

The Legend of the Lonely Buddhas

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The Legend of the Lonely Buddhas

Now listen to the legend of the Lonely Buddhas:

The Sage of Videha,¹ his body bent, asked
the Thus-Gone-One dwelling in Jetavana,
“Indeed there are those [called] the Lonely Buddhas;²
through what causes do they become [so], Wise One?” (1) [82]³

Then spoke the Omniscient, Outstanding, Great Sage,
to lucky Ānanda with [his] honeyed voice,
“Who performed service among former⁴ Buddhas,
[but] didn’t get freed in their dispensations,⁵ (2) [83]

because that is the means to awaken, wise,
they with sharp knowing, through knowledge and power,
because of [their] wishes [and] also great strength,
reach the Awakening of Lonely [Buddhas]. (3) [84]

In every world, with the exception of me,
there is no equal for the Lonely Buddhas.
I will describe a piece of the excellent
character⁶ of those Buddhas, the Great Sages.” (4) [85]

All of you, with well-pleased minds,⁷ aspiring for
the unsurpassed medicine, hear, by yourselves,
the excellent sayings, which are short and sweet,⁸
of those Great Sages who were Lonely Buddhas, (5) [86]

which are explanations of generations
of Lonely Buddhas who gathered together,
and a story of dispassion for danger,⁹
and likewise [how] they achieved Awakening. (6) [87]

¹The Sage of Videha is Ānanda, the Buddha’s cousin and personal attendant

²*paccekabuddhā*

³This and the following two verses correspond to the first three verses of *Buddhāpadāna*, above, where they are however found only in the BJTS edition; here, PTS agrees with BJTS in including them. They are in the more elaborate meter, with eleven syllables per foot, that characterizes the entire *Paccekabuddhāpadāna* (and the *sutta* from which it in turn draws, SN I.3), so I have translated accordingly.

⁴reading *pubba*° with BJTS (and PTS alt., and BJTS [2], above) for PTS *sabba*° (“all”)

⁵*jinasānesu*, lit., “Victors’ dispensations”

⁶*vaṇṇa-padesa-mattaj*

⁷or, reading *sabbesu pasannacittā*, “with minds pleased in all of those [Lonely Buddhas]”

⁸or read *madhuṃ va khuddaṃ* (“sweet like honey”) with BJTS, as below even in PTS (v. 56)

⁹*ādīnavo yañ ca*, BJTS Sinhala gloss *kāmayen*, i.e., “the danger” is (as *ādīnavo* connotes) passion itself

With awareness detached from passionate things,
mind not delighting in delights in the world,
abandoning obstacles, throbbing conquered,
thereby indeed¹⁰ they achieved Awakening. (7) [88]

Putting away the stick among all beings,
not causing harm to a single one of them,
with a loving mind, friendly, compassionate,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (8) [89]¹¹

Putting away the stick among all beings,
not causing harm to a single one of them,
not wishing for sons, let alone¹² companions,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (9) [90]¹³

Affections arise for one with connections;
this dis-ease proceeds in line with affections.
Seeing the danger that's born of affections,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (10) [91]¹⁴

Feeling compassion for friends [and] companions,
one puts off the goal, mind tied [to their problems];
seeing that fearfulness in intimacy,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (11) [92]¹⁵

One who is attentive to sons and to wives
is entangled like a large bamboo [thicket].
Not stuck to others, like a new bamboo shoot,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (12) [93]¹⁶

Just as a deer, not ensnared, goes for pasture
in the forest according to [its] wishes,
a knowing man looks after independence;
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (13) [94]¹⁷

Resting, standing, going, wandering there is

¹⁰reading *tath' eva* with BJTS for PTS *tatth' eva* ("there indeed")

¹¹BJTS adds the Pāli note: *ayaṃ gāthā marammapothake ca suttanipāte ca na vijjati*, "this verse is not found in the Burmese edition nor [lit., "and"] in *Suttanipāta*," referring to the remarkable fact that even though the following text is lifted almost verbatim from the "Rhinoceros Horn" *sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta* (I.3), corresponding as indicated in the footnotes on the following verses, this present verse in the *Paccekabuddhāpadāna*, though it follows the format of the *Sutta-nipāta sutta*, is not found in that *sutta* (nor, apparently, in Burmese manuscripts of *Apadāna*).

¹²*kuto*, lit., "how then?" "from where?"

