

2

Kisā Gotamī

- (a) **Kisā Gotamī Sutta**, The Kisā Gotamī Discourse | S 5.3
 (b) **Kisā Gotamī Therī, gāthā**, The Verses of the Elder Nun Kisā Gotamī | Thī 213-223
 (c) ***Kisā Gotamī Therī Vatthu**, The Story of the Elder Nun Kisā Gotamī | AA 1:377-380
 (d) **Kisā Gotamī Vatthu**, The Story of Kisā Gotamī | DhA 8.13 + 20.11
 Theme: An early case of a psychological defence of denial
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2007, 2013

Based on Ch 9 of *The Buddha and His Disciples: Profiles and perspectives in self-discovery*, lecture series, The Singapore Buddhist Federation & The Buddhist Fellowship, 2002; rev & enl Piya Tan ©2004; Thī tr 2007.

1 Sutta notes

1.1 VERSIONS OF THE STORY

Our hurt starts to heal with a positive mental attitude of lovingkindness to oneself and to the perceived “oppressor,” be it a person (ourselves or other) or a situation. It is important to try to understand the “oppressor”: why he or she or it is “oppressive,” and do something positive about it.¹ We have to work towards some level of self-wisdom to do this.

The story of **Kisā Gotamī** (lean Gotamī) is very popular among followers of early Buddhism, especially the Theravāda. There are **4 versions of her story** in the Commentaries—one in the Aṅguttara Commentary,² one in the Therī, gāthā Commentary;³ the 3rd in the Saṃyutta Commentary⁴ (the shortest and least known), and the 4th (the best known) in the Dhammapada Commentary.⁵ They all differ in some important details but most of them centre on the same 2 closing verses. In all 4 versions, Gotamī is said to undergo protracted psychological **denial** over the loss of her only child.

1.2 KISĀ GOTAMĪ, being lean (*kisā*) in a society that extols fleshiness in womanly beauty, finds difficulty in being accepted in marriage. Once married, she seeks to win her status in her new family by having a child. When she loses her only child after a long-awaited pregnancy, she falls into the rut of denial, wandering about in search of a cure for her dead child. She meets the Buddha who tells her to find some mustard seeds from a house that has known no death. As she goes from house to house throughout the city, the message of impermanence and death is echoed and re-echoed into her being. She returns a sane convert to the Buddha and is ordained into the order.⁶

¹ See eg Thich Nhat Hanh’s poem “Please Call Me By My True Names” (in *Peace is Every Step*, London, 1991:123 f.)

² AA 1:377-380.

³ ThīA 174-182.

⁴ SA 1:190 f. Interestingly, the short version has a couple of worldly (Chaucerian) details in connection with Gotamī and the landowner’s son.

⁵ DhA 2:270-275; 3:431-434.

⁶ DhA 2:270-275; AA 791-796; ThīA 58.174-176; cf. Thī 213-223. See also Rogers, *Buddhaghosa’s Parables*, 10, 1870:98-102. E W Burlingame (tr), *Buddhist Parables*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922: 92-94 (AA tr). *Tibetan Tales—Derived from Indian Sources* (from Tibetan of Kah-Gyur) German tr F Anton von Schiefner. English tr of the German by W R S Ralston (London: George Routledge & Sons; New York: EP Dutton, 1926), 11:216-226. In the Tibetan version, certain episodes of the story of Paṭācārā (DhA 8.12) are incorporated into the story of Kisā Gotamī. Cf *Die Legende von Kisāgotamī. Eine literarhistorische Untersuchung*. Breslau: Von Jakob H Thiessen, 1880. See also **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (8.6.2).

A vital theme that runs through all versions of these **Kisā Gotamī** stories is her walk in search of a handful of mustard seeds that would revive her dead son. This action represents a *spiritual movement* away from her old suffering self towards a new liberated self. We see a similar movement in the Buddha's conversion of **Aṅgulimāla**, where he runs after the Buddha to kill him, but he could not catch up with the Buddha until he calls out to the Buddha. The ensuing dialogue marks the spiritual turning-point in Aṅgulimāla's life.⁷

1.3 COMMENTARIAL ACCOUNTS

1.3.1 The Aṅuttara Commentary story has more hagiographical details (such as her past life in Padum'uttara Buddha's time). **The Therī,gāthā Commentary** text is the longest, containing her Therī,gāthā and Apadāna texts, and their glosses. The narrative itself is about as short as **the Saṃyutta** version, which is the shortest account on Kisā Gotamī. **The Dhammapada Commentary** version is the most secular of the accounts and has the longest narrative, with the best-known ending, relating how Gotamī gains awakening by reflecting on the lamp-flames. [2.4]

1.3.2 The first three (AA, ThīA, SA) are the works of Buddhaghosa, while the last (DhA) is of unconfirmed authorship⁸ but attributed to one Culla Buddhaghosa (Deutero Buddhaghosa).⁹ In either case, it is said that they were translated into Pali from the ancient Sinhala Commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*), which were, in turn, said to be records of earlier traditions brought by the arhat Mahinda (Asoka's son) from India.¹⁰

1.3.3 Comparing the Kisā Gotamī stories from the Aṅuttara Commentary and the Dhammapada Commentary, such as in their respective styles, strongly suggests that the two Commentaries were authored by different individuals, or that the Dhammapada Commentary had more than one author. It is also possible that the DhA version was recorded in Sri Lanka around the 5th century.¹¹

2 Flooding

2.1 "Flooding," in Buddhist terms, is a therapeutic procedure in behaviour therapy in which a patient is confronted with what he fears or has trouble with, either imagined or real, under safe circumstances. Through controlled exposure, the client eventually becomes habituated to it, and the initial fear respons-

⁷ **Aṅgulimāla S** (M 86.5/2:98 f), SD 5.11.

⁸ Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, 1933:192-201 [German 1912:153]; DhA:B 1:59; cf Norman, "Pali Literature" in *A History of Indian Literature*, Wiesbaden, 7/2, 1983:127.

⁹ See Malalasekera, *Pali Literature of Ceylon*, 1928:9 ff & BC Law, *Pali Literature*, 1933:449 ff.

¹⁰ In his Intro to **Samanta,pāsādikā** (Vinaya Commentary), Buddhaghosa says that he not only translated the Commentaries of the Mahāvihāra from the Sinhala, but compared them with the Comys of other monasteries, abbreviated and freely revised them. **Burlingame** (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 38 1918:267 f) says that the tradition according to which the Aṭṭhakathā were tr from Pali into Sinhala, and back again into Pali by Buddhaghosa and others, is "unreliable and misleading," because Buddhaghosa and the compiler of DhA availed themselves of common Pali originals though independently of each other, and because both Dhammapāla and the compiler of JA copied from Buddhaghosa's Comys. "Nevertheless, it is possible, indeed probable, that the 5th century translators, though translating from the Singhalese, used available Pāli texts as well (eg of legends and tales)" (Winternitz, 1933: 190 n4).

