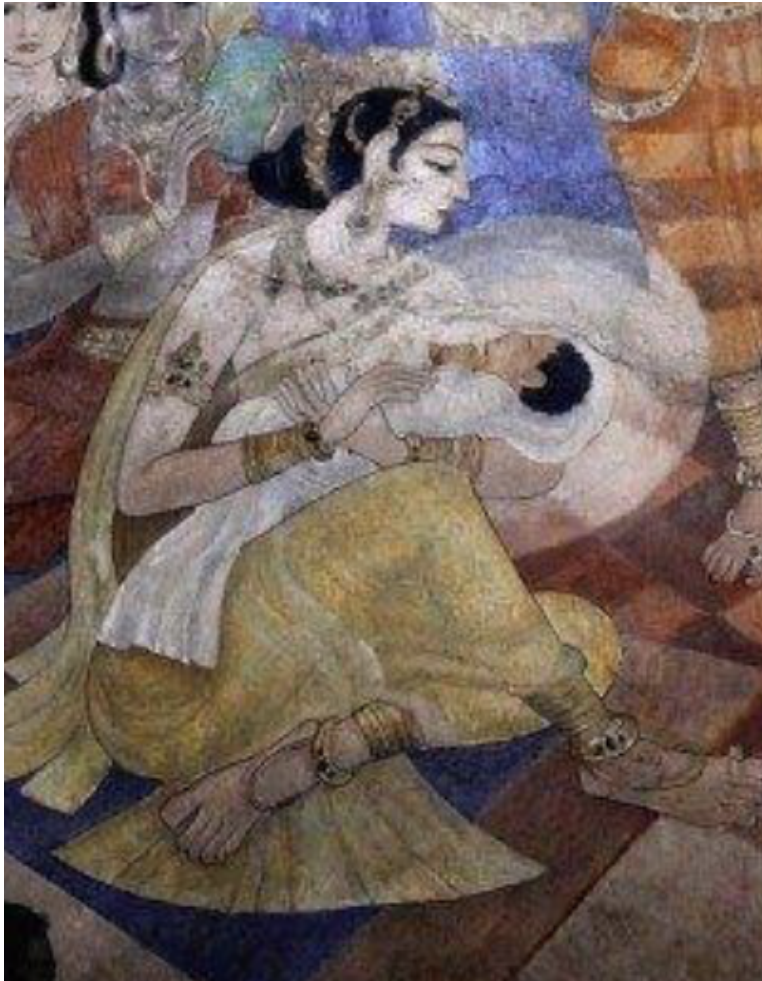


**“Maya’s Guidance for Gotami”**

**A Dharma song from the Cambodian Dharma song tradition,  
translated and performed by Trent Walker**



**Gotami holding the infant Buddha  
Extract from a mural by Somabandu Vidyapathi  
Bellanwila Raja Maha Viharaya, Sri Lanka**

**Preface**

According to received biographies of the Buddha, his mother, Maya, died shortly after giving birth to him, and he was subsequently raised by her sister, Mahapajapati Gotami, who later would become the first Buddhist nun.

While the lyrics of this Cambodian Dharma song assume this tragic context, they actually highlight the relationship between the Buddha’s birth mother and his adoptive mother. Performed with a graceful, flowing melody, this song lets us hear the voice of Maya on her deathbed, exhorting her younger sister to care for the seven-day-old Buddha as her own child.

The fourth and fifth stanzas of the song include references to the canonical Pali phrase for the Three Marks of Existence, “Aniccam Dukkham Anatta” (impermanence, suffering, and no-self), and to an epithet of the Buddha as “the refuge of gods and men.” Taken together with the third stanza, these stanzas ground this story of the emotional connections between two sisters in more general Buddhist teachings on death, the Three Marks of Existence, and the Buddha as a supreme refuge for all.

**Song**

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

ហៃនាងគោតមីស្រីម្ចាស់អើយ  
ស្រីអើយនាងចាំបណ្តាំណា  
បងបានផ្តាំផ្តាច់លើកន្តិដ្ឋា  
សូមម្ចាស់មេត្តាត្រាប្រណី។

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

បងបានចម្លងព្រះអយ្យបុត្រ  
កំណត់បានត្រឹម ៧ ថ្ងៃ  
នឹងសូន្យជីវិតចោលបុត្រថ្លៃ  
ក្សិណក្ស័យទៅកាន់លោកខាងមុខ ។

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

ធ្វើម្តេចសង្ខារជីវាសត្វ  
កើតហើយតែងស្លាប់ខ្ចាត់បាត់អន្តរាយ  
រាល់រូបមនុស្សសត្វផងទាំងឡាយ  
សុទ្ធតែបែកធ្លាយជាធម្មតា ។

Never lasting, never sure  
Life is as the Pali phrase  
ANICCAM DUKKHAM ANATTA

មិនទៀងមិនទាត់មិនកំណត់  
សឹងដូចមានបទបាលីថា  
អនិច្ចំ ទុក្ខំ អនត្តា

Little darling, you must know.

ចូរពៅពុំងារាងបានដឹង ។

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.

ចំណែករូបបងនេះប្អូនអើយ  
ទៀងតែស្លាប់ហើយកុំរំពឹង  
ខាននៅរក្សាបុត្រព្រលឹង  
ដែលជាពំនឹងមនុស្សទេវតា ។

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

ហេតុនេះចូរឃ្នូនស្នូនពិសី  
ដែលមានប្រណីដល់ជេដ្ឋា  
សូមថែបីមមថ្មមរក្សា  
ឱរសកំព្រាតតព្រះមេ ។

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

បំបៅហើយនាងលើកដូតទឹក  
ទាំងថ្ងៃយប់ព្រឹកកុំទំនេរ  
ថែធូនរក្សាជាងអស់គេ  
ណាស្រីមាសមេកុំឲ្យខាន ។

“Maya’s Guidance for Gotami,” translated and performed by Trent Walker.  
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