

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
JONATHAN S. WALTERS,
WHITMAN COLLEGE, 2017

Eighty-Four Thousand Brahmin Maiden Buddhist Nuns

Jonathan S. Walters

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[32. Eighty-Four Thousand Brahmin Maiden Buddhist Nuns¹]

O Great Sage,² in your city are
eighty-four thousand [young women,]
with [very] tender hands [and] feet,
who have been born in brahmin clans. (1) [1116]

O Great Sage,³ in your city are
many maidens from every land,⁴
born in Vaiśya and Śudra clans,
and gods, snake[-gods] and *kinnaras*. (2) [1117]

Some of them [already] went forth;
many have insight into truth;
the gods, *kinnaras* and snake[-gods]
will enjoy⁵ [this] in the future. (3) [1118]

Experiencing every fame,
achieving every achievement,
[those who've] obtained pleasure in you
will enjoy [it] in the future. (4) [1119]

And⁶ we're the daughters of brahmins,
who have been born in brahmin clans.
Out of our desire,⁷ Great Sage,
we worship [your] feet, Eyeful One. (5) [1120]

All existences have been reached,⁸
cravings are torn out by the roots;
latent tendencies are cut off,
merit[-based] aggregates broken. (6) [1121]

All pasture in meditation,⁹

¹BJTS reads "The *Apadāna* of Brahmin Maiden Buddhist Nuns"

²reading *mahāmune* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *mahāmuni*

³reading *mahāmune* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *mahāmuni*

⁴*cchatuddipā*, lit., "from the four continents," that is, from the entire world

⁵here PTS reads *phusissanti*, BJTS *bhujjhissanti*; both read *bhujjhissanti* in the following verse

⁶*tu*, or "but"

⁷*pekkato no*, perhaps "when we long for [or see]"

⁸*upāgatā bhavā sabbe*

⁹*samādhigoccharā sabā*

likewise have mastered altered states;¹⁰
we will always live delighting
in the Teaching through altered states.¹¹ (7) [1122]

The ties to being, ignorance,
the aggregates, too, are cast off.
We're born, O Leader, having gone
on the path very hard to see. (8) [1123]

"For a long time you have been my¹²
servants, doing what's to be done.
Cutting off the doubts of many,
may you all go to nirvana." (9) [1124]

Having worshipped the Sage's feet,
they performed [their] superpowers.¹³
Some are showing [very bright light,]
and after that making [it] dark. (10) [1125]

They are showing the moon [and] sun,
and the [great] ocean with [its] fish;
they're showing Mount Meru and the
Coral Tree¹⁴ [in heaven,] girdled. (11) [1126]

Through superpower they're showing
Tāvatiṃsa and Yāma spheres,
Tusitā [and] Nimmitā gods,
[and] the Vasavatti great lords. (12) [1127]

Some are showing the Brahmā [gods]
and a very costly walkway;
making [themselves] look like¹⁵ Brahmā,
they preach the *Dhamma* that's empty.¹⁶ (13) [1128]

¹⁰*samāpatti vasi tathā*, lit., "master with the attainments" (especially the eight *jhānas* or "altered states" experienced as states of awareness and/or levels of reality in meditation)

¹¹*jhānena dhammaratīyā viharissāma no sadā*

¹²reading *mamaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *mayāṃ* ("we")

¹³*katvā iddhivikubbanāṃ*, lit., "having done transformations through [their] superpowers"

¹⁴in Indra/Śakra's heaven

¹⁵or "conjuring up the appearance of"

¹⁶cf. below, [980]

Doing varied transformations,
showing Buddha¹⁷ superpowers,
they all demonstrated [their] strength,
[then they] worshipped the Teacher's feet. (14) [1129]

We've mastered the superpowers
[like] the "divine ear" element.
We're also the masters, Great Sage,
of the knowledge in others' hearts. (15) [1130]

We remember [our] former lives;
[our] "divine eye[s]" are purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
[we] will not be reborn again. (16) [1131]

In meaning and in the Teaching,
etymology and preaching,
[this] knowledge of ours was produced
in your presence, O Great Hero.¹⁸ (17) [1132]

