

Metteyyo bodhissato evaṃ āha yaṃ kiñci kusalaṃ katvā saṃsārabhayabhītānaṃ avijjāya mahāghoraṃ vuyhantaṃ caturoghehi kilesapaṅkamakkhite saṃsāradisammūlhe sañjive kālasutte ca aññābandhanābaddhe chetvāna bhandanaṃ satte micchadiṭṭhikavātehi aṭṭhaṅgaggatalehi rāgadosatamonaddhaṃ paññāsālakaṃ datvāna sokāturānaṃ dukkhīnaṃ ñānosadhavaṃ datvā mohandhakārasammūlhe ñāṇalokaṃ karitvāna lokaṃ apāyabandhantaṃ (baddhaṃ taṃ) attānaṃ tamparayaṇaṃ apāyā uddharitvāna	mama pathenti mānūsā bhavāmi bhayamocako mohajālasamajalaṃ lokassa' antaṃkaro ahaṃ tanhātakkarasevite dhammaṃ sudesayissa' ahaṃ tāpane pune tāpane tanhāsāsavaṣaṃgate sappāpessāmi nibbutiṃ dvāsattihi hanaraṃ gataṃ vivarissāmi paṇīnaṃ pāvetvā nantajantūnaṃ nayaṇaṃ sodhayissa' ahaṃ jarāmaraṇapīlitaṃ tikichissāmi paṇīnaṃ sadevāsuraṃ mānuse vidhamissāmi taṃ tamaṃ dassayissāmi parāyaṇaṃ
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## THE STORY OF THE ELDER MĀLEYVADEVA

Translated by Steven Collins

Honour to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Fully Enlightened One ! Bowing to the excellent Buddha, (who is) to be revered by gods and men, to the Teaching which originates from the Happy One,<sup>1</sup> and to the virtuous Monastic Order, I will undertake (to tell) in brief the story of Māleyva, replete with supreme(ly good) advice<sup>2</sup> and edifying for all.

In the past, the story goes, in the island of Tambapaṇṇi, (also) called the isle of Lankā, where the (Three) Jewels were established, a certain elder by the name of Māleyvadeva, famous for the excellence of his supernatural power and knowledge, lived in Rohana province supported by (alms given in) the village of Kamboja. The elder repeatedly brought back news of the beings roasting in hell: recounting (this news) to their relatives he inspired them to make merit by alms-giving and the like, and he made them aim for heaven as the result of the merit they acquired and by transferring merit to those (hell-beings). By the force of his supernatural power he travelled to both heaven(s) and hell(s): after seeing the great majesty of laymen and women in heaven who had faith in the Three Jewels, he went to people (on earth) and recounted how such-and-such a layman or woman had been reborn in such-and-such a heaven and experienced great happiness; after seeing the great suffering of miscreants in hell, he went to people (on earth) and recounted how such-and-such a man or woman had been reborn in such-and-such a hell and experienced great suffering. People gained faith in the

<sup>1</sup> On *sugata* as an epithet of the Buddha see Norman (90: 154), who renders it 'one who is in a (particularly) good way'.

<sup>2</sup> For *naya* as 'advice' see Ñāṇamoli (62: xli-xliii), who translates more literally as 'guide-line'.

teaching and did no evil; they dedicated merit (acquired through) almsgiving and the like to their dead relatives, and aimed for heaven as the result of the merit they acquired and by transferring merit to those (dead relatives).

One day the elder got up in the morning, took his robe and bowl and went to the village to collect alms. In the village (lived) a poor man (who) looked after his mother. At the (same) time he went out from the village to bathe; he came to a pond, took his bath, and saw eight blue lotus flowers. He picked them, got out of the pond, and started on his way (back). Then he saw the elder coming (towards him) bowl in hand, (looking) calm, restrained, well-controlled, his senses mastered, with perfect bearing. Joy and delight arose in him, and he went up to the elder and greeted him respectfully with his hands in the form of a hollow lotus-bud (made) by putting his ten finger-nails together. With great faith he gave the flowers to the elder, and made an aspiration in this verse:

By this gift of flowers, wherever I am (reborn) in a hundred thousand births, may I not be poor !

The elder took the eight blue lotus flowers, and gave thanks in this verse:

Whatever (a person) gives with a faithful mind, whether coarse or choice,<sup>1</sup> has a successful result according to (the donor's) wish.

<sup>1</sup> This rendering of *lūkhaṃ pañītaṃ vā* is taken from Masefield's (89: 91) translation of the phrase at Vv-a 64.

After giving thanks (thus) the elder (first) reflected<sup>1</sup>: 'Where shall I place these eight blue lotus flowers on a shrine — on top of a mountain, at (the place of the Buddha's) final nirvāṇa, at (the foot of) the Great Bodhi-tree or at the place where the Blessed One set in motion the Wheel of the Supreme Law<sup>2</sup>?' Then he thought: 'I have worshipped (at) these places seven times (each); what if I were to worship at the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine in heaven?'

Immediately after thinking this, the elder attained the fourth meditation level, which is the basis for supernatural knowledge; emerging from it he flew along the path of the wind and in the time it takes to snap one's fingers reached the terrace around the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine in the city of the Thirty-three gods, made beautiful by the (surrounding) land's being adorned with seven precious things<sup>3</sup>; Sakka,

<sup>1</sup> Reading *evaṃ samacintesi* with M3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Shrine' translates *cetiya*; the translation omits the first *vā*, and takes *udāhu* as an interrogative introducing the list of alternative sites in the locative. (Sih III p. 5 has *kuhiṃ āropessāmi mahācetiye udāhu cetiyagripabbate udāhu mahābodhimhīti punassa etad ahoṣi*.) Denis translated here 'Ou déposerai-je ces huit fleurs de lotus ? aux pieds du *cetiya*, situé sur la Montagne, ou à celui situé à l'endroit du Parinirvāṇa, ou à celui situé près du grand arbre de la Bodhi, ou à celui situé à l'endroit de la mise en route de la roue de la Loi incomparable?' In a note he refers to the fact that four 'shrines' commonly grouped together in this way are the sites of the Buddha's birth at Lumbinī, his Enlightenment, First Sermon and final Nirvāṇa. He remarks that the order is different here, and that the site of his birth is 'curiously replaced by the *cetiya* "placed on the mountain"', speculating that this might refer to the Cūlāmaṇi *cetiya* on Mt. Meru, in the heaven of the Thirty-three. He notes that manuscript M4 omits both this and the Parinirvāṇa *cetiya*, while M3 omits the latter; and states that 'the Siamese translation of the *Tikā Māleyyadevathera*' (*sic*) mentions only three *cetiya*-s: those at the top of a mountain, at the place of the Parinirvāṇa and of the First Sermon, while 'the Siamese text of the Pra Malay' mentions only the *cetiya* at the Bodhi-tree.

