

Abhaya

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[544. {547.}¹ Abhaya²]

The Victor, Padumuttara,
the One with Eyes for everything,
the Leader [of the World,] arose
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [6217]

The Thus-Gone-One exhorts someone
in the going for refuge, [and]
he exhorts someone in morals,
in the supreme ten ways to act.³ (2) [6218]

The Hero gives to somebody
the ultimate fruit of monkhood,
[and] likewise the eight attainments;⁴
he bestows the three knowledges. (3) [6219]

Supreme Man⁵ urges some being
in the six special knowledges,
[and] the Lord gives to somebody
the four analytical modes. (4) [6220]

Seeing folks to be awakened,
[across] leagues that can't be counted,
in no time having approached [them],
the Charioteer of Men exhorts. (5) [6221]

I then [lived] in Haṃsavatī;
I was the son of a brahmin,
a master of all the Vedas,
revered as a grammarian,
skillful in etymology,
confident in definitions,
verse-knower,⁶ ritual-knower,⁷
[also] clever at prosody.⁸ (6-7) [6222-6223]

¹*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.

²"Fearless," a historical monk, commonly known as Abhayarājakumāra, "Abhaya the Royal Prince," because he was the son of King Bimbisāra of Rajgir. See DPPN I:127-128.

³*dasakammaphuttame*: RD: "divided into kusala (meritorious, good) and akusala (demeritorious, evil) and classified according to the three manifestations" of body (3 *kammaphathas*), speech (4 *kammaphathas*) and mind (3 *kammaphathas*), for a total of ten.

⁴namely the four *jhanas* and the four formless realms (of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither consciousness nor unconsciousness)

⁵*naruttamo*

⁶*padako*, i.e. knowing the lines and feet of the Vedic poems

⁷*keṭubhavidū*

⁸*chandovicitikovidō*

[While] wandering about on foot,
 having approached Swan Hermitage,⁹
 I saw [him], the Best Debater,¹⁰
 Honored by the Great Populace,¹¹ (8) [6224]

preaching the *Dhamma* without stain.
 I, with contrary ideas,
 after having gone up to [him],
 after hearing his stainless words, (9) [6225]

[looking for a word] of the Sage
 which was incorrect, repeated,
 or¹² thrown-off or without meaning,
 I saw none; therefore I went forth. (10) [6226]

After not a long time, being
 confident among all teachers,
 I am taken as an expert¹³
 in the subtle words of Buddha. (11) [6227]

After having put together¹⁴
 four well-written¹⁵ verses [for him],
 praising the Chief of the Three Worlds,
 I had [them] preached¹⁶ from day to day. (12) [6228]

“In [this] frightful existence you
 are Free from Passion,¹⁷ Great Hero;¹⁸
 out of compassion, you don’t die,¹⁹
 thus [you’re] ‘the Compassionate Sage.’ (13) [6229]

Someone who’s²⁰ a common person
 not overwhelmed by defilements,
 [would be] attentive²¹ and mindful;²²
 thus [Buddha’s] inconceivable. (14) [6230]

⁹*haṃsārāmam* appears to be a proper name, though it also could be taken as “the hermitage in [my home-town] *Haṃsavatī*”

¹⁰*vadataraj seṭṭharaj*

¹¹*mahājana-purakkhataraj*

¹²reading *vā* with BJTS for PTS *ca* (“and”)

¹³*gaṇi*°, lit., “one who has a group [of followers],” “a teacher”

¹⁴reading *ganthayitvā* with BJTS for PTS *ganthavitvā*

¹⁵*suvyañjanaraj* (“with good characteristics” “good in the letter [as opposed to the meaning]”)

¹⁶*desayissaraj*

¹⁷*viratto*

¹⁸reading *mahāvra* (voc.) with BJTS for PTS *mahāvīro* (nom).

