Thi Ap 19 — 19. Uppalavaṇṇā

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

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Text

Therīpadāna

The Legends of the Therīs

19. Uppalavaṇṇā

Walt 511 The nun named Uppalavaṇṇā,

master of the superpowers,

having worshipped the Teacher’s feet,

spoke these words to him at that time: Verse 1

Walt 512 “Birth and rebirth crossed beyond,

I’ve attained the unshaking state.

All suffering’s destroyed by me;

I’m declaring it, O Great Sage. Verse 2

Walt 513 Throughout the multitudes who are

pleased in Buddha’s dispensation,

if I’ve wronged some people may they

forgive it facing the Victor. Verse 3

Walt 514 Great Sage, I am declaring that
if there's some mistake I've made,
transmigrating in existence,
may you forgive that transgression." Verse 4

Walt 515 "Show your superpowers to those
who practice my dispensation.
Cut off today the doubts throughout
the multitude, which is fourfold." Verse 5

Walt 516 "Great Hero, I am your daughter.
O Wise One, O Effulgent One,
I've done very difficult deeds,
difficult and numerous too. Verse 6

Walt 517 My skin is blue-lotus-colored;
by name I am named "Blue Lotus."
I'm your follower, Great Hero,
worshipping your feet, Eyeful One. Verse 7

Walt 518 Rāhula and I myself
due to our similar mindsets,
were born in the same conditions
various hundred many times. Verse 8

Walt 519 Rebirth is together with him
and after birth too, together.
Now in our final existence
both, born in varied conditions, Verse 9

Walt 520 together: Rāhula's your son;
I'm your daughter, named "Blue Lotus."
See my superpowers, Hero;
I'll show my strength to the Teacher." Verse 10

Walt 521 She put the four great oceans down
into the palm of her own hand,
just like a youthful physician
does oil destined for the bladder. Verse 11

Walt 522 Tearing up earth, she put it down
into the palm of her own hand,
like a tender young boy picking
a flower that's full of color. Verse 12

Walt 523 Her palm, big as the universe,
covering the world from the top,
caused raindrops of various hues
to rain forth again and again. Verse 13

Walt 524 Making earth into a mortar,
making Mount Meru her pestle,
as though a youthful grinding girl,
grinding grain flour, she made gravel. Verse 14

Walt 525 "I am the Best Buddha's daughter;
by name I am named "Blue Lotus."
A master of superpowers,
I practice your dispensation." Verse 15

Walt 526 Making varied transformations,
showing them to the World's Leader,
announcing name and lineage,
I worship your feet, Eyeful One. Verse 16

Walt 527 I've mastered the superpower
called the "divine ear" element.
I'm also a master, Great Sage,
of the knowledge in others' hearts. Verse 17

Walt 528 I remember my former lives;
my “divine eye” is purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
I will not be reborn again. Verse 18

Walt 529 In meaning and in the Teaching,
etymology and preaching,
my knowledge is vast and flawless,
through the Great Sage’s majesty. Verse 19

Walt 530 In the presence and the absence
of the Chief Victors, formerly,
much service was performed by me
for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 20

Walt 531 What good karma was done by me,
formerly in existence, Sage;
that merit heaped up by me was
for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 21

Walt 532 Avoiding wrong behavior and
the nine impossible places;
the ultimate life’s my duty
for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 22

Walt 533 I donated from my own funds
ten thousand ten millions in gold;
my very life was abandoned
for the sake of you, Great Hero.” Verse 23

Walt 534 Then all of them, greatly composed,
hands pressed together on their heads,
said, “Sister, how’d you make the effort
for such unmatched superpower?”

