Thi Ap 17 — 17. Gotamī

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

Source: https://suttacentral.net/thi-ap17/en/walters

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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Text

Therīpadāna

The Legends of the Therīs

17. Gotamī

Walt 226 One day the Great Lamp of the World,

the Caravan Leader for men,

dwelt in the Mahāvana Hall,

among Vesali’s gabled roofs. Verse 1

Walt 227 The Victor’s mother’s sister then,

the Buddhist nun Great Gotamī,

was dwelling in a nuns’ refuge,

built in that delightful city. Verse 2

Walt 228 This reasoning occurred to her,

thinking when she’d gone off alone

from liberated Buddhist nuns

numbering five times one hundred: Verse 2e-f,.3a-b

Walt 229 “I will not be able to see
the Buddha’s final nirvana,
that of the two chief followers,
nor Rāhul, Ānanda, Nanda. Verse 3c-f

Walt 230 Destroying life’s constituents
and letting go, I shall go to
nirvana, permitted by him,
the Great Sage, the Lord of the World.” Verse 4

Walt 231 That reasoning also occurred
to the five hundred Buddhist nuns;
that reasoning also occurred
to nuns beginning with Khema. Verse 5

Walt 232 At that time there was an earthquake;
the thunder of the gods did roar.
Weighed down by grief, the goddesses
who lived in that refuge for nuns,
piteously weeping at that,
shed their tears there in the refuge. Verse 6

Walt 233 And then all of those Buddhist nuns,
after approaching Gotamī,
placing their heads upon her feet,
spoke these words they addressed to her,: Verse 7

Walt 234 “Sister, gone off alone, there we
were sprinkled with drops of water.
The unshaking earth is shaking,
the thunder of the gods roaring,
lamentations are being heard:
what then does this mean, Gotamī?” Verse 8

Walt 235 She then told everything to them,
just as she had reasoned it out.
All of them too told Gotamī,
just as they had reasoned it out. Verse 9

Walt 236 “If it’s desired by you, sister —
nirvana, unsurpassed and pure —
we too will all reach nirvana,
with Buddha’s consent, Pious One. Verse 10

Walt 237 Along with you we have gone forth
from home and from existence too;
along with you indeed we’ll go
to nirvana, supreme city.” Verse 11

Walt 238 She said, “what is there to be said
to women who are going out?”
And then along with all of them
she quitted that Buddhist nuns’ nest. Verse 12

Walt 239 “May the goddesses forgive me,
who are dwelling in this refuge;
this will be my final vision
of this Buddhist nuns’ residence. Verse 13

Walt 240 I’ll go to unconditionedness,
where there’s neither death nor decay,
one doesn’t meet the unpleasant,
nor get cut off from pleasant things.” Verse 14

Walt 241 Hearing those words, not passionless,
those heirs of the Well-Gone Buddha,
overcome with grief lamented:
“Alas, we have little merit. Verse 15

Walt 242 Without those women this Buddhist
nuns' nest now has become empty;
the Victor's heirs now are not seen,
as stars disappear at daybreak. Verse 16

Walt 243 Gotamī goes to nirvana
along with the five hundred nuns,
like the Ganges flows to the sea,
with five hundred tributaries." Verse 17

Walt 244 The faithful laywomen, having
seen her going along the road,
coming out from their houses then
bowing down at her feet said this: Verse 18

Walt 245 "Great-fortuned one, be satisfied.
Nirvana's not proper for you,
abandoning us, destitute" —
distraught like that those women wailed. Verse 19

Walt 246 In order to dispel their grief,
Gotamī spoke this honeyed speech:
"Enough with your crying, children,
today, which is your time to laugh; Verse 20

Walt 247 I have understood suffering,
the cause of suffering's allayed,
I've experienced cessation,
I have cultivated the path. Verse 21

(The First Recitation Portion)

Walt 248 The Teacher's been worshipped by me,
I have done what the Buddha taught!