¹⁹*na nibbāyi*, lit., “did not die” or “did not reach full nirvana (*parinibbāna*)”

²⁰reading *santo* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *satto* (“a creature”)

²¹*sampajāno*

²²*satiyutto*

These are not destroyed by themselves,
 [even] someone's weak defilements,
 consumed in the fire of knowledge.
 It [would be] a marvel [if so]. (15) [6231]

He who's the Teacher of All Worlds:²³
 for him the world's thus a teacher;
 he's thus [known as] 'the World-Teacher'²⁴
 [and] the world is following him." (16) [6232]

With [fine verses] like those, I praised
 the Sambuddha,²⁵ *Dhamma*-preacher;²⁶
 doing so as long as [I] lived,
 after death²⁷ I went to heaven.²⁸ (17) [6233]

In the hundred thousand aeons
 since I praised the Buddha [like that],
 I've come to know no bad rebirth:
 that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (18) [6234]

I experienced a lot of
 great kingship in the world of gods,
 and local kingship [here on earth,]
 [and] wheel-turning kingship [as well]. (19) [6235]

I transmigrate in [just] two states:
 that of a god, or of a man.
 I do not know other rebirths;
 that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (20) [6236]

[When human] I'm born in two clans:
 the *kṣatriyan* or the brahmin.
 I don't get born²⁹ in lesser clans:
 that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (21) [6237]

Now, in [my] final existence,
 in Rajgir, ultimate city,³⁰
 I am King Bimbisāra's son,
 and [my given] name's Abhaya. (22) [6238]

²³*sabbalokassa guru* (BJTS reads *garu*, the older form, but glosses *guru*). I follow BJTS Sinh. gloss in taking this as referring specifically to a Buddha, hence capitalize it as a Buddha-epithet.

²⁴reading *lokāriyo* with BJTS for PTS *lokacariyā* (sic).

²⁵reading *sambuddhaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *yaṃ Budhhaṃ* ("which Buddha")

²⁶PTS *dhammadesakaṃ*; BJTS *dhammadesataṃ*

²⁷*tato cuto*, lit., "fallen from there"

²⁸*gato saggaṃ*

²⁹reading *jāyāmi* with BJTS for PTS *jānāmi* ("know")

³⁰*giribbajapuruttame*. Giribbaja or Girivraja is another name for Rajgir (also for Vaṅkagiri; see DPPN I:770)

Influenced³¹ by an evil friend,³²
 I was bewildered by a Jain.
 Sent by the leader of the Jains,³³
 I approached the Best of Buddhas. (23) [6239]

Having asked a subtle question,
 hearing [Buddha's] supreme response,
 going forth, in not a long time,
 I attained [my] arahantship. (24) [6240]

After praising the Best Victor,³⁴
 I [myself] am praised all the time.
 With good-scented body and mouth,
 I am endowed with happiness. (25) [6241]

Thus indeed I am greatly wise,
 with sharp, clever [and] quick wisdom,
 and I [speak] with varied discourse,
 through the power of that karma. (26) [6242]

With pleasure in [my] heart, praising the Worthy,³⁵
 the Unmatched,³⁶ Self-Become³⁷ Padumuttara,
 as the fruit of that, to a place [full] of woe,
 for a [whole] lakh³⁸ of aeons, I did not go. (27) [6243]³⁹

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
 all [new] existence is destroyed.
 Like elephants with broken chains,
 I am living without constraint. (28) [6244]

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) [6245]

The four analytical modes,

³¹*vasaṅ gantvā*, lit., "having gone under the power of"

³²*pāpamitta*°, a friend who enjoins one to evil deeds, as contrasted with a "beautiful friend" (*kalyānamitta*) who enjoins one to do good.

³³lit., "sent by Nāṭaputta," the typical Pāli designation of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the Jina. (BJTS reads *nā-taputtēna*). For details about him as depicted in the Pāli texts see DPPN II: 61-64. The protagonist is "sent" by the Jina in order to spy on or refute the Buddha.

³⁴*jinavarāṇ*

³⁵*arahaṇ*, i.e., "the arahant"

³⁶*asamaṇ*

³⁷*sayambhuṇ*

³⁸i.e., for one hundred thousand aeons

³⁹this verse is in the more complex xxx meter, with eleven-syllable feet.

and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (30) [6246]

Thus indeed Venerable Abhaya Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Abhaya Thera is finished.