<sup>3</sup> The long compound is difficult to analyse satisfactorily. The seven 'precious things' (literally 'jewels') are: gold, silver, pearl, gems, beryl, diamonds, and coral.

king of the gods, had reverently caused (this) delightful sapphire (shrine) to be set up, so that all the gods could worship (there). The Blessed One himself had cut off his top-knot (of hair) with a sword grasped in his cotton-soft, webbed hand, and had thrown it into the air with the aspiration 'if I am to attain enlightenment and become a Buddha may my top-knot not fall to the ground'; it did not fall to the ground, and (Sakka) caught it in a splendid gold casket which he carried on his own head (and then made the shrine for it). (The elder) worshipped (at the shrine) with the eight lotus flowers, walked around it keeping it to his right, paying reverence to the eight directions and with a five-fold prostration,<sup>1</sup> and sat down on the eastern side. Thus it is said:

He attained the fourth meditation level, the basis for supernatural knowledge, and emerging from it rose up instantly<sup>2</sup> into the sky like a golden swan; in the time it takes to snap one's fingers he arrived at the shrine in front of (the) Vejayanta palace, (where he) worshipped and paid reverence.<sup>3</sup>

At that moment Sakka, king of the gods, came with his retinue and worshipped the right tooth of the Blessed One and the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine with various kinds of garlands, perfumes, ointments and the like;

<sup>1</sup> This has been taken to refer to (i) 'touching the ground with forehead, waist, elbows, knees and feet' (PED citing Childers, s.v. *pañca-patiṭṭhita*), (ii) a 'kneeling añjali salute in which the forehead, edges of the hands and the knees touch the ground' (Masefield 89: 32 note 22), or (iii) touching the ground with forehead, elbows and knees (Bareau 62: 251).

<sup>2</sup> Reading *uggamma* with M2.

<sup>3</sup> M3 and M4 omit this paragraph and read more simply: 'The elder rose up into the sky on that very day and in the time it takes to snap one's fingers stood in front of the Vejayanta palace [reading *thero tadahe va vehāsaṃ abbhuggantvā acchārasaṃghātamattam pi ...*; for *tadahe va* see CPD s.v. *aha*]. He saw the shrine and feeling joy paid reverence to it; he worshipped with the eight blue lotus flowers, walked around (it) keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions and stood at one side'.

seeing the elder sitting down he went up to him, paid reverence and sat down to one side. All the groups of gods paid reverence to the shrine, walking around it keeping it to the right, (and then) paid reverence to the elder and sat down all around (him); so too did all the divine maidens, who paid reverence to the elder with a five-fold prostration. Sakka, king of the gods, asked the elder: 'Sir, where have you come from?' 'Great king, I have come from the Rose-Apple island<sup>1</sup> to pay reverence to the shrine.' Then the elder asked Sakka: 'Did you have the Cūlāmaṇi-shrine set up?' 'Yes, venerable sir, I had it set up to be worshipped by the gods.' The elder asked: 'King of the gods, these gods did good deeds in the human world and were reborn here to enjoy divine happiness; why do they make merit now?' 'Venerable sir, these gods make merit in the desire to go beyond the world of the gods.'<sup>2</sup> Sir, gods who are of little merit do not remain long in heaven, just as a few grains put in a wooden trough are quickly used up; whereas gods who are of much merit remain long in heaven, just as a lot of grain put in a granary remains (there) for a long time and is not used up. Similarly, sir, just as people with little wealth (but) with a lot of skill and knowledge, if they engage in farming, trade and the like make a living without difficulty, gods of little merit who enjoy (its) result (but) then make further merit experience heavenly happiness afterwards. Venerable sir, wealthy people with no skill or knowledge who do not engage in farming, trade or the like, (soon) use up their wealth and afterwards become quite poor: in just the same way gods of much merit who experience (its) result without making further merit afterwards are born in a poor state. Just as poor people with no

<sup>1</sup> *Jambudīpa*, the continent south of the cosmic centre Mt. Meru, corresponding (at least) to what are now India and Sri Lanka.

<sup>2</sup> I have previously rendered *devaloka* simply as 'heaven'. In this context there is, perhaps, some ambiguity as to whether *upari* means 'above', in the sense that the gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three wish to be reborn higher in the cosmic scale, in one of the Brahma-worlds, or whether it means 'beyond' in the non-spatial sense of transcending heavenly rebirth in *nirvāṇa* (perhaps by means of rebirth on earth at the time of Metteyya). See text below.

skill and knowledge who do not engage in farming, trade or the like become (even) poorer, so too gods of little merit who experience (its) fruit without making further merit become (even) poorer; (conversely) just as rich people with a lot of skill and knowledge who engage in farming, trade or the like prosper even more, so too gods of much merit who give alms, practise morality, and so on, go upstream (in the stream of life) and prosper, (even) as far as *nirvāna*.'

When the elder heard this he was pleased, and asked Sujā's husband (i.e. Sakka): 'Great king, all the gods have come to pay reverence at the shrine of the Blessed One; is the future Buddha Metteyya coming?' 'Yes, venerable sir.' 'When will he come?' 'Sir, he has come (in the past) on the eighth, fourteenth or fifteenth days (of the lunar month).' 'So — today being the eighth — is he coming (today)?' 'Yes, sir.' While the elder was thus conversing with Sakka, a junior god came with a hundred-fold retinue to worship at the shrine. The elder saw the junior god arrive and asked Sakka: 'King of the gods, is this Metteyya?' 'No, sir.' 'Who is it?' 'Someone else, sir.' 'King of the gods, what merit did this junior god make previously in the human world?' Sakka related his meritorious deed in this verse:

Sir, when born in the human (world) he was a poor grass-cutter who (once) when eating a leaf used for wrapping food<sup>1</sup> gave one piece as an offering to a crow; after doing even so small a meritorious deed he moved on (through life) in the human

<sup>1</sup> If *bhattapūṭaṅ* is correct, it is the direct object of *bhuñjivā*; the word usually refers to a leaf used for wrapping cooked rice, and I assume the point is that the man is so poor this is all he has to eat. The word *ekapiṇḍika* then refers not to one ball of rice but to one piece of the leaf given as 'alms-food' to the crow. Denis renders more simply 'comme il mangeait un sachet de riz bouilli, il en donna une portion à un corbeau'.

(realm) which ends in death, and was then reborn (here) because of it.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore it is said:

Whoever gives a gift to an animal such as a crow, as a result of even that gift the giver receives a hundred(-fold).

The junior god came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down on the eastern side.