¹¹ See Oskar von Hinuber, *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, 1996: §§262-269. Winternitz remarks that "the legend proves itself genuinely Indian, owing to the fact that it belongs to the type of 'consolatory stories' so familiar to us" (1933:193).

es or difficulties gradually diminish and disappear. As such, it is a form of **exposure therapy**.¹² In view of this, flooding as a psychotherapeutic technique is never taken lightly, as it might backfire if the therapist is unable to effectively guide the client, or does not clearly understand the client's mind works. The Buddha, however, knows exactly what he is doing because of his mind-reading powers.

Just as the Buddha heals Gotamī by making her face true reality through her own actions, a modern psychotherapist¹³ might use flooding to uncover the realities of her fixation on the dead child. In other words, before a client can abandon a fixation, he must first realize that it *is* a fixation. It is easier to deal with what we can actually see beyond any reasonable doubt.

2.2 For the sake of **healing Kisā Gotamī**, the Buddha instructs her to get **a handful of mustard seeds**. This is a very easy task which would help to take her mind away from being fixated on the negative idea of loss. The mustard seeds, however, must come from a house where no one has died. This is very unlikely, as families in the Buddha's time were, as a rule, extended families, and as such would certainly have experienced some deaths at some time. The therapy here is to reinforce the notion of true reality upon Gotamī that death is real and universal—and that she is not the only one with such a loss. This is a very practical example of the Buddhist healing notion of **“disowning the pain.”**¹⁴

Gotamī is unable to see the true reality of death and loss because she is deeply attached to her only child. She has invested all her emotions and hopes in the child whom she tragically and totally loses. This is like having the rug pulled away from under her feet, resulting in her falling from normality into a profound state of delusion—which makes her think that the child is only “sick,” and can somehow be healed.

2.3 This is the kind of painful reality that false religions and dissolute charlatans often exploit. Wrong advice and false consolation can also come from those who are devoted to an external agency (such as a God-idea) or magical beliefs, sublimating¹⁵ the victim's delusion and suffering, that is, unsolved, if not aggravated.

What the Buddha instructs Gotamī to do is effectively a self-therapy or personal healing. The Buddha only gives the instructions or prescription, but Gotamī herself undergoes the process of self-knowing and self-healing—coming to terms with herself—*through her own efforts*. Since the gloom and pain are self-inflicted, it is the self that can and must work with itself. This is the nature of the mind.

2.4 SEQUENCE OF TEXTS

2.4.1 This chapter on Kisā Gotamī begins with two canonical texts, one from the Saṃyutta, the other from the Therī, gāthā. These are followed by two versions of her story based on the Commentaries on the Aṅguttara, the Saṃyutta, the Therī, gāthā and the Dhammapada. The first story is a composite of related and overlapping accounts from various commentaries, and the second is the well-known version from the Dhammapada Commentary stories. [1.3]

¹² See eg G Corey, *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, 6th ed, 2001:269 f.

¹³ Such as ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy): see SD 43.1: The ACT therapeutic process.

¹⁴ See **Sall'atthēna S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5 (The 2 kinds of pains), & SD 26.9 (4.1.2); also Piya Tan, Reflection, “Don't own the pain,” R122 2010.

¹⁵ Sublimation is also one of the unconscious defence mechanisms, which prevents us from dealing directly with the real problem, giving only some kind of momentary “defence,” which may, in turn, lead to other difficulties. Sublimation is a rare defence that can also function *positively*, when it is channelled towards wholesome ends, such as a habitually violent person joins the police force to fight violent crime. See **Khaluṅka S** (A 8.14/4:190-195), SD 7.9; also SD 24.10b (2).

SD 43.2a	Kisā Gotamī Sutta	S 5.3
SD 43.2b	Kisā Gotamī Therī,gāthā	Thī 213-223
SD 43.2c	Kisā Gotamī Therī Vatthu	AA 1;377-380; SA 1:190f; ThīA 174-187 & ApThī 22/564-567; DhA 26.12/4:156 f
SD 43.2d	Kisā Gotamī Vatthu	DhA 8.13/2:270-275 & 20.11/3:431-434

2.4.2 The first canonical text is **the Kisā Gotamī Sutta** (S 5.3), detailing how she defeats Māra who appears to distract her from her meditation [SD 43.2a]. This account shows her as an arhat nun who has “gotten past the death of sons”; hence, she fears not Māra.

2.4.3 Then follows the second canonical text, **the Kisā Gotamī Therī,gāthā** (Thī 212-223), where the arhat Gotamī recounts her spiritual life up to her full awakening. This gives the gist of her personal loss and suffering, and how she overcomes them. [SD 43.2b]

2.4.4 The third text—**the Kisā Gotamī Therī Vatthu**—“the story of the nun Kisā Gotamī,” is a composite of commentarial accounts, with canonical verses from a late hagiographical biographical work on the saints, **the Apadāna**, forming an integrated account of her lay life. Some details, not mentioned in the main texts of the re-telling here, are found in the foot-notes at relevant points. [SD 43.2c]

2.4.5 The fourth and last text is **the Kisā Gotamī Vatthu**, “the story of Kisā Gotamī,” which combines the two Dhammapada Commentary accounts into a single story. This contains the Kisā Gotamī story we are most familiar with which is based on **Dhammapada 114**. [SD 43.2d]

— — —

SD 43.2a

The Kisā Gotamī Sutta

The Kisā Gotamī Discourse | S 5.3/1:129 f
Theme: Gotamī overcomes Māra

1 Originating in Sāvattthī.

Then, in the morning, **the nun Kisā Gotamī** dressed and, taking her bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī for alms.¹⁶

2 When she had gone on her almsround in Sāvattthī and returned from it, **[130]** after her meal, she went to the Andhavana for the day rest.

Having plunged into the Andhavana [Blind Men’s Forest], she sat down at the foot of a tree for the day rest.

3 Then, Māra the evil one, desiring to arouse fear, terror [quaking] and horror [horripilation], desiring to make her fall away from concentration, approached the nun Kisā Gotamī.

Having approached the nun Kisā Gotamī, he said this to her:

525 *Kim nu tvam hata,puttā va
ekam āsi rudam,mukhī*

Why now, when your son is dead,
do you sit here alone with tearful face?¹⁷

¹⁶ Comy here recounts the well-known story of her search for the mustard seeds she thought would “revive” her dead son (SA 1:190 f), told in greater detail in AA 1:377; DhA 8.13/2:270-275 & 20.11/3:431-434; ThīA 174-182.

*vanam ajjhoghatā ekā
purisam nu gavesasīti*

Having entered the woods all alone,
Are you on the lookout for a man?

