

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Uttara

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[{556.}¹ Uttara²]

The Sambuddha named Sumedha,
Bearing the Thirty-two Great Marks,
Seclusion-Lover, Blessed One,
came up to the Himalayas. [6385]

Plunged into the Himalayas,
the Chief, Compassionate, the Sage,
getting into lotus posture,³
sat down, the Ultimate Person. [6386]

I was a sorcerer⁴ back then,
[one who could] travel through the sky;
taking my well-gone⁵ trident I
was going through the sky [right there]. [6387]

Like fire [burning] on a mountain,
like the moon on the fifteenth day,⁶
the Buddha blazed forth in the woods,
like a regal *sal* tree in bloom. [6388]

Coming down from atop the woods,
the Buddha's rays filled [all of] space,
with the color of a reed-fire.⁷
Seeing [that], I pleased [my own] heart. [6389]

Wandering, I saw a flower,

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, see DPPN I:349. This same *apadāna*, with slight variations, is included above as #498 {501}, where it is ascribed to a monk named Tīṇikaṇikārapuphiya (“Three *Kaṇikāra* Flowers-er”), based on the nature of the original gift. The slight variations here are: reading *bhagavā* for *sambuddho* in the third foot of v. 1 [6385]; reading “well-gone” (*sugatam*) for “well-made” in v. 3 [6387]; reading *puṇṇamāye* for *puṇṇamāse* in v. 4 [6388]; reading “I don’t know” (*na jānāmi*) for “I don’t get born in” (*na jāyāmi*) in v. 21 [6405]; eliding the last two feet of v. 27 [6411], which #498 {501} presents as a six-footed verse.

³lit., “crouching with his legs crossed”

⁴*vijjādharo*, “spell-knower”

⁵*sugatam*, perhaps a mistake for *sukatam* (“well-made”)

⁶i.e., when it is full, *puṇṇamāye* [mistake for *puṇṇamāse*?] *va cchandimā*

⁷lit., “similar to the color of a reed-fire”

a dinner-plate⁸ with divine scent.
Carrying three [of those] flowers,
I offered⁹ [them] to the Buddha.¹⁰ [6390]

Through Buddha's majestic power,
[just] then those three flowers of mine,
stems turned upward, petals downward,
they're making shade for the Teacher. [6391]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. [6392]

There my well-constructed mansion
was known [by the name] "Dinner-Plate."¹¹
It [measured] sixty leagues in length,
[and it was] thirty leagues in width. [6393]

A hundred thousand pinnacles,
a mil-*kaṇḍa*¹² cent-*bheṇḍu*¹³ [large],
made of gold, covered in flags,
appeared for me on that mansion. [6394]

Palanquins made out of crystal,
made of gold [or] made of gemstones,
and also made out of rubies,
go where I wish¹⁴ if I should wish. [6395]

And there was an expensive bed,
which had an assembled¹⁵ mattress,

⁸*kaṇṇikāra*, *kaṇikāra* = Sinhala *kinihiriya*, *Pterospermum acerifolium*, produces a brilliant mass of yellow flowers; Engl. a.k.a. karnikar, bayur tree, maple-leaf bayur, caniyar (now archaic?), dinner-plate tree; Bodhi tree of Siddhattha Buddha.

⁹lit., "did *pūjā*"

¹⁰lit., "to the Best Buddha"

¹¹*kaṇikārīti nāyati*

¹²here and in the following neologism I exploit the English exploitation of the Latin shorthand for "thousand" and "hundred" to keep the meter. The Pali is lit., "a thousand *kaṇḍas* (part, portion, lump, a small measure), hundred *bheṇḍu* [tall? thick?]."

¹³following BJTS, PTS reads *geṇḍu*, in multiple variations. At least in transmission, these obscure measures may not have been more intelligible than they are today, even if they are clues to the historical situation in which the original was composed.

