

Dhammapada: Wisdom of the Buddha

Translated by Harischandra Kaviratna

First Edition copyright © 1980 by Theosophical University Press. Electronic version ISBN 978-1-55700-132-0. All rights reserved. This edition may be downloaded free of charge for personal use. Except for brief excerpts, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial or other use in any form without the prior permission of Theosophical University Press. For ease of searching, words are not accented in this version.

Contents

Illustration of [Palm Leaf Manuscript](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)



Canto

[I - The Twin Verses](#)

[II - On Vigilance](#)

[III - The Mind](#)

[IV - The Flowers](#)

[V - The Fool](#)

[VI - The Wise](#)

[VII - The Holy One](#)

[VIII - The Thousands](#)

[IX - Evil](#)

X - The Rod of Punishment

XI - Old Age

XII - The Self

XIII - The World

XIV - The Enlightened One

XV - Happiness

XVI - Affection

XVII - Anger

XVIII - Impurity

XIX - The Righteous

XX - The Path

XXI - Miscellaneous Verses

XXII - The Woeful State

XXIII - The Elephant

XXIV - Thirst or Craving

XXV - The Mendicant

XXVI - Who is a Brahman?

Glossary

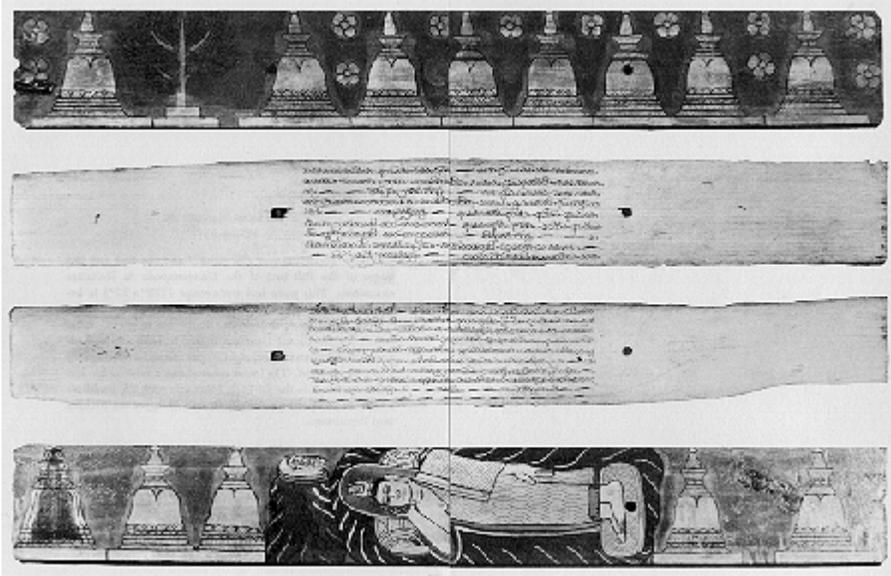
Appendix

I can imagine no scholar in this country or elsewhere, who could produce a better rendition of *Dhammapadam* than Dr. Harischandra Kaviratna. Early in life he acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Magadhi, Hindi, English, German, Latin, and other languages and arts. Dr. Kaviratna has contributed immensely to our Sinhala literature on a multiplicity of subjects such as Yoga, Indian philosophy, Mahayana, Theravada, Zen, Tantrikism, Peruvian and Mayan cultures, pre-Christian European cultures, and Egyptology. The present version of *Dhammapadam* is a verbatim translation which has carefully preserved the true spirit of Buddha's very word. This anthology may be regarded as a Buddhist encyclopaedia in miniature.

— Rt. Ven. G. Punnasara Maha Thero, Spiritual Instructor,

Palm Leaf Manuscript

Photo: Courtesy of K. D. Paranavitana, Assistant Archivist, Department of National Archives, Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Outer wooden covers ("Kamba") and the first and last pages of the Pali text of the *Dhammapada* in Sinhalese characters. This palm leaf manuscript (17 1/2" x 2 1/2") is believed to be the oldest extant copy of the scripture.

The upper cover depicts the Bodhi tree in green, under which the mendicant Gautama is said to have attained supreme enlightenment, and eight stupas colored amber against a red background. The lower cover shows a relic casket and two stupas beside the Sri Pada Mountain with the Buddha's footprint, and portrays also the Great Passing of the Buddha into Parinirvana.

FOREWORD

Buddhist tradition has it that shortly after the passing away of the Lord Buddha five hundred of his Arhats and disciples, led by Kasyapa, met in council at Rajagaha for the purpose of recalling to mind the truths they had received from their beloved Teacher during the forty-five years of his ministry. Their hope was to implant the salient principles of his message so firmly in memory that they would become a lasting impetus to moral and spiritual conduct, not alone for themselves and the brethren in distant parts of the land, but likewise for all future disciples who would seek to follow in the footsteps of the Awakened One.

With the Teacher no longer among them, the monks found themselves with the responsibility of handing on the teaching and discipline of the Order as faithfully as possible. Having no written texts to rely on, they did as their forebears had before them and prepared their discourses "for recitation," that is, basic themes were repeated with variations in order to impress the ideas on their hearers. At that time, according to the Sinhalese, the *Dhammapada* was orally assembled from the sayings of Gautama given on some three hundred different occasions. Put in verse form the couplets contrast the vanity of hypocrisy, false pride, heedlessness, and selfish desire with the virtues of truthfulness, modesty, vigilance, and self-abnegation. The admonitions are age-old, yet they strike home today, their austerity of purpose fittingly relieved by gentle humor and earthy simile.

Subsequently, several renditions of the *Dhammapada* in the Sanskrit and Chinese languages came into circulation; likewise, a number of stanzas are to be found almost verbatim in other texts of the canonical literature, testifying to the esteem in which its content was anciently held. Since first collated, the *Dhammapada* has become one of the best loved of Buddhist scriptures, recited

daily by millions of devotees who chant its verses in Pali or in their native dialect.

It was inevitable that differences in interpretation of teaching as well as of disciplinary practices would arise, with the result that about a century after the First Council was held a second gathering was called to affirm the purity of the doctrine. It was at this Second Council that the Arhats divided into two main streams, namely, the *Mahasanghika* or "Great Assembly" and the *Theravada* or "Doctrine of Elders." These gradually developed into the Mahayana or Northern School of Buddhism espoused chiefly in India, Tibet, China, and later Japan, and the Hinayana or Southern School whose stronghold is Sri Lanka, Burma, and the countries of Southeast Asia.

The range of Buddhist literature is vast, and much is made of the difference in emphasis between the Mahayana and the Hinayana: *Mahayana* or the "great way or vehicle" is the large "ferryboat" or fuller doctrine of the Lord Buddha that will ferry all beings across the ocean of births and deaths to the "other shore"; *Hinayana* or "incomplete or deficient way or vehicle" is, the Mahayanists say in contempt, the "ferryboat" of inferior quality because it contains less of the vital essence of the Master's wisdom. The Theravadins, the largest branch of Southern Buddhism, repudiate the title, and never refer to themselves as Hinayanists, because they hold that as the Pali Canon represents the oldest records of Buddha's life and message they are closer to the source than are the later and more elaborate doctrines of the Mahayanists. In fact, the Theravadins reverently state that the *Dhammapada* preserves the *buddhavacana* or "word of Buddha." Without doubt it carries the spirit of the Master's teaching, but there is no firm assurance that the Pali texts represent the most primitive Canon, for there appears to have been more than one collection of scriptures at a very early stage, from which both Pali and Sanskrit Canons may

have developed.

With the passage of years, although both derive inspiration from the same source, the two Schools diverged rather widely. To put it almost too simply, the basic difference lies in this: the goal of the Theravadin is to transmit in utter fidelity the teaching and example of Buddha-Gautama and by the steadfast practice of the virtues to become, in the course of time, an Arhat, one "worthy" of attaining the supreme nirvana or bliss of omniscience; the goal of the Mahayanist is to become a Bodhisattva, one whose "essence is bodhi or wisdom," and when nirvana is reached to renounce it for the sake of the world and the "weal of gods and men." In this sublime act of compassion is the promise that all beings are potential Buddhas, having the same intrinsic capacity for enlightenment.

Significantly, the same character training and purification process must be undergone by all devotees, by those who would become Buddha and enter nirvana, and by those who would refuse nirvana, as did Gautama Sakyamuni in the manner of his predecessor Buddhas. But let it not be thought that because the Theravadins do not explicitly delineate the Bodhisattva ideal they lack compassion. In actuality, the power of the Compassionate One is implicit in every word and incident recorded in the Pali Canon, the *Tripitaka* or "Three Baskets," the second of which, namely *Sutta-Pitaka*, includes the *Dhammapada* and the famed *Jatakamala* or "stories" that relate the previous "births" of Buddha.

One has only to read a little in this extensive literature to feel the depth of love that filled the Tathagata. He comes through not as a god or far-off divinity, but as a wonderfully wise and compassionate friend who understands human weakness yet has the gift of inciting the least of us to noble endeavor. His very

presence on earth was witness of the "earnest resolve" he had made "a hundred thousand cycles vast and four immensities ago" to join the line of Bodhisattvas who periodically fulfill their dhamma of bringing light and hope to a troubled humanity. Were this still not a potent influence in every Buddhist land today the populace would not gather in villages and groves, as they do in Sri Lanka, on full moon nights of their holy days, particularly in the month of Vesak (April/May), to hear once again the monks chanting the sacred verses of how Prince Siddhartha became Gautama-Bodhisattva out of love for all beings everywhere.

The present translation of the *Dhammapada* by Dr. Harischandra Kaviratna originally appeared as a serial in Sunrise magazine from August 1970 through September 1971. It has been revised by the translator where needed, and a Glossary of Pali philosophical terms with Sanskrit equivalents added.

Dr. Kaviratna, a native of Sri Lanka, is equally versed in Sinhalese, Pali, and Sanskrit, and since youth has been a dedicated researcher into the esoteric implications behind the Vedas, Vedanta, and Buddhist canonical and noncanonical literatures of both Northern and Southern Schools. It is our sincere hope that readers will find food for contemplation in this ancient devotional scripture which for more than twenty centuries has inspired in its hearers a genuine conversion, a "turning about" of the soul from the limitations of the personal toward the light within, the light that is our Self, our refuge, and our strength.