4 Then, it occurred to the nun Kisā Gotamī, “Now who is this that uttered the verse? Is it a human or a non-human?”

5 Then, it occurred to the nun Kisā Gotamī,
“It is this Māra the evil one. He has uttered the verse, desiring to arouse fear, terror [quaking] and horror [horripilation], desiring to make me fall away from concentration!”

6 Then, the nun Gotamī, knowing that it is Māra the evil one, addressed him in verse:¹⁸

526 *Accantam hata, puttāmi
purisā etad antikā
na socāmi na rodāmi
na tam bhāyāmi āvuso*

I have gotten past the death of sons;
with this, the search for men has ended.
I do not sorrow, I do not weep,
nor do I fear you, friend.

527 *Sabbattha vihatā nandi
tamo-k, khandho padālito
jetvāna maccuno senam
viharāmi anāsavāti*

Destroyed is delight everywhere,
split apart is the mass of darkness,
having conquered Māra’s army,
I dwell influx-free.

7 Then, Māra the evil one, realizing, “The nun Kisā Gotamī knows me!” sad and disappointed, disappeared right there.

— evam —

Here, in **S 526**, Gotamī puns on the expression “gotten past the death of sons.” First, she accepts her child’s death; thus, ending her mourning. Having understood the Dharma, she has no further need of a son; hence, she has no more fear of losing one. Thus she lives fearless of Māra.

— — —

¹⁷ It is unlikely that Kisā Gotamī is really weeping, as she is now an arhat. Clearly, Māra is here teasing her, or recalling her sad past. In fact, this whole episode of Māra’s intrusion can be understood as a lesson in Gotamī’s past replaying itself in her mind’s eye, and how she, as an arhat, responds—for our benefit today.

¹⁸ Cf Thī 213-223, but they do not correspond.

SD 43.2b

Kisā Gotamī Therī,gāthā

The Verses of the Elder Nun Kisā Gotamī | Thī 213-223

213 *Kalyāṇa,mittatā muninā
lokaṃ ādissa vaṇṇitā,
kalyāṇa,mitte bhajamāno
api bālo paṇḍito assa*

Spiritual friendship¹⁹ has been praised [explained]
by the sage in regard to the world:
resorting to spiritual friends
even the foolish would be wise.²⁰

214 *Bhajitabbā sappurisā
paññā tathā vaḍḍhati²² bhajato naṃ,²³
bhajamāno []²⁴ sappurise
sabbehi'pi dukkhehi pamucceyya.²⁵*

True individuals are to be associated with,²¹
associating thus, wisdom grows in him.
Resorting to true individuals,
one would be freed from all sufferings.

215 *Dukkhañ ca²⁶ vijāneyya dukkhassa
ca samudayaṃ nirodham²⁷
Aṭṭhaṅgikañ ca maggam
cattāri'pi ariya,saccāni [ca]²⁸*

One should know suffering, and suffering's
arising, and its ending,
and the eightfold path—
and the four noble truths, too.²⁹ **[144]**

[Spoken by a yakshini:]³⁰

216 *Dukkho itthi,bhāvo akkhāto
purisa,damma,sārathinā,*

Being a woman has been said to be painful
by the caravan leader of persons to be tamed.³¹

¹⁹ Comy takes this as a bahuvrihi: “the state of having a spiritual friend” (ThaA 177). In full: “a spiritual friend, good companion, good comrade” (*kalyāṇa,mitta kalyāṇa,sahāya kalyāṇa,sampavaṇka*): **D 33**,3.3(1)/3:267 (the 10 *nātha,karaṇa.dhamma*), **34**,2.3(1)/3:290 (the 10 *bahu,kāra.dhamma*); **S 3.4**,7/1:83, **3.18**,5+6+10+11/1:87 f, **45.2**,4+5/5:2 f, **45.3**,3-5/5:3 f; **A 3.27**/1:127, **5.47**,2/3:422, **8.54**,9/4:284, **8.55**,9/4:288, **8.57**,2/4:290, **9.1**,3+58/5:351-353, **9.3**,13/4:357 f, **10.17**,4/5:24 (*dhamma nātha,karaṇa*), **10.18**,4/5:26 (*dhamma nātha,karaṇa*), **10.50**,5/5:90, **10.97**,4/5:199, **11.15**,4/5:338, **11.15**,13/5:341; **U 4.1**/36 f; **Pug 3.14**/37. On spiritual friendship (*kalyāṇa,mittatā*), see **Spiritual friendship**, SD 34.1; on its accomplishment (*sampadā*), see SD 4.1 (4.2.1) & **Dīgha,jānu S** (A 8.54), SD 5.10. On the 5 conditions for spiritual maturity (*pañca dhamma paripakkāya*), see **Meghiya S** (A 9.3 ≈ U 4.1) & SD 34.2 (2.1.1).

²⁰ On the 3 sentiments of this verse, cf Thī 75c.

²¹ Cf **Mahā Maṅgala S** (Sn 2.4 = Khp 5): “Associating with the wise ... this is a supreme blessing” (*paṇḍitānañ ca sevānā ... etam maṅgalam uttamam*) (Sn 2.4/258-269/46 f = Khp 5/2 f). Here *paṇḍita* is clearly a synonym for *sappurisa*. On the true individual (*sappurisa*), see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 29.6 & **Bāla Paṇḍita S** (M 129,27-50), SD 2.22; see also **D 33**,2.2(6)/3:252, **34**,1.8(7)/3:283; **M 110**,14-24/3:23 f; **A 7.64**/4:113, **8.38**/4:144.

²² Be Ce Se so; Ee *pavaḍḍhati*. On philological n, see Tha:N 100 n214.

²³ Be Ce Se *bhajantānaṃ*; Ce so.

²⁴ Only Se adds *koci khattiy'ādiko*, “such as any kshatriya ...”.

²⁵ Be Ce so; Ee *mucceyya*; Ke Se *c'eva mocaye*: see Tha:Ee ed L Alsdorf, App II 1966:238 fn.

²⁶ Be Ce Ee so; Se *dukkhañ c'eva*.

²⁷ This and next lines:

²⁸ Be Ce so; Ee *cattāri ariya,saccāni*; Se has *ca*.

²⁹ Alt tr: These are the four noble truths, too.

³⁰ Comy says that a yakshini (female nature spirit), recalling her sufferings in previous existences, spoke these 2 verses (ThīA 178).

³¹ More fully, “peerless guide of persons to be tamed” (*anuttaro purisa,damma,sārathī*), the 6th of the Buddha's 9 qualities (eg S 1:219,31): see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7 esp (3.6).

