

## The Nun Uppala-vaṇṇā (Vi-1, 43)

*Tena kho pana samayena, aññataro māṇavako Uppalavaṇṇāya bhikkhuniyā paṭibaddhacitto hoti. Atha kho, so māṇavako—Uppalavaṇṇāya bhikkhuniyā gāmaṃ piṇḍāya pavitṭhāya—kuṭīkaṃ pavisitvā nilīno acchi. Uppalavaṇṇā bhikkhunī—pacchābhattaṃ piṇḍapāta-paṭikkantā—pāde pakkhāletvā kuṭīkaṃ pavisitvā mañcake nisīdi. Atha kho, so māṇavako Uppalavaṇṇaṃ bhikkhuniṃ uggahetvā dūsesi. Uppalavaṇṇā bhikkhunī bhikkhunīnaṃ etamatthaṃ ārocesī. Bhikkhuniyo bhikkhūnaṃ etamatthaṃ ārocesuṃ. Bhikkhū Bhagavato etamatthaṃ ārocesuṃ. “Anāpatti bhikkhave a-sādiyantiyā”ti.*

At that time, a young man is mentally tied up with the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā. Then, that young man —when the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā had entered a village for alms —entered the cottage and stayed hidden. The nun Uppala-vaṇṇā —having come back from alms-round after-meal/ afternoon —washed her feet and entered the cottage and sat on a little couch. Then, that young man took up and ruined the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā. The nun Uppala-vaṇṇā told this matter to nuns. The nuns told this matter to the monks. The monks told this matter to the Buddha. “Monks, no offence for an un-enjoyer” thus the Buddha said.

<i>tena kho pana samayena</i>	NG-1, 3 Sg.	at that time	<i>hoti</i>	<i>kālādhāra</i> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> form time adverb
<i>aññataro</i>	NG-1, 1 Sg.	certain	<i>māṇavako</i>	adjective
<i>māṇavako</i> <sup>1</sup>	NG-1, 1 Sg.	a young man	<i>hoti</i>	<i>pakati-kattā</i>
<i>uppalavaṇṇāya</i>	NG-3, 3 Sg.	<i>Uppalavaṇṇa</i>	<i>bhikkhuniyā</i>	adjective
<i>bhikkhuniyā</i>	NG-22, 3 Sg.	with the nun	<i>paṭibaddhacitto</i>	<i>saha-adi-yoga</i>
<i>paṭibaddhacitto</i> <sup>2</sup>	NG-1, 1 Sg.	in love (with), Lit. mentally tied up	<i>hoti</i>	<i>vikati-kattā</i>
<i>hoti</i>	V-1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sg.	is		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>atha kho</i>	Nip.	then	<i>pavisitvā, acchi</i>	<i>kālādhāra</i>
<i>so māṇavako</i>	NG-1, 1 Sg.	that young man	1. <i>pavisitvā</i> 2. <i>acchi</i>	1. <i>kattā</i> 2. <i>lakhya-vanta-kattā</i>
<i>uppalavaṇṇāya</i>	NG-3, 7 Sg.	Uppalavaṇṇā	<i>bhikkhuniyā</i>	adjective
<i>bhikkhuniyā</i>	NG-21, 7 Sg.	when the nun	<i>paviṭṭhāya</i>	<i>lakkhaṇa-vanta-kattā</i> (locative absolute)
<i>gāmaṃ</i>	NG-1, 2 Sg.	a village	<i>paviṭṭhāya</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>piṇḍāya</i>	NG-1, 4 Sg.	for alms	<i>paviṭṭhāya</i>	<i>taddattha</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> form purpose)
<i>paviṭṭhāya</i> <sup>3</sup> ( <i>tvā</i> )	NG-, 7 Sg.	had entered	<i>acchi</i>	<i>lakkhaṇa-kriyā</i> (marking action)
<i>kuṭīkaṃ</i>	NG-3, 2 Sg.	the cottage	<i>pavisitvā</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>pavisitvā</i>	Nip.	entered	<i>acchi</i>	<i>kriyā visesana</i>
<i>nilīno</i> <sup>4</sup>	NG-1, Sg.	hidden	<i>hutvā</i> (understood)	<i>kattā</i>
<i>acchi</i> <sup>5</sup>	V-6, 3 Sg.	stayed		<i>lakhya-kriyā</i> (marked action)

<sup>1</sup> *māṇavaka* masc. (typically of a Brahman) youngster; young lad; young boy [*manu* + \**a* + *ka*].