GRACE F. KNOCHÉ
Pasadena, California
April 15, 1980

INTRODUCTION

Ballads and folklore are the most precious remnants of a glorious and prolific culture that disappeared from the surface of our globe many centuries prior to the dawn of our present civilization. Embedded in age-old legendary poems are the loftiest speculations of our most ancient forebears and, although their culture vanished in the prehistoric past, we may discern its indelible impress upon the extant literature that is the universal heritage of mankind. The *Dhammapada*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and the ascetic poems of the Jains, for instance, perpetuate ethics and norms that were promulgated by the sages of an age that is still shrouded in mystery. Valmiki and Vyasa of Aryavarta, Homer and Pindar of Greece, Druid bard and Mayan priest, Chinese lawgiver and Egyptian hierophant — all echoed these moral values in their epics and systems of thought.

It is evident that even in the earliest dawn of prehistory men used a universal system of signs and symbols to transmit ideas and impressions — without doubt a symbol can more adequately represent a philosophical conception than the written word. Among ancient peoples, such as the Indo-Aryans, literacy and education were not considered of primary importance but merely as aids to interior illumination and religious insight. And indeed, throughout the centuries, mystics of both East and West have attained enlightenment and union with supreme Reality not through scholastic study, not through dialectic discourses, but through self-abnegation and intuitive direct comprehension. Rarely do those of great intellectual stature alone penetrate to the deepest esoteric truths embodied in the symbology of scriptural texts. With this in mind, we can better understand the conviction of the Brahmans that the sacred knowledge would be perverted when put into writing: the Vedas had to be *heard*.

The art of writing, therefore, did not become popular, as the emphasis of education was on the development of memory and its retentive power. If the expounder of a special branch of knowledge wished to protect his system from falling into oblivion, he rendered it into verse, to be sung or chanted; only on rare occasions did he commit it to writing. Paleographic evidence indicates also that writing, in its earliest stages, was used mostly to chronicle historic events; it was not used to impart instruction in mysticism and philosophy, exorcism and religion, for Druid bard and Brahman sage alike considered this a profanation of the esoteric wisdom. In that golden epoch of intuition and memory culture no teacher ever attempted to hand down the sacred knowledge through the medium of script. The immortal epics of poet-philosophers, such as the *Iliad* of Homer and the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, were learned by professional bards and minstrels who recited them in the courts of kings and in the pleasure gardens of the great cities where they drew large cosmopolitan gatherings. They wandered from land to land reciting the traditional ballads in order to entice a zealous following from among the curious. In those days erudition was judged not by a scholar's literary achievements, but by his ability to inspire his bearers to seek wisdom. It was customary also in every court throughout the world for a professional royal minstrel to chant the dynastic history from its beginning up to the time of the living king. For example, in pre-Columbian America, in the palaces of the Incas and Aztecs, reciters were employed who had memorized the genealogy of the solar rulers from the most remote eras.

In this way the hoary wisdom of the Vedas as well as of the non-Vedic literature of India was safely passed from generation to generation by word of mouth for many thousands of years with the utmost preservation of their purity, until in later times they were recorded and printed in book form. Even today in traveling

through India, Sri Lanka, or Burma, one may come across numerous individuals who can dictate for days the great works of scripture, grammar, astrology, medicine, and those of other branches of ancient knowledge. Some of this ancient lore is still being orally transmitted, having never been recorded. In Sri Lanka and Burma it is customary for every Buddhist novice to learn the Pali grammar, lexicons, and the *Dhammapada* by heart. Of course, most of these works are metrical compositions which makes the memorizing of them quite easy. It is rare to find a Buddhist monk in those countries who cannot recite the *Dhammapada* verbatim. It is well known that even the physical philosophers of Miletus and Athens presented their speculations in poetic form. The versification of the *Dhammapada* was done in the Audience Hall of Jeta's Grove at Sravasti to enable the followers of Buddha to learn them by rote. Most people think that the versification of these discourses was done after the demise of the Great Master, but my own research leads me to question this.

Although at a certain phase of human culture, learning by rote and oral transmission as a mode of preserving knowledge were admired by the philosophers both in East and West, we cannot underestimate the magnitude of the disadvantages involved. Natural catastrophe, pestilence, war, or other large-scale disasters could destroy the line of priests, bringing to an abrupt end the collective wisdom of untold centuries. This is the exact cause of the disappearance of most of the spoken languages of the archaic past, before the emergence of Sanskrit, Sumerian, Hamitic, and Semitic which, according to our modern philologists, can rightfully claim to be of very early antiquity. How many languages with their literary treasures have vanished from the surface of our planet is still an unsolved question. Dialects which we now know only by name have left us no more than their imprint on the grammatical structures and vocabularies of our

modern tongues.

While the age-old method of oral instruction had intrinsic esoteric merit, the ancient philosophers caused neglect of the written word, which did not reemerge before the sixth century B.C.E. at the dawn of the new intellectual epoch in India.

Throughout the Buddhist canon are passages which presuppose the existence of that very ancient religious tradition known as the Vedas, of which the Great Mendicant, Buddha, had acquired mastery under the renowned sage Visvamitra, "the universal friend." Yet the source of this literature is lost in the mists of time. Although its system of philosophy differs vastly in some of its cardinal tenets from Brahmanism, any critical student is aware that Buddhism contains many of the teachings of the earliest Upanishads. For a fuller understanding of Buddha's spiritual teachings, a regard for the atmosphere in which they developed at the convergence of Vedic and non-Vedic streams is indispensable.

The sacred tradition of the Vedas was already in the possession of the Aryans (1) many millennia ago. Its mystic religio-philosophy was not only closely related to that of their relatives in Iran (where it took the form of the Avesta), but is also similar to the Eleusinian and Orphic traditions of the Western Aryans who migrated to and established their cultural empires in Greece, Central and Northern Europe, and the Emerald Isle. It should be noted, however, that the seeds of desuetude had been germinating in the Aryan religion before that great family divided.

Orthodox Hindus hold that the Vedas existed even before the creation of the world, coeternal with Brahman. Consequently, most of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* are not just odes to the beauty of nature, but are musings about a transcendental reality *beyond*

visible natural phenomena. It is said that the rishis, while in spiritual trance, came in direct contact with celestial beings of whom they sang, and whom they considered as expressions of the cosmic intelligence, manifestations of the immanent divine principle. Thus they conceived of nature as a living organism controlled by conscious, intelligent entities. To denote these deities, the poets coined a special appellative term, *deva*, for which there is no adequate equivalent in modern European languages. It literally means the "shining one" or the "donor." The rain, therefore, is a deva, because it gives nourishment to all life on earth. Sun, moon, and stars are devas, because they shed light throughout the solar system and universe. The Ganges, Indus, and Sarasvati are deified rivers, because they irrigate the arable lands of Aryavarta. In addition, many gods of the pluralistic pantheon once were great heroes, warriors, or philanthropists, who later were venerated as devas for their valor or benevolence.

The religion of the Vedas is neither naturalism nor anthropomorphism, neither polytheism nor monotheism, but a unique mysticism, a synthesis of religious streams known to the ancient Aryans. But when esotericism was ousted by exotericism, symbolism by ritualism, idealism by sacerdotalism, this early spiritual vision dwindled into a polytheistic sacrificial creed, and the cultural life of the Aryans became completely dominated by a priesthood. The Brahman priests made every effort to monopolize for themselves the religious hymns of the Vedas and the ballads which the Aryans sang in praise of the deified natural forces, thus arrogating to themselves as much power as possible. Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids writes in *Buddhist India*:

We cannot, therefore, be far wrong if we suppose they [the Brahmans] were not merely indifferent to the use of writing as a means of handing on the books so lucrative to themselves, but were even strongly opposed to a method so

dangerous to their exclusive privileges. And we ought not to be surprised to find that the oldest manuscripts on bark or palm leaf known in India are Buddhist; that the earliest written records on stone and metal are Buddhist; that it is the Buddhists who first made use of writing to record their canonical books; . . . — p. 119

And so it was that with the advent of the Buddha the art of writing was given renewed impetus, and began to rise again from the gloomy limbo where it had been concealed for so long by the Brahman priesthood.

For a genealogy of Prince Siddhartha Gautama Sakya Muni, full-blown lotus of the solar dynasty, Lion of the Sakya clan, prince and heir-apparent of the city state of Kapilavastu, we have to rely mostly on the literary material embedded in the immortal Sanskrit poetical works of Avaghosha and Kshemendra. Asvaghosha flourished in the second century C.E. at the court of the Kushan King Kanishka in Northern India and recorded the Buddhist chronicles which had been handed down through oral tradition. Kshemendra, a great Buddhist poet of Kashmir in the eleventh century, wrote a poetical chronology of the dynastic history of the Sakya clan in his *Avadana Kalpalata*, an epic work which was translated into Tibetan in 1272 C.E. by Sovi-rton Lochava under the supervision of Phags-pa, spiritual instructor of Kublai Khan. The original Sanskrit text was lost for many centuries but recovered in 1882 by the Buddhist scholar Sri S. C. Das in the Tibetan printing establishment at Potala. The *Sakya-utpatti* ("Birth of the Sakya clan") of Kshemendra, as well as Pali commentaries and Tibetan legends, together give a comprehensive account of the origin of the Sakya clan.

Almost thirty miles to the south of the foothills of the Himalayas, a rolling plain extends for hundreds of miles along the Nepalese

frontier, verdant and picturesque, rich in scenic delights and silent forest glades through which flow sparkling streams. In this ideal retreat Buddhist tradition has it that a bodhisattva, Kapila Gautama Muni, lived about three centuries before the advent of Gautama Buddha.

Sometime between 950 and 900 B.C.E. there reigned a mighty king named Virudhaka, lord of a vast confederation of vassal states, and descendant of the Ikshvaku dynasty. On a pleasure trip he beheld a most charming young princess and felt himself compelled to make her a matrimonial proposal, which the princess accepted only on condition that the king appoint her youngest son, instead of her eldest, to be his heir to the throne of Kosala. In due time the queen reminded her lord of the promise he had made; the king was distressed by the demand that he break the Vedic convention, but the four older sons volunteered to accept banishment. They loaded their chariots and rode towards the Himalayas whose snow-covered peaks glittered on the far horizon. After some days they reached the monastery of the celebrated sage Kapila Gautama.

