Tha Ap 394 — 389. {392.} Sela

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

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Text

Therāpadāna

The Legends of the Theras

389. {392.} Sela

Walt 3581 In the city, Haṁsavatī,

I was in charge of the roadways.

Calling my kinsfolk together,

I spoke these words to them back then: Verse 1

Walt 3582 “The Buddha’s been born in the world,

the Unsurpassed Field of Merit,

the Foundation for Every World,

Sacrificial Recipient. Verse 2

Walt 3583 The kṣatriyans and city folk,

the rich people and the brahmins,

happy, with pleasure in their hearts,

have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 3

Walt 3584 Those on elephants, royal guards,
charioteers and foot-soldiers
happy, with pleasure in their hearts,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 4

Walt 3585 The mighty lords and the princes,
Vaiśyas as well as the brahmins,
happy, with pleasure in their hearts,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 5

Walt 3586 The cooks and those who dress the hair,
the bath boys, the garland-makers,
happy, with pleasure in their hearts,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 6

Walt 3587 The dyers, also the weavers,
the tanners, also the bath girls,
happy, with pleasure in their hearts,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 7

Walt 3588-3589 The fletchers, the leather workers,
carpenters and workers in gold,
tinsmiths, also makers of mats,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 8

Walt 3590 Hired servants and musicians,
and numerous slaves and servants,
to the extent of their own strength,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 9

Walt 3591 Water-bringers, wood-gatherers,
tillers, also grass-carriers,
to the extent of their own strength,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 10

Walt 3592 Florists and gardeners as well,
green-grocers and fruit-carriers,
to the extent of their own strength
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 11

Walt 3593 Harlots, slave-girls who bring water,
women who sell cakes or sell fish,
to the extent of their own strength,
have formed themselves into a guild. Verse 12

Walt 3594 Come you all, gathered together,
let us too form, as one, a group;
let us now perform service for
the Unsurpassed Field of Merit.” Verse 13

Walt 3595 They, having listened to my words,
formed a group to last for all time
and built a well-built meeting-hall
for those in the monks' Assembly. Verse 14

Walt 3596 After dedicating that hall,
elated with a happy mind,
surrounded by all of those folks,
I went up to the Sambuddha. Verse 15

Walt 3597 Having approached the Sambuddha,
the Lord of the World, Bull of Men,
and worshipping the Teacher’s feet,
I spoke these words to him back then: Verse 16

Walt 3598 “These three hundred people, Hero,
together as one in a group,
have appointed for you, O Sage,
this well-constructed meeting-hall.” Verse 17

Walt 3599 The Eyeful One, accepting it
in front of the monks' Assembly,
the Buddha spoke these verses then,
in front of my three hundred folks: Verse 18

Walt 3600 "Three hundred and this best one too,
conforming together as one,
having made this great achievement,
you all are going to enjoy it. Verse 19

Walt 3601 When your last rebirth is attained,
you all will achieve nirvana,
the state of coolness, unsurpassed,
unborn, undying peacefulness." Verse 20

Walt 3602 The Buddha prophesied like that,
the Omniscient One, Best of Monks,
and having heard the Buddha's words,
I declared my own mental bliss. Verse 21

Walt 3603 For thirty thousand aeons I
delighted in the world of gods.
Five hundred times the lord of gods,
I exercised divine rule there. Verse 22

Walt 3604 One thousand times I also was
a king who turns the wheel of law.
While exercising divine rule
the great gods all then worshipped me. Verse 23

Walt 3605-3606 Here, in this human kingdom, my
relatives are my retinue.
When my last rebirth was attained
there was a brahmin, Vāseṭṭha,

with eight hundred million in wealth;
I was born as the son of him.
My given name at birth was “Sela,”
a master of Vedic science. Verse 24-25

Walt 3607-3608 I, wandering about on foot,
waited on by my own students,
saw Keniya the ascetic
with matted hair, wearing ashes,
prepared to do a sacrifice.
Having seen him I spoke these words:

Sela:

“Bringing a wife? Going to one?
Or have you invited the king? Verse 26-27

Walt 3609 I want to do sacrifices
for brahmins who think like the gods,
but I’m not invited by kings
and have not found a sacrifice.” Verse 28

Keniya:

Walt 3610-3611 “There is no bringing brides for me;
I do not go to brides either.
The one I’ve invited today
is Best in the world with its gods,
the Delighter of the Śākyans
who Brings Happiness to Beings
out of Friendship for All Creatures;
these preparations are for him. Verse 29-30

Walt 3612 The Bright Hue of Wild Mangosteen,
Incomparable, Unmeasurable,

the Buddha, Unrivaled in Form,

is invited for tomorrow. Verse 31

Walt 3613 Like beaten gold atop a forge

burning bright like cedar charcoal,

the Great Hero’s like lightening bolts—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 32

