

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Ñāṇatthavika

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[481. {484.}¹ Nāṇatthavika²]

My well-made hermitage was [there,]
in the southern Himalayas.
Searching for ultimate meaning,
I'm then living in the forest. (1) [5076]

Satisfied with roots and with fruit,
whether [I] receive [them] or not,
searching for a [proper] teacher,³
I am living alone [just then]. (2) [5077]

The Sambuddha named Sumedha
arose in the world at that time.
[While] preaching the Four Noble Truths;
he ferried many folks across. (3) [5078]

I did not hear of the Buddha,⁴
and no one told me [about him].
When the eighth year had elapsed, I
heard [of] the Leader of the World. (4) [5079]

After bringing wood for the fire,
having swept out the hermitage,
having taken [my] shoulder yoke,⁵
I set out from the forest [then]. (5) [5080]

Staying over a single night⁶
in villages and [also] towns,
little by little I approached
the [city named] CChandavatī.⁷ (6) [5081]

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"Knowledge-Praiser"

³reading *anvesanto ācchariyaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *anomasanto cchariyaṃ* ("being perfect [in my] wanderings")

⁴lit., "the Sambuddha"

⁵*khāribhāraṃ gahetvāna*, that is, "all the [little] that I owned, borne on my shoulder" or "a *khāri*-load"

⁶*ekarattiṃ vasanto*, lit., "having dwelt [out somewhere on the road] for one night [only]"

⁷see DPPNI:851; the city is only "known" to have existed during the time of previous Buddhas (and during the previous lives of Gotama Buddha). This present passage is taken there as evidence that "[i]t existed also in the time of Sumedha Buddha"

The Buddha⁸ in that period
was Sumedha, the World-Leader.
Preaching the state of deathlessness,
he's lifting up many beings. (7) [5082]

Stepping past the mass of people,
worshipping the dispensation,⁹
placing deer-hide on one shoulder
I praised the Leader of the World: (8) [5083]

"You're the Teacher for those who breathe,
the Banner, the Flag and the Pole;
you are the Goal, the Solid Ground,
the Island,¹⁰ the Best of Biped. (9) [5084]

The twenty-first Recitation Portion
Sharp in philosophy,¹¹ Hero,
you ferry the people across.
There's no other star in the world
that is higher [than you,] O Sage. (10) [5085]

It is possible to measure
the ocean¹² with a blade of grass,¹³
but not ever could one measure
your knowledge, O Omniscient One. (11) [5086]

It's possible to lift the earth
onto a comparable sphere,
but not ever could one measure
your wisdom, O Omniscient One. (12) [5087]

It's possible to measure [all]
space with a rope or by the inch,
but not ever could one measure
your good conduct, Omniscient One. (13) [5088]

⁸lit., "the Blessed One"

⁹*jinsāsanāṇ*, lit., "the Victor's dispensation." BJTS (and PTS alt.) offer an alternative reading: *jitasāgaram* (PTS alt. is apparently read as *jina°*), "He by Whom the Ocean is Conquered" (or "Ocean of the Victor"). BJTS Sinh. gloss explains its reading as "the one who had conquered his senses, who was an ocean of virtue."

¹⁰or "lamp," *dīpo*

¹¹*nepuñño dassane*

¹²lit., "the unsurpassed ocean," *sāgaruttamo*

¹³*kusaggena*, lit., "with a *kusa*-grass-point," i.e., with the tip of a blade of *kusa*-grass

The water in the great ocean,
[and] space of this [bountiful] earth,
are [both things] that can be measured;
you're beyond measure, Eyeful One." (14) [5089]

With [those] six verses having praised
the Greatly Famed, Omniscient One,
having pressed [both] hands together,
I then remained [there] silently. (15) [5090]

The one whom they call "Sumedha,"¹⁴
Very Wise¹⁵ [and] Intelligent,¹⁶
seated in the monks' Assembly,
spoke these verses [about me then]: (16) [5091]

"This one who has praised my knowledge,
[feeling-]well pleased by [his] own hands,
I shall relate details of him;
[all of] you listen to my words: (17) [5092]

For seventy-seven aeons
he'll delight in the world of gods.
A thousand times the lord of gods,
he will exercise divine rule. (18) [5093]

Also, a different hundred times,
he'll be a king who turns the wheel.
[And there will be] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. (19) [5094]

[Whether] born human or divine,
being fitted with good¹⁷ karma,
with intentions not lacking thought,
he will be one with sharp wisdom. (20) [5095]

In thirty thousand aeons [hence],
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (21) [5096]

¹⁴the name of this Buddha means "very clever" (*su-medha*), so the line could also be translated, "The one whom they call 'the Wise One'"

¹⁵*bhūripaṇṇaṇ*

¹⁶*sumedhasaṇ*, "he with good intelligence," a play on the Buddha's name

¹⁷lit., "meritorious"

Having departed from the house,
he will go forth, having nothing.
Being [only] seven years old,
he will attain¹⁸ arahantship.“ (22) [5097]

As far back as I remember,¹⁹
ever since I reached discretion,²⁰
in the interval²¹ I don't know
any thinking that's not lovely. (23) [5098]

Transmigrating, in every life,
I experience good fortune.
I have no lack of possessions:
[that's] the fruit in praising knowledge. (24) [5099]

The three fires²² are blown out in me;
all [new] existence is destroyed;
knowing well all the defilements,
I am [now] dwelling undefiled. (25) [5100]

In the thirty thousand aeons
since I praised [the Buddha's] knowledge,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
[that's] the fruit in praising knowledge. (26) [5101]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (27) [5102]

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! (28) [5103]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,

¹⁸lit., “touch,” *phusissati*

¹⁹*yato sarāmi attānaṃ*, lit., “starting from when I remember myself”

²⁰or “since I reached puberty,” *yato patto 'smi viññuta*, lit., “starting from when I reached puberty”

²¹*etthantare*, lit., “in the interval [up to] here”

²²the cty here explains these as the fires of *rāga* (lust), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (ignorance, folly)

six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (29) [5104]

Thus indeed Venerable Ñāṇatthavīka Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Ñāṇatthavīka Thera is finished.