

# Sigālaka-mātā

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*Printed August 2022*

### [34. Sigāḷaka-mātā<sup>1</sup>]

The Victor, Padumuttara,  
was a Master of Everything.  
[That] Leader arose in the world  
one hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [1185]

I was born in Haṃsavatī,  
in a clan of ministers then,  
rich, prosperous, very wealthy,  
glistening with various gems. (2) [1186]

Going along with [my] father,  
surrounded by a multitude,  
having heard the Buddha's Teaching,  
I went forth into homelessness. (3) [1187]

After going forth I gave up  
evil karma with the body.  
I purified my way of life,  
except for poor conduct through speech. (4) [1188]

Pleased in the Buddha, Teaching and  
Assembly; eager, respectful,  
used to hearing the great Teaching;  
I'm greedy to see the Buddha. (5) [1189]

I then heard [of] a Buddhist nun,  
foremost among those freed by faith.<sup>2</sup>  
Aspiring to [attain] that place,  
I then fulfilled the three trainings.<sup>3</sup>  
The Rest for Those Seeking Pity,<sup>4</sup>  
the Well-Gone-One, thereupon said [this]: (6, 7a-b) [1190]<sup>5</sup>

“He<sup>6</sup> whose faith in the Thus-Gone-One  
is well-established, not shaking,

<sup>1</sup>“Sigāḷaka's Mother,” an historical nun, remembered as foremost among those who attained release through their faith. See DPPN II: 1133. She was the mother of Sigāla to whom the famous *Sigālovādasutta* was preached, upon which she also achieved fruits of the path.

<sup>2</sup>reading *saddhādhimuttānaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *aṅgavimuttānaṃ* (“freed in/by [their] limbs”)

<sup>3</sup>*tisso sikkhā*, i.e., training in morality (*sīla*), wisdom (*paññā*) and meditative states (*samādhi*)

<sup>4</sup>*karuṇānugatāsayo*, lit., “support for those come into/follow after/depend upon [his] pity (or compassion)”

<sup>5</sup>PTS presents the following speech of the Buddha in eight four-foot verses (6-13). BJTS presents the same speech arranged into seven verses ([1190-1196], the first and last of which it presents as six-footed verses). I follow the BJTS numbering here, indicating corresponding numbering in the PTS edition.

<sup>6</sup>the pronouns here are somewhat jarringly masculine ones, even though the subject is female

and whose morals<sup>7</sup> are beautiful,  
dear to noble people, and praised; (7c-d, 8a-b) [1191]

whose insight is upright and whose  
pleasure<sup>8</sup> is in the Assembly:  
it is said, “he is not wretched;”  
his life’s [considered] not useless. (8c-d, 9a-b) [1192]

Therefore, wise ones, commit [yourselves]  
to faith and to morality,  
to *Dhamma*-insight and pleasure;<sup>9</sup>  
pith of Buddha’s dispensation.” (9c-d, 10a-b) [1193]

Hearing that, being overjoyed,  
I questioned [him about] my wish.  
Then the Supreme,<sup>10</sup> Measureless One,<sup>11</sup>  
the Guide,<sup>12</sup> prophesied [in this way:] (10c-d, 11a-b) [1194]

“Lovely one, pleased in the Buddha,<sup>13</sup>  
you will receive that well-wished [place].  
In one hundred thousand aeons,  
arising in Okkāka’s clan,  
the one whose name is Gotama  
will be the Teacher in the world. (11c-d, 12) [1195]

Worthy heir to that one’s *Dhamma*,  
*Dhamma*’s legitimate offspring,  
she named Sigālaka’s Mother  
will be the Teacher’s follower.” (13) [1196]

Gladdened after having heard that,  
with a heart that was [full] of love,  
as long as life I then served the  
Victor, Guide, through [my] practices.<sup>14</sup> (14) [1197]

Due to that karma done very well,  
with intention and [firm] resolve,  
discarding [my] human body,  
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (15) [1198]

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<sup>7</sup>*sīlaṃ ca yassa*

<sup>8</sup>*pasādo*

<sup>9</sup>*pasādaṃ*

<sup>10</sup>*anomo*

<sup>11</sup>*amito*

<sup>12</sup>*vināyako*

<sup>13</sup>both of these adjectives are in the vocative: “O beautiful one, O you whose pleasure is in the Buddha”

