Tha Ap 8 — 6. Upāli

English translation by Jonathan S. Walters.

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Text

Therāpadāna

The Legends of the Theras

6. Upāli

Walt 446 In the city, Haṁsavatī

the brahmin known as Sujāta

was very rich, with great vast wealth,

having saved eight hundred million. Verse 1

Walt 447 I was that learned mantra-knower

who had mastered the three Vedas.

I had excelled in Saddhamma,

in reading signs and history. Verse 2

Walt 448 A great many female renouncers,

with single top-knots, ascetics,

who followed Rishi Gautama,

were wandering around back then. Verse 3

Walt 449 They then came and surrounded me,
thinking, “he’s a famous brahmin.”
The common people worshipped me
but I worshipped no one at all. Verse 4

Walt 450 I saw no one worthy of pūjā;
I was fiercely proud at that time.
The word “Buddha” did not exist yet
as the Victor’d still not been born. Verse 5

Walt 451 When many days and nights had passed
the Leader, Padumuttara,
Eyeful One, arose in the world,
dispelling all of its darkness. Verse 6

Walt 452 When his dispendation had been
explained and spread to many folks,
then he, the Buddha, did approach
the city called Haṁsavati. Verse 7

Walt 453 In order to assist others
the Eyeful Buddha preached Dhamma.
At that time his large retinue
extended for an entire league. Verse 8

Walt 454 An ascetic named Sunanda
with the favor of the people.
then pleased with flowers everyone
in that Buddha-retinue there. Verse 9

Walt 455 On a superb flowered platform
he explained the Four Noble Truths.
Dhamma-comprehension was reached
by a trillion beings who heard him. Verse 10

Walt 456 For seven days and nights Buddha
rained forth a shower of Dhamma,
and when the eighth day then did dawn
the Victor spoke of Sunanda: Verse 11

Walt 457 “This one, transmigrating in lives
in the gods’ world or that of men,
being most excellent of all
will transmigrate through his lifetimes. Verse 12

Walt 458 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 459 Worthy heir to that one’s Dhamma,
Dhamma’s legitimate offspring,
he will be that Teacher’s follower
named Mantāṇiputta Puṇṇa.” Verse 14

Walt 460 The Sambuddha spoke in this way
to Sunanda the ascetic,
causing all the people to smile
and displaying his own power. Verse 15

Walt 461 With hands pressed they showed reverence
to ascetic Sunanda then.
Acting in accord with Buddha
he purified his future state. Verse 16

Walt 462 And this thought then occurred to me
on hearing the words of the Sage:
“I also shall act in that way
until I too see Gotama.” Verse 17

Walt 463 Having thought in this fashion I
then considered the deed I'd do:
"what karma then should I perform
in this unrivaled merit-field? Verse 18

Walt 464 This bhikkhu known as Pāṭhika
is ranked first in the Vinaya
and all the recited teachings;
I will aspire to that status." Verse 19

Walt 465 I had immeasurable wealth
analogous to the ocean.
With that wealth I caused to be made
an ashram for the monks and Buddha. Verse 20

Walt 466 That ashram, known as Sobhana
was built to the east of the city.
I spent a hundred thousand coins
then built that monastic ashram. Verse 21

Walt 467 Constructing gabled cells, mansions,
platform stages and also caves,
and making a well-made walkway
I built that monastic ashram. Verse 22

Walt 468 I caused a bath-house to be made
with heated rooms and a fire-room
beneath the water-storage hall
and gave it to the Assembly. Verse 23

Walt 469 I gave everything they would need:
short chairs for sitting and recliners,
vessels for cooking and eating,
and medicines for the ashram. Verse 24

Walt 470 Then providing it protection
I had a solid rampart built
so none would do it any harm,
a place for peaceful meditation. Verse 25

Walt 471 I built that monastic ashram
with lakhs of quarters for the monks
and filling them abundantly
I then approached the Sambuddha. Verse 26

