Thag 12.2 — Sunīta

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

Verses of the Senior Monks 12.2

The Book of the Twelves

Chapter One

Sunīta

I was born in a low-class family.

We were poor, with little to eat.

My job was lowly—

I threw out the old flowers.

Shunned by people,

I was disregarded and held in contempt.

I humbled my heart

and paid respects to many people.

Then I saw the Buddha

at the fore of the mendicant Saṅgha.

The great hero

was entering the capital city of the Magadhans.

I dropped my flail

and approached to pay homage.

Out of sympathy for me,

the supreme man stood still.

When I had paid homage at the Teacher’s feet,

I stood to one side

and requested the going forth

from the one supreme among all beings.
Consequently, the Teacher, being compassionate,
having sympathy for the whole world,
said to me, “Come, monk!”
That was my ordination.
Staying alone in the wilderness,
meditating tirelessly,
I have completed what the Teacher taught,
just as the victor advised me.
In the first watch of the night,
I recollected my past lives.
In the middle watch,
I purified my clairvoyance.
In the last watch,
I shattered the mass of darkness.
At the end of the night,
as the sunrise drew near,
Indra and the Divinity came
and revered me with joined hands.
“Homage to you, O thoroughbred!
Homage to you, supreme among men!
Since your defilements are ended,
you, good fellow, are worthy of a religious donation.”
Consequently, having seen me honored
by the assembly of gods,
the Teacher smiled
and said the following:
“By fervor and spiritual practice,
by restraint and by self-control:

that’s how to become a brahmin,

this is the supreme brahmin.”