Thig 13.4 — Verses of the Elder Sundarī

English translation by Bhikkhuni Soma.
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Text

Verses of the Elder Bhikkhunīs

Chapter of the Twenties

Verses of the Elder Sundarī

“In the past your dead children
were devoured by scavengers.
Day and night,
you were overwhelmed by torment.
All of your seven children
have been devoured.
Brahmin Vāseṭṭhi, how come you
don’t look so strongly tormented now?”

“Brahmin, both you and I,
have had hundreds of children
and hundreds of relatives devoured
at some point in the past.
I have understood the escape
from birth and death
so I do not sorrow, I do not weep,
and I am not tormented.”

“It certainly is wonderful, Vāseṭṭhi,
that you make such a statement!
Whose Dhamma have you learned,
that you speak in this way?”

“There is, brahmin, the Self-Enlightened one,
in the town of Mithilā,
who teaches the Dhamma to sentient beings
so they can remove all suffering.
Brahmin, once I heard the teaching
of non-acquisition from that Arahant,
I immediately understood the true Dhamma,
and dispelled the grief I had for my lost children.”
“I too will go
to the town of Mithilā.
Perhaps the Bhagavant
can set me free of all suffering.”
The brahmin saw the Buddha,
released, free from acquisitions.
The Sage gone beyond suffering
taught him the Dhamma:
suffering, the origin of suffering,
the overcoming of suffering,
and the Noble eightfold path
leading to the appeasement of suffering.
He immediately understood the true Dhamma,
and was happy to go forth.
On the third night,
Sujāta attained the three knowledges.
“Come here, charioteer,
take this chariot back,
wish my brahmin lady freedom from disease, and tell her:
‘The brahmin has now gone forth.
On the third night,

Sujāta attained the three knowledges.’”
So the charioteer, took the chariot
and a thousand,
and wishing the brahmin lady freedom from disease, he said:
“The brahmin has now gone forth.
On the third night,
Sujāta attained the three knowledges.”
“Charioteer, I give you this horse and carriage,
as well as the thousand
and a full bowl,
since I hear that the brahmin possesses the three knowledges.”
“Take this horse and carriage,
and the thousand, brahmin lady,
I too will go forth,
near this excellent and wise one.”
“An elephant, an ox, and a jeweled earring;
after giving up such opulent householder wealth,
your father went forth.
Sundarī, enjoy these possessions,
you are the heir in the family.”
“An elephant, an ox, and a jeweled earring,
after giving up such charming householder wealth,
my father went forth,
struck by grief after losing his child.
I too will go forth,
struck by grief after losing my brother.”
“May your intention and aspiration
Sundarī, come to fruition.
Lumps of leftover food for sustenance,

and robes made from discarded rags:
these are acquired
free from influences in the world to come.”
“Because of the training, Ayya,
I have purified my divine eye.
I know my past lives,
where I dwelt previously.
On account of your support, beautiful one,
Elder Sobhanā who beautifies the Sangha,
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.
Allow me, Ayya,
to go to Sāvatthī where I desire to be,
I will roar my lion’s roar,
in the presence of the foremost Buddha.”
“Sundarī, see the Teacher,
with golden colored skin,
tamer of the untamed,
the self-enlightened one, fearless everywhere.”
“See Sundarī coming,
released, free from acquisitions,
free from passion, unbound,
one who has done what was to be done, free from influences.”
“Having left Bārāṇasī,
coming near you,
Great Hero, your female disciple,
Sundarī, pays homage at your feet.
You are the Buddha, you are the Teacher,
I am your daughter, brahmin!

Legitimate, born from your mouth,

one who has done what was to be done, free from influences.”

“You are welcome here, lucky one,

you are indeed welcome here.

In this way the tamed ones come,

paying homage at the Teacher’s feet.

Free from passion, unbound,

they have done what was to be done, free from influences.”

The Elder Sundarī