

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Dhammasavaniya

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[336. {339.}¹ Dhammasavaniya²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
was the Master of Everything.³
[While] preaching the Four Noble Truths,
he ferried many folks across. (1) [3042]

A matted-haired ascetic⁴ then,
I practiced fierce austerities.⁵
Throwing off [my] clothes made of bark,
I traveled in the sky back then. (2) [3043]

Then I was unable to fly⁶
over [him], the Best of Buddhas.
Like a bird hitting⁷ a mountain,
I did not get to journey on.⁸ (3) [3044]

My movement had not formerly
been obstructed in such a way;⁹
as though rising up¹⁰ from water,
I easily¹¹ flew¹² through the sky. (4) [3045]

“A lofty human being must¹³
be sitting underneath [me now].
It’s good¹⁴ for me to search for him;
I might obtain something worthwhile.”¹⁵ (5) [3046]

¹Apadāna numbers 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.

²“Dharma-Hearer” or “Hearer of the Teaching”

³lit., “Master of All Things (*dhamma*)” (or “Master of All Teachings”)

⁴*jaṭṭila*, an ascetic who wears his hair in a matted braid (*jaṭā*)

⁵lit., “I was one who practices fierce austerities,” reading *ugga-tāpano* with BJTS (and PTS alternative) for PTS *uggata-āpaṇa*, “rising over the bazaar”

⁶lit., “to go”

⁷*āsajja*, lit., “having hit/struck”

⁸lit., “I did not receive a journey”. BJTS (and PTS alt.) reads *na ālabhiṃ* for PTS *na labhe*; the grammar is clearer but the meaning is the same.

⁹lit., “this obstruction of movement had not formerly transpired for me”

¹⁰reading *dake yathā ummujjitvā* with BJTS for PTS *dake yathā ummisitvā* (“as though opening one’s eyes in the water”)

¹¹*evaṃ*, lit., “thus,” “in this way”

¹²lit., “am going” (“went”)

¹³lit., “will” (*bhavissati*, future tense)

¹⁴*handā me*, “well then for me”

¹⁵lit., “I might obtain a thing of value”

Then descending from the sky, I
heard the sound of the Teacher,
who was preaching impermanence;
I learned that [lesson] at that time. (6) [3047]

Learning to see¹⁶ impermanence
I went back to my hermitage.
Dwelling there the rest of my life,
I passed away [right] on the spot. (7) [3048]

In [my] subsequent existence,
I recalled hearing that Teaching.
Due to that karma done very well,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (8) [3049]

For thirty thousand aeons I
delighted in the world of gods.
And I exercised divine rule,
one more than fifty [different] times. (9) [3050]

And seventy-one [different] times
I was a wheel-turning monarch.
There was [also] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. (10) [3051]

[Then] seated in my father's house,
a monk with senses [well-]controlled,
illustrating [the truth] in verse,¹⁷
spoke of things as impermanent.¹⁸ (11) [3052]

Remembering that perception,
transmigrating from birth to birth,
I [still] did not perceive the end,
nirvana, everlasting state. (12) [3053]

"In flux indeed is all that is;
things come to be [and then] decay.
They arise [and then] they dissolve;
their cessation¹⁹ is happiness." (13) [3054]²⁰

¹⁶lit., "the perception of"

¹⁷reading *gāthāya* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *kathāya*, "through [his] speech"

¹⁸BJTS reads, more straightforwardly, *aniccchchataṃ udāhari*, "[then] spoke about impermanence"

¹⁹reading *vūpasamo* with BJTS for PTS *vupasamo*

²⁰cf. S iv.28; A i.152, 299

After hearing [him say] that verse,²¹
I recalled my past perception.
Seated in a single sitting,
I achieved the arahant-state. (14) [3055]

Being [only] seven years old,
I attained [my] arahantship.
Recognizing [my] virtue the
Buddha, Eyeful One ordained me. (15) [3056]

Even though I was a [mere] boy,
I finished what needs to be done.
Today what do I need to do
in the Śākyan's dispensation?²² (16) [3057]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I did that [good] karma then,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
the fruit in hearing the Teaching.²³ (17) [3058]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (18) [3059]

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

²¹*saha gāthaṃ sunitavāna*, lit., “after hearing [his sermon] together with that verse”
or “in conjunction with that verse”

²²lit., “in the dispensation of the Śākyan Son”

²³*saddhammasavane phalaṃ*, lit., “the fruit in the Great Teaching”