

# **Legends of the Buddhist Saints**

*Apadānapāli*

TRANSLATED BY  
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# Puṇṇikā

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### [38. Puṇṇikā<sup>1</sup>]

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,<sup>2</sup>  
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.<sup>3</sup> (4) [1290]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,  
I am a water-jug slave-girl,  
born in Śrāvastī, best city,  
in Anāthapiṇḍī[ka]'s house.<sup>4</sup> (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's<sup>5</sup> stick,  
oppressed by fear of faults called out. (7) [1293]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Complete" "Full". BJTS reads Puṇṇā; both spellings are correct, see DPPN II: 227-228.

<sup>2</sup>reading *dhammatthaparipucchikā*

<sup>3</sup>*pesalā atimaññaṇaṇa*. Cf. *Pesalā-atimaññaṇā Sutta* (S. i. 187f., see DPPN II: 245)

<sup>4</sup>he was a famous millionaire lay donor devoted to the Buddha. The hermitage he provided to the Buddha, in the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī, 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.

<sup>5</sup>lit., "the noble ladies' stick (or punishment)"

<sup>6</sup>= *Therīgāthā* v. 236

Of what are you afraid, brahmin?  
Limbs shivering you always go  
down to the water, so much cold  
being experienced by you.“ (8) [1294]<sup>7</sup>

“You certainly know, Puṇṇikā.  
You are asking<sup>8</sup> me who’s doing  
wholesome karma and warding off<sup>9</sup>  
karma with evil [consequence]. (9) [1295]<sup>10</sup>

Whether he is old is young,  
one who performs evil karma,  
just by sprinkling<sup>11</sup> himself with water,  
is freed from [that] evil karma.“ (10) [1296]<sup>12</sup>

I spoke a verse<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>  
Therefore they named me “Completer,”<sup>15</sup>  
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]

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<sup>7</sup> = *Therīgāthā* v. 237

<sup>8</sup> reading *paripucchchasi* with BJTS for PTS *paripucchchiyan* (“you would ask?”)

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

<sup>10</sup> = *Therīgāthā* v. 238

<sup>11</sup> pronounce as two syllables for chanting

<sup>12</sup> = *Therīgāthā* v. 239

<sup>13</sup> or foot, stanza, line, word: *padan*

<sup>14</sup> *pūrenti 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”

<sup>15</sup> *puṇṇā ti nāmaṃ*

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

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 destroyed<sup>16</sup>  
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 Therī<sup>17</sup> is finished

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<sup>16</sup>PTS reads *panassati*, BJTS *vinassati*

<sup>17</sup>the BJTS reading, for PTS *bhikkhunī Puṇṇikā*