Walt 472 “I’ve completed the ashram now;
please may you therefore accept it.
I’m gifting it to you, Hero,
and the residents, Eyeful One.” Verse 27

Walt 473 Padumuttara, World-Knower,
Sacrificial Recipient,
discerning what I was thinking
then accepted it, the Leader. Verse 28

Walt 474 Learning of the acquiescence
of the Omniscient One, Great Sage,
after the food had been prepared
I announced the time for giving. Verse 29

Walt 475 When the time had thus been announced,
Padumuttara, the Leader,
along with one thousand arahants
then came to my splendid ashram. Verse 30

Walt 476 Discerning the time to sit down
I entertained with food and drink.
Seeing that they’d finished eating
I then spoke these words to him: Verse 31

Walt 477 “This ashram known as Sobhana
cost me one hundred thousand coins
and building it cost so much more;
please may you therefore accept it. Verse 32

Walt 478 Because of giving this ashram
with intention and firm resolve
being reborn in lifetimes I
should receive what I’m wishing for.” Verse 33

Walt 479 The Buddha, having accepted
that well-made monastic ashram,
seated in the monks’ Assembly
then did speak these words about me: Verse 34

Walt 480 “This one who gave to the Buddha
a well-made monastic ashram,
I shall relate details of him;
all of you listen to my words: Verse 35

Walt 481 He said, “The army, with four parts—
tusker, soldier, chariot, horse—
will ceaselessly wait on this one:
fruit of a monastic ashram. Verse 36

Walt 482 Sixty thousand instruments and
well-decorated kettle-drums
will ceaselessly attend this one:
fruit of a monastic ashram. Verse 37

Walt 483 Women numbering sixteen thousand,
decked out in all the ornaments,
with varied clothes and jewelry
and wearing earrings made of gems, Verse 38

Walt 484 with long eyelashes, lovely smiles
and slim waists, pleasant to look at,
will ceaselessly wait on this one:
the fruit of a monastic ashram. Verse 39

Walt 485 He'll delight in the world of gods
for thirty thousand aeons hence.
A thousand times the king of gods,
he will exercise divine rule. Verse 40

Walt 486 Whatever a god-king obtains
he too will receive all of that.
Not lacking anything at all
he will exercise divine rule. Verse 41

Walt 487 A thousand times he's going to be
the wheel-turning king of a country.
His reigns on earth will be many,
innumerable by counting. Verse 42

Walt 488 In one hundred thousand aeons,
arising in Okkāka's clan,
the one whose name is Gotama
will be the Teacher in the world. Verse 43

Walt 489 Worthy heir to that one's Dhamma,
Dhamma's legitimate offspring,
this one will be that Teacher's follower;
his name will be Upāli then. Verse 44

Walt 490 Excelling in the Vinaya,
skilled in right and wrong conclusions,
furthering the Victor's teaching
he will live without defilements. Verse 45

Walt 491 Having recognized all of that,
Gotama, Bull of the Śākyas,
seated in the monks' Assembly
will place him in the foremost place." Verse 46

Walt 492 Doing service beyond measure
longing for your dispensation,
I have now fully reached the goal,
in which all fetters are destroyed. Verse 47

Walt 493 Just as a man tied to a stake,
fearing punishment by the king,
finding no pleasure in that stake,
would wish only to be set free, Verse 48

Walt 494 so too am I, O Great Hero,
afraid of rebirth-punishment.
Being bound to the karma-stake
I'm scared of desirous feelings. Verse 49

Walt 495 I find no pleasure in existence
being burned up by the three fires.
I am seeking liberation
like one punished by the king does. Verse 50

Walt 496 Just as a person who's been poisoned,
who's wracked with pain because of that,
would seek after an antidote,
a way to destroy that poison; Verse 51

Walt 497 and seeking, should he find a cure
that's able to destroy poison,
drinking it he would be happy
to be set free from that poison. Verse 52

