

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Sīvali

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[540. {543.}]¹ Sīvali²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the One with Eyes for everything,
the Leader [of the World,] arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [6076]

His morals could not be measured,
meditative states like lightening,³
vast⁴ knowledge could not be measured,
and freedom unlike anything.⁵ (2) [6077]

The Leader preached the *Dhamma* to
the men, the gods,⁶ the snake-gods [and]
the Brahmās [all] come together,
mixed with [Buddhist] monks and brahmins. (3) [6078]

Confident among Multitudes,⁷
the [Buddha] placed a merit-filled,
much-receiving [and] gift-worthy
follower in that foremost place. (4) [6079]

I was a kṣatriyan back then,
in the city named “Hamsa;”⁸
hearing the Victor’s words [about]
the follower’s virtuousness,⁹ (5) [6080]

inviting [Buddha], for a week
I fed [him] with [his] followers.
Giving a massive alms-giving,
I aspired [to attain] that place. (6) [6081]

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.

²a historical monk, famous (and still tapped for power today) as foremost among the recipients of gifts. See DPPN II:1163-1164 Small images, pictures and *yantras* of Sīvali are common good-luck-charms throughout the Theravāda Buddhist world

³lit., “*samādhi* whose metaphor is lightening”

⁴*varāṇ*, lit., “excellent” “fine”

⁵*anupamo*, lit., “which has no metaphor,” referencing back to the second foot as does the third foot to the first.

⁶*amarā*, or “the immortals”

⁷*parisāsu visārado*

⁸“Swan,” i.e., Hamsavati

⁹lit., “that the virtue of the follower was much”

Then [he], the Bull Among People,
seeing me bowing¹⁰ at [his] feet,
the Great Hero, in [his] good voice,
uttered these words [concerning me]: (7) [6082]

Then the multitude, desiring
to hear the words of the Victor,
the gods, titans, musical nymphs,
the greatly powerful Brahmās,¹¹
and the [Buddhist] monks, and brahmins,
praised [him] with hands pressed together:
“Praise to you, O Well-Bred Person!¹²
Praise to you, Ultimate Person!
For a week [this] kṣatriyan gave
a massive alms-giving to you.¹³
[We] wish to hear the fruit for him;
prophecy [that], O Sage So Great.” (8-10) [6083-6085]

After that, the Blessed One said,
“[All of] you listen to my words:
Who can tell the [fruit of the] gift¹⁴
well-established for the Buddha
[or] Assembly, beyond measure?
It will bear fruit beyond measure.
This rich man is truly wishing
[to attain] that ultimate place. (11-12) [6086-6087]

He’ll be a getter of huge wealth,
just like the monk Sudassana,¹⁵
[and] also just like me [as well];
he’ll receive that in the future. (13) [6088]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,

¹⁰or “bent”: *vinataṇ*

¹¹reading *brāhmaṇo* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *brāhmaṇā* (“the Brahmins”)

¹²*purisājañña*, RD “steed of man,” in the voc. Contracted form of *ājāniya/ājāniya*, “almost exclusively used to donate a thoroughbred horse”

¹³reading *hi vo* with BJTS for PTS *vibho* (= “the Wise One” ?)

¹⁴reading *dakkhiṇā tāya ko vattā* with BJTS for PTS *dakkhiṇādāya kho-v-attaṇ*, (“the value of giving a gift indeed” ?)

¹⁵“Good-Looking,” presumably the proper name of the monk who held the foremost place among receivers of gifts during the era of Padumuttara Buddha.

the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (14) [6089]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Sivali
will be the Teacher's follower." (15) [6090]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (16) [6091]

[Then] ninety-one aeons ago,
the World-Leader [named] Vipassi
arose, the One with Lovely Eyes,¹⁶
with Insight into Everything.¹⁷ (17) [6092]

Then I [lived] in Bandhumatī,
[a member] of a certain clan;¹⁸
I was¹⁹ pitied and sought after,
one intent on ending karma.²⁰ (18) [6093]

Then a certain corporation²¹
constructed a monastic school²²
for the Great Sage [named] Vipassi,
which was large and widely renowned. (19) [6094]

Searching for new curds and honey
to give along with solid food²³
at the end of the great alms-gift,
they did not find²⁴ [any to give]. (20) [6095]

¹⁶*cchārunayano*, or "lovely to the eyes" (?)

