Tha Ap 546 — 541. {544.} Vaṅgīsa

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

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Text

Therāpadāna

The Legends of the Theras

541. {544.} Vaṅgīsa

Walt 6118 The Victor, Padumuttara,

the One with Eyes for everything,

the Leader of the World, arose

a hundred thousand aeons hence. Verse 1

Walt 6119 Just like the waves on the ocean,

and just like the stars in the sky,

thus the word of the Sambuddha,

is thought out by the arahants. Verse 2

Walt 6120 The Supreme Victor, in a crowd

mixed with Buddhist monks and brahmins,

is honored by people along

with the gods, titans and snake-gods. Verse 3

Walt 6121 The Victor, the World-Surpasser,
illuminates the world with rays,
causing to open through his words
the tractable lotus-people. Verse 4

Walt 6122 The Supreme Person, Endowed with
the Four Perfect Confidences,
Fear and Timidness Abandoned,
is Confident, with Peace Attained. Verse 5

Walt 6123 The World-Chief is acknowledged as
the entire sphere of Buddhahood,
which is the Excellent Bull's place;
there is no one who refutes that. Verse 6

Walt 6124 When the Neutral One, the Buddha,
fearlessly roars his lion's roar,
no god nor man nor God Himself
exists who contradicts his words. Verse 7

Walt 6125 Preaching the excellent Dhamma,
ferrying the world with its gods,
Confident among Multitudes,
he's turning the wheel of Dhamma. Verse 8

Walt 6126 Praising the lofty virtue of
a well-regarded follower,
foremost among eloquent monks,
he placed him in that foremost place. Verse 9

Walt 6127 I then lived in Haṁsavatī,
a brahmin likewise well-regarded,
born knowing all of the Vedas,
lord of speech, debater-crusher. Verse 10

Walt 6128 Approaching him, the Great Hero,
having heard that Dhamma-preaching,
I obtained overwhelming joy,
loving the follower's virtue. Verse 11

Walt 6129 Inviting him, the Well-Gone-One,
World's Delighter, with Assembly,
I served them food for seven days,
and then I covered them with cloth. Verse 12

Walt 6130 Bowing with my head at his feet,
granted leave, hands pressed together,
happy, standing off to one side,
I praised the Ultimate Victor: Verse 13

Walt 6131 "Praise to you, Leopard of Sages!
Praise to you, O Best of People!
Praise to you, Chief of Every World!
Praise to you, Fearlessness-Maker! Verse 14

Walt 6132 Praise to you, Confuser of Death!
Praise to you, Crusher of False Views!
Praise to you, Peaceful Comforter!
Praise to you, Gone Beyond Refuge! Verse 15

Walt 6133 Revered One: Lord for the lordless,
Courage-Giver for the frightened,
Resting Place for the exhausted,
Refuge for those seeking refuge." Verse 16

Walt 6134 Praising the One of Great Virtue,
the Sambuddha, in such-like ways,
I said to the God of Speakers:
"I'm attaining that monk's station." Verse 17

Walt 6135-6136 He of Limitless Eloquence,
the Blessed One, said at that time:
“This one who worshipped the Buddha
with followers for a week, and
uttered praises of my virtue,
feeling well-pleased by his own hands,
is wishing to attain the place
of the monk who’s god of speakers. Verse 18-19

Walt 6137 Very far into the future,
he’ll receive that delightful place,
enjoying, with nothing lacking,
happiness among gods and men. Verse 20

Walt 6138 In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka’s clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. Verse 21

Walt 6139 Worthy heir to that one’s Dhamma,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
the one whose name is Vaṅgīsa
will be the Teacher’s follower.” Verse 22

Walt 6140 After hearing that I was thrilled,
and then for as long as I lived ,
loving-hearted, I provided
the Thus-Gone-One with requisites. Verse 23

Walt 6141 Due to that karma done very well,
with intention and firm resolve,
discarding my human body,
I went to Tāvatiṁsa then. Verse 24

Walt 6142 And now, in my final rebirth,
I’m born in a mendicant clan.
Birth was behind me when I was
only seven years past my birth. Verse 25

Walt 6143 I’m born knowing all the Vedas,
confident among speech-teachers,
lovely-sounding, varied speaker,
trampling out other speeches. Verse 26

Walt 6144 Born in Vaṅga, I’m “Vaṅga Lord,”
or I’m known as “the lord of words;”
“Vaṅgīsa” thus became my name,
which is honored throughout the world. Verse 27

Walt 6145 When I had attained discretion,
still in the first stage of my youth,
then in lovely Rajgir city
I saw the monk Sāriputta, Verse 28

Walt 6146 The Twenty-Fifth Recitation Portion
wandering about for alms food,
bowl in hand, very self-composed,
eyes undistracted, of few words,
not looking beyond a plough’s length. Verse 29

Walt 6147 Having seen him, being awestruck,
I spoke as was fitting for me,
in eloquent verses and feet,
free of spots of mere fleeting thoughts. Verse 30

Walt 6148 Then he, the wise one, the hero,
spoke back thus to me in response:
“The one described my Teacher,

the Sambuddha, the World's Leader." Verse 31a-b

Walt 6149 He then made an impassioned speech,
hard to encounter, ultimate.
Pleased by that colorful speaking
by the neutral Sāriputta,
bowing with my head at his feet,
I said, "give me ordination." Verse 31c-d,.32

Walt 6150 Then he, the one of great wisdom,
led me to the Best of Buddhas.
Bowing with my head at his feet,
I sat in the Teacher's presence. Verse 33a-b

Walt 6151 The Best Debater said to me,
"Vaṅgīsa, do you know any
art at all?" I spoke about it
and then I said to him "I know". Verse 33c-d

Walt 6152 "Through your distinction in knowledge,
if you can, then now speak about
a dead skull thrown out in the woods,
even after twelve years have passed." Verse 34

Walt 6153 When I agreed saying, "Yes, Sir,"
he showed three such dead skulls to me.
I said that they were now reborn
in hell, as a man, with the gods. Verse 35

Walt 6154 At that time the Leader showed me
the skull of a Lonely Buddha.
After that, without a basis,
I requested ordination. Verse 36

Walt 6155 After going forth, I praised the

Well-Gone-One in this and that place.
Therefore the monks became annoyed
at me, “he has a poet’s mind.” Verse 37

Walt 6156 Therefore in order to test me,
the Guide, the Buddha said to me:
“Are these verses thoughtful figures,
or are they spoken groundlessly?” Verse 38

Walt 6157 “Hero, I’m not poet-minded;
they are spoken by me with grounds.”
“In that case, then, O Vaṅgīsa,
you sing your praises of me now.” Verse 39

Walt 6158 At that time I praised the Hero,
the Seventh Sage, with my verses.
Then at once, becoming happy,
the Victor placed me as foremost. Verse 40

Walt 6159 Through my speaking and through my mind
I then despised some others who
were well-behaved. Stirred up by that,
I attained my arahantship. Verse 41

Walt 6160 “No other one at all is found who’s
foremost among the eloquent
as is this monk named Vaṅgīsa;
so should you consider him, monks.” Verse 42

Walt 6161 Karma done a hundred thousand
aeons hence showed me its fruit here:
well-liberated, arrow-quick,
I have destroyed my defilements. Verse 43

Walt 6162 My defilements are now burnt up;

all new existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. Verse 44

Walt 6163 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 45

Walt 6164 The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 46

Thus indeed Venerable Vaṅgīsa Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Vaṅgīsa Thera is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

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