The heavy load has been laid down,
the ties to existence removed. Verse 22

Walt 249 The reason for which I went forth
from my home into homelessness —
I have now achieved that purpose:
destruction of all the fetters. Verse 23

Walt 250 While Buddha and his great Teaching
are still around, nothing lacking —
that's the time for my nirvana;
do not grieve about me, children. Verse 24

Walt 251 Koṇḍañña, Ānanda, Nanda,
Rāhula, the Victor remain;
the Assembly's cheerful and close,
the conceit of rivals is slain. Verse 25

Walt 252 The Famed One in Okkāka's clan
is Exalted, the Death-Crusher;
children, isn't it now the time
for me to achieve nirvana? Verse 26

Walt 253 My wish I've had for very long
is finally fulfilled today.
This is the time for drums of joy.
What then with all these tears, children? Verse 27

Walt 254 If you feel compassion for me,
and if you all appreciate
the great Teaching's stability,
then strong and fervent you should be. Verse 28

Walt 255 Beseeched by me, the Sambuddha
gave ordination to women.

Therefore as I have shown myself,
you all should follow after him.” Verse 29

Walt 256 Having thus advised those women,
placed in front by the Buddhist nuns,
going up to and worshipping
the Buddha, she said this to him: Verse 30

Walt 257 “Well-Gone-One, I am your mother,
and you are my father, Hero;
Lord, who Gives the Good Teaching’s Joy,
O Gotama, I’m born from you. Verse 31

Walt 258 Your body, made of flesh and bones,
was reared up by me, Well-Gone-One;
my flawless body, made of Truth,
was reared up by you, Gotama. Verse 32

Walt 259 I suckled you with mother’s milk
which quenches thirst for a moment.
From you I drank the milk of Truth,
peaceful without interruption. Verse 33

Walt 260 Great Sage, you owe no debt to me
for protecting and rearing you.
To obtain such a son is what
women desiring sons desire. Verse 34

Walt 261 Mothers of kings, like Mandhātā,
are sunk into existence sea.
O son, through you I’ve crossed over
life, this ocean of becoming. Verse 35

Walt 262 Women can easily obtain
the name “King’s Mother” or “Chief Queen.”

The name, “Mother of the Buddha”
is the hardest name to obtain. Verse 36

Walt 263 O Hero, I’ve obtained that name!
I got my wish because of you.
Whether little things or big things,
all of that is fulfilled by me. Verse 37

Walt 264 Having abandoned this body,
I want to reach full nirvana.
Give me permission, O Hero,
O Dis-ease-Ender, O Leader. Verse 38

Walt 265 Stretch forth your feet, like lilies soft,
which are marked with wheel, goad and flag.
I shall make obeisance to you,
with a mother’s love for her son. Verse 39

Walt 266 Show me your physical body;
it resembles a heap of gold.
One last good look at your body,
then off I go to peace, Leader.” Verse 40

Walt 267 Marked with the thirty-two great marks,
it was adorned in radiance:
the Victor showed her his body,
a pale sun through an evening cloud. Verse 41

Walt 268 Then she laid her head down upon
the soles of his feet, marked with wheels,
which were like lotuses in bloom,
as brilliant as the dawning sun. Verse 42

Walt 269 “I’m bowing to the Sun for Men,
the Banner of the Solar Clan;

when I have died for the last time,
I will never see you again. Verse 43

Walt 270 Chief of the World, it is believed
that women make every error.
If there's any error in me,
forgive it, Mine of Compassion. Verse 44

Walt 271 I begged you, over and again,
for ordination of women.
If I was in error in that,
forgive it, O Bull Among Men. Verse 45

Walt 272 O Hero, with your permission,
I instructed the Buddhist nuns.
If I gave bad advice in that,
forgive it, Lord of Forgiveness." Verse 46

Walt 273 "What's not forgiven to forgive
in one who's adorned with virtue?
What more am I to say to you
when you're going to nirvana? Verse 47

Walt 274 Those who are desiring escape from the world
in my pure and complete Assembly of monks,
are like the fading crescent moon at daybreak
after having seen the ruin of its grasps." Verse 48

Walt 275 Like the stars and the moon around Mount Meru,
the other nuns circumambulated him,
Chief Victor, and after bowing at his feet,
they stood there gazing at the Blessed One's face. Verse 49

Walt 276 "Formerly my eyes and ears weren't satisfied
by the vision of you nor hearing your speech.