¹⁷*sabbadhammavipassaka*, a play on that Buddha's name

¹⁸the connotation is: "of a certain poor/lowly clan"

¹⁹reading *āsiṃ* with BJTS for PTS *āsi* ("he was")

²⁰or, "one longing for the end of work"

²¹or "guild": *aññātaro pūga*

²²*pariveṇaṇ*

²³reading *khajjaka-sāhitaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *khajjakasaññutaṇ*

²⁴lit., "see"

²⁵reading *tadāhaṃ taṃ gahetvāna* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *tadā bhattaṇ gahetvāna* ("then having taken cooked rice")

Then having taken [some] of that,²⁵
new curds and also honey too,
I went to the overseer's house,²⁶
and seeking that they saw me.²⁷ (21) [6096]

Even offering a thousand,
they did not obtain those two [things].²⁸
I thought [about it] then like this:
“That [price] would not be too little.
As far as all these people are
honoring [him], the Thus-Gone-One,
I too will do a [pious] deed,
for the World-Lord with Assembly.” (22-23) [6097-6098]

Then having thought [it out] like that,
mixing together the curds and
the honey, I gave [them] to the
Lord of the World with Assembly. (24) [6099]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (25) [6100]

Again, in Benares, being
a king [who was] very famous,
enraged²⁹ at an enemy [then,]
I caused the gateway to be blocked. (26) [6101]

Then, obstructing ascetics³⁰ [too],
[it] was guarded thus for a week.³¹
Therefore, as the result of that

²⁵*kammasāmiḡharaṇ*

²⁷reading *tamesantā mam' addasum* with BJTS for PTS *tamesantaṇ tamaddasaṇ* (“searching for that I saw that”)

²⁸reading *taṃ dvayaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *sat' anvayaṇ* (“conforming with [their] mindfulness”). BJTS gloss understands the intention to be, “did not obtain those two things from me,” i.e., “I would not sell those two things”ⁱ

²⁹reading *ruṭṭho* with BJTS for PTS *Buddho* (“the Buddha”)

³⁰BJTS reads *sapattino* (“[kings] with co-wives”?) though it recognizes *tapassino* (the PTS readings) as an alt.

³¹reading *sattāhaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *ekāhaṇ* (“one day”), cf. v. 30 below where like BJTS, PTS indicates “seven days” rather than “one day”

karma, I fell hard into hell.³² (27) [6102]

And now in [my] final rebirth,
due to the kṣatriyan's good deeds,³³
I'm born in Koliya city;
my mother was Suppavāsā,³⁴
father Mahāli Licchchavi.³⁵
Because of obstructing the gate,
I gestated for seven years,
suffering in [my] mother's womb. (28-29) [6103-6104]

One week breached in the birth canal,³⁶
I'm endowed with great suffering.
Because she gave approval [then],
my mother suffered greatly [now].³⁷ (30) [6105]

Departing from Śrāvastī, I
was pitied by [him], the Buddha;
on the very day I set out,
I went forth into homelessness. (31) [6106]

My preceptor: Sāriputta;
powerful³⁸ Moggallāna, the
wise, instructed me [as teacher]
[while he was] removing my hair. (32) [6107]

While my hair was being cut off,
I attained [my] arahantship.
Gods, snake-gods and human beings
are bringing me the requisites.³⁹ (33) [6108]

³²reading *papatim nirayaṃ bhusaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *pāpattaṃ nirayaṃ bhusaṃ* ("evil-ness hell vehemently")

³³lit., "meritorious karma;" I follow BJTS Sinhala gloss (and the context) in construing this foot with the previous verse, rather than (and indeed in juxtaposition) with what follows in the present one.

³⁴"Good Sojourner"

³⁵"Big Fish [*mahā + āli* ?] the Licchchavi"

³⁶lit., "gone astray at the gate [to the birth canal]"

³⁷BJTS Sinh. gloss clarifies that she gave approval of the gate-obstruction during the previous life; therefore reborn in the present she suffered this obstruction in her "gate" (*dvāra*)

³⁸*mahiddhiko*, usually translated "greatly powerful," i.e., a possessor of the *iddhi* ("magical") superpowers

³⁹i.e., the things allowed a Buddhist monk, usually summarized as four: robes, alms-food, a dwelling-place, and medicines.

Because, delighted, I worshipped⁴⁰
[Buddha] named Padumuttara
and the Guide, Vipassi [Buddha],
I'm distinguished with requisites. (34) [6109]

Due to the distinction of those
deeds, I'm receiving everywhere
enormous [and] ultimate wealth,
in woods, village, water [and] land. (35) [6110]

When the Guide is traveling for
the sake of seeing Revata,
the World's Chief Leader together
with thirty times a thousand monks,
the Great Wise One,⁴¹ the Great Hero,
the World's Chief Leader with the monks,⁴²
the Buddha's then served by me with
requisites the gods bring for me;
having gone he saw⁴³ Revata,
then going to Jetavana,
[he] placed me in that foremost place. (36-38) [6111-6113]

The Teacher, Friend of Every World,⁴⁴
praised me amidst the multitude:
"O monks, Sīvali's the foremost
receiver among my students." (39) [6114]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (40) [6115]

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) [6116]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,

⁴⁰lit., "did *pūjā*"

⁴¹*mahāmati*

⁴²*sasagho*, lit., "with the Assembly"

⁴³reading *addasa* with BJTS for PTS *addasaṇ* ("I saw")

⁴⁴*sabbalokahito*

six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (42) [6117]

Thus indeed Venerable Sīvali Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Sīvali Thera is finished.