The princes were well received and, instructed by the sage, they founded a flourishing metropolis which became known as Kapilavastu. After many centuries of benign rule, the sovereignty of the Sakya kingdom fell to King Sinhaharm. During his reign Kapilavastu became a center of international trade, learning, and spiritual culture. (2) King Sinhahanu had four sons and four daughters. The oldest son was Prince Suddhodana. He became known as King of Law, for he governed in accordance with the rules prescribed by Manu for righteous kings, and was loved by all his subjects.

King Suddhodana married his cousin Maya and, after her death, another cousin, Maha-Prajapati. Queen Maya was the

personification of beauty and purity, compassion, cosmic love, and intelligence. In esoteric schools she was considered the materialization of a divine vision: Queen Maya had all the virtues to become the mother of the universal Lord of Compassion, and yet after several years of married life the royal couple had not been blessed with a child. The account of the annunciation of the Sakya prince who was to become Buddha, known to every Buddhist in Sanskrit, Pali, or his native vernacular, is charmingly rendered into English by Sir Edwin Arnold, one of the great poets of the nineteenth century who spent a large part of his life in India. His classic, *The Light of Asia*, relates:

That night the wife of King Suddhodana,
Maya the Queen, asleep beside her Lord,
Dreamed a strange dream; dreamed that a star from
heaven —
Splendid, six-rayed, in color rosy-pearl,
Whereof the token was an Elephant
Six-tusked, and white as milk of Kamadhuk —
Shot through the void; and, shining into her,
Entered her womb upon the right. Awaked,
Bliss beyond mortal mother's filled her breast,
And over half the earth a lovely light
Forewent the morn. The strong hills shook; the waves
Sank lulled; all flowers that blow by day came forth
As 'twere high noon; down to the farthest hells
Passed the Queen's joy, as when warm sunshine thrills
Wood-glooms to gold, and into all the deeps

A tender whisper pierced. "Oh ye," it said,
"The dead that are to live, the live who die,
Uprise, and hear, and hope! Buddha is come!"
Whereat in Limbos numberless much peace

Spread, and the world's heart throbbed, and a wind blew
With unknown freshness over lands and seas.
And when the morning dawned, and this was told,
The grey dream-readers said "The dream is good!
The Crab is in conjunction with the Sun;
The Queen shall bear a boy, a holy child
Of wondrous wisdom, profiting all flesh,
Who shall deliver men from ignorance,
Or rule the world, if he will deign to rule."
In this wise was the holy Buddha born.

It was the age-old custom that the first confinement of a young mother should take place in the home of her parents, so, when Queen Maya felt that the blessed day was drawing near, she intimated her desire to go to her childhood home for the great event which the whole world was anticipating. The Lord of Kapilavastu caused the road connecting the two cities of the Sakyas to be swept and decorated, embellished with festoons and garlands. It was the month of flowers; the day was Vaisakha (Vesak) Full Moon Day in the year 623 B.C.E. (3) Between the two cities lay the famous pleasure garden Lumbini, and it was here, as the cortege paused on the journey, that the holy child saw the light of day among blossoming trees and warbling birds, while strains of heavenly music filled the air and soft breezes enriched with a celestial aroma blew throughout the Sakya kingdom.

Buddhist tradition records that as soon as Prince Siddhartha was born, King Suddhodana summoned the most erudite scholars and astrologers to the palace of Kapilavastu to cast the horoscope of the newborn babe. After examining the planetary positions, seven of the eight astrologers announced that the prince would become either the universal monarch of the present cycle, or he would retire from the world and become Buddha. Kaundanna alone, youngest member of the Astrological Council, predicted that

Siddhartha would indeed abdicate the throne of the Sakyas and become omniscient Buddha to save suffering humanity. Later, when the prince renounced the throne, Kaundanna also gave up the "householder life" and joined a small group of contemplatives in the forest. It was this community of five ascetics with whom Gautama-Siddhartha spent six years practicing austerities so severe that, when near death, he perceived that enlightenment was not to be attained by this means. It was then he adopted the system of moderation that came to be known as the Middle Way. After Gautama's illumination under the Bodhi tree, these five monks became his earliest disciples.

Another who correctly foresaw the infant's destiny was the venerable sage Asita (or Kala Devala), who was spiritual guide and mentor to King Suddhodana and to his father before him. On learning of the birth of Siddhartha, the sage hastened to the palace and, observing the distinguishing marks on the child, the aged Asita wept — not for the prince, but for himself, as his great age would prevent him from seeing the child grow up to become Buddha.

As King Suddhodana strongly believed in the prediction that his son would be a world monarch, he had him instructed by Visvamitra in the extensive curriculum befitting such a prince, including the Vedas and all systems of mysticism then current. It is noteworthy that the young man was taught to decipher pictographs as well as the sign language of cave dwellers and those plying the seas. In fact, from the vivid descriptions in ancient Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist works, and even from those in the rival literatures of the Jains and Vedantins, we may safely deduce that the Buddha had mastered all the sciences, arts, and languages known in India at that time.

We have here an interesting parallel between King Suddhodana

of Kapilavastu appointing the sage Visvamitra as teacher to Prince Siddhartha and the selection by King Philip of Macedonia of the great philosopher Aristotle to be preceptor to Prince Alexander. In both Aryan princes the age-old dream of establishing an invincible brotherhood of peoples was ingrained in their racial soul; but while Alexander spent most of his short life in military expeditions in an effort to expand the borders of his empire, Prince Siddhartha bade adieu to a worldly realm in order to establish an imperishable, eternal kingdom of the spirit.

The seventh-sixth centuries B.C.E. marked a new historical epoch in the religious evolution of Northern India. The racial intellect of the time was compelled to face two opposing psychological trends. The solution lay in the emergence of a magnetic individual who could successfully synthesize the realism of the physical philosophers with the idealism of the ancient Vedas, one who could blend the best of the old with the vigorous and constructive elements of the new. This mighty task, undertaken by Gautama Sakyamuni, was successfully accomplished by setting the "Wheel of the Sacred Law in motion" — that eternal Law which is forever valid, for the past, the present, and for eternities to come. This Law is preserved for posterity in the *Dhammapada*, a sublime ethical treatise of twenty-six cantos, which is to millions of Buddhists what the *Bhagavad-Gita* is to Hindus. Although it is not known when it was first committed to writing, its content suggests a direct descent from spiritual instruction given by Gautama Buddha. Extensive research confirms that these teachings express a universal wisdom, a rediscovery of the eternal Buddha Dharma which could rightly be termed the Sanatana Dharma or "eternal wisdom."

Dhammapada — the path of *dhamma* (Sanskrit *dharma*, a word comprising the essential ideas contained in the words truth, virtue, and law) — was compiled at the First Council of Buddhist

Elders three weeks after the Master's passing. It is therefore the oldest anthology on Buddhism extant. The work consists of a systematic collection of stanzas, terse yet elegant, giving the quintessence of Buddhist wisdom. These stanzas were the distillation of various sermons delivered by Buddha to kings and queens, to ministers and merchants, cowherds and peasants, to grieving mothers, distressed lovers, monks, paupers, saints, and criminals. The first verse of the *Dhammapada* is a direct attack on the dialectical materialism prevalent at the time of Buddha. Mind is not a by-product of physical elements; according to Buddha, mind precedes everything that exists. Nor is the destruction of the physical body the end of human existence. The external cosmos is a creation of mind integrated into a cosmic order of cause and effect.

The Master admonished his leading Arhats not to compel his followers to learn Ardha-Magadhi in order to understand his doctrine. Therefore, when Buddhism expanded, as it rapidly did, beyond the frontiers of Aryavarta, the missionaries began to translate the Dharma into numerous dialects and vernaculars. We know, for example, that *Dharmapadam*, an early Prakrit treatise, was composed during the fourth century B.C.E., and that about a century later, the first Buddhist king, Asoka, sent his son, Arhat Mahinda, to Sri Lanka, where he and his disciples made the first Sinhalese version of this ethical manual, titled *Dhampiya*. Unfortunately, this earliest rendition of *Dhammapada* in Sinhalese-Prakrit fell into oblivion soon after Buddhist prelates retranslated it into Pali along with the other works of the *Tripitaka* in 88-76 B.C.E.

It may be noted that Pali, like most European languages, has no alphabet of its own; in Sri Lanka it was written in Sinhalese script, while Burmese Buddhists used their own characters to write the Pali text. The language used by Buddha, Ardha-Magadhi

dialect, is very similar to the literary language of the Jains. Pali has the coloring of this dialect. Because in a living language terms undergo continual modification as the thought life of the nation changes, the Theravada scholars tried to retranslate the Buddha Dhamma from Sinhalese back into Pali, which has the Sinhalese idiom unaltered with very little Sanskrit influence upon it. Most of the Indian versions are no longer extant, either in printed or manuscript form, in any of the museum libraries of the world. Only a few birchbark manuscripts in Prakrit were discovered in the early part of the nineteenth century in northwestern India.

A Chinese *Dhammapada*, translated from the Sanskrit, was not lost; it was the first book, along with the rest of the *Tripitaka*, ever to be produced in a printing press and was made from wooden blocks in 972 C.E. But not until 1885 was the Pali *Dhammapada*, which had been lost to India for twenty-two centuries or so, reintroduced into that country in Devanagari transliteration by my paternal uncle, Ven. B. Sri Dharmapala Nayaka Thero of Batapola, under the guidance of Rt. Ven. C. A. Silakkandha Nayaka Thero of Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka.

Thirty years earlier, in 1855, a young Danish scholar, Victor Fausboll, published the first European edition of the *Dhammapada* in a Latin translation, with Pali text, and selections of native commentary. Subsequent renditions in German, English, and French followed, making the scripture more readily available to Western students. Later, Dr. E. W. Burlingame's three-volume translation of the voluminous commentary on the *Dhammapada*, written by the renowned Indian scholar Buddhaghosha in the early part of the fifth century C.E., provided the modern reader with a wealth of legendary and historic details regarding the various episodes and circumstances which led to the utterance of these verses. Were Buddha to come to the world today, however, he would probably not countenance some of the stories that

accompany his ethical teachings. For instance, he did not totally deny the existence of spirit in his and anatman (*Pali anatta*) doctrine, but used negative terms to illustrate and clarify the state of spirit.