But now, having obtained perfection, my mind
is satisfied by the taste of the Teaching. Verse 50

Walt 277 When you roar forth amidst the crowd,
destroying the sophists' conceit,
those there who are seeing your face,
are fortunate, O Bull of Men. Verse 51

Walt 278 Battle-Ender, fortunate too,
are they who worship your fine feet,
which have broad heels, extended toes,
and nails the color of copper. Verse 52

Walt 279 Fortunate too, O Best of Men,
are those who listen to your words,
imperfection-slaying, friendly,
honey-sweet and full of gladness. Verse 53

Walt 280 Fortunate am I, Great Hero,
intent on worshipping your feet.
The existential desert crossed,
I shine due to the good Teaching." Verse 54

Walt 281 Then the pious one explained \[her
thoughts\] to the Assembly of monks,
and having worshipped Rāhula,
Ānanda and Nanda, she said: Verse 55

Walt 282-283 "I am weary of my body,
similar to a serpent's den,
a sickness-house, heap of dis-ease,
pasturing in old age and death,
covered with varied flaws and drool,
dependent on others, actionless.

Therefore I desire nirvana;
give me your permission, children.” Verse 56-57

Walt 284 Nanda and lucky Rāhula,
who were griefless, without constraint,
wise and unshakingly steadfast,
reflected on the way things are: Verse 58

Walt 285 “Woe on greed for conditioned things:
as worthless as banana wood,
same as a deluded mirage,
fleeting and constantly changing. Verse 59

Walt 286 In flux are all conditioned things,
in so far as the Victor’s aunt,
the one who suckled the Buddha,
Gotamī, goes without a trace.” Verse 60

Walt 287 Ānanda was then still training,
fond of the Victor, but still sad.
Beseeching her there, shedding tears,
he was wailing piteously: Verse 61

Walt 288 “Gotamī is going, smiling;
surely then soon the Buddha too
will be going to nirvana,
like a fire whose fuel has run out.” Verse 62

Walt 289 Gotamī said to Ānanda
who was lamenting in this way:
“O son, keen on serving Buddha,
your wisdom’s deep as is the sea, Verse 63

Walt 290 and so you really should not mourn,
when the time for smiling has come!

Son, through your assistance to me,
I have realized nirvana. Verse 64

Walt 291 Being requested by you, dear,
Buddha gave us ordination.
Therefore do not be distressed, son;
your effort is now bearing fruit. Verse 65

Walt 292 That state unseen by the ancients,
and likewise by rival teachers,
is known by Buddhist young maidens,
when they're only seven years old. Verse 66

Walt 293 So take your final look at me,
preserver of the Buddha's word;
Son, I am going to that place
where one who's gone cannot be seen." Verse 67

Walt 294 Once when he was preaching Dhamma,
the Chief Leader of the World sneezed.
At that time, compassionately,
I spoke well-wishing words to him: Verse 68

Walt 295 "Live for a long time, Great Hero!
Remain for an aeon, Great Sage!
For the sake of the entire world,
do not grow old nor pass away!" Verse 69

Walt 296 The Buddha then said this to me
who had spoken to him like that:
"Buddhas are not to be worshipped,
as you're worshipping, Gotamī." Verse 70

Walt 297 "How then, O One with Omniscience,
should the Thus-Gone-Ones be worshipped?

How should Buddhas not be worshipped?
Being asked, tell all that to me.” Verse 71

Walt 298 “See my followers, united,
vigorously energetic,
constantly firm in their effort —
that is worship of the Buddhas.” Verse 72

Walt 299 Then, going back to the refuge,
gone off alone, I reflected:
“the Lord, who Reached the Three Worlds’ Ends,
likes a united retinue. Verse 73

Walt 300 Well then, I’ll reach full nirvana;
let me see no hindrance to that!”
I, contemplating in that way,
after seeing the Seventh Sage, Verse 74

Walt 301 announced to the Buddha, the Guide,
the time of my full nirvana.
And then he gave me his assent:
“you know the time, O Gotamī.” Verse 75

Walt 302 My defilements are now burnt up;
all new existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. Verse 76

Walt 303 Being in Best Buddha's presence
was a very good thing for me.
The three knowledges are attained;
I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 77

Walt 304 The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 78

Walt 305 “There are fools who doubt that women

too gain dhamma-penetration.