Walt 535 One hundred thousand aeons hence
I was a cobra-god maiden,
known by the name of Vimala,
well-honored among the maidens. Verse 24

Walt 536 The great cobra Mahoraga,
pleased in Buddha's dispensation,
invited Padumuttara
of Great Power, with followers. Verse 25

Walt 537-538 Sounding musical instruments,
going out to meet the Sambuddha,
he made the Buddha's road ready —
a pavilion made out of gems,
a palanquin made out of gems,
things to enjoy made out of gems,
strewn with sand that was mixed with gems,
adorned with flags covered in gems. Verse 26-27

Walt 539 The World's Leader, surrounded by
the multitude, which is fourfold,
sat down on an excellent seat
there in Mahoraga's palace. Verse 28

Walt 540 The cobra-king, greatly famed one,
gave excellent and excellent
food and drink, hard food that's filling,
soft food to drink, very costly. Verse 29

Walt 541 Having eaten, having rinsed the
bowl completely, the Sambuddha
then made an expression of thanks
to us, the cobra-god maidens. Verse 30

Walt 542-543 Discerning what was in my heart
and my mind which was fixed on him,
taking pleasure in the Teacher,
when the cobra maidens had seen
the one whose name was Best Lotus,
Greatly Famed All-Knower in bloom,
that Great Hero, at that moment,
showed a nun with superpowers. Verse 31-32

Walt 544 That Buddhist nun, very skillful,
displayed diverse superpowers.
Thrilling with delight, and awe-struck,
I said this to him, the Teacher: Verse 33

Walt 545 “I too saw the superpower
of this happy Buddhist nun.
Just how, Hero, did she become
so skillful in superpowers?” Verse 34

Walt 546 “This nun with great powers is my
legitimate daughter, mouth-born;
she’s followed my instructions, thus
she’s so skilled in superpowers.” Verse 35

Walt 547 Hearing the words of the Buddha,
delighted indeed I aspired,
“I too shall become such a one,
so skillful in superpowers. Verse 36

Walt 548 I am delighted, I’m happy;
in the not-yet-become future,
my supreme aspiration reached,
I will be like her, O Leader.” Verse 37

Walt 549 Satisfying with food and drink
the World’s Leader with Assembly,
on a palanquin made of gems,
within a shining pavilion, Verse 38

Walt 550 I worshipped him, the World’s Leader,
that my color should be that of
an aruṇa type blue lotus,
foremost flower of the cobras. Verse 39

Walt 551 Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and firm resolve,
discarding my human body,
I went to Tāvatiṁsa then. Verse 40

Walt 552 Fallen from there, being reborn
as a human being, I gave
a Self-Become Lonely Buddha
alms food covered with lotuses. Verse 41

Walt 553 In the ninety-first aeon hence
the Leader known as Vipassi
arose, the One Good to Look At,
the One with Eyes for Everything. Verse 42

Walt 554 Being a millionaire’s daughter
in Benares, supreme city,
inviting him, the Sambuddha,
the World’s Leader with Assembly, Verse 43

Walt 555 after donating a very
large almsgiving to the Guide, and
worshipping with lotuses, I
wished through them for splendid color. Verse 44

Walt 556 In this present lucky aeon
Brahma's Kinsman, Greatly Famed One,
the Buddha known as Kassapa
was born, the Best of Debaters. Verse 45

Walt 557 The attendant of the Great Sage
was the ruler of men back then,
the king of Kāsi, named Kiki,
in Benares, greatest city. Verse 46

Walt 558 I was that king's second daughter,
who was named Samaṇaguttā.
Hearing the Best Victor's Teaching,
I chose to seek ordination. Verse 47

Walt 559-560 Our father did not permit it;
we stayed at home during that time,
comfortable royal maidens
doing our practice with vigor
in virginal celibacy,
for twenty times a thousand years,
fond of waiting on the Buddha,
the king's seven joyful daughters. Verse 48-49

Walt 561 Samaṇī, and Samaṇaguttā,
Bhikkhunī, Bhikkhadāyikā,
Dhammā, and also Sudhammā,
and seventh Saṅghadāyikā, Verse 50

Walt 562 now I, and the nun named Khemā,
Paṭācārā and Kuṇḍalā,
Kisāgotamī, Dhammadinnā,
and Visākhā is the seventh. Verse 51

Walt 563 Due to those karmas done very well,
with intention and firm resolve,
discarding my human body,
I went to Tāvatiṁsa then. Verse 52

Walt 564 Fallen from there, being reborn
as a human, in a great clan,
I gave an arahant a robe
of costly saffron-colored silk. Verse 53

Walt 565 Fallen from there, reborn among
brahmins in Ariṭṭhapura,
daughter of Tirīṭavaccha,
I was charming Ummādantī. Verse 54