The volumes on the *Dhammapada* in my possession are mostly in the Devanagari and Sinhalese scripts, the Pali text of which has undergone very little distortion, although the commentaries and translations differ greatly. Some commentators have curious and artificial renderings, which are not akin to the streams of Buddhist and Vedic thought prevalent in India during the time of Buddha. Most of the European and Indian translators have based their renditions upon these artificial commentaries without any deep penetration into the philosophic currents of that early period.

For this present small volume, I have diligently compared the best European translations of the *Dhammapada* with Sanskrit, Burmese, and Chinese versions. Special care has been taken to bring out a faithful word-for-word rendition that is lucid, free of bias and, as far as possible, true to the wisdom and pristine grace of the original Pali texts.

DR. HARISCHANDRA KAVIRATNA

27 February 1980

Oriental Institute

Batapola, Sri Lanka

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is hereby made to Sunrise magazine for permission to publish this translation in book form; to the editorial and printing staffs of Theosophical University Press for their untiring labors during the preparation of the manuscript and through every stage of publication. I have a deep sense of

gratitude to the late James A. Long, Leader of the Theosophical Society, Pasadena, California, who, prior to his death, inspired me to embark upon this rendition. I am also indebted to his successor in office, Grace F. Knoche, for many valuable suggestions.

Grateful thanks are extended to the Rt. Ven. G. Punnasara Maha Thero, Spiritual Instructor at the Government Central College of Madamba, Sri Lanka; also to K. D. Parnavitana, Assistant Archivist, Department of National Archives, Colombo, for supplying the photograph of the wooden covers and first and last pages of the palm leaf manuscript of the Dhammapada which is considered the oldest extant copy of the scripture in the National Archives of Sri Lanka. (see illustration [above](#))

Lastly, a special word of appreciation to my beloved wife for her unfailing support and to my daughter Savitri who did the several typings required for the entire manuscript in Pali and English. —
HARISCHANDRA KAVIRATNA

FOOTNOTES:

1. This word, as here used for the peoples of Aryavarta, is derived from the Sanskrit *arya* (Pali *ariya*) meaning "noble." ([return to text](#))
2. The precise location of this city is not firmly established, though excavations in 1971 at Piprahwa, in the northeastern corner of the Basti district on the Nepalese frontier, uncovered a monastery constructed in four stages. Also at Piprahwa is a stupa erected in the time of King Asoka (273-232 B.C.E.), which bears an inscription suggesting that relics found therein are those of members of the Sakya family, close relatives of Gautama Buddha, possibly including those of Buddha himself. ([return to text](#))
3. The dates of Sakyamuni's birth, death, and parinirvana have

been variously calculated. Buddhist scholars have used at least three different calendars to compute these dates, as well as various astrological configurations. In addition, Western scholars have employed their own calendric ways of reckoning. With such diversity of opinions, no exact date can be determined. ([return to text](#))

[Contents](#)

[Theosophical Society Homepage](#)

***The Twin Verses* — Canto I**

1. All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If with an impure mind one speaks or acts, suffering follows him in the same way as the wheel follows the foot of the drawer (of the chariot).

2. All the phenomena of existence have mind as their precursor, mind as their supreme leader, and of mind are they made. If with a pure mind one speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his shadow that never leaves him.

3. The hatred of those who harbor such ill feelings as, "He reviled me, assaulted me, vanquished me and robbed me," is never appeased.

4. The hatred of those who do not harbor such ill feelings as, "He reviled me, assaulted me, vanquished me and robbed me," is easily pacified.

5. Through hatred, hatreds are never appeased; through non-hatred are hatreds always appeased — and this is a law eternal.

6. Most people never realize that all of us here shall one day perish. But those who do realize that truth settle their quarrels peacefully.

7. The pleasure-seeker who finds delight in physical objects, whose senses are unsubdued, who is immoderate in eating, indolent and listless, him Mara (the Evil One) prevails against, as does the monsoon wind against a weak-rooted tree.

8. He who perceives no pleasure in physical objects, who has perfect control of his senses, is moderate in eating, who is

unflinching in faith, energetic, him Mara does not prevail against any more than does the wind against a rocky mountain.

9. He who dons the yellow robe without even cleansing himself of sensuality, who is devoid of self-restraint and truthfulness, is indeed not fit for the yellow robe.

10. He who is purged of all sensuality, firmly established in moral virtues, possessed of self-restraint and truthfulness, is indeed fit for the yellow robe.

11. Those who take the non-real for the real and the real for the non-real and thus fall victims to erroneous notions, never reach the essence of reality.

12. Having realized the essential as the essential and the nonessential as the nonessential, they by thus following correct thinking attain the essential.

13. As the monsoon rain pierces through the roof of an ill-thatched house, so lust enters the undisciplined mind.

14. As the monsoon rain does not enter a well-thatched house, so lust does not enter a well-disciplined mind.

15. The sinner laments here, laments hereafter, and he laments in both worlds. Having seen himself sullied by his sinful deeds, the evildoer grieves and is afflicted.

16. The doer of wholesome deeds rejoices here and rejoices hereafter; thus he rejoices in both places. Having beheld his pure deeds he rejoices exceedingly.

17. He repents here, repents hereafter, the evildoer repents in both worlds. "Evil has been committed by me," thinking thus he repents. Having taken the path of evil he repents even more.

18. He rejoices here, he rejoices hereafter, the doer of wholesome

deeds rejoices in both worlds. "Good has been committed by me," thinking thus he rejoices. Having taken the celestial path, he rejoices exceedingly.

19. A heedless man, though he utters much of the Canon, but does not act accordingly, is like unto a cowherd who counts the cattle of others. He is, verily, not a sharer of the fruit of the monastic life.

20. A man, though he recites only a little of the Canon, but acts according to the precepts of the Sacred Law, who, having got rid of lust, hatred and delusion, has firmly established himself in liberated thought, and clinging to no worldly possessions here or hereafter — such a one becomes indeed a sharer of the true fruit of the monastic life.

[Canto II](#)
[Contents](#)

On Vigilance — Canto II

21. Vigilance is the path to immortality; non-vigilance is the path to death; the vigilant do not die; the non-vigilant, though alive, are like unto the dead.

22. Knowing this outstanding feature of vigilance, the wise delight in vigilance, rejoicing in the ways of the Noble Ones (*ariya*).

23. Those wise ones, contemplative, ever-striving sages of great prowess, realize nirvana, the incomparable bliss of yoga (union).

24. Greatly increasing is the glory of him who exerts himself, is thoughtful, pure in character, analytical, self-restrained, vigilant, and lives according to Dhamma (the Law).

25. Through diligence, vigilance, self-restraint and subjugation of the senses, the wise aspirant makes an island for himself that no flood could engulf.

26. Thoughtless men of great ignorance sink into negligence. But the wise man guards vigilance as his supreme treasure.

27. Betake yourselves not unto negligence; do not indulge in sensuous pleasures. For the vigilant and thoughtful aspirant acquires an amplitude of bliss.

28. When the wise man casts off laxity through vigilance, he is like unto a man who, having ascended the high tower of wisdom, looks upon the sorrowing people with an afflicted heart. He beholds suffering ignorant men as a mountaineer beholds people in a valley.

29. Vigilant among the heedless, wakeful among the sleeping ones, the wise man forges ahead, as a swift steed outstrips a horse

of lesser strength.

30. Through vigilance, did Maghavan (Indra) attain to the sovereignty of the gods. Vigilance is ever praised and negligence is ever loathed by the sages.

31. The bhikkhu (monk) who delights in vigilance, who regards negligence with abhorrence, advances, consuming all subtle and gross fetters, like the fire.

32. The bhikkhu who delights in vigilance, who looks upon negligence with abhorrence, is not liable to fall back, because he is indeed close to nirvana.

[Canto III](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Mind* — Canto III**

33. The discerning man straightens his mind, which is fickle and unsteady, difficult to guard and restrain, as the skilled fletcher straightens the shaft (of the arrow).
34. As the fish, taken out of its watery home and thrown on land, thrashes around, so does the mind tremble, while freeing itself from the dominion of Mara (the Evil One).
35. The mind is unstable and flighty. It wanders wherever it desires. Therefore it is good to control the mind. A disciplined mind brings happiness.
36. The mind is incomprehensible and exceedingly subtle. It wanders wherever it desires. Therefore, let the wise aspirant watch over the mind. A well-guarded mind brings happiness.
37. Those who control the mind which wanders afar, solitary, incorporeal, and which resides in the inner cavern (of the heart), will liberate themselves from the shackles of Mara.
38. He whose mind is not steady, who is ignorant of the true Dhamma, whose tranquillity is ruffled, the wisdom of such a man does not come to fullness.
39. Fear has he none, whose mind is not defiled by passion, whose heart is devoid of hatred, who has surpassed (the dichotomy of) good and evil and who is vigilant.
40. Knowing the corporeal body to be fragile, as an earthen jar, and fortifying the mind like a citadel, let the wise man fight Mara with the sword of wisdom. He should now protect what he has won, without attachment.

41. Alas! ere long, this corporeal body will lie flat upon the earth, unheeded, devoid of consciousness, like a useless log of wood.

42. An ill-directed mind does greater harm to the self than a hater does to another hater or an enemy to another enemy.

43. Neither father nor mother, nor any other kindred, can confer greater benefit than does the well-directed mind.

[Canto IV](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Flowers* — Canto IV**

44. Who shall gain victory over this earth together with the domain of Yama (ruler of the Underworld) with its gods? Who shall find the well-proclaimed Dhammapada (path of truth), even as the expert gardener selects the choicest flower?

45. The disciple will gain victory over the earth and the realm of Yama together with its gods. The true disciple will indeed find the well-proclaimed Dhammapada, even as the expert gardener selects the choicest flower.

