

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
JONATHAN S. WALTERS,
WHITMAN COLLEGE, 2017

Sabbakittika

Jonathan S. Walters

Copyright © 2026 Jonathan S. Walters.

PUBLISHED BY JONATHAN S. WALTERS AND WHITMAN COLLEGE

<https://apadanatranslation.com>

Licensed under the Attribution, Non-Commercial, Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).

Printed September 2026

[390. {393.}¹ Sabbakittika²]

I saw the Leader of the World, (3d) [3679]³
shining like a dinner-plate tree,⁴
blazing forth like a tree of lamps,
radiant like the morning star,⁵
like lightening in a mass of clouds, (1) [3677]

not frightened, never terrified,
like a lion, king of the beasts,
illuming the knowledge-light,⁶
crushing the groups of heretics,⁷ (2) [3678]

elevating this [entire] world,
eliminating every doubt,⁸
roaring⁹ like the king of the beasts. (3a-c) [3679a-c]¹⁰

With matted hair, wearing a hide,
lofty, strong, and powerful, I
took¹¹ [my] robe made out of bark [and]
spread it¹² at the soles of [his]¹³ feet. (4) [3680]

¹*Apadāna* 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“Every-Praiser”

³I have translated the final foot of (3) [3679] as the first line of this poem: “I saw the Leader of the World”. Placing the verb at the end of the string of similes works better in Pāli than it does in English, when presenting a string of descriptors as long as this one.

⁴*kaṇṇikāra*, *kaṇikāra* = Sinhala *kinihiriya*, *Pterospermum acerifolium*, produces a brilliant mass of yellow flowers; Engl. a.k.a. *karnikar*, bayur tree, maple-leaf bayur, *caniyar* (now archaic?), dinner-plate tree; Bodhi tree of Siddhattha Buddha.

⁵*osadhī*. RD (s.v.) points out that all we really know about this star is that it was particularly bright, leading Childers to translate it as “Venus” and others as the morning star.

⁶*ñāṇālokaṇ pakāsentaṇ*

⁷*maddantaṇ titthiye gaṇe*

⁸*chindantaṇ*, *sabbasaṇṣayaṇ*, lit., “cutting off all doubt”

⁹reading *gajjantaṇ* with BJTS for PTS *lasantaṇ*, “playing” or “sporting,” also “shining” or “sounding forth”

¹⁰I have translated (3d) = [3679d] as the first line of this poem: “I saw the Leader of the World”. Placing the verb at the end of the string of epithets works better in Pāli than it does in English, when presenting a string of descriptors as long as this one.

¹¹lit., “having taken,” *gaṭetvāna*

¹²*apatthariṇ*. BJTS reads *avatthariṇ* (and cf. PTS alt. *avattari*), with the same meaning.

¹³i.e., the Buddha’s, following the BJTS Sinhala gloss.

Taking a [fragrant] black creeper,¹⁴
I anointed¹⁵ the Thus-Gone-One.
After anointing the Buddha,¹⁶
I praised¹⁷ the Leader of the World: (5) [3681]

“O Great Sage, Crosser of the Flood,¹⁸
you are lifting up the [whole] world.
You are shining with knowledge-light,
[your] supreme lightening[-like] knowledge. (6) [3682]

You turn the wheel of the Teaching,
you crush the rival heretics,¹⁹
the Bull, the Winner at Meetings,²⁰
you are shaking the [entire] world. (7) [3683]

Like the waves of the great ocean,
breaking on the edge of the shore,
every misguided view breaks up
[when it crashes]²¹ on your knowledge. (8) [3684]

¹⁴reading *kālānusāriyaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *kālānusārikaṇ*. RD (s.v.) takes *Kāla* + *anusāriyaṃ* fr. *kala* 1, “black, (pol-ished?) Anusāri (“a kind of dark, fragrant sandal wood” Vin. Texts ii.51) Vin i.203; S iii.156=v.44= A v.22.” BJTS glosses the term as “black-vine (*kaḷuvāl*, an odiferous back creeper often used for binding given its supple and strong texture) or aloe wood (*agil*).” Given the specification of “black” (*kāla*°) I take the latter reading, though underline that this is not a type of sandalwood in either event, and find perplexing that BJTS glosses both black-vine and aloe wood as “saffron-colored” (*kaśāvat*). The protagonist presumably carries with him a paste made by grinding the wood, of whichever type (in modern South Asia it usually is indeed a variety of sandalwood), into a paste, which is kept on hand for this purpose, i.e., for smearing (on the forehead) of a person in order to bless him or her.

