya satagaṇeṇa sahaṣṣagaṇeṇa mayhaṃ Ayyā<sup>807</sup> abhirūpatarā,**  
“Why this is as lovely as my Noble Lady, who has a hundred, even a thousand, virtues,

**dvādasahatthe gabbhe nisinnāya padīpakiccaṃ natthi,**  
there is nothing that can hold a candle to her when she is sat in her twelve-cubit chamber,

**sarīrobbhāseṇeva tamaṃ vidhamatī!” ti**  
the radiance of her body destroys the darkness!”

**“Tena hi āgacchā,” ti<sup>808</sup> pūjāṃ<sup>809</sup> gahetvā, suvaṇṇarūpakāṃ rathe<sup>810</sup> āropetvā,**  
“Then come,” and they took the offering, mounted the golden statue on a chariot,

**Kosiyagottassa brāhmaṇassa<sup>811</sup> gharadvāre ṭhatvā āgamaṇaṃ nivedayiṃsu.**  
and stopped at the gate of the house of the brāhmaṇa of the Kosiya clan and announced their coming.

**Brāhmaṇo paṭisanthāraṃ katvā: “Kuto āgatattā?” ti pucchi.**  
The brāhmaṇa received them well and asked: “From where did you come?”

**“Magadharaṭṭhe Mahātitthagāme Kapilabrāhmaṇassa gharato.” ti**  
“From the house of the brāhmaṇa Kapila in the Great Ford village in the Magadha country.”

**“Kiṃ kāraṇā āgatā?” ti**  
“For what reason have you come?”

**“Iminā nāma kāraṇenā.” ti**  
“For this reason,” (and they explained).

**“Kalyāṇaṃ, Tātā, samajātigottavibhavo<sup>812</sup> amhākaṃ brāhmaṇo,**  
“It is good, Dears, this brāhmaṇa has the same birth, lineage and wealth as us,

**dassāma<sup>813</sup> dārikan,” ti paṇṇākāraṃ gaṇhi.**  
we will give (him) the girl,” and he received the bride-gift.

**Te Kapilabrāhmaṇassa sāsaṇaṃ paṇiṃsu:**  
They sent a message to the brāhmaṇa Kapila,

**“Laddhā dārikā, kattabbaṃ karoṭhā.” ti**  
saying: “Having found the girl, please do what should be done.”

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<sup>807</sup> ChS: *Ayyādhītā*.

<sup>808</sup> SHB: *āgacchāhī ti*; RTE: *āgacchāmā ti*.

<sup>809</sup> ChS: *khujjāṃ*.

<sup>810</sup> ChS: *ratham*.

<sup>811</sup> RTE omits: *brāhmaṇassa*.

<sup>812</sup> RTE: *samānajāti-*.

<sup>813</sup> ChS: *dassāmi*.

**Taṃ sāsanaṃ sutvā Pippalimāṇavassa ārocayimsu:**

After hearing the message, they informed the young brāhmaṇa Pippali,

**“Laddhā kira dārikā.” ti**

saying: “It seems the girl has been found.”

**Māṇavo: ‘Ahaṃ na labhissantī ti cintesiṃ, ime laddhā ti vadanti.**

The young brāhmaṇa (reflecting): ‘I thought they will not find (her) and now they say she is found.

**Anatthiko hutvā, paṇṇaṃ pesessāmi,’ ti**

Misfortune has arisen, I will send her a letter,’

**rahogato paṇṇaṃ likhi.**

and having gone into seclusion he wrote a letter.

**“Bhaddā attano jātigottabhogānurūpaṃ gharāvāsaṃ labhatu,**

“Bhaddā should gain a household life suitable to her birth, lineage and wealth,

**ahaṃ nikkhamitvā pabbajissāmi, mā pacchā vipphaṇṇārahāsi.” ti**

(but) having renounced, I will go forth, do not regret it later.”

**Bhaddā pi: “Asukassa kira<sup>814</sup> maṃ dātukāmo,” ti sutvā,**

Bhaddā also, having heard: “It seems they desire to give me to such and such,”

**rahogatā paṇṇaṃ likhi.**

went into seclusion and wrote a letter.

**“Ayyaputto attano jātigottabhogānurūpaṃ gharāvāsaṃ labhatu,**

“The Noble Sir should gain a household life suitable to his birth, lineage and wealth,

**ahaṃ nikkhamitvā pabbajissāmi, mā pacchā vipphaṇṇārahāsi.” ti**

(but) having renounced, I will go forth, do not regret it later.”

**Dve paṇṇāni antarāmagge samāgacchiṃsu.**

The two letter bearers met on the highway.

**“Idaṃ kassa paṇṇaṃ?”-ti**

“Whose letter is this?”

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<sup>814</sup> SHB, PTS: *nāma kira*.

**“Pippalimāṇavena Bhaddāya pahitan.”-ti**

“The young brāhmaṇa Pippali send it to Bhaddā.”

**“Idaṃ kassa paṇṇan?”-ti<sup>815</sup>**

“This is whose letter?”

**“Bhaddāya Pippalimāṇavassa pahitan,”-ti ca vutte dve pi vācetvā,**

“Bhaddā sent it to the young brāhmaṇa Pippali,” and after saying that and reading (the letters),

**“Passatha dārakānaṃ kamman”-ti**

saying: “Look at the children’s deeds!”

**phāletvā araṇṇe chaḍḍetvā,**

they tore them up and threw them away in the wilderness,

**samānapaṇṇaṃ likhitvā, ito ca etto ca pesesun.<sup>816</sup>**

wrote similar letters, and sent them from here and there.

**Iti tesam anicchamānānaṃ yeva samāgamo ahoṣi.**

Thus neither (Pippali nor Bhaddā) wished there to be a meeting.

**Taṃ divasam-eva māṇavo<sup>817</sup> ekaṃ pupphadāmaṃ gahetvā ṭhapesi.**

The day (they married) the young brāhmaṇa took a garland of flowers and set it up.<sup>818</sup>

**Bhaddā pi tāni sayanamajjhe ṭhapesi.<sup>819</sup>**

Bhaddā also set (one up) in the middle of the bed.

**Bhuttasāyam-āsā ubho pi: ‘Sayanaṃ abhiruhissāmā,’ ti samāgantvā,**

Having enjoyed supper they both thought: ‘We will go up and lie down,’ and having met (in the bedroom),

**māṇavo dakkhiṇapassena sayanaṃ abhiruhi,**

the young brāhmaṇa went up and lay down on his right side,

**Bhaddā vāmapassena abhiruhitvā āha:**

and Bhaddā after laying down on her left side, said:

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<sup>815</sup> RTE, ChS: “*Idaṃ kassā?*” *ti*.

<sup>816</sup> SHB: *etesam pesesun*; RTE: *etesun pesesun*; PTS: *etesun pesenti*.

<sup>817</sup> SHB, RTE: *taṃ divasam yeva māṇavo pi*.

<sup>818</sup> There seems to be an ellipsis in the story here as they are now married, but it doesn’t say how that came about.

<sup>819</sup> RTE: *Bhaddā pi Kāpilānī sayanamajjhe ṭhapatvā*; SHB, PTS: *Bhaddā pi tāni vāmena majjhe ṭhapatvā*.

**“Yassa passe pupphāni milāyanti tassa rāgacittam uppannan-ti vijānissāma,<sup>820</sup>**  
“On whichever side the flowers fade we will know that a lustful thought arose to the one (on that side),

**imam pupphadāmam na allīyitabban.”-ti**  
you should not come near this garland of flowers.”

**Te pana añnam-añnam sarīrasamphassabhayena**  
Through fear of their bodies coming into contact with each other

**tiyāmarattim niddam anokkamantā<sup>821</sup> va vītināmenti,**  
they passed the time without falling asleep during the three watches of the night

**divā pana hasanam-attam-pi<sup>822</sup> nāhosi.**  
and during the day there was no laughter.

**Te lokāmisena asamsaṭṭhā yāva Mātāpitāro dharanti,**  
For as long as their Mothers and Fathers continued they were unaffected by material life in this world,

**tāva kuṭumbam avicāretvā, tesu kālaṅkatesu vicārayimsu.**  
and they did not manage the family estates, but with their passing, they had to manage them.