*Sapattikam pi [hi]³² dukkham
appekaccā³³ sakim vijātāyo*

Being a co-wife, too, is suffering:
some, having given birth but once,

217 *Galake³⁴ api kantanti³⁵
sukhumāliniyo visāni khādanti,
Jana,māraka,majjha,gatā³⁶
ubho'pi vyasanāni anubhonti*

even slit their throats;
the delicate women take poisons.
Those who have entered the womb are people-killers.³⁷
Both³⁸ meet with disasters, too.

[The elder nun Kisā Gotamī, quoting the elder nun Paṭācārā:]³⁹

218 *Upavijaññā gacchantī
addasāham patim matam
Pantham hi vijāyitvāna
appattā'va sakam gharam⁴⁰*

While walking, about to give birth,
my husband dead saw I,
having given birth on a path,
not even reached my own house.

219 *Dve puttā kāla,katā
patī ca panthe mato kapaṇikāya,
Mātā pitā ca bhātā
ḍayhanti ca eka,cita,kāyam*

Two sons dead, and
my husband miserably dead, too, on the path.
Mother, father and brother, too,
were burning on the same pyre.

[The elder nun Kisā Gotamī, recalling the sufferings of Paṭācārā:]⁴¹

220 *Khīṇa,kulīne⁴² kapaṇe
anubhūtam te dukkham⁴⁴ aparimāṇam
Assu ca te pavattam [hi]⁴⁵
bahūni jāti,sahassāni*

O miserable woman,⁴³ with family destroyed,
you've suffered immeasurable pain!
And your tears had fallen
for many thousands of births!⁴⁶

³² Be Ee Se *sapattikam pi hi*; Ce omits *hi*.

³³ Lines cd: Be Ce so. Ee *nirodhañ ca aṭṭhaṅgika maggam*; Se *nirodh'aṭṭhaṅgika,maggam*.

³⁴ Be Ce Se so; Ee *gale*.

³⁵ Be Ce *api kantanti*; Ee Se *apakantanti*.

³⁶ Comy resolves this as *-māraka,majjha,gatā*, “the killer that has entered the middle (the womb),” but it can also be resolved as *-mārakam-ajjha,gatā*, “the killer that has entered into ... ” *Jana,māraka*, “people-killer” refers to defilements (*kilesa*) (ThīA 178).

³⁷ Comy: A wrongly positioned foetus, eg, would kill the woman; hence, the foetus is a killer of womankind (ThaA 178).

³⁸ Comy says that “both” here refers to the foetus and the pregnant woman. Some say that defilements (*kilesa*) are the “killers” and the “two” are the mother and father, who on account of their fever of passions would continue falling into suffering states, which prob refers to post-natal depression (ThīA 178). It is also possible that “both” here also refers to the 2 kinds of suicides (Thī:N 101).

³⁹ Comy notes that these 2 verses refer to **Paṭācārā**, when she is unhinged by grief, and these verses were spoken by her to show the dangers of womanhood: this also reflects Gotamī's own condition (ThaA 178 f). For Paṭācārā's verses, see Thī 112-116 (SD 43.3).

⁴⁰ Be Ce so; Ee Se *geham*.

⁴¹ ThīA 178. It is interesting to see how Kisā Gotamī recites what appear to be Pāṭācārā's verses, but none of them are found in **Pāṭācārā Thī**. This shows that the events of Pāṭācārā's tragedy occur before those Kisā Gotamī, and that Gotamī is a monastic junior to Paṭācārā.

⁴² Ee so; Be Ce Se *khīṇa,kulamhi*.

⁴³ Here Kisā Gotamī is addressing herself in a soliloquy.

⁴⁴ Be *dukham*; Ce Ee Se so.

⁴⁵ Only in Se.

- 221** *Vasitā passim̄ susāna,majjhe⁴⁷
atho'pi khāditāni putta,mamsāni
Hata,kulikā⁵⁰ sabba,garahitā
mata,patikā amataṃ adhigacchi* Living in the heart of a charnel ground I saw,⁴⁸
then, my own sons' flesh_devoured.⁴⁹
With family destroyed, despised by all,
husband dead, I gained the death-free!⁵¹
- 222** *Bhāvito me maggo
ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko⁵² amata,gāmi.⁵³
Nibbānaṃ sacchi,kataṃ
dhamm'ādāsaṃ apekkhi'haṃ⁵⁴* Cultivated by me is the path
noble and eightfold, leading to the death-free.
nirvana has been realized!
I've looked into the Dharma mirror.
- 223** *Aham-amhi kanta,sallā
ohita,bhārā kataṃ hi⁵⁵ karaṇiyam̄,
Kisā gotamī⁵⁶ therī
suvimutta,cittā⁵⁷ imam̄ bhaṇṭi⁵⁸* I've removed my dart,
laid down the burden, done what is to be done.
The elder nun Kisā Gotamī,
with well-liberated mind, said this.

— evaṃ —

⁴⁶ For the idea of tears being shed for thousands of births, see **Tha 495-497** and cf **Anamatagga Saṃy** (S 15/-2:178-193).

⁴⁷ Be Ce omit *passim̄*; Ee Se *passim̄ taṃ susāna,majjhe*.

⁴⁸ Ee Se *passim̄*: see prec n.

⁴⁹ Comy gives a dramatic account saying that this line refers to her having been reborn there (in past lives) as a female dog or female jackal feeding on human carcasses, or as a tiger, leopard or cat, eating the flesh of her own dead children (ThaA 179). However, from the verses themselves, we can surmise that Kisā Gotamī is prob referring to her own observations of animals feeding on the carcasses when she goes there to dispose of her own child's remains.

⁵⁰ Be Ee Se so; Ce *hata,kulukā*.

⁵¹ Comy notes that through spiritual friendship (viz, meeting with the Buddha) by chance, she attains nirvana, the death-free (ThīA 179).

⁵² Be Ce Ee so; Se *ariyo'aṭṭhaṅgiko*.

⁵³ Be Ee Se so; Ce *asaka,gāmi*: a + saka, "not belonging to oneself" (CPD).

⁵⁴ Be *avekkhiṃ'ham*; Ce Ee so; Se *avekkhi'haṃ*.

⁵⁵ Be Ce so; Ee Se has *me* instead.

⁵⁶ Be Ee so; Ce *kisajā gotamī*.

⁵⁷ Be Ce *vimutti,cittā*; Ee Se so.

⁵⁸ Be Ee Se so: *bhaṇi iti*; Ce *bhaṇṭi*;

SD 43.2c

Kisā Gotamī Therī Vatthu

The Story of the Elder Nun Kisā Gotamī (composite)
 AA 1:377-380,⁵⁹ SA 1:190 f; ThīA 174-182; DhA 26.12/4:156 f⁶⁰
 Commentarial glosses omitted

1 Gotamī's spiritual aspiration

1.1 Her name was Gotamī, but since she was of weak disposition [she was weak and petite] (*kisā,-dhātu,kattā*)⁶¹ [of little flesh and blood,]⁶² [of thin build],⁶³ she was called **Kisā Gotamī**.

