

Songs of Maya and Mahapajapati

Maya: from Garling (2021), *The Woman Who Raised the Buddha* (Cambodia)

Mahapajapati: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/thig/thig.06.06.olen.html> (Therigatha)

Maya

Little Sister Gotami!
Hold to these words of guidance
I now ask you to receive
Little Sister, forgive me.

Since giving birth to my son
Only seven days have passed
My life withers to nothing
As I pass on to the next world.

What can I do, when we are
Born only to be destroyed?
All humans and animals
Die and decay by nature.

Never lasting, never sure
Life is as the Pali phrase
ANICCAM DUKKHAM ANATTA
Little darling, you must know.

Now as for me, dear sister,
Don't worry, for death is sure;
No more can I hold my son
The refuge of gods and men.

You who pity your sister,
You, lovely girl, that is why
I ask you to hug and hold
This motherless child of mine.

Nurse him and bathe his body
Attend to him day and night
Care for him like no other
Oh my golden girl, don't stop!

Mahapajapati Gotami

Buddha! Hero! Praise be to you!
You foremost among all beings!
You who have released me from pain,
And so many other beings too.

All suffering has been understood.
The source of craving has withered.
Cessation has been touched by me
On the noble eight-fold path.

I've been mother and son before;
And father, brother — grandmother too.
Not understanding what was real,
I flowed-on without finding [peace].

But now I've seen the Blessed One!
This is my last compounded form.
The on-flowing of birth has expired.
There's no more re-becoming now.

See the gathering of followers:
Putting forth effort, self controlled,
Always with strong resolution
—This is how to honor the Buddhas!

Surely for the good of so many
Did Maya give birth to Gotama,
Who bursts asunder the mass of pain
Of those stricken by sickness and death.