

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Niggunḍipupphiya

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[327. Niggunḍipupphiya¹]

When according to [his] lifespan,
a god falls from the world,²
three sayings³ get emitted [then,]
[in] the rejoicing of the gods. (1) [2863]⁴
“From here, sir,⁵ go to a good state,
in the company of people.
Becoming human do obtain
great faith in the Excellent Truth.⁶ (2) [2864]

Having established that, your faith,
in the well-known Excellent Truth,
[well-]fixed, born of [those happy] roots,
[be] steadfast as long as [you] live. (3) [2865]

Doing good deeds⁷ with [your] body,
[and doing] much good with [your] speech;
doing good with [your] mind [as well,]
[be] free of hate and attachment.⁸ (4) [2866]

Thus exalting the life [you live],
doing merit with much giving,
make other men also enter
the chaste life [and] Excellent Truth.“ (5) [2867]

When gods know that a god’s falling,⁹
[filled] with this [sort of] compassion,
they rejoice [about his rebirth]:
“O god come [back] repeatedly.” (6) [2868]

I was moved when at that time the
assembly of gods had gathered,

¹“Niggunḍi-Flower-er.” Cf. #205, above. Here PTS spells through nearly certain error *Niggunṭhi*°. I follow the BJTS reading here. *Niggunḍi* is a kind of tree, *Vitex negunda*. Sinh: *nika*, Engl. “chaste tree,” “Chinese chaste tree” “five-leaved chaste tree” “horseshoe vitex”.

²or body (*kāyā*); this reading follows BJTS

³lit., sounds, objects of hearing

⁴vv. 1-10 plus the first two feet of v. 11 here precisely parallel the same verses of #187, above.

⁵*bho*, BJTS glosses *pinvata* (“O meritorious one”)

⁶*saddhamme*

⁷*kusalaṇ*

⁸lit., “[be a person] who is not one with ill-will, [one who is] free of attachment.”

⁹reading *devā devaṃ yadā vidū cchavantam* with BJTS for PTS *devadevaṇ yadā viduṇ*

“Well now then to what womb should I
go when [I have] fallen from here?” (7) [2869]

Padumuttara’s follower,
known by the name of Sumana,¹⁰
a monk with senses [well-]controlled,
realizing that I was moved
[and] desiring to lift me up,
did come into my presence then
[and] stirred me up instructing [me]
in the meaning and the Teaching.¹¹ (8-9) [2870-2871]

The Twelfth Recitation Portion¹²
Having listened to his words I
made [my] heart pleased in the Buddha.
Having saluted that hero¹³
I [then] passed away on the spot. (10) [2872]

I was reborn right then and there,
incited by [those] happy roots.
Even dwelling in mother’s womb,
I was my mother’s instructor.¹⁴ (11) [2873]

Having fallen from that body
I was reborn in Thirty-Three.¹⁵
Within that [heaven], then, for me,
mental disturbance was not seen. (12) [2874]

Fallen from Tāvatiṇsa [too,]
I¹⁶ came in to a mother’s womb.

¹⁰“Cheerful” or “Good-Minded”

¹¹*atthadhammānusāsivā*

¹²only in BJTS.

¹³here is the primary divergence, itself quite small, from the parallel passage in #187

¹⁴accepting the PTS reading *dhāretu* and taking it as the nom. sing. the verbal noun *dhāretar*, “bearer in mind, causer to remember, instructor, teacher” in the range supplied by RD. Alternate readings (there are many, the text has obviously puzzled editors) are variant derivatives of the same root, to bear (*dharati*), mostly in this causative sense (*dhāreti*, to carry, possess, put on, hold back, restrain, bear in mind, understand) with the same basic intent that “I was the support of my mother [rather than the other way around] even when I was in her womb.”

