

Abhaya

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**[544. {547.}<sup>1</sup> Abhaya<sup>2</sup>]**

The Victor, Padumuttara,  
the One with Eyes for everything,  
the Leader [of the World,] arose  
a hundred thousand aeons hence. (1) [6217]

The Thus-Gone-One exhorts someone  
in the going for refuge, [and]  
he exhorts someone in morals,  
in the supreme ten ways to act.<sup>3</sup> (2) [6218]

The Hero gives to somebody  
the ultimate fruit of monkhood,  
[and] likewise the eight attainments;<sup>4</sup>  
he bestows the three knowledges. (3) [6219]

Supreme Man<sup>5</sup> urges some being  
in the six special knowledges,  
[and] the Lord gives to somebody  
the four analytical modes. (4) [6220]

Seeing folks to be awakened,  
[across] leagues that can't be counted,  
in no time having approached [them],  
the Charioteer of Men exhorts. (5) [6221]

I then [lived] in Haṃsavatī;  
I was the son of a brahmin,  
a master of all the Vedas,  
revered as a grammarian,  
skillful in etymology,  
confident in definitions,  
verse-knower,<sup>6</sup> ritual-knower,<sup>7</sup>  
[also] clever at prosody.<sup>8</sup> (6-7) [6222-6223]

<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>“Fearless,” a historical monk, commonly known as Abhayarājakumāra, “Abhaya the Royal Prince,” because he was the son of King Bimbisāra of Rajgir. See DPPN I:127-128.

<sup>3</sup>*dasakammaphuttame*: RD: “divided into kusala (meritorious, good) and akusala (demeritorious, evil) and classified according to the three manifestations” of body (3 *kammaphathas*), speech (4 *kammaphathas*) and mind (3 *kammaphathas*), for a total of ten.

<sup>4</sup>namely the four *jhanas* and the four formless realms (of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither consciousness nor unconsciousness)

<sup>5</sup>*naruttamo*

<sup>6</sup>*padako*, i.e. knowing the lines and feet of the Vedic poems

<sup>7</sup>*keṭubhavidū*

<sup>8</sup>*chandovicitikovidō*

[While] wandering about on foot,  
 having approached Swan Hermitage,<sup>9</sup>  
 I saw [him], the Best Debater,<sup>10</sup>  
 Honored by the Great Populace,<sup>11</sup> (8) [6224]

preaching the *Dhamma* without stain.  
 I, with contrary ideas,  
 after having gone up to [him],  
 after hearing his stainless words, (9) [6225]

[looking for a word] of the Sage  
 which was incorrect, repeated,  
 or<sup>12</sup> thrown-off or without meaning,  
 I saw none; therefore I went forth. (10) [6226]

After not a long time, being  
 confident among all teachers,  
 I am taken as an expert<sup>13</sup>  
 in the subtle words of Buddha. (11) [6227]

After having put together<sup>14</sup>  
 four well-written<sup>15</sup> verses [for him],  
 praising the Chief of the Three Worlds,  
 I had [them] preached<sup>16</sup> from day to day. (12) [6228]

“In [this] frightful existence you  
 are Free from Passion,<sup>17</sup> Great Hero;<sup>18</sup>  
 out of compassion, you don’t die,<sup>19</sup>  
 thus [you’re] ‘the Compassionate Sage.’ (13) [6229]

Someone who’s<sup>20</sup> a common person  
 not overwhelmed by defilements,  
 [would be] attentive<sup>21</sup> and mindful;<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>*haṃsārāmam* appears to be a proper name, though it also could be taken as “the hermitage in [my hometown] *Haṃsavatī*”

<sup>10</sup>*vadatan seṭṭhaṇ*

<sup>11</sup>*mahājāna-purakkhataṇ*

<sup>12</sup>reading *vā* with BJTS for PTS *ca* (“and”)

<sup>13</sup>*gaṇi*°, lit., “one who has a group [of followers],” “a teacher”

<sup>14</sup>reading *ganthayitvā* with BJTS for PTS *ganthavitvā*

<sup>15</sup>*suvyañjanaṇ* (“with good characteristics” “good in the letter [as opposed to the meaning]”)

<sup>16</sup>*desayissaṇ*

<sup>17</sup>*viratto*

<sup>18</sup>reading *mahāvra* (voc.) with BJTS for PTS *mahāvīro* (nom).