Walt 3614 Like fire burning on a mountain,

like the moon on the fifteenth day,

the same color as burning reeds—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 33

Walt 3615 Fearless, Overcomer of Fear,

the Existence-Ender, the Sage,

The Great Hero’s like a lion—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 34

Walt 3616 Skillful in the Buddha’s Teaching,

little to endure from others,

Great Hero’s like an elephant—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 35

Walt 3617 Skilled in doing the Great Teaching,

the Unmatched, Buddha-elephant,

the Great Hero is like a bull—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 36

Walt 3618 Of Endless Beauty, Boundless Fame,

Bearing all the Various Marks,

the Great Hero is like Indra—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 37

Walt 3619 Strong One, Whose Group is Powerful,

Majestic One, Hard to Approach,

The Great Hero is like Brahmā—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 38

Walt 3620 Teaching-Reacher, Ten-Powered One,

Master of Surpassing Power,

the Great Hero is like the earth—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 39

Walt 3621 Full of waves called morality,

churning knowledge of the Teaching,

the Great Hero is like the sea—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 40

Walt 3622 Hard to Approach, Hard to Subdue,

Unshaken, Risen Up, Lofty,

the Great Hero’s like Mt. Meru—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 41

Walt 3623 Of Endless Knowledge, Impartial,

Unmeasurable, Gone to the Top,

the Great Hero is like the sky—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 42

Walt 3624 Support for Those with Fears and Frights,

Protection for Refuge-Seekers,

the Great Hero Provides Comfort—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 43

Walt 3625 The Abode of Wisdom and Spells,

Merit-Field for happiness-Seekers

the Great Hero, the Mine of Gems—

I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 44

Walt 3626 Comforter, the Awe-Inspirer,

Giver of the Fruit of Monkhood,

the Great Hero is like a cloud—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 45

Walt 3627 The Eye of the World, the Hero,
Dispeller of Every Darkness,
the Great Hero is like the sun—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 46

Walt 3628 Sage, Seer of the Nature of
Emancipations from Objects,
the Great Hero is like the moon—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 47

Walt 3629 Venerable, Raised up in the World,
Adorned with the Auspicious Marks,
Unmeasurable, the Great Sage—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha.

Walt 3630 The One Whose Knowledge is Boundless,
Morality beyond Compare,
whose freedom has no parallel,
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 48

Walt 3631 Whose courage has no parallel,
whose firmness is unthinkable,
he whose exertion is the best—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 49

Walt 3632 Passion, hatred, stupidity
and every poison is destroyed;
the Great Hero is like a drug—
I’ve invited him, the Buddha. Verse 50

Walt 3633 There’s removal of the darkness
of all pain, defilement, disease;

the Great Hero's like a doctor—
I've invited him, the Buddha. Verse 51

Walt 3634 "Friend, this sound is hard to obtain,
which has been said here, "the Buddha".
Hearing "the Buddha," "the Buddha,"
you all should be joyful like me." Verse 52

Sela:

Walt 3635 Not keeping my joy inside me
it poured forth to those outside me.
I, being full of joyful thoughts,
spoke these words to him at that time: Verse 53

Walt 3636 "Well then where is that Blessed One,
the World's Best One, the Bull of Men?
Having gone where will I see this
Giver of the Fruit of Monkhood?" Verse 54

Walt 3637 He, taking hold of my right arm,
thrilled, with his hands pressed together,
showed to me the King of Teachings,
who Removes the Arrows of Grief. Verse 55

Keniya:

Walt 3638 "Do you see this massive forest,
risen up like a great storm cloud,
dark blue just like collyrium,
as visible as the ocean? Verse 56

Walt 3639 The Buddha now is dwelling there,
the Untamed-Tamer, the Great Sage,
instructing those who can be trained,

making known Awakening's parts." Verse 57

Sela:

Walt 3640 Like the thirsty seeking water,
like the hungry looking for food,
like a cow greedy for its calf,
I went in search of the Victor. Verse 58

Walt 3641 Knowing manners and good conduct
I did teach to my own students
going into Buddha's presence,
restraint in line with the Teaching: Verse 59

Walt 3642 'Blessed Ones are Hard to Approach,
like lions wandering alone,
walking carefully, step by step,
come along after me, O men. Verse 60

Walt 3643 As fearful as a snake's venom,
like a lion, king of the beasts,
like a rutting tusked elephant,
thus Buddhas are Hard to Approach. Verse 61

Walt 3644 O men, neglecting any need
that you may have to cough or sneeze,
walking carefully, step by step,
go into the Buddha's presence. Verse 62