¹⁵Tidasa, the heaven of the (roughly) thirty gods, equivalent to Tāvatiṇsa

¹⁶reading *samokkamim* with BJTS for PTS *samokkamaṇ*, which would be a more impersonal still “there was a coming into a mother’s womb”

Coming out from [that] womb I knew
[the diff'rence between] black and white.¹⁷ (13) [2875]

Being [only] seven years old,
I entered the park-hermitage¹⁸
of Gotama, the Blessed One,
the Śākya Son, the Neutral One. (14) [2876]

When the dispensation had spread
[and] the Teaching¹⁹ was popular,²⁰
I saw the Teacher's [own] monks there,
doers of his dispensation. (15) [2877]

The city there, named Śrāvastī
had a king known as Kosala.
By elephant-chariot he
came to the supreme Bodhi [tree]. (16) [2878]

Having seen his elephant [there],
recalling [my own] past karma,
pressing both my hands together,
I [also] went to the event.²¹ (17) [2879]

Being [only] seven years old,
I went forth into homelessness.
He who looked after the Buddha
was the follower Ānanda,²²
perfectly behaved, resolute,
mindful and very learned too.

¹⁷*kaṇha + sukka*; "dark and bright" "black and white," (one of the colorless color-sensations); by extension merit or demerit, *puñña* or *pāpa*. "Black" and "White" carry similar connotations in English, so I have translated accordingly.

¹⁸*ārāma*, any of a number of places, so-designated, where the Buddha dwelt (and where many of the *suttas* were preached). Given the reference to Sāvattī in the present instance (v. 16) this would likely be the *ārāma* donated by Anāthapiṇḍika, in the Jetavāna.

¹⁹*pāvaccchana = dhamma*, the "Good Word"

²⁰*bahujañña*, "of the populace," "among the multitude"

²¹*samaya*. Alternately, "I [too] went to the festival," (which may overdetermine it) or (following cty, p. 477) "the gathering" (*samūhaṃ*), "I went to the place of gathering" (*samāgamaṭṭhānaṃ ahaṃ agamāsin ti attho*).

²²lit., "the follower named Ānanda," He is #10, above. His name means "Joy." The two halves of the verse barely connect, which may indicate some hiatus or a missing two feet, such that these two feet would belong with the subsequent verse, which would work better for the flow of the Pāli.

He took charge of the Brilliant One,²³
bringing pleasure to the king's heart. (18-19) [2880-2881]

After having heard his Teaching,
I recalled [my own] past karma.
Standing in that very [spot] I
[then] attained [my] arahantship. (20) [2882]

Putting a robe on one shoulder.
hands pressed together on [my] head,
saluting [him], the Sambuddha,
I uttered this speech [then and there]: (21) [2883]

"Gathering *niggunḍi*²⁴ blossoms
I placed them on the lion-throne
of Padumuttara Buddha,
the Lord of Bipedes, the Teacher. (22) [2884]

Through that deed, O Biped Lord,
O World's Best, O Bull among Men,
I've achieved the un-shaking state
without victory or defeat. (23) [2885]

In aeon twenty-five-thousand,²⁵
royal²⁶ lords of men numbered in
crore-hundred-trillions and hundred-
trillion-hundred-trillions, eight each.²⁷ (24) [2886]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (25) [2887]

²³taking *mahājūtiṃ* as a Buddha-epithet.

²⁴PTS *niggunṭhi*

²⁵lit., "in the twenty-five-thousandth of the aeons"

²⁶lit., kṣatriyan

²⁷the text is based on two large numbers, "*abbudas* and *nirabuddas*" of previous/subsequent lives as a kṣatriyan king, apparently within that single aeon (the 25,000th ago). Cty (p. 477) defines *abbuda* and *nirabbuda* based on the unit called *koṭi* ("crore" in Indian English = 100 lakhs [100,000] = ten million). A *koṭi* of *koṭis* (ten million squared = one hundred trillion) is a *pakoṭi*. A *koṭi* of *pakoṭis* is an *abbuda* (10,000,000 cubed = ten-million-hundred-trillions); a *koṭi* of *abbudas* is a *nirabudda* (ten million to the fourth power = hundred-trillion-hundred trillions). The text enumerates the previous-life kings in *abbudas* and *nirabuddas* and is read by cty and BJTS to mean that there were eight of each sort, i.e., eight *abbudas* and eight *nirabuddas*, = 8 x 10,000,000 cubed plus 8 x 10,000,000 to the fourth

Thus indeed Venerable Niggunḍipupphiya Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Niggunḍipupphiya Thera is finished.