**Pippalimāṇavassa<sup>823</sup> sampatti sattāsītikoṭidhanam.**  
The young brāhmaṇa Pippali was very wealthy, having eight hundred and seventy million.

**Ekadivasam sarīram ubbaṭṭetvā chaḍḍetabbam<sup>824</sup> suvaṇṇacuṇṇam-eva,**  
The golden powder that was thrown away after bathing his body for one day,

**Magadhanāḷiyā dvādasanāḷimattam<sup>825</sup> laddhum vaṭṭati.**  
was enough for twelve measures by the Magadha measure.

**Yantabaddhāni saṭṭhimattāni taḷākāni,<sup>826</sup>**  
There were at least sixty reservoirs with irrigation machines,

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<sup>820</sup> RTE: *jānissāma*; SHB, PTS: *vijānissāmā ti*.

<sup>821</sup> RTE, PTS: *anokkantā*.

<sup>822</sup> ChS: *hāsamattam pi*.

<sup>823</sup> ChS: *Mahatī māṇavassa*.

<sup>824</sup> SHB, *chaḍḍhetabba-*; PTS: *chaḍḍetabba-*.

<sup>825</sup> SHB: *dvādasanāḷī*; PTS: *dvādasanāḷim*.

<sup>826</sup> ChS: *saṭṭhi mahātaḷākāni*.

**kammanto dvādasayojaniko, Anurādhapurappamāṇā cuddasa gāmā,**<sup>827</sup>  
his workplace was twelve leagues, there were fourteen Anurādhapura-sized villages,<sup>828</sup>

**cuddasa hatthānikā, cuddasa assānikā, cuddasa rathānikā.**<sup>829</sup>  
fourteen elephant armies, fourteen horse armies and fourteen chariot armies.

**So ekadivasam alaṅkata-assam**<sup>830</sup> **āruyha**<sup>831</sup>  
One day, after mounting a decorated horse

**mahājanaparivuto kammantaṃ gantvā,**  
and going to work surrounded by the populace,

**khettakoṭiyam ṭhito naṅgalehi bhinnaṭṭhānato,**  
standing at the top of ten million fields that were being broken by the plough,

**kākādayo sakuṇe gaṇḍuppāpādike pāṇake**<sup>832</sup> **uddharitvā, khādante disvā,**  
and having seen the birds, beginning with the crows, digging up and eating the earth  
worms, and insects and so on,

**“Tātā, ime kiṃ khādanti?” ti pucchi.**  
he asked: “Dear, what are they eating?”

**“Gaṇḍuppāde, Ayyā.” ti**  
“Earth worms, Noble Sir.”

**“Etehi kataṃ pāpaṃ kassa hotī?” ti**  
“Who (pays) for the wickedness done by these (birds)?”

**“Tumbhākaṃ, Ayyā.” ti**  
“You do, Noble Sir.”

**So cintesi: ‘Sace etehi kataṃ pāpaṃ mayhaṃ hoti,**  
He thought: ‘If mine is (the result) for the wickedness done by these,

**kiṃ me karissati sattāsītikoṭidhanaṃ,**  
what will I do with eight hundred and seventy million,

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<sup>827</sup> RTE: *Anurādhapurappamāṇo dāsagāmo.*

<sup>828</sup> The Great Commentator Buddhaghosa was residing in Anurādhapūra, the ancient Sri Lankan capital, when he compiled the commentaries.

<sup>829</sup> RTE: *hatthānikā . assānikā . rathānikā.*

<sup>830</sup> RTE: *alaṅkatāssam.*

<sup>831</sup> SHB, PTS: *alaṅkatarathaṃ abhiruyha.*

<sup>832</sup> ChS: *gaṇḍuppādādipāṇake.*

**kiṃ dvādasayojaniko kammanto,**  
what use is a workplace of twelve leagues,

**kiṃ saṭṭhi yantabaddhāni taḷākāni,**  
what use sixty reservoirs with irrigation machines,

**kiṃ cuddasa gāmā?**<sup>833</sup>  
what use fourteen villages?

**Sabbam-etam Bhaddāya Kāpilāniyā niyyādetvā**<sup>834</sup> **nikkhamma pabbajissāmi.**’ ti  
Having given everything over to Bhaddā Kāpilānī I will renounce and go forth.’

**Bhaddā pi Kāpilānī tasmim̐ khaṇe,**  
Bhaddā Kāpilānī at that time,

**antaravatthusmim̐**<sup>835</sup> **tayo tilakumbhe pattharāpetvā,**  
three pots of sesame seeds having being sown over the inner fields,

**dhātīhi parivutā nisinnā, kāke**<sup>836</sup> **tilapāṇake khādamāne**<sup>837</sup> **disvā,**  
was sitting surrounded by her helpers, and saw crows eating the worms (that dwelt) in the sesame,

**“Ammā, kiṃ ime khādantī?” ti pucchi.**  
and asked: “Lady, what are they eating?”

**“Pāṇake, Ayye.” ti**  
“Worms, Noble Lady.”

**“Akusalam̐ kassa hotī?” ti**  
“Whose is the unwholesome (result)?”

**“Tumbhākam̐, Ayye.” ti**  
“Yours, Noble Lady.”

**Sā cintesi:**  
She thought:

**‘Mayham̐ catuhatthavattham̐ nāḷikodanamattañ-ca laddhum̐ vaṭṭati,**  
‘Four cubit of clothes and a mere measure of milk-rice is enough for me,

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<sup>833</sup> RTE: *kiṃ dāsagāmā.*

<sup>834</sup> ChS: *niyyādetvā.*

<sup>835</sup> ChS: *-vatthumhi.*

<sup>836</sup> SHB, PTS: *kākehi.*

<sup>837</sup> ChS: *khādante.*

**yadi panetaṃ ettakena janena kataṃ akusalaṃ mayhaṃ hoti,**  
but if the unwholesome (deeds) done by this many people is mine,

**addhā<sup>838</sup> bhavasahassena pi vaṭṭato sīsaṃ ukkhipituṃ na sakkā,**  
it is certainly not possible to lift my head from the round (of births and deaths)  
through a thousand rebirths,

**Ayyaputte āgatamatte yeva sabbam̐ tassa niyyādetvā,**  
having given everything over to the Noble Sir as soon as he returns,

**nikkhamma pabbajissāmī.’ ti**  
I will renounce and go forth.’

**Māṇavo āgantvā nahāyitvā<sup>839</sup> pāsādaṃ āruyha mahārahe pallaṅke nisīdi.**  
The young brāhmaṇa returned after bathing, ascended the mansion and sat down on an  
expensive couch.

**Athassa<sup>840</sup> Cakkavattino anucchavikaṃ<sup>841</sup> bhojanaṃ sajjayimsu.**  
They prepared a meal for him suitable for a Universal Monarch.

**Dve pi bhuñjitvā, parijane nikkhante, rahogata<sup>842</sup> phāsukaṭṭhāne nisīdimsu.**  
After they both had eaten, and with the departure of the attendants, they sat down on a  
comfortable spot in seclusion.

**Tato māṇavo Bhaddaṃ āha:**  
Then the young brāhmaṇa said this to Bhaddā:

**“Bhadde imaṃ gharaṃ āgacchantī kittakaṃ dhanam̐ āharī?” ti**  
“Bhaddā, when coming to this house how much wealth did you bring?”

**“Pañcapaññāsa sakaṭasahassāni, Ayyā.” ti**  
“Fifty-five thousand carts, Noble Sir.”

**“Etaṃ sabbam̐, yā ca<sup>843</sup> imasmim̐ ghare sattāsītikoṭṭiyo,<sup>844</sup>**  
° “There is all this wealth, plus eight hundred and seventy million,

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<sup>838</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *addhā*.

