

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
JONATHAN S. WALTERS,
WHITMAN COLLEGE, 2017

Nanda

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

[403. {406.}¹ Nanda²]

I was a deer-hunter back then,
within a grove in the forest.
[While] searching after³ spotted deer,
I saw the Self-Become One [there]. (1) [4050]

The Sambuddha named Anuraddha,⁴
the Self-Become, Unconquered One,
Seclusion-Lover, the Wise One,⁵
plunged into the forest⁶ back then. (2) [4051]

Having gathered four sticks of wood,
I placed them in four [corner-]spots.
Building a well-built pavilion,
I covered [it] with lotus blooms.⁷ (3) [4052]

Having covered the pavilion,
I greeted the Self-Become One.
Laying aside my bow right there,
I went forth into homelessness. (4) [4053]

A short time after going forth,
I was afflicted with illness.⁸
Transmigrating through past karma,
I passed away [right then and] there. (5) [4054]

Bound up with [my] former karma,
I went to Tusitā heaven.

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“Joy”. BJTS reads *Nandaka*

³PTS reads *pasadamigaṇ gavesanto*; BJTS reads *pasadaṃ migam esanto*. The two readings have virtually the same meaning; unlike the PTS reading, however, the BJTS reading keeps the meter

⁴PTS and BJTS agree on this reading, even though it breaks meter; following the text, this first foot contains nine syllable. One would prefer “the Buddha named Anuruddha” (*anuruddho nāma buddho*, eight syllables) to keep the meter, but as many of the other Buddhas have three-syllable names, the pattern is “X nāma Sambuddho” and here the manuscripts (and the authors?) have followed suit.

⁵reading so *dhīro* with BJTS for PTS so *vīro*, “the Hero”

⁶*vanamajjh’*, lit., “in the middle of the forest”

⁷*padumapupphehi*, lit., “with pink lotus flowers”

⁸*vyādhi me udapajjatha* (BJTS reads *upapajjatha*), lit “illness came into existence for me”

There a mansion made out of gold⁹
is produced according to wish. (6) [4055]

[My] divine carriage stands in wait,
a thousand-horse-yoked vehicle.
Ascending into that carriage,
I travel according to wish. (7) [4056]

When I am going out¹⁰ from there,
having been reborn as a god,¹¹
a pavilion's held up for me
a hundred leagues on every side. (8) [4057]

I [always] nestle¹² on a bed
that's constantly strewn with flowers.
And from the sky, pink lotuses
are raining [on me] all the time. (9) [4058]

When the rays of light are throbbing,
and the sun's heat scorches [the world],
the heat is not oppressing me:
that's the fruit of a pavilion. (10) [4059]

I pass beyond [all] bad rebirth;
the states of woe¹³ are closed to me.
In a pavilion or tree-root,
burning heat is not known by me. (11) [4060]

Fixing perception on the earth,¹⁴
I cross over the [great] ocean.¹⁵
That's my well-done karma, the fruit
of [doing] that Buddha-pūjā. (12) [4061]

Making roads, even with no road,

⁹BJTS reads *sovaṇṇamayam* for PTS *sovaṇṇayaṇ*, thereby breaking meter.

¹⁰BJTS reads *niyamāna* for PTS *niyyamāna*, to the same end (“[the one] taking that carriage and going”)

¹¹*devabhūta* *me sato*, lit., “when I am being born as a god”

¹²reading *tuvaṭṭāmi* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *tuvaṭṭhāmi*. The term means to share with, cuddle, snuggle up; BJTS provides the less evocative gloss “I sleep” (*nidimi*)

¹³*apāyā*, “hells,” reckoned as four: hell proper (*niraya*) and rebirth as an animal, a ghost (*peta*), or a titan (*asura*).

¹⁴*mahisaññam adhiṭṭhāya*, lit., “having fixed [my] mind (or concentrating) on perception of the earth”

¹⁵*loṇatoyaṇ*, lit., “the salt water”. This interpretation follows BJTS

I am traveling¹⁶ in the sky.
O! that karma well-done by me:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. (13) [4062]

I know former existences,
the "divine eye" is purified,
my defilements are [all] destroyed:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. (14) [4063]

Buddha's legitimate offspring,
worthy heir to the Great Teaching,
I've renounced my earlier birth:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. (15) [4064]

I'm one who pleased the Well-Gone-One,
Gotama, Bull of the Śākya,
the *Dhamma*'s heir, I bear its flag:¹⁷
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. (16) [4065]

After serving the Sambuddha,
Gotama, Bull of the Śākya,
I asked the Leader of the World
[about] the path that goes beyond.¹⁸ (17) [4066]

Being asked, the Buddha [then] told
the deep and subtle state [beyond].
Having heard that Teaching of his,
I attained [my] arahantship.¹⁹ (18) [4067]

O! that karma well-done by me!
I'm fully freed from being born;
I have destroyed all defilements;
now there will be no more rebirth. (19) [4068]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (20) [4069]

¹⁶lit., "going"

¹⁷*dharmadāhaja dharmadāyādo*, lit., "[I am] one who possesses the flag (or banner) of the Teaching, worthy heir of the Teaching"

¹⁸*pāraṅgamaniyaṃ maggaṃ*

¹⁹lit., "I attained the destruction of the outflows"

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! (21) [4070]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (22) [4071]

Thus indeed Venerable Nanda Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Nanda Thera is finished.