Immediately afterwards another junior god came to worship at the shrine of the Blessed One with a thousand-fold retinue, illuminating all the regions with the splendour of his body. The elder saw him and asked Sakka 'King of the gods, is this Metteyya?' 'No, sir.' 'Who is it?' 'Someone else.' 'King of the gods, what merit did this junior god make previously in the human world?' Sakka related his meritorious deed in this verse:

Sir, when born in the human (world) he was a young brahmin by the name of Gopāla; (once) when eating he gave a portion to a cowherd, and through that gift he has been born (here) with a retinue of a thousand. He has come with (his) thousand(-fold retinue) to worship at the shrine.

Therefore it is said:

<sup>1</sup> I derive *sarivā* from *sar*, to move, flow (as in *samsāra*); Denis seems to have taken it as being from *sar*, to remember, since he translates the last line 's'en étant souvenu au moment de la mort, il a transmigré et est re-né ici', although it is unclear whether his last two verbs gloss *upapajjati* (mss. *uppapajjati*) or he was taking *sarivā* in both the senses mentioned here.

Whoever gives a gift to those who are without virtue and of little merit, as a result of even that gift receives a thousand(-fold).

He arrived, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down on the western side.

Another junior god came, with a retinue of ten thousand, illuminating the whole shrine area with the splendour of his body. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same replies]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

Sir, (once) in a former life he gave alms to a virtuous novice, and through the maturation of that (deed of) merit he has died and come to heaven.

Therefore it is said:

Whoever gives a gift to an ordinary person<sup>1</sup> who is virtuous, as a result of even that gift the giver receives ten thousand(-fold).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down on the southern side.

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<sup>1</sup> Reading *puthujjane* with M2 and M4; i.e. someone who has not advanced to any of the stages of the Buddhist spiritual path.

Another junior god came, with a retinue of twenty thousand, illuminating the whole area of space<sup>1</sup> with the splendour of his body and his ornamentation. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka explained his meritorious deed in this verse:

This one gave alms to a monk on his alms-round at (one) time (in the past); because of that (deed of) merit he has died and come to heaven.

Therefore it is said:

Whoever gives a gift to a virtuous monk, as a result of that same (gift) the giver receives twenty thousand(-fold).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down on the northern side.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of thirty thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

He was formerly a weaver in Anurādhapura, who lived a life of purity (and was) well-known as (a person) of great merit; at various places he cremated the bodies of the dead, and transferred to (each dead person) the merit acquired through

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<sup>1</sup> *Ākāsa-maṇḍala*, lit. 'circle of space'; for the term in meditative visualisation see *Vism* 175 (PTS ed., = HOS V 26).

giving<sup>1</sup> to the virtuous gifts (such as) medicine, almsfood, robes and lodgings. Because of this meritorious action he was reborn in the city of the Thirty-three (gods).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of forty thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

He was a very wealthy man<sup>2</sup> (called) Haritāla, generous and virtuous, who lived a life of faith<sup>3</sup> in the village of Haritāla; he gave medicine, robes, food and drink to the virtuous, and by the maturation of these deeds was reborn in the city of the Thirty-three (gods).

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<sup>1</sup> Literally 'having cremated the bodies of dead people here and there and dedicating (to them) the (merit acquired through) gift(s), he gave ...'. The verb *uddissati*, 'to point out' or 'refer to', also has the specialised meanings of designating the recipient of a gift or of the transferred merit acquired from a gift (see CPD s.v.); *dakkhiṇā* simply means 'gift', but is common, in the *Peta-vatthu* for example, as a term for what PED calls (s.v. *dakkhiṇā*) 'a donation given to a "holy" person with ref. to unhappy beings in the Peta existence, intended to induce the alleviation of their sufferings; an intercessional, expiatory offering'. I assume therefore that the weaver is being said to have transferred merit to the dead he cremated by giving gifts to 'the virtuous'. As Denis points out in a note, the force of *tahim tahim* is probably that these were either abandoned corpses or those of people who had no relatives to bury them.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahāsetthi*, a 'great' banker or merchant.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *saddhājivena* with M2 and M4.

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with fifty<sup>1</sup> thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

He was (re)born as king Saddhātissa in the island of Tāmbapaṇṇi, the brother of Abhayadūtṭha<sup>2</sup>; serene in mind and respectful to the Buddha, the Teaching and the Monastic Order, permanently restrained in the five (rules of) virtue and observing the eight Precepts on Uposatha day(s),<sup>3</sup> giving to the virtuous, devoted to liberality, not stingy<sup>4</sup>; by the maturation of these deeds he was reborn in the home of the Thirty-three.

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of sixty thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

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<sup>1</sup> Reading *paññāsa-sahasseehi* with M3 and M4.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Dūtṭhagāmaṇi, destined to be at the right side of Metteyya as his first chief disciple; Saddhātissa was destined to be at Metteyya's left, as his second chief disciple; see DPPN s.v.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *pañcasile* [for *-sile*] *saññamo niccam*, with *saññamo* (= *samyamo*) as an adjective: cp. text p. 40 line 2 and p. 50 line 4, translation p. 81 and note 3, p. 88 and note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Reading *dadānam ... amaccharo*, and taking *dadānam* as a present participle.

Abhayaduṭṭha by name, a provider of the four requisites (to monks), he paid due homage to the Buddha, the Teaching and the Monastic Order; he had a relic-shrine built for the Tathāgata and (a sprig of) the Bodhi-tree planted, gave gifts to monks for the sake of (transferring merit to) his mother and father,<sup>1</sup> giving lavishly to the virtuous and beggars. He died a reverent death<sup>2</sup> and was reborn in the home of the Thirty-three (gods).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of seventy<sup>3</sup> thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

In a former life he was a novice (monk), diligent and wise, who paid due homage to the Buddha, the Teaching and the Monastic Order; untiringly night and day he constantly provided the Order with hot and cold water, brooms and lamps. By the maturation of these deeds he was reborn in the city of the Thirty-three (gods).

<sup>1</sup> See note 1 on p. 74 on *dakkhiṇā*.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi's death and entrance into the Tusita heaven, which he delayed in order to listen to monks reciting, is told in the Mahāvamsa Chap. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *sattati*-.

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of eighty thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

Born into a family of poor (people), he lived on what was given (to him) by others. (Whenever) he saw a monk on his alms-round he would stand (in front of) other people's houses and alert (any) house-owner who was unaware (that a monk was there) with elegant words (such as): 'master, a venerable virtuous (monk) is standing at the doors of (your) house, give generously whatever alms-food you have to this excellent (person)'. On hearing this the house-owner would say to him kindly 'Well spoken, my friend, I will give almsfood; take almsfood and present it to the elder'. By speaking in this way he was reborn in the city of the Thirty-three (gods).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of ninety thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers].<sup>1</sup> Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

<sup>1</sup> Denis' text, based on M1, omits Sakka's reply *n' eso bhante ti* here, but this is a scribal error: it is found in M2, M3 and M4.