<sup>839</sup> RTE: *nhatvā*; SHB, PTS: *nahatvā*.

<sup>840</sup> RTE, PTS: *Atha*.

<sup>841</sup> SHB, PTS: *anucchavika-*.

<sup>842</sup> RTE: *rahogate*.

<sup>843</sup> PTS: *yāva*.

<sup>844</sup> SHB, PTS: *satta-asītikoṭṭiyo*.

**yantabaddhā saṭṭhi taḷākādibhedā,<sup>845</sup> sampatti atthi,**  
and sixty reservoirs with irrigation machines and so on,

**sabbaṃ tuyhaṃ yeva niyyādesin.”-ti<sup>846</sup>**  
I give all of this over to you.”

**“Tumhe pana kuhiṃ<sup>847</sup> gacchatha, Ayyā?” ti**  
“But where will you go, Noble Sir?”

**“Ahaṃ pabbajissāmī.” ti**  
“I will go forth.”

**“Ayya,<sup>848</sup> aham-pi tumhākaṃ yeva āgamaṇaṃ olokayamānā nisinnā,**  
“Noble Sir, I also have been sitting here waiting for your coming,

**aham-pi pabbajissāmī.” ti**  
I also will go forth.”

**Tesaṃ ādittapaṇṇakuṭi viya tayo bhavā upaṭṭhahimsu.**  
The three states of continuation<sup>849</sup> appeared to them like three leaf-huts that are burning.

**Te antarāpaṇato kāsāyāni<sup>850</sup> vatthāni mattikāpatte ca āharāpetvā,**  
They had their clothes died yellow with astringents and clay bowls brought from the market,

**aññaṃ-aññaṃ kese ohārāpetvā:**  
shaved off each others’ hair,

**“Ye loke Arahanto te uddissa amhākaṃ pabbajjā,” ti vatvā,**  
saying: “Our going forth is on account of those who are Liberated in the world,”

**thavikāya patte osāretvā, amse laggetvā, pāsādato otarimsu.**  
and depositing their bowls in their bags, and slinging them over the shoulder, they descended from the palace.

**Gehe dāsesu vā kammakāresu<sup>851</sup> vā na koci sañjāni.**  
No one from the home, whether servants or workers, recognised them.

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<sup>845</sup> RTE, PTS add: *ca*.

<sup>846</sup> ChS: *niyyātemī ti*.

<sup>847</sup> ChS: *kahaṃ*.

<sup>848</sup> SHB, RTE, PTS omit: *Ayya*.

<sup>849</sup> The sense worlds (*kāmaloka*), the form worlds (*rūpaloka*) and the formless worlds (*arūpaloka*).

<sup>850</sup> ChS: *kasāvarasapītāni*.

<sup>851</sup> SHB, PTS: *kammakāresu*.

**Atha ne<sup>852</sup> brāhmaṇagāmato nikkhamma dāsagāmadvārena<sup>853</sup> gacchante,**  
Then, having departed from the brāhmaṇa village, while going through the entrance to the servants' village,

**ākappakuttavasena dāsagāmavāsino<sup>854</sup> sañjānimsu.**  
they were recognised by those living in the servants' village by their gait and deportment.

**Te rodantā pādesu nipatitvā: “Kiṃ amhe anāthe karoṭha, Ayyā?” ti āhamsu.**  
Throwing themselves at their feet crying, they said: “Noble Ones, why do you leave us helpless?”

**“Mayaṃ bhaṇe ādittapaṇṇasālā viya tayo bhavā ti pabbajimhā,<sup>855</sup>**  
° After saying: “We, friends, (having seen) that the three states of continuation are like three leaf-huts that are burning, are going forth,

**sace tumhesu ekekaṃ bhujissam karoma, vassasatam-pi nappahoti,<sup>856</sup>**  
if we were to make you freemen one by one, it would not be possible with one hundred years (you are so many),

**tumhe va<sup>857</sup> tumhākaṃ sīsam dhovivā, bhujissā hutvā jīvathā,” ti vatvā,**  
after washing each other's heads,<sup>858</sup> live as freemen,”

**tesam rodantānaṃ yeva pakkamimsu.**  
and leaving them crying they went away.

**Thero purato gacchanto nivattitvā olokento<sup>859</sup> cintesi:**  
The Elder, as he was going along in front, after stopping and looking,

**‘Ayaṃ<sup>860</sup> Bhaddā Kāpilānī sakala-Jambudīpagghanikā itthī,**  
thought: ‘This Bhaddā Kāpilānī, who is worth more than all the women in the Rose-Apple Isle,

**mayhaṃ pacchato āgacchati.**  
is coming along behind me.

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<sup>852</sup> SHB, PTS: *te*.

<sup>853</sup> SHB, PTS: *dāsakammakaragāmadvārena*.

<sup>854</sup> SHB, PTS: *cuddasa gāmadvāsino*.

<sup>855</sup> SHB, PTS: *pabbajissāma*.

<sup>856</sup> PTS: *nappahomā ti*.

<sup>857</sup> RTE, PTS: *tumhe ca*.

<sup>858</sup> Apparently a sign that they were given their freedom.

<sup>859</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *nivattitvā olokento*.

<sup>860</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Ayaṃ*.

**Ṭhānaṃ kho panetaṃ vijjati yaṃ kocid-eva evaṃ cinteyya:**

But there may be a reason for someone to think thus:

**“Ime pabbajitvā pi vinā bhavituṃ na sakkontī, ananucchavikaṃ karontī.” ti**

“Having gone forth they are not able to live apart, but that is unsuitable (for them).”

**Koci vā pana amhesu<sup>861</sup> manañ padūsetvā, apāyapūrako bhaveyya,**

If someone defiled their minds in this way, they might (risk) filling up the lower worlds,

**imaṃ pahāya, mayā<sup>862</sup> gantuṃ vaṭṭatī,’ ti cittaṃ uppādesi.**

after abandoning her, it is right to go off by myself,’ (this) thought arose.

**So purato gacchanto dvedhāpathañ disvā tassa<sup>863</sup> matthake aṭṭhāsi.**

While going forward he saw a junction in the path and stood at its head.

**Bhaddā pi āgantvā vanditvā aṭṭhāsi.**

Bhaddā came and worshipped and also stood there.

**Atha naṃ āha: “Bhadde, tādisiṃ itthiṃ mama pacchato āgacchantiṃ disvā**

Then he said to her: “Bhaddā, having seen such a woman as you following me,

**‘Ime pabbajitvā pi vinā bhavituṃ na sakkontī,’ ti cintetvā,**

and thinking: ‘Having gone forth they are not able to live apart,’

**amhesu paduṭṭhacitto mahājano apāyapūrako bhaveyya,**

through us the people may defile their minds, and might fill up the lower worlds,

**imasmiṃ dvedhāpathe tvañ<sup>864</sup> ekaṃ gaṇha, ahaṃ ekena gamissāmī.” ti**

(therefore) at this junction you take one (road), and I will go by another.”

**“Āma, Ayya, pabbajitānaṃ mātugāmo nāma malaṃ:**

“Yes, Noble Sir, for those gone forth, women are known as a stain,

**‘Pabbajitvā pi<sup>865</sup> vinā na bhavantī,’ ti amhākaṃ dosaṃ dassanti,**

thinking: ‘Having gone forth these are not living apart,’ they will make the fault ours,

**tumhe ekaṃ maggaṃ gaṇhatha, ahaṃ ekaṃ gaṇhitvā,<sup>866</sup> vinā bhavissāmā.” ti**

you take one path, I will take another, and we will live apart.”

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<sup>861</sup> RTE: *koci nāma amhesu*; SHB, PTS omit: *amhesu*.

<sup>862</sup> SHB, PTS: *mayhaṃ*.

<sup>863</sup> PTS: *tattha*.

<sup>864</sup> RTE: *dvedhāpathe thatvā*.

<sup>865</sup> RTE adds: *ime*.

<sup>866</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *ahaṃ ekaṃ gaṇhitvā*.