Our¹⁹ meeting with [all] the Buddhas,
the World-Lords, was displayed [to you];
our extensive service [to them]
was for the sake of you, Great Sage. (18) [1133]

O Sage, recall the good karma,
which formerly [was done] by us;
[that] merit was heaped up by us
for the sake of you, Great Hero. (19) [1134]

One hundred thousand aeons hence
Padumuttara was the Sage.²⁰
The city named Hamsavati
was the home of [that] Buddha's clan. (20) [1135]

The Ganges River always flows
past the gate of Hamsavati.
Buddhist monks are troubled by the

¹⁷lit., "to the Teacher"

¹⁸here as elsewhere, reading the voc. *mahāmunue* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *mahāmuni*

¹⁹reading *no* with BJTS (and the parallel instance of this verse below, at [1063]) for PTS *tehi* ("by them")

²⁰*mahāmuni*, lit., "the Great Sage"

river, unable to²¹ proceed. (21) [1136]

A day, [then] two, and then [it's] three,
after that a week, [next] a month,
then fully four months [might pass for
those monks], unable to²² proceed. (22) [1137]

Then the future Buddha²³ was a
local leader,²⁴ named Jaṭila.
Seeing [those] stranded Buddhist monks
he made²⁵ a bridge on the river.²⁶ (23) [1138]

Then, with a hundred thousand [spent,]
the bridge on the river made, he²⁷
made a monastery for the
Assembly on the nearer bank. (24) [1139]

The women as well as the men,
from clans of high [and] low status,
provided²⁸ [funds for] equal shares
in his bridge and monastery. (25) [1140]

We and the other women [too,]
in the city and countrysides,
who had minds that were very clear,
were [rightful] heirs of that karma. (26) [1141]

Women [and] men²⁹ and boys [as well,]
and also numerous young girls,
[joined together] to spread [clean] sand,
for his bridge and monastery. (27) [1142]

²¹lit., “they are not receiving” “they are not getting”

²²lit., “they are not receiving” “they are not getting”

²³*sattasāro*, lit., “essence (or pith) of beings;” I follow BJTS Sinhala gloss in taking this as “bodhisattva”. Jaṭila (a.k.a. Jaṭika) is mentioned as a rebirth precursor of Gotama Buddha in the *nidāna-kathā* (J.i.37) and *Buddhavaṃsa* (xi.11), and called a “provincial governor” (Malalasekera’s understanding of *mahāraṭṭhiya*; in the present *Apadāna* text *raṭṭhika* [“rustic”]); see DPPN I: 931

²⁴*raṭṭhiko*, lit., “countryman”. Sinh. gloss *rāṭṭiyek*, “a guy from the country” (*raṭavāsī*) or a district official; the Pāli likewise can mean “a man of the country” either in the sense of “someone from the country” or “an official of the country”

²⁵*kārayi*, lit., “he caused to be built”

²⁶reading *setuṃ gaṇḍāya* with BJTS for PTS *setuno satta* (?)

²⁷reading *kārayi* with BJTS for PTS [*a*] *kārayiṇ* (“I made”)

²⁸lit., “did”

²⁹reading *purisā* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *pumā*

Sweeping the roadway, making flags,
plantain-banners,³⁰ pots of plenty,³¹
and having honored the Teacher
with incense, cunnam and garlands, (28) [1143]

having made the monastery
and the bridge, inviting the Guide,
after giving extensive alms,
he³² aspired to Awakening.³³ (29) [1144]

Padumuttara, Great Hero,
Crosser-Over³⁴ of all that breathe,
the Great Sage made³⁵ [his] thanksgiving
to [bodhisattva] Jaṭila:³⁶ (30) [1145]

“Undergoing life after life,
when one hundred thousand [aeons]
have passed, [in] the “lucky” aeon,
he will attain Awakening. (31) [1146]

These men and women who’ve arranged
by hand³⁷ what work was to be done,
will all in futures³⁸ yet to come
be [born together] face-to-face.³⁹ (32) [1147]

As the result of that karma,
[done] with intention and resolve,
reborn in heavens of the gods,
they will [all] be your attendants.⁴⁰ (33) [1148]

³⁰*kadali*, lit., “plantains,” see RD s.v., banners in the shape of or made of banana leaves.

