

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Nandā (Janapadakalyāṇi)

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[25. Nandā (Janapadakalyāṇī)¹]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
was a Master of Everything.
[That] Leader arose in the world
one hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [804]

The Admonisher,² Instructor,³
Crosser-Over⁴ of all that breathe,
Skilled at Preaching,⁵ [he], the Buddha,
caused many folks to cross [the flood]. (2) [805]

Merciful,⁶ Compassionate One,⁷
Well-Wisher⁸ of all that breathe, he
established in the five precepts
all the rivals who had arrived. (3) [806]

In this way he was Unconfused⁹
and Very Well-Known¹⁰ by rivals,
Ornamented¹¹ by arahants
who were masters [and] neutral ones. (4) [807]

The [body of the] Sage So Great
rose up fifty-eight cubits¹² [tall];

¹“Joy,” an historical nun, daughter of King Suddhodana and Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī (#17, above), hence half-sister (plus, given that her mother was the Buddha’s mother’s sister) of the Buddha, remembered as foremost among those with meditative power. Malalasekera (DPPN II:1217) takes her as Sundarī Nandā, though there has been some confusion with the other Nandās among the famous nuns; “Janapadakalyāṇī” is also an epithet used for the Nandā caled Rūpanandā (DPPN I:934; II: 748) who also is said to be a “sister” of the Buddha. Cf. also in this mix Abhirūpanandā (DPPN I:143)

²ovāḍako, or “Advisor” “Exhorter.” Vv. 2-6 here are found verbatim as vv. 2-6 of five separate *apadānas* of monks in the *Therāpadāna*, #531 {534} (Dabbamalla) and #534-537 {537-540} (Mahākoṭṭhika, Uruvelakassapa, Rādhā and Mogharāja, respectively).

³viññāpako

⁴tārako

⁵desanākusalo

⁶anukampako

⁷kāruṇiko

⁸hitesi

⁹nirākulāṇ

¹⁰suññāṭaṇ, or “empty [of ill-will],” which is BJTS Sinhala gloss reading; I construe the epithet as *su* + *ñāta*

¹¹vicchittāṇ

¹²*ratanāna-aṭṭha-paññāsaṇ uggato*. A *ratana* (Sinh. *riyan*) is figured as twelve-fingers (*aṅgula*), according to Sinh-Eng Dictionary about eighteen inches. The claim here then is that Padumuttara Buddha was 1044 inches (or 87 feet) tall.

he was Valuable Like Gold,¹³

Bearing the Thirty-Two Great Marks. (5) [808]

[People's] lifespan at that time was
[fully] one hundred thousand years.

Remaining [in the world] so long,
he ferried many folks across. (6) [809]

I was born in Hamsavatī,
in a clan of millionaires then,
glistening with various gems,
endowed with supreme happiness. (7) [810]

Having approached the Great Hero,
I heard [him] preaching the *Dhamma*,
ultimately sweet¹⁴ ambrosia¹⁵
which makes known the ultimate truth. (8) [811]

Then after inviting [him, the]
Three-Worlds-Ender, with Assembly,
giving him a large almsgiving,
[feeling well-]pleased by [my] own hands,
bowing [my] head to the Hero,
the World's Leader with Assembly,
I aspired to that foremost place
of Buddhist nuns who meditate. (9-10) [812-813]

Then the Untamed-Tamer,¹⁶ Master,¹⁷
Refuge for the Three Worlds,¹⁸ [Buddha,]
the Leopard of Men,¹⁹ prophesied:
“you will receive that well-wished [place]. (11) [814]

¹³*kañcchanagghiyasaṅkāso*, lit., “like a gold valuable thing” or “like a gold festoon work”

¹⁴*paramassādaṇ*, or “having the ultimate taste”

¹⁵*amataṇ*, or “deathless”

¹⁶*adantadamako* could mean either “tamer of the untamed” or “tamer who is untamed;” I leave the ambiguity open with the hyphen, admitting here my preference for “tamer of the untamed” (which is also the BJTS reading, cf RD on *dametar*), and recommend pronunciation in chanting which through stress on the first term in the compound, and tone, can emphasize that the Buddha is one who tames those who are untamed/feral.

