

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Uruvelakassapa

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[535. {538.}¹ Uruvelakassapa²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the Sage, Knower of Every World,
the One who had [Five] Eyes, arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [5911]³
The Admonisher,⁴ Instructor,⁵
Crosser-Over⁶ of all that breathe,
Skilled at Preaching,⁷ [he], the Buddha,
caused many folks to cross [the flood]. (2) [5912]

Merciful,⁸ Compassionate One,⁹
Well-Wisher¹⁰ of all that breathe, he
established in the five precepts
all the rivals who had arrived. (3) [5913]

In this way he was Unconfused¹¹
and Very Well-Known¹² by rivals,
Ornamented¹³ by arahants
who were masters [and] neutral ones. (4) [5914]

The [body of the] Sage So Great
rose up fifty-eight cubits¹⁴ [tall];

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“Kassapa of Uruvela,” a historical monk famous for having the foremost place among monks with large retinues. See DPPN 1:432-434

³this and the following five verses also appear, verbatim, as the first six verses of Dabbamalla’s *apadāna* (#531 {534}, above; [5769]-[5774]), and also of Mahākoṭṭhita’s *apadāna* (#534 {537}, above; [5881]-[5886])

⁴ovādako

⁵viññāpako

⁶tārako

⁷desanākusalo

⁸anukampako

⁹kāruṇiko

¹⁰hitesi

¹¹nirākulaṇ

¹²suññātaṇ, or “empty [of ill-will],” which is BJTS Sinhala gloss reading; I construe the epithet as *su* + *ñāta*

¹³vicchittaṇ

¹⁴*ratanāna-aṭṭha-paññāsaṇ uggato*. A *ratana* (Sinh. *riyan*) is figured as twelve-fingers (*aṅgula*), according to Sinh-Eng Dictionary about eighteen inches. The claim here then is that Padumuttara Buddha was 1044 inches (or 87 feet) tall.

he was Valuable Like Gold,¹⁵
Bearing the Thirty-Two Great Marks. (5) [5915]

[People's] lifespan at that time was
[fully] one hundred thousand years.
Remaining [in the world] so long,
he ferried many folks across. (6) [5916]

I then [lived] in Hamsavatī,
A brahmin held in high regard.
Approaching the Torch for the World,¹⁶
I heard the preaching of *Dhamma*. (7) [5917]

[One] of the Great Man's¹⁷ followers
had an extensive retinue.
I was thrilled after hearing [him]
being placed in that foremost place. (8) [5918]

Inviting [him], the Great Victor,¹⁸
I gave an almsgiving [to him],
along with [my]¹⁹ large entourage,
including a thousand brahmins. (9) [5919]

Giving a massive almsgiving,
having saluted the Leader,
happy, standing off at one side,
I spoke these words [to him just then]: (10) [5920]

“Hero, due to my faith in you
and by virtue of serving [you],
let [me] have²⁰ a large retinue
[while] transmigrating here and there.” (11) [5921]

¹⁵*kañcchanagghiyasaṅkāso*, lit., “like a gold valuable thing” or “like a gold festoon work”

¹⁶*lokapajjtotar*

¹⁷*mahāpurisa*^o

¹⁸*mahājīna*

¹⁹following BJTS Sinh gloss in taking *mahatā parivārena* with *saha dānaṃ ahaṃ adaṃ* rather than with *mahāñjina*, though the latter is also a possible reading.

²⁰*parisā mahatī hotu*, lit., “let there be [to me]”. This translation follows BJTS Sinhala gloss (*ē ē tanhi upadinnā vū maṭa mahat vū piri āti wēwā*, “let there be a large retinue for me being reborn in this and that place”), but the construction is elastic enough to allow for other readings that would better emphasize the “sociokarmic” dimension here, that is, that an entire group of people both make and experience this karma, e.g., “let this retinue be great as [it] transmigrates here and there” or even “let this be a great retinue transmigrating here and there”.