Walt 498 Just so am I, O Great Hero,
like him struck down by the poison.
Pained because of my ignorance
I came for the Saddhamma-cure. Verse 53

Walt 499 Searching for that curing Dhamma
I saw the Śākyan dispensation,
the best among all medicines,
by which all arrows are removed. Verse 54

Walt 500 Drinking that Dhamma-medicine
I have destroyed every poison.
I have seen tranquil nirvana,
which does not age and does not die. Verse 55

Walt 501 Just as one frightened by a ghost,
wracked with pain because of that fear
would seek after an exorcist
to free him from that ghost's attacks, Verse 56

Walt 502 and seeking, should he find a man
with skill in exorcising ghosts,
that one would slay the ghost for him,
and wipe it out right to the root. Verse 57

Walt 503 Just so am I, O Great Hero,
pained because I'm sunk in darkness.
I searched for the world of knowledge
that could free me from this darkness. Verse 58

Walt 504 And then I saw the Śākyan Sage,
cure for darkness and defilement.
He drove out my mental darkness
like the exorcist does the ghost. Verse 59

Walt 505 Diverting the stream of being;
he held back the craving-waters;
obliterating all rebirth
like the exorcist, to the root. Verse 60

Walt 506 Just as a harpy who swoops down
on snakes to serve as his own food
will launch attacks from a great lake
a hundred leagues in each direction, Verse 61

Walt 507 and that one, picking up a snake
would hurt it right beneath the head
then carrying it, take off again,
flying about the sky at will, Verse 62

Walt 508 just so am I, O Great Hero,
just as strong as is that harpy.
Searching for the unconditioned
I washed away all of my stains. Verse 63

Walt 509 I have seen the superb Teaching,
the peaceful state, so unsurpassed.
Carrying it, I'm now dwelling
like the harpy with the serpent. Verse 64

Walt 510 There is a vine, āsāvatī,
which grows up in Indra's garden.
A single fruit is borne by it
after a thousand years have passed. Verse 65

Walt 511 The gods are looking after that
as long as the fruit may last there.
Thus indeed the gods do savor
that superb vine, āsāvatī. Verse 66

Walt 512 For one hundred thousand years then
I did attend upon that Sage,
worshipping him morning and night
just like the gods āsāvatī. Verse 67

Walt 513 Service which was never-ending,
and worship which was not empty;
for all the time that I had come
not one moment did he fail me. Verse 68

Walt 514 I witness no re-becoming;
I’ve investigated being;
free of desires and fully free,
calmed, I’m wandering about now. Verse 69

Walt 515 And just as a lotus flower
blooms due to the rays of the sun,
so too do I, O Great Hero,
bloom because of the Buddha-rays. Verse 70

Walt 516 Just as male birds are not always
found mating with the female cranes
but only when the clouds do rumble
do they take them to their wombs, Verse 71

Walt 517 and for much time they stay pregnant—
as long as the clouds don’t thunder—
then they are freed from that burden
when the clouds are raining again, Verse 72

Walt 518 so when the Dhamma-cloud thundered
of Padumuttara Buddha,
due to that Dhamma-cloud’s loud sound
I then conceived a Dhamma-womb. Verse 73

Walt 519 Serving for a hundred thousand
aeons I bore that merit-fetus.
I was not freed from that burden;
the Dhamma-cloud did not thunder. Verse 74

Walt 520 But when you, Sage of the Śākyas
did thunder from your Dhamma-cloud
in lovely Kapilavastu,
I was set free from that burden. Verse 75

Walt 521 Then I explained the whole Teaching
and also its four fruits, which are:
emptiness, the absence of marks,
suchness, intentionality. Verse 76

The Second Recitation Portion.