46. Recognizing this corporeal body to be evanescent as foam, comprehending this worldly nature as a mirage, and having broken the flower-arrows of Cupid (Mara), the true aspirant will go beyond the realm of the Evil One.

47. The hedonist who seeks only the blossoms of sensual delights, who indulges only in such pleasures, him the Evil One carries off, as a flood carries off the inhabitants of a sleeping village.

48. The hedonist who seeks only the blossoms of sensual delights, whose mind is agitated, him the Evil One (Mara) brings under his sway even before his carnal desires are satiated.

49. As the bee takes away the nectar, and departs from the flower without harming its color or fragrance, so let a sage move about in the village.

50. Let the aspirant observe not the perversities of others, nor what others have and have not done; rather should he consider what he has done and what he has yet to do.

51. Like unto a lovely flower which is exquisite in color, yet lacking in fragrance, even so prove futile the well-spoken words

of the man who acts not up to them.

52. Like unto a lovely flower of charming color and sweet fragrance, even so prove fruitful the words of him who acts according to them.

53. As many a garland can be strung from a mass of flowers, so should mortal man born in this world perform many wholesome deeds.

54. The fragrance of flowers does not travel against the wind, be it that of sandalwood, tagara, or jasmine. But the fragrance of the virtuous man travels even against the wind. The virtuous man pervades all directions with his purity.

55. Among all the fragrant scents, like sandalwood, tagara, the water lily and the wild jasmine, the fragrance of moral purity is foremost and unique.

56. That scent of sandalwood, tagara plant (and other fragrant things) is of little account; whereas the aroma of the virtuous expands in a greater sphere, even up to the gods.

57. Mara (the Evil One) cannot approach the path of the virtuous, the vigilant, and those who are emancipated through wisdom.

58, 59. As upon a heap of rubbish, thrown on the highway, a lily grows and blooms, fragrant and elegant, so among the ignorant multitudes does the disciple of the Fully Enlightened One shine in resplendent wisdom.

***The Fool* — Canto V**

60. Long is the night to a sleepless person; long is the distance of a league to a tired person; long is the circle of rebirths to a fool who does not know the true Law.

61. If a genuine seeker, who sets forth in search of a superior friend, does not come in contact with such a one or at least an equal, then he should resolutely choose the solitary course, for there can be no companionship with the ignorant.

62. "I have children, I have wealth," thinking thus, the fool torments himself. But, when he is not the possessor of his own self, how then of children? How then of wealth?

63. The fool who knows of his ignorance, indeed, through that very consideration becomes a wise man. But that conceited fool who considers himself learned is, in fact, called a fool.

64. A fool who associates with a wise man throughout his life may not know the Dhamma any more than the ladle the taste of soup.

65. As the tongue detects the taste of the broth, so the intelligent person who associates with a wise man even for a moment comes to realize the essence of the Law.

66. The unwise, fools who are enemies to themselves, go about committing sinful deeds which produce bitter fruits.

67. Not well done is that deed which one, having performed, has to repent; whose consequence one has to face with tears and lamentation.

68. Well done is that deed which one, having performed, does not repent, and whose consequence one experiences with delight and

contentment.

69. So long as an evil deed does not mature (bring disastrous results), the fool thinks his deed to be sweet as honey. But, when his evil deed matures, he falls into untold misery.

70. Though a fool (practicing austerity) may eat his food from the tip of a blade of kusa grass for months and months, he is not worth one-sixteenth part of those who have realized the Good Law.

71. As fresh-drawn milk from the cow does not soon curdle, so an evil deed does not produce immediate fruits. It follows the wrongdoer like a smoldering spark that burns throughout and then suddenly blazes up.

72. Whatever knowledge a fool acquires causes him only harm. It cleaves his head and destroys his good nature (through conceit).

73, 74. Unwise is the monk who desires undue adoration from others, lordship over other monks, authority among the monastic dwellings and homage even from outside groups. Moreover, he thinks, "May both laymen and monks highly esteem my action! May they be subject to me in all actions, great or small." Such is the grasping desire of a worldly monk whose haughtiness and conceit ever increase.

75. One path leads to worldly gain and honor; quite another path leads to nirvana. Having realized this truth, let not the monk, the true follower of the Enlightened One, yearn for homage from others, but let him cultivate serenity of mind and dispassion.

***The Wise* — Canto VI**

76. The disciple should associate with a wise friend, who detects and censures his faults, and who points out virtues as a guide tells of buried treasures. There is happiness, not woe, to him who associates with such an intelligent friend.

77. The man who exhorts, instructs and dissuades his fellowmen from unworthy acts is dear to the virtuous and hated by the wicked.

78. Do not keep company with evildoing friends nor with people who are base; associate with the good, associate with the best of men.

79. One who drinks the nectar of the Good Law lives happily with a tranquil mind. The wise man ever delights in the Dhamma as realized by the Noble Ones.

80. Irrigators conduct the water wherever they wish; fletchers shape the shafts; carpenters work (1) the wood, and wise men discipline themselves.

81. As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, so the wise are not shaken by censure or praise.

82. The wise, having hearkened to the Good Law, become serene like unto a deep, calm and crystal-clear lake.

83. Good men abandon lusting after things; they take no pleasure in sensual speech; when touched by happiness or sorrow, the wise show no elation or dejection.

84. For the sake of oneself, or for the sake of another, one should not long for a son, wealth or a kingdom. He who does not crave

success or prosperity by wrongful means is indeed virtuous, wise and honorable.

85 Few among men cross over to the further shore; the multitudes who remain run to and fro on this shore.

86. Those who live according to the Dhamma which has been well proclaimed (by the Buddha) will cross over the impassable realm of death to the further shore.

87. Having abandoned the ways of darkness, let the wise follow the light. Having come from home to homelessness, let him enjoy the bliss of solitude, so difficult to achieve.

88. He should focus his mind upon that exalted state (nirvana). Having given up all sense pleasures, possessing nothing, let the wise, cleansing the mind from defilements, purify the self.

89. Those whose minds are well fixed upon the elements of enlightenment (*sambodhi*),(2) who, without hankering after anything, glory in renunciation, whose biases are extinguished, who are full of light, they indeed have attained the bliss of nirvana in this very world.

FOOTNOTES:

1. The Pali verb *namayanti* literally means "bend." ([return to text](#))

2. The seven links of *sambodhi* are: 1) mindfulness; 2) wisdom; 3) energy; 4) joyousness; 5) serenity; 6) concentrated meditation; 7) equanimity. ([return to text](#))

[Canto VII](#)

[Contents](#)

The Holy One — Canto VII

90. The fever of passion afflicts not the holy one (*arahant*), who has completed his samsaric journey (cycle of rebirths), who is free from sorrow, absolutely emancipated, and who has destroyed all knots of attachment.

91. Mindful ones constantly strive, they do not cling to a dwelling place; like swans that abandon a lake, the holy ones abandon house and home.

92. Those who have no accumulation (of worldly possessions), who have a well-regulated diet, who are within range of perfect deliverance through realization of the Void and the conditionlessness of all forms (*sunnata* and *animitta*), their holy path is as difficult to trace as is the track of birds in the air.

93. He whose mental attachments are extinguished, who is not immoderate in food, who is within range of perfect deliverance through realization of the Void and the conditionlessness of all forms, his holy path is as difficult to trace as is the track of birds in the air.

94. He whose senses are subdued, like horses well trained by a charioteer, whose pride is destroyed and who is free from corruption, even the gods cherish such a one.

95. He who is unperturbed like the earth, who is steadfast like Indra's post (in the portal of a city), whose character is as pure and translucent as a clear lake, to such a holy one there are no further cycles of rebirth (*samsara*).

96. His mind becomes calm. His word and deed are calm. Such is the state of tranquillity of one who has attained to deliverance

through the realization of truth.

97. He who is not credulous, who knows the nature of the Uncreated (*akata*), who has severed all the bonds (of rebirth), who has destroyed all the influxes of evil and given up all cravings, he, indeed, is noblest among men.

98. That spot is truly delightful where the Holy Ones (*arahant*) reside, be it village or forest, valley or high ground.

99. Charming are the forests which do not attract the multitudes. But the holy ones, free from attachments, find delight in them for they are not seekers after the allurements of the senses.

[Canto VIII](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Thousands* — Canto VIII**

100. A single word full of meaning, hearing which one becomes at peace, is better than a thousand words which are empty of meaning.

101. A single couplet pregnant with meaning, hearing which one becomes at peace, is better than a thousand couplets composed of meaningless words.

102. One word of the Dhamma, hearing which one becomes at peace, is better than the utterance of a hundred verses which consist of superficial words.

103. Though one were to conquer a million men in battle, that man who conquers himself is the greater victor.

104,105. To overcome one's own self is indeed better than to conquer others.

Neither god nor demigod, nor Mara with Brahma, can undo the victory of him who has subjugated himself and who practices self-restraint.

106. Were a man month after month for a hundred years to offer sacrifices by the thousands, and were he to pay homage even for a moment to one who is self-governed, that homage is superior to the sacrifices of a hundred years.

107. Were a man for a hundred years to tend the sacrificial fire in the forest, and were he to pay homage even for a moment to one who is self-governed, that homage is superior to the fire-sacrifice of a hundred years.

108. Whatever offering or sacrifice a person, who is desirous of

gaining merit, may make throughout the course of a year, that is not worth one fourth of the merit acquired by homage paid to one of upright life.

109. In him, who always honors and respects the aged, four conditions will increase: longevity, beauty, happiness and strength.

110. One day's life of an Arhat who is virtuous and contemplative is better than a hundred years of life of one who is dissolute and of uncontrolled mind.

111. One day's life of him who is wise and contemplative is better than a life of a hundred years of one who is unwise and of uncontrolled mind.

112. One day's life of a person who is vigorous and resolute is better than a life of a hundred years of him who is weak and indolent.

113. A single day's life of one who clearly sees the origin and cessation (of all composite things), is better than a hundred years of life of him who does not perceive the origin and cessation of things.

114. A single day's life of one who perceives the immortal state is far better than if one were to live a hundred years without perceiving this state.

115. A single day's life of one who realizes the Sublime Truth is indeed better than a life of a hundred years of one who does not realize the Sublime Truth.

