room for the lazes. After attaining Arahandhood, the Venerable Mahëkaccëna preached the Dhamma for the welfare of people and the happiness of the people. Among the teachings taught by him, what his disciple should follow permanently is:

“Do what you should do before the death comes to you.”

As to the Venerable Mahëkaccëna’s view, we don’t know the death will come to us today or tomorrow. Therefore we should do Dana (giving), Sëla (precept) and Bhëvanë (meditation) just now. If we do so, we are sure that we will attain Nibbëna which is free from suffering.

CHAPTER 4

KHEMË, KUÐDALAKESŒ AND PA®ŒCŒRŒ

4.1. Khemë

4.1.1. Introduction

The following account of Khemë of Great wisdom is taken from A~guttara Nikëya, its commentary, SaÑyutta Nikëya, its commentary, Kuddaka Nikëya, its commentaries such as Dhammapada commentary, Therëghëthë commentary.

Just as the Buddha has appointed two chief disciples in the order of monks, Sëriputta and Moggallëna, he likewise named two
women as his foremost disciples in the Bhikkhunī Sangha, the order of nuns. These two were the bhikkhunīs Uppalavācā and Khemā, the former excelling in psychic power, the latter in wisdom.\textsuperscript{176} The Buddha has held up these two as the models and examples for all the nuns to emulate, the standard against which other nuns could evaluate themselves.\textsuperscript{177}

The name “\textit{Khemā}” means “security” and is a synonym for Nibbāna. The nun Khemā belonged to a royal family from the land of Magadha. She was extremely beautiful and fair to behold, and when she reached marriageable age she became one of the chief consorts of King Bimbisāra. This king was a stream-enterer and a generous benefactor of the Blessed One. He has donated his own Bamboo Grove to the Sangha and constantly looked after the monks with great solicitude. But although Khemā often heard about the Buddha from the king, she resisted going to see him, fearful that he would find fault with her beauty of form and preach to her about the vanity of sensual pleasures, to which she was tightly attached. The king, however, found a way to induce her to listen to the Teaching. He hired a troop of singers to sing songs to her in praise of the harmony, peacefulness, and beauty of the Bamboo Grove monastery, and because Khemā loved the beauties of nature she decided to visit there.

\section*{4.1.2. Attaining Arahantship}

\textsuperscript{176} AN 1. P. 26, its Comy P 261-274.  
\textsuperscript{177} SN 1. P. 432.
Decked out in royal splendor with silk and sandalwood, she went to the monastery and was gradually drawn to the hall where the Buddha was preaching. The Buddha, who read her thoughts, created by his psychic powers a beautiful young woman standing besides him fanning him. KhemÈ was enthralled by this lovely woman and thought to herself: “Never before have I seen such a woman. I myself do not come within even a fraction of her beauty. Surely those who say the ascetic Gotama disparages beauty of form must be misrepresenting him.” The Buddha then made this created image gradually change from youth to middle age, and then to old age, with broken teeth, gray hair, and wrinkled skin, until it finally fell to the ground lifeless. Only then did she realize the vanity of external beauty and the fleeting nature of life. She thought, “Has such a body come to be wrecked like that? Then my body too must share that fate.”

The Buddha read her mind and said:

KhemÈ, behold this mass of elements,
Diseased, impure, decaying;
Trickling all over and oozing,
It is desired only by fools\textsuperscript{178}.

At the conclusion of the stanza KhemÈ was established in the fruit of stream-entry. But the Buddha continued to teach her, concluding his sermon with another verse:

Those enslaved by lust drift down the stream

\textsuperscript{178} khu. Thig. v. 354.
As a spider glides on its self-spun web.
Having cut off even this, the wise wander
Indifferent to the pleasures they’ve renounced\textsuperscript{179}.
KhemÈ penetrates the sermon fully, and right on the spot, while still dressed in her royal attire, she attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges. Thereafter, having received her husband’s permission, she joined the order of nuns.\textsuperscript{180}

4.1.3. KhemÈ’s Previous Life

An ordinary person, hearing KhemÈ’s story, sees only the wonder of the present happening. A Buddha, however, can see beyond this and knows that this woman did not come to full liberation by chance or good fortune. Such an attainment, almost like lightning, is only possible for one whose seed of wisdom has long been ripening and whose virtue is fully matured. In past aeons, KhemÈ had planted the roots of merit under many former Buddhas. Due to her innate attraction toward the highest truth, she always came to birth wherever a Buddha, a Bearer of Truth, lived. It is said that already one hundred thousand aeons ago she had sold her beautiful hair to give alms to the Buddha Padumuttara. During the time of the Buddha VipassÈ, ninety-one aeons ago, she had been a bhikkhunÈ and a teacher of the Dhamma. Father, it is told that during the Dispensations of the three Buddha of our happy aeon, the predecessors of our Buddha Gotama, she was a lay disciple and gained happiness through building monasteries for the

