

Legends of the Buddhist Saints

Apadānapāli

TRANSLATED BY
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Ambapālī

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[39. Ambapālī¹]

The Great Sage was Phussa [Buddha,
[like] a garland of speckled rays.²
I was [that Buddha's own] sister,
born in [Buddha's] kṣatriyan clan. (1) [1307]

Having listened to his Teaching,
with a mind that was very clear,
giving [him] a large alms-giving
I aspired to achieve beauty. (2) [1308]

Thirty-one aeons in the past,³
Sikhi, Chief Leader of the World,
arose, the [Bright] Lamp of the World,
the Three Worlds' Refuge, the Victor. (3) [1309]

I'm then born in a brahmin clan,
in lovely Āruṇa City.
Angered [about something,] I cursed
a nun with liberated mind. (4) [1310]

Misbehaved like a prostitute,
I dirtied the dispensation.⁴
Having thus cursed [the nun] like that,
because of that evil karma,
I went to a horrific hell,
full of terrible suffering.
Fallen from there, [again] reborn
human,⁵ I was an ascetic.⁶ (5-6) [1311-1312]

For ten thousand [different] lifetimes,
I was fixed in prostitution;
thus I was not freed from evil,
as though [I'd] eaten⁷ strong poison. (7) [1313]

¹"Mango-Guarded", an historical nun, see DPPN I: 155-156

²*raṅsiphusitāvelo*, playing on/explaining the name "Phussa" (= speckled,
cf. *phusita*)

³or "ago," or "hence," as elsewhere: *ito*

⁴*jīnasāsanadūsikā*, lit., "defiling the Victor's dispensation"

⁵lit., "among humans"

⁶*tapassinī*, lit., "a female practitioner of austerities"

⁷*bhuttā...yathā*; BJTS reads *bhutvā*

In Kassapa's dispensation,⁸
 I practiced celibate [nunhood]⁹.
 Due to that karma, I was born
 in the city of the thirty.¹⁰ (8) [1314]

When [my] last rebirth was attained,
 come to be spontaneously,¹¹
 I was born amidst mango boughs;
 therefore I was "Mango-Guarded." (9) [1315]

Along with ten million beings,
 gone forth in the dispensation,¹²
 I attained the unshaking state,
 Buddha's legitimate daughter. (10) [1316]

I've mastered the superpowers
 [like] the "divine ear" element.
 I'm also a master, Great Sage,¹³
 of the knowledge in others' hearts. (11) [1317]

I remember [my] former lives;
 [my] "divine eye" is purified.
 All the defilements are destroyed;
 [I] will not be reborn again. (12) [1318]

In meaning and in the Teaching,
 etymology and preaching,
 [this] knowledge of mine was produced
 in your presence, O Great Hero. (13) [1319]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
 all [new] existence is destroyed.
 Like elephants with broken chains,
 I am living without constraint. (14) [1320]

Being in Best Buddha's presence
 was a very good thing for me.

⁸*kassape jinasāsane*, lit., "in the dispensation of the Victor, Kassapa [Buddha]"

⁹reading °*brahmacchariyam* with BJTS for PTS °*brahmaccheram*, lit., "the Brahma-life" "the holy life" "celibacy"

¹⁰i.e., the thirty-three gods.

¹¹*ahosiṇ opapātikā*

¹²it. "I went forth in the Victor's dispensation"

¹³reading *mahāmune* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *mahāmuni*, Great Sage.

The three knowledges are attained;
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (15) [1321]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (16) [1322]

Thus indeed the bhikkhunī Ambapālī spoke these verses.

The legend of the bhikkhunī Ambapālī is finished