To dispel that wrong view of theirs,

display miracles, Gotamī.” Verse 79

Walt 306 Then bowing to the Sambuddha,

and rising up into the sky,

with Buddha’s assent, Gotamī

displayed various miracles. Verse 80

Walt 307 Being alone, then she was cloned;

and being cloned, again alone.

Appearing then disappearing,

she walked through walls, walked through the sky. Verse 81

Walt 308 She traveled unattached to earth;

she also sank down into it.

She walked on water as on land,

leaving its surface unbroken. Verse 82

Walt 309 Cross-legged, she flew like a bird,

across the surface of the sky.

With her body she took control

of space right up to Brahma’s home. Verse 83

Walt 310 Taking Mount Meru as handle,

she made great earth her umbrella.

Carrying, twirling root and all,

she walked back and forth in the sky. Verse 84

Walt 311 And like the time when six suns rose,

she caused the entire world to fume.

As though it were the end of time,
she garlanded the earth in flames. Verse 85

Walt 312 She took mounts Meru, Mandāra,
Daddara, great Muccalinda —
all of them, in a single fist,
like they were tiny mustard seeds. Verse 86

Walt 313 She concealed with her fingertip
the makers of both day and night,
as though a thousand suns and moons
were a necklace she was wearing. Verse 87

Walt 314 In a single hand she held the
waters of the four great oceans;
she rained forth a torrential rain,
like an apocalyptic cloud. Verse 88

Walt 315 She made appear up in the sky
a wheel-turner with retinue.
She showed Vishnu as the boar and
roaring lion, and Garuḍa. Verse 89

Walt 316 Being alone, she conjured up
a boundless group of Buddhist nuns.
Making them disappear again,
alone, she said this to the Sage: Verse 90

Walt 317 “Your mother’s sister, Great Hero,
is one who’s done what you have taught.
An attainer of her own goal,
she worships your feet, Eyeful One.” Verse 91

Walt 318 Having shown varied miracles,
descending from up in the sky,

worshipping the Lamp of the World,
she sat down there, off to one side. Verse 92

Walt 319 “O Great Sage, I’m an old woman,
a hundred twenty years from birth.
That much is enough, O Hero;
I’m reaching nirvana, Leader.” Verse 93

Walt 320 Astonished, all the multitudes,
with their hands pressed together then,
said, “sister, you have great prowess
at supernormal miracles.” Verse 94

Walt 321 The Victor, Padumuttara,
the One with Eyes for everything,
the Leader of the World, arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. Verse 95

Walt 322 I was born in Haṁsavatī,
in a clan of ministers then,
furnished with all kinds of servants,
rich, prosperous, very wealthy. Verse 96

Walt 323 Once, when tagging on with father —
attended by a group of slaves —
along with a large retinue,
I approached that Bull Among Men. Verse 97

Walt 324 The Victor, like autumnal son,
surrounded by garlands of rays,
without constraints, that Dhamma-cloud
rained forth like the king of the gods. Verse 98

Walt 325 Seeing him, being pleased at heart,
and having heard his lovely voice,

the Leader of Men placed his aunt
in the foremost place among nuns. Verse 99

Walt 326 Hearing this, for an entire day,
I gave the Neutral One large gifts
and lots of the requisites to
the Chief of Men with Assembly. Verse 100

Walt 327 Having fallen down at his feet,
I aspired to attain that place.
And then the Greatly Mindful One,
the Seventh Sage, said to the crowd: Verse 101

Walt 328 “This one who for a week has fed
the World’s Leader with Assembly,
I shall relate details of her:
all of you listen to my words: Verse 102

Walt 329 In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. Verse 103

Walt 330 Worthy heir to that one’s Dhamma,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Gotamī
will be the Teacher’s follower. Verse 104

Walt 331 She will be his mother’s sister,\
the Buddha’s wet-nurse his whole life.
She will attain the foremost place
among the senior Buddhist nuns.” Verse 105

Walt 332 Hearing that I was overjoyed,
and then as long as life, I served

the Victor with the requisites.
After that, having passed away, Verse 106

Walt 333 born among the Tāvatiṁsa
gods with all delights and riches,
in ten ways I was outshining
all the other gods who lived there: Verse 107