<sup>2</sup> *paṭibaddhacitta* adj. (+loc) infatuated (with); in love (with); attracted (to); enamoured (with); lit. bound mind [*paṭibaddha* + *citta*].

<sup>3</sup> *paviṭṭha* 1 pp. (+acc) entered; gone (into) [*pa* + √*vis* + *ta*].

<sup>4</sup> *nilīna* pp. hidden; concealed [*ni* + √*lī* + *na*].

<sup>5</sup> *acchi* 1.1 aor. (+acc) sat (in); stayed (in); remained (in); waited (in) [√*ās* + *a* + *i*].

<i>uppalavaṇṇā</i>	<i>NG-3, 1 Sg.</i>	Uppalavaṇṇā	<i>bhikkhunī</i>	adjective
<i>bhikkhunī</i>	<i>NG-21, 1 Sg.</i>	the nun		
<i>pacchābhattam</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>Nip.</i>	after-meal/ afternoon	<i>paṭikkantā</i>	<i>kālādhāra</i>
<i>piṇḍapāta-paṭikkantā</i> <sup>7</sup>	<i>NG-3, 1 Sg.</i>	having come back from alms-round		
<i>pāde</i>	<i>NG-1, 2 Pl.</i>	[her] feet	<i>pakkhāletvā</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>pakkhāletvā</i> <sup>8</sup>	<i>Nip.</i>	washed	<i>nisīdi</i>	<i>kriyā visesana</i>
<i>kuṭikaṃ</i>	<i>NG-3, 2 Sg.</i>	the cottage	<i>pavisitvā</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>pavisitvā</i>	<i>Nip.</i>	entered	<i>nisīdi</i>	<i>kriyā visesana</i>
<i>mañcake</i>	<i>NG-1, 7 Sg.</i>	on a little couch	<i>nisīdi</i>	<i>desādhāra</i>
<i>nisīdi</i>	<i>V-6, 3 Sg.</i>	sat		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>atha kho</i>	<i>Nip.</i>	then		<i>kālādhāra</i>
<i>so māṇavako</i>	<i>NG-1, 1 Sg.</i>	that young man and	<i>uggahetvā, dūsesi</i>	<i>kattā</i>
<i>uppalavaṇṇam</i>	<i>NG-3, 2 Sg.</i>	Uppalavaṇṇā	<i>bhikkhuniṃ</i>	adjective
<i>bhikkhuniṃ</i>	<i>NG-22, 2 Sg.</i>	the nun	<i>uggahetvā, dūsesi</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>uggahetvā</i>	<i>Nip.</i>	took up	<i>dūsesi</i>	<i>kriyā visesana</i>
<i>dūsesi</i>	<i>V-6, 3 Sg.</i>	ruined		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>uppalavaṇṇā</i>	<i>NG-3, 1 Sg.</i>	Uppalavaṇṇā	<i>bhikkhunī</i>	adjective
<i>bhikkhunī</i>	<i>NG-22, 1 Sg.</i>	nun Uppala-vaṇṇā	<i>ārocesi</i>	<i>kattā</i>
<i>bhikkhuniṇaṃ</i>	<i>NG-22, 4 Pl.</i>	to the nuns	<i>ārocesi</i>	<i>appadāna-kamma</i>
<i>etamatthaṃ</i>	<i>NG-1, 2 Sg.</i>	this matter	<i>ārocesi</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>ārocesi</i> <sup>9</sup>	<i>V-6, 3 Sg.</i>	told		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>bhikkhuniyo</i>	<i>NG-22, 1 Pl.</i>	the nuns	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>kattā</i>
<i>bhikkhūnaṃ</i>	<i>NG-17, 4 Pl.</i>	to the monks	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>appadāna-kamma</i>
<i>etamatthaṃ</i>	<i>NG-1, 2 Sg.</i>	this matter	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>V-6, 3 Pl.</i>	told		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>bhikkhū</i>	<i>NG-17, 1 Pl.</i>	the monks to the Buddha	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>kattā</i>
<i>bhagavato</i>	<i>NG-1, 4 Sg.</i>	to the Buddha	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>appadāna-kamma</i>
<i>etamatthaṃ</i>	<i>NG-1, 2 Sg.</i>	this matter	<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>kamma</i>
<i>ārocesuṃ</i>	<i>V-6, 3 Pl.</i>	told		<i>kriyā</i>
<i>anāpatti</i>	<i>NG-10, 1 Sg.</i>	[there is] no offence	<i>atthi</i> (understood)	<i>vikati-kattā</i>
<i>bhikkhave</i>	<i>Voc.</i>	Monks		
<i>a-sādiyantiyā</i> <sup>10</sup>	<i>NG-10, 4 Sg.</i>	for an un-enjoyer	<i>atthi</i> (understood)	<i>appadāna-kamma</i>
<i>iti</i>	<i>Nip.</i>	[the Buddha said] thus		<i>ākāra-jotaka</i>