<sup>14</sup>*paṭipattīhi*

And now, in [my] final rebirth,  
in Giribbaja,<sup>15</sup> best city,  
[I was] born to rich millionaires,<sup>16</sup>  
with a huge quantity of gems. (16) [1199]

My son was named Sigāḷaka,  
taking delight on the wrong road,  
slipped into the jungle of views,  
keen to worship the directions. (17) [1200]

Standing on the road, the Buddha,  
the Guide, advised him, seeing him  
coming toward the city praising  
the directions<sup>17</sup> with balls of food. (18) [1201]

When he was preaching<sup>18</sup> the *Dhamma*,  
there were amazing shrieks of joy;<sup>19</sup>  
twenty million<sup>20</sup> men [and] women  
gained insight into the Teaching.<sup>21</sup> (19) [1202]

Then having gone [into] the crowd,  
having heard the Well-Gone-One's speech,  
gaining the fruit of stream-entry,  
I went forth into homelessness. (20) [1203]

After not a very long time,  
hankering to see the Buddha,  
refining<sup>22</sup> mindfulness [through] him,  
I attained [my] arahantship. (21) [1204]

I'm going<sup>23</sup> every single day  
in order to see the Buddha.  
I'm dissatisfied looking at

<sup>15</sup> = Rājagaha, Rajgir, in Bihār

<sup>16</sup> lit., "born in a rich clan of millionaires"

<sup>17</sup> *nānādisā*, lit., "various directions" "the different directions"

<sup>18</sup> reading *desayato* (gen. abs. constr.) with BJTS (and PTS alt) for PTS *desayito*

<sup>19</sup> BJTS reads *ninādo* for PTS *panādo*, though BJTS alt. agrees with PTS. The term is singular so we might imagine some sort of shout in unison; I translate as "shrieks" (plural) given the context.

<sup>20</sup> *dvekoṭi*, lit., "two [times] ten million"

<sup>21</sup> lit., "there was an [achieving of] insight into the *Dhamma* of twenty million." *Dhammābhisamaya*, "insight into the *Dhamma*" or "entry into the *Dhamma*" or "comprehension of the *Dhamma*" or "penetration into the *Dhamma*" refers to the achievement of a firm grasp on the essentials of the Teaching. It is used as a technical term in the account of each Buddha in the *Bud-dhavaṃsa*, one among many categories of Buddha-achievement enumerated there.

<sup>22</sup> or "cultivating:" *bhāvetvā*

<sup>23</sup> reading *vajām' ahaṃ* with BJTS (cf. PTS alt. *vajām' ayaṃ*)

only [his] eye-pleasing body,<sup>24</sup> (22) [1205]

produced by all the perfections,  
excellent lair of good fortune,  
[his] body, strewn with all goodness:  
dissatisfied, I'm living<sup>25</sup> [there]. (23) [1206]

The Victor, pleased at that virtue,  
placed me in that foremost [place:]  
“The Mother of Sigālaka’s  
foremost among those freed by faith.”<sup>26</sup> (24) [1207]

I've mastered the superpowers  
[like] the “divine ear” element.  
I'm also a master, Great Sage,  
of the knowledge in others' hearts. (25) [1208]

I remember [my] former lives;  
[my] “divine eye” is purified.  
All the defilements are destroyed;  
[I] will not be reborn again. (26) [1209]

In meaning and in the Teaching,  
etymology and preaching,  
[this] knowledge of mine was produced  
in your presence, O Great Hero. (27) [1210]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (28) [1211]

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! (29) [1212]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (30) [1213]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Sigālaka-mātā spoke these verses.

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<sup>24</sup>reading *nayanānandanāṃ* with BJTS for PTS *yena 'va nandanāṃ* (“through which there is rejoicing”?)

<sup>25</sup>reading *vihāram' ahaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *bhayām' ahaṃ* (= *bhāyām' ahaṃ*, “I am fearing”?)

<sup>26</sup>reading *aggā saddhādhimuttikā* with BJTS for PTS *aggā saṅgavimuttikā* (“freed from clinging”), alt. *aṅgavimuttikā* (“freed in/by her] limbs”)

The legend of Sigālaka-mātā Therī<sup>27</sup> is finished

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<sup>27</sup>this is the BJTS reading; PTS reads bhikkhunī Sigālaka-mātā