1.2 During the time of Padum'uttara Buddha,⁶⁴ she was born in a family in Hamsa,vatī, where people heard the Buddha teaching the Dharma. One day, [when she reached the age of discretion,]⁶⁵ having seen the Teacher establishing a nun as the foremost of those (nuns) who wore coarse robes, Gotamī, too, did acts of merit, aspiring to the position.⁶⁶

1.3 For a hundred thousand world cycles, she was reborn [wandered in samsara] amongst the devas and humans. After that, when the Buddha had arisen in this world, she was born into a destitute family. When she came of age, she married into another family.⁶⁷ There they treated her (badly) as “the daughter from the destitute family.”⁶⁸

2 Gotamī and the landowner's son⁶⁹

2.2 It is said that once in Savatthī, a family's wealth of 80 million all turned into charcoal. Not discarding what has turned into charcoal, the landowner thought,
 “Surely, there will be someone with merit, and by that merit, this will be restored to its original state.”

He (collected the charcoal and) filled the silver and gold pots full, set them up in his shop and sat down near them.

⁵⁹ For Eng tr, see Bode 1893.

⁶⁰ At DhA 26.12/4:156, the Buddha speaks to Sakka in praise of Kisā Gotamī's wearing rag-robes. Here, I have freely used Burlingame's tr (1921, DhA:B 3:285 f), giving my own rendition where I think his otherwise excellent tr is either outmoded or unclear, and filling in any omission.

⁶¹ *Dhātu* here lit tr as “humour” (Vism 485).

⁶² *Appa,maṃsa,lohitaṭāya*, SA 1:190.

⁶³ *Kisa,sarīratāya*, ThīA 174.

⁶⁴ The 10th of the 24 Buddhas before our Gotama Buddha (B 11/34-36; BA 190-198).

⁶⁵ ThīA 174.

⁶⁶ A 1:25.

⁶⁷ At this point, **SA 1:190** inserts the episode of the landowner (*kuṭumbika*) whose wealth of 80 million (*asīti,koṭi,-dhanam*) turned into charcoal. Apparently, Buddhaghosa here borrows from DhA: see n9 above on Samanta,pāsā-dikā. The SA version gives more details of Gotamī before her awakening and only briefly mentions events leading up to her arhathood.

⁶⁸ *Duggata,kulassa dhītā*.

⁶⁹ This section is from SA 1:190 f.

2.3 Now a daughter from a destitute family, taking with her half a masaka [small coin] thought,
“I will get wood and vegetable.”

2.4 As she was going along the street, she saw the landowner, and said,
“There is so much wealth in your shop; how much more there must be in your house!”

2.5 “What do you see, woman, that makes you speak thus?”
“This silver and gold.”

2.6 “This must be the person of merit,” he thought, and asked her about her background. Having set
in order the goods in his shop, he went to see her parents, and said,

“There is in our house a boy who has come of age. Give this girl to him.”

2.7 “Sir, what kind of joke are you playing on the poor?”
“Friendly intimacy only comes with hardship. Take her. Let her be the landlady!”
He brought her home (to marry the boy).

3 Gotamī’s denial

3.1 In due course,⁷⁰ when she gave birth to a son, they accorded her proper respect. But when the
boy was old enough to run about and play, he died. Sorrow arose in her. [She went mad with grief.]⁷¹

3.2 She thought [on account of her being mad with grief]:⁷²

“I was denied wealth and honour⁷³ in this house, but since the birth of my son, I have received
respect. These folk may even seek to cast my son away.”

3.3 Taking her son on her hip, she went from door to door, saying,
“Give me medicine for my son!”

3.4 Wherever she went, people she met told her,
“We have never heard of any medicine for the dead.”

So saying, they clapped their hands and laughed. She simply knew not what they had said.

⁷⁰ SA 1:190 f concludes the rest of the story thus:

On account of living intimately (*saṃvāsam anvāya*) (with the landlord’s son), she bore a son. When the son was
able to run around on his own feet, he died.

Having gone to a great family, misfortune arose in the family, she thought, “This loss of a son has come upon
me!”

As a result of the profound sorrow arising from her loss, she prevented the son’s funeral rites, took the dead
body and wandered about aimlessly in the city.

One day, she walked into the great road of the Buddha, the One with the Ten Powers, and before him, she said,
“Blessed One, give me medicine for the sake of my son’s health.”

“Go into Sāvattihī, and look around until you find a house where no one has died. Ask for mustard seeds from
them. That would be the medicine for your son.”

She entered the city went to the neighbouring houses as instructed by the Blessed One, wandering about, asking
for mustard seeds from house to house.

“But this, they say, is the nature of things for everyone, not just for my son.”

Leaving the corpse in the mortuary (? *sālāyama*), she asked for the going forth.

“Let her go forth!” said the Teacher, and sent her to the nuns’ quarters. In the tonsure hall she attained arhat-
hood.

⁷¹ *Sok’ummādo uppajji*, ThīA 174.

⁷² ThīA 175.

⁷³ *Hata,lābha,sakkāra*, perhaps also contextually translatable as “failed to receive honour.”

4 The wise man

4.1 Now a wise person, seeing her, thought,

“This woman must have been driven out of her mind by the sorrow for her son. But as regards the medicine for her, there is no one else who would know, except the One with the Ten Powers.”⁷⁴

4.2 So he said to her,

“Woman, as for the medicine for your son, there is no one else who knows, except the One with the Ten Powers, the foremost individual in the world with its devas, who resides at the vihara before us.⁷⁵ Go there and ask him.”

4.3 She thought, “This person speaks the truth.”

Taking her child, she went to the Tathāgata who at that time was seated on the Buddha-seat.

4.4 Standing at the edge of the congregation, she said,

“Blessed One, give me medicine for my son.”

5 The mustard seeds

5.1 The Teacher, seeing her spiritual disposition [her readiness for conversion], said,

“You have done well, Gotamī, in coming here for the medicine. Go into the city, bent on your goal,⁷⁶ walk around the whole city, and from whichever house where no one has died fetch mustard seeds.”

“Very well, bhante,” she said.

5.2 With joyful heart, she entered the city, and at the very first house, said,

“The One with the Ten Powers bids me fetch mustard seeds as medicine for my son. Give me mustard seeds!”

“Here! Gotamī,” they said, and brought it and gave to her.

5.3 “I cannot just take it like that. Has anyone died in this house?”

“What are you saying, Gotamī! It is impossible to count the dead here.”

“In that case, alas, I cannot take it. The One with the Ten Powers tells me that I cannot take mustard seeds from a house where anyone has died.”