**Tikkhattuṃ padakkhiṇaṃ katvā,**

After reverentially circumambulating him three times,

**catūsu ṭhānesu pañcapatiṭṭhitena vanditvā,**

worshipping with the five-fold prostration on all four sides,

**dasanakhasamodhānasamujjalaṃ añjalim paggayha,**

extending a reverential salutation with the ten fingernails joined together,

**“Satasahassakappamāṇe<sup>867</sup> addhāne kato mittasanthavo**

° saying: “Our friendship and fellowship that ran over a measure of one hundred thousand aeons

**ajja bhijjati,” ti vatvā:**

is broken today,”<sup>868</sup>

**“Tumhe dakkhiṇajātikā nāma, tumhākaṃ dakkhiṇamaggo vaṭṭati,**

and “You are known as one belonging to the right, the right path is suitable for you,

**mayam mātugāmā nāma vāmajātikā, amhākaṃ vāmamaggo<sup>869</sup> vaṭṭati,” ti**

I am a woman belonging to the left, the left path is suitable for me,”

**vanditvā maggaṃ paṭipannā.**

after worshipping, she entered the (left) path.

**Tesaṃ dvedhābhūtakāle<sup>870</sup> ayaṃ mahāpathavī,**

At the time of this juncture the great earth,

**“Ahaṃ<sup>871</sup> cakkavāḷagirisinerupabbate dhāretuṃ sakkontī pi,<sup>872</sup>**

° as though saying: “This universe with its mountains and Mount Sineru I am able to bear,

**tumhākaṃ guṇe dhāretuṃ na sakkomī,” ti vadantī viya viravamānā akampi,**

but your virtue I am unable to bear,” quaked with a roar,

**ākāse asanisaddo viya pavatti,<sup>873</sup> cakkavāḷapabbato unnadi.<sup>874</sup>**

which spread like thunderstorms in the sky, and the mountain (at the centre of the) universe resounded.

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<sup>867</sup> SHB, PTS: *Satasahassakappaparimāṇe*.

<sup>868</sup> This seems to presage her ability to know past lives, although this was happening before her ordination or attainment.

<sup>869</sup> SHB, PTS: *vāmo maggo*.

<sup>870</sup> RTE: *dvedhāgatakāle*.

<sup>871</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Ahaṃ*.

<sup>872</sup> RTE: *sakkomi*, omits: *pi*; PTS omits: *pi*.

<sup>873</sup> SHB: *pavattittha*; RTE: *vaṭṭati*; PTS: *pavattati*.

<sup>874</sup> SHB: *uṇṇami*; RTE: *oṇami*; PTS: *unnamati*.

\* \* \*

**Mahākassapathero**<sup>875</sup> **pana dakkhiṇamaggaṃ gahevā,**  
But the Elder Mahā Kassapa, after taking the right hand road,

**Dasabalassa santikaṃ Bahuputtakanigrodhamūlaṃ gato,**  
went into the One of Ten Power's presence at the root of the Many Sons' Banyan Tree  
(shrine),

**ayaṃ Bhaddā Kāpilānī vāmamaggaṃ gaṇhitvā,**<sup>876</sup>  
while Bhaddā Kāpilānī, after taking the left hand road,

**mātugāmassa pabbajjāya ananuññātabhāvena Paribbājikārāmaṃ agamāsi.**  
because there wasn't (yet) permission for women to go forth, went to the Wandering  
Nuns' monastery.

**Yadā pana Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī**<sup>877</sup> **pabbajjañ-ca labhi,**<sup>878</sup>  
But when Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī received the going forth,

**tadā sā Therī**<sup>879</sup> **Theriyā santike pabbajjañ-ca upasampadañ-ca labhitvā,**  
then that Elder,<sup>880</sup> after receiving the going forth and the higher ordination in the  
presence of the Elder Nun,

**aparabhāge, vipassanāya kammaṃ karontī,**  
later, while working at insight meditation,

**Arahattaṃ patvā pubbenivāsaññe ciṇṇavasī ahoṣi.**  
attained Liberation and became one who had mastered the knowledge of former lives.

**Atha Satthā Jetavane nisīditvā, bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu**<sup>881</sup> **ṭhapento,**  
Then after the Teacher had sat down in Jeta's Wood, as he was assigning the places of the  
nuns in order,

**imaṃ Theriṃ pubbenivāsaṃ anussarantīnaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**  
he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who recollect their  
former lives.

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<sup>875</sup> RTE, ChS: *-thero*.

<sup>876</sup> RTE: *gaṇhitvā va*.

<sup>877</sup> ChS: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī*.

<sup>878</sup> RTE, ChS: *Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī pabbajjañ-ca upasampadañ-ca labhi*.

<sup>879</sup> RTE omits: *Therī*.

<sup>880</sup> It is curious that she should be called an Elder at this point, as she is still unordained in the  
nuns' Community.

<sup>881</sup> SHB, PTS, RTE: *ṭhānantare*.

## Bhaddākaccānātherīvatthu

### 11. The Story about the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kaccānā

#### Introduction

This is the story of the nun Bhaddā Kaccānā, also known as Rāhulamātā, Bimbā, Yasodharā, Gopī and other names, who had previously been Siddhattha's wife. The story about her runs somewhat contrary to the preceding story, as she is said to be one of just four disciples who could recollect an uncountable period and one hundred thousand aeons, far exceeding the others in this facility; they are Vens. Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Bakkula, and Bhaddā Kaccānā.

Yet above Bhaddā Kāpilānī has just been placed as foremost amongst those who recollect their former lives. How we resolve this problem is not sure. I tend to think that the position given to Bhaddā Kāpilānī is probably mistaken, as her story gives no indication that would be the position she would hold.<sup>882</sup>

However, the story surrounding Bhaddā Kaccānā also gives no real background for her attainment either, simply stating she aspired for it, and that she became famous for having acquired it, and later was appointed to the position.

In the Traditions neither her aspiration, nor her appointment to this position, are mentioned, and her main accomplishment seems to have been as being the Bodhisatta's wife in many lives. But then again, given the identification of this nun with Siddhattha's wife, it seems odd that none of the literally dozens of past life stories that were known about her are included here; indeed, apart from her life at the time she made the aspiration no other lives but her last one are mentioned.

Eventually in the late Medieval period a whole cycle of stories seem to have grown up about her, as can be seen in the Therī-Apadānadīpanī,<sup>883</sup> where her story far exceeds in length that of any other of the Elder Nuns.

One other problem that requires mentioning is that there is no one amongst the male disciples who is mentioned as having this position. Bakkula, who is mentioned in the story as also having this quality of recall, is only placed foremost amongst those with little ill-health in the stories of the male disciples, and this position is not mentioned there.

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<sup>882</sup> Except for the aspiration recorded before Buddha Padumuttara, which would be part of the textual misidentification.

<sup>883</sup> Effectively the last commentary ever written on one of the Tīpīṭaka books. It was written by Bhaddanta Kumārābhivamsa in the 1960s, but first published in 1992 in Burmese script, and then in 2009 in Romanised script. For materials translated from Sinhala based on traditional works, see Ranjini Obeyesekere: *Yasodharā, the Wife of the Bōdhisattva*, SUNY, New York, 2009.

**AN 1.5.11**

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**mahābhiññappattānam, yad-idam Bhaddā Kaccānā.**<sup>884</sup>

amongst those who have attained very deep knowledge, that is to say, Bhaddā Kaccānā.

**AA 1.5.11**

(commentary)

**Ekādasame, “Mahābhiññappattānan,”-ti**<sup>885</sup>

In the eleventh (story), “Amongst those who have attained very deep knowledge,”

**mahatiyo abhiññāyo**<sup>886</sup> **pattānam, Bhaddā Kaccānā, nāma**<sup>887</sup> **aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why the Elder Nun Bhaddā Kaccānā, amongst those who had very deep knowledge, was said to be foremost.

