

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Mahākappina

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[530. {533.}¹ Mahākappina²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
was a Master of Everything.
He rose in the space of the world,³
like the sun in the autumn sky. (1) [5727]

With [his] word-rays he awakens
the lotuses [called] things to know.
With his thought-rays the Leader cleans
the muck [known as] the defilements. (2) [5728]

The fame of the rivals is slain,
like firefly-light⁴ [by] the sun;
he sheds the light of truthfulness⁵
like a gem [reflects] the sunlight. (3) [5729]

Like the ocean for gems, he is
the future for the virtuous;
like a rain-cloud for living things,
he rains by the cloud of Teaching. (4) [5730]

I was a magistrate⁶ back then,
in the city named “Haṃsa;”⁷
approaching I heard the Teaching,
of the one named “Superb Lotus,”⁸
who was purifying⁹ my mind
[while] explaining the virtue of

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.

²A historical monk, foremost among those who instruct (admonish, teach) the monks (*bhikkhuovādakānaṃ*) (and the nuns: see DPPN II:473-475, which uncharacteristically does not mention *Apadāna*).

³reading *jagadākāse* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *jaladākāse* (“in the space of a rain-cloud”)

⁴see Cone s.v. for *khajjota-ābhā*

⁵reading *saccchchatthābhaṃ pakāseti* for *sabbatthaṃ*

⁶*akkhadasso*, RD “one who examines the dice, an upmire, a judge” Cone s.v. a judge, a magistrate, very clear in the commentarial passage she cites; “assessor” is Malalasekara’s translation

⁷“Swan,” i.e., *Haṃsavatī*

⁸*jalajuttamanāmino*, i.e. Padumuttara Buddha

⁹or “perfuming,” “cleaning,” *vāsayantassa*

¹⁰*katāvino*, i.e., an arahant

a follower who'd done the deed,¹⁰
the admonisher of the monks. (5-6) [5731-5732]

Delighted,¹¹ happy,¹² having heard,
[then] inviting the Thus-Gone-One,
having fed [him] with his students,
I aspired [to attain] that place. (7) [5733]

Then the Greatly Fortunate One,
loudly as a swan or drum, said,¹³
“look at him, a great minister,
skilled in examining [cases],
fallen down in front of my feet,
his body hair¹⁴ growing upward,
rain-cloud-colored¹⁵ [and] broad-shouldered,¹⁶
with pleasant[-looking] eyes [and] face, (8-9) [5734-5735]

with an extensive entourage,
bound for kingship, very famous.
With kindness¹⁷ he is wishing
for the place of this deed-doer.¹⁸ (10) [5736]

Because of this alms-giving¹⁹ [done]
with intention and [firm] resolve,²⁰
for one hundred thousand aeons
he won't be born in a bad state.²¹ (11) [5737]

Divine fortune²² among the gods;
greatness [when born] among humans:

¹¹*patīto*

¹²*sumano*

¹³reading BJTS *tadāhāsi mahābhāgo haṃsadundubhisussaro* with BJTS for PTS' garbled *tadā haṃsasamābhāgo haṃsadundubhinīvaccho*

¹⁴°*tanūruhaṇ*, see Buddhaddatta *Pāli-Sinhala Akārādiya*, s.v.

¹⁵PTS *jimuttavaṇṇaṇ*, BJTS *jīmūtavaṇṇaṇ*, read *jīmutavaṇṇaṇ* and see see Buddhaddatta *Pāli-Sinhala Akārādiya*, *jīmuta*, s.v. BJTS Sinhala gloss concurs: *meghavarṇa vū*

¹⁶lit., “fat-shoulders”. BJTS reads *pīṇ*° but understands the adjective in the same way: “having shoulders which are full (covered with meat)

¹⁷*muditāya*, “with disinterested love”

¹⁸*katāvino*, i.e., arahant.

¹⁹reading *piṇḍapātena* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *pañipātena* (“because of this prostration” “because of this adoration”)

²⁰reading *cchetaṇāpaṇidhīhi ccha* with BJTS (and this is a recurring foot throughout *Apadāna*) for PTS *cchāgena paṇidhīhi ccha* (“with generosity and resolve”)

²¹or “he won't be reborn in a bad rebirth” (*n'upapajjati duggatiṇ*)

²²PTS *sobhāgyaṇ*, BJTS *sobhaggaṇ*

having enjoyed that, through the rest,²³
he will attain [his] nirvana. (12) [5738]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (13) [5739]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Kappina
will be the Teacher's follower." (14) [5740]

And so, having performed good deeds,
in the Victor's dispensation,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (15) [5741]

Having commanded righteously²⁴
[both] divine and human kingdoms,
I was born close to Benares,
in a clan of servants who weave.²⁵ (16) [5742]

With a following of thousands,
together with [my] chief queen, I
[then] attended on five hundred
Buddhas enlightened by themselves.²⁶ (17) [5743]

Having fed [them] for three months, we²⁷
afterward gave [them] the three robes.
Fallen from there we all of us

²³i.e., through the remainder of the good karma

²⁴*sutaso anusāsiya*, following cty (p. 504: "the meaning is: having commanded righteously with equal words and on the basis of reasons"). BJTS reads *sataso* and takes it (in the gloss) as *siyavarak* ("a hundred times") though it also includes the commentarial gloss "righteously and slowly" (*dāhāmin semin*)

²⁵*jāto keniyaajātiyā*. Malalasekera takes this as a mistake for *koliyaajātiyā* (in a Koiyyan clan), the corresponding reading in ThagA, but cty. explains the term as *tantavāya-jātiyā pesakārakūla* ("in a weaver's cast, a clan of servants"); BJTS Sinh. gloss and Cone, s.v., adopt the latter reading, though PTS apparently treats this as a proper name (perhaps recalling the use of this as a proper name in #389 {392}, v. 26 [3607] et passim). The context suggests that in this birth he was a king, so this would be an instance of lower caste kingship if the cty. reading is accepted.