***Evil* — Canto IX**

116. Make haste in doing good and restrain the mind from evil; if one is slow in doing good, the mind finds delight in evil.

117. If a man commits evil let him not repeat it again and again; let him not delight in it, for the accumulation of sin brings suffering.

118. If a man commits a meritorious deed, let him perform it again and again; let him develop a longing for doing good; happiness is the outcome of the accumulation of merit.

119. Even the wrongdoer finds some happiness so long as (the fruit of) his misdeed does not mature; but when it does mature, then he sees its evil results.

120. Even the doer of good deeds knows evil (days) so long as his merit has not matured; but when his merit has fully matured, then he sees the happy results of his meritorious deeds.

121. Do not think lightly of evil, saying, "It will not come to me." By the constant fall of waterdrops, a pitcher is filled; likewise the unwise person, accumulating evil little by little, becomes full of evil.

122. Do not think lightly of merit, saying, "It will not come to me." By the constant fall of waterdrops, a pitcher is filled; likewise the wise person, accumulating merit little by little, becomes full of merit.

123. As a merchant who has limited escort, yet carries much wealth, avoids a perilous road, as a man who is desirous of living long avoids poison, so in the same way should the wise shun evil.

124. If one does not have a wound in his hand, he may carry poison in his palm. Poison does not affect him who has no wound. There is no ill effect for the person who does no wrong.

125. Whoever offends an innocent, pure and faultless person, the evil (of his act) rebounds on that fool, even as fine dust thrown against the wind.

126. (After death), some are reborn in the womb; evildoers are born in hell; those who commit meritorious deeds go to heaven; and those who are free from worldly desires realize nirvana.

127. Not in the sky, not in the middle of the ocean, not even in the cave of a mountain, should one seek refuge, for there exists no place in the world where one can escape the effects of wrongdoing.

128. Not in the sky, not in the middle of the ocean, not even in the cave of a mountain, should one seek refuge, for there exists no place in the world where one will not be overpowered by death.

[Canto X](#)
[Contents](#)

***The Rod of Punishment* — Canto X**

129. All tremble before the rod of punishment; all fear death; likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay.

130. All tremble before the rod of punishment; for all life is dear; likening others to oneself, one should neither slay nor cause to slay.

131. He who, desirous of happiness for himself, torments with a rod others who are likewise seeking enjoyment, shall not obtain happiness in the hereafter.

132. He who, desirous of happiness for himself, does not torment others who likewise long for happiness, shall obtain happiness in the hereafter.

133. Do not speak harshly to anyone; those thus spoken to will retaliate in kind; discordant indeed will be the response, and soon retribution will overtake you.

134. If you can make yourself as silent as a shattered bronze gong, then you have attained to the peace of nirvana, for now there is no discord in you.

135. As a cowherd with his rod drives cattle to the pasture, so do old age and death drive the lives of sentient beings.

136. When a person ignorant (of the Dhamma) commits evil deeds, he does not realize their nature. The stupid man burns (suffers) through these deeds as if consumed by fire.

137. He who inflicts punishment upon those who do not deserve it, and hurts those who are harmless, such a person will soon

come to face one of these ten states:

138,139,140. He may soon come to terrible pain, great deprivations, physical injury, deep-rooted ailment or mental disorder, the wrath of the monarch or a dreadful accusation, loss of relatives, the complete destruction of wealth, or a sudden fire may break out and burn his houses. After the dissolution of his physical body, he will surely be born in hell.

141. Neither nakedness, nor matted locks; neither applying mud (all over the body), nor fasting, nor lying on the bare earth; neither besmearing oneself with soot, nor squatting on one's heels, can purify a man who has not got rid of his doubts.

142. Even though a person be dressed in fine clothes, if he develops tranquillity, is quiet, self-disciplined, resolute and practices celibacy, and abstains from injuring all other beings, he is indeed a Brahman, an ascetic and a monk.

143. Is there any man in this world so self-restrained through modesty that he avoids censure as a self-respecting horse avoids the whip?

144. As a well-trained horse when touched by the whip, even so be you strenuous and eager. By devotion, virtue, effort, concentration, and by the critical investigation of truth (*dhamma*) may you abandon this great suffering (of *samsara*), perfect in wisdom, conduct and awareness.

145. Irrigators conduct water wherever they wish; fletchers shape the shafts; carpenters work the wood, and wise men discipline themselves.

***Old Age* — Canto XI**

146. Why laugh, why be jubilant, when all is constantly burning (with desires)? Should you not seek the light of wisdom when you are enveloped by the darkness of ignorance?

147. Behold this illusory human image, embellished (by rich attire and jewels), full of corruptions, a structure of bones, liable to constant illness, full of countless hankerings, in which there is nothing permanent or stable.

148. This frail form is a nest of diseases. It is fragile and putrid. It disintegrates and death is the end of life.

149. These dove-grey bones are like unto the gourds thrown away in the autumnal season. What pleasure is there in looking at them?

150. Here is a citadel built of bones, plastered with flesh and blood, wherein are concealed decay, death, vanity and deceit.

151. The gaily decorated royal chariots wear out. So likewise does this body. But the truth of the righteous does not wear out with age. Thus do the enlightened proclaim it to the wise.

152. The man of little spiritual learning grows like an ox; his flesh increases, but his wisdom does not.

153. For countless births have I passed through this cycle of births and deaths, seeking the builder of this tabernacle, but in vain. Sorrowful indeed is this cyclic repetition of births.

154. O builder of the house, I have seen you; you shall not build the house again. All the rafters are broken; the ridgepole is sundered. Mind has arrived at dissolution (nirvana), having

attained the extinction of all cravings (*tanha*).

155. Those who do not practice self-discipline, who do not acquire wealth in their youth, when they become old, pine away, like old herons in a dried-up lake where there are no fish.

156. Those who do not practice self-discipline, who do not acquire wealth in their youth, lie like broken arrows, lamenting the deeds of the past.

[Canto XII](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Self* — Canto XII**

157. If a man esteems the self, let him guard himself with great care. Let the wise man keep vigil over himself, in one of the three watches (of life or of the night).

158. Let each first firmly establish himself in right conduct, then only may he admonish others. Such a wise man does not suffer blemish.

159. Let a man mold himself into what he admonishes others to be. Thus well-controlled he can control others. It is extremely difficult indeed to control one's own self.

160. The self is the master of the self. Who else can that master be? With the self fully subdued, one obtains the sublime refuge which is very difficult to achieve.

161. The sin committed by oneself, born of oneself, produced by oneself, crushes the evil-minded one as the diamond cuts the precious stone.

162. As the parasitic maluva creeper destroys the sal tree which it entwines, so the immoral conduct of a man gradually makes of him what his enemy would have him be.

163. It is quite easy to perform evil deeds which are not beneficial to oneself. But it is extremely difficult to perform a deed which is righteous and beneficial.

164. If an evil-minded one, by reason of his false views, reviles the teaching of the Arhats, the Noble Ones, and the virtuous, verily he brings forth the fruit of his own destruction, even as does the katthaka reed.

165. By self alone is evil done; by self alone is one defiled; by self alone is evil not done; by self alone is one purified. Purity and impurity depend on oneself; no one can purify another.

166. However much one is engaged in activities for the good of others, one should not neglect his own (spiritual) purpose. Having discerned one's own task, let him apply himself to that task with diligence.

[Canto XIII](#)

[Contents](#)

***The World* — Canto XIII**

167. Let no one follow a degraded course of existence, nor live in indolence; let him not follow false views, nor be a person who prolongs his worldly existence.

168. Awake! Be not heedless. Follow the truth (*dhamma*). He who embarks upon the path of truth lives happily in this world and in the hereafter.

169. Follow the law of morality; do not follow the law of immorality; he who embarks upon the path of truth lives happily in this world and in the hereafter.

170. Look upon the world as a bubble, regard it as a mirage; who thus perceives the world, him Mara, the king of death, does not see.

171. Come, behold this world, resplendent like unto a royal chariot. Fools are immersed in it; but the wise have no attachment for it.

172. He who formerly was heedless, but, after due consideration, becomes vigilant, illumines the world as the moon freed from a cloud.

173. He whose evil deeds are superseded by meritorious deeds, illumines the world as the moon freed from a cloud.

174. This world is blind. Few are they who can see things as they are. As birds escaped from the net, few go to heaven.

175. Swans fly in the path of the sun; those who possess psychic powers (*iddhi*) go through the air. The wise, having conquered Mara and his hosts, go forth out of this world.

176. There is no sin that a man will not commit who utters falsehood, who has transgressed the one law of truthfulness (*dhamma*), and who has rejected the other world.

177. Indeed the miserly do not go to the world of the gods; the foolish do not praise liberality. But the wise man who takes pleasure in giving, through that very act becomes happy in the next world.

178. The fruit of entering the stream (the path) is superior to that of the sole sovereignty of the world, or going to heaven, or the supreme lordship over the whole universe.

[Canto XIV](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Enlightened One* — Canto XIV**

179. By what path will you lead the Buddha of infinite range of perception, the Pathless One, whose conquest of passions cannot be undone, into whose conquest no one in this world enters?

180. By what path will you lead the Buddha of infinite range of perception, the Pathless One, in whom there is not that entangling and poisonous craving which leads one astray (to another state of birth)?

181. Those wise ones who are absorbed in meditation, who take delight in the inner calm of renunciation, such mindful and perfectly awakened ones even the devas (gods) hold dear.

182. Difficult is it to be born as a human being; difficult is the existence of mortals; difficult is the hearing of the Sublime Truth; rare is the appearance of the Enlightened Ones (Buddhas).

183. Abstention from all evil, the doing of good deeds, and the purification of the mind, is the admonition of the Enlightened Ones.

184. Forbearance which is long-suffering is the highest austerity. The Buddhas declare nirvana to be the supreme state. Verily he is not an anchorite who harms another; nor is he an ascetic who causes grief to another.

185. Not reviling, not injuring, practicing restraint according to the moral code (*patimokkha*) leading to freedom, moderation in eating, living in solitude, dwelling with diligence on the highest thoughts — this is the teaching of the Buddhas.

