Thig 13.1 — Verses of the Elder Ambapālī

English translation by Bhikkhuni Soma.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/thig13.1/en/soma
Source revision: da23a8afdd1be12267ecf4a0ff94af5187093702
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Verses of the Elder Bhikkhunīs

The Chapter of the Twenties

Verses of the Elder Ambapālī

“Curly hair, black like the color of bees,

sprang from this head of mine.

Because of old age it is now like hemp-bark—

the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

A fragrance like a sweet-scented chest full of flowers,

sprang from this head of mine.

Because of old age now it just smells like fur—

the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

Hair growing thick like a forest grove,

made resplendent, and gathered at the top with comb and hairpins.

Because of old age, it is now thinning here and there—

the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

Shining hair, adorned with plaits of black and gold,

arranged in beautiful braids.

Because of old age my head has gone bald—

the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

My eyebrows were such a splendor,

so well done, as if drawn by a painter.

Because of old age they are sagging and wrinkly—

the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

My large eyes were the best shade of blue,
as radiant and splendid as gemstones.
Because of old age, they shine no more—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
Smooth prominent incomparable nose,
shining at the peak of youth—
Because of old age it has withered,
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My earlobes were such a splendor,
like bracelets well made from start to finish.
Because of old age they are sagging and wrinkly—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
The color of a jasmine bud,
my teeth were so splendid.
Because of old age they are broken and blackened—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
I had a sweet hum like a cuckoo,
chirping in the forests and jungles.
Because of old age it falters at times—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My neck looked beautiful in the past,
as smooth as a well polished conch-shell.
Because of old age it is twisted and broken—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My arms were of such splendor,
both similar to round crossbars.
Because of old age they are now like withered branches—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My hands were of such splendor,

smooth and adorned with gold rings.
Because of old age they are now like gnarled roots—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My little breasts were of such splendor,
plump, round, close together, and perky.
Like drops of water they now droop—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My body was of such splendor,
smooth like a golden panel.
Now it’s covered with fine wrinkles—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My thighs were of such splendor,
both like the torso of a snake.
Because of old age they are now like stalks of bamboo—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My calves were of such splendor,
adorned with exquisite gold anklets.
Because of old age they are now like sesame twigs—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
My feet were of such splendor,
as soft as tufts of cotton.
Because of old age they are wrinkled and cracked—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.
Such was this body,
now decrepit, an abode of much suffering,
a house of decrepitude fallen into disrepair—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.”
The Elder Ambapālī