[Buddha], the Cuckoo-Voiced²¹ Teacher,
Elephant-Trumpet-Sounding One,²²
spoke to the retinue [just] then:
“All of you look at this brahmin,
with big arms, the color of gold,
[with] face and eyes [like] lotuses,
[his] body hair growing upward,
happy, with faith in my virtue.”²³ (12-13) [5922-5923]

This one’s aspiring to the place
of the monk with a lion’s roar.²⁴
Very far into the future,
he’ll receive that delightful [place]. (14) [5924]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (15) [5925]

Worthy heir to that one’s *Dhamma*,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Kassapa
will be the Teacher’s follower.” (16) [5926]

[Then] ninety-two aeons ago,
there was a Teacher, Unsurpassed,²⁵
Beyond Compare,²⁶ Unrivalled One:²⁷
Phussa, Chief Leader of the World. (17) [5927]

That one, having slain all darkness,
untangling the great tangle,²⁸
rained forth the rain of deathlessness,
refreshing the [world] with [its] gods. (18) [5928]

²¹*karavīkarudo*, “he with the sound of a cuckoo”

²²*gajagajjitassusaro*

²³reading *saddhāvantaṃ guṇe mama* with BJTS for PTS *sandhāvantaṃ guṇaṃ mamaṃ*

²⁴*sīhaghosassa*, lit., “of the one who has a lion’s sound”

²⁵*anuttaro*

²⁶*anupamo*

²⁷*asadiso*

²⁸*vijaṭetvā mahājaṭaṇ*. *Jaṭa* literally means he braid of a “matted hair ascetic” or a tangle of tree branches (a thicket), but figuratively refers to the great tangle of desire. The verb, *vijaṭeti*, means “untangle” but has the connotation, as does the English equivalent, of explaining or unraveling.

In [the city of] Benares,
[reborn] the king's sons²⁹ at that time,
we were three brothers, all of us,
in the confidence of the king. (19) [5929]

Strong, with heroic limbs [and] looks,³⁰
[we're] undefeated in battle.
Then troubled in the borderlands,
the lord of the earth said to us: (20) [5930]

"Come, going to the borderlands,
cleaning up that forest army,³¹
having pacified my kingdom,
come back again," [is what] he said. (21) [5931]

Afterward we said [to the king]:
"If you'll give [leave] to us to serve
the [Buddha], Leader [of the World],
then we'll clean up your³² [enemies]." (22) [5932]

Then we, having obtained our wish,
sent out by the earth's protector,
making the borderlands weapon-
free, we came up to him again. (23) [5933]

Having asked the king [to let us]
serve the Teacher, the World-Leader,
getting the Excellent Sage,³³ we
worshipped³⁴ him as long as [we] lived. (24) [5934]

Giving very expensive cloth,
and abundant³⁵ tasty [alms food],
and lodgings³⁶ [which were] delightful,

²⁹reading *rājāpacchā* (lit., "children of the king") with BJTS for PTS *rājāmacchā* ("royal ministers")

³⁰*viraṅgarūpā*, lit., "with the appearance/form and limbs/body of a hero"

³¹reading *sodhetvā aṭavibalaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *sodhetvā avidhībalaṃ* ("cleaning up that army without a method"). BJTS understands this as a [rebel] army which is hiding in the forest; it could also be read to mean "army of forest people," the so-called "tribals" on the borderlands of India.

³²BJTS reads *vo* (pl) for PTS *te* (sing.), perhaps assuming a "royal we"?

³³*munivaraṇ*

³⁴reading *yajimha* with BJTS for PTS *adimha* ("we gave")

³⁵*paṇītāni*

³⁶lit., "bed [and] chair" (or "bed [and] food")

and beneficial³⁷ medicines
to the Sage with the monks,³⁸ neutral
toward birth because of the Teaching,
We, moral [and] compassionate,
minds engaged in meditation,
with loving hearts, having waited
on the [World-]Leader all the time,
when the World-Chief reached nirvana,
worshipping³⁹ with all of [our] strength,⁴⁰ (25-27) [5935-5937]

fallen from there, gone to heaven,⁴¹
all [three] of us experienced
great happiness [when] in that place:
that's the fruit of Buddha-pūjā. (28) [5938]

Like an illusionist on stage⁴²
showing [himself as] very large,
thus touring⁴³ in existence I
became the king of Videha.⁴⁴ (29) [5939]

At the word of naked⁴⁵ Guṇa,⁴⁶
become⁴⁷ dependent on wrong views,⁴⁸
I got onto an evil path.
Not heeding⁴⁹ the advice [given]