\textsuperscript{179} Dhp. Comp. v. 347.
Sangha.\textsuperscript{181}

While most beings drift around in heavenly or infernal realms during the lifetime of a Buddha, KhemÈ always tried to be near the source of wisdom. When no Buddha appeared in the world she would be reborn at the time of Pacceka-buddhas or in proximity to the Bodhisatta, the future Buddha Gotama. In one birth she was the wife of the Bodhisatta, who always exhorted his peaceful family thus:

\begin{verbatim}
According to what you have, give alms;  
Observe the Uposatha, keep the precepts pure;  
Dwell upon the thought of death, mindful of your mortal state.  
For in the case of beings like us,  
Death is certain, life uncertain;  
All existing things must pass, subject to decay.  
Therefore be heedful day and night.
\end{verbatim}

One day KhemÈ’s only son in this life was suddenly killed by the bite of a poisonous snake, yet she was able to keep total equanimity:

\begin{verbatim}
Uncalled he hither came, unbidden soon to go;  
Even as he came, he went. What cause is here for woe?  
No friend’s lament can touch the ashes of the dead:  
Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread.  
Though I should fast and weep, how would it profit me?  
My kith and kin, alas! Would more unhappy be.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{181} Khu TherÊ Comy, P. 130-140.
No friend’s lament can touch the ashes of the dead:
Why should I grieve? He fares the way he had to tread?¹⁸²

Another time she was the daughter-in-law of the Bodhisatta¹⁸³, many times a great empress who dreamed about receiving teaching from the Bodhisatta and then actually received such teachings¹⁸⁴. It is further recounted that as a queen her husband the king was the future Sariputta. This husband in former lives was a righteous king who upheld the ten royal virtues: generosity, morality, renunciation, truthfulness, gentleness, patience, amity, harmlessness, humility, and justice. Because of these virtues the king lived in happiness and bliss. KhemÈ, too, lived in accordance with these precepts¹⁸⁵. It was only because KhemÈ had already purified her heart in many past lives that she was mature enough, on her first meeting with the Buddha, to realize the ultimate truth in the twinkling of an eye.

4.1.4. KhemÈ and MÈra

KhemÈ’s transformed to sensuality is starkly revealed to us by a dialogue in verse, recorded in the TheragÈthÈ, in which she fends off the advances of a charming seducer. According to the commentary, the seducer is actually Mara, the Tempter, who had approached intending to divert her from her quest for liberation-vainly, as she was already an arahant:

¹⁸² Khu JÈt Comy 3. P. 150-155. (v. 19. 20. 21. 22)
¹⁸³ Khu JÈt Comy 3. P. 302-305.
¹⁸⁴ Khu JÈt Comy 4. P. 413-424.
“You are so young and beautiful,
And I myself an in the bloom of youth.
Come, noble lady, let us rejoice
In the music of a fivefold ensemble.”

“I am repelled and humiliated
By this putrid fleshly body.
Afflicted by illness, so very fragile;
I have uprooted sensual craving.

Sensual! Pleasures are now like sword stakes,
The aggregates are their chopping block.
That which you call sensual delight
Has become for me no delight at all.

Everywhere delight has been destroyed,
The mass of darkness has been shattered.
Know this, O Evil One-
You are defeated, Exterminator.”186

4.1.5. Dialogue between KhemÈ and King Pasenadi

The Buddha praised Khema as the nun foremost in wisdom. A dialogue that has come down in the SaÑyutta NikÈya confirms this, illustrating how her wisdom made a deep impact on King Pasenadi.

186 Khu Theg. p. 395. (v. 139.140. 141. 142.)
The king was traveling through the countryside of Kosala and arrived one evening at a small township. Wishing to have a conversation about spiritual matters, he ordered a servant to find out whether there was a wise ascetic or brahmin in the town. The servant inquired everywhere. He could not find any ascetic or brahmin for his master to converse with, but he learned that a bhikkhunī, an ordained disciple of the Buddha, was dwelling in the town. It was the saintly Khema, who was famed everywhere for her wisdom, deep insight, great learning, and perspicacity in discussion.

When the king received this report he went to her, greeted her with respect, and questioned her about the after-death condition of a Tathāgata, a liberated sage:

“Does a Tathāgata-a Perfect One-exist after death?”
“The Exalted One has not declared that a Tathāgata exists after death”
“Then a Tathāgata does not exist after death?”
“That, too, the Exalted One has not declared.”
“Then a Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after death?”
“Even that, the Exalted One has not declared.”
“Then does a Tathāgata neither exist nor not exist after death?”
“That, too, the Exalted One has not declared.”