In Tambapaṇṇi Island, in Kaṇṇikārika village, he saw a stūpa of the Tathāgata<sup>1</sup> and worshipped it with a Kaṇṇikāra (flower), and with his eyes as a lamp, his head as (a bunch of) flowers, his voice as incense and his mind as perfume<sup>2</sup>; by the maturation of this deed he was reborn in the city of the Thirty-three (gods).

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

Then another junior god came to worship, with a retinue of a hundred thousand. The elder saw him [and asked the same questions as before, with the same answers]. Sakka recounted his meritorious deed in this verse:

Formerly he was a poor grass-cutter in Anurādhapura who refrained from killing, was good and established in the (Three) Refuge(s); he followed a proper livelihood by cutting grass and fire-wood. On one occasion when he had gone alone to the river he saw (some) silver sand; he carried it away, built a shrine and said happily: 'Oh, my shrine is beautiful ! It sparkles like a beryl, (it) shines and blazes like a fire; (it is so) beautiful it stirs the heart, (it is) lovely, glorious: I worship the excellent shrine I made with sand, I honour it with body, speech and mind, (as well as ) with flowers'. He fed virtuous (monks) and gave (them) what he had. By the maturation of this deed he was reborn in the home of the Thirty-three (gods).

<sup>1</sup> Reading *tathāgatathūpaṃ* with M2 and M4.

<sup>2</sup> Assuming *sugandhinā*.

He came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., and sat down there and then.

End of the first (section of the) story of Māleyya, dealing with the twelve junior gods.

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Then the noble Metteyya, the future Buddha, came down from the Tusita realm to worship at the shrine. He was attended by millions upon millions<sup>1</sup> of junior gods and goddesses, who shone with a light brighter than that of the moon with its thousand rays; he (himself) shone like a full moon in a cloudless autumn sky, surrounded by clusters of stars. They were (all) holding lamps, incense, perfumes and garlands.<sup>2</sup> His celestial radiance filled the whole city of the Thirty-three (gods) with light, gave off a celestial smell, and with his characteristic incomparable grace and charm he came to the shrine-terrace, walked around it keeping it to his right, paid reverence to and worshipped the eight directions, and sat down on the western side. Therefore it is said:

Then the noble Metteyya (came), attended by tens of millions, with a hundred divine young maidens in front, a hundred behind, a hundred to his right and to his left. Metteyya in their midst was like the moon in the midst of stars; everywhere was illuminated by the rays of the divine maidens and of their jewels, like the light from ten million moons.

<sup>1</sup> *Koṭisatasahassa*, 'one hundred thousand crores'; a crore is usually taken to be ten million.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *-ādāni* with M2, M3 and M4. I have not followed the exact order of the Pali here, for the sake of smooth English.



The elder saw the future Buddha from afar, and asked Sakka ‘King of the gods, is this Metteyya the future Buddha?’ ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘King of the gods, these divine young girls coming in front of Metteyya, with their (shining) white rays, clothes and jewels — what merit did they make in former lives in the human world?’ Sakka recounted their deeds of merit:

Venerable sir, all these celestial maidens, when formerly born in the human (world), made merit by giving gifts and the like on Uposatha day; they gave white clothes, white garlands, white perfumes and ointments, and white food to the excellent Buddha’s monks. Because of these deeds of merit they are coming in front of Metteyya.

On hearing this the elder praised their deeds of merit and again questioned Sakka: ‘King of the gods, these divine young girls coming on the right of Metteyya, with (golden-)yellow rays, (golden-)yellow clothes and wearing golden jewels — what merit did they make in former lives in the human (world)?’ Sakka recounted their deeds of merit:

Sir, all these celestial maidens, when formerly born in the human (world), made merit by keeping the (moral) precepts and the like on Uposatha day; they gave yellow clothes, yellow garlands, yellow perfumes and ointments, and yellow food to the excellent Buddha’s monks. Because of these deeds of merit they are coming in front of Metteyya.

On hearing this the elder praised their deeds of merit, and again questioned Sakka [in a similar way, about the divine young girls to Metteyya’s left, with red rays, clothes and jewels]. Sakka recounted their deeds of merit:

Sir, all these divine maidens, when formerly born in the human (world), heard and rightly honoured the Teaching<sup>1</sup> on Uposatha day, and gave red clothes, garlands, perfumes and ointments, and red food to the excellent Buddha’s monks; they honoured the Three Jewels and (so) are coming on Metteyya’s left.

[Again the elder praised their deeds and then questioned Sakka about the divine girls behind Metteyya, with dark-coloured rays,<sup>2</sup> etc.] Sakka recounted their deeds of merit:

Sir, all these divine maidens, when formerly born in the human (world), heard and rightly honoured the Teaching on Uposatha day, and gave dark-coloured clothes, garlands, perfumes and ointments, and dark food to the excellent Buddha’s monks; with restraint, shining,<sup>3</sup> they are coming behind Metteyya.

On hearing this the elder praised their deeds of merit, and again asked Sakka ‘What merit did Metteyya make that he should have attained such happiness?’ Sakka’s capacity to elucidate<sup>4</sup> Metteyya’s merit can be

<sup>1</sup> Either taking *supūjitā* in an active sense, as Denis suggests, or reading *supūjetvā* with M3 (here and in next verses). See note 3 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Sāma*, Skt. *śyāma* can refer to a number of dark colours. Denis chooses ‘blue’, perhaps because, as K.R. Norman writes (personal communication) ‘other references to groups of people with different coloured robes, etc., usually have blue, yellow, red, white, which would suggest that *sāma* might be taken as = *nīla* “blue”’.

<sup>3</sup> As Denis remarks, *saṃyamā* must be taken as an adjective here. He derives *saṃvibhātā* from *vi-bhaj*, to give a share (of), and says that this, like *supūjitā* in the previous verses, is a past participle used actively. The past participle passive from *vi-bhaj* is usually *vibhatta*, however, and I prefer to derive the form from *vi-bhā*, to shine. K.R. Norman suggests (personal communication) that *supūjitā* may be *metri causa* for the absolutive *supūjivā*.