<sup>19</sup>*na nibbāyi*, lit., “did not die” or “did not reach full nirvana (*parinibbāna*)”

<sup>20</sup>reading *santo* with BJTS (and PTS alt.) for PTS *satto* (“a creature”)

<sup>21</sup>*sampajāno*

<sup>22</sup>*satiyutto*

thus [Buddha's] inconceivable. (14) [6230]

These are not destroyed by themselves,  
[even] someone's weak defilements,  
consumed in the fire of knowledge.  
It [would be] a marvel [if so]. (15) [6231]

He who's the Teacher of All Worlds:<sup>23</sup>  
for him the world's thus a teacher;  
he's thus [known as] 'the World-Teacher'<sup>24</sup>  
[and] the world is following him." (16) [6232]

With [fine verses] like those, I praised  
the Sambuddha,<sup>25</sup> *Dhamma*-preacher;<sup>26</sup>  
doing so as long as [I] lived,  
after death<sup>27</sup> I went to heaven.<sup>28</sup> (17) [6233]

In the hundred thousand aeons  
since I praised the Buddha [like that],  
I've come to know no bad rebirth:  
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (18) [6234]

I experienced a lot of  
great kingship in the world of gods,  
and local kingship [here on earth,]  
[and] wheel-turning kingship [as well]. (19) [6235]

I transmigrate in [just] two states:  
that of a god, or of a man.  
I do not know other rebirths;  
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (20) [6236]

[When human] I'm born in two clans:  
the kṣatriyan or the brahmin.  
I don't get born<sup>29</sup> in lesser clans:  
that's the fruit of praising [Buddha]. (21) [6237]

Now, in [my] final existence,  
in Rajgir, ultimate city,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *sabbalokassa guru* (BJTS reads *garu*, the older form, but glosses *guru*). I follow BJTS Sinh. gloss in taking this as referring specifically to a Buddha, hence capitalize it as a Buddha-epithet.

<sup>24</sup> reading *lokcāriyo* with BJTS for PTS *lokacariyā* (sic).

<sup>25</sup> reading *sambuddhaṃ* with BJTS for PTS *yaṃ Budhhaṃ* ("which Buddha")

<sup>26</sup> PTS *dhammadesakaṃ*; BJTS *dhammadesataṃ*

<sup>27</sup> *tato cuto*, lit., "fallen from there"

<sup>28</sup> *gato saggaṃ*

<sup>29</sup> reading *jāyāmi* with BJTS for PTS *jānāmi* ("know")

<sup>30</sup> *giribajapuruttame*. Giribbaja or Girivraja is another name for Rajgir (also for Vaṅkagiri; see

I am King Bimbisāra's son,  
and [my given] name's Abhaya. (22) [6238]

Influenced<sup>31</sup> by an evil friend,<sup>32</sup>  
I was bewildered by a Jain.  
Sent by the leader of the Jains,<sup>33</sup>  
I approached the Best of Buddhas. (23) [6239]

Having asked a subtle question,  
hearing [Buddha's] supreme response,  
going forth, in not a long time,  
I attained [my] arahantship. (24) [6240]

After praising the Best Victor,<sup>34</sup>  
I [myself] am praised all the time.  
With good-scented body and mouth,  
I am endowed with happiness. (25) [6241]

Thus indeed I am greatly wise,  
with sharp, clever [and] quick wisdom,  
and I [speak] with varied discourse,  
through the power of that karma. (26) [6242]

With pleasure in [my] heart, praising the Worthy,<sup>35</sup>  
the Unmatched,<sup>36</sup> Self-Become<sup>37</sup> Padumuttara,  
as the fruit of that, to a place [full] of woe,  
for a [whole] lakh<sup>38</sup> of aeons, I did not go. (27) [6243]<sup>39</sup>

My defilements are [now] burnt up;  
all [new] existence is destroyed.  
Like elephants with broken chains,  
I am living without constraint. (28) [6244]

Being in Best Buddha's presence  
was a very good thing for me.

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DPPN I:770)

<sup>31</sup>°*vasaṇ gantvā*, lit., "having gone under the power of"

<sup>32</sup>*pāpamitta*°, a friend who enjoins one to evil deeds, as contrasted with a "beautiful friend" (*ka-lyānamitta*) who enjoins one to do good.

<sup>33</sup>lit., "sent by Nāṭaputta," the typical Pāli designation of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the Jina. (BJTS reads *nāṭaputtēna*). For details about him as depicted in the Pāli texts see DPPN II: 61-64. The protagonist is "sent" by the Jina in order to spy on or refute the Buddha.

<sup>34</sup>*jinavaraṇ*

<sup>35</sup>*arahaṇ*, i.e., "the arahant"

<sup>36</sup>*asamaṇ*

<sup>37</sup>*sayambhuṇ*

<sup>38</sup>i.e., for one hundred thousand aeons

<sup>39</sup>this verse is in the more complex xxx meter, with eleven-syllable feet.

The three knowledges are attained;  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (29) [6245]

The four analytical modes,  
and these eight deliverances,  
six special knowledges mastered,  
[I have] done what the Buddha taught! (30) [6246]

Thus indeed Venerable Abhaya Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Abhaya Thera is finished.