Thereupon the king wanted to know why the Buddha had rejected these four questions. To understand the reason we must first understand what these four views imply. The views concern a
Tathêgata, which here means not only a supreme Buddha but any liberated sage. The four views, however, conceive the Tathêgata in terms of the category of selfhood; assuming that the liberated being is a substantial self, they formulate contradictory theses on the fate of that self. The first view, which is conditioned by the craving for existence, maintains that those who have reached the highest goal continue on after death in some metaphysical dimension, either as distinct individuals or as absorbed into some transpersonal spiritual essence. This answer is the one given by most religions, including several later interpretations of Buddhism.

The second answer—that a Tathêgata does not exist after death—reflects the craving for nonexistence, for annihilation. The theorist regards the Perfect One as a truly existent self whose fate at death is complete annihilation. From this perspective deliverance is nothing more than the absolute dissolution of a real self.

The third answer seeks a compromise: everything impermanent in a Tathêgata would be annihilated at death, but the permanent essence, his soul, would remain. The fourth answer tries to escape the predicament by formulating a “neither-nor” solution—a skeptical approach that still implicitly accepts the validity of the Tathêgata as a real self.

All four formulas have been rejected by the Buddha as wrong views. They all presuppose that there is an “I” distinct from the world—an “I” which is either raised to eternal life or annihilated in the abyss of nothingness—while in reality “I” and “world” are mere abstractions posited on the basis of the five aggregates that constitute the process of experience. Only the Enlightened Ones
and their wise disciples can actually see this as it is. Those who do not share this insight assume one of the four speculative views. They suppose either that an “I,” an essentially permanent “self,” is wandering through samsara, the round of birth and death, gradually ascending higher and higher until it is liberated into the divine essence; or they conclude that liberation is simply the destruction of a real self; or they attempt to formulate a syncretic position; or they fall into skepticism.

The Buddha, however, teaches that there is no real “I” or “self” to be either projected into eternity or utterly destroyed; such a substantial self has never existed and thus has never wandered through samsara. What we call “I” and what we call “world” are in reality a constantly changing process, always in flux. This process throws up the illusions of “I” and “world,” which then become objects of speculation regarding their past origin and future destiny. The way to liberation requires that we stop speculating about the “I,” abandon our habitual views and formulas, and directly examine the phenomena on the basis of which views of self are formulated: the concrete processes of mind and body.

Liberation is to be won, not by fashioning metaphysical hypotheses, but by observing with mindfulness the arising and passing away of the five aggregates: form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. All these phenomena have arisen due to causes; therefore they are impermanent and subject to decay cannot be a self. Since the five aggregates are subject to destruction—since they become sick, disintegrate, and pass away—they are not “my” self, they are not “mine”; they are
merely empty phenomena occurring through conditions.

Because all views of self are only mental constructions, products of speculative thought, any designation of the Enlightened One after death is an illusion born from a compulsive urge for conceptual certainty. Whoever has followed the Buddha’s Teaching, as Khema did, is greatly relieved to see that the Buddha did not teach the destruction of an existing entity, the annihilation of a self. We live in a world of perpetual destruction and uncontrollable transiency, in the realm of death, and whatever we look upon as “I” and “mine” is constantly vanishing. It is only by renouncing these things that we can reach a refuge of true peace and security. Thus the Blessed One proclaimed: “Open are the doors to the Deathless. Let those with ears send forth faith.”

In her discussion with King Pasenadi, Khema illustrated her point with a simile. She asked the king whether he had a skillful mathematician or statistician who could calculate for him how many grains of sand are contained in the river Ganges. The king replied that this was not possible, for the grains of sand in the Ganges were innumerable and incalculable. The nun then asked him whether he knew of anyone who could figure out how many gallons of water are contained in the great ocean. That, too, the king considered impossible, for the ocean is deep, immeasurable, hard to fathom. Just so, said Khema, is the Tathāgata. Whoever wishes to define the Perfect One can only do so through the five aggregates, yet those who have reached awakening no longer hold to any of them as their personal identity: “The Tathāgata is released from reckoning by form, feeling, perception, volitional
formations, and consciousness; he is deep, immeasurable, hard to fathom like the great ocean.” Therefore it is not appropriate to say that after death the Tathāgata exists or does not exist, or that he both exists and does not exist, or that he neither exists nor does not exist. None of these designations can define the indefinable.

The king rejoiced in the penetrating explanation of the nun Khemā. Later he met the Buddha and asked him the same four questions, and the master replied exactly as Khemā had done, using the very same words. The king was amazed and recounted his conversation with the holly nun Khema, the woman disciple who excelled in wisdom.\footnote{SN.2. p. 544-549.}

4.1.6. Conclusion

She was proud of her beauty. But, when the Buddha preached the Dhamma of “The beauty is subject to decay” to her, she realized it. Later, she entered the Order of the Nun. In the Buddha’s Sīsana even women can get a chance to attain Arahanthood if they want to be it. The Buddha gave the special chance to women. That is why women should be grateful to the Buddha. The Nun Khemā could get the special chance which was given by the Buddha. She fulfilled the perfections (paramīs) for one incalculable and one hundred thousand aeons so that she could get a chance which she wanted. As a result, she was the foremost in wisdom as she wanted. If some one wants to get what he or she wants, he or she should try to get it. In this way, she or he can get
what she or he wants. Otherwise, he or she cannot get it. This is the Buddha’s practical way. The account of the nun KhemÈ who excelled in wisdom had been mentioned in this way.