186, 187. There is no satisfying the passions even by a shower of gold coins; the wise man, knowing that sense delights are of

fleeting pleasure and productive of pain, finds no joy even in celestial pleasures. The true disciple of the Fully Enlightened One delights only in the destruction of all worldly desires.

188. Men driven by fear betake themselves to numerous refuges, such as mountains, forests, groves, sacred trees and shrines.

189. Verily, none of these is a safe refuge, nor is it the supreme refuge. For even after arriving at a refuge, one is not emancipated from all suffering.

190. He who takes refuge in the Enlightened One (*buddha*), in his Doctrine (*dhamma*), and in his Community of Monks (*sangha*), perceives with clarity of wisdom the Four Noble Truths, namely:

191, 192. Suffering, the Origin of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, the Noble Eightfold Path (1) that leads to the cessation of suffering.

That, verily, is the safe refuge and the supreme refuge. After having arrived at that refuge, a man is emancipated from all suffering.

193. An illumined person (a Buddha) is indeed very rare. He is not born everywhere. Wherever such a one takes birth, that family prospers.

194. Blessed is the birth of the Buddhas; blessed is the discourse on the Noble Law; blessed is the harmony of the Community of Monks; blessed is the devotion of those living in brotherhood.

195, 196. He who pays homage to those who deserve homage, whether the Enlightened Ones or their disciples; he who has overcome the host of passions, and crossed the stream of grief and lamentations; he who pays homage to such as are emancipated and fearless — his merit cannot be measured.

FOOTNOTES:

1. See GLOSSARY for detailed list (p. 165). ([return to text](#))

[Canto XV](#)

[Contents](#)

***Happiness* — Canto XV**

197. Blessed indeed are we who live among those who hate, hating no one; amidst those who hate, let us dwell without hatred.

198. Blessed indeed are we who live among those who are ailing, without ailments; amidst those who are so afflicted, let us live in good health.

199. Blessed indeed are we who live among those who are yearning for sense delights, without yearning for such things; amidst those who are yearning for sense delights, let us dwell without yearning.

200. Happy indeed are we who live without possessions. Let us feed on happiness, like the radiant gods (who feed on spiritual bliss).

201. Victory breeds enmity; the vanquished one dwells in sorrow; the composed person lives happily, disregarding both victory and defeat.

202. There is no fire like passion; there is no blemish like hatred; there is no suffering like physical existence (the five aggregates or skandhas) and there is no bliss equal to the calm (of nirvana).

203. Greed is the worst of afflictions; mental and emotional tendencies are the greatest of sorrows. Having perceived this fact truly, one realizes nirvana, the highest bliss.

204. Health is the greatest of gifts, contentment the greatest of riches; trust is the finest of relationships and nirvana the highest bliss.

205. Having tasted the sweetness of solitude and of inner

tranquillity, he becomes free of woe and sin, enjoying the sweetness of the bliss of the Dhamma.

206. Glorious is it to see the Noble Ones; their company at all times brings happiness; by not seeing the spiritually ignorant, one will always be happy.

207. He who leads a life in the company of fools suffers long; it is as painful to live with fools as it is with a foe; association with the wise brings happiness as does the company of one's kinsfolk.

208. Therefore, one should follow the steadfast, the wise, the educated, the self-reliant, the dutiful and the noble. Even as the moon follows the path of the stars, so ought one to follow such a virtuous and highly intelligent man.

[Canto XVI](#)

[Contents](#)

***Affection* — Canto XVI**

209. He who gives himself to what is not befitting and thus forgets his own quest; he who indulges in sense pleasures envies the person who exerts himself in meditation.

210. Do not become attached to what is pleasing nor to what is displeasing; not to see what is dear to one is painful, as also is the sight of the unpleasant.

211. Therefore, let no one cherish anything, inasmuch as the loss of what is beloved is hard. There are no fetters for him who knows neither pleasure nor pain.

212. From pleasure arises sorrow; from pleasure arises fear. To him who is free from pleasure there is no sorrow. Whence, then, comes fear?

213. From affection arises sorrow; from affection arises fear. To him who is free from affection there is no sorrow. Whence fear?

214. From attachment arises sorrow; from attachment arises fear. To him who is free from attachment there is no sorrow. Whence fear?

215. From desire arises sorrow, from desire arises fear. To him who is free from desire there is no sorrow. Whence fear?

216. From craving arises sorrow; from craving arises fear. To him who is free from craving there is no sorrow. Whence fear?

217. He who possesses virtue and spiritual insight, who is well established in the Dhamma, who is truthful, who performs his duties, him the people hold dear.

218. He in whom is born a sublime longing for the Ineffable,

whose mind is permeated by this longing, whose thoughts are not bewildered by attachment — such a person is called "one bound upstream."

219. When a man who has been away for a long time returns home safely, his kinsmen, friends and well-wishers welcome him gladly.

220. When a man has departed from this world to the next, the effects of his good deeds receive him gladly, even as kinsmen welcome a friend on his return home.

[Canto XVII](#)

[Contents](#)

Anger — Canto XVII

221. Let a man abandon anger, let him renounce pride and let him get beyond all worldly fetters. No suffering befalls him who is passionless and clings neither to mind nor to form (*nama-rupa*).

222. He who controls his rising anger as a skilled driver curbs a rolling chariot, him I call a true charioteer. Others merely hold the reins.

223. Let a man conquer anger by love, let him subdue evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality and the liar by truth.

224. One should always speak the truth, not yield to anger, and give, even though it be little, to the person who begs. By these three virtues, a man is able to come into the presence of the devas.

225. Those sages who observe nonviolence, who are ever controlled in body, attain the changeless state (nirvana) where, having gone, they suffer no more.

226. The influxes of passion disappear in those who are ever vigilant, who are absorbed day and night in spiritual studies, and who are bent on realization of nirvana.

227. This is an old saying, O Atula, not one merely of today: "They blame him who remains silent, they blame him who speaks much, they even blame him who speaks in moderation." There is none in this world who is not blamed.

228. There never existed, nor will there ever exist, nor does there exist today anyone who is always scorned or always praised.

229, 230. If wise men, after due observation day after day, praise one who is flawless in character, highly intelligent and endowed with religious insight and virtue, who is like unto a coin made of the purest gold from the jambu river — who would dare censure such a man? Even the devas praise him; he is praised even by Brahma.

231. One should guard against the agitations of the body; he should be restrained in body. Having abandoned the bodily sins (1), he should cultivate good conduct in body.

232. One should guard against the agitations of speech; he should be restrained in speech. Having abandoned the verbal sins (2), he should cultivate good conduct in speech.

233. One should guard against the agitations of mind; he should be restrained of mind. Having abandoned the mental sins (3), he should cultivate good conduct in mind.

234. The wise who are controlled in body, who likewise are controlled in speech, those wise men who are controlled in mind, are indeed well controlled.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Bodily sins are threefold: 1) killing; 2) stealing; 3) adultery. [\(return to text\)](#)

2. Verbal sins are fourfold: 1) falsehood; 2) slander; 3) obscene speech; 4) idle gossip. [\(return to text\)](#)

3. Mental sins are: 1) covetousness; 2) malevolence; 3) false views. [\(return to text\)](#)

***Impurity* — Canto XVIII**

235. You are now like a withered leaf; even the messengers of Yama (death) have drawn near you. You stand at the threshold of departure, with no provision for your journey.

236. Make of yourself a light; strive hard, without delay, and be wise; purged of moral impurities and being thus stainless, you will then enter the celestial realm of the Noble Ones.

237. Your life has now come to a close; you have come into the presence of death. There is no halting-place for you on the way, and no provision have you made for your journey.

238. Make of yourself a light; strive hard, without delay, and be wise; purged of moral impurities and being thus stainless, you will not then come again into birth and old age.

239. Little by little, ever and anon, the wise man should remove his moral impurities as a smith blows away the dross of silver.

240. As rust arising from iron straightway corrodes the very iron from which it arose, even so the evil deeds of the transgressor lead him to the state of woe.

241. Non-recitation is the rust of the scriptures; non-exertion is the rust of households; sloth is the rust of beauty; negligence is the rust of a watchman.

242. An unchaste life is the blemish of woman; niggardliness is the taint of a benefactor; impurities are indeed evils in this world and in the next.

243. But there is an impurity greater than all impurities — this is ignorance. Rid yourselves of this greatest impurity, O monks, be

you free from all impurities.

244. Life is easy for him who is shameless, impudent as a crow-hero (rascal) and a slanderer, a braggart, arrogant and impure in living.

245. But life is difficult for him who is unassuming, constantly seeking that which is pure, disinterested in worldly things, not boastful, who lives in purity and is endowed with insight.

246, 247. He who destroys life here, who utters untruth, who takes what is not given to him, who goes to the wife of another, who indulges in intoxicating liquors, such a man, while in this world, destroys the root of his being.

248. Know this, O man, evil-natured ones are unrestrained; let not greed and wrongdoing lead you to untold misery for a long time.

249. People give alms according to their faith and inclination. But he who frets about the drink and food given to others does not attain peace of mind by day or by night.

250. He in whom that feeling is totally uprooted and destroyed, that person attains peace of mind by day and by night.

251. There is no fire like passion; there is no stranglehold like hatred; there is no snare like delusion; there is no torrent like craving.

252. The faults of others are easily seen, but one's own faults are perceived with difficulty. One winnows the faults of others like chaff, but conceals his own faults as a fowler covers his body with twigs and leaves.

253. If a man sees only the faults of others, and is ever taking offense, his appetite for sense pleasures increases and he is far from the eradication of his desires.

254. There is no footprint in the sky (*akasa*); there is no ascetic outwardly. Mankind delights in the illusory world; the Tathagatas (Buddhas) find no delight therein.

255. There is no footprint in the sky; there is no ascetic outwardly; no composite things are eternal; there is no instability in the Buddhas.

[Canto XIX](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Righteous* — Canto XIX**

256. He who arbitrates a case by force does not thereby become just (established in Dhamma). But the wise man is he who carefully discriminates between right and wrong.

257. He who leads others by nonviolence, righteously and equitably, is indeed a guardian of justice, wise and righteous.

258. One is not wise merely because he talks much. But he who is calm, free from hatred and fear, is verily called a wise man.