¹³this is SN, v. 35

¹⁴= SN, v. 36

¹⁵= SN, v. 37

¹⁶= SN, v. 38

¹⁷= SN, v. 39

[some] invitation amidst [one's] companions.
Looking after independence [most] don't want,¹⁸
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (14) [95]¹⁹

Amidst [one's] companions there is delighting
in sports, and there is abundant love for sons.
[Though] hating separation from what's held dear,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (15) [96]²⁰

Global in outlook,²¹ one is causing no harm,
being happy with whatever comes one's way;
an endurer of troubles, not stiff with fear,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (16) [97]²²

Even some who have gone forth are ill-disposed;
likewise [some] householders living in the house.
Being unconcerned about others' children,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (17) [98]²³

Shedding the attributes of life in the house
like an ebony²⁴ tree whose leaves have fallen,
the hero severs the ties to household life;
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (18) [99]²⁵

If one should obtain a clever companion,
a co-wanderer who lives well [and] is wise,
after having overcome every trouble,
one would wander with that one, thrilled [and] mindful. (19) [100]²⁶

If one should not get a clever companion,
a co-wanderer who lives well [and] is wise,
[then] like a king quitting a conquered kingdom,
one should wander alone, like tuskers in the woods.²⁷ (20) [101]²⁸

Truly we're praising success with companions;
those²⁹ who are better or equal should be served.

¹⁸*anabhijjhitaṃ seritaṃ*, lit., "un-coveted independence"

¹⁹ = SN, v. 40

²⁰ = SN, v. 41

²¹*catuddiso*, lit., "[one who belongs to] the four directions"

²² = SN, v. 42

²³ = SN, v. 43

²⁴*koviḷāra*, a species of ebony, *Bauhinia variegata*

²⁵ = SN, v. 44

²⁶ = SN, v. 45

²⁷lit., "like a *mātaṅga* elephant in the woods (or forest)"

²⁸this corresponds to SN, v. 46 but the latter does not diverge from the standard refrain, reading as the fourth foot: "one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn"

²⁹lit., "companions"

Not getting those, not enjoying sinful things,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (21) [102]³⁰

Seeing shiny [bangles made out] of [fine] gold,
which have been well-made by the son of a smith,
banging together when two are on [one] arm
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (22) [103]³¹

“Like that, with another,³² there will be for me,
meaningless chatter or ill-tempered [bad speech];”
seeing that as a danger for the future,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (23) [104]³³

Sense pleasures are varied, sweet and delightful;
[they] churn up the mind with [their] varying form.
Seeing danger in the strands of sense pleasure,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (24) [105]³⁴

“For me this is calamity, misfortune;
a sickness, a [sharp] arrow, a fearsome thing.”
Seeing this fear in the strands of sense pleasure,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (25) [106]³⁵

[Freezing] cold and [scorching] heat, hunger and thirst,
wind [and] hot weather and gadflies [and] serpents:
having vanquished even all of those [problems,]
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (26) [107]³⁶

Just as a noble elephant with a full-
grown spotted body, abandoning the herd,
might dwell in the woods, however it wishes,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (27) [108]³⁷

“One who is fond of company cannot touch³⁸
liberation, even temporarily.”
Heeding with care [those] words of the Sun's Kinsman,³⁹

³⁰ = SN, v. 47

³¹ = SN, v. 48. Clanging bangles is a common image of the throes of passion in Sanskrit erotic poetry, one of many levels at which the imagery here works to characterize the Lonely Buddha's aversion to the world

³² *dutiyena sahā*, lit., “with a second”

³³ = SN, v. 49

³⁴ = SN, v. 50

³⁵ = SN, v. 51

³⁶ = SN, v. 52

³⁷ = SN, v. 53

³⁸ lit., “it is an impossibility (*aṭṭhāna*, for *a-ṭṭhānaṃ*, lit., “groundless”) that one...would touch”

³⁹ *Ādiccabandhussa*. Though elsewhere in *Apadāna* this epithet signals Sammāsambuddhas (especially Tissa), here, as BJTS gloss makes clear, it refers to the Paccekabuddha to whom the phrase

one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (28) [109]⁴⁰

Freed from [incessant] wrangling of opinions,
gaining the way, getting the path, [with the thought,
"I know I am not to be led by others,"

one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (29) [110]⁴¹

Freed from greed, without deceit, [and] thirst-free,
lacking hypocrisy, fault- and folly-free,⁴²

becoming intention-free in the whole world,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (30) [111]⁴³

Avoiding, not consorting with an evil
companion, who is blind⁴⁴ to the goal, who gets
into trouble, who intends [things], is slothful,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (31) [112]⁴⁵

One should consort with [someone] noble, a friend,
very learned, *Dhamma*-bearer, skilled preacher.
Discerning [one's own] goals, removing [all] doubt,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (32) [113]⁴⁶

Not embellishing, not looking after sport
nor⁴⁷ delights, pleasures, happiness in the world;
abstaining from adornment,⁴⁸ telling the truth,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (33) [114]⁴⁹

Having given up sense pleasures completely,
[including] sons and wives, father [and] mother,
wealth and grain and also [all one's] relatives,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (34) [115]⁵⁰

Mindful, discerning, "this is an attachment;
the happiness here is trifling, little fun;

in quotation marks is attributed.