¹⁵*anulimpin*, “smeared on”

¹⁶lit., “the Sambuddha”

¹⁷*santhaviṇ*

¹⁸*oghatiṇṇa*

¹⁹*paratitthiye maddase*

²⁰reading *jītaśaṅgamo* with BJTS for PTS *jītaśaṅgame*. I following BJTS Sinhala gloss (*dinana lada saṅgrāma āti*, “he who has meetings where he wins”), which seems to take the Pāli as “he whose meetings result in defeating [others],” but could also mean, “He who has meetings with the defeated,” “he by whom meetings are defeated,” or, drawing on the “bull” imagery, “he who wins in sexual intercourse”

²¹lit., “in just that way,” *tath’eva*, a filler which translated literally does not add to the clarity of the metaphor.

²²BJTS reads *°jālena*, (instr.) “by a net,” but I think the PTS reading *°jāle* (loc.) makes better grammatical sense here, the first two feet forming an extended locative absolute construction.

When a net²² which has very fine
mesh has been stretched out²³ in a lake,
creatures²⁴ entangled in the net²⁵
instantly [find themselves] oppressed. (9) [3685]

So the heretics in the world,
attached to the various sects,²⁶
do thrash about, O Happy One,²⁷
[entangled] in your great knowledge.²⁸ (10) [3686]

Support²⁹ for those caught in the flood,
you're the Lord³⁰ for those lacking kin,
Refuge³¹ for those distressed by fear,
Relief³² for those seeking freedom, (11) [3687]

the One Hero,³³ the Unmatched One,³⁴
the Heap of Compassion and Love,³⁵
Moral One,³⁶ Unequaled,³⁷ Peaceful,³⁸
Master,³⁹ Neutral,⁴⁰ the Winning Road,⁴¹ (12) [3688]
Wise One,⁴² Whose Delusion's Destroyed,⁴³

²² *sampatānite*, glossed by BJTS as *atuḷa kalhi*, “when it has been spread”

²⁴ lit., “living things,” *pāṇā*; BJTS glosses “(fish)” (*matsyayō*)

²⁵ *antojālagatā*, lit., “gone to inside the net”

²⁶ reading *puthupāsaṇḍanissita* with BJTS for PTS *phuṭā saccchchavinissitā* (“are numerous and ungrounded in truth”?)

²⁷ *mārisa*, in the voc.

²⁸ *anto nāṇavare tuyhaṇ*

²⁹ *patiṭṭhā*

³⁰ *nātho*

³¹ *saraṇo*

³² *parāyaṇo* = final end, support, refuge

³³ *ekavīro*

³⁴ *asādiso*

³⁵ reading *kāruṇāmettāsaṅcchayo* with BJTS for PTS *mettākāruṇādisaṅcchayo*, “heap of love, compassion, etc.” (which breaks meter).

³⁶ *susīlo*, lit., “one who has good moral discipline”

³⁷ *asamo*

³⁸ *santo*

³⁹ *vasī*

⁴⁰ *tādī*

⁴¹ *jitāñjaso*, following BJTS gloss. I read this foot *vasī tadī jitāñjaso* with PTS *vasitavi-jitāñjajo*

⁴² *dhīro*

⁴³ *vigatasammoho*

Lust-less One,⁴⁴ Who Speaks the Unsaid,⁴⁵
Accomplished One,⁴⁶ you've Thrown Off Hate,⁴⁷
Stainless One,⁴⁸ Restrained,⁴⁹ Pure One,⁵⁰ (13) [3689]

Attachment-Free,⁵¹ Conceit Slain,⁵²
Arahant,⁵³ Three-Worlds-Surpasser,⁵⁴
Limit-Free,⁵⁵ Teaching-Respecter,⁵⁶
Goal-Reacher,⁵⁷ Whose Rule is Friendship,⁵⁸ (14) [3690]

you Ferry Across⁵⁹ like a ship,
Bring Relief⁶⁰ like buried treasure,⁶¹
are Without Fear⁶² as is a lion,
Haughty⁶³ like an elephant-king." (15) [3691]