³¹reading *punṇaghāṭe* with BJTS for PTS °[*uṇṇakuṭa* (“full huts”)]

³²reading *abhipatthayi* with BJTS (and, misspelled, PTS alt.) for PTS *abhipatthayaṇ* (“I aspired”)

³³*sambodhiṇ abhipatthayi*, i.e., he (renewed) his aspiration to become a Buddha, as he is said to have done in the presence of all the Buddhas since Dīpaṅkara.

³⁴*tārako*

³⁵reading *anumodaniyaṃ kāsī* with BJTS for PTS *anumodaniyaṇ kāsī-jaṭṭilassa* (“I gave thanks to Jaṭila from Benares [or, Miss Lilley seems to be thinking in her lack of capitalization, “I gave thanks to the matted-hair ascetic (*jaṭṭilassa*) from Benares”])

³⁶reading *kāsī jaṭṭilassa* with BJTS for PTS *kāsī-jaṭṭilassa*, see previous note

³⁷reading *ye keci hatthaparikkammaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *Keci hatthapadaṇ* (“Some, hand [and] foot”)

³⁸lit., “in the future” (singular)

³⁹*sammukhā*, i.e. “together”

⁴⁰*tuyham*, presumably addressing the bodhisattva

Transmigrating life after life,
a long time we experienced⁴¹
countless [years of] divine pleasure
and countless [such] human [rebirths]. (34) [1149]

For one hundred thousand aeons,
well-done karma's attainment, we're
tender girls among men; likewise
in the superb city of gods. (35) [1150]

Beautiful, wealthy and famous,
and also praised and respected,
we are constantly receiving
[that] well-done karma's attainment. (36) [1151]

When [our] last rebirth was attained,
we are born⁴² in a brahmin clan,
with [very] tender hands [and] feet,
in the home of the Śākya prince.⁴³ (37) [1152]

We are never⁴⁴ seeing the earth
when it is undecorated,
[and] we do not see muddy roads
[when they] have not been cleaned,⁴⁵ Great Sage. (38) [1153]

When we were living in the house,
we were respected all the time;
they're always bringing everything,
through the strength of our past karma.⁴⁶ (39) [1154]

After abandoning [our] homes,
going forth into homelessness,
we have crossed the road of rebirth;⁴⁷

⁴¹reading *anubhontī cchiraṃ kālaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *tuyhaṇ vo paricchāre ccha* ("and all of you will attend on you")

⁴²reading *jātāmha* with BJTS for PTS *ajātā* ("[we are] unborn;" worse is alt. *ajāto* "he is unborn")

⁴³*putta*° lit., "son"

⁴⁴lit., "all the time we are not..."

⁴⁵reading *cchikkhallabhūmimasucchiṃ* with BJTS for PTS *cchikkhallabhūmiṇ gamanāṇ* ("going on muddy roads")

⁴⁶reading *pubbakammabalena no* with BJTS for PTS *pubbakammaphalan tato* ("after the fruit of previous karma")

⁴⁷*saṃsārapatha-nittiṇṇā*

we have become free of passion.⁴⁸ (40) [1155]

All the time they are bringing us
monastic robes and alms to eat,
requisites [as well as] lodgings,
by the thousands and more and more.⁴⁹ (41) [1156]

Our defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
we are living without constraint. (42) [1157]

Being in Best Buddha's presence
was a very good thing for us.
The three knowledges are attained;
[we have] done what the Buddha taught! (43) [1158]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[we have] done what the Buddha taught! (44) [1159]

Thus indeed Eighty-Four Thousand Brahmin Maiden Buddhist Nuns
spoke these verses.

The legend of Eighty-Four Thousand Brahmin Maiden Buddhist Nuns is
finished

⁴⁸reading *vītarāgā bhavāmase* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *n'atthi dāni punabbhavo* ("now there will be no more rebirth")

⁴⁹*tato tato*