

Sonā

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## [26. Soṇā<sup>1</sup>]

The Victor, Padumuttara,  
was a Master of Everything.  
[That] Leader arose in the world  
one hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [858]

Born then in a millionaire's clan,  
I was happy, honored,<sup>2</sup> held dear.  
Approaching the Excellent Sage,<sup>3</sup>  
I heard [his] words, [sweet as] honey. (2) [859]

I was overjoyed having heard  
the Victor praise the nun foremost  
of those who make a strong effort,  
doing service for the Teacher. (3) [860]

Then worshipping<sup>4</sup> the Sambuddha,  
I aspired to [attain] that place.  
The Great Hero approved [of that:]  
“Your aspiration will succeed. (4) [861]

In one hundred thousand aeons,  
arising in Okkāka's clan,  
the one whose name is Gotama  
will be the Teacher in the world. (5) [862]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,  
*Dhamma*'s legitimate offspring,  
the one known by the name Soṇā  
will be the Teacher's follower.” (6) [863]

At that time being overjoyed,  
as long as life, heart [full of] love,  
I attended on the Victor,  
the Guide, providing requisites. (7) [864]

Due to that karma done very well,  
with intention and [firm] resolve,  
discarding [my] human body,  
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (8) [865]

<sup>1</sup>“Dog,” or a kind of tree, Bodhi Tree of Paduma and Nārada Buddhas, according to BV. An historical nun, remembered as foremost among those who make energetic effort.

<sup>2</sup>readiṅg *pūjitā* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *sajjitā*, which however approximates the same meaning.

<sup>3</sup>*munivaraṅ*

<sup>4</sup>or “saluting”: *abhivādiya*

And now, in [my] final rebirth,  
I'm born in a millionaire's clan,  
rich, prosperous, very wealthy,  
in Śrāvastī, best of cities. (9) [866]

When I'd become a young woman,<sup>5</sup>  
having gone to a husband's clan,  
I was the mother of<sup>6</sup> ten sons,  
very handsome and distinguished. (10) [867]

All of them were comfortable,  
delightful in the people's eyes,  
brilliant even to enemies,  
needless to say, they're loved by<sup>7</sup> me. (11) [868]

Then, without my desiring it,<sup>8</sup>  
he who was my husband went forth  
in the Buddha's<sup>9</sup> dispensation,  
surrounded<sup>10</sup> by [those] sons<sup>11</sup> [of mine]. (12) [869]

[And] then, alone, I reflected:  
"Enough with [this] life [here] for me,<sup>12</sup>  
growing old and in misery,  
bereft of<sup>13</sup> [my] husband [and] sons. (13) [870]

I will also go to the place  
where [my] husband has [now] arrived."<sup>14</sup>  
After reflecting in that way,  
I went forth into homelessness. (14) [871]

And then the nuns left me alone  
in the retreat for Buddhist nuns,  
going off with the instruction:  
"heat up the water [while we're gone]." (15) [872]

Then bringing water I poured [it]  
into a small pot<sup>15</sup>[used for that].

<sup>5</sup>or "when I had attained puberty:" *yadā ca yobbanupetā*

<sup>6</sup>lit., "I gave birth to"

<sup>7</sup>lit., "of"

<sup>8</sup>*mayhaṅ akāmāya*, lit., "with my disliking [of it]"

<sup>9</sup>*devadevassa*, lit., "of the God of Gods" or "the Gods' God's"

<sup>10</sup>or "honored," "being placed in front of"

<sup>11</sup>*dasaputta*<sup>o</sup>, lit., "by the ten sons"

<sup>12</sup>or "I'm fed up with this existence:" *jīvitenālam atthu me*, lit., "Let it be enough with life for me"

<sup>13</sup>*jīnāya*, BJTS reads *cattāya* (with much the same meaning)

<sup>14</sup>reading *sampatto* with BJTS for PTS *pasuto* ("pursuing")

<sup>15</sup>*kumbhiyā culle*, lit., "into a small *kumbhi*-pot"

After placing [it on the hearth,]  
seated, I then kindled my heart. (16) [873]

Seeing the body's<sup>16</sup> diseased-ness,  
essence-less-ness, impermanence,  
throwing off all the defilements,  
I achieved [my] arahantship. (17) [874]

Then coming [back, those] Buddhist nuns,  
asked [me] about the hot water.  
Through concentration on the fire,<sup>17</sup>  
I quickly made the flame ignite. (18) [875]

Astonished, the [nuns] made that fact  
audible to the Best Victor.  
Hearing [it,] the Lord, overjoyed,  
spoke this verse [about me just then:] (19) [876]

“A life lived [only] for one day  
undertaken with strong effort,  
is better than a century  
lived inert, lacking energy.” (20) [877]

The Great Hero was [greatly] pleased  
by my exemplary conduct.  
That Great Sage said that I'm foremost  
of those who make a strong effort. (21) [878]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (22) [879]

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! (23) [880]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (24) [881]

Thus indeed Bhikkhunī Soṇā spoke these verses.

<sup>16</sup>*khandhe*, lit., “the [five] heaps” or aggregates that make up personal being, the constituent elements of the “I” trapped in *saṃsāra*.

<sup>17</sup>lit., “on the fire element”

The legend of Soṇā Therī is finished.