4.2. BhaddÈkuÓÉalakesÈ,

4.2.1. Introduction

The following account of the nun, foremost of the bhikkhunÈs with respect to quickness of understanding (khippÈbhiÓÔa) is taken from A~guttara NikÈya and its commentary, SaÑyutta NikÈya and its commentary, Kuddaka NikÈya and its commentaries such as Dhammapada commentary, TherÈghÈthÈ commentary.

In RÈjagaha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, there lived a girl of good family named BhaddÈ, the only daughter of a rich merchant. Her parents kept her confined to the top floor of a seven-storied mansion, for she had a passionate nature and they were afraid that her awakening sexuality would lead her into trouble. One day BhaddÈ heard a commotion down below in the street, and when she looked out the window she saw a criminal being led to the place of execution. He was a young man of station who had become a thief and was caught committing a robbery. As soon as BhaddÈ set eyes upon him love arose in her heart, and she lay down on her bed, refusing to eat unless she could have him for her husband. Her parents tried to dissuade her from such folly, but she would see no alternative. Then her rich father sent a generous bribe to the guard and asked him to bring the man to his mansion.

The guard did as he was instructed, substituting a local derelict for the robber. The merchant gave the robber to his
daughter in marriage, hopeful that his character might alter through this sudden change of fortune. Soon after the wedding, however, the bridegroom became obsessed with a desire to take possession of his wife’s jewelry. Thus he told her that while he was being led to the execution block he had vowed that if he could escape death he would make an offering to a certain mountain deity. He urged Bhaddê to put on all her finest ornaments and accompany him to this deity’s haunt, a cliff off the top of a steep mountain. When they came to the cliff, called ‘Robbers’ Precipice’ because it was here that the king would have criminals thrown to their death, her husband demanded that Bhaddê hand over all her jewelry to him. Bhaddê saw only one way to escape this predicament. She asked her husband permission to pay final obeisance to him, and as she embraced him she threw him over the cliff, to be dashed to pieces down below.

Burdened by the enormity of her deed, Bhaddê had no desire to return to lay life, for sensual pleasures and possessions no longer had any meaning for her. Therefore she decided to become a wandering ascetic. First she entered the Order of the Jains, and as a special penance her hair was torn out by the roots when she ordained. But it grew again and became very curly, for which reason she was called KuÔÉalakesê, which means “Curly-hair.”

4.2.2. Bhaddê in the Religious Life

The teaching of the Jain sect did not satisfy her, so she became a solitary wanderer. Traveling through India, she visited many spiritual teachers, learned their doctrines, and thereby
obtained an excellent knowledge of religious texts and philosophies. She became especially skilled in the art of debate and in a short time became one of the most famous debaters in India. Whenever she entered a town, she would make a sandpile and stick a rose-apple branch into it, announcing that whoever would engage in debate with her should notify her by trampling upon the sandpile.

One day she came to SÈvatthi and again erected her little monument. At that time the Venerable Sariputta was staying at the Jetavana monastery. He heard of the arrival of BhaddÈ and, as a sign of his willingness for debate, he told several children to go and trample on the sandpile. Thereupon BhaddÈ went to Jetavana, confident of victory, accompanied by a large number of people.

She put a number of questions to SÈriputta, and he answered them all until she had nothing more to ask. Then SÈriputta questioned her. Already the first question affected BhaddÈ profoundly, namely, “What is the one?” She remained silent, unable to determine what the elder could have intended. Surely, she pondered, he did not mean “God,” or “Brahman,” or “the Infinite.” But what was it then? The answer should have been “nutriment,” because all beings are sustained by food. Admitting defeat, BhaddÈ asked Sariputta for the answer, but he said that he would tell her only if she enters the Buddhist Order. The elder then sent her to the bhikkhuÈs and had her ordained, and after few days she attained arahantship.¹⁸⁸

Such is the version of BhaddÈ’s meeting with the Dhamma that has been recorded in the Dhammapada Commentary, but BhaddÈ’s

verses in the *Therīgāthā* present a different picture:

Formerly I traveled in a single cloth
With plucked hair, covered with mud,
Imagining flaws in the flawless
And seeing no flaws in what is flawed.

Having come out from my daytime dwelling,
On the mountain Vulture’s Peak
I saw the spotless Enlightened One
Accompanied by the Bhikkhu Sangha.