Walt 334 through shapes and sounds and fragrances,
through tastes and the things that I touch,
in terms of lifespan, complexion,
happiness and famousness too Verse 108

Walt 335 and likewise through supreme power
I shone, having attained those ten.
There I became the beloved
chief queen of the king of the gods. Verse 109

Walt 336 Transmigrating in the cycle,
being blown on by karma-wind,
I was born in a slave-village,
in the realm of the Kāsi king. Verse 110

Walt 337 Every day there were five hundred
slaves dwelling in that very place.
I was the wife of he who was
best of all the slaves living there. Verse 111

Walt 338 Five hundred self-become Buddhas
entered our village seeking alms.
Along with all my female kin,
I was thrilled after seeing them. Verse 112

Walt 339 All of us having formed a guild,
we served those Buddhas for four months.\

Having given each the three robes,
we transmigrated with husbands. Verse 113

Walt 340 Fallen from there with our husbands,
we all went to Tāvatiṁsa.
And now, in my final rebirth,
born in Devadaha city, Verse 114

Walt 341 my father, Añjana Śākya,
my mother was Sulakhanā.
We left for Suddhodana's house,
in Kapilavastu City. Verse 115

Walt 342 The other women born Śākyan
also came to the Śākyans' house.
Distinguished among all of them,
I was wet-nurse of the Victor. Verse 116

Walt 343 After having gone forth, my son
became the Buddha, the World's Guide.
Afterwards I renounced the world,
together with the five hundred. Verse 117

Walt 344 Along with the Śākyan heroes,
I witnessed the comfort of peace.
They were the men who formerly
had been born as our own husbands. Verse 118

Walt 345 Makers of merit together,
they've now seized the crucial moment.
Pitied by the Well-Gone-One, they
experienced arahantship. Verse 119

Walt 346 The rest of the Buddhist nuns there
then all rose up into the air.

Come together like bright stars
those women with great powers shined. Verse 120

Walt 347 They displayed their diverse powers
like different types of ornaments
might be displayed by a goldsmith,
who is well-trained in workmanship. Verse 121

Walt 348-349 After displaying miracles,
variegated and many,
having pleased the Fine Debater,
the Sage, and his retinue then,
having descended from the sky,
having worshipped the Seventh Sage,
permitted by the Chief of Men,
they sat down in that place again. Verse 122-123

Walt 350 “Hey, Hero, it was Gotamī
who showed pity to all of us.
Perfumed by your good karma, we
reached destruction of our constraints. Verse 124

Walt 351 Our defilements are now burnt up;
all new existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
we are living without constraint. Verse 125

Walt 352 Being in Best Buddha's presence
was a very good thing for us.
The three knowledges are attained;
We have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 126

Walt 353 The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,
We have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 127

Walt 354 We are masters of miracles,
O Sage So Great, we are masters
of the “divine ear” faculty,
and knowing what’s in others’ hearts. Verse 128

Walt 355 We know all of our former lives;
“divine eye” now is purified.
All the constraints have been destroyed;
there now will be no more rebirth. Verse 129

Walt 356 It was in your presence, Great Sage,
that our own knowledge came to be,
knowing meaning and the Teaching,
etymology and preaching. Verse 130

Walt 357 Leader, you’re surrounded by us,
Buddhist nuns with hearts full of love;
O Great Sage, give your permission
to us to all reach nirvana.” Verse 131

Walt 358 The Victor said, “What can I say
to women who are telling me,
‘we are going to reach nirvana’?
Know that now is your time for it.” Verse 132

Walt 359 At that time all those Buddhist nuns,
starting with the nun Gotamī,
worshipping the Victor then rose
up from their seats and went away. Verse 133

Walt 360 The World’s Chief Leader, the Wise One,
with a large body of people,

followed his own maternal aunt
until she got up to the gate. Verse 134

Walt 361 Then Gotamī fell to the ground
at the feet of the World's Kinsman,
and with all of the other nuns
performed a final foot-worship. Verse 135

Walt 362 "This will be my final vision
of you, the Lord of the Whole World.
Never again will I see your
face, the fountain of ambrosia. Verse 136

