

Pabhañkara

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

[333. {336.}¹ Pabhaṅkara²]

In deep forest which was crowded
with wild beasts there was a stupa³
of Blessed Padumuttara,
the World's Best One, the Neutral One. (1) [2984]

Nobody dared to travel [there]
to pay homage to the stupa.
The stupa was broken, [in ruins],
covered in grasses, sticks and vines. (2) [2985]

I was then a forest-worker,
as were⁴ father and grandfathers.
I saw that stupa in the woods,
broken, tangled in grass and vines. (3) [2986]

Having seen the Buddha's stupa,
I served [it] with a reverent heart:
"the Best Buddha's stupa, broken,
is abandoned in the forest.
It's not meet, not appropriate
for one who can tell right from wrong.⁵
[But] I engage in other work,
not cleaning the Buddha's stupa." (4-5) [2987-2988]

Cleaning off the grasses and sticks
and vines [growing] on the stupa,
after worshipping [it] eight times,
[still] bent over I [then] went off. (6) [2989]

Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and [firm] resolve,
discarding [my] human body,
I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (7) [2990]

There my well-constructed mansion
was [made of] gold, brightly shining.
It rose up sixty leagues [in height]
[and it] was thirty leagues in width. (8) [2991]

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"Light-Maker"

³*cetiya*, could also be some other sort of shrine but vv. 3-4 makes clear that it is imagined as a stupa.

⁴lit., "by means of," "through". We might say "by birth" or "in the family business"

⁵*jānantassa guṇāguṇaṇ*, lit., "for one who know/can distinguish virtue and ignominy"

And thirty [different] times did I
exercise rule over the gods.
And five and twenty times was I
a wheel-turning king [with great strength]. (9) [2992]

Transmigrating from birth to birth,
I'm receiving great possessions.
Possessions never lack for me:
that's the fruit of cleaning [stupas]. (10) [2993]

When I'm going in the forest,
seated on an elephant's back,⁶
whichever direction I go,
the forest provides [me] refuge. (11) [2994]

I do not see with [my two] eyes
[any tree-]stump or thorn at all.
In accordance with [my] karma,⁷
it gets removed all by itself. (12) [2995]

I do not get the itch,⁸ ringworm,⁹
rashes,¹⁰ abscesses,¹¹ leprosy,¹²
epilepsy¹³ [and] scabies¹⁴ [too]:
that's¹⁵ the fruit of cleaning [stupas]. (13) [2996]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned¹⁶ the stupa,¹⁷
I was not conscious of pimples
or spots produced on my body. (14) [2997]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned the stupa,¹⁸

⁶lit., "on a palanquin or litter on the back of an elephant." That is, he does not ride bareback but in some sort of ornamented fixture on its back, an image of kingship, power and wealth.

⁷lit., "with [my] meritorious karma," *puññakamma*

⁸*kaṇḍu*. BJTS reads *kacchu*, with the same meaning.

⁹*daddu*

¹⁰*kuṭṭha*

¹¹*gaṇḍa*

¹²*kilāsa*

¹³*apamāra*. This seems an outlier since the remainder of the diseases listed here are all diseases of the skin, but the Pāli is unambiguous.

¹⁴*vitacchikā*

¹⁵I take the PTS *idhaṇ* here as a typographical error, following BJTS in reading the expected *idaṇ*

¹⁶reading *sodhite* with BJTS (and PTS alt, and the subsequent verses here in the same form) for PTS (and BJTS alt) *sodhane*, "cleaning"

¹⁷lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"

¹⁸lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"

I transmigrate in [just] two states:
that of a god, or of a man. (15) [2998]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned the stupa,¹⁹
every place where I am living
is gold-colored and very bright. (16) [2999]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned the stupa,²⁰
displeasing things are avoided,
[and] things which are pleasing appear. (17) [3000]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned the stupa,²¹
my mind is [always very] pure,
one-pointed, very attentive. (18) [3001]

Another miracle for me:
after I had cleaned the stupa,²²
seated in a single sitting,
I achieved the arahant-state. (19) [3002]

In the hundred thousand aeons
since I did that [good] karma then,
I've come to know no bad rebirth:
that's the fruit of cleaning [stupas]. (20) [3003]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (21) [3004]

Thus indeed Venerable Pabhaṅkara Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Pabhaṅkara Thera is finished.

¹⁹lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"

²⁰lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"

²¹lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"

²²lit., "when I had cleaned the Buddha's stupa"