

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Ratṭhapāla

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[18. Raṭṭhapāla]

A rare elephant, fit for kings,¹
with chariot-pole tusks was given by me
to Blessed Padumuttara,
the World's Best One, the Neutral One. (1) [769]

It included all the trappings,²
white umbrella [and] a mahout;
taking the value of all that
I had a monastery built. (2) [770]

The palaces that I built [there]
[numbered] fifty-four thousand [then];
holding a massive almsgiving³
I gave it⁴ to the Sage So Great. (3) [771]

The Great Sage gave thanks [to me then],
the Self-Become One, Best Person,
[then] he preached the path beyond death
to all of the smiling people. (4) [772]

Then Buddha, named for the lotus⁵
made this prophesy about me;
seated in the monks' Assembly
he uttered these verses [aloud]: (5) [773]

"I'll relate the karmic results
of this one⁶ who constructed [here]
fifty-four thousand palaces;
[all of] you listen to my words: (6) [774]

¹lit., "a vehicle for kings". See note to [666]

²reading *sakappaṇo* ("with the trappings for an elephant," BJTS, alt. in cty) for *sātaṭṭhaṇo* ("with a reciter of the *Artharva Veda*," PTS, also cty though the latter understands the term to mean "decorated with the ornaments of an elephant").

³BJTS, cty read *mahoghaṇ*, "a great flood," interpreting it as a flood of alms; PTS reads, more straightforwardly, *mahābhattaṇ*, "a huge almsgiving/rice". The meaning is anyway clear: after giving an almsgiving, Raṭṭhapāla Thera's rebirth precursor dedicated everything to the Buddha.

⁴reading *niyyādesiṇ* ("dedicated," "put into charge," BJTS) for *niyyātesin* ("departed, went out," PTS, cty)

⁵see above v. [701] and note there.

⁶reading *ayam* ("this one," BJTS) for *aham* ("I," the reading of PTS which causes the editor to place the first two lines in quotes, to the effect, "[the one who thought], 'I had 54,000 palaces built.'").

Eighteen thousand huts with gables
will come into being upon
[his] superb heavenly mansion;
they all will be made out of gold. (7) [775]

Fifty times as the king of gods
he will exercise divine rule.
And fifty-eight times he will be
a king who turns the wheel [of law]. (8) [776]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (9) [777]

Falling down from the world of gods,
incited by [his] wholesome roots,
every time he will be reborn
in a rich clan with lots of food. (10) [778]

He afterwards leaving the world,
incited by [his] wholesome roots,
will be the Teacher's follower,
known by the name Raṭṭhapāla. (11) [779]

Being one bent on exertion,
calmed,⁷ devoid of grounds for rebirth,⁸
knowing well all the defilements,
he'll reach nirvana, undefiled." (12) [780]

Rising up, having left the world,
abandoning abundant food,
like one for whom almsfood is phlegm
I have no taste for any food. (13) [781]

My effort bearing the burden
brought me release from attachments.
[Now] I'm bearing my last body
in the Buddha's⁹ dispensation. (14) [782]

⁷*upasanto*

⁸*nirūpadhi*

⁹*sammāsambuddhasāsane*, lit., "in the Supreme (or Great Perfected) Buddha's dispensation"

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (15) [783]

Thus indeed Venerable Raṭṭhapāla Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Raṭṭhapāla Thera is finished.