

Kumāra-Kassapa

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[532. {535.}¹ Kumāra-Kassapa²]

One hundred thousand aeons hence
the Leader arose [in the world],
the Hero, Friend of Every World,³
who name was Padumuttara. (1) [5811]

Being a brahmin at that time,
distinguished,⁴ a Vedic master,
wandering during siesta,
I saw the Leader of the World,
explaining the Four [Noble] Truths,
awakening the world with gods,
praising in the multitude the
top of those with varied discourse. (2-3) [5812-5813]

At that time, with a gladdened heart,
inviting [him], the Thus-Gone-One,
decorating a pavilion
with [bolts] of cloth diversely dyed,
lit up by various gemstones,
I fed [him] with the monks⁵ [in it].
Having fed [them all] for a week
diverse, foremost [and] tasty food,
worshipping⁶ [him] and followers
with flowers of various hues,
falling down in front of [his] feet,
I aspired [to attain] that place. (4-6) [5814-5816]

Then the Excellent Sage,⁷ Sole Hoard
of the Taste of Compassion,⁸ said:
“Look at that excellent brahmin,
[with] face and eyes [like] lotuses,
possessing much joy and delight,
[his] body hair growing upward,
[his] large eyes extremely mirthful,

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 “Boy-Kassapa”

³ *sabbalokahito*, or “Friendly to All Worlds”

⁴ reading *vissuto* with BJTS for PTS *va sato*

⁵ *sasaṅghaṇ*, lit., “with the assembly [of monks]”

⁶ lit., “doing *pūjā*”

⁷ *munivaro*

⁸ *karuṇekarasāsayo*, BJTS Sinhala gloss: *karuṇā rasaṭa eka ma nidhāna vū* (“who was the one [and only] treasure-trove for the taste of compassion”)

greedy for my dispensation,
 fallen down in front of my feet,
 happily turned toward one [purpose:]⁹
 he's wishing for that [foremost] place
 [of preachers with] varied discourse.¹⁰ (7-9) [5617-5819]

In one hundred thousand aeons,
 arising in Okkāka's clan,
 the one whose name is Gotama
 will be the Teacher in the world. (10) [5820]

Worthy heir to that one's *Dhamma*,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
 named Kumāra-Kassapa, he
 will be the Teacher's follower. (11) [5821]

Through the power of that cloth with
 varied flowers and gems [as well],
 he will attain the foremost [place]
 of [preachers] with varied discourse." (12) [5822]

Due to that karma done very well,
 with intention and [firm] resolve,
 discarding [my] human body,
 I went to Tāvatiṃsa [then]. (13) [5823]

Touring¹¹ the space of existence
 like an actor upon the stage,¹²
 the son of a deer [named] Sākhā,¹³
 I entered the womb of a doe. (14) [5824]

[And] then while I was in the womb,
 [my mother's] turn to die stood nigh.¹⁴
 Turned out¹⁵ by Sākhā, my mother
 went to Nigrodha for refuge. (15) [5825]

By that deer-king [Nigrodha], she

⁹*ekāvatta-sumānaṣaṇ*

¹⁰reading *vicittakathikattanaṃ* (lit., "varied-discourse-ness") with BJTS for PTS *vicittakathikatthadaṇ* ("of giving meaning through varied discourse")

¹¹*paribbhaṃaṇ bhavākāse*

¹²*raṅgamajjhe yathā naṭo*

¹³"Branch". RD says "branch-deer" (*sākhā-miga*) signifies a monkey at J ii.73; the compound translated here (*sākhāmigatrajo*) thus can also be read to mean "son of a monkey," but the following lines make clear that the figures here are deer.

¹⁴reading *vajjhavāro upatiṭṭho* with BJTS ("the turn to die for was looked after" [or "was served"]) for PTS *vajjavāraṇ upatiṭṭhā* ("she looked after [etc.] the time to die").

¹⁵reading *vattā* with BJTS for PTS *cattā*

was released from [her pending] death.
Sacrificing his life [instead],
[Nigrodha] then advised me thus: (16) [5826]

“Only Nigrodha should be served;
don’t keep company with Sākhā.¹⁶
Better death in Nirodha[’s care]
than life in [the care of] Sākhā.” (17) [5827]

Instructed by that advice of the deer[-king],
my mother and I, because of his advice,
to the delightful Tusitā heaven came¹⁷
as though [we] had gone abroad, taking [our] house. (18-19) [5828]¹⁸

Again, when Hero Kassapa’s
dispensation had reached [its] goal,
ascending to a mountain-top
engaged in the Victor’s teachings,¹⁹ (20) [5829]

now, in Rājagaha²⁰ [city],
I was born in a wealthy²¹ clan.
My mother, with [me in her] womb,
had gone²² forth into homelessness. (21) [5830]

Finding out that [she] was pregnant,
they approached Devadatta²³ then.
He said, “let all of you banish²⁴
this Buddhist nun²⁵ who is evil.” (22) [5831]

Now [she] too being shown mercy
by the Lord of Sages,²⁶ Victor,
my mother’s [living] happily
in a convent for Buddhist nuns. (23) [5832]

Finding that out, the Kosala

¹⁶lit., “one should not keep company with Sākhā

¹⁷*āgama*, lit., “having come”

¹⁸PTS treats this as two short verses; BJTS as a single verse in more elaborate metre (with 11-syllable feet rather than half-verses); I follow BJTS’s reading.

¹⁹*jināsānaṅ*, lit., “the Victor’s dispensation”

²⁰modern Rajgir, in Bihar.

²¹*setṭhi*°, “a millionaire’s”

²²lit., “went forth.” We are to understand that she did this unintentionally, i.e., unaware she was pregnant

²³the Buddha’s cousin, who tries to rival the Buddha with increasing virulence and hatred until he is finally sucked into *avīci* hell. See #387 {390}, above.

²⁴*vināsetha*, 2nd pers. pl., also “destroy” “ruin” “kill”

²⁵*bhikkhuniṅ*

²⁶*munindena*

earth-protector supported me,
with the care given to a prince,²⁷
and by name I was “Kassapa.” (24) [5833]

Because there was “Great Kassapa,”
I [was known as] “Boy Kassapa.”
Hearing Buddha’s preaching that the
body’s the same as an anthill,²⁸
because of that my mind was freed
from attachment altogether.
After taming King Pāyāsi,²⁹
I [then] attained that foremost place. (25-26) [5834-5835]

My defilements are [now] burnt up;
all [new] existence is destroyed.
Like elephants with broken chains,
I am living without constraint. (27) [5836]

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! (28) [5837]

The four analytical modes,
and these eight deliverances,
six special knowledges mastered,
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (29) [5838]

Thus indeed Venerable Kumāra-Kassapa Thera spoke these verses.
The legend of Kumāra-Kassapa Thera is finished.

²⁷or “to the prince,” his own son?

²⁸in the *Vammikasutta*, M i. 142ff, which is centered on Kumāra-Kassapa. A certain deity appears and tells him a riddle about a burning anthill; he reports this to the Buddha who solves the riddle by equating the anthill with the body. See DPPN II:832-833

²⁹who maintained that karma bears no fruit. His famous dialogue about rebirth with Kumārakassapa is recounted in the *Pāyāsisutta*, D. ii. 316ff. See DPPN II:187-188