

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Uppaladāyikā

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[33. Uppaladāyikā¹]

In Aruṇavatī City,
[lived] the kṣatriyan Aruṇa.
I was [then] the wife of that king;
in that place² I was practicing.³ (1) [1160]

Gone off alone [and] sitting down,
I then reflected [on it] like this:
“there’s no good karma⁴ done by me
to take along on my journey.⁵ (2) [1161]

Am I not then going to hell,
burning red hot, very cruel,
with a gruesome form, and bitter?
For me there’s no doubt about that.” (3) [1162]

Having thought [it through] in that way.
bringing pleasure to [my own] mind,
after going up to the king,
I spoke these words [entreating him:] (4) [1163]

“O king,⁶ we [who are] called “women”
always follow behind [our] men.⁷
Give me a single Buddhist monk;
I shall feed [him,] O kṣatriyan.” (5) [1164]

¹“Blue Lotus Giver”

²reading *ekajjhaṃ* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *ekaccchchaṇ* (“certain,” “definite”)

³reading *cchārayāṃ’ ahaṃ* with BJTS (and cf. PTS alts. here) for PTS *vādayāṃ’ ahaṇ*
 (“I am singing” “I am making sound” “I am causing to be said”)

⁴*kusalaṇ*, lit., “wholesome deeds”

⁵PTS *kusalaṇ me kataṇ n’atthi ādāya gamiyam mama*; BJTS *ādāya gamanīyaṃ hi kusalaṇ natthi me kataṇ*

⁶*deva*, or “Lord,” lit., “god”

⁷or “always become victims of men,” reading *purisānugatā sadā* with BJTS for PTS *purisānaṇ bharā mayaṇ* (“we are burdens on men” or “we carry the burden of men,” perhaps playing with the common word for “wife” used in v. 1, *bhāriyā*). Given the second half of the verse, in either event she is asking her husband for permission to “adopt” a monk. In the BJTS reading she does this by stating that as a woman she has not been able to do her own good deeds, always following after her men when they do their good deeds (and gain the merit; the whole question of women’s roles in the production of men’s karma peppers the *Therī-apadāna* despite its virtual absence in the corresponding *Thera-apadāna*). In the PTS reading, she sets up her request for the monk to feed either by apologizing for being a burden, or by pointing out that as one accustomed to carrying the burden of men she will be able to carry that of the monk, now requested.

At that time the king gave to me
a monk with senses [well-]controlled.
After picking up his alms bowl,
I filled [it] with exquisite⁸ food. (6) [1165]

Filling it with exquisite food,
having removed a fine garment
which was valued at a thousand,
I gave it with a happy mind. (7) [1166]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (8) [1167]

I was fixed in the chief queen's place
of one thousand kings of the gods.
I was fixed in the chief queen's place
of one thousand wheel-turning kings. (9) [1168]

[There was also] much local rule,
innumerable by counting,⁹
[and there was] much other,¹⁰ varied
fruit of that karma thereafter. (10) [1169]

I'm [always] blue lotus-colored,
very beautiful, good-looking,
a woman endowed in all parts,
of noble birth [and] radiant.¹¹ (11) [1170]

When [my] last rebirth was attained
I was born in the Śākya clan,
leader of one thousand women
[attached] to Siddhodana's son.¹² (12) [1171]

Becoming wearied in the home,
I went forth into homelessness.

⁸*parama*, or "supreme" "ultimate" "best" "superior"

⁹this refrain, common in *Thera-apadāna*, appears only here, and obviously lifted, in *Therī-apadāna*

¹⁰reading *aññaṃ* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *puññaṃ* ("merit"), though the latter is presumably the "other fruit" which the former reading implies

¹¹or "effulgent," *jutindharā*

¹²i.e., attached to (attending on) the bodhisattva Siddhartha; women of the royal harem of the becoming-Buddha.

Before the seventh night occurred¹³
I attained the Four [Noble] Truths. (13) [1172]

I cannot count [the gifts received,
monastic robes and alms to eat,
requisites [as well as] lodgings:
that's the fruit of [giving] alms food.¹⁴ (14) [1173]

O Sage, recall the good karma,
which formerly [was done] by me;
much of mine has been sacrificed
for the sake of you, Great Hero. (15) [1174]

In the thirty-one aeons since
I gave that alms-giving back then,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of [giving] alms food.¹⁵ (16) [1175]

I transmigrate in [just] two states:
as a goddess or a woman.
I do not know other rebirths;
that's the fruit of [giving] alms food. (17) [1176]

[When human] I'm born in high clans,
which have big¹⁶ halls, very wealthy;
I do not witness lesser clans:
that's the fruit of [giving] alms food. (18) [1177]

Transmigrating life after life,
incited by [my] wholesome roots,
I do not see what does not please:
fruit [of deeds] done with¹⁷ happy mind. (19) [1178]

I've mastered the superpowers
[like] the "divine ear" element.
I'm also a master, Great Sage,
of the knowledge in others' hearts. (20) [1179]

¹³lit., "the seventh night not attained"

¹⁴*piṇḍapātass' idaṇ phalaṇ*

¹⁵*piṇḍapātass' idaṇ phalaṇ*

¹⁶reads *mahā°* with BJTS for *tayo°* ("three"). The latter is possible, but a weird departure from what is a stock phrase elsewhere in *Apadāna*

¹⁷lit., "of"

I remember [my] former lives;
[my] “divine eye” is purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
[I] will not be reborn again. (21) [1180]

In meaning and in the Teaching,
etymology and preaching,
[this] knowledge of mine was produced
in your presence, O Great Hero. (22) [1181]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (23) [1182]

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! (24) [1183]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (25) [1184]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Uppaladāyikā spoke these verses face to face
with the Blessed One.

The legend of the bhikkhunī Uppaladāyikā is finished