**Ekassa hi**<sup>888</sup> **Buddhassa cattāro va janā mahābhiññā honti, na avasesasāvakā.**

For one Buddha there are four people who have very deep knowledge, and not the rest of the disciples.

**Avasesasāvakā hi kappasatasahassam-eva anussaritam sakkonti, na tato param.**

Other disciples may be able to recall one hundred thousand aeons, but not more than that.<sup>889</sup>

**Mahābhiññappattā pana kappasatasahassādhikam asaṅkhyeyyam anussaranti.**

For those who have attained very deep knowledge they recall (at least) an uncountable (length of time) and one hundred thousand aeons.

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<sup>884</sup> ChS: *Bhaddakaccānā*.

<sup>885</sup> RTE: *Mahābhiññāppatt-*, and similarly throughout.

<sup>886</sup> SHB, PTS: *abhiññā*.

<sup>887</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *nāma*.

<sup>888</sup> SHB, PTS: *pi*.

<sup>889</sup> The six powers (*chaḷabhiññā*) of the later texts are magical power (*iddhividha*), the divine ear (*dibbasota*), knowledge of others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*), recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussati*), the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) and the extinction of the pollutants (*āsavakkhaya*). Here the distinguishing feature seems to be her ability to recall more lives than others. But if that was so, why was Bhaddā Kāpilāni named as the disciple who excelled in that ability.

**Amhākam-pi Satthu Sāsane dve Aggasāvaka Bakkulathero<sup>890</sup> Bhaddā Kaccānā ti:**

In our Teacher's dispensation they were the two Great Disciples,<sup>891</sup> the Elder Bakkula and Bhaddā Kaccānā:

**ime cattāro ettakam anussarituṃ sakkhimsu.<sup>892</sup>**

these four were able to recall this much.

**Tasmā ayam Therī mahābhiññappattānam aggā nāma jātā.**

Therefore this Elder Nun became known as foremost amongst those who had attained very deep knowledge.

**Bhaddā Kaccānā ti tassā nāmam.**

Bhaddā Kaccānā is her name.

**Bhaddakañcanassa<sup>893</sup> hi uttamasuvaṇṇassa viya<sup>894</sup> tassā sarīravaṇṇo ahoṣi,**  
Her skin-colour was like the finest gold, indeed, like the most auspicious gold,

**sā tasmā Bhaddakañcanā ti nāmam labhi,**

therefore she received the name Bhaddakañcanā (Auspicious Golden One),

**sā pacchā Kaccānā tveva saṅkham gatā.<sup>895</sup>**

and later the name Kaccānā came.

**Rāhulamātāyetam adhivacanam.**

She was also designated Rāhulamātā (Rāhula's Mother).

### **Her Aspiration and Good Deeds**

**Sā hi<sup>896</sup> Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara,

**Haṃsavatiyaṃ kulagehe paṭisandhiṃ gahetvā,**

she was conceived in a good family home in Haṃsavatī,

**aparabhāge Satthu Dhammakatham suṇantī,**

and later, while listening to the Teacher talk about Dhamma,

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<sup>890</sup> RTE, ChS: *Bākulathero*.

<sup>891</sup> Vens. Sāriputta and Moggallāna.

<sup>892</sup> RTE: *asakkhimsu*.

<sup>893</sup> RTE: *Bhaddakaccanassa*; RTE, PTS add: *viya*.

<sup>894</sup> RTE: *viya ca*.

<sup>895</sup> RTE replaces these two lines with: *tasmā Bhaddākaccānātveva saṅkham gatā*.

<sup>896</sup> RTE: *Sā pi*.

**Satthāram ekam bhikkhunim mahābhiññappattānam aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentam disvā,**  
seeing the Teacher place a certain nun as being foremost amongst those who had attained  
very deep knowledge,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā<sup>897</sup> tam ṭhānantaram patthesi.**  
she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

### Her Last Life

**Sā kappasatasahassam devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**  
After being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**imasmiṃ Buddhuppāde,**  
when this (Gotama) Buddha arose,

**Suppabuddhasakkassa<sup>898</sup> gehe paṭisandhim gaṇhi,**  
she was conceived in the Sakyan Suppabuddha's home,<sup>899</sup>

**Bhaddā Kaccānā tissā nāmam akāmsu.**  
and they made the name Bhaddā Kaccānā for her.

**Sā vayappattā Bodhisattassa geham agamāsi.**  
When she had reached maturity she went to the Buddha-to-be's home.<sup>900</sup>

**Sā<sup>901</sup> aparabhāge Rāhulakumāram nāma puttam vijāyi.**  
Later she gave birth to a son, the prince Rāhula.

**Tassa jātadivase va<sup>902</sup> Bodhisatto nikkhamitvā,**  
The Buddha-to-be, after renouncing on the day (Rāhula) was born,

**Bodhimaṇḍe sabbaññutam patvā,**  
and attaining omniscience within the circle of the Bodhi Tree,

**lokānuggaham karonto, anupubbena Kapilavatthum āgamma,**  
while bringing relief to the world, gradually came to Kapilavatthu,

**ñātīnam saṅgham akāsi.**  
and gave assistance to his relatives.

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<sup>897</sup> PTS omits: *adhikārakammaṃ katvā*.

<sup>898</sup> RTE: *Suppabuddhassa*.

<sup>899</sup> Making her a cousin of Siddhattha.

<sup>900</sup> I.e. she married Siddhattha.

<sup>901</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *Sā*.

<sup>902</sup> RTE omits: *va*.

**Aparabhāge, parinibbute Suddhodanamahārāje,**  
Later, when the Great King Suddhodana attained Nibbāna,

**Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī<sup>903</sup> pañcahi mātuḡāmasatehi saddhiṃ Satthu santike pabbaji.**  
Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, together with five hundred women, went forth in the presence of the Teacher.

**Rāhulamātā pi Janapadakalyāṇī pi Theriyā santikaṃ gantvā, pabbaji.**  
Rāhula's Mother and Janapadakalyāṇī,<sup>904</sup> after going into the presence of the Elder Nun, also went forth.

**Sā pabbajitakālato paṭṭhāya Bhaddā Kaccānatherī<sup>905</sup> tveva pākaṭā ahoṣi.**  
Beginning from that time she became well-known as the Elder Nun, Bhaddā Kaccānā.

**Sā<sup>906</sup> aparabhāge vipassanaṃ vaḍḍhetvā, Arahattaṃ patvā,<sup>907</sup>**  
Later, having developed insight, and attained Liberation,

**abhiññāsu ciṅṇavasī ahoṣi, ekapallaṅke<sup>908</sup> nisinnā,**  
she mastered the deep knowledges, during a single sitting in cross-legged position,

**ekāvajjanena, kappasatasahassādhikaṃ<sup>909</sup> asaṅkhyeyyaṃ anussarati,**  
with one advertence, she recalled (at least) an uncountable (length of time) and one hundred thousand aeons,

**tassā tasmaṃ guṇe pākaṭe jāte.**  
and she became well-known as having this virtue.

**Satthā Jetavane nisinno<sup>910</sup> bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu<sup>911</sup> ṭhapento,**  
As the Teacher was sitting in Jeta's Wood and assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**imaṃ Theriṃ mahābhiññappattānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**  
he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who had very deep knowledge.

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<sup>903</sup> SHB, ChS: *Mahāpajāpatigotamī*.

<sup>904</sup> I.e. Nandā.

<sup>905</sup> SHB: *Bhadda-*; ChS: *-ttherī*.

<sup>906</sup> SHB omits: *Sā*; PTS: *Atha*.

<sup>907</sup> SHB: *pattā*.

<sup>908</sup> ChS: *ekapallaṅkena*.

<sup>909</sup> RTE adds: *ekam*.

<sup>910</sup> SHB, PTS: *nisitvā*.

<sup>911</sup> PTS, ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## **Kisāgotamītherīvatthu**

### **12. The Story about the Elder Nun Kisā Gotamī**

#### **Introduction**

Kisā Gotamī's story is another of the really memorable stories in this collection: having made the usual aspiration at the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, no further lives are recorded until she is born in her last life, to a poor family in Sāvathī.

