

Ajita

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*Printed December 2018*

[397. {400.}<sup>1</sup> Ajita<sup>2</sup>]

The Victor,<sup>3</sup> Padumuttara,  
was the Master of Everything.<sup>4</sup>  
Plunged into the Himalayas,  
the Leader of the World sat down. (1) [3856]

I did not see the Sambuddha,  
I also did not hear [his] sound.  
Searching for food for me to eat,  
I was wandering in the woods. (2) [3857]

There I did see the Sambuddha,  
Bearing the Thirty-two Great Marks.<sup>5</sup>  
Seeing [the Buddha] made me think,<sup>6</sup>  
“what sort of<sup>7</sup> being<sup>8</sup> might this be?” (3) [3858]

Examining [his body’s] marks,  
I recalled my [studies of] lore,  
the good words which I [once] had heard,  
from<sup>9</sup> elderly<sup>10</sup> men of wisdom:<sup>11</sup> (4) [3859]

“According to that word of theirs,  
this [person] will be a Buddha;  
well then I ought to honor [him];  
it will purify my station.”<sup>12</sup> (5) [3860]

Quickly coming to [my] ashram,  
I grabbed<sup>13</sup> [some] buffalo ghee,<sup>14</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>Apadāna numbers provided in {fancy brackets} correspond to the BJTS edition, which contains more individual poems than does the PTS edition dictating the main numbering of this translation.

<sup>2</sup>“Unconquered”

<sup>3</sup>lit., “the Victor named Padumuttara”

<sup>4</sup>lit., “master of all things (*dhamma*)” (or “Master of All Teachings”)

<sup>5</sup>on the bodies of those destined to become a wheel-turning monarch or a Buddha

<sup>6</sup>*cittam āpajjijxi*, lit., “I produced the thought”

<sup>7</sup>*ko nāma*

<sup>8</sup>or “person,” “living being,” “creature:” *satto*

<sup>9</sup>lit., “of” (gen. case)

<sup>10</sup>reading *vuddhānaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *Buddhānaṃ*

<sup>11</sup>*paṇḍitānaṃ*

<sup>12</sup>*gatiṃ me sodhayissati*, i.e., “it will clean up my karma;” “it will get me a better rebirth”

<sup>13</sup>*gahim*

<sup>14</sup>reading *madhutelaṃ* (Sinhala gloss: *mītel*) with BJTS for PTS *dumatelaṃ* (“tree oil”). The term could also be read as a compound, “honey and oil;” the PTS reading could be sustained by taking *mītel* as the tree oil of that name, which is produced from the seeds of the *mī* tree, *Bassia longifolia* (*Sapot.*). Indeed, *madhu* (“honey”) can also refer to this oil. However, buffalo ghee would be a more likely oil for lamp-lighting than *mī* oil (which is used primarily in the making of medicines), so I have followed the BJTS reading here, leaving open these other possibilities.

taking a pot [to carry it,  
I approached [him], the Bull of Men.<sup>15</sup> (6) [3861]

Taking a three-legged [stool],<sup>16</sup> I  
stood it [up] in an open space.  
Lighting a lamp [placed on that stool,  
I worshipped [the Buddha] eight times. (7) [3862]

Seven nights and days the Buddha,  
sat [there], the Ultimate Person.  
Then at the end of the [last] night,<sup>17</sup>  
[Buddha] stood up, the World-Leader. [3863]

Happy, with pleasure in [my] heart,  
for seven nights and days I lit  
[that] lamp for the [seated] Buddha,  
[feeling well-]pleased by my own hands. [3864]

All the good scents of the forests<sup>18</sup>  
on Gandhamādana Mountain,  
by means of Buddha's majesty<sup>19</sup>  
then went up to [him], the Victor. [3865]

[All of] the trees [were then] in bloom.  
By means of Buddha's majesty  
all of the floral scents produced,<sup>20</sup>  
assembled into one right then. [3866]

Throughout the Himalayas, both  
the snake-gods and the *garuḷas*,  
desiring to hear the Teaching,  
came into the Buddha's presence. [3867]

The monk whose name was Devala  
was the Buddha's chief attendant.  
With one hundred thousand masters,  
he [also] approached the Buddha.<sup>21</sup> [3868]

Padumuttara, World-Knower,

<sup>15</sup>reading *narāsaḥmaṃ* with BJTS for PTS (and BJTS alt.) *vināyakaṇ* ("Guide")

<sup>16</sup>*tindaṇḍake*, lit., "three-sticked". BJTS glosses the term as *pirivājipuṭuwa*, "the stool (or chair) [used by] ascetics"

<sup>17</sup>*ratyā vivasāne*, read *ratyā vivasane*, "at the end of the night," a stock phrase.

<sup>18</sup>*sabbe vanā gandhamayā*, lit., "all the forests made of good scents." I am assuming that despite the Buddha's magical power, the trees themselves did not come to him, though that is the Pāli (and BJTS glosses in Sinhala accordingly). Rather, I take the meaning to be that the scents of those forests came to him.

