

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Dhammadinnā

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Printed September 2026

[23. Dhammadinnā¹]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
was a Master of Everything.
[That] Leader arose in the world
one hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [733]

I then [lived] in Haṃsavatī,
[born] in an undistinguished clan.
I worked for others, governed by
morality, intelligent. (2) [734]

Sujāta, foremost follower
of Padumuttara Buddha,
departing the monastery,
was going begging for alms-food. (3) [735]

I was then a water-bearer,
going carrying a pitcher.
Seeing him I gave [him some] soup,
[feeling well-]pleased by [my] own hands. (4) [736]

Having accepted [that from me,]
he sat down [there and] enjoyed it.
After leading him to that house,
I gave [some] solid food to him. (5) [737]

Then my employer,² being pleased,
made [me] his own daughter-in-law.
Going with [my] mother-in-law,
I worshipped [him,] the Sambuddha. (6) [738]

Then he extolled a Buddhist nun
who was a preacher of *Dhamma*.
He placed [her] in that foremost place;
hearing that I was delighted. (7) [739]

Then, inviting the Well-Gone-One,
World's Leader with the Assembly,

¹"*Dhamma*-Given," an historical nun, remembered as foremost among the nuns who preached *Dhamma*.

²*ayyaka*, lit., "grandfather." I follow BJTS Sinhala gloss in reading him as her "master" (*svāmi teme*), imagining him called "grandfather" in the home where she was a servant.

giving [them] a large almsgiving,
I aspired to [attain] that place. (8) [740]

Then the Well-Gone-One said to me,
with the sweet sound of a cymbal:³
“O one who’s fond of serving me,
O servant of the Assembly,
O hearer of the good Teaching,
proper one, mind set⁴ on virtue,
O lucky one, be overjoyed:
you will attain your wish’s fruit. (9-10) [741-742]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (11) [743]

Worthy heir to that one’s *Dhamma*,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name’s Dhammadinnā
will be the Teacher’s follower.” (12) [744]

At that time being overjoyed,
as long as life, heart [full of] love,
I attended on the Victor,
the Guide, providing requisites. (13) [745]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (14) [746]

In this [present] lucky aeon
Brahma’s Kinsman, Greatly Famed One,
[the Buddha] known as Kassapa⁵
was born, the Best of Debaters. (15) [747]

The attendant of the Great Sage
was the ruler of men back then,
the king of Kāsi, named Kiki,
in Benares, greatest city. (16) [748]

³ *ghananinādasussaro*, should this be taken as a Buddha epithet, to be capitalized?

⁴ *āgacchita*°, lit., “come into”

⁵ BJTS reads “Named Kassapa according to his Lineage (*gottena*)”

I was his sixth [royal] daughter,
well-known by the name Sudhammā.⁶
Hearing the Best Victor's Teaching,
I chose [to seek] ordination. (17) [749]

Our father did not permit it;
we [stayed] at home during that time,
comfortable⁷ royal maidens
doing [our] practice with vigor
in virginal celibacy,
for twenty times a thousand years,
fond of waiting on the Buddha,
[the king's] seven joyful daughters. (18-19) [750-751]

Samaṇī, and Samaṇaguttā,⁸
Bhikkhunī, Bhikkhadāyikā,
Dhammā, and also Sudhammā,
and seventh Saṅghadāyikā, (20) [752]

[now] Khemā Uppalavaṇṇā,
Paṭācchārā and Kuṇḍalā,⁹
[Kisā]gotamī, also I,
and Visākhā is the seventh. (21) [753]

Due to those karmas¹⁰ done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (22) [754]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,
I'm born in a millionaire's clan,

⁶“Good Teaching”

⁷*sukhe thitā*, lit., “remaining in comfort.” Pronounce all four syllables when chanting to keep the meter or, to chant as a three-syllable word, read “comfortable royal princesses”

⁸I follow the original (in both recensions) in making this first foot a nine-syllable foot through the addition of the (superfluous) “and” (*ccha*). The comma amplifies its effect, to syncopate the verse such that the (respective, exact) parallelism of the following verse (in which, however, all four feet contain the expected eight syllables) becomes apparent.

⁹ = Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesī

¹⁰here the text (in both PTS and BJTS editions) substitutes *tehi kammehi* (plural instrumental) for the ordinary *tena kammena* (singular instrumental) in this *Apadāna* stock phrase. Perhaps “good deeds” would be better here.

rich, endowed with every pleasure,
in Rajgir, excellent city. (23) [755]

When I'd become a young woman,¹¹
possessing the virtue of beauty,
married¹² to another [good] clan,
I dwelt endowed with happiness. (24) [756]

Having approached the World's Refuge,
having heard [his] *Dhamma*-preaching,
through the Buddha,¹³ my husband gained
the fruit of a non-returner. (25) [757]

Then I, having been permitted,
went forth into homelessness [too.]
After not a very long time,
I attained [my] arahantship. (26) [758]

Then a layman, approaching me,
asked [me a series of] questions
[which were very] deep and subtle;
I explained all of them [to him]. (27) [759]

The Victor, pleased by [my]¹⁴ virtue,
[then] placed me in that foremost place,
Buddhist nun, preacher of *Dhamma*:
"I see no other one who is
as wise as is Dhammadinnā;
so should you consider¹⁵ [her,] monks."
"I am indeed a wise woman,
who was pitied by the Leader. (28-29) [760-761]

The Teacher's been worshipped by me;
[I have] done what the Buddha taught.
The heavy load has been laid down,
the ties to existence severed. (30) [762]

The reason for which I went forth,
from [my] home into homelessness —

¹¹*paṭhame yobbane t̥hitā*, lit., "fixed in the first [blush of] youth"

¹²lit., "going"

¹³*subuddhimā*, lit., "through He who Possessed Great Intelligence"

¹⁴lit., "in the" "in that"

¹⁵*dhāretha*, lit., "carry" "recall" "remember" "regard"

I have [now] achieved that purpose:
destruction of all the fetters. (31) [763]

I've mastered the superpowers
[like] the "divine ear" element.
I know the hearts of others [too,]
I have done what the Teacher taught.¹⁶ (32) [764]

I remember [my] former lives;
[my] "divine eye" is purified.
Throwing off all the defilements,
I am¹⁷ purified, [I'm] stainless. (33) [765]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (34) [766]

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) [767]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (36) [768]

Thus indeed Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā spoke these verses.
The legend of Dhammadinnā Therī is finished.

¹⁶*satthu sāsanakārikā*, lit., "[I am] a doer of the Teacher's dispensation"

¹⁷reading *amhi* ("I am") with BJTS for PTS *āsiṇ* ("I was" "I became")