Then I humbly bowed down on my knees
And in his presence saluted him.
“Come, Bhaddī,” he said to me-
And that was my ordination.189

In this version the meeting between Bhaddī and the Buddha takes place, not at Sāvatthī, but at Vulture’s peak near Rējagaha, and Bhaddī receives ordination, not by the established procedure of a formal ceremony, but simply by the Buddha’s invitation to her to become a bhikkhunī. The discussion that took place between them is not recorded in the verses themselves, but Bhaddī must have attained realization very quickly; for the Buddha later declared her to be the foremost of the bhikkhunīs with respect to quickness of understanding (*khippībhīsā*). The *Therīgāthā* Commentary, in

189 Khu Thg P. 391(v.107.108.109.)
commenting on the verses, attempts to reconcile the verses and the old commentarial tradition. According to this version, after BhaddÊ admitted defeat to SÊriputta, she paid homage to him and he brought her into the presence of the Buddha. Then the Teacher, aware that her wisdom was ripe, spoke to her a verse of the Dhammapada:

Though one hears a thousand verses
Made of lines devoid of meaning,
Better is a single meaningful line
By hearing which one is set at peace.

At the conclusion of the verse she attained arahantship together with the analytical knowledges (paimisambhidÈÖÈna). Thereupon she requested the going forth. The Buddha consented to this and sent her to the Order of nuns, where she received formal ordination.\footnote{Khu Dhp Comy 1. P. 412-417. (v.102)}

The ApÊdÊna offers still another perspective on BhaddÊ’s awakening. After BhaddÊ had gone forth as a Jain nun she studied their philosophical system. One day, while she was sitting alone reflecting on their doctrine, a dog approached her with a mutilated human hand in its mouth, which it deposited right in front of her. When BhaddÊ saw this, and noticed that the hand was crawling with worms, she received a deep spiritual shock. In a state of excitement she asked who could explain to her the significance of that incident. Her inquiries led her to the Buddhist monks, who brought her to the Master:
He then taught me the Dhamma,
The aggregates, sense bases, and elements,
The Leader told me about foulness,
Impermanence, suffering, and nonself.

Having heard the Dhamma from him,
I purified the vision of the Dhamma.
When I had understood true Dhamma,
(I asked for) the going forth and ordination.

Requested, the Leader then said to me,
“Come, O BhaddÈ!”
Then, having been fully ordained,
I observed a little streamlet of water.

Through that stream of foot-washing water
I knew the process of rise and fall.
Then I reflected that all formations
Are exactly the same in nature.

Right on the spot my mind was released,
Totally freed by the end of clinging.
The Victor then appointed me the chief
Of those with quick understanding.\footnote{Khu Ap Pali 2. P. 239-243,(v. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45.)}
The last couplet refers to the occasion when the Buddha declared Bhaddë the nun foremost in quickness of understanding. This was a quality she shared with the monk BÈhiya, who reached arahantship in an instant when the Buddha told him: “In the seen there should be for you only the seen, in the heard, in the sensed only the sensed, in the cognized only the cognized”. Both had grasped the highest truth so quickly, and had penetrated it so deeply, that in a split-second they ascended from the stage of a worldling to arahantship.

Bhaddë’s later life was spent in traveling over the North Indian countryside, preaching the Dhamma and guiding others to the same goal of deliverance that she herself had reached:

Free from defilements, for fifty years
I traveled in A~ga and Magadha.
Among the Vajjis, in KÈsi and Kosala,
I ate the almsfood of the land.

That lay-supporter-wise man indeed-
Who gave a robe to BhaddÈ,
Has generated abundant merit,
For she is one free of all ties.\(^{192}\)

### 4.2.3. Conclusion

When we study the story of Bhaddakundala Kesatheri, we can get

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\(^{192}\) Khu Thg P. 391. its Comy P. 102-111. (v. 110.111.)
the generable knowledges. She was very beautiful and rich. She could be married with a man, who is very handsome and rich, if she wanted him. But she could not wait for it because there was strong attachment of a certain thief who was very handsome and very rich in her mind at the present time. She tried to get it. In this case, we know if some one becomes increasingly attached to some one, she or he is not shameful because of attachment. Later on, his husband, thief tried to kill her. She escaped her husband’s assassin by her cleverness. We can know her cleverness. Finally, she entered the Order of the Nun (Bhikkhunīs). Later on, she attained arahant-hood (the Noble One) because she listened to one verse (Yo ca ghīthā sataṁ bhēse antthapadasañhitā ekañ dhammapadañ seyyo yañ sutvē upasammati v.102) preached by the Buddha. As to the above verse, though some one listens to many verses, he or she cannot get arahant-hood. It is useless or unessential. Otherwise, he or she attains arahant-hood because he or she listens to only one verse. It is useful or essential. Thus, though the Buddha’s teaching is less, it is very beneficial for His disciples. Later on, the Buddha declared Bhaddī as the nun foremost in quickness of understanding. The Buddha never discriminates between man and woman. The Buddha conferred the special title to not only men but also woman if they tried to get it. This is the Buddha’s nature. The account of the nun Bhaddīkuṭālakesa who excelled in quickness of understanding had been mentioned in this way.
4.3. Paôëcërê,  

4.3.1 Introduction  

The following account of the nun foremost of the bhikkhunês with respect to quickness of understanding (khippêbhiôôa) is taken from A~guttara Nikêsya, its commentary, Sañyutta Nikêsya, its commentary, Kuddaka Nikêsya, its commentaries such as Dhammapada commentary, Therêghêthê commentary.