¹⁷*pabhu*

¹⁸*tilokasaraṇo*

¹⁹*narasaddūlo*. Cf. notes to *Thera-apadāna* [6131], above and *Therī-apadāna* [1222], below

In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (12) [815]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
the one known by the name Nandā,
will be the Teacher's follower." (13) [816]

At that time being overjoyed,
as long as life, heart [full of] love,
I attended on the Victor,
the Guide, providing requisites. (14) [817]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvātimsa [then]. (15) [818]

Fallen thence, I went to Yāma,²⁰
[and] then I went to Tusita,
and then to Nimmānarati,²¹
and then Vāsavatti City. (16) [819]

In whichever place I'm reborn,
in accordance with that karma,
everyplace I was made chief queen
of [the gods who were] the kings [there]. (17) [820]

Fallen thence, in the human state,
[everyplace] I was made chief queen
of kings who turn the wheel [of law],
and [powerful] regional kings. (18) [821]

Having experienced success,
among gods as well as humans,
becoming happy everywhere,
I transmigrated for aeons.²² (19) [822]

²⁰Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati and Vāsavatti are all heavens in the Buddhist cosmology.

²¹BJTS reads *nimmānaratiṃ*

²²*anekakappesu*, lit., "during various aeons"

When [my] last rebirth was attained,
I was the blameless²³ daughter of
King Suddhodana,²⁴ [living in]
delightful²⁵ Kapilavastu.²⁶ (20) [823]

Seeing [my] splendor²⁷ [and] beauty,
that [Śākya] clan was rejoicing.²⁸
Therefore they gave the name “Nandā,”
pleasant [and] excellent, to me. (21) [824]

[I was]²⁹ renowned as “the Beauty”³⁰
among all of the young women
in that same³¹ delightful city,
except [of course] Yasodharā.³² (22) [825]

[My] eldest brother’s the Buddha,³³
the middle one’s³⁴ likewise a saint;³⁵
staying alone in the lay life,
I am exhorted by mother:³⁶ (23) [826]

“Child, you’re born in the Śākya clan,
following after the Buddha.
Why do you sit³⁷ [there] in the house,
being bereft of [all your] joy?³⁸ (24) [827]

²³*aninditā*

²⁴“Good Rice-Gruel,” the Buddha’s (bodhisatta Siddhattha’s) biological father

²⁵*ramme*. BJTS reads *puramhi*, “in the city”

²⁶*kapilavhaye*, lit., “in the [city] named for Kapila”

²⁷reading *siriṃ ccha* with BJTS for PTS (and BJTS alt.) *siriyā*, “with splendor”

²⁸*nanditaṇ*

²⁹*ccha*, lit., “and [I was]”

³⁰*kalyāṇi ti*

³¹*pi*, or “very” (emph.)

³²the Buddha’s wife, #28 of *Therī-apadāna*, below.

³³*tilokaggo*, lit., “Three Worlds’ Chief”

³⁴*majjhimo*, or BJTS (and PTS alt.) *pacchimo*, “the last” — BJTS Sinh. gloss *mā kaṇiṭṭu bāyā* (“my younger elder brother”)

³⁵*arahā*, “worthy” “an arahant”

³⁶that is, by Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, founder and leader of the Assembly of Nuns (*bhikkhunīsaṅgha*)

³⁷reading *kinnu v’ acchasi* with BJTS for PTS *kiṇ na acchasi*, (“why don’t you sit”)

³⁸*nandena pi vinā bhūtā*, a play on the nun’s name

³⁹*asucchisammataṇ*, or “not considered pure” (depending on whether the compound is understood as *asuci-sammataṇ* or *a-succhisammataṇ*)

Thought impure³⁹ is youthful beauty,⁴⁰
under the power of old age;
even a life which is healthy,
ends in disease, ends in dying. (25) [828]

