

# Mahākappina

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[530. {533.}<sup>1</sup> Mahākappina<sup>2</sup>]

The Victor, Padumuttara,  
was a Master of Everything.  
He rose in the space of the world,<sup>3</sup>  
like the sun in the autumn sky. (1) [5727]

With [his] word-rays he awakens  
the lotuses [called] things to know.  
With his thought-rays the Leader cleans  
the muck [known as] the defilements. (2) [5728]

The fame of the rivals is slain,  
like firefly-light<sup>4</sup> [by] the sun;  
he sheds the light of truthfulness<sup>5</sup>  
like a gem [reflects] the sunlight. (3) [5729]

Like the ocean for gems, he is  
the future for the virtuous;  
like a rain-cloud for living things,  
he rains by the cloud of Teaching. (4) [5730]

I was a magistrate<sup>6</sup> back then,  
in the city named “Haṃsa;”<sup>7</sup>  
approaching I heard the Teaching,  
of the one named “Superb Lotus,”<sup>8</sup>  
who was purifying<sup>9</sup> my mind  
[while] explaining the virtue of  
a follower who’d done the deed,<sup>10</sup>  
the admonisher of the monks. (5-6) [5731-5732]

Delighted,<sup>11</sup> happy,<sup>12</sup> having heard,

<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> A historical monk, foremost among those who instruct (admonish, teach) the monks (*bhikkhuovādakānaṃ*) (and the nuns: see DPPN II:473-475, which uncharacteristically does not mention *Apadāna*).

<sup>3</sup> reading *jagadākāse* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *jaladākāse* (“in the space of a rain-cloud”)

<sup>4</sup> see Cone s.v. for *khajjota-ābhā*

<sup>5</sup> reading *saccatthābhaṃ pakāseti* for *sabbatthar*

<sup>6</sup> *akkhadasso*, RD “one who examines the dice, an upmire, a judge” Cone s.v. a judge, a magistrate, very clear in the commentarial passage she cites; “assessor” is Malalasekara’s translation

<sup>7</sup> “Swan,” i.e., *Haṃsavatī*

<sup>8</sup> *jalajuttamanāmino*, i.e. Padumuttara Buddha

<sup>9</sup> or “perfuming,” “cleaning,” *vāsayantassa*

<sup>10</sup> *katāvino*, i.e., an arahant

<sup>11</sup> *patīto*

<sup>12</sup> *sumano*

[then] inviting the Thus-Gone-One,  
having fed [him] with his students,  
I aspired [to attain] that place. (7) [5733]

Then the Greatly Fortunate One,  
loudly as a swan or drum, said,<sup>13</sup>  
“look at him, a great minister,  
skilled in examining [cases],  
fallen down in front of my feet,  
his body hair<sup>14</sup> growing upward,  
rain-cloud-colored<sup>15</sup> [and] broad-shouldered,<sup>16</sup>  
with pleasant[-looking] eyes [and] face, (8-9) [5734-5735]

with an extensive entourage,  
bound for kingship, very famous.  
With kindness<sup>17</sup> he is wishing  
for the place of this deed-doer.<sup>18</sup> (10) [5736]

Because of this alms-giving<sup>19</sup> [done]  
with intention and [firm] resolve,<sup>20</sup>  
for one hundred thousand aeons  
he won't be born in a bad state.<sup>21</sup> (11) [5737]

Divine fortune<sup>22</sup> among the gods;  
greatness [when born] among humans:  
having enjoyed that, through the rest,<sup>23</sup>  
he will attain [his] nirvana. (12) [5738]

In one hundred thousand aeons,  
arising in Okkāka's clan,  
the one whose name is Gotama  
will be the Teacher in the world. (13) [5739]

<sup>13</sup>reading BJTS *tadhāsi mahābhāgo haṃsadundubhisussaro* with BJTS for PTS' garbled *tadhā haṃsasamābhāgo haṃsadundubhinivaco*

<sup>14</sup>\**tanūruhaṇ*, see Buddhadatta *Pāli-Sinhala Akārādiya*, s.v.