<sup>19</sup>*anubhāvena*, BJTS notes that all the texts give *ānubhāvena*

<sup>20</sup>*pupphagandhāse*, following BJTS Sinhala gloss here

<sup>21</sup>lit., "went up to the Buddha's presence"

Sacrificial Recipient,  
seated in the monks' Assembly,  
[then] spoke these verses [about me]: [3869]

“He who has lit a lamp for me,  
[feeling well-]pleased by his own hands,  
I shall relate details of him;  
[all of] you listen to my words: [3870]

For sixty thousand aeons he  
will delight in the world of gods.  
A thousand times he'll be a king,  
a king who turns the wheel [of law]. [3871]

Thirty-six times lord of the gods,  
he will exercise divine rule.  
Seven hundred [times]<sup>22</sup> on the earth,  
he'll rule an extensive kingdom,<sup>23</sup>  
[and he will have] much local rule,  
innumerable by counting. [3872]<sup>24</sup>

Because of this lamp-offering,  
he will develop “divine eye.”  
This one is always going to see  
eight kosas<sup>25</sup> in all directions.<sup>26</sup> [3873]

Fallen from the world of the gods,  
when this person has been reborn,  
whether by day or else by night,  
a lamp will be carried [for him]. [3874]

When this person's<sup>27</sup> being reborn,  
a possessor of good karma,  
he will illuminate [the world]  
throughout the city [where] he is. [3875]

In whichever womb he's reborn,  
[whether] it's human or divine,  
because of his lamp-offering,  
due to the fruit of [those] eight lamps,

<sup>22</sup> following BJTS Sinhala gloss: *satsiya varak*

<sup>23</sup> *vipulaṃ rajjaṃ karissati*, following BJTS Sinhala gloss

<sup>24</sup> PTS and BJTS agree in presenting this as a six-footed verse.

<sup>25</sup> BJTS understands this as a measure of distance, *krōṣa* = 500 bow-lengths, 80 bull-lengths, 8000 *riyan* (*Śri Sumaṅgala Śabdakoṣaya*, s.v.)

<sup>26</sup> *samantato*, “on all sides” “everywhere”

<sup>27</sup> *sattassa*, also “being” “creature” (gen. abs. construction)

people will not surpass this one:  
that is the fruit of giving lamps. [3876]

In one hundred thousand aeons,  
arising in Okkāka's clan,  
the one whose name is Gotama  
will be the Teacher in the world. [3877]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,  
*Dhamma's* legitimate offspring,  
knowing well all the defilements,  
he'll reach nirvana, undefiled. [3878]

Having pleased [him], the Sambuddha,  
Gotama, Bull of the Śākyas,  
he'll be the Teacher's follower,  
[and his] name [will be] Ajita." [3879]

For sixty thousand aeons I  
delighted in the world of gods.  
In that place too my hundred lamps  
are burning [brightly] all the time.<sup>28</sup> [3880]

In the gods' world or that of men,  
my [own] effulgence<sup>29</sup> is diffused.  
Remembering the Best Buddha,  
I generate enormous mirth. [3881]

Falling from Tusitā heaven,  
I came out of a mother's womb.  
While that person<sup>30</sup> was being born,  
there was [always] a lot of light. [3882]

Having departed from the house,  
I went forth into homelessness.  
Having gone up to Bāvarī,  
I agreed to be his student.<sup>31</sup> [3883]

Living in the Himalayas,  
I heard [about]<sup>32</sup> the World-Leader.  
Searching for ultimate meaning,  
I approached [the Buddha], the Guide.<sup>33</sup> [3884]

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<sup>28</sup>lit., "every day"

<sup>29</sup>*prabhā*

<sup>30</sup>*sattassa* (gen. abs. construction)

<sup>31</sup>*sissattaṃ ajjupāgamiṃ*

<sup>32</sup>following the BJTS Sinhala gloss "(geṇa)"

<sup>33</sup>*vināyakam*

The Tame One, Buddha, He who Tames,  
the Flood-Crosser, Beyond Rebirth,<sup>34</sup>  
the Buddha spoke of nirvana,  
liberation from all dis-ease. [3885]

His coming to me succeeded;  
I entertained [him], the Great Sage.  
Attaining the three knowledges,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! [3886]

In the hundred thousand aeons  
since I gave [him] that lamp back then,  
I've come to know no bad rebirth:  
that's the fruit of giving lamps. [3887]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
All defilements are exhausted;  
now there will be no more rebirth. (26) [3888]

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! (27) [3889]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (28) [3890]

Thus indeed Venerable Ajita Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Ajita Thera is finished.

The summary:

Pilindavaccha<sup>35</sup> and Sela,  
Sabbakitti, Madundada,  
Kūṭāgārī and Bakkula,  
Giri, Salaḷasavhaya,<sup>36</sup>  
Sabbada and Ajita too:  
the verses here are counted at  
one hundred and five verses and  
twenty more beyond that [number].

<sup>34</sup>nirūpadhi, i.e., "devoid of the ground for rebirth," "free of the upadhis"

<sup>35</sup>BJTS: Piḷindavaccha

<sup>36</sup>BJTS: Salala°

The Pilindavaccha<sup>37</sup> Chapter, the Fortieth.

Then there is the Summary of Chapters:

Paduma and Ārakkhada,  
Ummā and Gandhodakena,  
Ekapadama, Saddasaññi,  
Mandāraṃ, Bodhiavandaka,  
Avaṅṭa and Pilindi [too].

And these verses are counted too,  
seventy-four verses [beyond]  
eleven hundred [verses here].

The Ten Chapters<sup>38</sup> called Paduma.

The Fourth Hundred<sup>39</sup> is finished.

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<sup>37</sup>BJTS: Piḷindavaccha

<sup>38</sup>vaggadasakaṃ

<sup>39</sup>Sataka is a common structure in Sanskrit and Pāli poetry, usually referring to one hundred verses, rather than (as here) one hundred stories.