

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Abhaya

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[544. {547.}¹ Abhaya²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the One with Eyes for everything,
the Leader [of the World,] arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [6217]

The Thus-Gone-One exhorts someone
in the going for refuge, [and]
he exhorts someone in morals,
in the supreme ten ways to act.³ (2) [6218]

The Hero gives to somebody
the ultimate fruit of monkhood,
[and] likewise the eight attainments;⁴
he bestows the three knowledges. (3) [6219]

Supreme Man⁵ urges some being
in the six special knowledges,
[and] the Lord gives to somebody
the four analytical modes. (4) [6220]

Seeing folks to be awakened,
[across] leagues that can't be counted,
in no time having approached [them],
the Charioteer of Men exhorts. (5) [6221]

I then [lived] in Hamsavatī;
I was the son of a brahmin,
a master of all the Vedas,
revered as a grammarian,
skillful in etymology,
confident in definitions,

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.

²"Fearless," a historical monk, commonly known as Abhayarājakumāra, "Abhaya the Royal Prince," because he was the son of King Bimbisāra of Rajgir. See DPPN I:127-128.

³*dasakammāpathuttame*: RD: "divided into kusala (meritorious, good) and akusala (demeritorious, evil) and classified according to the three manifestations" of body (3 *kammāpathas*), speech (4 *kammāpathas*) and mind (3 *kammāpathas*), for a total of ten.

⁴namely the four *jhanas* and the four formless realms (of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither consciousness nor unconsciousness)

⁵*naruttamo*

verse-knower,⁶ ritual-knower,⁷
[also] clever at prosody.⁸ (6-7) [6222-6223]

[While] wandering about on foot,
having approached Swan Hermitage,⁹
I saw [him], the Best Debater,¹⁰
Honored by the Great Populace,¹¹ (8) [6224]

preaching the *Dhamma* without stain.
I, with contrary ideas,
after having gone up to [him],
after hearing his stainless words, (9) [6225]

[looking for a word] of the Sage
which was incorrect, repeated,
or¹² thrown-off or without meaning,
I saw none; therefore I went forth. (10) [6226]

After not a long time, being
confident among all teachers,
I am taken as an expert¹³
in the subtle words of Buddha. (11) [6227]

After having put together¹⁴
four well-written¹⁵ verses [for him],
praising the Chief of the Three Worlds,
I had [them] preached¹⁶ from day to day. (12) [6228]

“In [this] frightful existence you
are Free from Passion,¹⁷ Great Hero;¹⁸

⁶*padako*, i.e. knowing the lines and feet of the Vedic poems

⁷*keṭubhavidū*

⁸*chandovicchitikovido*

⁹*haṃsârāmam* appears to be a proper name, though it also could be taken as “the hermitage in [my hometown] Hamsavatī”

¹⁰*vadatan seṭṭhan*

¹¹*mahājana-purakkhatan*

¹²reading *vā* with BJTS for PTS *ccha* (“and”)

¹³*gaṇi*°, lit., “one who has a group [of followers],” “a teacher”

¹⁴reading *ganthayitvā* with BJTS for PTS *ganthavitvā*

¹⁵*suṃvyañjanan* (“with good characteristics” “good in the letter [as opposed to the meaning]”)

¹⁶*desayissan*

¹⁷*viratto*

¹⁸reading *mahāvra* (voc.) with BJTS for PTS *mahāvīro* (nom).

out of compassion, you don't die,¹⁹
thus [you're] 'the Compassionate Sage.' (13) [6229]

Someone who's²⁰ a common person
not overwhelmed by defilements,
[would be] attentive²¹ and mindful;²²
thus [Buddha's] inconceivable. (14) [6230]

These are not destroyed by themselves,
[even] someone's weak defilements,
consumed in the fire of knowledge.
It [would be] a marvel [if so]. (15) [6231]