Walt 363 No more homage to your soft feet;
I won't ever touch them again.
O Hero, Chief of the Whole World,
today I'll go to nirvana! Verse 137

Walt 364 What's your physical form or face,
with things being such as they are?
All conditioned things are like that,
providing no comfort, trifling. Verse 138

Walt 365 She, having gone along with them
back to her own refuge for nuns,
sat in half-lotus position
in her own superior seat. Verse 139

Walt 366 At that time the laywomen there,
fond of Buddha's dispensation,
hearing her proceeding ahead,
those foot-worshippers approached her, Verse 140

Walt 367 pounding on their chests with their fists,
loudly howling piteous cries.

Grieving they fell down on the earth
like creepers cut off at the root. Verse 141

Walt 368 “Refuge-Bestower, Lord, do not
leave us to go to nirvana.
Bowing down our heads, all of us
are begging you, O Gotamī.” Verse 142

Walt 369 One laywoman, faithful and wise,
was striving the most among them.
While gently stroking that one’s head,
Gotamī spoke these words to her: Verse 143

Walt 370 “Enough with this depression, child,
twisted up in the snares of Death;
impermanent is all that is,
ever-shaking, ending in loss.” Verse 144

Walt 371 Then having sent them all away,
she entered the first altered state,
the second and also the third,
and then she attained the fourth one. Verse 145

Walt 372 In order, moving higher still:
the plane of space-infinity,
the plane in which perception’s pure,
and that where nothingness is seen. Verse 146

Walt 373 In reverse order, Gotamī
entered all of those altered states,
from the last back down to the first,
and then back up to the fourth one. Verse 147

Walt 374 Rising up, she reached nirvana,
like the flame of a fuel-less lamp.

There was an enormous earthquake;
bolts of lightening fell from the sky. Verse 148

Walt 375 The thunder was rumbling loudly;
the deities gathered there wailed.
A flower-shower from the sky
was raining down upon the earth. Verse 149

Walt 376 Even regal Mount Meru shook,
just like a dancer on the stage;
the great ocean was greatly grieved,
and he was weeping in distress. Verse 150

Walt 377 The gods, snake-gods and titans too,
even Brahmā, awed at that time,
said, “this one has now been dissolved;
in flux indeed is all that is.” Verse 151

Walt 378 The other nuns surrounding her,
who practiced the Buddha’s teachings,
they too attained nirvana then,
like the flames of lamps without fuel. Verse 152

Walt 379 “Alas! Attachments end up cut!
Alas! Conditioned things all change!
Alas! Life ends in destruction.”
In this way people were wailing. Verse 153

Walt 380 Then Brahmā and the deities
went up to him, the Seventh Sage,
doing what is appropriate,
according to worldly custom. Verse 154

Walt 381 Then the Teacher told Ānanda,
whose knowledge was deep as the sea,

“Go now, Ānanda, tell the monks,
my mother has reached nirvana.” Verse 155

Walt 382-383 Then Ānanda, who’d lost his joy,
whose eyes were filling up with tears,
announced, while choking on his words,
“Come together, O Buddhist monks,
who are residing in the North,
or in the east or south or west.
Let them all listen to my words,
monks who are the Well-Gone-One’s heirs. Verse 156-157

Walt 384 This Gotamī, who carefully
reared up the body of the Sage,
has gone to peace, no longer seen,
just like stars when the sun rises. Verse 158

Walt 385 She’s gone home, leaving behind her
designation “Buddha’s Mother,”
where even he, the Five-Eyed One,
the Leader, cannot see one gone. Verse 159

Walt 386 Each with faith in the Well-Gone-One,
and each of the Sage’s pupils,
ought now to come, that Buddha’s son,
to honor the Buddha’s mother.” Verse 160

Walt 387 Hearing that, the monks came with speed,
even those living far away.
Some came by Buddha’s majesty,
some were skilled in superpowers. Verse 161

Walt 388 Folks there raised a funeral bier
where Gotamī was now laid out,

in a good, lovely gabled hut,
excellent and made out of gold. Verse 162

Walt 389 The four gods called “World-Protectors”
hoisted the bier on their shoulders;
other gods starting with Śakra,
gathered inside the gabled hut. Verse 163