Paôëcërê was the beautiful daughter of a very wealthy merchant of Savatthi. When she was sixteen years of age her parents had confined to the top floor of a seven-story high mansion, where she was surrounded by guards to prevent her from keeping company with young men. In spite of this precaution, she became involved in
a love affair with a servant in her parents’ house.

When her parents arranged a marriage for her with a young man of equal social status, she decided to elope with her lover. Having escaped from the tower by disguising herself as a servant girl, she met her lover in town, and the couple went to live in a village far from SÈvatthi. There the husband earned his living by farming a small plot of land, and the young wife had to do all the menial chores, which formerly had been performed by her patents’ servants. Thus she reaped the results of her deed.

When she became pregnant she begged her husband to take her back to her parents’ house to give birth there; for, she said, one’s mother and father always have a soft spot in their hearts for their child and can forgive any wrongdoing. Her husband refused; however, afraid that her parents would have him arrested or even killed. When she realized that he would not yield to her entreaties, she decided to go by herself. So one day, while her husband was away at work, she slipped out the door and set out down the road toward SÈvatthi. When her husband learned from the neighbours what had happened, he followed her and soon caught up with her. Though he tried to persuade her to return, she would not listen to him but insisted on continuing. Before they could reach SÈvatthi the birth-pains started and she soon gave birth to a baby son. As she had no more reason to go to her parents’ house, they turned back.

Sometime later PaÔÈcÈrÈ became pregnant second time. Again she requested her husband to take her home to her parents, again he refused, and again she took matters into her own hands
and started off, carrying her son. When her husband followed her and pleaded with her to return with him, she refused to listen. After they had traveled about half way to SÈvatthi a fearful storm arose quite out of season, with thunder and lightning and incessant rain. Just then her birth-pains started.

She asked her husband to find her some shelter. The husband went off to search for material to build a shed. As he was chopping down some saplings a poisonous snake, hidden in an anthill, came out and bit him. Its poison was like molten lava and instantly he fell down dead. PaÔÈcÈrÈ waited and waited for him, but in vain. Then she gave birth to a second son. Throughout the night both children, terrified by the buffeting of the storm, screamed at the top of their lungs, but the only protection their mother could offer them was her body, lean and haggard from her tribulations. In the morning she placed the newborn baby on her hip, gave a finger to the older child, and set out upon the path her husband had taken saying: “Come, dear child, your father has left us.” As she turned the bend in the road she found her husband lying dead, his body stiff as a board. She wailed and lamented, blaming herself for his death and continued on her journey.

After some time they came to the river Aciravati. On account of the rain the river had swollen and was waist-high, with a violent current. Feeling too weak to wade across with both children, PaÔÈcÈrÈ left the older boy on the near bank and carried the baby across to the other side. Then she returned to take the first-born across. When she was in midstream, a hawk in search of prey saw the newborn baby. Mistaking it for a piece of meat, the hawk came
swooping down, pounced on the child, and flew off with the baby in its talons, while PaÔÈcÈrÈ could only look on helplessly and scream. The older boy saw his mother stop in midstream and heard her shouts. He thought she was calling him and started out after her, but as soon as he stepped into the river he was swept off by the turbulent current.

Wailing and lamenting, PaÔÈcÈrÈ went on her way, half-crazed by the triple tragedy that had befallen her: the loss of her husband and both her sons in a single day. But more misfortune lay ahead. As she approached SÈvatthi she met a traveler who was coming out from the city, and she asked him about her family. “Ask me about any other family in town but that one,” he told her. “Please don’t ask me about that family.” She insisted, however, and thus he had to speak: “Last night, during the terrible storm, their house collapsed, killing both the elderly couple and their son. All three were cremated together just a short while ago. There,” he said, pointing to a wisp of pale blue smoke swirling up in the distance, “If you look where I’m pointing you can see the smoke from their funeral pyre.”

