

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Mogharāja

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[537. {540.}¹ Mogharāja²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the Sage, Knower of Every World,
the One who had [Five] Eyes, arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [5987]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) [5988]

Merciful,⁸ Compassionate One,⁹
Well-Wisher¹⁰ of all that breathe, he
established in the five precepts
all the rivals who had arrived. (3) [5989]

In this way he was Unconfused¹¹
and Very Well-Known¹² by rivals,
Ornamented¹³ by arahants
who were masters [and] neutral ones. (4) [5990]

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.

²a historical monk. See DPPN II: 669-670

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}; [5881]-[5886]), and Uruvela-Kassapa's *apadāna* (#535 {538}; [5911]-[5916]), and Rādhas *apadāna* (#536 {539}; [5956]-[5961])

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) [5991]

[People's] lifespan at that time was
[fully] one hundred thousand years.
Remaining [in the world] so long,
he ferried many folks across. (6) [5992]

I was then in Hamsavatī;
I was [born] in a certain¹⁶ clan.
Bound to working for others,¹⁷ I
did not have any possessions. (7) [5993]

Living on the unfinished floor¹⁸
of a storeroom for special seats,¹⁹
I lit a fire there [on that floor];
the earth became hard [and] blackened. (8) [5994]

Then the Lord, explaining the Four
Noble Truths to the retinue,
lavished praise on a follower
who wore inferior cloth robes.²⁰ (9) [5995]

[Then] thrilled at that virtue of his,
falling before the Thus-Gone-One,
I aspired to that supreme place,
foremost among those with rough robes. (10) [5996]

Then Buddha Padumuttara
said this to [all his] followers:
“All of you look at that person,

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

¹⁶*aññatare* implies “undistinguished” here

¹⁷i.e., an itinerant worker or a servant

¹⁸BJTS Sinh. gloss (*piriyam no kaḷa bimhi*) seems to take the Pāli as *vasanto katabhūmiyaṃ* (“on an unfinished floor”) rather than (as both editions have it), *vasanto katabhūmiyaṃ*, which means the opposite (“on a finished floor”). The reference to “the earth” (*mahī*) in the final foot may be why the BJTS editor reads it this way, and I follow suit, though it is unclear to me why blackening an unfinished floor would be problematic enough to cause the terrible consequences it does for the protagonist.

¹⁹*paṭikkamanasālāyaṇ*, following RD. The sense is of a building whose purpose is keeping the chairs, cushions, mats or what have you that are appointed for distinguished visitors. As the Buddha and monks would have been among the latter, the sooting up of the floor seems to have been especially grave.

²⁰*lūkhacchīvaradhārakaṇ*. *Lūkha*° refers to rough, inferior cloth discarded by tailors

with bad clothes, a skinny body,
with joy [and] pleasure in [his] face,
possessing a great wealth of faith,
happy, body hair grown upward,
steadfast, eating food in a hall.²¹ (11-12) [5997-5998]

He's wishing to [attain] the place
of [this] monk [named] Saccchhasena;²²
his hope's for the appearance of
this [monk] wearing robes of rough cloth." (13) [5999]

After hearing that,²³ being thrilled,
bowing [my] head to the Victor,
doing good karma my whole life²⁴
in the Victor's dispensation,
due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I was gone to Tāvātimsa. (14-15) [6000-6001]

Through the deed of burning the floor
in the storeroom for special seats,
for all of a thousand [years,] I
burned in hell, remaining in pain. (16) [6002]

Due to that karma's remainder,
I had five hundred [more] rebirths,
being born in a human clan,
[and] marked with the marks of [my] caste.²⁵ (17) [6003]

For those same five hundred rebirths,
I'm afflicted with skin disease,
I underwent great suffering,
through the power of that karma. (18) [6004]

²¹*sālapiṇḍitaṇ*, BJTS Sinh. gloss "who has *sālapiṇḍa* ("a lump of food in a hall" "a lump of sal"

²²"Truth-Army"

²³oddly, here the Buddha does not draw the conclusion that the protagonist will indeed attain that foremost place; perhaps a verse or two has been lost?

²⁴lit., "for as long as [I] lived"

²⁵reading *jātiyā lakkaṇaṇkita* with BJTS for PTS *tatiyākāraṇ' aṇkita* ("marked in the third mine"?)

