

# Ambapālī

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### [39. Ambapālī<sup>1</sup>]

The Great Sage was Phussa [Buddha,  
[like] a garland of speckled rays.<sup>2</sup>  
I was [that Buddha's own] sister,  
born in [Buddha's] kṣatriyan clan. (1) [1307]

Having listened to his Teaching,  
with a mind that was very clear,  
giving [him] a large alms-giving  
I aspired to achieve beauty. (2) [1308]

Thirty-one aeons in the past,<sup>3</sup>  
Sikhi, Chief Leader of the World,  
arose, the [Bright] Lamp of the World,  
the Three Worlds' Refuge, the Victor. (3) [1309]

I'm then born in a brahmin clan,  
in lovely Āruṇa City.  
Angered [about something,] I cursed  
a nun with liberated mind. (4) [1310]

Misbehaved like a prostitute,  
I dirtied the dispensation.<sup>4</sup>  
Having thus cursed [the nun] like that,  
because of that evil karma,  
I went to a horrific hell,  
full of terrible suffering.  
Fallen from there, [again] reborn  
human,<sup>5</sup> I was an ascetic.<sup>6</sup> (5-6) [1311-1312]

For ten thousand [different] lifetimes,  
I was fixed in prostitution;  
thus I was not freed from evil,  
as though [I'd] eaten<sup>7</sup> strong poison. (7) [1313]

In Kassapa's dispensation,<sup>8</sup>  
I practiced celibate [nunhood]<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>"Mango-Guarded", an historical nun, see DPPN I: 155-156

<sup>2</sup>*raṅsiphusitāvelo*, playing on/explaining the name "Phussa" (= speckled, cf. °*phusita*°)

<sup>3</sup>or "ago," or "hence," as elsewhere: *ito*

<sup>4</sup>*jinasāsanadūsikā*, lit., "defiling the Victor's dispensation"

<sup>5</sup>lit., "among humans"

<sup>6</sup>*tapassinī*, lit., "a female practitioner of austerities"

<sup>7</sup>*bhuttā...yathā*; BJTS reads *bhuvā*

<sup>8</sup>*kassape jinasāsane*, lit., "in the dispensation of the Victor, Kassapa [Buddha]"

<sup>9</sup>reading °*brahmacariyam* with BJTS for PTS °*brahmaceram*, lit., "the Brahma-life" "the holy life"

Due to that karma, I was born  
in the city of the thirty.<sup>10</sup> (8) [1314]

When [my] last rebirth was attained,  
come to be spontaneously,<sup>11</sup>  
I was born amidst mango boughs;  
therefore I was “Mango-Guarded.” (9) [1315]

Along with ten million beings,  
gone forth in the dispensation,<sup>12</sup>  
I attained the unshaking state,  
Buddha’s legitimate daughter. (10) [1316]

I’ve mastered the superpowers  
[like] the “divine ear” element.  
I’m also a master, Great Sage,<sup>13</sup>  
of the knowledge in others’ hearts. (11) [1317]

I remember [my] former lives;  
[my] “divine eye” is purified.  
All the defilements are destroyed;  
[I] will not be reborn again. (12) [1318]

In meaning and in the Teaching,  
etymology and preaching,  
[this] knowledge of mine was produced  
in your presence, O Great Hero. (13) [1319]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (14) [1320]

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! (15) [1321]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (16) [1322]

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“celibacy”

<sup>10</sup>i.e., the thirty-three gods.

<sup>11</sup>*ahosiṇ opapātikā*

<sup>12</sup>it. “I went forth in the Victor’s dispensation”

<sup>13</sup>reading *mahāmune* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *mahāmuni*, Great Sage.

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Ambapālī spoke these verses.

The legend of the bhikkhunī Ambapālī is finished