

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Phussitakammiya

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[332. {335.}¹ Phussitakammiya²]

The Sambuddha named Vipassi,
the World's Best, the Bull among Men,
dwelt in the monks' hermitage³ [then],
together with the arahants.⁴ (1) [2969]

Vipassi, Leader of the World,
went out from the hermitage door
with those devoid of defilements,⁵
[who numbered] eight hundred thousand. (2) [2970]

I was then dressed in a deer-hide,
and also wore clothes made of bark.
Carrying safflower⁶ water,
I came up to the Sambuddha. (3) [2971]

Bringing pleasure to [my] own heart,
happy, my hands pressed together,
taking the safflower water,⁷
I sprinkled it on the Buddha. (4) [2972]

Due to that deed, the Sambuddha
known by the name Supreme Lotus,⁸

¹ *Apadāna* numbers henceforth provided in {fancy brackets} correspond to the BJTS edition, which contains more individual poems than does the PTS edition dictating the main numbering of this translation. This invented convention parallels the use in this translation of [square brackets] to cross-reference the BJTS numbering of individual verses with that of the PTS edition.

² "Karmically [named] Phussita" or "Karmically [named] Drop" (see v. 8). Here probably a [mis]spelling of *phusita*, rain-drop, sprinkle, Sinh. *poḍak*, see v. 9; summary of the chapter [see below] also gives *Phusita* rather than *Phussita* as here and in the texts; BJTS gives *Phusita*^o throughout, and reads the name *Phusitakampiya*, "Rain Shaker" or "Shaken by Rain".

³ *saṅghārāma*

⁴ lit., "together with those without defilements," *khīṇāsavehi*

⁵ *khīṇāsavehi*, i.e., arahants.

⁶ *kusumbha* + *odaka*, water infused with safflower, *Carthamus tinctorius*, used for dying things red. Sinh. *vanuk mal*. There is some slippage from this water (dyed red, and presumably scented of safflower) to rain in a future life which smells like sandalwood, to the description in v. 14 of the original offering as "sandalwood-*pūjā*," *cchandanam abhipūjayin*, unless we imagine sandalwood to have been part of (and the scent of) the safflower-[dyed]-water that *Phusita* originally offered. A modern parallel would be *kiri handun pān*, "milk-sandal-water".

⁷ I suspect this repetition of the prior foot, too, is in error. The transmission of these pages of the text is especially fraught, it seems. I have chosen the alternate translation of the verb to maintain the narrative flow.

⁸ *jalajuttamanāmaka*

after praising [that] deed of mine,
went according to [his] wishes. (5) [2973]

There were five thousand [scented] drops,
which I offered⁹ to the Victor.
Because of twenty-five hundred,
I ruled over the [world of] gods;
because of twenty-five hundred,
I was a wheel-turning monarch;
due to the remaining karma,
I attained [my] arahantship.¹⁰ (6-7) [2974-2975]

When I am a king of the gods,
and likewise [when] a lord of men,
that very name's assigned to me:
my name is [always] "Phussita."¹¹ (8) [2976]

Whether I have become a god,
or likewise [whether] I'm a man,
it's as though drops are¹² raining forth
a fathom¹³ in all directions.¹⁴ (9) [2977]

My existence is opened up,¹⁵
my defilements are [all] burnt up,
all the outflows are [now] destroyed:
that is the fruit of [giving] drops. (10) [2978]

My rain [smells] like it's sandalwood,
and it diffuses such fragrance.
My body odor's [also sweet];
a small room is permeated. (11) [2979]

⁹lit. "with which I did *pūjā*"

¹⁰though this is an almost economic depiction of karmic equivalency — one might think in terms of bonus points or frequent flyer rules — both in the exactitude by which he "spends" the karma he earned in doing the *pūjā* and the explicit statement that attaining arahantship is the remaining fruit of that karma, this final line is quite enigmatic given that 2500 plus 2500 presumably depletes the original 5000 drops of water. What then is the "remaining karma" with which arahantship is purchased?

¹¹BJTS *Phusita*; "[water] drop"

¹²lit., "it's as though a drop is"

¹³*vyāma*

¹⁴lit., on all sides

¹⁵*ugghāṭitā*

A divine fragrance is diffused
to [people] who have good karma.¹⁶
After smelling¹⁷ that scent they know,
“Phussita¹⁸ has come to this place.” (12) [2980]

Branches, leaves, sticks, even grasses,
throughout [the world] it’s as though [plants,]
recognizing what I’m thinking,
in an instant produce fragrance. (13) [2981]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I did sandalwood-*pūjā*,
I’ve come to know no bad rebirth:
that is the fruit of [giving] drops. (14) [2982]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (15) [2983]

Thus indeed Venerable Phussitakammiya¹⁹ Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Phussitakammiya²⁰ Thera is finished.

¹⁶lit., “meritorious karma” or “meritorious deeds,” *puññakamma-samaṅgināṇ*

¹⁷*ghatvāna*. I follow BJTS Sinhala gloss (and the obvious context) in this translation.

¹⁸BJTS *Phusita*

¹⁹BJTS reads *Phusitakampiya*

²⁰BJTS reads *Phusitakampiya*