⁴⁰ = SN, v. 54

⁴¹ = SN, v. 55

⁴² *niddhanta-kasāva=moho*, lit., "with faults and delusions blown away/purified/cleaned up"

⁴³ = SN, v. 56

⁴⁴ lit., "who does not see" "who does not look at"

⁴⁵ = SN, v. 57

⁴⁶ = SN, v. 58

⁴⁷ *ca*, lit., "and"

⁴⁸ *vibhūsanatthāṇā*, lit., "from a state of adornment". The °(t)thāṇā here is largely superfluous, except in providing the ablative required by *virato*, and messes up the meter (13 syllables in this foot), but neither PTS nor BJTS indicates any hesitation about the reading. Norman, in his SN tr. (p. 9) reads *vibhūsanā* and omits °thāṇā

⁴⁹ = SN, v. 59

⁵⁰ = SN, v. 60

here there is much suffering, this is a shaft,”⁵¹
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (35) [116]⁵²

Having broken to bits [one’s own] hindrances,⁵³
like a fish breaking a net in the water,
like fire that does not return to what is burnt,
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (36) [117]⁵⁴

With eyes cast downward, not [just] goofing around,
having senses guarded and mind protected,
not filled with desire,⁵⁵ not burning [as though fire,]
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (37) [118]⁵⁶

Discarding the attributes of household life,
just like a coral tree⁵⁷ with fallen-off leaves,
departing [the house] wearing the saffron robe,
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (38) [119]⁵⁸

Not⁵⁹ greedy for [good] tastes, not wavering, not
feeding others, on unbroken begging rounds,⁶⁰
with a mind that’s not bound to this clan or that,
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (39) [120]⁶¹

Abandoning the five hindrances of mind,
having pushed away all of the defilements,
independent, affection [and] hate removed,
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (40) [121]⁶²

Putting happiness and suffering behind,
[and] even in the past, mental joy and pain;⁶³
attaining equanimity, calm and pure,
one should wander alone, like a rhino’s horn. (41) [122]⁶⁴

With strenuous effort⁶⁵ to reach the best goal,

⁵¹*kaṇḍo*, the shaft of an arrow (also an arrow itself, and “lump”)

⁵²= SN, v. 61

⁵³or “fetters,” *saṃyojanāni*

⁵⁴= SN, v. 62

⁵⁵*anavassuto*, lit., “not leaking” “not oozing”

⁵⁶= SN, v. 63

⁵⁷*pārīchatto*, RD: *Erythmia Indica*, also a tree in Indra’s heaven

⁵⁸= SN, v. 64

⁵⁹*akaraṇ*, lit., “not doing”

⁶⁰*sapadānacārī*

⁶¹= SN, v. 65

⁶²= SN, v. 66

⁶³*pubbe va somanassaṇ domanassaṇ*, KRN SN tr. “already”

⁶⁴= SN, v. 67

⁶⁵*āraddhaviṛiyo*

with mind unstuck [and] behavior attentive,
with firm exertion, having strength and power,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (42) [123]⁶⁶

Not quitting solitude [or] meditation,
always living among things by the Teaching,
grasping the danger within existences,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (43) [124]⁶⁷

Aspiring to destroy craving, not lazy,
not foolish, learned, possessing mindfulness,
probing the Teaching, restrained, energetic,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (44) [125]⁶⁸

Not terrified, like a lion [hearing] sounds;
unentangled, as is the wind in a net;
not smeared, like a pink lotus by the water,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (45) [126]⁶⁹

Having overcome, like a strong-toothed lion,
the king of beasts, wandering victorious,
one should make use of lodgings that are remote,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (46) [127]⁷⁰

Practicing love, equanimity, pity,
release, or⁷¹ joy for others at the [right] time,
being unobstructed by the entire world,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (47) [128]⁷²

Quitting passion and hatred and delusion,
having broken to bits [one's own] hindrances,⁷³
not trembling at the moment when life's destroyed,
one should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (48) [129]⁷⁴

They associate, they embrace with [some] motive;
friends without motives are hard to find⁷⁵ these days.
Wise about self-interest, people aren't pure.