She gained a good marriage but was despised by the family until such time as she had a son, at which point she was treated with respect. Unfortunately this didn't last, as the young lad died while still a child.

Gotamī, unable to face the fact that her child had died, which, besides the grief involved in losing a child, would also have the unwanted consequence of lowering her status again, wandered around asking for medicine for her dead child, which no one could supply.

One wise man thought to send her to the Buddha, who is a physician who could cure all ills, and she readily went along. The Buddha asked her to bring a mustard seed to him, but there is a catch, it must be from a household that never saw a death in the family.

Full of hope she went into town and started on her quest, but after a few houses she realised every house she went to has seen a death in the family, and that death is not for her son alone, but is a pervasive phenomena in life, and that this is a universal teaching.

She abandoned her child in the charnel ground and returned to the Buddha a wiser person than when she left, and he taught her with a verse, which saw her established in the first stage of Awakening. Later he taught her again, and that time she attained Liberation.

Again here there is no explanation for why she attained her foremost position as one who wore rough robes, and it does not seem to be prefigured in the story. It is simply stated that that was what she was good at, and eventually she was placed foremost for it.

The counterpart to this nun amongst the monks was Mogharājā.<sup>912</sup>

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<sup>912</sup> He was one of Bāvarī's sixteen students, who made an epic journey across India to meet and ask questions of the Buddha. His answers were enough for most of them to attain Liberation.

**AN 1.5.12**

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanānam bhikkhunīnam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**lūkhacīvaradharānam, yad-idaṃ Kisā Gotamī.**

amongst those who wear robes made of rough materials, that is to say, Kisā Gotamī.

**AA 1.5.12**

(commentary)

**Dvādasame, “Lūkhacīvaradharānan,”-ti**

In the twelfth (story), “Amongst those who wear robes made of rough materials,”

**tīhi lūkhehi samannāgatam paṃsukūlam dhārentīnam, Kisā Gotamī aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why Kisā Gotamī, amongst those who wore robes brought from the cemetery that are rough in three ways,<sup>913</sup> was said to be foremost.

**‘Gotamī’ ti tassā<sup>914</sup> nāman,**

‘Gotamī’ was her name,

**thokam kisadhātukattā<sup>915</sup> pana ‘Kisā Gotamī,’ ti vuccati.**

but as she was somewhat thin by nature she was called ‘Kisā<sup>916</sup> Gotamī’.

**Her Aspiration**

**Ayam-pi<sup>917</sup> Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara,

**Haṃsavatiyaṃ kulagehe nibbattivā,<sup>918</sup>**

she was reborn in a good family home in Haṃsavatī,

**Satthu Dhammadesanaṃ suṇantī,**

and while listening to the Teacher teach the Dhamma,

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhuniṃ lūkhacīvaradharānam**

° seeing the Teacher place a certain nun

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<sup>913</sup> The *Ṭīkā* describes these as being: *vatthalūkhasuttalūkharajanalūkhasaṅkhāta*, reckoned as rough in cloth, rough in thread, and rough in dye.

<sup>914</sup> RTE: *tissā*.

<sup>915</sup> SHB, PTS: *kilantadhātukattā*; RTE: *kisādhātukattā*.

<sup>916</sup> It means: thin, skinny.

<sup>917</sup> SHB, PTS: *Ayam-pi hi*.

<sup>918</sup> SHB, PTS: *nibbattā*.

**aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**

as being foremost amongst those who wore robes made of rough materials,

**adhikārakammaṃ katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

### Her Last Life

**Sā kappasatasahassaṃ devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

After being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**imasmim Buddhuppāde,**

when this (Gotama) Buddha arose,

**Sāvatthiyaṃ duggatakule nibbattivā,<sup>919</sup>**

she was reborn in a poor family in Sāvattihī,

**vayappattakāle ekaṃ kulaṃ agamāsi.**

and when she reached maturity she went to a good family.

**Tattha naṃ duggatakulassa dhītā ti paribhaviṃsu.**

There they abused her as a daughter of a poor family.

**Sā aparabhāge puttāṃ vijāyi, athassā sammānam-akaṃsu.**

Later, she gave birth to a son, and then she was treated with respect.

**So panassā dārako ādhāvitvā paridhāvitvā kīlanavaye ṭhito,**

But when the boy had reached playing age, running here and running there,

**kālam-akāsi, tassā soko udapādi.**

he died, and grief arose in her.

**Sā: ‘Ahaṃ imasmim yeva gehe hatalābhasakkārā hutvā,**

She thought: ‘In this home, where gains and respect have been cut off,

**puttassa jātakālato paṭṭhāya, sakkāraṃ pāpuṇim,**

and since the time of the birth of my son, I have gained respect,

**ime mayhaṃ puttāṃ bahi chaḍḍetum-pi vāyameyyun.’-ti**

they will endeavour to cast away my son.’

**Puttāṃ ankenādāya: “Puttassa me bhesajjaṃ dethā,” ti**

With her son on her hip, saying: “Give medicine for my son,”

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<sup>919</sup> SHB, PTS: *nibbattā*.

**gehadvārapaṭipāṭiyā<sup>920</sup> vicarati,**  
she wandered successively to the door of (various) homes,

**diṭṭhadiṭṭhaṭṭhāne manussā: “Kattha te matakassa<sup>921</sup> bhesajjam diṭṭhapubban?”-ti**  
and men, wherever they saw her, saying: “Where did you ever see medicine for one who is dead?”

**pāṇim paharivā parihāsam karonti.**  
clapped their hands and mocked her.

**Sā tesam kathāya neva saññattim<sup>922</sup> gacchati.**  
Although they spoke like this, she wasn’t convinced.

**Atha nam eko paṇḍitapuriso disvā,**  
Then, after a certain wise man had seen her,

**‘Ayaṃ puttāsokena cittavikkhepaṃ pattā bhavissati,**  
and thought: ‘Her mind has been overthrown by grief for her son,

**etissā pana<sup>923</sup> bhesajjam na añño jānissati,**  
but although no one else will know of a medicine,

**Dasabalo va jānissatī,’ ti cintevā,**  
the One of Ten Powers will know,’

**evam-āha: “Amma, tava puttassa bhesajjam añño jānanto nāma natthi**  
he said: “Lady, there is no one knowing the medicine for your son other

**sadevake pana<sup>924</sup> loke Aggapuggalo Dasabalo,**  
than the Greatest Person in the world with its gods, the One of Ten Powers,

**dhuravihāre vasati, tassa santikam gantvā pucchāhī.” ti**  
who dwells in a nearby monastery, go into his presence and ask (Him).”

**Sā: ‘Saccam puriso kathetī,’ ti puttam-ādāya,**  
She, thinking: ‘This man speaks the truth,’ carrying her son,

**Tathāgatassa Buddhāsane nisinnavelāya parisapariyante ṭhatvā,**  
stood on the edge of the (four) assemblies at a time when the Realised One was sitting on his Buddha seat,

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<sup>920</sup> PTS: *-paṭipāṭiyam*.

<sup>921</sup> RTE: *matassa*.

<sup>922</sup> RTE: *saññittim*.

<sup>923</sup> RTE: *etassā panassa*.

<sup>924</sup> PTS omits: *pana*.

**“Puttassa me bhesajjam detha Bhagavā,” ti āha.**  
and said: “Give medicine for my son, Fortunate One.”

**Satthā tassā upanissayam disvā,**  
The Teacher, seeing she had the supporting conditions,

**“Bhaddakam te Gotami<sup>925</sup> katam bhesajjatthāya idhāgacchantiyā,**  
said: “It is fortunate for you, Gotamī, that you came here for medicine,

**gaccha nagaram pavisivā, koṭito paṭṭhāya sakalanagaram carivā,**  
go, enter the town and wander through the whole town starting from one end,

**yasmim gehe koci matapubbo natthi, tato siddhatthakam āharāhī,” ti<sup>926</sup> āha.**  
and at whatever home there has not been a death, from there bring a mustard seed.”