## Nun Uppalavaṇṇā (translation by I.B. Horner)

<sup>6</sup> *pacchābhattam* ind. after eating; after the meal; in the late morning [*pacchā + bhatta + aṃ*].

<sup>7</sup> *paṭikkanta* 1 pp. (+abl) returned (from); come back (from) [*pati + √kam + ta*].

<sup>8</sup> *Pakkhāletvā* abs. (+acc) having washed; having rinsed [*pa + √khal + \*e + tvā*].

<sup>9</sup> *ārocesi* 1 aor. (+acc & +dat) told (to); informed (to); explained (to); lit. caused to inform [*ā + √ruc + \*e + si*].

<sup>10</sup> *Sādiyanta* prp. (+acc) consenting (to); accepting; agreeing (to); permitting; lit. causing to be tasted [*√sād + \*e + iya + nta*].

Now at one time, a certain Brahmin youth was in love with the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā. Then this Brahmin youth, when the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā had gone into the village for alms, entered the hut and sat down, concealed. The nun Uppala-vaṇṇā, after the meal and when she had finished eating, washing her feet and entering the hut, sat down on the couch. Then the Brahmin youth, taking up the nun Uppala-vaṇṇā, assaulted her. The nun Uppala-vaṇṇā told this matter to the monks. The monks told this matter to the lord. He said: “There is no offence, monks, as she was not willing.”

## Background story about nun Uppalavaṇṇā

1. Uppalavaṇṇā Therī.— One of the two chief women disciples of the Buddha. She was born in Sāvatti as the daughter of a banker, and she received the name of Uppalavaṇṇā because her skin was the colour of the heart of the blue lotus. When she was come of age, kings and commoners from the whole of India sent messengers to her father, asking for her hand. He, not wishing to offend any of them, suggested that Uppalavaṇṇā should leave the world. Because of her spiritual potential (upanissaya), she very willingly agreed and was ordained a nun. Soon it came to her turn to perform certain services in the uposatha-hall. Lighting the lamp, she swept the room. Taking the flame of the lamp as her visible object, she developed concentration on the fire-device (tejokasina) and, attaining to jhāna, became an Arahant possessed of the four kinds of Analytical Knowledge (Paṭisambhidā). She became particularly versed in the mystic potency of transformation (iddhivikubbana). When the Buddha arrived at the Gandamba-tree to perform the [Twin Miracle](#), Uppalavaṇṇā offered to perform certain miracles herself, if the Buddha would give his consent, but this he [refused](#).<sup>1</sup> Later, at Jetavana, in the assembly of the Saṅgha, he declared her to be the chief of the women possessed of psychic power.<sup>2</sup> The [Therīgāthā](#)<sup>3</sup> contains several verses attributed to her.

Three of them had been uttered in anguish by a mother who had been unwittingly living as her daughter’s rival with the man who later became the monk [Gaṅgātīriya](#) (q.v.) Uppalavaṇṇā repeated them to help her to reflect on the harm and vileness of sensual desires. Two others are utterances of joy on the distinctions she had won and another records a miracle she performed before the Buddha, with his consent. The rest contain a conversation between Uppalavaṇṇā and [Māra](#),<sup>4</sup> wherein she tells him that she has passed completely beyond his power.

