

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Subhadda

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[49. Subhadda]

Padumuttara, World-Knower,
Sacrificial Recipient,
Great Famed One, lifting up people
did make them achieve nirvana. (1) [1215]

And as the Buddha passed away¹
the ten thousand worlds were quaking.
A huge group of people and gods
assembled together [there] then. (2) [1216]

Happy, [and] with a happy heart
I anointed the Best of Men
with a covering² that was full
of incense³ and jasmine flowers. (3) [1217]

The Teacher, Peerless in the World,
discerning what I was thinking,
the Clever One, the Sambuddha
uttered these verses [about me]: (4) [1218]

“I shall relate details of him
who in [these], my final moments,
covered me with scents and flowers;
[all of] you listen to my words: (5) [1219]

Fallen from here this person will
go to the Tusitā heaven.
Exercising divine rule there
he will [then] go to Nimmāna.⁴ (6) [1220]

[There] in that very same way he
having given superb flowers,
delighting in his own karma
will [then] enjoy much happiness. (7) [1221]

Fallen again this man will be
born in a Tusitā body.

¹lit., “as the Sambuddha reached nirvana”

²the term implies some sort of blanket or canopy, though v. [5] refers to it as a garland.

³*tagara*, a particular type thereof.

⁴Nirmāṇarati is another heaven wherein, as its name implies, one delights in form.

Falling from that body [as well]
he will go to a human state. (8) [1222]

The Śākyas' Son, Great Elephant,
Leader in the world with [its] gods
Eyeful One, awakening, will
make many achieve nirvana. (9) [1223]

Going forth as [a non-Buddhist,]
incited by [his] wholesome roots,
approaching the Sambuddha he
will ask [good] questions at that time. (10) [1224]

Once he's spoken, the Sambuddha,
the Omniscient One, World-Leader,
discerning his former karma
will reveal the [Four Noble] Truths.⁵ (11) [1225]

This one, wise and energetic,
happy, [and] with a tranquil mind,
after worshipping the Teacher
will ask to go forth [a Buddhist]. (12) [1226]

The One Skilled in the Top Teaching,
he, the Buddha, will [then] ordain
[this one] gladdened by own-karma,
after seeing his [well]-pleased mind. (13) [1227]

This man, after [all his] striving
in the Buddha's⁶ dispensation,
knowing well all the defilements
will reach nirvana, undefiled." (14) [1228]

The Fifth Recitation Portion.
In keeping with [my] past karma,
being calm and well-attentive,
the Buddha's legitimate son,
I am well-made, born from *Dhamma*. (15) [1229]

⁵ the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, the path that leads to the cessation of suffering, believed to have been delivered in his first sermon. Subhadda's question, however, was asked as the Buddha lay dying.

⁶ lit., "the Supreme Buddha's dispensation"

⁷ *dharmarājan*

Approaching the King of Teaching⁷

I asked the ultimate question.

In addressing my question he

unloosed the stream of the Teaching. (16) [1230]

Understanding his Teaching, I

lived fond of the dispensation.

Knowing well all the defilements,

without defilements I [now] live. (17) [1231]

One hundred thousand aeons hence

the [Buddha] named for a lotus,

achieved nirvana, beyond grasp,

like a lamp deprived of [its] oil. (18) [1232]⁸

There was a stupa, made of gems,

[rising up] seven leagues [in height],

all-auspicious and delightful;

there I performed a flag-*pūjā*. (19) [1233]

Tissa, the foremost follower

of the Sambuddha, Kassapa,

was my [own] legitimate son,

an heir to [that] Victor's teaching. (20) [1234]

Because of his immature mind,

I [once] spoke inauspicious words.

As the result of that [bad] deed

I [only] saw the Victor's death.⁹ (21) [1235]

In a garden in a *sal* grove

the [Great] Sage, [then] on his death bed,

the Friend, Compassionate, Victor,

the Great Hero, ordained me [there].¹⁰ (22) [1236]

Today, right now I have gone forth;

today's [my] ordination too.¹¹

[And] today's the final passing¹²

in front of the Best of Bipeds. (23) [1237]

⁸This verse appears to be out of sequence, or interpolated?

⁹lit., "I saw the Victor [only] at the end".

¹⁰lit., "made [me] to go forth"

¹¹*upasampadā*: higher ordination, usually accomplished a long time after going forth (*pabbajja*)

¹²*parinibbāna*

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (24) [1238]

Thus indeed Venerable Subhadda Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Subhadda Thera is finished.