

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Pañcasīlasamādāniya

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[24. Pañcchasīlasamādāniya¹]

In the city, CChandavati,²
I was a servant-man back then.
Bound in the service of others
I could not renounce the world [yet]: (1) [948]

“Being shrouded in great blindness
I’m being scorched by the three fires.³
By what strategy might I then
be set free [from this samsara]? (2) [949]

I lack the things to be given;
I am a miserable servant.
Why then don’t I guard and fulfill
the five [basic] moral precepts? (3) [950]

Nisabha is a follower
of the Sage, Anomadassi.
Having approached him I’ll adopt
the five moral training precepts.” (4) [951]

In those days the normal lifespan
was [full] one hundred thousand years.
For all that time I did protect
the five moral precepts fully. (5) [952]

When the time for [my] death arrived
the gods [all then] consoled me [thus]:
“Happy one, [you will] be served [by]
this one-thousand-horse chariot.” (6) [953]

In my heart, as I breathed my last,⁴
I recalled those [five] moral rules.
Through that karma which was done well
I went on to Tāvatiṃsa. (7) [954]

Thirty times as the king of gods
I exercised divine rule [there].

¹“Acceptor of the Five Moral Precepts”

²see DPPNI:851; the city is only “known” to have existed during the time of previous Buddhas (and during the previous lives of Gotama Buddha).

³city here explains these as the fires of *rāga* (lust), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (ignorance, folly)

⁴lit., “as the last was taking place”

Anointed by celestial nymphs
I enjoyed [much] divine pleasure. (8) [955]

[Fully] five hundred times I ruled
as a monarch who turns the wheel,
[and I did have] much local rule
innumerable by counting. (9) [956]

Falling down from the world of gods,
incited by [my] wholesome roots,
I was born in a rich family
with a big house in Vesāli.⁵ (10) [957]

When the rainy season started,
the Victor's dispensation shined.
My mother and my father too
took on the five moral precepts. (11) [958]

And I, hearing [that word] "moral"
recalled my [past] morality.
I sat down on a single seat
[and] attained [my] arahantship. (12) [959]

Though I was [only] five years old
I attained [my] arahantship.
Knowing virtue the Eyeful One,
the Buddha [then] ordained [me there]. (13) [960]

Having perfectly protected
those five [basic] moral precepts,
for aeons beyond measure I
went to no place of suffering. (14) [961]

That I experienced [great] fame
due to those [five] moral precepts.
Talking for ten million aeons
I still could tell but part of it.⁶ (15) [962]

Guarding the five moral precepts
I received the three [good] results:⁷

⁵lit., "in the city of Vesāli"

⁶I follow the cty in understanding *desaka* (ordinarily teacher, lecturer) as "only one part" (*ekakoṭṭhāsam eva*).

⁷lit., "causes" or bases for good or bad action. The BJTS Sinhala gloss is *anusas* (karmic results)

I had long life, abundant food
and developed piercing wisdom. (16) [963]

[My] outstanding human action
is [now] proclaimed to everyone.
Transmigrating from birth to birth
I obtain those [three good results].⁸ (17) [964]

If a pupil of the Victor
should [thus] delight throughout his lives
in the limitless moral rules,
what might [his] result [then] be like? (18) [965]

The five precepts⁹ were practiced well
by me, a wise servant-man [then].
Due to that moral discipline
today I'm freed¹⁰ from every bond. (19) [966]

I guarded the five moral rules
uncountable aeons ago.
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of the five precepts.¹¹ (20) [967]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (21) [968]

Thus indeed Venerable Pañcchasīlasamādāniya Thera spoke these verses.
The legend of Pañcchasīlasamādāniya Thera is finished.

⁸lit., "I obtain those places".

⁹*pañcchasīlān'*:

¹⁰reading *mocchayim* (BJTS) for *poṭṭhayiṇ* (PTS).

¹¹*pañcchasīle*: to practice restraint from taking life, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech and becoming careless through the use of alcohol.