Walt 3645 Buddhas are Hard to Go Up To,
they're Ones who Relish Solitude,
make Little Sound, Hard to Approach,
Revered in the world with its gods. Verse 63

Walt 3646 When I am asking him questions,

or exchanging friendly greetings,
then you all should make little sound;
stand there as though you were sages. Verse 64

Walt 3647 Which Great Teaching he is preaching,
peaceful, leading to nirvana,
listen to the meaning with care,
happily hearing the Teaching.”’ Verse 65

Walt 3648 Having approached the Sambuddha
I exchanged greetings with the Sage.
While I was conversing with him,
I looked out for Great Man’s marks. Verse 66

Walt 3649 I can see thirty of the marks,
doubting only two of the marks:
through his powers the Sage showed me
his penis enclosed in a sheath. Verse 67

Walt 3650 And then the Buddha placed his tongue
into his ear and on his nose.
The Victor touched his forehead’s tip
and covered it all with his tongue. Verse 68

Walt 3651 I, seeing his auspicious marks,
fulfilling all the attributes,
concluding that, “he’s a Buddha,”
I went forth with all my students. Verse 69

Walt 3652 I went forth into homelessness,
together with the three hundred.
When eight months still had not elapsed,
we all realized nirvana. Verse 70

Walt 3653 Together doing good karma

for the Unsurpassed Merit-Field,
together we transmigrated,
together we turned from the world. Verse 71

Walt 3654 I gave rafters for that new hall,
remaining within the guild's rule.
Due to that deed, well done by me,
I'm receiving eight good results. Verse 72

Walt 3655 I'm worshipped in all directions,
and I have food that's ambrosial;
I'm the support of everyone;
I don't experience terror. Verse 73

Walt 3656 I don't get any diseases,
and I protect my long life-span.
I am one with exquisite skin,
I live in dwellings that I choose. Verse 74

Walt 3657 Remaining within the guild's rule,
the rafters I gave numbered eight.
Following the eighth I received
analysis with Arahantship. Verse 75

Walt 3658 All accomplishments accomplished,
duties complete, defilement-free,
I am your son today, Great Sage,
and "Eight Rafters" is now my name. Verse 76

Walt 3659 Remaining within the guild's rule,
the pillars I gave numbered five.
Due to that deed, well done by me,
I'm receiving five good results. Verse 77

Walt 3660 I remain unshaken by love,

I do not lack for possessions,
I’m one whose words are taken well,
and likewise I cause no offense. Verse 78

Walt 3661 My mind is not out of control,
I’m not shaken by anything,
unstained in the dispensation,
due to that deed, well done by me. Verse 79

Walt 3662 I’m respectful, obedient,
duties complete, defilement-free;
I’m your follower, Great Hero,
a venerated monk, O Sage. Verse 80

Walt 3663 Making a well-made palanquin,
I then dedicated that hall.
Due to that deed, well done by me,
I’m receiving five good results. Verse 81

Walt 3664 I’m born in an eminent clan,
I become a very rich man,
I’m one who achieves all success,
I am not plagued with avarice. Verse 82

Walt 3665 In whichever village I wish
my palanquin comes to a rest,
by means of that best palanquin,
I travel according to wish. Verse 83

Walt 3666 Because of that palanquin-gift,
I removed all of my darkness.
Sage, this monk, empowered with all
special knowledges, worships you. Verse 84

Walt 3667 I performed all of my duties

and the duties of others too.
Because of that well-done deed, I
entered the city of no fear. Verse 85

Walt 3668 I gave food to the Buddha and
also that well-completed hall.
Due to that deed, well done by me,
I arrived at that best of states. Verse 86

Walt 3669 Those who are tamers in the world,
tame these elephants and horses.
Employing varied punishments
they tame by means of cruelty. Verse 87

Walt 3670 Not like that, O Great Hero, do
you tame men and women here.
Not using force, without weapons,
you tame in the supreme taming. Verse 88

Walt 3671 Praising the virtues of giving,
you are skilled in preaching, O Sage;
addressing a single question
you freed the three hundred, O Sage. Verse 89

Walt 3672 We're tamed by the charioteer,
well-freed, undefiled, empowered
by all the special knowledges,
quenched in destroying the bases. Verse 90

Walt 3673 In the hundred thousand aeons
since I gave that gift at that time,
every fear has been overcome:
that's the fruit of giving a hall. Verse 91

Walt 3674 My being in Buddha's presence

was a very good thing for me.

The three knowledges are attained;

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 92

Walt 3675 My defilements are now burnt up;

all new existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. Verse 93

Walt 3676 The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 94

Thus indeed Venerable Sela Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Sela Thera is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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