³⁷*hitāni*

³⁸lit., “with the Assembly”

³⁹lit., “doing pūjā”

⁴⁰*yathābalaṃ*, lit., “to the extent of strength”

⁴¹*santusitaṃ gatā*, lit., “gone to Tusitā”

⁴²reading *rañge* with BJTS for PTS *laddho* (“I received”)

⁴³reading *bhamanto* with BJTS for PTS *bhavanto* (“existing”)

⁴⁴the following story refers — quite obliquely — to the *Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka* (No. 544), told in the context of Uruvela Kassapa’s conversion. See DPPN II: 518-519. In the story, he is born as Aṅgati, king of Mithilā in Videha.

⁴⁵i.e., the naked ascetic

⁴⁶“Virtue.” In *Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka* he is depicted as preaching that there is no future life, and advocating that one therefore should indulge in only pleasures during the present one.

⁴⁷lit “gone into dependence on,” reading *°gatāsaya* with BJTS for PTS *hatāsaya*

⁴⁸In *Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka* he proceeds to spend two weeks in the palace, indulging himself.

⁴⁹lit., “disregarding,” *nādayitvāna*

by my daughter [known as] Rujā,⁵⁰
I [later] being much-advised
by the brahmin [named] Nārada,⁵¹
giving up [Guṇa's] evil views,
having fulfilled with distinction
the⁵² ten [wholesome] ways of acting,⁵³
abandoning [my] body, I
went to heaven with a palace. (30-32) [5940-5942]

When [my] last rebirth was attained,
I was a kinsman of Brahmā,
born in Benares with great wealth,⁵⁴
in a large brahmin family.⁵⁵ (33) [5943]

Fearing death, illness [and] old age,
and abandoning [my] great wealth,
seeking the path to nirvana,
I went forth as a Jaṭila.⁵⁶ (34) [5944]

[And] then those two brothers of mine
[also] went forth along with me.
Having built in Uruvelā
a hermitage, I [then] lived there. (35) [5945]

Named “Kassapa” through [my] lineage,
since I dwelt in Uruvelā,
I was therefore known [by the name]
of “Uruvela Kassapa.”⁵⁷ (36) [5946]

My brother [lived] near the river;⁵⁸
he was named “Nadī Kassapa.”

⁵⁰“Pain”. *Mahānārada-kassapa-jātaka* explains that at the end of two weeks she requested her father for 1000 (units of money) to make offerings to monks, and to keep the fast. That text maintains that in a future life she was born as Ānanda

⁵¹the Bodhisatta

⁵²lit., “of the”

⁵³reading *dasakammapathāna* (gen.) with BJTS for PTS *dasakammapathena* (acc.); these are three ways of acting in body, four ways of acting in speech, and three ways of acting in mind, totaling ten.

⁵⁴reading *phitāyaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *pi tāyaṃ*

⁵⁵or “clan”: *vippamahākule*

⁵⁶lit., “among the Jaṭilas, “matted-hair ascetics”

⁵⁷reading *uruvelakassapo iti* with BJTS for PTS *Uruvelāsu Kassapo* (“Kassapa among the Uruvelans”)

⁵⁸the Nerañjarā River (*nadī*)

[The other lived] close to Gāyā;
by name he's "Gāyā Kassapa". (37) [5947]

Two hundred for Nadīkassapa,
[and] three for the middle brother.
No less than five hundred for me,
students who all [then] followed me. (38) [5948]

Then the Buddha, approaching me,
the World-Chief, Charioteer of Men,
doing various miracles,
he led me [on the correct path]. (39) [5949]

I was [ordained], "come monk," along
with a lakh [in my] retinue;
I attained [my] arahantship,
together with all of them [too]. (40) [5950]

They and also many others
were students attending on me.
I was able to instruct [them,]
as the Seventh Sage [advised] me. (41) [5951]

He placed me in the foremost place
[of those with a] large retinue.
O! the deed done for the Buddha
[certainly] bore [its] fruit for me. (42) [5952]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (43) [5953]

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! (44) [5954]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (45) [5955]

Thus indeed Venerable Uruvelakassapa Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Uruvelakassapa Thera is finished.