Tha Ap 535 — 530. {533.} Mahākappina

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

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Text

Therāpadāna

The Legends of the Theras

530. {533.} Mahākappina

Walt 5727 The Victor, Padumuttara,

was a Master of Everything.

He rose in the space of the world,

like the sun in the autumn sky. Verse 1

Walt 5728 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. Verse 2

Walt 5729 The fame of the rivals is slain,

like firefly-light by the sun;

he sheds the light of truthfulness

like a gem reflects the sunlight. Verse 3

Walt 5730 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. Verse 4

Walt 5731-5732 I was a magistrate back then,
in the city named “Haṁsa;”
approaching I heard the Teaching,
of the one named “Superb Lotus,”
who was purifying my mind
while explaining the virtue of
a follower who’d done the deed,
the admonisher of the monks. Verse 5-6

Walt 5733 Delighted, happy, having heard,
then inviting the Thus-Gone-One,
having fed him with his students,
I aspired to attain that place. Verse 7

Walt 5734-5735 Then the Greatly Fortunate One,
loudly as a swan or drum, said,
“look at him, a great minister,
skilled in examining cases,
fallen down in front of my feet,
his body hair growing upward,
rain-cloud-colored and broad-shouldered,
with pleasant-looking eyes and face, Verse 8-9

Walt 5736 with an extensive entourage,
bound for kingship, very famous.
With kindliness he is wishing
for the place of this deed-doer. Verse 10

Walt 5737 Because of this alms-giving done
with intention and firm resolve,
for one hundred thousand aeons
he won’t be born in a bad state. Verse 11

Walt 5738 Divine fortune among the gods;
greatness when born among humans:
having enjoyed that, through the rest,
he will attain his nirvana. Verse 12

Walt 5739 In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. Verse 13

Walt 5740 Worthy heir to that one’s Dhamma,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Kappina
will be the Teacher’s follower.” Verse 14

Walt 5741 And so, having performed good deeds,
in the Victor’s dispensation,
discarding my human body,
I went to Tāvatiṁsa then. Verse 15

Walt 5742 Having commanded righteously
both divine and human kingdoms,
I was born close to Benares,
in a clan of servants who weave. Verse 16

Walt 5743 With a following of thousands,
together with my chief queen, I
then attended on five hundred
Buddhas enlightened by themselves. Verse 17

Walt 5744 Having fed them for three months, we
afterward gave them the three robes.
Fallen from there we all of us
arose among the thirty gods. Verse 18

Walt 5745 Fallen from there we all came back
to human existence again.
We’re born in Kukkuṭa city,
to the side of Himalaya. Verse 19

Walt 5746 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. Verse 20

Walt 5747 The comfort of kingship attained,
I was rich in every pleasure.
Told by merchants, I got to know,
that the Buddha had arisen: Verse 21

Walt 5748 “A Buddha’s risen in the world;
Unequaled, the Single Person,
he’s declaring the great Teaching:
ultimate, deathless comfort. Verse 22

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

Walt 5750-5751 quitting kingship, with ministers,
I left, devoted to Buddha.
Seeing the great Canda River—
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. Verse 24-25

Walt 5752 "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! Verse 26

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

Walt 5754 If the monks have crossed the wasteland,
the unsurpassed field of merit,
due to the truthfulness of that,
let my journey be a success!" Verse 28

Walt 5755 When that truth-wish had been performed,
the water went off from the road.
Thus in safety I crossed over
to the river's beautiful bank. Verse 29

Walt 5756 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, Verse 30

Walt 5757 surrounded by his followers
like the moon along with the stars,
like the king of gods raining forth
the gladdening sermon-water. Verse 31

Walt 5758 Worshipping with the ministers,
I went up to him on one side,
and then, discerning what we wished,
the Buddha preached the Dhamma there. Verse 32

Walt 5759 Having heard the stainless Teaching,
we then said this to the Victor:
“O Great Sage, please now ordain us,
we’re disgusted with existence.” Verse 33

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

Walt 5761 When that was spoken, all of us
took on the appearance of monks;
we were all then fully ordained
stream-enterers in the teachings. Verse 35

Walt 5762 Then going to Jetavana,
the Guide gave instruction to us.
Thus instructed by the Victor,
I attained my arahantship. Verse 36

Walt 5763 Thereafter I admonished them,
the thousand monks along with me.
Then, because of my instruction,
they too were freed from defilements. Verse 37

Walt 5764 The Victor, pleased by that virtue,
then placed in that foremost place,
“Among the monk-admonishers,
Kappina’s top,” he told the folk. Verse 38

Walt 5765 Karma done a hundred thousand

aeons hence showed me its fruit here:

well-liberated, arrow-quick,

I have destroyed my defilements. Verse 39

Walt 5766 My defilements are now burnt up;

all new existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. Verse 40

Walt 5767 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! Verse 41

Walt 5768 The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 42

Thus indeed Venerable Mahākappina Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Mahākappina Thera is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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