Walt 390 There were five hundred gabled huts,
the color of autumnal suns,
which were built by Vissakamma,
for all of those great Buddhist nuns. Verse 164

Walt 391 All those five hundred Buddhist nuns
were laid out on funeral biers,
hoisted up on shoulders of gods,
lined up in the proper order. Verse 165

Walt 392 A canopy up in the sky
was stretched out over everything.
The sun and moon and all the stars
were drawn on it in liquid gold. Verse 166

Walt 393 Flags of various types were raised,
a floral covering stretched out;
flowers rose up out of the earth,
like incense rising in the sky. Verse 167

Walt 394 Both the sun and the moon were seen,
and all the stars were twinkling;
and even when it was high noon,
the sun did not burn, like the moon. Verse 168

Walt 395 Gods made offerings of garlands,
perfumed with divine fragrances

and honored Gotamī with songs,
with dances and with discourses. Verse 169

Walt 396 The snake-gods, titans and Brahmās
according to powers and strengths,
made offerings to the laid-out
mother who was in nirvana. Verse 170

Walt 397 In front were led off all of the
Well-Gone-One's heirs in nirvana,
Gotamī was led off after,
honored wet-nurse of the Buddha. Verse 171

Walt 398 With the gods and people out front,
the snake-gods, titans and Brahmās,
and next, with followers, Buddha,
processed to worship his mother. Verse 172

Walt 399 The Buddha's final nirvana
was not of such a kind as this.
Gotamī's final nirvana
was extremely miraculous. Verse 173

Walt 400 The Buddha and monks won't be seen
at Buddha's final nirvana.
The Buddha is at Gotamī's;
so's Sāriputta and so on. Verse 174

Walt 401 Then they built the funeral pyres,
made with all sorts of fragrant wood,
and sprinkled with perfumed powder.
Those great nuns were cremated there. Verse 175

Walt 402 The remaining portions and bones
were completely consumed by fire.

And at that time Ānanda spoke
this speech, which was very moving: Verse 176

Walt 403 “Gotamī’s gone without a trace
and her corpse has been cremated,
intimating that the Buddha’s
nirvana too will soon occur.” Verse 177

Walt 404 Ānanda, urged by the Buddha,
placed Gotamī’s sacred relics
in her begging bowl at that time,
and presented them to the Lord. Verse 178

Walt 405-406 Taking them up with both his hands,
the Seventh Sage, the Buddha, said:
“Just as the trunk of a standing,
gigantic timber-bearing tree,
impermanent, breaks into bits,
however massive it may be,
so Gotamī, who was a nun,
has reached her final nirvana. Verse 179-180

Walt 407 O! it is a marvelous thing!
My mother who’s reached nirvana,
leaving only relics behind
did not grieve and was not wailing. Verse 181

Walt 408 Grieving not for others left,
she’s crossed the sea of existence.
She’s cooled, she’s in nirvana.
her torment is now avoided. Verse 182

Walt 409 Know this about her, O you monks,
she was a very wise woman,

with wisdom which was vast and wide,
distinguished among Buddhist nuns. Verse 183

Walt 410 She'd mastered the superpower
called the "divine ear" element.
Gotamī was a master of
the knowledge stored in others' hearts. Verse 184

Walt 411 She remembered her former lives;
her "divine eye" was purified.
All the defilements were destroyed;
she will not be reborn again. Verse 185

Walt 412 She had purified her knowledge
of meaning and of the Teaching,
etymology and preaching:
because of that she did not grieve. Verse 186

Walt 413 A rod of iron that's beaten
when it is glowing due to fire
slowly cools off, leaving no ash:
like that it's not known where she went. Verse 187

Walt 414 No rebirth place can be discerned
of the truly liberated,
who cross the flood of lustful bonds,
who've reached unshaking happiness. Verse 188

Walt 415 Therefore be lamps unto yourselves;
graze in the field of mindfulness.
With wisdom's seven parts attained,
you all should end your suffering. Verse 189

Thus indeed Bhikkhunī Mahāpajāpatīgotamī spoke these verses.

The legend of Mahāpajāpatīgotamī Therī is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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Prepared for SuttaCentral by Ayya Vimala.