

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Sopāka

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Printed September 2026

[19. Sopāka]

The Blessed One named Siddhattha
came into my presence [one time]
when I was cleaning¹ a retreat²
on a most fine,³ superb mountain. (1) [784]

Seeing the Buddha who'd arrived
I spread out a woven [grass] mat
for the World's Best, the Neutral One,
and gave [to him] that floral seat. (2) [785]

Sitting on that seat of flowers
Siddhattha the World-Leader
discerning my situation
[then] spoke about impermanence. (3) [786]

"In flux indeed is all that is;
things that arise and [then] decline
are being born [and then] dying;
happy is the relief from them." (4) [787]

Saying this the Omniscient One,
the World's Best One, the Bull of Men,
the Hero⁴ flew into the sky
just like a swan-king in the air. (5) [788]

Abandoning my own dogma
I [then] perceived impermanence.
Meditating for [just] one [day],
[right then and] there I passed away. (6) [789]

Incited by [my] wholesome roots
I [then] enjoyed the two-fold bliss.⁵
When [my] last rebirth was attained

¹BJTS and cty read *sevantassa* ("serving") for *sodhayantassa* ("washing" "making clean"); either term conveys the meaning, elaborated by the cty, that he was a worker at the retreat.

²*pabbhara* is a slope, incline; cty explains that it was a place on the mountain where the monks would relax or be separated from others (*vivekaṭṭhānaṃ*, "leisure spot")

³PTS gives *pavare*, "most excellent;" BJTS reads *vipine*, "forest[ed]" (or "in the forest").

⁴BJTS (and PTS alt.) reads *dhīro* ("the wise one")

⁵*dve sampatti*. See above, n. to [702].

I was born among dog-cookers.⁶(7) [790]

After I set out from the house
I went forth into homelessness.
Dread-locked ascetic seven years,
I attained [my] arahantship. (8) [791]

Energetic,⁷ self-abandoned,
careful about the moral rules,
having pleased the Great Elephant
I got higher ordination. (9) [792]

In the ninety-four aeons since
I did that [good] karma back then
I've come to know no bad rebirth;
that's the fruit of a flower-gift. (10) [793]

In the ninety-fourth aeon since
I obtained that perception [then],
meditating upon that sense
my defilements were [all] destroyed. (11) [794]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (12) [795]

Thus indeed Venerable Sopāka Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Venerable Sopāka Thera is finished.

⁶i.e., despicable, low people. Lit, "I approached a dog-cooker's womb." On the semantic range and history of this insulting term, see David White, "Dogs Die."

⁷lit., "with strenuous effort"