He who's the Teacher of All Worlds:²³
for him the world's thus a teacher;
he's thus [known as] 'the World-Teacher'²⁴
[and] the world is following him." (16) [6232]

With [fine verses] like those, I praised
the Sambuddha,²⁵ *Dhamma*-preacher;²⁶
doing so as long as [I] lived,
after death²⁷ I went to heaven.²⁸ (17) [6233]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I praised the Buddha [like that],
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (18) [6234]

I experienced a lot of
great kingship in the world of gods,
and local kingship [here on earth],
[and] wheel-turning kingship [as well]. (19) [6235]

¹⁹*na nibbāyi*, lit., "did not die" or "did not reach full nirvana (*parinibbāna*)"

²⁰reading *santo* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *satto* ("a creature")

²¹*sampajāno*

²²*satīyutto*

²³*sabbalokassa guru* (BJTS reads *garu*, the older form, but glosses *guru*). I follow BJTS Sinh. gloss in taking this as referring specifically to a Buddha, hence capitalize it as a Buddha-epithet.

²⁴reading *lokccāriyo* with BJTS for PTS *lokacchariyā* (sic).

²⁵reading *sambuddhaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *yaṃ Budhhaṃ* ("which Buddha")

²⁶PTS *dharmadesakāṃ*; BJTS *dharmadesatāṃ*

²⁷*tato cchuto*, lit., "fallen from there"

²⁸*gato saggaṃ*

I transmigrate in [just] two states:
that of a god, or of a man.
I do not know other rebirths;
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (20) [6236]

[When human] I'm born in two clans:
the kṣatriyan or the brahmin.
I don't get born²⁹ in lesser clans:
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (21) [6237]

Now, in [my] final existence,
in Rajgir, ultimate city,³⁰
I am King Bimbisāra's son,
and [my given] name's Abhaya. (22) [6238]

Influenced³¹ by an evil friend,³²
I was bewildered by a Jain.
Sent by the leader of the Jains,³³
I approached the Best of Buddhas. (23) [6239]

Having asked a subtle question,
hearing [Buddha's] supreme response,
going forth, in not a long time,
I attained [my] arahantship. (24) [6240]

After praising the Best Victor,³⁴
I [myself] am praised all the time.
With good-scented body and mouth,
I am endowed with happiness. (25) [6241]

Thus indeed I am greatly wise,
with sharp, clever [and] quick wisdom,
and I [speak] with varied discourse,
through the power of that karma. (26) [6242]

²⁹reading *jāyāmi* with BJTS for PTS *jānāmi* ("know")

³⁰*giribbajapuruttame*. Giribbaja or Girivraja is another name for Rajgir (also for Vaṅkagiri; see DPPN I:770)

³¹°*vasaṇ gantvā*, lit., "having gone under the power of"

³²*pāpamitta*°, a friend who enjoins one to evil deeds, as contrasted with a "beautiful friend" (*kalyānamitta*) who enjoins one to do good.

³³lit., "sent by Nātaputta," the typical Pāli designation of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the Jina. (BJTS reads *nātaputtana*). For details about him as depicted in the Pāli texts see DPPN II: 61-64. The protagonist is "sent" by the Jina in order to spy on or refute the Buddha.

³⁴*jinavarāṇ*

With pleasure in [my] heart, praising the Worthy,³⁵
the Unmatched,³⁶ Self-Become³⁷ Padumuttara,
as the fruit of that, to a place [full] of woe,
for a [whole] lakh³⁸ of aeons, I did not go. (27) [6243]³⁹

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (28) [6244]

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! (29) [6245]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (30) [6246]

Thus indeed Venerable Abhaya Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Abhaya Thera is finished.

³⁵ *arahañ*, i.e., "the arahant"

³⁶ *asamañ*

³⁷ *sayambhūñ*

³⁸ i.e., for one hundred thousand aeons

³⁹ this verse is in the more complex xxx meter, with eleven-syllable feet.