The books give several episodes connected with Uppalavaṇṇā. Once a young man named Nanda, who was her cousin and had been in love with her during her lay-life, hid himself in her hut in Andhavana and, in spite of her protestations, deprived her of her chastity. It is said that he was swallowed up by the fires of [Avīci](#). From that time onwards, nuns were forbidden to live in [Andhavana](#).<sup>5</sup> On another occasion, Uppalavaṇṇā came across, in Andhavana, some meat left behind, obviously for her, by some kind-hearted thief; having cooked the meat, she took it to the Buddha at Veḷuvana. Finding him away on his alms-rounds, she left the meat with Udāyi, who was looking after the vihāra, to be given to the Buddha, but Udāyi insisted on Uppalavaṇṇā giving him her inner robe as a reward for his [services](#).<sup>6</sup>

According to the Dhammapada [Commentary](#),<sup>7</sup> the miracle that Uppalavaṇṇā volunteered to perform at the Gandamba-tree, was the assumption of the form of a Cakkavatti, with a retinue extending for thirty-six leagues and the paying of homage to the Buddha, with all the Cakkavatti's followers, in the presence of the multitude.

Mention is made of a pupil of Uppalavaṇṇā, who followed the Buddha for seven years, learning the [Vinaya](#).<sup>8</sup>

The Buddha declares that Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā are the measure of his women disciples, and that the believing nun, if she would aspire perfectly, should aspire to be like [them](#).<sup>9</sup>

In the time of [Padumuttara Buddha](#) Uppalavaṇṇā saw a woman disciple who was declared to be the best of those possessed of supernormal power, and wished for herself a similar rank in the dispensation of a future Buddha. In the time of Kassapa, she was one of the seven daughters of Kikī, king of Bārāṇasī, and having done many good deeds, was born in heaven. Later, she was born in the world of men and had to work for her own living. One day she gave to a [Pacceka Buddha](#), who had just risen from samādhi, a meal of fried rice in his bowl and covered it with a beautiful lotus; the meal had been prepared for herself. The lotus she afterwards took back but again replaced it, asking the Pacceka Buddha's forgiveness. She expressed a wish that she should beget as many sons as there were grains of rice in her gift, and that lotuses should spring up under her feet as she walked. In her next birth she was born in a lotus. An ascetic adopted her as his daughter, but when she grew up, the king of Bārāṇasī, hearing of her beauty, asked the ascetic for her hand and made her his chief queen, under the name of Padumavatī. The king's other wives were jealous of her beauty, and when the king was away, quelling a rising of the border tribes, they concealed in caskets the five hundred sons, chief of whom was the prince [Mahāpaduma](#) (q.v.), that were born to Padumavatī, and told the king that Padumavatī was a non-human and had given birth to a log of wood. Padumavatī was sent away in disgrace, but later, through the instrumentality of Sakka, the trick was exposed, and Padumavatī regained all her former power and [glory](#).<sup>10</sup> Later, when Mahāpaduma and his brothers became Pacceka Buddhas, Padumavatī died of a broken heart and was born in a village outside Rājagaha. There some of the Pacceka Buddhas who had been her sons discovered her, and they all came to a meal at her house. At the conclusion of the meal she offered them blue lotuses, and expressed the wish that her complexion should be like the matrix of the blue [lotus](#).<sup>11</sup>

The [Apadāna](#) account of the past lives of Uppalavaṇṇā differs from the above in several [details](#).<sup>12</sup> According to this account, in Padumuttara's time she was a Nāga maiden named Vimalā and was impressed by the psychic powers displayed by a nun, hence her wish for similar powers. The Apadāna also mentions Uppalavaṇṇā's birth as the daughter of a banker of Bārāṇasī, in the time of Vipassī. She gave great alms to the Buddha and the monks and made offerings of lotuses. She was the second daughter of [Kikī](#) and her name was Samaṇā. In her next birth she became the ravishing daughter of Tīrītavaccha of [Aritthapura](#). In her last birth she became an Arahant within a fortnight of her ordination.

