

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Dhammarucī

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[486. {489.}¹ Dhammarucchi²]

When Dipaṅkara was Buddha,
the Victor said of Sumedha:
“Aeons beyond measure from now,
this one will become a Buddha. (1) [5193]

The one named Māyā’s going to be
the birth-mother of this [person];
Suddhodhana the father’s name;
this one will be [named] Gotama. (2) [5194]

Being one bent on exertion,
having practiced austerities,
the Sambuddha will awaken³
Great Famed, at the Bodhi tree’s roots.⁴ (3) [5195]

Upatissa⁵ and Kolita⁶
will be the [two] chief followers;⁷
the one whose name is Ānanda
will attend upon this Victor. (4) [5196]

Khemā and Uppalavaṇṇā
will be chief female followers;⁸
CChitta and Ālavaka will
be the chief pious laymen.⁹ (5) [5197]

Khujjuttarā, Nandamātā
will be chief pious laywomen;¹⁰
the Bodhi tree of this Hero
is known as the Aśvattha tree.¹¹ (6) [5198]

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“Splendor of the Teaching”.

³*bujjhissati*, from the same root as Buddha (lit., “Awakened”)

⁴lit., “of an *asattha* tree.” The *asattha* (Skt. *aśvattha*) tree, *figus religiosa*, is the Bodhi tree of Gotama Buddha (Sinh. *bō gasa*)

⁵i.e., Sāriputta (*Thera-apadāna* #1)

⁶i.e., Mahā-Moggallāna (*Thera-apadāna* #2)

⁷*sāvaka*, “voice-hearers,” accomplished arahant monks

⁸*sāvikā*

⁹*upāsakā*, devout laymen who observe eight precepts, more monk-like than ordinary Buddhists who observe the five precepts.

¹⁰*upāsikā*

¹¹The *asattha* (Skt. *aśvattha*) tree is *figus religiosa* (Sinh. *bō gasa*)

After having heard those words of
the Great Sage, the Unequaled One,¹²
overjoyed, [both] gods¹³ and men, are
praising [him], hands pressed together. (7) [5199]

At that time I was a young man,
well-educated, named Megha.¹⁴
Having heard [that] best prophesy
for Sumedha, [then] a great sage,
cultivating confidence in
Sumedha, font¹⁵ of compassion,
[when] that hero renounced the world,¹⁶
I renounced right along with [him]. (8-9) [5200-5201]

Restrained¹⁷ in the monastic rules,¹⁸
and [also] in the five senses,
he lived pure, mindful, a hero,
doer of what the Victor taught.¹⁹ (10) [5202]

[While] I was living in that way,
I strayed away²⁰ from the good road,
urged into bad behavior by
a certain evil friend [of mine]. (11) [5203]

Having been controlled by reason,²¹
I fell from the dispensation;²²
afterward, by that bad friend, the
murder of [my] mother was schemed. (12) [5204]

¹²*asamassa*

¹³°*marū*, in the more general sense of “gods” (as opposed, I suppose, to the *maruts* of Vedic mythology to which the term most directly applies)

¹⁴“Cloud”

¹⁵*āsaya*, lit., “abode” “haunt” “support for” “vessel of”

¹⁶or “went forth”

¹⁷*saṃvuto*

¹⁸lit., “in the recitation,” “in the *Pātimokkha*,” the (in the Pāli *vinaya*, 227) rules recited at monthly *uposatha* gatherings of Buddhist monks, ideally encapsulating the whole of monastic law.

¹⁹*jīnasāsanakārako*

²⁰or “was lost,” *paridhaṇṣito*

²¹or thinking, *vitakka-vasa-go* (BJTS *vitakka-vasīko*)

²²*sāsanato*, lit., “from the dispensation”

I did no-interval karma,²³
and I killed with an evil mind;
I fell from there [right into] hell,²⁴
born in a very cruel [place]. (13) [5205]

Being gone to that woeful state,²⁵
I long transmigrated in pain,²⁶
not seeing the Hero again,
Sumedha, the Bull among Men. (14) [5206]

In this aeon, in the ocean,
I was a *timingala* fish.²⁷
Having seen a ship in the sea,
I approached it looking for food. (15) [5207]

Seeing me, the traders, afraid,
remembered the Best of Buddhas;
I heard a huge sound shouted out,
“Gotama!” [they cried in terror]. (16) [5208]

Recalling the past perception,
I passed away [right] on the spot.
I was reborn in Śrāvastī,
a brahmin in a high-ranked clan. (17) [5209]

My name was Dhammarucchī [then],
a loather of every evil.
Having seen the Lamp of the World,
being [only] seven years old, (18) [5210]

I went to great Jetavana,²⁸
[and] went forth into homelessness.
I approach the Buddha three times
[every] night, also [every] day. (19) [5211]

²³*anantariyaṇ*, a deed whose result is immediate descent into the lowest Avīcchi (“no interval”? “no pleasure”?) hell, “a deadly sin,” of which there are five: patricide, matricide, killing an arahant, shedding the blood of a Buddha (it is impossible to kill one), and dissension in the Sangha (monks’ Assembly).

²⁴lit., “into avīcchi, which is particularly gruesome. See DPPN I:199ff.

²⁵or “suffering,” *vinīpatagato*

²⁶or “suffering,” *dukkhito*

²⁷of mythical proportions, the largest fish in the sea, maybe even “sea monster”

²⁸the “Jeta Grove” in which Anāthapiṇḍika built the famous hermitage for the Buddha, the location of many of the *suttas*.

Seeing [me], seeing [me,] the Sage
called [me] “long time Dhammarucchi.”

After that I told the Buddha

[how my] past karma had progressed: (20) [5212]

Very long, marked with hundreds of good deeds,²⁹
conditions [then] gradually³⁰ purified.

Today I am looking closely indeed,

I am seeing your body without compare. (21) [5213]³¹

Very long, darkness is destroyed by it.³²

Through guarding³³ purity, the stream³⁴ has been cleansed.

Very long, [now] purified without fault,

is the eye made out of knowledge, O Great Sage. (22) [5214]

A long time, [now] come together with you;

not destroyed, again the interval was long;

today, again come together with you,

O Gotama, deeds do not [just] disappear. (23) [5215]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;

all [new] existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. (24) [5216]

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) [5217]

The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

²⁹lit., “merits,” °*puñña*°

³⁰reading *patipubbenā* with BJTS for PTS *patipubbe na* (“in the past, not...”)

³¹PTS and BJTS agree in presenting this and the following two verses in a different, more complex meter than the rest of the poem (and indeed, different from the meter in the vast majority of the whole *Apadāna* collection), with 10-11-10-11 syllable counts per quatrain (10-11-10-12 in the present instance, perhaps due to the superfluous ‘*haṇ*’). I have translated accordingly.

³²reading *taṃ* with BJTS (and PTS alts.) for PTS *mayā* (“by me”)

³³*suci-rakkhena*, a play on words that echoes the “very long [time]” (*su-cchiraṃ*) governing these verses. Or is this *succhira* + *akkhena*, “by the eye for very long,” picking up the “eye” (*naṇa*) reference in the fourth foot?

³⁴or river (*nadi*) of existence, or of doubt (as in #485 {488} above, v. 7 = [5183])

six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (26) [5218]

Thus indeed Venerable Dhammarucchi Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Dhammarucchi Thera is finished.