

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Dhotaka

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[401. {404.}¹ Dhotaka²]

The River named Bhāgīrathī³
is fed by the Himalayas.
It is always flowing along,
past⁴ the gate of Haṃsavatī. (1) [3962]

The hermitage named Sobhita,⁵
well-built, is on the river's slopes.
The Buddha, Padumuttara,
the World's Leader, was dwelling there. (2) [3963]

He was honored the people,
like Indra by the thirty [gods].
The Blessed One was seated⁶ there
fearlessly [just] like a lion. (3) [3964]

I was a brahmin living in
the city of Haṃsavatī.
My name [back then] was Chalāṅga,⁷
named thus [because] I was a sage. (4) [3965]

One thousand eight hundred⁸ students
were surrounding me at that time.
Joined together⁹ with those students,
I went up to the riverbank. (5) [3966]

At that place I saw [Buddhist] monks,
without deceit,¹⁰ cleansed of evil,¹¹
crossing Bhāgīrathī [River].
At that time I reflected thus: (6) [3967]

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"Wash-er"

³This is the BJTS spelling; PTS gives *Bhāgīrasī*

⁴or through? *dvārena*

⁵"beautiful"

⁶lit., "sat down"

⁷"Six Limbs" or "Six Branches," as in the six branches of Vedic science. BJTS spells the name *Chalāṅga*

⁸lit., "eighteen hundred"

⁹*samito*, lit., "assembled" (also pacified, calmed)

¹⁰*nikkuhe*

¹¹*dhotapāpake*

“These sons of Buddha, of great fame,
are crossing evening and morning;
they are being troubled themselves,
[and] their things¹² are getting ruined. (7) [3968]

The Buddha’s said to be the Chief
of the world including the gods.
I have not [yet] made donations¹³
that would cleanse [my] road to rebirth. (8) [3969]

Why then don’t I get a bridge built
on the river for Best Buddha?
Causing that work to be done,¹⁴ I’ll
transmigrate in this existence.” (9) [3970]

Donating a hundred thousand
I had a bridge built [for him there],
trusting that “doing this deed¹⁵ will
be of great [advantage] to me.”¹⁶ (10) [3971]

Having caused [that] bridge to be built,
I went up to the World-Leader.
Hands pressed together on [my] head,
I spoke these words [to him back then]: (11) [3972]

“Donating¹⁷ one hundred thousand,
I’ve caused this magnificent¹⁸ bridge
to be constructed for your sake;
please accept [it], O Sage So Great.” (12) [3973]

Padumuttara, World-Knower,
Sacrificial Recipient,
seated in the monks’ Assembly,
spoke these verses [about me then]: (13) [3974]

“He who had [this] bridge built for me,
[feeling well-]pleased by [his] own hands,

¹² *attā*, “things in hand”

¹³ lit., “there has not been doing of donations (*dakkhiṇe*) by me”

¹⁴ *kārāpetvā imaṃ kammaṃ*

¹⁵ *kāraṃ*

¹⁶ I BJTS follow BJTS’s treatment of *kataṃ kāraṃ vipulam me bhavissati* as a saying in which the protagonist cultivates trust.

¹⁷ lit., doing, *katvā*, BJTS alt. corrects to *datvā*

¹⁸ *mahā°*

I shall relate details of him;
[all of] you listen to my words: (14) [3975]

Fallen into¹⁹ a cave²⁰ or from
[the top of] a mountain or tree,
even dying²¹ he will get caught:²²
that's the fruit of giving bridges. (15) [3976]

As the wind²³ [does not disturb] a
banyan²⁴ spreading [its] growing roots,²⁵
enemies²⁶ will not defeat²⁷ [him]:
that's the fruit of giving bridges. (16) [3977]

No thieves are going to defeat²⁸ him²⁹
and the king³⁰ will not despise [him].
He'll surpass all [his] enemies:³¹
that's the fruit of giving bridges. (17) [3978]

[Even] in an unsheltered space,
being scorched by the [sun's] harsh heat,
conforming with [his] good karma,³²
he won't feel any discomfort.³³ (18) [3979]

¹⁹lit., "from"

²⁰reading *darito* with BJTS for PTS *dalito* "broken off" (but cf. RD, *darī* s.v., *dal* is alt. for *dar* in derivatives of this noun.

²¹*cchuto*, which literally means "fallen" as well, paralleling the actual "falling" (*patito*) governing the first two feet of the verse with a metaphorical one ("fallen from life") governing the third foot.

²²*lacchchati tṭhānaṇ*, lit., "he will receive a support/place/stand

²³*māluto*, abl. case

²⁴*nigrodhā* = Sinh. *nuga*, RD: the banyan or Indian fig-tree, *Ficus Indica*; Bot. dict.: milky fig tree, *Ficus altissima* (*Urti.*)

²⁵lit., "as a banyan...[is not disturbed] because of the wind." Banyan trees drop new roots from their spreading branches, the image invoked in *virūlha-mūla-santānaṇ*

²⁶*amittā*, "non-friends"

²⁷PTS read *sahissanti*, BJTS (and PTS alt.) reads *pasahanti*; though the latter is in the present indicative it can also be read as a future-tense verb, hence the two readings produce the same meaning.

²⁸PTS read *sahissanti*, BJTS (and PTS alt.) reads *pasahanti*; though the latter is in the present indicative it can also be read as a future-tense verb, hence the two readings produce the same meaning.

²⁹lit., "of him," i.e., "bring about the defeat of him"

³⁰*khattiyo*, lit., "the warrior (*kṣatriyan*).". BJTS (and PTS alt.) read this in the plural: *nātimaññanti khattiyā*, in which case read "kings" or else "noblemen".

³¹*amitte*, "non-friends"

³²*puñṇakammena saṇṇuttā*, lit., "with [his] meritorious karma"

³³*na bhavissati vedanā*, lit., "there will not be feelings"

In the world of gods or of men,
a well-built elephant-carriage
all of the time will come to be,
discerning what he is thinking. (19) [3980]

A thousand fast carriages with
Sindh horses as quick as the wind
will come to [him] evening and morning:
that's the fruit of giving bridges. (20) [3981]

Having come to the human state,
this one is going to be happy;
here too for [this] very man the
elephant-carriage will appear.³⁴ (21) [3982]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (22) [3983]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
knowing well all the defilements
he'll reach nirvana, undefiled." (23) [3984]

O! that karma well-done by me
for him whose name is "Best Lotus."³⁵
Having done that deed³⁶ [for him] there,
I attained [my] arahantship.³⁷ (24) [3985]

Having put forth exertion,³⁸ I'm
calmed,³⁹ devoid of grounds for rebirth;⁴⁰
like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (25) [3986]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
All defilements are exhausted;

³⁴*bhavissati*, lit., "will become," "will come to be," "will exist"

³⁵*jaladuttamanāmake*, i.e., Padmuttera (also "Best Lotus")

³⁶*kāraṇ*

³⁷lit., "I attained the destruction of the outflows"

³⁸*padhānaṇ padahitvāna*, lit., "having exerted [myself] in exertion"

³⁹*upasanto*

⁴⁰*nirūpadhi*

now there will be no more rebirth. (26) [3988]⁴¹
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) [3987]
The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (28) [3989]
Thus indeed Venerable Dhotaka Thera spoke these verses.
The legend of Dhotaka Thera is finished.

⁴¹note that BJTS inverts the first and second verses of the three-verse concluding refrain.