

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Kaṅkha-Revata

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[539. {542.}¹ Kaṅkha-Revata²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the One with Eyes for everything,
the Leader [of the World,] arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [6056]

Lion-Jawed³ and Brahmā-Voiced,⁴ his
sound⁵ was [like] a swan's [or] a drum's;
gait heroic [like] a tusker's,⁶
very bright [like] the moon [or] sun, (2) [6057]

Very Wise,⁷ the Great Hero, the
Great Meditator, the Great Friend,⁸
Greatly Compassionate,⁹ the Lord,
Dispeller of the Great Darkness,¹⁰ (3) [6058]

the Three Worlds' Chief,¹¹ the Sambuddha,
Sage, Knower of Beings' Wishes,¹²

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"Troubled Revata," a historical monk so-named due to his scrupulosity about the Vinaya rules prior to attaining his arahantship. He was known as the foremost among those who are proficient in the trance-like meditative states called *jhanas*. See DPPN I: 474-475

³*sīhahanu*. BJTS Sinh. gloss on this curious epithet is *siṃhayakugē haṇu banda piruṇu haṇu āttē ya* ("he has a full jaw like the jaw of a lion")

⁴*brahmagiro*

⁵the final component of this compound varies considerably in the texts; all the alternatives seem to indicate "sound" or "noise," paralleling other forms of this adjective (e.g., [5624], [5734]). PTS reads *haṇsadundrabhinisvano*, which is garbled; BJTS reads *haṇsadundubhibissaro*. I follow BJTS and BJTS Sinh. gloss *haḍḍa*. Presumably the meaning is that his voice was loud or resonated well. BJTS takes the first two components of the compound, *haṇsa* + *dundubhi*, as the name of a particular type of drum, "Swan-drum" (*hasbera*), though I find no indication of such an instrument in the dictionaries and so find more likely the translation here, that the Buddha's sound was resounding like that of a swan or a drum — loud but pleasant.

⁶*nāgavikkantagamano*

⁷*mahāmati*

⁸*mahāhito*. BJTS reads *mahābalo* ("Very Strong")

⁹*mahākāruṇiko*

¹⁰*mahātamanisūdano* (BJTS reads, more coherently, *mahātamapanūdano*)

¹¹*tilokaggo*

¹²*sattāsayavidū*

¹³*veneyyavinayaṇ bahuṇ*; BJTS tries to clean up the grammar with *vineyye vinayaṇ bahuṇ*

leading many who can be led¹³
whenever he preaches *Dhamma*, (4) [6059]

the Victor delighted¹⁴ people,
praising amidst [his] retinue
a hero, meditator, calm
[and] undisturbed trance-loving [monk]. (5) [6060]

I then [lived] in Hamsavatī,
brahmin master of the Vedas.
Hearing the Teaching, being thrilled,
I aspired [to attain] that place. (6) [6061]

Then the Victor prophesied, the
Leader, amidst the Assembly,
“O brahmin, you [should] be¹⁵ thrilled, [for]
you’ll attain that delightful [place]. (7) [6062]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (8) [6063]

Worthy heir to that one’s *Dhamma*,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Revata
will be the Teacher’s follower.” (9) [6064]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (10) [6065]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,
I’m born in Koliya city,
in a well-off kṣatriyan clan,
rich, prosperous, very wealthy. (11) [6066]

When the Buddha preached the *Dhamma*
in Kapilavastu [city],

¹⁴*toṣeti*, lit., “is delighting”

¹⁵lit., “be” (imperative)

¹⁶*tadā pasanno*, lit., “then being pleased”

being pleased¹⁶ in the Well-Gone-One,
I went forth into homelessness. (12) [6067]

I had lots of doubts, here and there,
[what is] proper, [what's] improper;¹⁷
[while] preaching the supreme *Dhamma*,
the Buddha resolved¹⁸ all of that. (13) [6068]

After that I crossed existence,
then fond of the pleasure in trance
I lived. At that time, seeing me,
the Buddha said this [about me]: (14) [6069]

“Which doubts exist in this world or the other,¹⁹
[whether] known by oneself or else known by another,
those who are meditators give up all that,
living the holy life,²⁰ energetically.”²¹ (15) [6070]²²

Karma done a hundred thousand
[aeons hence] showed me [its] fruit here:
well-liberated, arrow-quick,
I have destroyed my defilements. (16) [6071]

Then the World-Surpasser,²³ the Sage,
after seeing my love of trance,
the Great Sage then appointed me:
“foremost of monks who meditate.” (17) [6072]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (18) [6073]

¹⁷*kappākappe*, or “permitted...prohibited” or “the rule...not the rule” or “suitable...not suitable”

¹⁸*vinayī*, both “removed” and “instructed”

¹⁹*idha vā hurāṇ vā*, cf. RD, s.v. and his references to re-use of the phrase in poetry: S.i.12; DH 20; Sn 224 = J. i.96.

²⁰or “wandering in celibacy”: *brahmacchariyan ccharantā*

²¹pronounce all six syllables when chanting, or else read “[most] energetically,” to keep the meter.

²²This verse is in a more complex 11-12-11-12 meter named xxx (reading *ye jhāyino tā* with BJTS for PTS *jhāyino tā* in the third foot, thereby preserving both meter and grammar.

²³*lokantagū*, lit., “who has gone to the ends of the world” (understood by BJTS to refer to *bhavotpattiya*, the process of rebirth or re-existence itself)

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! (19) [6074]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (20) [6075]

Thus indeed Venerable Kaṅkha-Revata Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Kaṅkha-Revata Thera is finished.