<sup>4</sup> *-opamāya ca paññāya pakāsetvā*, literally ‘elucidating it with an understanding comparable to ...’. I have broken up the long Pali sentence, which is not without linguistic problems, into more manageable English.

compared to a hare (trying to) cross the ocean, or a blind man (trying to) climb a mountain, but he elucidated it briefly (as follows): there are three (types of future Buddha), called those who excel in faith, those who excel in wisdom, and those who excel in energy; Metteyya is one who excels in energy.<sup>1</sup> (All) future Buddhas, by means of the three-fold good conduct (consisting in) control of body, speech and mind, accumulated over many ages,<sup>2</sup> fulfil thirty perfections altogether: ten (ordinary) perfections, ten higher perfections, and ten perfections in the ultimate sense. The perfection of generosity comprises the sacrifice of wealth, children and wife [= ordinary perfection], the sacrifice of (one's own) limbs [= higher perfection] and the sacrifice of (one's) life [= perfection in the ultimate sense]<sup>3</sup>; and correspondingly (there are three levels of) the perfections of morality, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truth, resolution, loving-kindness and equanimity. He spoke these verses:

The merit which Metteyya the future Buddha made over and over again — not (even) the excellent omniscient Buddhas could describe it (all) — cannot be told (even) partially, just as a hare crossing the ocean or a blind man climbing a mountain would

<sup>1</sup> This classification of bodhisattvas would seem to be a Southeast Asian invention, found elsewhere in published Pali texts only at the very end of the *Dasabodhisattuddesa* (Martini (36): text p. 335, transl. pp. 367–68), where it is associated with three kinds of person, from a group of four, found in earlier literature (A II 135, Pp 41, Nett 7). The alternative version of this section cited in Appendix A from M3 says that Metteyya was 'one who excels in faith', although Denis gives no alternative for *thāmādhiko* in the following verses from that ms.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *anappakappopacita-kāyavācimānopanihita-tividhasucaritena*.

<sup>3</sup> There is a certain amount of confusion in different texts as to which actions constitute which level of the perfections. This doubtless arises because the prefix *upa-* often denotes a 'minor' level of what it is prefixed to, whereas the term *upapāramī* occurs second in the list: compare Ja I 25 and Bv-a 59 with Bv-a 113, and cf. Cp-a 272. I follow Horner (78: 89 and note 1, 162–63) in taking *upa-* in the sense of 'superior' (cf. CPD s.v.) or 'higher'.

not attain (their) goal<sup>1</sup>: in the same way Metteyya's merit is infinite, boundless, (since) he accumulated the necessary conditions (for enlightenment) completely, during many aeons. There are three (kinds of) future Buddhas: one is known as he who excels in energy,<sup>2</sup> who fulfils all perfections during (a period of time lasting) a hundred thousand aeons and sixteen uncountable aeons and (then) attains supreme Full Enlightenment; (the second) is renowned in this human (world) as he who excels in faith, who fulfils all the perfections during (a period of time lasting) a hundred thousand aeons and eight uncountable aeons and (then) attains supreme Full Enlightenment; (the third) is renowned in this human (world) as he who excels in wisdom, who fulfils all the perfections during (a period of time lasting) a hundred thousand aeons and four uncountable aeons and (then) attains supreme Full Enlightenment. The future Buddha Metteyya is known as one who excels in energy; he has fulfilled all the perfections during a hundred thousand aeons and sixteen uncountable aeons and has been reborn in the Tusita (heaven): when he dies from that body (and is reborn on earth) he will attain Full Enlightenment.

While the elder was conversing thus with Sakka, Metteyya came, walked around the shrine keeping it to his right, paid reverence to the eight directions, worshipped with garlands, perfumes, etc., paid reverence with the five-fold prostration, and sat down on the eastern side. The future Buddha saw the elder sitting down there, paid reverence to him and asked 'Where have you come from, venerable Sir?' 'I have

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly the sense of *patiṭṭhā* here, although it is an unusual use of the word. Similarly, the general sense is quite clear in the sentence as a whole, despite the inelegant syntax of the Pali.

<sup>2</sup> In the prose version *virīya* appears here in place of *thāma*; they can be regarded as synonyms.

come from the Rose-Apple Island, great king.' 'Venerable Sir, what is happening among the human beings in Rose-Apple Island?' The elder answered his question by saying:

Everyone there lives according to their (past) deeds, rich and poor, happy and unhappy, attractive and unattractive, long-lived and short-lived. The rich are few, the poor are many; the happy are few, the unhappy many; the attractive are few, the unattractive many; the long-lived are few, the short-lived many. Human beings are few, there are more animals; that is why I say that everyone lives according to their (past) deeds.

The future Buddha heard what the elder said (and asked) 'Sir, do the human beings in Rose-Apple Island make much merit or demerit?' 'Great king, those who make merit are few, there are more who do evil.' 'Sir, how do they make merit?' He explained 'Great king, some human beings in Rose-Apple Island give alms, some preserve morality, (or) give the gift of The Truth, keep the Uposatha day(s), make images of the Buddha, build monasteries or residences (for the Order), give rains-residences, robes, almsfood (or) medicine, tend the Bodhi-tree, build stūpas, shrines, parks (for the Order), causeways (or) walkways (for meditation), dig wells (or) canals, give (the monastic) requisites (or) the ten-fold gift,<sup>1</sup> look after their mother and father, offer sacrifice for the sake of dead relatives, worship the Three Jewels, have their son enter the Monastic Order (as a novice),<sup>2</sup> or worship the Buddha-image: the

<sup>1</sup> Lists of gifts, varying in number, are found in the texts (e.g. A IV 239, Nidd I 373, Nidd II 233; the number ten is given at Pv-a 7); without citing a source Denis gives food, drink, lodging, clothes, vehicles, garlands, ointments, perfumes, seats and lamps.

<sup>2</sup> All mss. apart from M2 add here *keci dhammaputtam pabbājenti*, 'some have a son in the Teaching [?] enter the Monastic Order (as a novice)', which I do not understand. Perhaps *dhammaputta* refers to a novice, and the verb is repeated in

human beings in Rose-Apple Island do all these deeds of merit, according to their capacity, their strength and their inclination'. 'Sir, when the human beings in Rose-Apple Island make merit in these ways, what wishes do they make?' The elder recounted<sup>1</sup> their aspirations in these words:

Your Highness,<sup>2</sup> when they make even a (small) measure of merit, or cause others to make merit, or transfer their merit to others, they make an aspiration for enlightenment (in relation) to you: 'by the merit acquired through giving, morality and the like, may we gain sight of the Buddha Metteyya himself, (and) while the Buddha Metteyya is not reborn (on earth, but remains in heaven) worshipped by the gods, may we, moving through rebirths, never go to a hell'. In this way the human beings in Rose-Apple Island, everywhere and always, make merit and then make an aspiration with regard to you.