Look at even your [own] fine form:
charming, distracting to the mind,⁴¹
it's adorned and ornamented
like⁴² Goddess Fortune embellished,⁴³ (26) [829]

like concentrated⁴⁴ world-essence⁴⁵
medicinal balm for the eyes,⁴⁶
generating praise for merit,⁴⁷
rejoicing the Okkāka clan; (27) [830]

in no long time at all, old age
is going to overpower [it].
Young one, abandoning the house,
choose⁴⁸ the Teaching, O blameless one.“ (28) [831]

After hearing [my] mother's words,
I went forth into homelessness
in⁴⁹ body, but not in [my] heart,
[still] enthralled by youth and beauty. (29) [832]

Mother⁵⁰ said to make my basis⁵¹
through study of the altered states,⁵²
[pursuing it] with great effort.
I was not enthused⁵³ about that. (30) [833]

⁴⁰*rūpaṇ*

⁴¹*manoharaṇ*, “delightful”

⁴²BJTS reads *sasikantam* (?) for PTS *passa kantaṇ*, perhaps a typo given the absence of a note

⁴³*siri-saṅkhata-sannibhaṇ*

⁴⁴reading PTS alt *puñjitaṇ* (“lumped together”) or BJTS *piṇḍitaṇ* (“pressed into a ball”) for PTS *pūjitaṇ* (“worshipped”)

⁴⁵*lokaśāraṇ*

⁴⁶*nayanānaṇ rasāyanaṇ*

⁴⁷*puññānaṇ*, lit., “for merit[orious deed]s,” i.e., plural

⁴⁸PTS *vara*. BJTS reads *cchara*, “wander”

⁴⁹*dehena*, lit., “with”

⁵⁰lit., “And mother”

⁵¹PTS reads *saraṇ* (“flowing, going” or perhaps “arrow,” “lake,” “remembering,” “sound”), alt. *padaṇ* (“root”); BJTS reads *paraṇ* (?)

⁵²*jhāṇ'ajjhena*

⁵³*na cchāhaṇ tatra ussukā*, omitting “and” in the translation

Then the Great Compassionate One
saw⁵⁴ me enthralled by sense pleasures.
To make me⁵⁵ weary of beauty,⁵⁶
through his own majestic power,
the Victor conjured up, in my
line of sight, a woman who shined;
she was gorgeous,⁵⁷ truly brilliant,⁵⁸
even more beautiful than I. (31-32) [834-835]

And I, astonished, seeing her⁵⁹
very astonishing body,
thought [to myself,] “fruitful [today]
is the receipt of human eyes.” (33) [836]

I said to her, “O lucky one!⁶⁰
Tell me the story how you’ve come,
and if you please, do tell to me
[your] clan, [your] name, [your] family.” (34) [837]

“No time for questions, lucky one;
let me lay [my head] in [your] lap.”⁶¹
As though sinking⁶² into my limbs
she reclined well⁶³ for a moment. (35) [838]

Then putting [her] head in my lap
she with lovely eyes stretched out [there].
A spider,⁶⁴ very venomous,
landed on that [woman’s] forehead. (36) [839]

When [it] had fallen onto her,
boils formed [all over her body];

⁵⁴*disvā*, lit., “seeing”

⁵⁵*nibbindanattarā*, lit., “for the sake of weariness”

⁵⁶or “form”: *rūpasmiṇ*

⁵⁷*dassaniyaṇ*, lit., “to be looked at,” “eye-cchandy”

⁵⁸*surucchiraṇ*

⁵⁹lit., “her, seeing [her] very”

⁶⁰*ehi subhage*

⁶¹spoken by the conjured up woman

⁶²reading *sīdantiīva* with BJTS for PTS *nisīdanti* (“sitting”)

⁶³reading *supasuppaya* with BJTS (and following BJTS Sinhala gloss) for PTS *passajis-*
saṇ (? the side? “I will look at my limbs?”)