5.4 In the same way, [she went to the second house;]⁷⁷ she went to the third house.

⁷⁴ “The One with the Ten Powers,” *dasa,bala* or more fully *dasa,bala,ñāṇa*. The 10 powers are: (1) knowledge of the possible and the impossible (*thānāthāna ñāṇa*), such as in the analysis of karma (M 57, 135, 136), and the possibility regarding the realm, circumstances, time and effort, all of which would impede or reinforce the result; and also the cause of karma, etc; (2) knowledge of the result of karma (*kamma,vipāka ñāṇa*); (3) knowledge of the way leading to all destinies and goals (*sabbattha,gāminī,paṭipadā*); (4) knowledge of the world with its various elements (*nānā,dhātu ñāṇa*) (M 115.4-9/3:62 f); (5) knowledge of the different dispositions of beings (*nānādhimuttika ñāṇa*); (6) knowledge of the maturity level of beings in terms of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom (*indriya,paropariyatta ñāṇa*) (Vbh §814-827); (7) knowledge of the defilements, cleansing and emergence in the cases of the meditations, liberations, concentrations and attainments (*jhān’ādi,sāṅkiles’ādi ñāṇa*); (8) knowledge of the recollection of (his own) past lives (*pubbe,nivāsānussati ñāṇa*); (9) knowledge of the passing away and arising of beings (according to their karma) (*cutūpapāta ñāṇa*); (10) knowledge of the destruction of the mental defilements (*āsava-k,khaya ñāṇa*) (M 1:69; A 5:33; Vbh 336). See **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12,9-20/1:69-71) for details.

⁷⁵ “At the vihara before us,” *dhura,vihāre*. The word “vihara” is found in the Merriam-Webster Third New International Dictionary.

⁷⁶ “Bent on your goal,” *koṭito paṭṭhāya*.

⁷⁷ ThīA 175 mentions both the second and third houses: *dutiyaṃ tatiyaṃ gharaṃ gantvā*. From this omission, it is likely that Buddhaghosa wrote the ThīA version first, and in assuming the details, inadvertently fails to mention “the second house” in the AA version. Of course, the reverse is also possible, that he made the omission first, but then rectified it in the ThīA later.

[Then, by the Buddha's power, she was free of madness, her mind restored.]⁷⁸

5.5 Then, she thought,

"This whole city must surely be like this! In his goodness and compassion, this must have been seen by the Buddha!"

6 Gotamī awakes to the truth

6.1 Overcome with **samvega**,⁷⁹ she went outside of the city, heading for the charnel-ground, holding her son in her arms. Then, she said,

"Dear little son, I thought that you alone have been overtaken by this thing called death. But you are not the only one death has overtaken. This is the law common to all mankind."⁸⁰

6.2 So saying, she left her son in the charnel-ground.

Then, she uttered the stanza:

6.3 This is not the nature [dharma] of a village, nor the nature of the market-town,
Nor even the nature of any single family—
But of all the world with its devas,
This indeed is the only truth [dharma]: that of impermanence. (Ap 22.28/566)

6.4 Now, having said this, she went before the Teacher. Then, the Teacher said to her,
"Gotamī, did you get the mustard seeds?"

6.5 "Bhante, I am done with the business of the mustard seeds! Only give me refuge [support]."⁸¹

6.6 Then, the Teacher uttered to her this stanza in **the Dhammapada**:

The man who is intoxicated by sons and cattle, whose mind is distracted,
death carries him off, like a great flood sweeps away a sleeping village. (Dh 287)

6.7 At the end of (the utterance of) the stanza, even as she stood right there, she became a **stream-winner**.

6.8 She requested **the going-forth** and the Teacher consented to her going-forth.

6.9 She thrice circumambulated the Teacher, keeping him to her right, saluted him, and, having gone to the nuns' quarters, received the going forth and higher ordination.

Not long after her ordination, practising meditation⁸² by way of wise attention, she cultivated insight.

⁷⁸ ThīA 175.

⁷⁹ "Samvega" (*saṃvega*), "sense of urgency," is closely associated with spiritual "seeing" (*dassana*), a close encounter with reality. The *Pali-English Dictionary* defines it as "agitation, fear, anxiety; thrill, religious emotion (caused by contemplation of the miseries of the world)." It is one of the most powerful of Buddhist terms that refers to a sort of spiritual crisis that results from directly perceiving the truth. For a lay person, this usually results in disillusionment with worldly life, often leading to renunciation, whereas in the case of a monastic, it urges him to exert more energy in spiritual practice until the goal is attained. For a discussion, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7f).

⁸⁰ This is an example of an apostrophe, ie, addressing an absent or imagined audience, a sort of soliloquy.

⁸¹ *Niṭṭhitaṃ bhante siddhatthakena kammarā, patiṭṭhaṃ pana me dethāti āha*. "Refuge [support]," *patiṭṭhaṃ*, 2 sg acc of *patiṭṭhā*, from *pati* + √STHĀ, to stand. Cf Ved *pratiṣṭhā*, "support, foundation, resting place, stay, ground, help, also (spiritual) helper, support for salvation": S 1:1 (*ap*~), 2:65, 3:53; Sn 173; Dh 332; J 1:149, 4:20; Miln 302; DhsA 261; VvA 138; PvA 53, 60 (= *dīpa*, "island"), 87 (= *dīpa*), 141 (*su*~), 174 (*su*~ = *dīpa*).

⁸² "Working on it," *kammarā karoti*.

6.10 Then, the Teacher, appearing in a radiant form (before her), uttered this stanza,⁸³

And if anyone were to live for a hundred years, not seeing the death-free state,
it is better living for just a day, seeing the death-free state. (Dh 114)

6.11 At the conclusion of the teaching, Kisā Gotamī attained **arhathood**.

And becoming the most excellent (*param-ukkaṭṭhā*) of those resorting to the requisites,⁸⁴ she wandered about accomplished in coarse triple robes.⁸⁵

6.12 On another occasion, the Teacher, seated in Jeta’s Grove and assigning ranks (of those foremost) amongst the nuns, established her as the foremost amongst the sisters (*therī*) who are **wearers of coarse triple robes**.

6.13 [And she, reflecting on what great things she had won, uttered these stanzas before the Teacher, in praise of friendship with the Master (*mukha*): **Thī 213-223**.]⁸⁶ [SD 43.2b]

— — —

SD 43.2d

Kisā Gotamī Vatthu

The Story of Kisā Gotamī | DhA 8.13/2:270-275 & 20.11/3:431-433⁸⁷
commentarial glosses omitted

1 The prophecy

1.1 It is said that once the wealth of a seth [*seṭṭhī*, wealthy entrepreneur] worth 40 million suddenly turned into charcoal.⁸⁸ The seth, overcome with grief, refused to eat and simply lay down on his bed.

1.2 One day, a companion visited his house and asked,
“Sir, why are you sorrowful?”

1.3 Having heard the merchant’s story, he said,
“Sir, sorrow not. [2:271] I know a way out of the difficulty, why don’t you follow it!”