When she saw the smoke, instantly PaÔÈcÈrÈ went mad. She tore off her clothing and ran about naked, weeping and wailing, “Both my sons are dead, my husband on the road lies dead, my mother and father and brother burn on one funeral pyre!” those who saw her called her a crazy fool, threw rubbish at her, and pelted her with clods of earth, but she continued on until she reached the outskirts of SÈvatthi.
4.3.2. The mad PaÔÈcÈrÈ and the Buddha’s Dhamma

At this time, the Buddha was residing at the Jetavana monastery surrounded by a multitude of disciples. When he saw PaÔÈcÈrÈ at the entrance to the monastery he recognized her as one who was ripe for his message of deliverance. The lay disciples cried out, “Don’t let that crazy woman come here!” But the Master said, “Do not hinder her; let her come to me.” When she had drawn near, he told her, “Sister, regain your mindfulness!” Instantly, she regained her mindfulness. A kindly man threw her his outer cloak. She put it on, and approaching the Enlightened One, she prostrated herself at his feet and told him her tragic story. The Teacher listened to her patiently, with deep compassion, and then replied, “PaÔÈcÈrÈ, do not be troubled any more. You have come to one who is able to be your shelter and refuge. It is not only today that you have met with calamity and disaster, but throughout this beginningless round of existence, weeping over the loss of sons and others dear to you, you have shed more tears than the waters of the four oceans.” As he went on speaking about the perils of samsara, her grief subsided. The Buddha then concluded his instructions with the following verses:

The four oceans contain but a little water
Compared to all the tears that we have shed,
Smitten by sorrow, bewildered by pain.
Why, O woman, are you still heedless?
No sons are there for shelter,
Nor father, nor related folk;
For one seized by the Ender
Kinsmen provide no shelter.

Having well understood this fact,
The wise man well restrained by virtues
Quickly indeed should clear
The path going to NibbÈna.\textsuperscript{193}

This exposition of the Enlightened One penetrated her mind so deeply that she could completely grasp the impermanence of all conditioned things and the universality of suffering. By the time the Buddha had finished his discourse, it was not a lamenting and mad woman that sat at his feet but a stream-enterer, a knower of the Dhamma, one assured of final liberation.

\textbf{4.3.3. Attaining Arahanthood}

Immediately after attaining stream-entry PaÔÈcÈrÈ requested the going forth and the higher ordination, and the Buddha sent her to the bhikkunÊs. After entering the BhikkunÊ Sangha, the order of nuns, PaÔÈcÈrÈ practiced the Dhamma with great diligence. Her efforts soon bore fruit and she attained her goal\textsuperscript{194}. She describes her development in her verses in the TherÊgÈthÈ:

\textsuperscript{193} Khu Dhp Comy 1. P 437-442
\textsuperscript{194} Khu Dhp Comy 1. P 437-442.(dhp- v. 288. Thg. v. 501.)
Ploughing the field with their ploughs,
Sowing seeds upon the ground,
Maintaining their wives and children,
Young men acquire wealth.

Then why, when I am pure in virtue,
Practicing the Master’s Teaching,
Have I not attained Nibbêna-
For I am not lazy, nor puffed up?

Having washed my feet,
I reflected upon the waters.
When I saw the foot water flow
From the high ground down the slope,
My mind became concentrated
Like an excellent thoroughbred steed.

Having taken a lamp, I entered my cell.
I inspected the bed and sat down on the couch.
Then, having taken a needle,
I pulled down the wick.
The liberation of the mind
Was like the quenching of the lamp.\(^{195}\)

\(^{195}\) Khu Thg p. 342. (v.112. 113.114. 115. 116.)
4.3.4. The Preserver of the Vinaya

As Paścācīrē observed the water trickling down the slope, she noticed that some streams sank into the ground; others flowed down a little farther, while others flowed all the way to the bottom of the slope. This, she recognized, was a perfect metaphor for the nature of sentient existence: some beings live for a very short time only, like her children; others live into their adult years, like her husband; still others live into old age, like her parents. But just as all the streams of water eventually had to disappear into the soil, so Death, the End-maker, lays his hand upon all living beings, and none can escape his grasp.

When this realization dawned upon Paścācīrē her mind immediately became composed. With steady concentration she contemplated conditioned phenomena as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. But still, in spite of her efforts, she could not make the breakthrough to final liberation. Fatigued, she decided to retire for the night. When she entered her dwelling and sat down on the bed, just as she extinguished the oil lamp all the momentum she had built up through her previous practice bore fruit. In a fraction of a second, simultaneously with the quenching of the lamp, supreme knowledge arose. She had reached her goal, Nibbāna, the permanent quenching of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion.

During her career as a bhikkhunī, Paścācīrē achieved the distinction of being designated by the Buddha as the foremost among the bhikkhunīs who are experts in the Vinaya (etadaggaṁ bhikkhunīnaṁ vinayadharīnaṁ). She was thus the female
counterpart of the Elder UpÊli, the chief Vinaya specialist among the bhikkhus. This appointment was the fruition of an ancient aspiration. We are told that in the Dispensation of the Buddha Padumuttara PaÔècÈrÈ had seen the Teacher assign to an elder nun the position of preeminence among nuns versed in the Vinaya, and it seemed to her as if he were taking that nun by the arm and admitting her to the Garden of Delight. So she formed her resolve and made this aspiration: “Under a Buddha like you may I become preeminent among nuns versed in the Vinaya.” The Lord Padumuttara, extending his mind into the future, perceived that her aspiration would be fulfilled and gave her the prediction.