<sup>15</sup>PTS *jimuttavaṇṇaṇ*, BJTS *jimūtavaṇṇaṇ*, read *jimutavaṇṇaṇ* and see see Buddhadatta *Pāli-Sinhala Akārādiya*, *jimuta*, s.v. BJTS Sinhala gloss concurs: *meghavarṇa vū*

<sup>16</sup>lit., “fat-shoulders”. BJTS reads *piṇ°* but understands the adjective in the same way: “having shoulders whihc are full (covered with meat)

<sup>17</sup>*muditāya*, “with disinterested love”

<sup>18</sup>*katāvino*, i.e., arahant.

<sup>19</sup>reading *piṇḍapātena* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *paṇipātena* (“because of this prostration” “because of this adoration”)

<sup>20</sup>reading *cetanāpaṇidhihi ca* with BJTS (and this is a recurring foot throughout *Apadāna*) for PTS *cāgena paṇidhihi ca* (“with generosity and resolve”)

<sup>21</sup>or “he won't be reborn in a bad rebirth” (*n'upapajjati duggatiṇ*)

<sup>22</sup>PTS *sobhāgyaṇ*, BJTS *sobhaggam*

<sup>23</sup>i.e., through the remainder of the good karma

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,  
*Dhamma's* legitimate offspring,  
 the one whose name is Kappina  
 will be the Teacher's follower." (14) [5740]

And so, having performed good deeds,  
 in the Victor's dispensation,  
 discarding [my] human body,  
 I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (15) [5741]

Having commanded righteously<sup>24</sup>  
 [both] divine and human kingdoms,  
 I was born close to Benares,  
 in a clan of servants who weave.<sup>25</sup> (16) [5742]

With a following of thousands,  
 together with [my] chief queen, I  
 [then] attended on five hundred  
 Buddhas enlightened by themselves.<sup>26</sup> (17) [5743]

Having fed [them] for three months, we<sup>27</sup>  
 afterward gave [them] the three robes.  
 Fallen from there we all of us  
 arose among the thirty [gods].<sup>28</sup> (18) [5744]

Fallen from there we all came back  
 to human existence again.  
 We're born<sup>29</sup> in Kukkuṭa city,  
 to the side of Himalaya. (19) [5745]

My name [at birth] was Kappina;  
 son of the king, very famous.  
 The rest were born in a clan of  
 ministers; they waited on me. (20) [5746]

<sup>24</sup>*sutaso anusāsiya*, following cty (p. 504: "the meaning is: having commanded righteously with equal words and on the basis of reasons"). BJTS reads *sataso* and takes it (in the gloss) as *siyavarak* ("a hundred times") though it also includes the commentarial gloss "righteously and slowly" (*dāhāmin semin*)

<sup>25</sup>*jāto keniyaḷātiyā*. Malalasekera takes this as a mistake for *koliyaḷātiyā* (in a Koiian clan), the corresponding reading in ThagA, but cty. explains the term as *tantavāyaḷātiyā pesakārakūla* ("in a weaver's cast, a clan of servants"); BJTS Sinh. gloss and Cone, s.v., adopt the latter reading, though PTS apparently treats this as a proper name (perhaps recalling the use of this as a proper name in #389 {392}, v. 26 [3607] et passim). The context suggests that in this birth he was a king, so this would be an instance of lower caste kingship if the cty. reading is accepted.

<sup>26</sup>*pañcapaccekabuddhānaḷ satāni*

<sup>27</sup>reading *adamha* with BJTS for PTS *dammi*

<sup>28</sup>*tidasūpagā*, i.e. the thirty-three gods, in Tāvatiṃsa heaven

<sup>29</sup>reading *jātā* with BJTS for PTS *jāto* ("I was born")

The comfort of kingship<sup>30</sup> attained,  
I was rich in every pleasure.  
Told by merchants, I got to know,<sup>31</sup>  
that the Buddha had arisen: (21) [5747]

“A Buddha’s risen in the world;  
Unequaled,<sup>32</sup> the Single Person,<sup>33</sup>  
he’s declaring the great Teaching:  
ultimate, deathless comfort. (22) [5748]

