Thi Ap 30 — 30. Eighteen Thousand Buddhist Nuns Headed Up by Yasodharā

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

Source: https://suttacentral.net/thi-ap30/en/walters

Source revision: 2d9ca8da858f94302ed6783e2717bf73d651881b

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Text

Therīpadāna

The Legends of the Therīs

30. Eighteen Thousand Buddhist Nuns Headed Up by Yasodharā

Walt 1044 Buddhist nuns, eighteen thousand strong,

who were born in the Śākyan clan,

headed up by Yasodharā,

went up to him, the Sambuddha. Verse 1

Walt 1045 All those eighteen thousand women

are superpower-possessors.

Worshipping the feet of the Sage,

they’re announcing their strength’s extent. Verse 2

Walt 1046 "Birth is destroyed, old age, disease,

and death is as well, O Great Sage;

Guide, we travel the peaceful path,

deathless and without defilement. Verse 3

Walt 1047 If there’s trouble in the city,
even for everyone, Great Sage,
they all know our imperfections;
Leader, give us your forgiveness.” Verse 4

Walt 1048 "Now display your superpowers,
doers of my dispensation;
to that extent cut off the doubt
among all of the assemblies.” Verse 5

Walt 1049 "We’re Yasodharās, Great Hero;
desirable, speaking sweet words.
And in the home, O Great Hero,
we all were fixed as your chief queens. Verse 6

Walt 1050 In your household, O Hero, we
were the leaders, the lords of all
of the women there, who numbered
one hundred thousand ninety six. Verse 7

Walt 1051 All us women are endowed with
the virtues of beauty and grace;
youthful, well-spoken, we’re revered,
like gods are revered by people. Verse 8

Walt 1052 All us eighteen thousand women,
born in the clan of the Śākyas,
are famous ones, Yasodharās,
the leaders of thousands back then. Verse 9

Walt 1053 Beyond the essence of desire,
fixed as the essence of beauty,
we’re unmatched in terms of beauty

among other thousands, Great Sage.” Verse 10

Walt 1054 Worshipping the Sambuddha, they
showed the Teacher superpowers.
They displayed great superpowers,
diverse, having various forms. Verse 11

Walt 1055 Body big as the universe,
they made the continent up north
their heads; both other islands wings;
and made India their torsos; Verse 12

Walt 1056 tail feathers: the southern ocean;
other feathers: varied rivers;
their eyes were the moon and the sun,
their crests were cosmic Mount Meru. Verse 13

Walt 1057 In their beaks, mountain at world’s end,
they carried a tree with its roots.
Coming up to him, fanning him,
they’re worshipping the World’s Leader. Verse 14

Walt 1058 Then they made themselves elephants,
likewise horses, mountains, oceans,
the moon and the sun, Mount Meru,
and Śakra, the king of the gods. Verse 15

Walt 1059 "We’re like Yasodharās, Hero;
We worship your feet, Eyeful One.
Through your majesty, Hero,
we’re perfected, Leader of Men. Verse 16

Walt 1060 We’ve mastered the superpowers
like the “divine ear” element.
We’re also the masters, Great Sage,

of the knowledge in others' hearts. Verse 17

Walt 1061 We remember our former lives;
our "divine eyes" are purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
we will not be reborn again. Verse 18

Walt 1062 In meaning and in the Teaching,
etymology and preaching,
this knowledge of ours was produced
in your presence, O Great Hero. Verse 19

Walt 1063 Our meeting with all the Buddhas,
the World-Lords, was displayed to you;
our extensive service to them
was for the sake of you, Great Sage. Verse 20

Walt 1064 O Sage, recall the good karma,
which formerly was done by us;
that merit was heaped up by us
for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 21

Walt 1065 We kept from misconduct, hindered
the nine impossible places;
we have sacrificed life itself
for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 22

Walt 1066 We were given to be your wives,
several tens of billions of times.
We were not distressed about that,
for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 23

Walt 1067 We were given to do service,
several tens of billions of times.
We were not distressed about that,

for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 24

Walt 1068 We were given to provide food,
several tens of billions of times.
We were not distressed about that,
for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 25

Walt 1069 We have given you all our lives,
several tens of billions of times.
We'll liberate ourselves from fear,
giving up our lives once more. Verse 26

Walt 1070 Great Sage for your sake we do not
conceal the things of a woman,
numerous clothes of varied types,
ornaments affixed to our limbs. Verse 27

Walt 1071 Wealth and grain have been given up,
villages and also small towns,
fields and sons and daughters as well
have been given up, O Great Sage. Verse 28

Walt 1072 Elephants, horses, also cows,
slaves as well as servant-women
are given up beyond all count,
for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 29

Walt 1073 Whatever we are told to give
as alms to beggars, we give that;
we don't witness any distress
from giving the ultimate gift. Verse 30

