

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Mahākassapa

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[3. Mahākassapa]

When the World-Chief had passed away¹
the people, with exalted minds,
intoxicated with delight
did *pūjā* for the Neutral One,
the Teacher, who was the World's Best,
Blessed One, Padumuttara. (1) [399, 400a-b]

When their religious emotion²
was born, great joy³ arose in me.
Gathering my family and friends
I spoke these words [to all of them]:
“the Great Hero has passed away;⁴
surely we should do a *pūjā*!” (2) [400c-d, 401]

They agreed saying, “Excellent!”
which made me smile even more.
“We’ll make a meritorious pyre
over the Buddha, the World-Chief.”⁵ (3) [402]

We made a well-made festoon work
which was one hundred hands in height,
and we raised up into the sky
a mansion fifty hands higher.⁶ (4) [403]

Having made that festoon work there,
decorated with rows of stripes,
bringing pleasure to [my] own mind
I worshipped that excellent shrine. (5) [404]

Like a blazing column of fire,
like a regal *sal* tree in bloom,
like Indra’s post up in the sky
it shined in the four directions. (6) [405]

¹*parinibbute*, lit., “when he had fully gone out” “when he reached nirvana”.

²*saṃvega*.

³*pīti*.

⁴lit., “reached nirvana”

⁵the locatives allow for a double entendre, what is given, and/or: “we will make a heap of merit with respect to the Buddha, the World-Chief.”

⁶lit., “one hundred and fifty hands high”

⁷taking the PTS alternate reading *tattha* for *tesu*, which also follows BJTS

After making [my] mind pleased there⁷
and doing much that was wholesome,
recalling karma from the past
I was born with the thirty [gods].⁸ (7) [406]

I possessed a divine chariot
yoked with one thousand [fine] horses.
That tall residence of mine [there]
was seven stories [tall] in height. (8) [407]

It had one thousand gabled cells;
all [of them were] made out of gold.
It blazed by means of its own power
lighting up every direction. (9) [408]

There were also other doorways
[all] made of rubies [at that time].
With their light they too illumined
the four directions entirely. (10) [409]

Those well-constructed gabled cells
produced by [my past] good karma⁹
and [all] the gemstone [doors] then shined
in ten directions on all sides. (11) [410]

When they were thus [all] shining forth
there was a massive effulgence.
I surpassed all the [other] gods;
that is the fruit of good karma. (12) [411]

Sixty thousand aeons ago
I was the king¹⁰ named Ubbiddha.
Victorious on [all] four sides
I took the earth as residence. (13) [412]

In that most auspicious aeon
for fully thirty times I was
a wheel-turning king with great strength
deriving from my own karma. (14) [413]

⁸*tidasañ*, i.e., the thirty-three gods, in Tāvatisa heaven

⁹*puññakammābhiniḃbattā*, lit., “produced by meritorious karma”

¹⁰lit., “kṣatriya”

Possessor of the seven jewels
I'm lord of the four continents.
And in that place my residence
was as tall as the tree of Indra.¹¹ (15) [413-414]

It was twenty-four [leagues]¹² in length,
[and] in width [it measured] twelve [leagues].
[My] city was named Rammaka;
it had strong ramparts and gateways. (16) [414-415]

It was five hundred [leagues] in length,
in width two hundred fifty [leagues].¹³
It was crowded with groups of men
just like the thirty-three gods' city. (17) [415]

Like needles in a needle-case¹⁴
there were twenty [different] bazaars¹⁵
[where] they gather, one another;
[the city] was [very] crowded. (18) [416]

Of such a sort was my city,
with elephants, horses, chariots
and [very] crowded with people:
Rammaka, excellent city. (19) [417]

Having lived there and having left
I returned to the world of gods.
In this, my final existence,
I'm born in an accomplished clan.¹⁶ (20) [418]

Born into a brahmin family
I had a massive heap of gems.
Eight hundred million¹⁷ [worth of] gold¹⁸
abandoned, I went forth renouncing. (21) [419]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.

¹¹*indalatṭhi*

¹²following the cty, which understands the numbers to refer to *yojanas*

¹³lit "half of that," i.e., 250

¹⁴following BJTS in reading *sūcchighare* and *sūcchi* for *sucighare* and *suci* (PTS).

¹⁵following the cty in reading *āpaṇa* for *paṇṇu*.

¹⁶lit., "there was an accomplished clan for me".

¹⁷lit., "eighty *koṭis*"

¹⁸following BJTS Sinhala gloss, which takes *'bhiraññassa* as *ran*.

Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. [420]

Being in Best Buddha's presence
was a very good thing for me.
The three knowledges are attained;
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! [421]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (22) [422]

Thus indeed Venerable Mahākassapa Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Mahākassapa Thera is finished.