And his students are well-engaged,  
well-liberated, undefiled.”  
After hearing that good word, [and]  
paying respect to the merchants, (23) [5749]

quitting<sup>34</sup> kingship, with ministers,  
I left, devoted to Buddha.<sup>35</sup>  
Seeing the great Canda River<sup>36</sup> —  
full [of water] with level banks,  
a little rough, without supports,  
a rushing current hard to cross —  
recalling the Buddha’s virtue,  
I got across [it] in safety. (24-25) [5750-5751]

“If [he] Crossed the stream of being,  
Buddha, Knower, World’s-End-Goer,  
due to the truthfulness of that,  
let my journey be a success! (26) [5752]

If the Path is going to peace,  
and release is peaceful comfort,  
due to the truthfulness of that,  
let my journey be a success! (27) [5753]

If the monks<sup>37</sup> have crossed the wasteland,  
the unsurpassed field of merit,  
due to the truthfulness of that,  
let my journey be a success!” (28) [5754]

<sup>30</sup>*mahārajjā*, lit., “of overlordship,” “of powerful kingship” “of being a maharajah”

<sup>31</sup>*apāpuṇiṇi*. BJTS reads *ahaṃ suṇiṃ*, “I heard”

<sup>32</sup>*asamo*

<sup>33</sup>*ekapuggalo*

<sup>34</sup>reading *pahāya* with BJTS for PTS *vihāya* (“having worked”)

<sup>35</sup>*buddhamāma*, lit., “taking Buddha as ‘mine’”

<sup>36</sup>that is, the Candabhāgā

<sup>37</sup>lit., “if the assembly (*saṅgha*)”

When that truth-wish<sup>38</sup> had been performed,  
the water went off from the road.  
Thus in safety I crossed over  
to the river's beautiful bank. (29) [5755]

I saw the Buddha sitting down,  
like the sun [when it] is rising,  
blazing like a mountain of gold,  
shining forth like a tree of lamps, (30) [5756]

surrounded by [his] followers  
like the moon along with the stars,  
like the king of gods<sup>39</sup> raining forth  
the gladdening sermon-water. (31) [5757]

Worshipping with the ministers,  
I went up to [him] on one side,  
[and] then, discerning [what] we wished,  
the Buddha preached the *Dhamma* [there]. (32) [5758]

Having heard the stainless Teaching,  
we [then] said [this] to the Victor:  
“O Great Sage, please [now] ordain [us],  
we're disgusted with existence.” (33) [5759]

“Well-preached, O monks, is the *Dhamma*,  
for you to make suffering end;  
wander forth in celibacy,”  
thus [indeed] spoke the Seventh Sage. (34) [5760]

When that was spoken, all of us  
took on the appearance of monks;  
we were [all then] fully ordained  
stream-enterers in the teachings.<sup>40</sup> (35) [5761]

Then going to Jetavana,  
the Guide gave instruction [to us].  
[Thus] instructed by the Victor,  
I attained [my] arahantship. (36) [5762]

Thereafter I admonished them,<sup>41</sup>  
the thousand monks [along with me].  
[Then], because of my instruction,

<sup>38</sup>*saccavare*, “wish [because of] truth,” cf. *saccakiriya*, “act of truth”

<sup>39</sup>*vāsavaṇ viya*, = Sakka, Indra

<sup>40</sup>*sotāpaṇṇā ca sāsane*, lit., “and stream-enterers in the dispensation”

<sup>41</sup>lit., “it,” singular, standing in for “the [group] of a thousand monks”

they too were freed from defilements.<sup>42</sup> (37) [5763]

The Victor, pleased<sup>43</sup> by<sup>44</sup> that virtue,  
[then] placed in that foremost place,  
“Among the monk-admonishers,  
Kappina’s top,” [he told] the folk. (38) [5764]

Karma done a hundred thousand  
[aeons hence] showed me [its] fruit here:  
well-liberated, arrow-quick,  
I have destroyed my defilements. (39) [5765]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (40) [5766]

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! (41) [5767]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (42) [5768]

Thus indeed Venerable Mahākappina Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Mahākappina Thera is finished.

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<sup>42</sup>*te pi āsuṇ anāsavā*

<sup>43</sup>*tuṭṭho*, lit “happy” “delighted”

<sup>44</sup>lit. “in”