¹⁴*yenicchchakā*, following BJTS Sinhala gloss *kāmāti tānaka*

¹⁵*vikutī*^o; I take this to evoke a mattress (*tūlikā*^o) constructed through piling up ("assembling") of layers of grass or wool (see RD., s.v.)

with a wool blanket¹⁶ on one end,
and furnished with [lots of] pillows. [6396]

Going out from the palace, I'm
wandering in divine travels,
going according to [my] wish,
honored by the gods' assembly. [6397]

I stand on flowers¹⁷ underneath;
a canopy is above me.
A hundred leagues on every side
is covered with dinner-plate [trees].¹⁸ [6398]

[There] sixty thousand instruments
wait on me evening and morning.
They're attending me constantly,
by night and day they're not lazy. [6399]

I delight in play and pleasures;¹⁹
desiring desires, I rejoice
due to the dances and singing,
the percussion and speeches there. [6400]

Eating and drinking there I'm then
rejoicing among the thirty,²⁰
together with troops of women
I rejoice in [my] great mansion.²¹ [6401]

And five hundred [different] times,
I exercised divine rule [there].
And three hundred [different] times,
I was a king who turns the wheel.
[And I enjoyed] much local rule,
innumerable by counting. [6402]

Transmigrating from birth to birth,
I receive many possessions.

¹⁶reading *uddalomika*° with BJTS for PTS *uddhalomikā* (which means about the same thing, see RD, s.v)

¹⁷lit., "on a flower"

¹⁸or perhaps flowers? Or both, i.e. trees in bloom?

¹⁹*khiḍḍāratiyā*

²⁰*tidase*, i.e., in Tāvatiṃsa heaven

²¹*vyamha-m-uttame*, lit., "in [my] ultimate (or superb) mansion"

I have no lack of possessions:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6403]

I transmigrate in [just] two states:
that of a god, or of a man.
I know no other rebirth [state]:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6404]

I am born in the two [high] clans,
kṣatriyan and also brahmin.
I'm not aware of lesser clans:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6405]

Elephant- [and] horse-vehicles,
palanquins [and] chariots [too],
I am receiving all of that:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6406]

Troops of slaves [and] troops of slave-girls,
and women who are all decked out,
I am receiving all of that:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6407]

Silk material, woolen stuff,
khoma cloth and cotton [goods too],
I am receiving all of that:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6408]

New clothing and fruit which is fresh,
pure²² food of foremost tastiness,
I am receiving all of that:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6409]

[People saying,] "eat this, enjoy
this, please lie down on this [fine] bed,"
I am receiving all of that:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6410]

Everywhere I'm given honor²³
[and] I have very lofty fame,

²²*nava*, the same adjective translated as "new" in the first foot and "fresh" in the second foot

²³lit., "*pūjā*"

²⁴*mahāpakkho*, lit., "one of the great faction" "one with a powerful party,"

always in the majority,²⁴
my retinue has no factions. [6411]
I'm not aware of²⁵ cold [nor] heat,
[and] burning fever²⁶ is not known.
Likewise there is not found in me,
suffering of the mind [or] heart. [6412]

Having been the color of gold,
I transmigrate from birth to birth.
I do not know a bad color:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6413]

Falling down from the world of gods,
incited by [my] wholesome roots,
I am reborn in Śrāvastī,²⁷
in a wealthy [clan] with big halls.²⁸ [6414]

Giving up the five sense pleasures,²⁹
I went forth into homelessness.
Being [only] seven years old,
I attained [my] arahantship. [6415]

Knowing [my] virtue, the Buddha,
the Eyeful One, [then] ordained [me].
A young boy worthy of honor:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6416]

The divine eye is purified;
I'm skilled in meditative states.³⁰
Special knowledges perfected:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6417]

Analytical modes attained,
skilled in [all] the superpowers,³¹

²⁵or "I do not know," *na jānāmi*

²⁶*pariḷāho*

²⁷lit., "in the city, Śrāvastī,"

²⁸*mahāsāle*, a mark of wealth (which is further emphasized as *su-aḍḍhake*, "very wealthy" or "very influential")

²⁹*pañccha-kāma-guṇe*, "the five strands of sense pleasure," namely those obtained through the five senses

³⁰*samādhikusalo ahaṇ*

³¹*iddhipādesu kovido*

perfect in special knowledges:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6418]

In the thirty thousand aeons
since I worshipped³² the Buddha [then],
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of Buddha-*pūjā*. [6419]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. [6420]

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! [6421]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! [6422]

Thus indeed Venerable Uttara Thera spoke these verses.
The legend of Uttara Thera, the sixth.

³²lit., "did *pūjā*"