The future Buddha, joyful to hear (this) news of human beings in Rose-Apple Island, said 'Sir, let everyone who wishes to see me when I have attained Omniscience listen to a complete recitation in one day of the Great Vessantara Birth-Story; if they worship with a thousand lamps or a thousand lotuses, a thousand blue lotuses, blue water-lilies, Mandāra-flowers, flax-flowers, a thousand banners, parasols, flags or vehicles, and bring everything to worship the Teaching, they will attain arahantship along with the analytical insights at the time of my Enlightenment (and) in my presence'. Then he

error for *upasampādentī*; the phrase would then refer to monks ordaining their novices in the second and higher Ordination.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *kathento* with M2 and M3.

<sup>2</sup> The vocative *deva*, literally 'god' applies directly to Metteyya in his present birth in the Tusita heaven; since it is also regularly used as a form of address to kings, in the light of Māleyya's having previously called him 'great king' (*mahārāja*) I adopt this rendering here.

recounted how evil humans would not attain the sight of his Buddhahood, in these verses:

(Those who) violently mistreat nuns, make a schism in the Order, commit the five actions which bring immediate retribution,<sup>1</sup> destroy a stūpa or Bodhi-tree,<sup>2</sup> murder a future Buddha or take away the peace of the Order: (these) wicked and negligent beings will not be in my presence.

The elder listened to these words and said 'Great king, what you said was good! I will recount (it) to the human beings in Rose-Apple Island. But when will you become Buddha?' 'Sir, the dispensation of Gotama Buddha will last five thousand years and (then) disappear. When it has disappeared there will be an abundance of bad actions in the world. Even the word 'good' will not exist — how much less the occurrence of good (actions)! Gradually human beings will lose (all) conscience and (sense of) shame, breaking (all) rules: they will not consider 'this is my mother, my daughter, my sister or grand-daughter', and will be (as) shameless as goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, jackals, dogs, and the like. Then gradually, because of their abundant bad actions, from (having) a lifetime fixed at a hundred years, human beings will deteriorate and (come to) have a lifetime of ten years. When there is taking and giving in marriage<sup>3</sup> between five year old boy(s) and girl(s), then will occur an 'intervening period of the sword'. Men will regard each other as animals; whatever they (can) grasp in their hands<sup>4</sup> will become a weapon like a two-edged (sword) or a single-edged razor, (and) they will kill each other. The wise among them, as soon as they hear of

<sup>1</sup> These are: matricide, parricide, killing an Arahant, causing a Buddha to shed blood, and creating schism in the Order.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *bodhiñ ca chedakā* with M5.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *āvāhavivāho* with M5.

<sup>4</sup> Reading with M5 *yam yaṃ hatthena gahitaṃ tan taṃ ...*

the destruction, will go to the mountains and hide by themselves; all the rest apart from them will attack and destroy each other within seven days. When the seventh day has passed, they will come out, each one from his hiding-place, embrace each other and come into harmony with each other, (saying) 'let us do good, and abstain from killing, from theft, sexual misdeeds, lying, intoxicating drink, speech which is malicious, harsh or frivolous, from envy, ill-will and wrong views — let us make merit!' (And so) they will make merit. Those who live ten years will have children who live for twenty; and as human beings make more and more merit, their children will gradually live for thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety and a hundred years. Children will gradually live for two hundred years, (then) three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine hundred years, (and then finally) a thousand. Gradually, the children of those who live a thousand years will live for two thousand; (then) for three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten thousand. Then human beings will practice religion still more, and will live for a hundred thousand years; as they practice religion still more, there will be those who live for millions and millions of years<sup>1</sup>; practising religion still further than this, they will live for an incalculable amount of time. Then old age and death will not be known among (these) beings; but again they will become negligent, and their length of life will diminish.<sup>2</sup> From (having) an incalculable length of life, men will deteriorate and (come to) have a lifetime of millions and millions of years<sup>3</sup>; from then they will gradually deteriorate (until) they have a lifetime of ninety thousand years; from then they will gradually deteriorate (until) they have a lifetime of eighty thousand years. At that time it will rain (only) in the middle of the night, every fortnight, ten

<sup>1</sup> Reading *koṭisatasahassāyukā* with M5; literally a hundred thousand crores; on *koṭi* see p. 79 note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Assuming *āyu parihāyissati*.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming (*vassa-*)*koṭisatasahassāyukā*, as at M5 above; see note 1 above.

days or five days, increasing the fertility of the earth.<sup>1</sup> The Rose-Apple Island will be prosperous (and) continuously filled with flowers, fruits, thickly-clustered garlands, and trees; (it will be) crowded with villages and towns (only) a cock's-flight (apart), free from thieves and robbers, without (any) grasping at (wrong) views, (and) blazing with royal cities; (it will be) replete with all treasures, happy, with abundant alms-food and at peace, replete with great amounts of food and drink, hard and soft food, fish, meat and the like, prospering with wealth and possessions. The reservoirs will be everywhere filled with beautifully soft water. Then, sir, husbands and wives will enjoy the pleasures of the five senses without arguments or anger; farmers, traders, and the like will live happily without (needing to) work; men and women will not (need to) spin thread or weave the loom, (but) will wear celestial clothes. Men will be content with their wives, and women with their husbands; restrained,<sup>2</sup> men will not commit adultery nor women make another man their husband, (but) they will be loving and pleasant to one another. No-one will stir up quarrels because of villages, towns, wealth, crops, fields, property or soil; all human beings will be handsome, with beautiful bodies, (and will be) loving and pleasant to each other. Crows will become friendly with owls, cats with mice, deer with lions, mongooses with snakes, lions with deer, and so on: in this way all animals which are (usually) enemies will be friendly to each other. Then, from one grain of self-growing rice (will come already-)husked grains: two thousand two hundred and seventy cartloads will be (for them as easily had as) sixteen *ambana*-measures and two *tumba*-s.<sup>3</sup> Then I will

<sup>1</sup> Literally 'the nutritive essence of the earth', *paṭhavirasa* (spelt thus in text); it is said that seeds take up this 'earth-essence', along with liquid, or 'the nutritive essence of water' (*sineha, aporasa*) to produce growth: S I 134, A I 32, V 213, Spk I 250, Pj II 5–6, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Again, assuming *samyamā* is being used adjectivally.

