

# Ñāṇatthavika

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[481. {484.}]<sup>1</sup> *Nāṇatthavika*<sup>2</sup>]

My well-made hermitage was [there,]  
in the southern Himalayas.  
Searching for ultimate meaning,  
I'm then living in the forest. (1) [5076]

Satisfied with roots and with fruit,  
whether [I] receive [them] or not,  
searching for a [proper] teacher,<sup>3</sup>  
I am living alone [just then]. (2) [5077]

The Sambuddha named Sumedha  
arose in the world at that time.  
[While] preaching the Four Noble Truths;  
he ferried many folks across. (3) [5078]

I did not hear of the Buddha,<sup>4</sup>  
and no one told me [about him].  
When the eighth year had elapsed, I  
heard [of] the Leader of the World. (4) [5079]

After bringing wood for the fire,  
having swept out the hermitage,  
having taken [my] shoulder yoke,<sup>5</sup>  
I set out from the forest [then]. (5) [5080]

Staying over a single night<sup>6</sup>  
in villages and [also] towns,  
little by little I approached  
the [city named] Candavatī.<sup>7</sup> (6) [5081]

The Buddha<sup>8</sup> in that period  
was Sumedha, the World-Leader.  
Preaching the state of deathlessness,  
he's lifting up many beings. (7) [5082]

<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>“Knowledge-Praiser”

<sup>3</sup>reading *anvesanto ācariyaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *anomasanto cariyaṃ* (“being perfect [in my] wanderings”)

<sup>4</sup>lit., “the Sambuddha”

<sup>5</sup>*khāribhāraṃ gahetvāna*, that is, “all the [little] that I owned, borne on my shoulder” or “a *khāri*-load”

<sup>6</sup>*ekarattiṃ vasanto*, lit., “having dwelt [out somewhere on the road] for one night [only]”

<sup>7</sup>see DPPN I:851; the city is only “known” to have existed during the time of previous Buddhas (and during the previous lives of Gotama Buddha). This present passage is taken there as evidence that “[i]t existed also in the time of Sumedha Buddha”

<sup>8</sup>lit., “the Blessed One”

Stepping past the mass of people,  
 worshipping the dispensation,<sup>9</sup>  
 placing deer-hide on one shoulder  
 I praised the Leader of the World: (8) [5083]

“You’re the Teacher for those who breathe,  
 the Banner, the Flag and the Pole;  
 you are the Goal, the Solid Ground,  
 the Island,<sup>10</sup> the Best of Biped. (9) [5084]

The twenty-first Recitation Portion  
 Sharp in philosophy,<sup>11</sup> Hero,  
 you ferry the people across.  
 There’s no other star in the world  
 that is higher [than you,] O Sage. (10) [5085]

It is possible to measure  
 the ocean<sup>12</sup> with a blade of grass,<sup>13</sup>  
 but not ever could one measure  
 your knowledge, O Omniscient One. (11) [5086]

It’s possible to lift the earth  
 onto a comparable sphere,  
 but not ever could one measure  
 your wisdom, O Omniscient One. (12) [5087]

It’s possible to measure [all]  
 space with a rope or by the inch,  
 but not ever could one measure  
 your good conduct, Omniscient One. (13) [5088]

The water in the great ocean,  
 [and] space of this [bountiful] earth,  
 are [both things] that can be measured;  
 you’re beyond measure, Eyeful One.” (14) [5089]

With [those] six verses having praised  
 the Greatly Famed, Omniscient One,  
 having pressed [both] hands together,  
 I then remained [there] silently. (15) [5090]

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<sup>9</sup>*jinsāsanāṇ*, lit., “the Victor’s dispensation.” BJTS (and PTS alt.) offer an alternative reading: *jitasāgaram* (PTS alt. is apparently read as *jina*°), “He by Whom the Ocean is Conquered” (or “Ocean of the Victor”). BJTS Sinh. gloss explains its reading as “the one who had conquered his senses, who was an ocean of virtue.

<sup>10</sup> or “lamp,” *dīpo*

<sup>11</sup> *nepuñño dassane*

<sup>12</sup> lit., “the unsurpassed ocean,” *sāgaruttamo*

<sup>13</sup> *kusaggena*, lit., “with a *kusa*-grass-point,” i.e., with the tip of a blade of *kusa*-grass

The one whom they call “Sumedha,”<sup>14</sup>  
 Very Wise<sup>15</sup> [and] Intelligent,<sup>16</sup>  
 seated in the monks’ Assembly,  
 spoke these verses [about me then]: (16) [5091]

“This one who has praised my knowledge,  
 [feeling-]well pleased by [his] own hands,  
 I shall relate details of him;  
 [all of] you listen to my words: (17) [5092]

For seventy-seven aeons  
 he’ll delight in the world of gods.  
 A thousand times the lord of gods,  
 he will exercise divine rule. (18) [5093]

Also, a different hundred times,  
 he’ll be a king who turns the wheel.  
 [And there will be] much local rule,  
 innumerable by counting. (19) [5094]

[Whether] born human or divine,  
 being fitted with good<sup>17</sup> karma,  
 with intentions not lacking thought,  
 he will be one with sharp wisdom. (20) [5095]

In thirty thousand aeons [hence],  
 arising in Okkāka’s clan,  
 the one whose name is Gotama  
 will be the Teacher in the world. (21) [5096]

Having departed from the house,  
 he will go forth, having nothing.  
 Being [only] seven years old,  
 he will attain<sup>18</sup> arahantship.” (22) [5097]

As far back as I remember,<sup>19</sup>  
 ever since I reached discretion,<sup>20</sup>  
 in the interval<sup>21</sup> I don’t know  
 any thinking that’s not lovely. (23) [5098]

<sup>14</sup>the name of this Buddha means “very clever” (*su-medha*), so the line could also be translated, “The one whom they call ‘the Wise One’”

<sup>15</sup>*bhūripaññāṇ*

<sup>16</sup>*sumedhasaṇ*, “he with good intelligence,” a play on the Buddha’s name

<sup>17</sup>lit., “meritorious”

<sup>18</sup>lit., “touch,” *phusissati*

<sup>19</sup>*yato sarāmi attānaṇ*, lit., “starting from when I remember myself”

<sup>20</sup>or “since I reached puberty,” *yato patto ‘smi viññuta*, lit., “starting from when I reached puberty”

<sup>21</sup>*etthantare*, lit., “in the interval [up to] here”

Transmigrating, in every life,  
I experience good fortune.  
I have no lack of possessions:  
[that's] the fruit in praising knowledge. (24) [5099]

The three fires<sup>22</sup> are blown out in me;  
all [new] existence is destroyed;  
knowing well all the defilements,  
I am [now] dwelling undefiled. (25) [5100]

In the thirty thousand aeons  
since I praised [the Buddha's] knowledge,  
I've come to know no bad rebirth:  
[that's] the fruit in praising knowledge. (26) [5101]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (27) [5102]

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! (28) [5103]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (29) [5104]

Thus indeed Venerable Ñāṇatthavika Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Ñāṇatthavika Thera is finished.

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<sup>22</sup>the cty here explains these as the fires of *rāga* (lust), *dosa* (anger) and *moha* (ignorance, folly)