Having praised with [those] ten verses
Padumuttara of Great Fame,
having worshipped the Teacher's feet,
I thereafter stood silently. (16) [3692]

Padumuttara, World-Knower,
Sacrificial Recipient,

⁴⁴ *anejo*

⁴⁵ *akathan kathī*. BJTS reads this as a compound, *akathanīkathī*

⁴⁶ *vusito*

⁴⁷ *vantadoso*, lit., "who has vomited up hate"

⁴⁸ *nimmalo*

⁴⁹ *payato*

⁵⁰ reading *succhī* with BJTS for PTS *suci*

⁵¹ reading *sangātigo* with BJTS for PTS *sangh'ātīto*

⁵² reading *hatamado* with BJTS for PTS *gatamado* ("Gone into Conceit" "Intoxicated One")

⁵³ *tevijjo*, "possessor of the three higher knowledges" (recognition of former births, insight into the future destiny of all being, recognition of the origin of misery and of the path to its removal), that is, an *arahant*. The term is also used in a non-Buddhist (Brahmanical) sense, "master of the three Vedas," but here the Buddhist interpretation would seem most appropriate.

⁵⁴ *tibhavantago*

⁵⁵ *simātigo*

⁵⁶ *dhammagarū*

⁵⁷ *katattho*, lit., "he whose goal is done"

⁵⁸ *hitadhammato*

⁵⁹ *tārako*, elsewhere in this translation this epithet is translated "Crosser Over"

⁶⁰ *assāsa* ("breathing easily") + *kārako*

⁶¹ *nidhīva*

⁶² *asambhito*

⁶³ reading *dappito* with BJTS for PTS *dammito*, "Tamed"

the Teacher, standing in the monks'
Assembly, spoke these verses [then]: (17) [3693]

“He who praised my morality,
[my] knowledge, also [my] Teaching,
I shall relate details of him;
[all of] you listen to my words: (18) [3694]

For sixty thousand aeons he'll
delight in the world of the gods.
Overcoming the other gods,
he will exercise rulership. (19) [3695]

He thereafter having gone forth,
incited by [his] wholesome roots,
will go forth in the Blessed One
Gotama's dispensation. (20) [3696]

Going forth, having avoided
bad actions⁶⁴ [done] with his body,
destroying all [his] defilements,
he'll reach nirvana,⁶⁵ undefiled.“ (21) [3697]

“Just like a cloud, which thundering,
satiates this world [wanting rain],
so indeed did you, Great Hero,
satisfy me [with] your thunder.” (22) [3698]

Praising morality, wisdom,
the Teaching and the World's Leader,
I attained the ultimate peace,
nirvana, the unshaking state. (23) [3699]

So now indeed the Blessed One,
the Eyeful One, should long remain;
[people]⁶⁶ should learn what [now] is known,⁶⁷
and [they] should reach the deathless state.⁶⁸ (24) [3700]

⁶⁴*pāpakammaṇ*

⁶⁵*nibbāyissati*

⁶⁶in the BJTS reading which guides me here, the last two feet of this verse have an implied, 3rd person plural subject.

⁶⁷reading *aññātañccha vijāneyyumaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *aññātañccha vijāneyyaṇ* (“I should learn”)

⁶⁸reading *phuseyyumaṃ amataṇ padaṇ* for PTS *phasseyyam amataṇ padaṇ* (“I should touch the deathless path”). *Phassati* is related to *phuseti* and in fact can stand for it, but

This is my last going around;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Knowing well all the defilements,
I [now] am living, undefiled. (25) [3701]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I praised the Buddha [back then],
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of praising [Buddhas]. (26) [3702]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
All defilements are exhausted;
now there will be no more rebirth. (27) [3703]

My being in Buddha's presence⁶⁹
was a very good thing for me.
The three knowledges are attained;
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (28) [3704]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (29) [3705]

Thus indeed Venerable Sabbakittika Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Sabbakittika Thera is finished.

the latter carries the applied meaning "reach" or "achieve" (an exalted religious state),
and the first person makes no sense in context.

⁶⁹here too BJTS agrees with the PTS variant reading of this foot