

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Hemaka

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[404. {407.}¹ Hemaka²]

Near the top of a mountain slope,
the ascetic named Anoma,
making a well-built hermitage,
dwelt in a hall made of leaves then. (1) [4072]

His practices³ were successful;
the goal attained⁴ by⁵ [his] own strength.⁶
Heroic in [his] own monkhood,
[he] was zealous, clever, a sage. (2) [4073]

Confident in his religion,⁷
he was skilled in others' doctrines,⁸
expert⁹ and skillful [in reading]
omens¹⁰ on earth and in the sky. (3) [4074]

Meditating, trance-loving sage,
he did not covet,¹¹ was grief-free,¹²
happy if receiving or not,
ate little food,¹³ did not kill beasts.¹⁴ (4) [4075]

Piyadassi, the Sambuddha,
Chief,¹⁵ Compassionate One, the Sage,
wishing to help beings across,¹⁶
spread¹⁷ [the Teaching] with compassion.¹⁸ (5) [4076]

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“Gold-er”

³tapokammaṇ, lit., “his ascetic practices”

⁴siddhipattto

⁵lit., “in”

⁶reading *sake bale* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *sake phale*, “in his own fruit”

⁷sasamaye, his own crowd, multitude, assembly; also season, tradition, religion

⁸paravāde

⁹paṭṭho, lit., “established.” BJTS Sinh. gloss here: *prakaṭa*

¹⁰uppādamhi, BJTS gloss *utpāta śāstrayehi dakṣayeka*

¹¹alolupo

¹²vītasoko

¹³appāhāro

¹⁴nirārambho, lit., “without objects [of sacrifice],” one who does not kill animals in sacrifice

¹⁵aggo

¹⁶BJTS gloss: across the ocean of *saṃsāra*

¹⁷pharī, “spread abroad” BJTS Sinh. gloss *pātira vī ya*; the term also means “thrilled [others]”

Piyadassi, the Sage So Great,
seeing folks who could understand,¹⁹
having gone is exhorting [them,]
in a thousand universes.²⁰ (6) [4077]

With a desire to lift me up,
he [then] approached my hermitage.
I had not formerly seen [him,]²¹
nor heard of him from anyone. (7) [4078]

Omens, dreams [and] auspicious marks
were very clear to me [back then],
an expert, skilled in horoscopes,²²
[both] on the earth and in the sky. (8) [4079]

After hearing of the Buddha,
I gladdened [my] heart over him.²³
Whether eating or sitting down,
I remember [him] all the time. (9) [4080]

When I was thus remembering,
the Blessed One thought [of me] too.
Joy arose in me all the time,
when I thought about the Buddha. (10) [4081]

Returning at a later time,
the Sage So Great came up to me.
When he arrived²⁴ I did not know
that he's the Buddha, the Great Sage. (11) [4082]

Full of Pity, Compassionate,
Piyadassi, the Sage So Great,
[then] introduced himself [to me]:
"I am the Buddha in the world."²⁵ (12) [4083]

¹⁸lit., "...with compassion at that time"

¹⁹or "capable of being enlightened," *bodhaneyyaṇ pajaṇ*, BJTS reads *bodhaneyyaṇ janāṇ*, "people who could understand"

²⁰*cchakkavāḷasahassamhi*, i.e., in a thousand spheres of cosmic mountains that define a world

²¹lit., "had not formerly seen the Victor"

²²*nakkhattapada*, lit., "[reading] constellations"

²³lit., "I brought pleasure to my heart with regard to that/him"

²⁴reading *sampatte pi* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *sampatto pi*, "though I had arrived"

²⁵*sadevake*, lit., "in [the world together] with the gods"

Coming to know the Sambuddha,
Piyadassi, the Sage So Great,
[filling my] own heart with pleasure,
I spoke these words [to him back then]: (13) [4084]

“You are sitting down on other
chairs and palanquins and deck-chairs,
but²⁶ you, the Seer of All Things,
should sit²⁷ upon a gem-set throne.²⁸ (14) [4085]

At that time [someone]²⁹ created³⁰
a chair made out of all the gems,
a magically-created³¹ seat
for Piyadassi, the Great Sage. (15) [4086]

Then I gave a rose-apple fruit,³²
as big as a jug of water,³³
to [Buddha] seated on [that] chair
magically-fashioned out of gems. (16) [4087]

[At that time] the Great Sage ate [it],
generating [great] mirth³⁴ for me.
Then bringing pleasure to [my] heart,
I saluted [him], the Teacher. (17) [4088]

But Piyadassi, Blessed One,
the World’s Best One, the Bull of Men,
sitting upon [that] gem-set throne,
spoke these verses [about me then]: (18) [4089]

“He who gave me [this] gem-set chair
and [also this] ambrosial³⁵ fruit,
I shall relate details of him;
[all of] you listen to my words: (19) [4090]

²⁶reading *pi* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS ‘*si*, “you are”