**Sā:<sup>927</sup> “Sādhu, Bhante,” ti**  
Saying: “Very well, reverend Sir,”

**tuṭṭhamānasā antonagaram pavisivā, paṭṭhamagehe yeva:**  
she entered into the town with a hopeful mind, and at the first home

**“Dasabalo mama puttassa bhesajjatthāya siddhatthakam āharāpeti:**  
° she said: “The One of Ten Powers has me bring a mustard seed as medicine for my son,

**siddhatthakam me dethā,” ti āha.**  
please give me a mustard seed.”

**“Handa, Gotamī” ti nīharitvā, adamsu.**  
Saying: “Come, Gotamī,” and stretching forth, they gave (it to her).

**“Aham evam gahetum na sakkomi:<sup>928</sup>**  
“I am not able to take it,

**‘Imasmim gehe koci matapubbo nāma<sup>929</sup> natthī?’ ” ti**  
(but first must ask): ‘In this home has there not been a death?’ ”

**“Kim vadesi Gotami, ko idha matake gaṇetum sakkotī?” ti**  
“What did you say, Gotamī, who is able to count those who have died here?”

**“Tena hi alam nāham gaṇhissāmi,<sup>930</sup>**  
“Then that is enough, I will not take it,

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<sup>925</sup> PTS: *Gotamī*.

<sup>926</sup> RTE, ChS: *āharā ti*.

<sup>927</sup> PTS omits: *Sā*.

<sup>928</sup> SHB, PTS: *sakkā*.

<sup>929</sup> SHB, PTS omit: *nāma*.

<sup>930</sup> RTE omits: *nāham gaṇhissāmi*; PTS: *gaṇhissāmī ti*.

**Dasabalo maṃ yattha matapubbo natthi, tato naṃ gaṇhāpetī,” ti āha.<sup>931</sup>**

the One of Ten Powers (told) me that from a home where there has not been a death, from there I have to take it for him.”

**Sā iminā va niyāmena tatiyagharaṃ<sup>932</sup> gantvā, cintesi:**

Having gone to the third house in this way, she realised:

**“Sakalanagare ayam-eva niyāmo bhavissati,**

“The whole city will be this way,

**idaṃ hitānukampakena Buddhena diṭṭhaṃ bhavissatī.” ti**

this must have been foreseen by the Awakened One, who is beneficent and compassionate.”

**Samvegāṃ labhitvā, tato va<sup>933</sup> bahi nikkhamitvā,**

She became spiritually anxious, departed from there,

**āmakasusānaṃ gantvā,<sup>934</sup> puttāṃ hatthena gahetvā:**

went to the charnel grounds, and took her son with her hand,

**“Puttaka, ahaṃ imaṃ maraṇaṃ taveva uppanna-ti cintesiṃ,**

° and saying: “Son, I thought there was death only for you,

**na panetaṃ taveva, mahājanasādhāraṇo, esa Dhammo,” ti vatvā,**

but it is not only for you, for the (whole) population it is the same, this is the Dhamma,”

**puttāṃ āmakasusāne chaḍḍetvā, imaṃ gātham-āha:**

she abandoned her son in the charnel grounds, and spoke this verse:

**“Na gāma-Dhammo no nigamassa Dhammo,**

“Not a village Teaching, nor a town Teaching,

**Na cāpi yaṃ<sup>935</sup> ekakulassa Dhammo,**

Nor is this a Teaching for one family alone,

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<sup>931</sup> SHB, PTS: *atthi tato siddhatthakaṃ na gaṇhāpetī ti*; omit: *āha*.

<sup>932</sup> SHB: *tatiyā gharaṃ*; PTS: *tatiyaṃ gharaṃ*.

<sup>933</sup> PTS omits: *va*.

<sup>934</sup> SHB, PTS: *netvā*.

<sup>935</sup> SHB, PTS: *cāp’ ayaṃ*.

**Sabbassa lokassa sadevakassa,**  
For the whole of the world with its gods,

**Eso va<sup>936</sup> Dhammo, yad-idaṃ aniccatā.” ti**  
There is this Teaching of impermanence.”<sup>937</sup>

**Evañ-ca pana vatvā, Satthu santikaṃ agamāsi.**  
Having spoken thus, she went into the presence of the Teacher.

**Atha naṃ Satthā: “Laddho te, Gotami,<sup>938</sup> siddhatthako?” ti<sup>939</sup> āha.**  
Then the Teacher said to her: “Gotamī, did you get the mustard seed?”

**“Niṭṭhitam,<sup>940</sup> Bhante, siddhatthakena kammaṃ, patiṭṭham pana me dethā,” ti āha.**  
“The business with a mustard seed is finished, reverend Sir, but give me something for support.”

**Athassā Satthā Dhammapade imaṃ gātham-āha:**  
Then the Teacher spoke this verse to her found in the Dhammapada:

**“Taṃ puttapasusammattam byāsattamanasam naram,**  
“That person whose clinging mind is intoxicated by children and cattle,  
**suttam gāmam mahogho va maccu ādāya gacchatī.” ti**  
death will carry away like a sleeping village by a great flood.”<sup>941</sup>

**Sā gāthāpariyosāne yathā ṭhitā va Sotāpattiphale patiṭṭhāya pabbajjam yāci,**  
At the end of the verse as she stood there she was established in Stream-Entry and requested the going forth,

**Satthā pabbajjam anujāni.<sup>942</sup>**  
and the Teacher allowed the going forth.

**Sā tikkhattum Satthāram padakkhiṇam katvā, vandivā,**  
She circumambulated the Teacher three times, worshipped him,

**bhikkhunī-upassayam gantvā, pabbajjañ-ca<sup>943</sup> upasampadañ-ca<sup>944</sup> labhitvā,**  
went to the nunnery, received the going forth and higher ordination,

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<sup>936</sup> ChS: *Eseva*.

<sup>937</sup> The verse is quoted from the Traditions about Kisā Gotamī, Therī-Apadāna, 3.2 vs. 27.

<sup>938</sup> PTS: *Gotamī*.

<sup>939</sup> RTE: *siddhatthakā ti*.

<sup>940</sup> RTE: *Naṭṭhi me*.

<sup>941</sup> Dhṃ 287.

<sup>942</sup> RTE: *anujānāti*.

<sup>943</sup> SHB, PTS: *pabbajji*.

<sup>944</sup> SHB, PTS: *upasampadam*.

**na cirasseva<sup>945</sup> yoniso manasikāre kammaṃ karontī, vipassanaṃ vaḍḍhesi.**  
and in no long time, while wisely reflecting, she developed insight.

**Athassā Satthā imaṃ obhāsagātham-āha:**

Then the Teacher spoke this lustrous verse:

**“Yo ca vassasataṃ jīve apassaṃ Amataṃ padaṃ,**  
“The one who lives for a hundred years not seeing the Deathless state,

**ekāhaṃ jīvitaṃ seyyo passato Amataṃ padan.”-ti**  
is surpassed by one living for one day seeing the Deathless state.”<sup>946</sup>

**Sā gāthāpariyosāne Arahattaṃ pattā,<sup>947</sup>**

At the end of the verse she attained Liberation,

**parikkhāravalañje paramukkaṭṭhā hutvā,**

and in the use of the requisites she became pre-eminent,

**tīhi lūkhehi samannāgataṃ cīvaraṃ pārupitvā vicari.**

and wandered around after covering herself with a robe that was rough in three ways.

**Aparabhāge Satthā Jetavane nisinno,**

Later as the Teacher was sitting in Jeta’s Wood,

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu<sup>948</sup> ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**imaṃ Theriṃ lūkhacīvaradharānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who wore robes that are rough in three ways.

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<sup>945</sup> SHB: *pana ca cirasseva*.

<sup>946</sup> Dhp 114.

<sup>947</sup> RTE: *patvā*.

