

# Abhirūpanandā

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### [36. Abhirūpanandā<sup>1</sup>]

Ninety-one aeons ago the  
Leader, whose name was Vipassi,  
arose, the One Good to Look At,<sup>2</sup>  
the One with Eyes for Everything. (1) [1246]

I was then in Bandhumatī,  
born in a large clan, prosperous  
[and] rich; beautiful and held dear,  
I am worshipped<sup>3</sup> by<sup>4</sup> the people. (2) [1247]

Having approached the Great Hero,  
Vipassi, Leader of the World,  
hearing the Teaching, I went for  
refuge [in] the Leader of Men. (3) [1248]

Having been restrained in morals,  
when the Best Man<sup>5</sup> reached nirvana,  
I offered<sup>6</sup> a gold umbrella  
on top of the relic-stupa. (4) [1249]

I'm freely generous, moral  
as long as life; fallen from there,  
discarding [my] human body,  
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (5) [1250]

In ten ways I was outshining  
[all the] other [gods who lived there]:  
through shapes [and] sounds [and] fragrances,  
through tastes and the [things that I] touch, (6) [1251]

in terms of lifespan, complexion,  
happiness and famousness too  
[and] likewise through supreme power  
I shone, having attained [those ten]. (7) [1252]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,  
I'm born in Kapilavastu.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Very Beautiful Joy,” an historical nun, DPPN I:143. On these various “Joys” (of whom Malalasekera’s designations may need further work) see above, the first note to *Therī-apadāna* #25.

<sup>2</sup>*carunayano*

<sup>3</sup>reading *pūjanīyā* with BJTS for PTS *sajanassā*

<sup>4</sup>lit., of (gen. pl.), lit., “the people’s object to be worshipped”

<sup>5</sup>*nibbute ca naruttame*

<sup>6</sup>lit., “did *pūjā*”

<sup>7</sup>*kapilavhaye*, lit., “in the [city] named for Kapila”

I'm well-known [by the] name Nandā,  
the Śākya Khemaka's daughter. (8) [1253]

The nickname<sup>8</sup> "Very Beautiful"<sup>9</sup>  
indicated my loveliness;<sup>10</sup>  
when I had attained discretion,  
[I'm] adorned with gorgeous beauty.<sup>11</sup> (9) [1254]

Then there was a very big fight<sup>12</sup>  
over me<sup>13</sup> among the Śākyans.  
Then [my] father had me ordained,  
"don't let the Śākyas be destroyed."<sup>14</sup> (10) [1255]

Going forth like that, having heard  
that the Supreme Man hates<sup>15</sup> beauty,  
I did not approach [the Buddha,]  
bring proud about my beauty. (11) [1256]

Not even going for advice,  
I'm afraid to see the Buddha.  
Then the Victor had me led to  
his presence by means of a trick. (12) [1257]

Clever in the Path, [the Buddha]  
made three [different] women appear  
with forms like celestial nymphs:  
[one] young, [one] diseased, [the third] dead. (13) [1258]

Seeing them, very moved, I was  
freed from delighting in bodies.  
I stood [there,] weary of being,  
then the Leader said [this] to me: (14) [1259]

"Nandā, see this complex heap<sup>16</sup> as  
diseased, disgusting [and] putrid.

<sup>8</sup>reading *upapadaṃ* (in the sense of "epithet") with BJTS for PTS *uppādaṃ* ("birth" "omen"), which breaks meter.

<sup>9</sup>*abhirūpaṃ*

<sup>10</sup>reading *me kantisūcakaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *m'ekaṃ ti sūcakaṃ* (?)

<sup>11</sup>reading *rūpalāvaññābhusitā* with BJTS for PTS *rūpavañṇavibhusitā*, which however has much the same meaning.

<sup>12</sup>or debate: *vivādo*

<sup>13</sup>reading *tadā mamatthaṃ* ("for my sake," i.e., over who will marry me) with BJTS for PTS *Idaṃ me-m'atthe* ("this for the sake of me"?)

<sup>14</sup>i.e., everyone wants Nandā so badly that the end result will be the ruin of the whole clan; her father takes her out of the competition to avoid the conflict it will generate

<sup>15</sup>reading *rūpadessiṃ naruttamaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *rūpadassiṃ* (alt. *dassana*), "beautiful looking supreme man"

<sup>16</sup>*samussayaṃ*, "conglomeration," i.e., the body

It is oozing and it's dripping,  
the delight of foolish people. (15) [1260]

With one-pointed focus, steadfast,  
fix your mind on impurity.  
Just as is this, so too is that;  
just as is that, so too is this. (16) [1261]

Considering that in this way,  
industrious by night and day,  
you will see with your own wisdom,  
having turned away in disgust." (17) [1262]

Not delaying in that [purpose,]  
thinking<sup>17</sup> [it all] through thoroughly,  
I saw this body as it is,  
on the inside and the outside. (18) [1263]

Then I'm disgusted with bodies,  
and inwardly free of passion;  
not negligent, no longer yoked,  
at peace, and [I've reached] nirvana. (19) [1264]

I've mastered the superpowers  
[like] the "divine ear" element.  
I'm also a master, Great Sage,<sup>18</sup>  
of the knowledge in others' hearts. (20) [1265]

I remember [my] former lives;  
[my] "divine eye" is purified.  
All the defilements are destroyed;  
[I] will not be reborn again. (21) [1266]

In meaning and in the Teaching,  
etymology and preaching,  
[this] knowledge of mine was produced  
in your presence, O Great Hero. (22) [1267]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (23) [1268]

Being in Best Buddha's presence  
was a very good thing for me.

<sup>17</sup>or "dwelling" "practicing" "living" (BJTS: *viharantya'dha yoniso*)

<sup>18</sup>reading *mahāmune* (voc.) with BJTS for PTS *tadā muni* ("Then the Sage [nom.];" PTS alt. *tadā mune*, "Then, O Sage")

The three knowledges are attained;  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (24) [1269]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (25) [1270]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Abhirūpanandā spoke these verses.

The legend of Abhirūpanandā Therī<sup>19</sup> is finished

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<sup>19</sup>this is the BJTS reading for PTS *bhikkhunī Abhirūpanandā*