⁶⁶= SN, v. 68

⁶⁷= SN, v. 69

⁶⁸= SN, v. 70

⁶⁹= SN, v. 71

⁷⁰= SN, v. 72

⁷¹ca, lit., "and"

⁷²= SN, v. 73

⁷³or "fetters," *saṃyojanāni*

⁷⁴= SN, v. 74

⁷⁵or "hard to get," *dullabhā*

One should wander alone, like a rhino's horn. (49) [130]⁷⁶

With Pure Morals and With Very Pure Wisdom,
Attentive, Applying Selves to Mindfulness,
Insightful, Seeing the Teaching's Distinction,
Knowing the Aspects of Path [and] of Wisdom,⁷⁷ (50) [131]

in a Victor's dispensation practicing
merit, aspiration [and] thus [gaining] signs,⁷⁸
Wise Ones who don't go on to have followers
become Lonely Victors, [those] Self-Become Ones. (51) [132]

With Vast *Dhamma*,⁷⁹ [and] Many *Dhamma*-Bodies,⁸⁰
Mind-Lords,⁸¹ Crossing the Flood of All Suffering,⁸²
With Thrilled Minds,⁸³ Seers of the Ultimate Goal,⁸⁴
Analogues of Lions,⁸⁵ Like a Rhino's Horn,⁸⁶ (52) [133]

With Tranquil Senses,⁸⁷ With Tranquil Minds,⁸⁸ Composed,⁸⁹
Acting Mindfully⁹⁰ for⁹¹ neighboring beings,⁹²
Lamps⁹³ shining the light of ultimate truth here,
these Lonely Buddhas are constantly honored.⁹⁴ (53) [134]

All Obstacles Abandoned,⁹⁵ Lords of People,⁹⁶
Lamps of the World,⁹⁷ Shedding Light Like Heaps of Gold,⁹⁸

⁷⁶= SN, v. 75. This is the concluding verse of this sermon in SN, and the remaining nine verses of this *apadāna* are apparently original to it, as are its first eight verses, above.

⁷⁷lit., "of going in the aspects of path [and] the aspects of wisdom (°*bojjhaṅga*°)"

⁷⁸or predictions: *nimittaṅ*

⁷⁹*mahantadhammā*

⁸⁰*bahudhammakāyā*

⁸¹*cittissarā*

⁸²*sabbadukkhoghatiṇṇā*

⁸³*udaggacittā*

⁸⁴*paramatthadassī*

⁸⁵*sihopamā*, lit., "with lions as metaphors"

⁸⁶*khaggavisāṇakappā*

⁸⁷*santindriyā*

⁸⁸*santamānā*

⁸⁹*samādhi*

⁹⁰*satippacārā*

⁹¹lit., "in" "among"

⁹²*paccantasattesu satippacārā*. BJTS reads *paccanta gambhīra-mata-ppacāra*, "Going About with Deep Thought for Neighboring [Folks]" (?)

⁹³*Dīpā*

⁹⁴reading *satataccitā* 'me with BJTS for PTS *satataṅ hitā* 'me ("these...who are constantly friendly")

⁹⁵*pahīnasabbāvaraṇā*

⁹⁶*janindā*

⁹⁷*lokappadīpā*

⁹⁸*ghanakañcanābhā*

Free of Doubt [and] Good for the World to Look At,⁹⁹
these Lonely Buddhas are constantly honored.¹⁰⁰ (54) [135]

The clever sayings¹⁰¹ of the Lonely Buddhas
are circulating¹⁰² in the world with [its] gods.
Having heard, those who don't act that way are fools;
they spin in suffering again and again. (55) [136]

The clever sayings¹⁰³ of the Lonely Buddhas
are as sweet as if they were¹⁰⁴ flowing honey.¹⁰⁵
Having heard, those who practice accordingly
become seers of the [Four]¹⁰⁶ Truths, very wise. (56) [137]

The[se] lofty verses spoken by [those] Victors,
Lonely Buddhas, gone forth into homelessness,
were made known, for apprehending the Teaching,
by the Śākya Lion,¹⁰⁷ the Ultimate Man. (57) [138]

With pity for the world, these transformations¹⁰⁸
of those [Self-Become Ones,] the Lonely Buddhas,
were made known by [him,] the Self-Become Lion,
for increasing emotion and connection.¹⁰⁹ (58) [139]

The Legend of the Lonely Buddhas is finished.¹¹⁰

⁹⁹*lokasudakkhiṇeyyā*

¹⁰⁰reading *satataccitā* 'me with BJTS for PTS *satataṇ hitā* 'me ("these...who are constantly friendly")

¹⁰¹*subhāsītāni*

¹⁰²*caranti*

¹⁰³*subhāsītāni*

¹⁰⁴lit., "like"

¹⁰⁵BJTS reads *khuddam avassavantaṃ* ("flowing honey") for PTS *khuddam iva ssavantaṃ* ("like ["as if they were"] flowing honey")

¹⁰⁶I follow BJTS Sinhala gloss in interpolating "the Four Noble Truths" here, as elsewhere more explicitly throughout *Apadāna*.

¹⁰⁷*Śākyasīhena*

¹⁰⁸*vikubbitāni*, lit., "miraculous transformations" (as through *iddhi* superpowers); the term seems to agree with *subhāsītāni*, "clever sayings," in vv. 55-56 = "lofty verses" in v. 57.

¹⁰⁹*saṇvegasaṅgāmativaḍḍhanatthaṇ*

¹¹⁰PTS (only) adds "the second".