²⁷lit., “sit!” (imperative, *nidisa*)

²⁸*ratanāsane*

²⁹this follows the BJTS Sinhala gloss

³⁰*nimminivāna*, lit., “having created”

³¹*iddhinimmittaṇ*, lit., “created by *iddhi* powers”

³²*jambuphalaṇ*

³³or “as large as an elephant’s frontal lobe:” *kumbhamattaṇ*. Rose-apple is typically at most only about the size of a golf ball

³⁴or laughter, *hāsaṇ janetvāna*

³⁵*amataṇ*

“For seventy-seven aeons
he’ll delight in the world of gods,
and fifty-seven times he’ll be
a king who turns the wheel [of law]. (20) [4091]

Thirty-two times the lord of gods,
he will exercise divine rule,
[and there will be] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. (21) [4092]

He will receive seats made of gems
and also made out of rubies,
[and] many palanquins well-made
out of gold³⁶ [and] out of silver.³⁷ (22) [4093]

Even when walking back and forth,
palanquins of different sorts,
all the time will wait upon
[this] man possessing good³⁸ karma. (23) [4094]

Huts with gables and palaces,
and beds which are very costly,
all of the time will come to be,
discerning what he is thinking. (24) [4095]

[And] sixty thousand elephants,
decked out in all the ornaments,
mātaṅgas with gold headdresses,
clothed in harnessing made of gold,
mounted by elephant-trainers
with lances and goads in hand,³⁹
are going to wait on this [man]:
that’s the fruit of a gem-set chair. (25-26) [4096-4097]

Sixty thousand horses [as well],
decked out in all the ornaments,

³⁶here as elsewhere BJTS corrects PTS *sovaṇṇayaṇ* to *sovaṇṇamayam*, despite breaking meter.

³⁷*rūpimayaṇ* = *rūpiya-mayaṇ*

³⁸*puñña*, lit., “meritorious”

³⁹*tomaraṅkusapāṇi*

thoroughbreds of good pedigree,⁴⁰
horses from Sindh, fast vehicles,
mounted by trainers of horses⁴¹
wearing armor with bows in hand,
are going to wait on this [man]:
that's the fruit of a gem-set chair. (27-28) [4098-4099]

Sixty thousand chariots [too],
decked out in all the ornaments,
covered in⁴² the skins of leopards
and likewise tigers,⁴³ flags hoisted,
mounted by animal-trainers⁴⁴
wearing armor with bows in hand,
will constantly wait on this [man]:
that's the fruit of a gem-set chair. (29-30) [4100-4101]

Sixty thousand milch-cows [as well,]
red in color,⁴⁵ best of the best,⁴⁶

⁴⁰*jātiyā*, lit., “well-born” or simply “excellent,” the term connotes lineage, genealogy, caste, breed. Here it seems to substitute for “those fast like the wind” (*vātajavā*) in parallel lists (see above, [1293], [2692], [3981])

⁴¹*gāmaṇīya* usually means elephant-trainers, as in v. 26 [4097], above, but here the context makes “horse-trainer” a more suitable translation, so I have taken the same liberty taken by the poet in treating the term that way. PSI indicates that these are trainers of “elephants, etc.” (*ātun ādīn puhūṇu karana ācchāryyaya*), allowing for the extended meaning in this context.

⁴²*sannaddhā*, RD: fastened, bound; put on, clothed (with), armed, accoutred. The term has a wide enough range to leave open the possibility that rather than covered in the hides of these big cats, the poet imagines the chariots pulled by leopards and tigers, which would make sense of the specification below that they are also mounted by animal-trainers, in this case perhaps leopard- and tiger-trainers, paralleling the elephant-trainers who mount the elephants and the horse-trainers who mount the horses.

⁴³*dīpā*, fr. *dīpī*, leopard. Both RD and PSI give cart covered with a tiger skin as one of the meanings of *dīpā*, and the same (i.e., covered with a tiger skin) for *veyyagghā*, but here the “and also too” (*atho pi*) connecting the two terms clearly indicates that they are not simple synonyms, but rather two types of decorated or armored carts: those covered with leopard skins (*dīpā*) and those covered with tiger skins (*veyyagghā*).

⁴⁴*gāmaṇīya* usually means elephant-trainers, as in v. 26 [4097], above, but as noted in the note on v. [4099], above, the meaning is more elastic to include other animals too. Here I opt for the most open translation, given the possibility that at least horses in addition to elephants would have been imagined pulling the 60,000 chariots. It is even possible that the poet imagines the chariots as pulled by leopards and tigers, rather than merely covered in their hides, in which case “big-cat-trainers” would be the best translation here.

⁴⁵*rohaññā*, a common epithet of cows. BJTS however reads *dohaññā*, apparently fr. *doha*, milking.

⁵⁰*ccharimo vattate bhavo*

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (39) [4110]

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! (40) [4111]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (41) [4112]

Thus indeed Venerable Hemaka Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Hemaka Thera is finished.