⁶⁴reading *lūtā* (Sinh. gloss *makuḷuvek*) with BJTS (and PTS alt., sort of [*lutā*, sic]) for
PTS *luddā* (“hunters” [or “disgusting/gruesome thing” ?])

popping open, they were oozing
putrid [chunks of] pus mixed with blood. (37) [840]

And [her] face was disfigured too,
with the putrid stench of a corpse;
and [her] body festered⁶⁵ too,
[now] swollen up and [turning] blue. (38) [841]

With all of her limbs quivering,
gasping for every breath she took,⁶⁶
making known her own suffering,
she piteously wailed [like this:] (39) [842]

“I’m afflicted with affliction,⁶⁷
feeling [agonizing] feelings;
I’m sunk down in great affliction.
Be a refuge for me, O friend.” (40) [843]

“Where is [that] facial shine of yours?
Where is your [attractive] long nose?
Your excellent copper-red lips?
Where has your [beautiful] face gone? (41) [844]

Where’s [your] mouth, shining like the moon?
Where has your conch-shell-shaped neck gone?
And [both] your ears, swaying like swings,⁶⁸
have [now] become [badly] discolored. (42) [845]

Your milk-laden [breasts shaped] like jugs
which resembled pointy [young] buds⁶⁹
have popped open; you’ve become a
putrid corpse with a horrid stench. (43) [846]

⁶⁵reading *vipubbañccha* (“festering”) with BJTS for PTS *sabbañccha* (“all” “entire”), though the latter is also a reasonable enough reading.

⁶⁶reading *nissasantī* (lit., “gasping for breath [or “panting” or “sighing” or “exhaling”]) with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *nissayanti* (“they are pursuing” “leaning on”)

⁶⁷or “suffering with suffering” “ill at ease with dis-ease” etc.: *dukkhena dukkhitā homi*

⁶⁸reading *dolālālā* (lit., “swing-aquiver”) with BJTS for PTS *dolālocchā* (“swing” + ?) and alts. *dolālolā* “swing unwavering/undisturbed,” *dolātulā*, “swing” + ?) which seem to emulate the alliteration of BJTS’ *dolālālā* even at the expense of apparent meaning

⁶⁹especially the buds of *mimusops elengi* (says RD quoting Hardy, see *maḥula* s.v.), = Spanish Cherry, Pāli *vakula*. This accepts the PTS reading here, *maḥul[ā]a-khāraḥ-ākārā*, recognizing that there is a lot of variation (BJTS reads *maḥulaṃburuhākārā* [“resembling the buds of trees in water” (?)])

[Your] slender middle⁷⁰ [and] buttocks,
meat-stall⁷¹ where wounds and sins⁷² are born
[are now] adorned with excrement.
O! Beauty is not eternal! (44) [847]

Every born body [is the same:]
putrid-smelling and frightening,
like a loathsome⁷³ cemetery,
where [only] fools [find their] delight.“ (45) [848]

Then the Great Compassionate One,
my brother, Leader of the World,
Having seen me, moved in [my] heart,
he spoke these verses [to me then:] (46) [849]

“Nanda, look at [your own] body,
[also] a sick [and] putrid corpse.
Through disgustingness cultivate
[your] mind, well-composed and tranquil. (47) [850]

Just as is this, so too is that;
just as is that, so too is this:
putrid [and] emitting a stench,
causing delight [only] to fools. (48) [851]

Considering that in this way,
industrious by day and night,
you will see with your own wisdom,
having turned away in disgust. (49) [852]

After that I was deeply moved,
having heard [those] well-said verses;
remaining there, being at peace,⁷⁴
I attained [my] arahantship. (50) [853]

Everyplace where I am seated,
I [reach] the highest altered states.

⁷⁰reading *tanumajjhā* with BJTS for PTS *vedimajjhā*, “in the middle of the bench” (?)

⁷¹*sūnā*, lit., “slaughterhouse”

⁷²reading *sūnā vaṇitakibbisā* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *sūnā ‘va nītakibbisā* (“like a slaughterhouse leading to sin” ?)

⁷³*jegucchchaṇ*; BJTS reads *bībhacchchaṇ*, with similar range of meaning (disgusting, horrible, dreadful)

⁷⁴or, reading *vipassantī* with BJTS, “investigating” “applying insight”

The Victor, pleased by [my]⁷⁵ virtue,
[then] placed me in that foremost place. (51) [854]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (52) [855]

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! (53) [856]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (54) [857]

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

⁷⁵lit., "in the" "in that"