1.4 “Well, sir, what should I do?”

“Spread a reed mat in your shop, pile up the charcoal on it, and sit down as if you were selling it.

Passers-by will say thus,

‘Other people would sell such things as cloth, oil, honey, or molasses, but you are sitting here selling charcoal.’

Then, you should say, ‘If I cannot sell what is mine, what could I do?’

⁸³ *Atha’ssā satthā imāṃ obhāsa, gātham āha*, lit “Then the Teacher uttered this radiance-verse.”

⁸⁴ **The 8 requisites of a monastic** (*aṭṭha, parikkhāra*) are: the three robes, a bowl, a razor, a needle and thread, a girdle and a water-strainer (DA 1:206 ff; J 1:165, 4:342, 5:254; DhA 2:61).

⁸⁵ Resorting to only the triple robes (*ti, cīvarik’āṅga*) is one of the 13 ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*): for the others, see **Bakkula S** (M 124), SD 3.15 (1) & **Aṅgulimāla S** (M 86), SD 5.11 (1).

⁸⁶ It is clear that Gotamī’s Therī, gāthā (Thī 218 f), referring to the loss of “two sons and a husband dead along the path,” correctly belongs to Paṭācārā’s Therī, gāthā.

⁸⁷ For parallels, see Aṅuttara Comy (JRAS 1893:791-791); ThīA 63/174-176. In ThīA 218 f and the Tib version, certain episodes of the Paṭācāra story (DhA 8.12) are incorporated into the Kosā Gotamī. For other refs, see DhA:B 2:257 n1.

⁸⁸ This episode of wealth turning into charcoal is also found at SA 1:190 f. See W Pruitt (tr), *Commentary on the Verses*, Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1998:222-224.

1.5 But again, someone might say,
'Other people would sell such things as cloth, oil, honey, or molasses, but you are sitting here selling money [silver and gold].'

1.6 Then, you should say, 'Where is there any money?'

When he or she says, 'There it is!' you must say, 'Bring it to me!'

1.7 The person will bring you a handful of charcoal. Take it into your hands, and it will turn into money.

1.8 Now if your customer were a maiden, marry her to your son, turn over the forty million to her, and you should live on what she gives you.

1.9 But if the person were a youth, marry him to your daughter as soon as she reaches marriageable age, turn over the forty million to him, and you should live on what he gives you."

1.10 "A good plan, indeed!" said the seth. [272]

So, he piled up the charcoal in his shop, and sat down as if he were selling it. People who came along said thus,

'Other people would sell such things as cloth, oil, honey, or molasses, but you are sitting here selling charcoal.'

Then, he said, 'If I cannot sell what is mine, what could I do?'

2 Kisā Gotamī

2.1 Now, there was a certain maiden, the daughter of a poverty-stricken family. Her name was Gotamī, but by reason of the leanness of her body she was generally known as **Kisā Gotamī** [Lean Gotamī]. She was running an errand, and came to the shop door.

2.2 She said this,

"My good sir, other people would sell such things as cloth, oil, honey, or molasses, but you are sitting here selling charcoal."

2.3 "Girl, where is there any money?"

"Right here where you are sitting!"

2.4 "Hand it to me, daughter (*ammā*)!"⁸⁹

She took a handful of the charcoal and placed it in his hands. And when it filled his hands, it turned into money.

2.5 Then, the seth said to her, "Where is your house, maiden?"

She said, "Such and such, sir."

2.6 The seth, perceiving that she was unmarried,⁹⁰ married her to his own son, putting the 40 million in her charge. Everything turned into money!

2.7 In due course, she was with child. After ten lunar months, gave birth to a son.

But the child died as soon as he was able to walk.

3 Kisā Gotamī seeks a cure for her dead child

3.1 Now, Kisā Gotamī had never seen death before. Therefore, when they came to remove the body for cremation, she stopped them.

She thought, "I will ask around for medicine for my son."

⁸⁹ *Amma* (voc), a general way of addressing a girl or woman, variously tr in English depending on her status: "Mother," "Madam," "Miss," "Woman," etc. See CPD: amma & ammā.

⁹⁰ "Unmarried," *assāmika, bhāvaṃ*, "of the status of one without a husband."

3.2 Placing the corpse on her hip, she went from house to house asking, “Do you know what medicine will cure my son?” **[273]**

3.3 People said to her, “Woman, you must be mad to wander from house to house asking for medicine for your dead child!”

But she thought, “Surely, I will find someone who knows the medicine for my child.”

3.4 Now a certain wise man saw her and thought,

“Our daughter here has no doubt brought forth a child for the first time, one who has not seen death before. I must find her some help [refuge] (*avassaya*).”

3.5 He said, “Woman, I know no medicine (for curing your child); but I know one who knows the medicine.”

“Sir, who is it that knows?”

3.6 “The Teacher, woman, knows. Go and ask him.”

“I will go, good sir, and ask him.”

4 Kisā Gotamī seeks white mustard seeds

4.1 So she went to the Teacher, saluted him, and standing at one side, asked him:

“Bhante, is it true, as people say, that you know the cure for my child?”

“Yes, I do know.”

4.2 “What is it that I should get?”

“A pinch of white mustard seeds.”⁹¹

4.3 “I will find it, bhante. But in whose house shall I get it?”

“In whose house neither son nor daughter nor anyone else had died.”

“Very well, bhante,” she said and saluted him.

4.4 Then, she placed the dead child on her hip, entered the village, stopped at the door of the first house, and asked,

“Are there any white mustard seeds in this house? **[274]** They say it is medicine for my child.”

“Yes.”

“Well then, give it to me.”

4.5 They brought grains of white mustard seeds, and when they were going to give them to her, she asked,

“Madam, in the house that you dwell, has a son or a daughter or anyone not died before?”

4.6 “What are you saying, woman? Few indeed are the living; only the dead are many.”

“Well then, keep your mustard seeds: they are no medicine for my child.”

5 Kisā Gotamī learns the truth

5.1 So she wandered about in this manner, hoping and asking around. There was not a single house where she could find the mustard seeds she sought.

5.2 And when evening came, she thought,

“Ah! It is a heavy task I have taken upon myself. I thought it was I alone who had lost a child,⁹² but in every village, there are more dead than the living.”

⁹¹ *Acchara-g, gahaṇa, matte siddhatthake laddhurū vaṭṭatīti*. “White mustard seeds,” *siddhatthaka* (Skt *siddhârthaka*), also *siddhattha* (Ap 2.22.24/2:564; ThA 181; J 3:225, 6:537; DhA 2:273); *siddhattha* is also the Buddha’s personal name, some explained as *siddha* (accomplished) + *attha* (purpose, wish), ie, “wish-fulfilled, mission accomplished.” Also *sāsapa* (Skt *sarṣapa*) (S 2:137, 4:464; A 4:170; J 6:174; DhA 1:107, 2:51, 4:166; Vism 306, 633; PvA 198). Mustard power (*sāsapa, kuṭṭa*) is mentioned in the Vinaya (V 1:205, 2:151).