Walt 522 Giving service beyond measure,
longing for your dispensation,
I have now fully reached the goal,
the state of peace without rival. Verse 77

Walt 523 I have excelled in Vinaya
just as had the sage Pāṭhika.
There is no one to rival me;
I further your dispensation. Verse 78

Walt 524 I'm without any doubts about
the letter as well as the spirit
of both Vibhangas, Khandakas,
and the Parivāra, the fifth. Verse 79

Walt 525 Skilled in rebuking, redressing,
in correct and flawed conclusions,

restoration and expungement—
I have excelled in all regards. Verse 80

Walt 526 Citing the relevant sentence
in the Vibhangas and Khandhakas,
and disentangling both of them
I make suitable restorations. Verse 81

Walt 527 Well-skilled in the Pāli language,
wise in what's meaningful and not,
there's nothing that's not known by me,
foremost in the Teacher's teaching. Verse 82

Walt 528 I am now skilled in all matters
in the Śākyan dispensation.
I resolve all perplexities
and cut off every single doubt. Verse 83

Walt 529 I am skilled in all the subjects:
prior clauses, subsequent ones,
in the letter and the spirit,
opening frames, concluding ones. Verse 84

Walt 530 Just as a king with great power
who having rebuked enemies
and triumphing in his battles
might build a city in that place, Verse 85

Walt 531 and he'd construct in that city
many ramparts, and trenches too,
gateways with strongholds and pillars,
and high watch-towers of various sorts, Verse 86

Walt 532 and well-planned bazaars at crossroads
and places where four roads do meet,

and there he'd build a court of law
to settle meanings and lacks thereof. Verse 87

Walt 533 To censure all unfriendly kings,
to make known faults and faultlessness
and for protection he'd appoint
a general of the army there. Verse 88

Walt 534 In order to protect his goods
he would appoint a treasurer,
one with skill in guarding treasure,
commanding, "do not waste my goods." Verse 89

Walt 535 So that procedures are followed
he'd give the administration
to a friend, the king's devotee,
desiring his prosperity. Verse 90

Walt 536 He'd appoint as his adviser
one with much skill in reading signs
as well as omens which arise,
a learned master of mantras. Verse 91

Walt 537 Thereby endowed with all these limbs
he would be called "a Kṣatriyan".
Always they would protect the king
like a goose protects the injured. Verse 92

Walt 538 Thus indeed are you, Great Hero,
a Kṣatriyan with slain enemies.
You are called the King of Teaching
in this world including the gods. Verse 93

Walt 539 Having destroyed the heretics
and Māra with his army too,

driving out that cause of darkness
you built a city of Dhamma. Verse 94

Walt 540 Morality's the ramparts there;
your knowledge, the gates and strongholds;
faith in you, the pillar, Wise One;
restraint, the sentry at the door. Verse 95

Walt 541 Mindfulness is the high watch-tower;
you wisdom is the crossroads, Sage;
the superpowers, where four roads meet;
the Dhamma-road's well-constructed. Verse 96

Walt 542 Your court of law consists of the
nine-fold teaching of the Buddha,
the Suttas and Abhidhamma
and the whole of the Vinaya. Verse 97

Walt 543 Emptiness, the absence of marks,
dwelling wanting very little,
desirelessness and cessation:
all of these form your Dhamma-hut. Verse 98

Walt 544 At the top of those with wisdom
and skilled in understanding too,
the one known as Sāriputta's
general of your Dhamma-army. Verse 99

Walt 545 Wise in the four sudden events,
excelling in the super powers,
the one who's known as Kolita
is your top adviser, O Sage. Verse 100

Walt 546 Bearer of the ancient lineage,
hard to approach, of mighty power,

foremost in ascetic virtue,

Kassapa’s Prime Minister, Sage. Verse 101

Walt 547 The learned bearer of Dhamma,

reciter of all the teachings,

the one who’s known as Ānanda

serves as your Dhamma-guard, O Sage. Verse 102

Walt 548 Passing over all of those monks

the Blessed One did reckon me

best explainer of Vinaya

and gave my judgments authority. Verse 103

Walt 549 Whatever Buddha-follower

raises some Vinaya question,

there without my even thinking

I relate the answer to that. Verse 104

Walt 550 Throughout the entire Buddha-field

except of course for you, Great Sage,

in Vinaya there’s no rival;

where would someone better come from? Verse 105

Walt 551 Seated in the monks’ Assembly

Gotama thus thundered forth then:

“There’s no rival for Upāli

in Vibhangas and Khandhakas.” Verse 106

Walt 552 Teacher’s nine-fold dispensation

as far as the Buddha’s preached it

is all found in the Vinaya

for one who knows it to the root. Verse 107

Walt 553 Remembering my past karma

Gotama, Bull of the Śākyas,

seated in the monks' Assembly
did place me in the foremost place. Verse 108

Walt 554 Having served one hundred thousand
aeons while longing for this place,
I have now fully reached the goal,
excelling in the Vinaya. Verse 109

Walt 555 I was formerly a barber
bringing the Śākyas happiness.
The son of the Great Sage was born
after I'd abandoned that clan. Verse 110

Walt 556 In the second aeon ago
there lived Kṣatriyan Añjasa
of boundless might and measureless fame,
king of the earth, and very rich. Verse 111

Walt 557 I was then the son of that king,
the Kṣatriyan named Candana.
I was puffed up with pride of clan
and pride about my fame and wealth. Verse 112

Walt 558 One hundred thousand elephants
decked out in all the ornaments,
in rut in three ways, mātaṅgas,
waited on me all of the time. Verse 113

Walt 559 Wishing to go to the garden
surrounded by my army, I
mounted the elephant Sirika
then headed out from the city. Verse 114

Walt 560 The Lonely Buddha Devala
abundant in perfect conduct,

self-controlled with doors well-guarded
approached my city at that time. Verse 115

Walt 561 Driving Sirika the tusker
I insulted that Buddha then.
Due to that, with ire arisen,
he would never lift his foot. Verse 116

Walt 562 Having seen my tusker's bad mood
I got angry at the Buddha.
Having harassed the Sambuddha
I then went into the garden. Verse 117

Walt 563 I felt no pleasure in that moment
as though my head were set ablaze.
I was burning up with anguish
just like a fish caught on the hook. Verse 118

Walt 564 I felt the whole earth was burning
all the way to the ocean's edge.
Going to my father's presence
I spoke these words to him just then: Verse 119

Walt 565 "My insult to that Self-Become One
is like a very angry snake,
it's like a mass of fire that's come,
it's like a drunk tusked elephant. Verse 120

Walt 566 It's awful that I've insulted
that Buddha, Victor, Fiercely Strong.
We'll bring our cities all to ruin;
let's seek the pardon of that sage." Verse 121

Walt 567 "If we don't make him understand,
that Self-Tamed One, Self-Controlled One,

then on the seventh day from now
my country will all be destroyed. Verse 122

Walt 568 Sumekhala the Kosiyan
and Siggava, so Sattuka,
after they'd insulted sages
came to grief, as did their armies. Verse 123

Walt 569 Whenever sages get enraged,
well-trained ones who are celibate,
they cause the world to be destroyed
with its gods, oceans and mountains." Verse 124

Walt 570 I assembled all the people
throughout three hundred thousand leagues.
In order to discuss that crime,
I approached the Self-Become One. Verse 125

Walt 571 Wearing wet clothes, bearing wet heads,
everyone pressed hands together.
Falling down at the Buddha's feet
I spoke these words to him just then: Verse 126

Walt 572 "Please show forgiveness, Great Hero;
the populace is begging you.
Please extinguish this awful fire;
and don't destroy the whole country. Verse 127

Walt 573 All the gods and also the men
and titans and spirits as well,
would constantly break my head open
with a hammer made of iron." Verse 128

Walt 574 "Fire does not survive in water
and seeds don't germinate in rock;

worms don’t survive in medicine;
there’s no anger in a Buddha. Verse 129

Walt 575 Like the earth, which is unshaken
and the ocean, beyond measure,
and the sky, which has no limit,
so the Buddha can’t be perturbed. Verse 130

