

# Sopāka

Copyright © 2022 Jonathan S. Walters.

PUBLISHED BY JONATHAN S. WALTERS AND WHITMAN COLLEGE

<http://www.apadanatranslation.com>

Licensed under the Attribution, Non-Commercial, Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>).

*Printed August 2022*

## [19. Sopāka]

The Blessed One named Siddhattha  
came into my presence [one time]  
when I was cleaning<sup>1</sup> a retreat<sup>2</sup>  
on a most fine,<sup>3</sup> superb mountain. (1) [784]

Seeing the Buddha who'd arrived  
I spread out a woven [grass] mat  
for the World's Best, the Neutral One,  
and gave [to him] that floral seat. (2) [785]

Sitting on that seat of flowers  
Siddhattha the World-Leader  
discerning my situation  
[then] spoke about impermanence. (3) [786]

“In flux indeed is all that is;  
things that arise and [then] decline  
are being born [and then] dying;  
happy is the relief from them.” (4) [787]

Saying this the Omniscient One,  
the World's Best One, the Bull of Men,  
the Hero<sup>4</sup> flew into the sky  
just like a swan-king in the air. (5) [788]

Abandoning my own dogma  
I [then] perceived impermanence.  
Meditating for [just] one [day],  
[right then and] there I passed away. (6) [789]

Incited by [my] wholesome roots  
I [then] enjoyed the two-fold bliss.<sup>5</sup>  
When [my] last rebirth was attained  
I was born among dog-cookers.<sup>6</sup>(7) [790]

After I set out from the house  
I went forth into homelessness.

<sup>1</sup>BJTS and cty read *sevantassa* (“serving”) for *sodhayantassa* (“washing” “making clean”); either term conveys the meaning, elaborated by the cty, that he was a worker at the retreat.

<sup>2</sup>*pabbhara* is a slope, incline; cty explains that it was a place on the mountain where the monks would relax or be separated from others (*vivekaṭṭhānaṃ*, “leisure spot”)

<sup>3</sup>PTS gives *pavare*, “most excellent;” BJTS reads *vipine*, “forest[ed]” (or “in the forest”).

<sup>4</sup>BJTS (and PTS alt.) reads *dhīro* (“the wise one”)

<sup>5</sup>*dve sampatti*. See above, n. to [702].

<sup>6</sup>i.e., despicable, low people. Lit, “I approached a dog-cooker’s womb.” On the semantic range and history of this insulting term, see David White, “Dogs Die.”

Dread-locked ascetic seven years,  
I attained [my] arahantship. (8) [791]

Energetic,<sup>7</sup> self-abandoned,  
careful about the moral rules,  
having pleased the Great Elephant  
I got higher ordination. (9) [792]

In the ninety-four aeons since  
I did that [good] karma back then  
I've come to know no bad rebirth;  
that's the fruit of a flower-gift. (10) [793]

In the ninety-fourth aeon since  
I obtained that perception [then],  
meditating upon that sense  
my defilements were [all] destroyed. (11) [794]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (12) [795]

Thus indeed Venerable Sopāka Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Venerable Sopāka Thera is finished.

---

<sup>7</sup>lit., "with strenuous effort"