<sup>3</sup> I translate the text of M5, cited here by Denis but occurring in that ms. after the sentence 'farmers ... will live happily without (the need to) work'. Similar sentiments are expressed at Anāg vv. 27–29, and for the interpretation here see

listen to the entreaty of the gods and Brahmas living in the ten thousand-fold world system; I will make the Five Considerations, as to time, place, continent, family, and age-limit of the mother; (and) I will come as Buddha to the human world.' When he had said this, in order to praise his own perfections he said:

During a hundred thousand aeons and sixteen incalculable aeons I fulfilled the perfections variously, acting<sup>1</sup> as a future Buddha excelling in energy, and gave gifts<sup>2</sup>: when I attain omniscience no-one will be deformed. Putting ornaments on my head and ointment on my eyes I gave to beggars for millions and millions of years: when I attain omniscience no human being will be blind. Ornamenting all parts (of my body) I gave a complete gift: when I attain omniscience, no-one will be deformed. I told no lies and did not deceive anyone who asked (me for something): when I attain omniscience, no human being will be dumb. When I heard the Teaching I was glad, and I listened to what supplicants said: when I attain omniscience, no human being will be deaf. I looked at virtuous supplicants with loving eyes: when I attain omniscience, no human being will be blind. With upright body I gave gifts and the like at the proper time: when I attain omniscience no human being will be humpbacked. I gave beings medicine(s) and got rid of<sup>3</sup> the danger (from disease): when I attain omniscience, then beings will be in good health. I practised loving-kindness, destroying beings' fear and

Leumann (19) ad loc. The Anāg reads *ambanaṃ soḷasaṃ*, 'one sixteenth of an *ambana*'.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *caritvā* with M2.

<sup>2</sup> As Denis notes, the forms and tenses of the verbs in these verses are odd. The translation assumes all Metteyya's assertions about himself refer to the past, and all predictions about others refer to the future.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *vinodayi* with M5.

terror: when I attain omniscience, then there will be no Māras.<sup>1</sup> In a pleasant way I gave pleasing food and drink: when I attain omniscience human beings will be prosperous. In a pleasant way I gave pleasing clothes: when I attain omniscience human beings will be handsome. I gave to supplicants pleasing vehicles, elephants, horses, chariots, palanquins and litters: when I attain omniscience human beings will be happy. I freed beings from bondage, from hatred and suffering: when I attain omniscience, living beings will be free. I practised loving-kindness equally to friend and foe: when I attain omniscience, the ground will be even. I made supplicants happy with food and wealth: when I attain omniscience rivers will be full of cool water.

(Then Metteyya said this:)<sup>2</sup>

When they have done any (act of) merit human beings, full of fear of rebirth, aspire to (see) me; I will free them from existence. I will cause (them) to cross to the further shore of the world, (this world) whose fearful origin is ignorance, which is entangled in the net of delusion and carried away by the four floods. I (will) teach<sup>3</sup> the way to liberation to those who are smeared with the dirt of defilement, who follow after the thief (which is) craving, and have gone astray in (all) the regions of rebirth; I will teach the way to heaven to beings in the hells (called) Sañjiva, Kālasutta, Tāpana, Patāpana and Avīci. I will cut from (their) bondage beings who are bound by the ties of ignorance and caught in the net of craving, and make them

<sup>1</sup> *Māra*, literally death, is a name given to various phenomena and gods, all of which/whom are malevolent in some way; see DPPN s.v.

<sup>2</sup> This is found only in M3, but marks a natural break in the verses.

<sup>3</sup> The verbs in this sentence and the next are in the aorist.

attain *nirvāṇa*. The city of *nirvāṇa*, without old age or death, has a fence of wrong views and a door bolted by the sixty-two views: with the key of the Eight-fold Path I will open up (this door) for beings. I will give the medicinal stick of wisdom to beings whose sight is spoilt through being covered with the darkness of lust and hatred, and clean their eyes. I will give the excellent medicine of understanding to beings who are sick with grief, who suffer much, and who are oppressed by old age and death,<sup>1</sup> and (so) cure (them). I will suffuse with the light of understanding (the world) with its gods, asuras and humans, gone astray in the darkness of delusion,<sup>2</sup> and take away the darkness. I will raise from hell those who are falling, helpless and without refuge, into the hells, and show them the way to the further shore.

When he had said this the future Buddha told (the elder): ‘Sir, recount to human beings what I have said’. With his shining hands in the form of a hollow lotus-bud (made) by putting his ten finger-nails together, and putting the shining añjali-greeting (thus made) firmly to his forehead, (itself) like a well-washed plate of gold, he walked around the delightful sapphire Cūlāmaṇi-shrine, paid reverence to the eight directions and made a fivefold prostration, and took leave of the elder; escorted by millions and millions of junior gods and goddesses, shining like a full moon, risen to the top of the sky freed from masses of dense cloud (and) surrounded by clusters of stars, he went to the Tusita city. So it is said:

Thus the supremely beautiful Metteyya worshipped at the excellent shrine, again paid reverence, and left keeping his face

<sup>1</sup> The epithets here must be taken to refer to ‘beings’, although they are in the accusative singular and not genitive (used for dative) plural.

<sup>2</sup> Again, the grammar is faulty here, although the sense is clear.

towards (the shrine).<sup>1</sup> And all the celestial maidens worshipped at the excellent shrine, paid reverence to the eight directions and left (likewise). Just as the moon shines on an autumn full moon night, so the noble Metteyya shone among the gods. Like a lion among deer, a bull among cows, a Garuda among birds, so was he among the gods. Like Meru among mountains, adorned with the seven jewels, a Universal Emperor among men, so was he among the gods. The Pāricchattaka<sup>2</sup> among trees, the lotus among flowers, beryl among gems, so was he among the gods. Like fire at the top of a mountain, like refined gold, surpassing all the gods he shone with the fire of his beauty. Going to the Tusita realm, surrounded by gods, he experienced divine happiness and caused beings to rejoice<sup>3</sup> for a long time.

The elder<sup>4</sup> (possessed, as if he) was adorned with a multitude of ornaments, unlimited good qualities, such as the four perfect virtues — the supreme virtue of restraint by the Monastic Rule, the virtue of sense-restraint, the perfect virtue of right livelihood and the virtue of dependence (only) on the four requisites (of the Monastic Life). At the same moment (as Metteyya left) he paid reverence to the Cūlāmaṇi-

<sup>1</sup> *Piṭṭhito*, lit. 'backwards'.

<sup>2</sup> A tree in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven.

<sup>3</sup> Taking *pamodati* in the sense of the causative *pamodeti*; perhaps the text should be emended.

