

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Ajita

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[397. {400.}¹ Ajita²]

The Victor,³ Padumuttara,
was the Master of Everything.⁴
Plunged into the Himalayas,
the Leader of the World sat down. (1) [3856]

I did not see the Sambuddha,
I also did not hear [his] sound.
Searching for food for me to eat,
I was wandering in the woods. (2) [3857]

There I did see the Sambuddha,
Bearing the Thirty-two Great Marks.⁵
Seeing [the Buddha] made me think,⁶
“what sort of⁷ being⁸ might this be?” (3) [3858]

Examining [his body’s] marks,
I recalled my [studies of] lore,
the good words which I [once] had heard,
from⁹ elderly¹⁰ men of wisdom:¹¹ (4) [3859]

“According to that word of theirs,
this [person] will be a Buddha;
well then I ought to honor [him];
it will purify my station.”¹² (5) [3860]

Quickly coming to [my] ashram,
I grabbed¹³ [some] buffalo ghee,¹⁴ and

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“Unconquered”

³lit., “the Victor named Padumuttara”

⁴lit., “master of all things (*dhamma*)” (or “Master of All Teachings”)

⁵on the bodies of those destined to become a wheel-turning monarch or a Buddha

⁶*cchittam āpajjixi*, lit., “I produced the thought”

⁷*ko nāma*

⁸or “person,” “living being,” “creature:” *satto*

⁹lit., “of” (gen. case)

¹⁰reading *vuddhānaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *Buddhānaṃ*

¹¹*paṇḍitānaṃ*

¹²*gatiṃ me sodhayissati*, i.e., “it will clean up my karma;” “it will get me a better rebirth”

¹³*gahim*

¹⁴reading *madhutelaṃ* (Sinhala gloss: *mītel*) with BJTS for PTS *dumatelaṃ* (“tree oil”). The term could also be read as a compound, “honey and oil;” the PTS reading could

taking a pot [to carry it,]
I approached [him], the Bull of Men.¹⁵ (6) [3861]

Taking a three-legged [stool],¹⁶ I
stood it [up] in an open space.
Lighting a lamp [placed on that stool,]
I worshipped [the Buddha] eight times. (7) [3862]

Seven nights and days the Buddha,
sat [there], the Ultimate Person.
Then at the end of the [last] night,¹⁷
[Buddha] stood up, the World-Leader. [3863]

Happy, with pleasure in [my] heart,
for seven nights and days I lit
[that] lamp for the [seated] Buddha,
[feeling well-]pleased by my own hands. [3864]

All the good scents of the forests¹⁸
on Gandhamādana Mountain,
by means of Buddha's majesty¹⁹
then went up to [him], the Victor. [3865]

[All of] the trees [were then] in bloom.
By means of Buddha's majesty
all of the floral scents produced,²⁰
assembled into one right then. [3866]

Throughout the Himalayas, both
the snake-gods and the *garuḷas*,

be sustained by taking *mītel* as the tree oil of that name, which is produced from the seeds of the *mī* tree, *Bassia longifolia* (*Sapot.*). Indeed, *madhu* ("honey") can also refer to this oil. However, buffalo ghee would be a more likely oil for lamp-lighting than *mī* oil (which is used primarily in the making of medicines), so I have followed the BJTS reading here, leaving open these other possibilities.

¹⁵reading *narāsaḥmaṇ* with BJTS for PTS (and BJTS alt.) *vināyakaṇ* ("Guide")

¹⁶*tindandake*, lit., "three-sticked". BJTS glosses the term as *pirivāḷipūtuwa*, "the stool (or chair) [used by] ascetics"

¹⁷*ratyā vivasāne*, read *ratyā vivasane*, "at the end of the night," a stock phrase.

¹⁸*sabbe vanā gandhamayā*, lit., "all the forests made of good scents." I am assuming that despite the Buddha's magical power, the trees themselves did not come to him, though that is the Pāli (and BJTS glosses in Sinhala accordingly). Rather, I take the meaning to be that the scents of those forests came to him.