4.3.5. Nuns’ Views on PaÔècÈrÈ

It is perhaps natural that PaÔècÈrÈ should have been particularly concerned with discipline, since in her earlier years she had experienced so keenly the bitter fruit of reckless behavior. In the order of nuns she had learned that intensive training in discipline is indispensable for achieving peace and serenity. Through her own experience, moreover, she had acquired a deep understanding of the ways of the human heart and was thus able to help other nuns in their training. Many of the nuns turned to her for guidance and found great consolation in her advice.

One example is Sister CandÈ, who expresses her gratitude to PaÔècÈrÈ in a verse of the TherÊgÈthÈ:

Because she had compassion for me,
PaÔècÈrÈ gave me the going forth;
Then she gave me an exhortation,
And enjoined me in the ultimate goal.

Having heard her word,
I followed her instruction;
The lady’s exhortation was not vain.
I am canker-free with the triple knowledge! 196

Another bhikkhunī, Uttarī, reported how Paścemiṇī spoke to a group of nuns about conduct and discipline:

Exert yourselves in the Buddha’s Teaching,
Which having done, one does not repent.
Having quickly washed your feet,
Sit down on one side.

Having aroused the mind,
Make it one-pointed and well concentrated.
Examine the formations
As alien and not as self. 197

Uttarī took Paścemiṇī’s words to heart and thereby attained the three true knowledges.

In the Therīgāthī there is a description of how Paścemiṇī used to teach other nuns and of the benefits they derived from her

196 khu, Thg. Pali. 392. (v.125.126.)
197 khu, Thg Pali. p. 392. (v. 176-177)
counsel. These verses, according to the colophon, are spoken by an unspecified group of thirty elder nuns who declared arahantship in the presence of PaØÈcÈrÈ:

“Having taken up the pestle,
Young men pound the grain.
Maintaining their wives and children,
Young men acquire wealth.

Practice the Buddha’s Teaching,
Which having done, one does not repent.
Having quickly washed your feet,
Sit down on one side.
Devoting yourself to serenity of mind,
Practice the Buddha’s Teaching.”

Having heard her advice, PaØÈcÈrÈ’s instruction,
They cleaned off their feet and sat down to one side.
Then, devoted to serenity of mind,
They practiced the Buddha’s Teaching.

In the first watch of the night
They recollected their former births.
In the night’s middle watch
They purified the divine eye.
In the last watch of the night
They sundered the mass of darkness.
Having risen, they worshipped her feet,
“Your instruction has been taken to heart.
As the thirty gods honor Indra,
The one unconquered in battle,
So shall we dwell honoring you.
We are cankerless, bearers of the triple knowledge.”

PaÔÈcÈrÈ was able to effect the change from a frivolous young girl to a Sangha elder so quickly because in previous births she had already developed the requisite faculties. Under previous Buddhas, it is said, she had been a nun many times. The insights she had thereby gained were hidden beneath her actions in subsequent lives, awaiting the right conditions to ripen. When her Master, the Buddha Gotama, appeared in the world, she quickly found her way to him, spurred on by suffering and by the unconscious urge to find a way to release from the beginningless round of rebirths. Drawn to the Awakened One and his emancipating Dhamma, she entered the homeless life and attained to unconditioned freedom.199

4.3.6. Conclusion
PaÔÈcÈrÈ had mother, father, relatives, two sons and husband. But they died due to the various kinds of miseries such as storm, snake and drowsing. She was so mad so that she could not

198 Thg Comy P. 111-120. (v. 125, 126, or 112,113,114,115,115.)
read her mind because they died. At that time, she went here and there. She felt in grief and pain severely. But no body can save her. Finally she met the Buddha. When she had listened to the Dhamma of mindfulness, she changed from a mad woman to normal person and became a stream-wanner (sotëpanna). Thus, the Buddha’s Dhamma make someone free from suffering, grief and pain.

The four oceans contain but a little water if we compared to all the tears that we have shed, smitten by sorrow, and bewildered by pain. Though it, we know that we have gone round Sañsara (birth and death) for a long time, we cannot account our lives and Sañsara is too long. After listening to the Buddha’s Dhamma, she entered the Order of Bhikkhunī. We know that the Buddha gave a chance to all persons who descended from the highest and lowest class to enter His Sēsana if they want it. When PaŌcērī Bhikkhunī practiced meditation severely, she attained Arahanthood. Later on, The Buddha conferred the title (foremost in Vinaya) on her. It is but obvious that one who practices or observes austerity and meditation could get some title in the Buddha’s Sēsana and PaŌcērī is an example of this.