

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
JONATHAN S. WALTERS,
WHITMAN COLLEGE, 2017

Puṇṇaka

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

[399. {402.}]¹ **Puṇṇaka²**

The Self-Become, Unconquered One,
the Buddha, who had an illness,
was living amidst the mountains,
near the top of a mountain slope. (1) [3919]

All around my hermitage [there,]
when Buddha was passing away,³
there was shouting out all the time,
there was [brilliant] light all the time. (2) [3920]

Throughout that forest grove all the
bears⁴ and wolves,⁵ *kara bānā* bears,⁶
the tigers⁷ and the lions too,
are roaring loudly all the time. (3) [3921]

After seeing those strange omens⁸
I ascended⁹ the mountain slope.
There I saw [him], the Sambuddha,
passed away,¹⁰ the Unconquered One,
like a regal *sal* tree in bloom,
like the risen hundred-rayed [sun],
aglow like charcoal [that's still hot],
passed away,¹¹ the Unconquered One. (4-5) [3922-3923]

Making it full of grass and sticks,
I [then] made a pyre [for him] there.

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“Full One,” a historical monk, to whom the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta* (M. iii. 267ff.; S. iv. 60 ff) was preached. Cty (p. 484) says he was the leader of an army of *yakkhas*, but I do not see that detail in the extant text.

³*buddhe nibbāyamānamhi* (loc. abs. construction)

⁴*acchcha*°, Sinh. gloss *valassu*

⁵*koka*, etymological cousin of *vāka*, *ṛka*, above, see RD

⁶*taracchchā*, Sinh. gloss *kara bānā* (“submissive” “bent over”) *valassu*, Note BJTS omits the second mention of “wolves” so may be taking *koka* in compound with *taracchchā* (i.e., *kokataracchchā*), in specifying this particular type of bear (cf. *Sorata*, *kara bāna valasā*, s.v.)

⁷reading *vyagghā* with BJTS for PTS *vālā* (= *vālā*, snakes?)

⁸*uppādaṇ taṇ...disvā*, lit., “after seeing that strange omen,” but the plural is obviously implied as three strange omens have been mentioned.

⁹lit., “went”

¹⁰*nibbutaṇ*

¹¹*nibbutaṇ*

Having made [that] well-fashioned pyre,
I cremated [the Buddha's] corpse. (6) [3924]

After I'd cremated [his] corpse,
I sprinkled scented water [there].
A spirit¹² standing in the sky
fixed a name for me for all time: (7) [3925]

"That¹³ duty was fulfilled by you
for the Great Sage, the Self-Become.
O sage you're always going to be
named "the full one"¹⁴ [in each lifetime]." (8) [3926]

After falling from that body,
I went to the world of the gods.
There a divinely-made perfume¹⁵
is [then] exuded in the sky. (9) [3927]

Even in that [world of gods] the
name assigned me was "the full one."¹⁶
[Whether] born human or divine,
I fulfill [all] my intentions. (10) [3928]

This is the final time for me;
[my] last rebirth is proceeding.¹⁷
And here as well "the full one" is
the name assigned me [that's] well known. (11) [3929]

Having regaled the Sambuddha,
Gotama, Bull of the Śākya,
knowing well all the defilements,
I am [now] living, undefiled. (12) [3930]

In the ninety-one aeons since
I did that [good] karma back then,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
the fruit of duties for the corpse. (13) [3931]

¹²*yakkho*

¹³BJTS reads *yaṃ* ("which") for PTS (and BJTS alt.) *taṃ*

¹⁴*puṇṇako*

¹⁵*divyamayo* (BJTS and PTS alt. read *dibbamayo*) *gandho*

¹⁶*puṇṇako*

¹⁷*ccharimo vattate bhavo*

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Knowing well all the defilements,
I am [now] living, undefiled. (14) [3932]

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! (15) [3933]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (16) [3934]

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