

Puṇṇikā

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[38. Puṇṇikā¹]

Gone forth in the dispensation
of the Blessed One, Vipassi,
and of Sikhi and Vessabhu,
the Sage Kakusandha [Buddha],
Konāgamana, Neutral One,
and of the Buddha Kassapa,
[I'm] a nun endowed with morals,
clever, with senses [well-]controlled. (1-2) [1287-1288]

Learned bearer of the Teaching,
asker of the Teaching's meaning,²
studier of, listener to
and worshipper of the Teaching, (3) [1289]

amidst the people I'm preaching
in the Victor's dispensation.
Because of [my] profound learning,
I despised kind associates.³ (4) [1290]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,
I am a water-jug slave-girl,
born in Śrāvasti, best city,
in Anāthapiṇḍi[ka]'s house.⁴ (5) [1291]

Gone [bearing] a load of water,
I saw an erudite brahmin,
[standing] in the water, chilly.
After seeing him I said this: (6) [1292]

“Bearing water I always go
down to the water in the cold,
scared with fear of the master's⁵ stick,
oppressed by fear of faults called out. (7) [1293]⁶

Of what are you afraid, brahmin?
Limbs shivering you always go

¹“Complete” “Full”. BJTS reads Puṇṇā; both spellings are correct, see DPPN II: 227-228.

²reading *dhammatthaparipucchikā*

³*pesalā atimaññisaṃ*. Cf. *Pesalā-atimaññanā Sutta* (S. i. 187f., see DPPN II: 245)

⁴he was a famous millionaire lay donor devoted to the Buddha. The hermitage he provided to the Buddha, in the Jeta Grove in Śrāvasti, was the site where many of the Buddha's sermons were originally preached. As is clear in the present *apadāna*, too, he was also kind-hearted and generous with his own slaves.

⁵lit., “the noble ladies' stick (or punishment)”

⁶= *Therīgāthā* v. 236

down to the water, so much cold
being experienced by you.” (8) [1294]⁷

“You certainly know, Puṇṇikā.
You are asking⁸ me who’s doing
wholesome karma and warding off⁹
karma with evil [consequence]. (9) [1295]¹⁰

Whether he is old is young,
one who performs evil karma,
just by sprinkling¹¹ himself with water,
is freed from [that] evil karma.” (10) [1296]¹²

I spoke a verse¹³ of *Dhamma* to
[him] coming out of the water.
Hearing that [he] was very moved;
gone forth, he was an arahant. (11) [1297]

When I was born in the slave clan,
[I] completed the full hundred.¹⁴
Therefore they named me “Completer,”¹⁵
and freed me from [my] slavery. (12) [1298]

Getting the millionaire’s consent,
I went forth into homelessness.
After not a very long time,
I attained [my] arahantship. (13) [1299]

I’ve mastered the superpowers
[like] the “divine ear” element.
I’m also a master, Great Sage,
of the knowledge in others’ hearts. (14) [1300]

I remember [my] former lives;
[my] “divine eye” is purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
[I] will not be reborn again. (15) [1301]

⁷ = *Therīgāthā* v. 237

⁸ reading *paripucchasi* with BJTS for PTS *paripucchiyan* (“you would ask?”)

⁹ reading *rundhantaṃ* with BJTS (and PTS alt) for PTS *niddhantaṃ* (“blown off” “purified” “thrown out”)

¹⁰ = *Therīgāthā* v. 238

¹¹ pronounce as two syllables for chanting

¹² = *Therīgāthā* v. 239

¹³ or foot, stanza, line, word: *padaṃ*

¹⁴ *pūrentī ūnakasataṃ*, lit., “[I am] completing (or filling, this is one of numerous plays on the meaning of her name) a deficient hundred,” i.e., “I was the 100th slave”

¹⁵ *puṇṇā ti nāmaṃ*

In meaning and in the Teaching,
 etymology and preaching,
 [this] knowledge of mine was produced
 in your presence, O Great Hero. (16) [1302]

Through meditation, very wise;
 through what has been heard, one's learned;
 but karma will not be destroyed¹⁶
 through the pride of those of high birth. (17) [1303]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
 all [new] existence is destroyed.
 Like elephants with broken chains,
 I am living without constraint. (18) [1304]

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! (19) [1305]

The four analytical modes,
 and these eight deliverances,
 six special knowledges mastered,
 [I have] done what the Buddha taught! (20) [1306]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Puṇṇikā spoke these verses.

The legend of Puṇṇikā Therī¹⁷ is finished

¹⁶PTS reads *panassati*, BJTS *vinassati*

¹⁷the BJTS reading, for PTS *bhikkhunī Puṇṇikā*