<sup>4</sup> The Pali has a single long sentence here, beginning with 'at the same moment (as Metteyya left)'; I have changed the long string of epithets applied to Māleyyadeva and to the golden swan into separate sentences. M3 has a different and shorter ending section, reproduced in Appendix C. The sense is much the same, but it adds in the last sentence of the prose: 'whoever listens attentively [assuming *suṇanti sakkaccam*] to the Vessantara (Jātaka), taught by the Conqueror, and whatever benefactors make merit and (practise) morality and the like, (they will all) hear [assuming *suṇanti*, used for the future tense] the excellent Happy One Metteyya, (their) support [taking *passayam* as equivalent to *apassayam*].

shrine and took leave of Sakka, king of the gods. He travelled along the path of rebirth<sup>1</sup> which is the origin of sufferings such as birth, old age and death, which have their home in numerous forest thickets crowded with various trees and forest creepers such as the extremely strong (trees and creepers of) lust, craving and wrong views.<sup>2</sup> He shone like a golden swan whose supreme, outstanding body had a head guarding the threefold knowledge, wings of the fourth meditation level, two excellent lucky feet of the beautiful, shining bases of supernatural power, and the entire plumage guarding the eight liberations, the analytical knowledges and the worldly and super-worldly confidences. He descended from the realm of the Thirty-three, came to Rose-Apple Island, and with the incomparable grace natural to a disciple (of the Buddha)<sup>3</sup> went for alms in villages, towns and royal cities. So it is said:

Then the elder (Māleyya-)deva took leave of the king of the gods, paid reverence again at the shrine and came down from heaven. He shone like a golden swan as he came again to the human (world) and went for alms in towns and royal cities.

As he returned for alms he announced to the people of Rose-Apple Island the news of Metteyya. When they heard what the elder said people were glad and made merit through giving and the like: at the end of their lives they filled up the divine worlds. The poor man who had given the eight blue lotus flowers remembered that gift of lotuses all his life; when he died (he went) from the human world and was reborn in the realm of the Thirty-three, in a blue-lotus palace inlaid with seven jewels,

<sup>1</sup> i.e. he returned to earth from heaven.

<sup>2</sup> There is probably a pun intended here between *vana*- as 'forest' and *vana* as a synonym for *taṇhā*, 'craving'. The image is of Māleyyadeva returning from heaven like a swan through a forest, both of which are metaphorically elaborated.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. not the same as the 'grace' or 'charm' of a Buddha, *Buddha-liḥā*.

crowded with celestial maidens and ringing with the sound of dancing, singing and the five kinds of musical instrument. As he walked lotuses of five colours (appeared to) receive each foot; the odour from his mouth pervaded the entire city of the gods like the perfume of a lotus. The gods and goddesses smelt the lotus-perfume and followed after him; they all saw a lotus receiving each foot, and told Sakka, king of the gods. When he heard their tale he was delighted, and went there (to him) and asked 'God, what deed of merit did you do in the human world to obtain such happiness?' He listened to what Sakka said and replied 'King of the gods, formerly in the human world I lived in Mithilā supporting my mother; I was a young man called Piṅguttara.<sup>1</sup> One day I went to a certain pond to bathe. When I had bathed there I saw eight blue lotus flowers; I took them and gave them to a certain elder. Because of that gift of blue lotuses I have been born in a blue-lotus palace; as I walk lotus flowers come into existence at each step, my eyes are like blue-lotus petals, my body has an odour like that of a blue lotus, and I am born (here) as the junior god named Blue-lotus'. When Sakka heard this he became joyful and glad; he took blue-lotus flowers and worshipped at the shrine of the Buddha. The junior god Blue Lotus is still there today. So it is said:

To enjoy (the result of) that merit, and divine happiness, in a future birth in the presence of Metteyya — this is the result of a gift of flowers. Therefore the wise man who aspires to be in the presence of Metteyya should practice alms-giving, morality and the like. Whoever remembers the future Buddha's words and does any act of merit, will gain the advantage of seeing Metteyya, and will in the future make an end of suffering;

<sup>1</sup> J VI 347–49 tells a different story of a young man from Mithilā, in north India, with this name; perhaps the Māleyyadevattheravatthu has borrowed the names, although this is clearly the same person as at the start of the story, in Kamboja village, Rohana, Sri Lanka.

(before then,) moving on through rebirth, that person will not go to hell.

End of the expository account of the Elder Māleyyadeva.

(This) will be a cause of (attaining) *nirvāṇa* in the future !<sup>1</sup>

#### ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations for titles of Pali texts are those of the Critical Pāli Dictionary

Childers = R.C. Childers' Dictionary of the Pāli Language

CPD = Critical Pāli Dictionary

DPPN = Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names

HOS = Harvard Oriental Series

PED = The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary

PTS = Pali Text Society

<sup>1</sup> Denis states that in M1, the only ms. in which it occurs, the word *bhavissanti* [for *bhavissati*] seems to have been written later, to complete the verse. Presumably the 'cause' for attaining *nirvāṇa* here is copying the manuscript and/or listening to its being recited.



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## NIBBĀNASUTTA: AN ALLEGEDLY NON-CANONICAL SUTTA ON NIBBĀNA AS A GREAT CITY<sup>1</sup>

The pages that follow carry a preliminary edition and translation of the *Nibbānasutta*, an "allegedly non-canonical"<sup>2</sup> Pali text

<sup>1</sup> This is a corrected and revised version of the edition and translation of the *Nibbānasutta* that was published as "The Sutta on Nibbāna as a Great City" in the commemorative volume for the Ven. Hammalava Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Essays: A Miscellany*, edited by Pollamure Sorata Thera, Laksman Perera, and Karl Goonasena (London: Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, 1992), pp. 38–67.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance I received from Professor G.D. Wijayawardhana, Steven Collins, Jacqueline Filliozat, and P.B. Meegaskumbura in the preparation of this edition and translation. All read over a preliminary transcription of the manuscript and each made many suggestions for improving the text. Professor Wijayawardhana's and Steven Collins' comments also aided me in translating the text. P.B. Meegaskumbura made many helpful comments on the introduction. It was, however, only through the generosity and kindness of Jacqueline Filliozat that this edition was even possible. She made a copy of the original manuscript available to me and also made it possible for me to learn how to read *mūl* script. Finally, she compared my initial transcription with the original manuscript and made a number of improvements in the reading of the manuscript itself.

<sup>2</sup> I use this appellation to refer to texts which begin with the standard phrases of a sutta — "*Evam me sutam. Ekaṃ samayaṃ ...*" — but are not found in standard editions of the Pali canon. The term comes from K.D. Somadasa, who uses it in his *Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library* (London: The British Library, and Henley-on-Thames: Pali Text Society, 1987), Vol. I, p. 27. I prefer this label to the alternative designations "apocryphal" or "counterfeit", since it is less likely to pre-judge the whole issue of the status of such texts; see Charles Hallisey, "Tuṇḍilovāda: An Allegedly Non-Canonical Sutta," *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, XV (1990), pp. 156–58. The use of the term "apocryphal" for texts whose inclusion in the Canon might be contested has been popularized by Padmanabh S. Jaini; see especially "*Ākāravattārasutta: An 'Apocryphal' Sutta from Thailand*," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 35 (1992), p. 193. The label "counterfeit Sutta" has been applied to the *Dasabodhisattupattikathā* by the Ven. H. Saddhatissa (*The Birth*