Walt 1074 We have experienced dis-ease
of diverse types, beyond all count,
in this much-varied existence

for the sake of you, Great Hero. Verse 31

Walt 1075 Attaining comforts, we don't thrill;
We don't get distressed by troubles.
Everywhere we remain balanced
for the sake of you, O Great Sage. Verse 32

Walt 1076 After experiencing both
pleasure and pain along the way,
the Great Sage reached Awakening,
the Teaching for which Buddha strived. Verse 33

Walt 1077 By you and by us there was much
meeting with the other World-Lords,
whether you're the god Brahmā or
Gotama Buddha, World's Leader. Verse 34

Walt 1078 We performed a lot of service,
for the sake of you, O Great Sage;
while you sought the Buddha's Teaching,
we were always your attendants. Verse 35

Walt 1079 One hundred thousand aeons and
four incalculable aeons
hence, Dīpaṅkara, Great Hero,
the Leader of the World was born. Verse 36

Walt 1080 Someplace in a nearby country,
inviting him, the Thus-Gone-One,
happy-minded folks are cleaning
the road on which he is coming. Verse 37

Walt 1081 At that time there was a brahmin,
known by the name of Sumedha.
He was making the road ready

for the All-Seer who was coming. Verse 38

Walt 1082 At that time we all were maidens,
who had been born in brahmin clans;
we carried to that assembly
flowers grown in water, on land. Verse 39

Walt 1083 Just then the Greatly Famed Buddha,
Dīpaṅkara, the Great Hero,
prophesied future Buddhahood
for that sage with a lofty mind. Verse 40

Walt 1084 The earth together with its gods
was shaking, roaring and quaking,
as he was praising his karma
for that sage with a lofty mind. Verse 41

Walt 1085 Divine maidens, human women,
we and the whole world with its gods,
worshipping with various things
to be offered, we made wishes. Verse 42

Walt 1086 The Buddha with the name “Bright Lamp”
prophesied to them at that time:
“Who wished today, they’re going to be,
reborn together, face-to-face.” Verse 43

Walt 1087 Rejoicing about Buddha’s speech,
we lived behaving in that way
the Buddha prophesied for us
numberless aeons ago. Verse 44

Walt 1088 We brought pleasure to our minds when
that karma was well done by us;
we experienced countless wombs,

divine as well as human ones. Verse 45

Walt 1089 Undergoing pleasure and pain,
among gods and human beings,
when our last rebirth was attained,
we were born in the Śākyan clan. Verse 46

Walt 1090 Beautiful and very wealthy,
famous and likewise virtuous;
endowed with every attainment,
we're much-honored among the clans. Verse 47

Walt 1091 Riches, fame, hospitality,
and indulgence in worldly things –
they do not agitate our minds;
we have no fear from anything. Verse 48

Walt 1092 We were appointed to attend
on what the Blessed One had said
within the harem of the king
in the kṣatriyan city then. Verse 49

Walt 1093 We are women who are servants,
and those who feel pleasure and pain,
and women who declare the facts,
women who are compassionate. Verse 50

Walt 1094 Well-practiced, the Teaching-practice;
that practice is not ill-practiced.
We're at ease practicing Teaching,
in this world and in the other. Verse 51

Walt 1095 After abandoning the home,
going forth into homelessness,
when eight months had not yet elapsed,

we attained the Four Noble Truths. Verse 52

Walt 1096 Like the waves upon the ocean,
folks are bringing many varied
monastic robes and alms to eat,
requisites as well as lodgings. Verse 53

Walt 1097 Our defilements are now burnt up;
all new existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
we are living without constraint. Verse 54

Walt 1098 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 55

Walt 1099 The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
we have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 56

Walt 1100 Thus many sorts of suffering
and many types of happiness;
the pure life now has been achieved,
we have obtained all achievements. Verse 57

Walt 1101 Woman who are giving themselves
for the merit of the Great Sage
attain companionship with him,
and unconditioned nirvana. Verse 58

Walt 1102 The past is thoroughly destroyed,
and the present and the future;
all of our karma is destroyed:

we worship your feet, Eyeful One.” Verse 59

Walt 1103 “What more can I say to women

who are going to nirvana?

Pacifying conditioned flaws

you should attain the deathless state.” Verse 60

Thus indeed Eighteen Thousand Buddhist Nuns Headed Up by Yasodharā spoke these verses.

The legend of Eighteen Thousand Buddhist Nuns Headed Up by Yasodharā is finished

The Summary:

Kuṇḍalā, also Gotamī,

Dhammadinnā and Sakulā,

Excellent Nandā and Soṇā

Kapilāni, Yasodharā,

and the ten thousand Buddhist nuns

also the eighteen thousand nuns:

the verses that are counted here

number one hundred and forty

and also seventy-eight more.

The Kuṇḍalakesā Chapter, the Third

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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