<sup>948</sup> ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

## Sigālakamātātherīvatthu<sup>949</sup>

### 13. The Story about the Elder Nun Sigālakamātā

#### Introduction

The last of these stories concerns Sigālakamātā, who heard the Buddha Padumuttara<sup>950</sup> praise the virtue of having faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, saw him appoint a nun as being foremost in this virtue and aspired for the same position herself.

No other of her lives are recorded here, apart from her last one when she was born to a rich merchant in Rājagaha. She heard the Buddha give a discourse one day and gaining faith she decided to go forth, and had a great attraction to the physical splendour of the Buddha.

Understanding her inclination the Buddha taught her with appropriate teachings that tended to enhance her faith. These are unfortunately not identified in the commentary, but they were sufficient for her to attain Liberation,<sup>951</sup> and she was later identified by the Buddha as the nun who was foremost amongst those with faith.

Her male counterpart was Ven. Vakkali.

#### AN 1.5.13

(text)

**Etad-aggam bhikkhave mama sāvikanam bhikkhuninam**

This is the foremost of my nun disciples, monastics,

**saddhādhimuttānam, yad-idaṃ Sigālakamātā.**

amongst those who are inclined to faith, that is to say, Sigālakamātā.

#### AA 1.5.13

(commentary)

**Terasame, “Saddhādhimuttānan,”-ti**

In the thirteenth (story), “Amongst those who are inclined to faith,”

**saddhālakkaṇe abhiniviṭṭhānam, Sigālakamātā<sup>952</sup> aggā ti dasseti.**

it shows why Sigālakamātā, amongst those who adhered to the characteristic of faith, was said to be foremost.

<sup>949</sup> RTE: *Singālamātā*-; and so throughout.

<sup>950</sup> According to the Traditions he was her half-brother.

<sup>951</sup> She was One who was Liberated through Faith (*Saddhāvimuttī*), which is one of the seven kinds of Noble Disciples (*Ariyapuggala*).

<sup>952</sup> ChS: *Singāla*-; throughout.

## Her Aspiration

**Ayaṃ kira Padumuttarabuddhakāle,**

At the time of the Buddha Padumuttara, it seems,

**Haṃsavatiyaṃ kulaghare nibbattā,**

she was reborn in a good family home in Haṃsavatī,

**Satthu Dhammakatham<sup>953</sup> suṇantī:**

and listened to the Teacher talk about Dhamma,<sup>954</sup> (saying):

**Yassa saddhā Tathāgate, acalā suppatiṭṭhitā,<sup>955</sup>**

Whoever has faith in the Realised One,<sup>956</sup> unshaken and firmly established,

**sīlañ-ca yassa kalyāṇaṃ, ariyakantaṃ pasamsitaṃ,**

whoever is virtuous and good, pleasing to the Noble Ones and praised,

**Saṅghe pasādo yassatthi, ujubhūtañ-ca dassanaṃ,**

whoever has confidence in the Community, having insight that is upright,

**adaliddo ti taṃ āhu, amoghaṃ tassa jīvitaṃ.**

they say that one is not poor, his life is not in vain.

**Tasmā saddhañ-ca sīlañ-ca, pasādaṃ Dhammadassanaṃ,**

Therefore faith, virtue, confidence and insight into Dhamma,

**anuyuñjetha medhāvī, saraṃ Buddhāna<sup>957</sup> Sāsanaṃ.**

should be engaged in by the intelligent, remembering the Buddhas' Dispensation.

**Satthāraṃ ekaṃ bhikkhuniṃ saddhādhimuttānaṃ**

Seeing the Teacher place a certain nun

**aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapentaṃ disvā,**

as being foremost amongst those who were inclined to faith,

**adhikārakammaṃ<sup>958</sup> katvā taṃ ṭhānantaraṃ patthesi.**

she did a great deed and aspired for that position herself.

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<sup>953</sup> RTE: *Dhammaṃ*.

<sup>954</sup> It appears from the Apadāna she was a Nun in that Lord Buddha's Community at the time.

<sup>955</sup> RTE: *supatiṭṭhitā*.

<sup>956</sup> From her Apadāna, verses 7-9.

<sup>957</sup> RTE: *Buddhānaṃ*.

<sup>958</sup> PTS: *adhikāraṃ*.

## Her Last Life

**Sā kappasatasahassam devamanussesu saṃsaritvā,**

After being reborn amongst gods and humans (only) for one hundred thousand aeons,

**imasmiṃ buddhuppāde,**

when this (Gotama) Buddha arose,

**Rājagahanagare seṭṭhikule nibbattā,**

she was reborn in a merchant's family in Rājagaha,

**samānajātikam kulam gantvā,**

and after going to a family of similar birth,

**ekam puttam vijāyi, tassa Sigālakakumāro ti nāmaṃ akaṃsu.**

she gave birth to one son, and they made the name Sigālaka Kumāra for him.<sup>959</sup>

**Sā pi teneva kāraṇena Sigālakamātā nāma jātā.**

Through that reason the name Sigālakamātā<sup>960</sup> arose.

**Sā ekadivasam Satthu Dhammakatham sutvā,**

One day, after hearing the Teacher talk about Dhamma,<sup>961</sup>

**paṭiladdhasaddhā Satthu santikam<sup>962</sup> gantvā pabbaji.**

she gained faith,<sup>963</sup> and after going into the presence of the Teacher, went forth.

**Pabbajitakālato paṭṭhāya saddhindriyam adhimattam paṭilabhi.**

Since the time of going forth she gained a preponderance of the faculty of faith.

**Sā Dhammasavanatthāya<sup>964</sup> vihāram gantvā,**

Having gone to the monastery for the purpose of listening to Dhamma,

**Dasabalassa sarīrasampattim<sup>965</sup> olokayamānā va tiṭṭhati.**

she stood looking at the One of Ten Power's bodily splendour.

**Satthā tassā saddhālakkaṇe abhiniviṭṭhabhāvam ñatvā,**

The Teacher, knowing that she adhered to the mark of faith,

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<sup>959</sup> It is this Sigālaka Kumāra that the Buddha gives instruction to in Sigālasuttam, DN 31, one of the most popular and influential discourses in the Canon.

<sup>960</sup> It means: Sigālaka's Mother.

<sup>961</sup> This was the famous and influential Discourse to Sigāla, her son, DN 31.

<sup>962</sup> PTS: *santike*; omit *gantvā*.

<sup>963</sup> In the Traditions it says she attained Stream-Entry at this point.

<sup>964</sup> RTE, ChS: *Dhammassavanatthāya*.

<sup>965</sup> SHB, PTS: *sarīranipphattim*.

**sappāyam katvā, pasādanīyam-eva Dhammaṃ desesi.**<sup>966</sup>

and knowing the suitability, taught confidence-inspiring Dhamma.

**Sā pi Therī saddhālakkaṇam-eva dhuraṃ katvā, Arahattaṃ pāpuṇi.**

So this Elder Nun, bearing the characteristic of faith, attained Liberation.

**Atha naṃ Satthā aparabhāge Jetavane nisīditvā,**

Later, after the Teacher had sat down in Jeta's Wood,

**bhikkhuniyo paṭipāṭiyā ṭhānantaresu**<sup>967</sup> **ṭhapento,**

as he was assigning the places of the nuns in order,

**imaṃ Theriṃ saddhādhimuttānaṃ aggaṭṭhāne ṭhapesī ti.**

he placed this Elder Nun in the foremost position amongst those who were inclined to faith.

*Theripāḷivaṇṇanā Niṭṭhitā*<sup>968</sup>

*The Commentary on the Text about the Elder Nuns is Finished*

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<sup>966</sup> SHB, PTS: *deseti*.

<sup>967</sup> ChS: *ṭhānantare*.

<sup>968</sup> RTE: *Terasasuttapaṭimaṇḍitāya Theripāḷiyā Vaṇṇanā Niṭṭhitā*. ChS: *Pañcamavaggavaṇṇanā Terasasuttapaṭimaṇḍitāya Theripāḷiyā Vaṇṇanā Niṭṭhitā*.