In this [present] lucky aeon,
having a mind [full] of pleasure,
I entertained with begged alms food
Upariṭṭha, the Famous One.²⁶ (19) [6005]

Through the rest of the deed²⁷ I did,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (20) [6006]

When [my] last²⁸ rebirth was attained,
I'm born in a warrior²⁹ clan.
After the death of my father,
I possessed a large kingdom [then]. (21) [6007]

Afflicted with a skin disease,
I get no comfort in the night.
Due to useless royal comfort,³⁰
I was then called “King of Useless.”³¹
Seeing the flaws of the body,
I went forth into homelessness.
I entered in the studentship
of Bāvarī, the chief brahmin. (23) [6009]

With an enormous retinue,
approaching the Leader of Men,³²
I asked a subtle question of
the Hero, Debater-Crusher.³³ (24) [6010]

“[In] this world [or in] the next world
[or] in Brahma's world with [its] gods,

²⁶BJTS gloss explains that he was a *paccchekabuddha* or “Lonely Buddha” who realizes nirvana without teaching the path (as does a *Sammāsambuddha*). Reading *upariṭṭhaṃ yasassināṃ* with BJTS for PTS *upaṭṭhitaṃ yasassināṃ* (“I waited on the famous”)

²⁷lit., “the karma”

²⁸taking BJTS *macchchime* (for *paccchime*) as a typographical error

²⁹lit., “kṣatriyan”

³⁰*mogharajjasukhan yasmā*

³¹*Mogharājā*

³²*naranāyakaṃ*

³³reading *taṃ vīraṃ vādisūdanaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *vāhisaṃ vādisūdanaṃ* (“Lord of Speech, Debater-Crusher”) and following BJTS Sinh. gloss on *sūdanaṃ* (*maḍinnā*, “Crusher”)

[might] he not know the sight of you,³⁴
of Gotama, the Famous One? (25) [6011]

Thus one with excellent knowledge³⁵
comes to the point through the question,
[while] looking upon what world, [then],
does the King of Death not see [him]?“ (26) [6012]

The Physician for all Disease,³⁶
the Buddha answered³⁷ [this] to me:
“Look upon the world as empty,³⁸
Mogharāja;³⁹ always mindful,
[and] uprooting his own [false] views,⁴⁰
[in this way] he’d cross beyond death.
Thusly looking upon the world,
the King of Death does not see [him].” (27-28) [6013-6014]

And the conclusion of that verse,
cutting off [my] hair and [my] beard,
putting on saffron-colored robes,
I became an arahant monk. (29) [6015]

Oppressed by illness I don’t live
in Assembly monasteries.
“Don’t offend the monastery” —
by that word I’m extra-oppressed. (30) [6016]

Taking [cloth] atop rubbish heaps,
from charnel field, on carriage roads,
having made⁴¹ [my] robe out of that,
I am wearing a rough-cloth robe. (31) [6017]

Pleased about⁴² that virtue of mine,
the Great Physician,⁴³ the Leader,

³⁴reading *diṭṭhiṃ te nābhijānāti* with BJTS for PTS *diṭṭhi no nābhijānāmi*, and following BJTS Sinh. gloss.

³⁵or “excellent knowledge,” see under RD *abhikkanta*, s.v. (°*dassāvin*)

³⁶*sabbarogatikicchako*

³⁷*abhaṇi* lit., “said”

³⁸*suññato*

³⁹reading *mogharāja* (voc.) with BJTS for PTS *Mogharājā* (nom.)

⁴⁰*attānudiṭṭhiṃ uhaccchcha*

⁴¹reading *katvā* with BJTS for PTS *hutvā* (“having become”)

⁴²lit., “in”

⁴³*mahā-bhisakko*

[then] placed me in the foremost place
of those who wear robes of rough cloth. (32) [6018]

Merit and evil are all destroyed;
every illness is driven out.
Like fire, [I] have no attachments;
I will realize nirvana. (33) [6019]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (34) [6020]

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! (35) [6021]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (36) [6022]

Thus indeed Venerable Mogharāja Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Mogharāja Thera is finished.

The Summary:

Kaccchchāna, Vakkali Thera,
the one named Mahākappina,
Dabba, and he named Kumāra,
Bāhiya, Master Koṭṭhita,
Uruvelakassapa, Rādha,
and Mogharājā the pundit.
There are three hundred verses here,
piled on another sixty-two.

The Kaccchchāna Chapter, the Fifty-Fourth⁴⁴

⁴⁴BJTS places this statement above the summary, rather than after it