5.3 Thinking thus, her heart that was soft before with mother's love now became strong [firm]. She left her son [in a charnel ground] in the forest. Going to the Teacher, she saluted him and stood at one side.

5.4 The Teacher said, "Did you get a single pinch of white mustard seeds?"⁹³

"No, bhante, I did not. In every village, there are more dead than the living."

5.5 The Teacher said, "You thought in vain that you alone had lost a son. But all living beings are subject to the unchanging truth, thus:

The king of death, like a great flood, **[275]** sweeps away into the sea of ruin⁹⁴ all those beings with a weak mental disposition."⁹⁵

5.6 Teaching her the Dharma, he uttered this stanza:

*Taṃ putta,pasu,sammattaṃ
vyāsatta,manasaṃ naraṃ
Suttaṃ gāmaṃ mah'ogho'va
maccu ādāya gacchatīti*

The man who is intoxicated by sons and cattle,
whose mind is distracted,
Death carries him off, like a great flood *d*
sweeps away a sleeping village. *c*

(Dh 287) [= DhA 3:342]

5.7 At the end of (the utterance of) the stanza, Kisā Gotamī became a **streamwinner**. Many others, too, won the fruit of streamwinning and so on.

5.8 Kisā Gotamī requested the going-forth from the Teacher, who instructed that she go forth in the presence of the order of nuns. After she had obtained her ordination, she was known as the elder nun (*therī*) Kisā Gotamī.

6 Kisā Gotamī's awakening

6.1 One day, it was her turn to light the lamp in the uposatha [consecrated convocation] hall. Having lit the lamp, she sat down and observed the tongues of flame, some flaring up, others flickering out.⁹⁶

She took this for her subject of meditation, reflecting thus:

6.2 "Even so it is with beings: some here flare up, while others flicker away. Only those who have reached nirvana no more arise."

6.3 The Teacher, seated in his fragrant cell, sent forth a radiant image of himself, and seated as it were right before her, showing the connection, said,

6.4 "Even as it is with the flames, so it is with living beings here: *some flare up, while others flicker away. Only those who have reached nirvana no more arise.* Therefore, better is the life of one who lives for but a moment, but who sees nirvana, than those who live a hundred years, not seeing nirvana."⁹⁷

6.5 Then, he taught her the Dharma, uttering this stanza:

⁹² *Mam'eva putto mato' ti saññam akāsim*, lit "I had the notion, 'Only my son is dead!'"

⁹³ *Laddhā te ek'acchara,mattā siddhatthakāti.*

⁹⁴ "Sea of ruin," *apāya,samudda.* I borrow this from Burlingame, DhA:B 2:259.

⁹⁵ "Those with a weak mental disposition," *aparipuṇṇ'ajjhāsaye.*

⁹⁶ In the story of Paṭācārā, she "realizes that the point of the light going out is like the moment of awakening" (Thī 112-116, 218 f; AA 552-560; DhA 8.12/2:260-270; ThīA 108-112. See DhA:B Intro §27, Synoptical Table & p50.)

⁹⁷ *Evam nibbānaṃ apassantānaṃ vassa,sataṃ jīvanato nibbānaṃ passantassa khaṇa,mattam pi jīvitaṃ seyyo ti.* The last 2 padas can also be rendered thus: "Therefore, better is the life of one who sees nirvana, even for just an instant, than those who live a hundred years, not seeing nirvana." Cf Thī 112-116 & Dh 113 (in connection with Paṭācārā).

*Yo ca vassa,sataṃ jīve
apassam̐ amatam̐ padam̐;
ekāham̐ jīvitam̐ seyyo
passato amatam̐ padan̐'ti*

Even if one were to live for a hundred years,
not seeing the death-free state,
'Tis better living for just a day,
seeing the death-free state.

(Dh 114) [= DhA 3:431]

6.6 At the conclusion of the teaching, Kisā Gotamī, even as she sat right there, attained **arhathood** together with the analytic insights.⁹⁸

— — —

Bibliography

- Bode, Mabel (tr)
1893 “Women leaders of the Buddhist reformation.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* ns 25 1893:793-796. Download: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/journals/jras/1893-13.htm>.
- Norman, K R (tr)
1971 *The Elders' Verses II Therīgāthā*. London: Pali Text Society, 1971:24 & 99-102. See 1989.
1989 *The Elders' Verses II Therīgāthā* [1971:24 & 99-102]. Rev ed, with C A F Rhys Davids, 1939. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1989:195 f. See Rhys Davids & Norman 1989:165-228.
- Pruitt, William (tr)
1999 [ThaA:P] *The Commentaries on the Verses of the Therīs: The Therīgāthā-aṭṭhakathā, Paramatthadīpanī VI* by Ācariya Dhammapāla [1998]. Oxford: Pali text Society, 1999 (with corrections):222-232.
- Rhys Davids, C A F (tr)
1909 *Psalms of the Sisters* [1909]; repr with *Psalms of the Brethrens* [1913] as *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, London, Pali Text Society, 1937:106-110. Repr See Rhys Davids & Norman 1989:1-163 (on Kisā Gotamī, see pp195 f).
1937 See 1909.
- Rhys Davids, C A F; & K R Norman (trs)
1989 *Poems of the Early Buddhist Nuns (Therīgāthā)*: (1) *Psalms of the Sisters* (rev), pp1-163; (2) *Elders' Verses II* (rev), pp165-228. Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1997.
- ThaA:P *Paramatthadīpanī VI* by Dhamma,pāla: see William Pruitt (tr), 1999.
Tha:N *Therī,gāthā*, annotated tr: see K R Norman (tr), 1971:24, 99-102, & 1989:195 f.
Tha:RD *Therī,gāthā*, annotated tr: see C A F Rhys Davids (tr), 1909:106-110. Repr, see Rhys Davids & Norman 1989:195 f.

070807 091102 131214rev 141211r 160814 211207 220107

⁹⁸ “Analytic insights,” *paṭisambhidā*, discriminative knowledges, ie, (1) ~ of meanings [consequences] (*attha,-paṭisambhidā*); (2) ~ of dharmas [ideas, mental states; causes] (*dhamma,paṭisambhidā*); (3) ~ of language (*nirut-ti,paṭisambhidā*); (4) ~ of wit [perspicuity (in knowledge and expression)] (*paṭibhāna,paṭisambhidā*) (A 2:160; Pm 1:119). Defined at Vbh 293 & Vism 440. 3 kinds (1, 3, 4) at Vbh 297.