

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Mettaḡu

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[400. {403.}¹ Mettagu²]

In the Himalayan region,
there's a mountain named Asoka.³
In that place was my hermitage,
constructed by Vissakamma.⁴ (1) [3935]

The Sambuddha named Sumedha,
Chief,⁵ Compassionate One,⁶ the Sage,⁷
dressing himself in the morning,
approached me [begging] for alms food. (2) [3936]

[Seeing] the Great Hero who'd come,⁸
Sumedha, Leader of the World,
taking a good alms-bowl, I
filled it with clarified butter.⁹ (3) [3937]

Giving it to¹⁰ the Best Buddha,
Sumedha, Leader of the World,
pressing both my hands together,
I brought pleasure to [my] heart [there]. (4) [3938]

Because of this ghee-offering,
[made] with intention and resolve,
[whether] born human or divine,
I obtain enormous comfort. (5) [3940]

Avoiding states of suffering,¹¹
I transmigrate from birth to birth.
Having resolved [my] heart on it,¹²
I'm obtaining the deathless state. (6) [3941]

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 "Perfect in Loving-kindness"

³ "Griefless." This is the only reference to the mountain recorded in DPPN (I:220)

⁴ Vishwakarma, "the divine architect"

⁵ *aggo*

⁶ *kāruṇiko*

⁷ *muni*

⁸ *upāgataṃ*, lit., "approached"

⁹ *sappitelāṃ*, i.e., ghee

¹⁰ lit., "for," the expected datives here appear in the locative, presumably *metri causa*

¹¹ *vinipātāṃ*

¹² *tattha cchittaṃ paṇidhitvā*, also "having aspired," "having wished," "having intended"

“This gain for you is well-received,
which is that you saw me, brahmin.
Having arrived to look at me,
you’re going to be an arahant. (7) [3942]

Be confident [and] have no fear,
after finding the Great-Famed One.
Having given [this] ghee to me,
you will be freed from being born. (8) [3943]

Because of this ghee-offering
and practicing with loving heart,¹³
for eighteen hundred aeons you
will delight in the world of gods. (9) [3944]

And eighteen times you [also] will
become the king of [all] the gods,
[and you will have] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. (10) [3945]

And fifty-one times you will be
a king who turns the wheel [of law],
lord of the grove of rose-apples,¹⁴
victorious on [all] four sides.¹⁵ (11) [3946]

Unperturbed like the great ocean,
as hard to carry as the earth,
in just that way your possessions
are going to be immeasurable.¹⁶ (12) [3947]

I went forth after giving [up]
six hundred million [worth] of gold.
Seeking after what is wholesome,
I [first] went up to Bāvarī. (13) [3948]

[While] I studied the mantras there,
Vedic science¹⁷ and [reading] marks,

¹³*mettacchittavatāya ccha*

¹⁴*jambusaṇḍa* = *jambudīpa* = India, the South Asian continent

¹⁵*cchaturanto vijitāvi*, “possessed of conquest of the four quarters,” a supreme imperial overlord

¹⁶contract to “immeas’rable” for chanting, to preserve the meter.

¹⁷*chalanigaṇ*, lit., “the six branches.” RD: “the set of six Vedāṅgas, disciplines of Vedic science, viz. 1. kappa, 2. vyākaraṇā, 3. nirutti, 4. sikkhā, 5. chando (vicchiti), 6. joti-sattha (thus enumd at VvA 265; at PvA 97 in sequence 4, 1, 3, 2, 6, 5): D iii.269; Vv 6316;

you arose [in the world], Great Sage,
destroying that bewilderment.¹⁸ (14) [3949]

Having a desire to see you,
I came [up to you], O Great Sage.
Having listened to your Teaching,
I [then] attained the deathless state. (15) [3950]

Thirty thousand aeons [ago]
I gave that ghee to the Buddha.
In the interval¹⁹ I don't know
[any] begging of ghee²⁰ by me. (16) [3951]

My intentions being discerned,
what I wish for [then] arises.
My heart discerned [I am] reborn,
[and] I gratify everyone. (17) [3952]

O! the Buddha! O! the Teaching!
O! our Teacher's [great] achievement!
After giving a bit of ghee,
I receive immeasurably. (18) [3953]

The water in the great ocean,
the extent of Mt. Meru's slope,
would not be²¹ one half a quarter²²
of the ghee arising for me. (19) [3954]

The universe's full extent,
made into a [gigantic] pile
would not be able²³ [to fill the]
space of the clothing worn by me. (20) [3955]

Himalaya, king of mountains,
although it is the best mountain,

Pv ii.613; Miln 178, 236." BJTS understand this as an adjective modifying "[reading] marks," i.e., "the six branches of the science (*śāstraya*) of marks," but given the use of the term to refer to the six branches of Vedic science above ([3605] = Sela (#389 {392})), v. 24,

¹⁸ *andhakāra*, lit., "blinder," "[studies] that blind"

¹⁹ *etthantare*, lit., "in the interval [up to] here"

²⁰ *sappiṇ viññāpitaṇ mayā*, lit., "ghee instructions from me" or (as in BJTS Sinhala gloss,) "not even a word about ghee"

²¹ BJTS reads *phassati*, "would not touch"

²² *kalabhāgaṇ*, i.e., a thirty-second part (this follows BJTS)

²³ *na sammati*, following BJTS gloss *no pohotē = no hāki*

is not [even] comparable
to the perfumes anointing me. (21) [3956]

Clothes and perfumes and ghee and food,
or [everything] that's in the world,
and nirvana, unconditioned:²⁴
that is the fruit of giving ghee. (22) [3957]

[My] couch today is mindfulness,²⁵
[my] pasture's meditative states,²⁶
[my] food is wisdom's [seven] parts:²⁷
that is the fruit of giving ghee. (23) [3958]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Knowing well all the defilements,
I am [now] living, undefiled. (24) [3959]

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! (25) [3960]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (26) [3961]

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

²⁴*asaṅkhatāṃ ccha nibbānaṃ*

²⁵*sati paṭṭhānasayano*

²⁶lit., "samādhi [and] jhāna," meditative awareness and higher levels of consciousness"

²⁷reading *bojjhaṅga-bhojano* with BJTS for PTS (typo) *bhojjaṅgabhojano*