²⁶*pañcchapaccchekabuddhānaṃ satāni*

²⁷reading *adamha* with BJTS for PTS *dammi*

arose among the thirty [gods].²⁸ (18) [5744]

Fallen from there we all came back
to human existence again.

We're born²⁹ in Kukkuṭa city,
to the side of Himalaya. (19) [5745]

My name [at birth] was Kappina;
son of the king, very famous.
The rest were born in a clan of
ministers; they waited on me. (20) [5746]

The comfort of kingship³⁰ attained,
I was rich in every pleasure.
Told by merchants, I got to know,³¹
that the Buddha had arisen: (21) [5747]

"A Buddha's risen in the world;
Unequaled,³² the Single Person,³³
he's declaring the great Teaching:
ultimate, deathless comfort. (22) [5748]

And his students are well-engaged,
well-liberated, undefiled."
After hearing that good word, [and]
paying respect to the merchants, (23) [5749]

quitting³⁴ kingship, with ministers,
I left, devoted to Buddha.³⁵
Seeing the great CChanda River³⁶ —
full [of water] with level banks,
a little rough, without supports,
a rushing current hard to cross —
recalling the Buddha's virtue,
I got across [it] in safety. (24-25) [5750-5751]

²⁸*tidasūpagā*, i.e. the thirty-three gods, in Tāvātimsa heaven

²⁹reading *jātā* with BJTS for PTS *jāto* ("I was born")

³⁰*mahārajaṇ*, lit., "of overlordship," "of powerful kingship" "of being a maharajah"

³¹*apāpuṇiṇ*. BJTS reads *ahaṃ suṇiṃ*, "I heard"

³²*asamo*

³³*ekapuggalo*

³⁴reading *pahāya* with BJTS for PTS *vihāya* ("having worked")

³⁵*buddhamāma*, lit., "taking Buddha as 'mine'"

³⁶that is, the CChandabhāgā

“If [he] Crossed the stream of being,
Buddha, Knower, World’s-End-Goer,
due to the truthfulness of that,
let my journey be a success! (26) [5752]

If the Path is going to peace,
and release is peaceful comfort,
due to the truthfulness of that,
let my journey be a success! (27) [5753]

If the monks³⁷ have crossed the wasteland,
the unsurpassed field of merit,
due to the truthfulness of that,
let my journey be a success!“ (28) [5754]

When that truth-wish³⁸ had been performed,
the water went off from the road.
Thus in safety I crossed over
to the river’s beautiful bank. (29) [5755]

I saw the Buddha sitting down,
like the sun [when it] is rising,
blazing like a mountain of gold,
shining forth like a tree of lamps, (30) [5756]

surrounded by [his] followers
like the moon along with the stars,
like the king of gods³⁹ raining forth
the gladdening sermon-water. (31) [5757]

Worshipping with the ministers,
I went up to [him] on one side,
[and] then, discerning [what] we wished,
the Buddha preached the *Dhamma* [there]. (32) [5758]

Having heard the stainless Teaching,
we [then] said [this] to the Victor:
“O Great Sage, please [now] ordain [us],
we’re disgusted with existence.” (33) [5759]

³⁷lit., “if the assembly (*saṅgha*)”

³⁸*saccchavare*, “wish [because of] truth,” cf. *saccchakiriya*, “act of truth”

³⁹*vāsavaṇ viya*, = Sakka, Indra

“Well-preached, O monks, is the *Dhamma*,
for you to make suffering end;
wander forth in celibacy,”
thus [indeed] spoke the Seventh Sage. (34) [5760]

When that was spoken, all of us
took on the appearance of monks;
we were [all then] fully ordained
stream-enterers in the teachings.⁴⁰ (35) [5761]

Then going to Jetavana,
the Guide gave instruction [to us].
[Thus] instructed by the Victor,
I attained [my] arahantship. (36) [5762]

Thereafter I admonished them,⁴¹
the thousand monks [along with me].
[Then], because of my instruction,
they too were freed from defilements.⁴² (37) [5763]

The Victor, pleased⁴³ by⁴⁴ that virtue,
[then] placed in that foremost place,
“Among the monk-admonishers,
Kappina’s top,” [he told] the folk. (38) [5764]

Karma done a hundred thousand
[aeons hence] showed me [its] fruit here:
well-liberated, arrow-quick,
I have destroyed my defilements. (39) [5765]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (40) [5766]

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! (41) [5767]

⁴⁰*sotāpaṇṇā ccha sāsane*, lit., “and stream-enterers in the dispensation”

⁴¹lit., “it,” singular, standing in for “the [group] of a thousand monks”

⁴²*te pi āsuṇ anāsavā*

⁴³*tuṭṭho*, lit “happy” “delighted”

⁴⁴lit. “in”

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (42) [5768]

Thus indeed Venerable Mahākappina Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Mahākappina Thera is finished.