¹⁹*anubhāvena*, BJTS notes that all the texts give *ānubhāvena*

²⁰*pupphagandhāse*, following BJTS Sinhala gloss here

desiring to hear the Teaching,
came into the Buddha's presence. [3867]

The monk whose name was Devala
was the Buddha's chief attendant.
With one hundred thousand masters,
he [also] approached the Buddha.²¹ [3868]

Padumuttara, World-Knower,
Sacrificial Recipient,
seated in the monks' Assembly,
[then] spoke these verses [about me]: [3869]

"He who has lit a lamp for me,
[feeling well-]pleased by his own hands,
I shall relate details of him;
[all of] you listen to my words: [3870]

For sixty thousand aeons he
will delight in the world of gods.
A thousand times he'll be a king,
a king who turns the wheel [of law]. [3871]

Thirty-six times lord of the gods,
he will exercise divine rule.
Seven hundred [times]²² on the earth,
he'll rule an extensive kingdom,²³
[and he will have] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. [3872]²⁴

Because of this lamp-offering,
he will develop "divine eye."
This one is always going to see
eight *kosas*²⁵ in all directions.²⁶ [3873]

Fallen from the world of the gods,
when this person has been reborn,

²¹lit., "went up to the Buddha's presence"

²²following BJTS Sinhala gloss: *satsiya varak*

²³*vipulaṃ rajjaṃ karissati*, following BJTS Sinhala gloss

²⁴PTS and BJTS agree in presenting this as a six-footed verse.

²⁵BJTS understands this as a measure of distance, *krōśa* = 500 bow-lengths, 80 bull-lengths, 8000 *riyan* (*Śrī Sumaṅgala Śabdakoṣaya*, s.v.)

²⁶*samantato*, "on all sides" "everywhere"

whether by day or else by night,
a lamp will be carried [for him]. [3874]

When this person's²⁷ being reborn,
a possessor of good karma,
he will illuminate [the world]
throughout the city [where] he is. [3875]

In whichever womb he's reborn,
[whether] it's human or divine,
because of his lamp-offering,
due to the fruit of [those] eight lamps,
people will not surpass this one:
that is the fruit of giving lamps. [3876]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. [3877]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
knowing well all the defilements,
he'll reach nirvana, undefiled. [3878]

Having pleased [him], the Sambuddha,
Gotama, Bull of the Śākyas,
he'll be the Teacher's follower,
[and his] name [will be] Ajita." [3879]

For sixty thousand aeons I
delighted in the world of gods.
In that place too my hundred lamps
are burning [brightly] all the time.²⁸ [3880]

In the gods' world or that of men,
my [own] effulgence²⁹ is diffused.
Remembering the Best Buddha,
I generate enormous mirth. [3881]

²⁷*sattassa*, also "being" "creature" (gen. abs. construction)

²⁸lit., "every day"

²⁹*prabhā*

Falling from Tusitā heaven,
I came out of a mother's womb.
While that person³⁰ was being born,
there was [always] a lot of light. [3882]

Having departed from the house,
I went forth into homelessness.
Having gone up to Bāvarī,
I agreed to be his student.³¹ [3883]

Living in the Himalayas,
I heard [about]³² the World-Leader.
Searching for ultimate meaning,
I approached [the Buddha], the Guide.³³ [3884]

The Tame One, Buddha, He who Tames,
the Flood-Crosser, Beyond Rebirth,³⁴
the Buddha spoke of nirvana,
liberation from all dis-ease. [3885]

His coming to me succeeded;
I entertained [him], the Great Sage.
Attaining the three knowledges,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! [3886]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I gave [him] that lamp back then,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of giving lamps. [3887]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
All defilements are exhausted;
now there will be no more rebirth. (26) [3888]

Being in Best Buddha's presence
was a very good thing for me.
The three knowledges are attained;
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (27) [3889]

³⁰*sattassa* (gen. abs. construction)

³¹*sissattaṃ ajjupāgamiṃ*

³²following the BJTS Sinhala gloss “(*geṇa*)”

³³*vināyakaṃ*

³⁴*nirūpadhi*, i.e., “devoid of the ground for rebirth,” “free of the *upadhis*”

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (28) [3890]

Thus indeed Venerable Ajita Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Ajita Thera is finished.

The summary:

Pilindavacchcha³⁵ and Sela,
Sabbakitti, Madundada,
Kūṭāgārī and Bakkula,
Giri, Salaḷasavhaya,³⁶
Sabbada and Ajita too:
the verses here are counted at
one hundred and five verses and
twenty more beyond that [number].

The Pilindavacchcha³⁷ Chapter, the Fortieth.

Then there is the Summary of Chapters:

Paduma and Ārakkhada,
Ummā and Gandhodakena,
Ekapadama, Saddasaññi,
Mandāraṃ, Bodhiavandaka,
Avaṇṭa and Pilindi [too].
And these verses are counted too,
seventy-four verses [beyond]
eleven hundred [verses here].

The Ten Chapters³⁸ called Paduma.

The Fourth Hundred³⁹ is finished.

³⁵BJTS: Pilindavacchcha

³⁶BJTS: Salala°

³⁷BJTS: Pilindavacchcha

³⁸vaggadasakaṇ

³⁹Sataka is a common structure in Sanskrit and Pāli poetry, usually referring to one hundred verses, rather than (as here) one hundred stories.