Uppalavaṇṇā's name occurs several times in the Jātaka stories. In the [Kharādiya Jātaka](#)<sup>13</sup> she was a deer, the sister of the Bodhisatta; in the [Tipallatthamiga Jātaka](#)<sup>14</sup> she was the mother of Rāhula, then born as a stag. She is identified with the old woman, the foster-mother of Ayyikākāḷaka in the [Kaṇha](#),<sup>15</sup> with the queen [Mudulakkhanā](#),<sup>16</sup> the brahminee in the [Sārambha](#),<sup>17</sup> the courtesan in the [Kurudhamma](#),<sup>18</sup> the brahmin's daughter (and sister of Rāhula) in the [Venasākha](#),<sup>19</sup> Siridevī in the [Sirikālakanni](#),<sup>20</sup> the goddess in the [Siṅghapuppha](#),<sup>21</sup> Manoja's sister

in the [Manoja](#),<sup>22</sup> the ascetic's daughter in the [Kumbhakāra](#),<sup>23</sup> the deity in the [Jāgara](#),<sup>24</sup> in the [Saṅkha](#),<sup>25</sup> and in the [Kimchanda](#),<sup>26</sup> the sister in the [Bhisa](#),<sup>27</sup> Sutanā in the [Rohaṇamiga](#),<sup>28</sup> the younger sister in the [Jayaddisa](#),<sup>29</sup> Kuṇḍalī in the [Tesakuṇa](#),<sup>30</sup> Ummadantī in the [Ummadantī](#),<sup>31</sup> Hiridevatā in the [Sudhābhojana](#),<sup>32</sup> the goddess of the parasol in the [Mūgapakkha](#),<sup>33</sup> the ocean spirit in the [Mahājanaka](#),<sup>34</sup> the goddess in the [Suvannasāma](#),<sup>35</sup> Selā in the [Candakumāra](#),<sup>36</sup> Accimukhī in the [Bhūridatta](#),<sup>37</sup> Bherī in the [Umaṅga](#),<sup>38</sup> and Kaṇhājinā in the [Vessantara](#).<sup>39</sup> It was Uppalavaṇṇā who ordained Anojā and her companions, by the express wish of the Buddha.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ThigA.190, 195. <sup>2</sup> A.i.25. <sup>3</sup> Thig.vv.234-5.

<sup>4</sup> A conversation, more or less identical with the foregoing, is recorded in S.i.131 f.

<sup>5</sup> DhA.ii.49 f; the incident is referred to in Vin.iii.35. It is said (e.g., DhA.iv.166 f) that this incident gave rise to the question whether even Arahants enjoyed the pleasures of love and wished to gratify their passions. Why should they not? For they are not trees nor ant-hills, but living creatures with moist flesh. The Buddha most emphatically declared that thoughts of lust never entered the hearts of the saints.

<sup>6</sup> Vin.iii.208 f. <sup>7</sup> DhA.iii.211. <sup>8</sup> Vin.ii.261. <sup>9</sup> A.i.88; ii.164; S.ii.236.

<sup>10</sup> Her temporary downfall was due to her having withdrawn her gift of a lotus to the Pacceka Buddha.

<sup>11</sup> This account is a summary of the Therīgāthā Commentary, pp.182 ff; AA.i.188 ff; but see also DhA.ii.48 f.

<sup>12</sup> Ap.ii.551. However, vv.1-15 quoted in the ThigA. differ from those in the [Apadāna](#), and agree with the ThigA. account.

<sup>13</sup> J.i.160. <sup>14</sup> J.i.164. <sup>15</sup> J.i.196. <sup>16</sup> J.i.306. <sup>17</sup> J.i.375. <sup>18</sup> J.ii.381. <sup>19</sup> J.iii.168.

<sup>20</sup> J.iii.264. <sup>21</sup> J.iii.310. <sup>22</sup> J.iii.324. <sup>23</sup> J.iii.383. <sup>24</sup> J.iii.405. <sup>25</sup> J.iv.22.

<sup>26</sup> J.v.11. <sup>27</sup> J.iv.314. <sup>28</sup> J.iv.423. <sup>29</sup> J.v.36. <sup>30</sup> J.v.125. <sup>31</sup> J.v.227.

<sup>32</sup> J.v.412. <sup>33</sup> J.vi.29. <sup>34</sup> J.vi.68. <sup>35</sup> J.vi.95. <sup>36</sup> J.vi.157. <sup>37</sup> J.vi.219.

<sup>38</sup> J.vi.478. <sup>39</sup> J.vi.593. <sup>40</sup> AA.i.178.