

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Sigālaka-mātā

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[34. Sigālaka-mātā¹]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
was a Master of Everything.
[That] Leader arose in the world
one hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [1185]

I was born in Haṃsavatī,
in a clan of ministers then,
rich, prosperous, very wealthy,
glistening with various gems. (2) [1186]

Going along with [my] father,
surrounded by a multitude,
having heard the Buddha's Teaching,
I went forth into homelessness. (3) [1187]

After going forth I gave up
evil karma with the body.
I purified my way of life,
except for poor conduct through speech. (4) [1188]

Pleased in the Buddha, Teaching and
Assembly; eager, respectful,
used to hearing the great Teaching;
I'm greedy to see the Buddha. (5) [1189]

I then heard [of] a Buddhist nun,
foremost among those freed by faith.²
Aspiring to [attain] that place,
I then fulfilled the three trainings.³
The Rest for Those Seeking Pity,⁴
the Well-Gone-One, thereupon said [this]: (6, 7a-b) [1190]⁵

¹"Sigālaka's Mother," an historical nun, remembered as foremost among those who attained release through their faith. See DPPN II: 1133. She was the mother of Sigāla to whom the famous *Sigālovādasutta* was preached, upon which she also achieved fruits of the path.

²reading *saddhādhimuttānaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *aṅgavimuttānaṃ* ("freed in/by [their] limbs")

³*tisso sikkhā*, i.e., training in morality (*sīla*), wisdom (*paññā*) and meditative states (*samādhi*)

⁴*karuṇānugatāsayo*, lit., "support for those come into/follow after/depend upon [his] pity (or compassion)"

⁵PTS presents the following speech of the Buddha in eight four-foot verses (6-13). BJTS presents the same speech arranged into seven verses ([1190-1196], the first and

“He⁶ whose faith in the Thus-Gone-One
is well-established, not shaking,
and whose morals⁷ are beautiful,
dear to noble people, and praised; (7c-d, 8a-b) [1191]

whose insight is upright and whose
pleasure⁸ is in the Assembly:
it is said, “he is not wretched;”
his life’s [considered] not useless. (8c-d, 9a-b) [1192]

Therefore, wise ones, commit [yourselves]
to faith and to morality,
to *Dhamma*-insight and pleasure;⁹
pith of Buddha’s dispensation.” (9c-d, 10a-b) [1193]

Hearing that, being overjoyed,
I questioned [him about] my wish.
Then the Supreme,¹⁰ Measureless One,¹¹
the Guide,¹² prophesied [in this way:] (10c-d, 11a-b) [1194]

“Lovely one, pleased in the Buddha,¹³
you will receive that well-wished [place].
In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. (11c-d, 12) [1195]

Worthy heir to that one’s *Dhamma*,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
she named Sigālaka’s Mother
will be the Teacher’s follower.” (13) [1196]

last of which it presents as six-footed verses). I follow the BJTS numbering here, indicating corresponding numbering in the PTS edition.

⁶the pronouns here are somewhat jarringly masculine ones, even though the subject is female

⁷*sīlaṇ ccha yassa*

⁸*pasādo*

⁹*pasādaṇ*

¹⁰*anomo*

¹¹*amito*

¹²*vināyako*

¹³both of these adjectives are in the vocative: “O beautiful one, O you whose pleasure is in the Buddha”

Gladdened after having heard that,
with a heart that was [full] of love,
as long as life I then served the
Victor, Guide, through [my] practices.¹⁴ (14) [1197]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (15) [1198]

And now, in [my] final rebirth,
in Giribbaja,¹⁵ best city,
[I was] born to rich millionaires,¹⁶
with a huge quantity of gems. (16) [1199]

My son was named Sigālaka,
taking delight on the wrong road,
slipped into the jungle of views,
keen to worship the directions. (17) [1200]

Standing on the road, the Buddha,
the Guide, advised him, seeing him
coming toward the city praising
the directions¹⁷ with balls of food. (18) [1201]

When he was preaching¹⁸ the *Dhamma*,
there were amazing shrieks of joy;¹⁹
twenty million²⁰ men [and] women
gained insight into the Teaching.²¹ (19) [1202]

¹⁴ *paṭipattihi*

¹⁵ = Rājagaha, Rajgir, in Bihār

¹⁶ lit., “born in a rich clan of millionaires”

¹⁷ *nānādisā*, lit., “various directions” “the different directions”

¹⁸ reading *desayato* (gen. abs. constr.) with BJTS (and PTS alt) for PTS *desayito*

¹⁹ BJTS reads *ninādo* for PTS *panādo*, though BJTS alt. agrees with PTS. The term is singular so we might imagine some sort of shout in unison; I translate as “shrieks” (plural) given the context.

²⁰ *dvekoṭi*, lit., “two [times] ten million”

²¹ lit., “there was an [achieving of] insight into the *Dhamma* of twenty million.” *Dhammābhisamaya*, “insight into the *Dhamma*” or “entry into the *Dhamma*” or “comprehension of the *Dhamma*” or “penetration into the *Dhamma*” refers to the achievement of a firm grasp on the essentials of the Teaching. It is used as a technical term in the account of each Buddha in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, one among many categories of Buddha-achievement enumerated there.

Then having gone [into] the crowd,
having heard the Well-Gone-One's speech,
gaining the fruit of stream-entry,
I went forth into homelessness. (20) [1203]

After not a very long time,
hankering to see the Buddha,
refining²² mindfulness [through] him,
I attained [my] arahantship. (21) [1204]

I'm going²³ every single day
in order to see the Buddha.
I'm dissatisfied looking at
only [his] eye-pleasing body,²⁴ (22) [1205]

produced by all the perfections,
excellent lair of good fortune,
[his] body, strewn with all goodness:
dissatisfied, I'm living²⁵ [there]. (23) [1206]

The Victor, pleased at that virtue,
placed me in that foremost [place:]
"The Mother of Sigālaka's
foremost among those freed by faith."²⁶ (24) [1207]

I've mastered the superpowers
[like] the "divine ear" element.
I'm also a master, Great Sage,
of the knowledge in others' hearts. (25) [1208]

I remember [my] former lives;
[my] "divine eye" is purified.
All the defilements are destroyed;
[I] will not be reborn again. (26) [1209]

In meaning and in the Teaching,
etymology and preaching,

²²or "cultivating:" *bhāvetvā*

²³reading *vajām' ahaṃ* with BJTS (cf. PTS alt. *vajām' ayaṃ*)

²⁴reading *nayanānandanaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *yena 'va nandanaṃ* ("through which there is rejoicing"?)

²⁵reading *vihāram' ahaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *bhayām' ahaṃ* (= *bhāyām' ahaṃ*, "I am fearing"?)

²⁶reading *aggā saddhādhimuttikā* with BJTS for PTS *aggā saṅgavimuttikā* ("freed from clinging"), alt. *aṅgavimuttikā* ("freed in/by her] limbs")

[this] knowledge of mine was produced
in your presence, O Great Hero. (27) [1210]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (28) [1211]

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! (29) [1212]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (30) [1213]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Sigālaka-mātā spoke these verses.

The legend of Sigālaka-mātā Therī²⁷ is finished

²⁷this is the BJTS reading; PTS reads bhikkhunī Sigālaka-mātā