Walt 576 Great Heroes who are ascetics
are patient and forgiving folks.
Such patient, forgiving people
do not consider your wrong course.” Verse 131

Walt 577 The Sambuddha, having said this,
then extinguished that awful fire.
Then in front of everyone there
he flew right up into the sky. Verse 132

Walt 578 Wise One, due to that bad action
I attained inferior birth;
now passing beyond that station,
I’ve come to the fearless city. Verse 133

Walt 579 Then, Great Hero, having seen me,
well-settled but being burnt up,
that Self-Become Lonely Buddha
drove off the fire and forgave me. Verse 134

Walt 580 Even so today, Great Hero,
you have extinguished the three fires,
relieving me who was being
burnt up by those self-same three fires. Verse 135

Walt 581 Let those of you with ears to hear,
all of you, listen to my words:

I’m declaring the facts for you
of how I came to see this state. Verse 136

Walt 582 Sneering at the Self-Become One,
peaceful-hearted and attentive,
today, due to that bad karma,
I am born in this low-caste womb. Verse 137

Walt 583 Don’t transgress even one moment;
you will grieve for the moment missed.
The moment is prepared for you:
endeavor now for your own good. Verse 138

Walt 584 The poison called haḷāhaḷa
in some is cured by vomiting.
For some the antidote is purging,
for others medicinal herbs. Verse 139

Walt 585 With reference to merit-field-seekers,
for those on the path the cure is vomit;
for those after path-fruits it’s a purge;
for the fruit-attainers, medicinal herbs. Verse 140

Walt 586 Those who would oppose the teaching
are poisoned as with haḷāhaḷa:
a snake’s venom, poison eaten,
surely is going to harm that man. Verse 141

Walt 587 Only once does haḷāhaḷa
bring about the end of one’s life.
After opposing the teaching
he burns for ten million aeons. Verse 142

Walt 588 Patiently and non-violently,
with loving-kindness in his heart,

Buddha helps this world with its gods.
Therefore you shouldn’t oppose him. Verse 143

Walt 589 Unattached to getting or not,
whether honored or insulted,
Buddhas are steady like the earth;
therefore they shouldn’t be opposed. Verse 144

Walt 590 The Sage is just the same toward all,
Devadatta the murderer,
the thief Angulimālaka,
Dhanapāla and Rāhula. Verse 145

Walt 591 They don’t experience anger;
passion is never found in them.
The Buddha’s just the same toward all,
a murderer or his own son. Verse 146

Walt 592 Seeing a robe atop a tree—
discarded, smeared with excrement—
one should press the hands, head bowed;
that sages’ flag should be worshipped. Verse 147

Walt 593 All of the Buddhas of the past
and the present and future too,
purify themselves with that flag;
therefore they ought to be worshipped. Verse 148

Walt 594 With my heart I bear Vinaya,
almost the same as the Teacher.
I will always live my life by
paying homage to Vinaya. Verse 149

Walt 595 Vinaya’s my inclination;
it’s my walking meditation.

I make my home in Vinaya;

the Vinaya is my pasture. Verse 150

Walt 596 I have excelled in Vinaya,

skilled in mental tranquility.

Great Hero, Teacher, Upāli

is now venerating your feet. Verse 151

Walt 597 I'll wander village to village

and also city to city

paying homage to Sambuddha

and to the practice of Dhamma. Verse 152

Walt 598 My defilements are now burnt up;

all new existence is destroyed.

Like elephants with broken chains,

I am living without constraint. Verse 153

Walt 599 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 154

Walt 600 The four analytical modes,

and these eight deliverances,

six special knowledges mastered,

I have done what the Buddha taught! Verse 155

Thus indeed Venerable Upāli Thera spoke these verses.

The legend of Upāli Thera is finished.

Translated by Jonathan S. Walters.

Whitman College, 2017

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