Walt 566 Fallen from there, I was born in
an undistinguished rural clan.
I was then engrossed in guarding
rice in a not-quite-ripened field. Verse 55

Walt 567 Having seen a Lonely Buddha,
giving him five hundred grains of
roasted paddy, lotus-covered,
I wished to have five hundred sons. Verse 56

Walt 568 With those wishes having given
honey to that Self-Become One,
fallen from there I was reborn
in a lotus in the forest. Verse 57

Walt 569 Being the Kāsi king’s chief queen,
I was respected and worshipped.
I bore royal princes for him,
not one fewer than five hundred. Verse 58

Walt 59 When my sons had become young men,

Walt 570 while sporting at their water sports,

seeing fallen lotus petals,

they turned into Lonely-Leaders.

Walt 571 I was then grieved, being bereft
of those heroes who were my sons.
Fallen from there, I was born in
a village near Isigili. Verse 60

Walt 572-573 When I, Buddha-mother reborn,
then well-guarded myself,
was going carrying rice gruel,
having seen eight Lonely-Leaders
going to the village for alms,
I remembered my former sons.
Then a stream of milk spurted out
from me out of love for my sons. Verse 61-62

Walt 574 And then I gave rice gruel to them,
feeling well-pleased by my own hands.
Fallen from there I was reborn
in “Joy” with the thirty-three gods. Verse 63

Walt 575 Feeling both happiness and pain,
transmigrating from birth to birth,
my very life was abandoned
for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 64

Walt 576-577 Thus suffering in varied forms,
various forms of happiness:
when my last rebirth was attained,

I’m born in Śrāvasti city,
in a wealthy millionaire’s clan,
comfortable, decorated,
glistening with various gems,
endowed with every sense-pleasure. Verse 65-66

Walt 578 I was respected and worshipped,
revered, likewise also esteemed.
I achieved radiant beauty,
much-respected among the clans. Verse 67

Walt 579 And I was very much desired,
through the good fortune of beauty,
desired by various hundreds
of millionaire’s sons living there. Verse 68

Walt 580 After abandoning my house,
I went forth into homelessness.
When eight months had not yet elapsed,
I attained the Four Noble Truths. Verse 69

Walt 581 “With superpowers creating
a chariot with four horses,
I will worship the feet of the
Buddha, World’s Lord, Resplendent One.” Verse 70

Walt 582 “O nun, having approached a tree in full bloom,
you remain alone, at that sāla tree’s roots.
You have no second in natural beauty.
Foolish one, aren’t you afraid of wanton men?” Verse 71

Walt 583 “Even if a hundred thousand wanton men
come to this place, should behave in such a way,
I would not be terrified, not a hair raised:

I’m not afraid of you, Death, when I’m alone. Verse 72

Walt 584 I, this nun am disappearing;
I am hiding in your belly;
you do not see me, standing here
in the spot between your eyebrows. Verse 73

Walt 585 Becoming master of my mind,
I developed superpowers;
I’m liberated from all bonds:
I am not afraid of you, friend. Verse 74

Walt 586 Sense pleasures are swords and daggers;
the heaps executioner’s blocks.
I now dislike the enjoyment
of sense-pleasures of which you spoke. Verse 75

Walt 587 Everywhere, enjoyments are slain;
the mass of darkness is destroyed.
Know it like this, O evil one:
you have been killed, O end-maker.” Verse 76

Walt 588 The Victor, pleased by my virtue,
then placed me in that foremost place.
To the crowds the Guide announced me
“best of those with superpowers.” Verse 77

Walt 589 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 severed. Verse 78

Walt 590 The reason for which I went forth
from my home into homelessness —
I have now achieved that purpose:

destruction of all the fetters. Verse 79

Walt 591 By the moment they’re bringing me

monastic robes and begging bowls,

all the requisites and lodgings,

in the thousands from everywhere. Verse 80

Walt 592 My defilements are now burnt up;

all new existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. Verse 81

Walt 593 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 82

Walt 594 The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 83

Thus indeed Bhikkhunī Uppalavaṇṇā spoke these verses.

The legend of Uppalavaṇṇā Therī is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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