259. One is not a supporter of Dhamma merely because he talks much. But he who hears only a little of the Law, yet perceives its essence by diligent exertion, and does not neglect it, is indeed a true supporter of Dhamma.

260. One does not become an elder by reason of his hair being grey. Of course, he may be ripe in age, but he is a person "grown old in vain."

261. He in whom there dwell truth, virtue, nonviolence, self-restraint and moderation, such a wise monk who has cast away all impurities is indeed called an elder (*thera*).

262. Not by mere ornate speech, nor by a beautiful complexion, does a man who is jealous, selfish and crafty become worthy of respect.

263. But he in whom these evils are completely uprooted and extinguished, who has given up hatred and is wise — indeed he is called worthy of respect.

264. Not by tonsure does one who is undisciplined and utters lies become a monk. How can he who is overcome by desire and

greed become a monk?

265. But he who constantly stills his evil tendencies, small or great, is called a true monk (*samana*), because he has quieted all these evils.

266. He is not a religious mendicant because he begs alms from others. He does not become a bhikkhu merely by outward observances of the Law.

267. But he who has transcended both merit and demerit, who leads a life of purity and lives in this world in full realization of the Truth, he indeed is called a bhikkhu.

268, 269. By quietude alone one does not become a sage (*muni*) if he is foolish and ignorant. But he who, as if holding a pair of scales, takes the good and shuns the evil, is a wise man; he is indeed a muni by that very reason. He who understands both good and evil as they really are, is called a true sage.

270. He who injures living beings is not an Ariya (noble). By nonviolence towards all living beings one becomes an Ariya.

271, 272. Not merely by the practice of morality and self-discipline nor by great learning, not even by samadhi (profound spiritual contemplation) or by a life of seclusion, do I reach the bliss of freedom which is not attainable by the ordinary mortal. O bhikkhu, rest not content until you have attained the extinction of all desires.

[Canto XX](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Path* — Canto XX**

273. Of paths the Eightfold is the best; of truths the Four Noble Truths are the best; of all states Detachment is the best; of men (1) the Seeing One (Buddha) is the foremost.

274. This is the path; there is no other path that leads to purity of insight. Follow this path, for this path bewilders the Evil One (Mara).

275. Having entered upon the path you will come to an end of your suffering. Having myself recognized this, I proclaimed this path which removes all thorns.

276. You yourself must make the effort. The Tathagatas (Buddhas) can only point the way. Those who have entered the path and become meditative are freed from the fetters of Mara.

277. "Transient are all composite things"; he who perceives the truth of this gets disgusted with this world of suffering. This is the path to purity.

278. "Sorrowful are all composite things"; he who perceives the truth of this gets disgusted with this world of suffering. This is the path to purity.

279. "All forms of existence are unreal" (*an-atta*); he who perceives the truth of this gets disgusted with this world of suffering. This is the path to purity.

280. He who does not get up when it is time to do so; who, although youthful and strong, is yet given to indolence, is weak in resolution and thought — such an idle and lazy person does not find the path to wisdom.

281. One should be watchful over his speech, well-restrained in mind, and commit no unwholesome deed with his body. Let him purify this threefold avenue of action (karma), and he will tread the path made known by the sages.

282. Verily, from devotion (*yoga*) arises wisdom, from nondevotion springs the loss of wisdom. Having become aware of this twofold path that leads to progress and decline, let him place himself in such a way that his wisdom increases.

283. Cut down the whole forest (of desires), not just a tree. From the forest arises fear. Cut down the forest and its brushwood, O monks, and be emancipated.

284. As long as the brushwood of a man's lust towards women is not completely destroyed, even to the last seedling, so long is his mind fettered as a suckling calf is bound to its mother.

285. Cut off the love of self as one would pluck an autumnal white lotus. Proceed then upon that (Eightfold) path of peace — the nirvana as expounded by Sugata (Buddha).

286. "Here shall I dwell in the rainy season; here shall I dwell in winter and summer." Thus the fool muses, but never reflects on the dangers that might befall him.

287. As a great flood carries off a sleeping village, so death seizes and carries off a man who is distracted and overly attached to his children and cattle.

288. Sons are no protection, neither father nor kinsfolk; when one is assailed by death, there is no protection among one's kin.

289. Having perceived this significant fact, let the wise and self-restrained man quickly clear the path that leads to nirvana.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Dipadana (from *dvi+pada*), "bipeds" (men). ([return to text](#))

[Canto XXI](#)

[Contents](#)

***Miscellaneous Verses* — Canto XXI**

290. If by renouncing a small pleasure one derives great bliss, the wise man relinquishes that smaller pleasure in view of the greater one.

291. He who desires happiness for himself by inflicting injury on others, is not freed from hatred, being entangled himself in the bonds of hatred.

292. If what ought to be done is neglected, and what ought not to be done is done, then the sensuous influxes of the arrogant and the heedless increase.

293. Those who are constantly watchful as to the nature of the body, who abstain from doing what ought not to be done, who strive to perform the deeds that ought to be done, who are mindful and self-restrained — in such men the sensuous influxes are extinguished.

294. Having slain mother (craving), father (egotism), and the two kings of the Kshatriya caste (the two false doctrines of eternalism and annihilation of the soul), and having destroyed the kingdom with its inhabitants (the twelve bases of sense perception and objects of attachment), the true Brahman goes his way unperturbed.

295. Having slain mother, father and two kings of the Brahman caste, and having destroyed as the fifth, the tiger (the perilous path of the five hindrances, namely, lust, ill will, torpor, restlessness and doubt), the true Brahman goes his way unperturbed.

296. The disciples of Gotama (Gautama) always awake well-

enlightened. Their consciousness is constantly centered, day and night, on the Buddha.

297. The disciples of Gotama always awake well-enlightened. Their consciousness is constantly centered, day and night, on the Dhamma.

298. The disciples of Gotama always awake well-enlightened. Their consciousness is constantly centered, day and night, on the Order (*sangha*).

299. The disciples of Gotama always awake well-enlightened. Their consciousness is constantly centered, day and night, upon (the transitory nature of) the body.

300. The disciples of Gotama always awake well-enlightened. Their consciousness, by day and night, delights in the virtue of nonviolence (*ahimsa*).

301. The disciples of Gotama always awake well-enlightened. Their consciousness, by day and night, delights in contemplation.

302. Renunciation of the worldly life is difficult; difficult is it to be happy in the monastic life; equally difficult and painful is it to lead a householder's life. Association with the unsympathetic is also painful. Woe befalls the wayfarer (who enters the cycle of births and deaths). Therefore be not a traveler (in *samsara*); fall not a victim of sorrow!

303. He who is endowed with devotion and virtue and is blessed with fame and wealth, is revered wherever he goes.

304. Good men shine from afar like the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. But the wicked, like arrows shot in the night, are not seen.

305. Sitting alone, sleeping alone, living alone, and being diligent,

subduing the self by means of the Self, let a man find delight in the ending of the forest (of desires).

[Canto XXII](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Woeful State* — Canto XXII**

306. The man who utters a falsehood goes to the woeful state (hell), as does he who having committed an act says, "I did not commit it." After death both these men of contemptible deeds become equal in the next world.

307. Many of those who wear the saffron robe are of evil character and unrestrained. These evildoers are born in hell by reason of their sinful deeds.

308. It is far better for an irreligious and unrestrained monk to swallow a flaming ball of red-hot iron than to feed on the alms of the people.

309. Four wretched conditions befall the heedless man who commits adultery: demerit, broken sleep, scorn as third, and birth in hell as fourth.

310. There is the acquirement of demerit as well as of rebirth in an evil state; even the fleeting pleasure of the man in the arms of the woman is accompanied by fear; and, moreover, the penalty inflicted by the Raja is heavy. Therefore, a man should not commit adultery.

311. Just as a blade of kusa grass when wrongly handled cuts the hand, so does asceticism when wrongly practiced drag one to the woeful state.

312. Any act performed halfheartedly, any religious rite observed improperly, or continence reluctantly practiced none of these produces great fruit.

313. If anything ought to be done, let a man perform that deed with all his might; an ascetic who is lax scatters more and more

dust (of passion).

314. An evil act is better left undone, for that evil deed causes torment afterwards. It is better to perform a good deed; by performing it one does not repent later.

315. As a frontier city, well-guarded within and without, so guard yourself. Do not lose a single moment, for those who let opportunity slip away do indeed grieve when they are born in the woeful state (hell).

316. Those who are ashamed of what they ought not to be ashamed of, and are not ashamed of what they ought to be, such men, embracing erroneous views, enter the woeful path.

317. Those who are fearful when there is no cause for fear, and feel no fear when they should, such men, embracing erroneous views, enter the woeful path.

318. Those who imagine error where there is none, and do not see it where it does exist, such men, embracing false views, enter the woeful path.

319. Those who discern error as error and truth as truth, such men, embracing right views, enter the path of bliss.

[Canto XXIII](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Elephant* — Canto XXIII**

320. Even as an elephant on the battlefield endures the arrow shot from the bow, so shall I bear with abusive language. Verily, most people are ill-tempered.

321. They lead a well-trained elephant to the assembly; the king mounts a well-tamed elephant. The self-controlled man who can bear with abusive language is the best among men.

322. When trained, mules are good, so also are the horses of Sindhu breed and the great tuskers of noble lineage. But better than all these is the man who has controlled the senses.

323. Not astride any of these (animals) can one reach the untrodden realm (nirvana), where a well-disciplined man goes only on his well-tamed (nature), his well-controlled self.

324. The royal tusker named Dhanapalaka, with sap-flowing temples in its rut period, is difficult to control. It does not eat a morsel when bound. It eagerly longs for the elephant forest.

325. If a man is torpid, gluttonous, slumberous and rolling to and fro like a huge hog which has been fattened by pig wash and podder, that indolent and stupid fool is born again and again.

326. During the past, this mind of mine roamed freely as it liked, as it desired, at its own pleasure. But today, I shall fully keep it in check, even as the elephant driver with the point of a goad controls an unruly elephant in rut.

327. Be ever vigilant; keep close watch over your thoughts; extricate yourself from the mire of evil, as does an elephant sunk in the mud.

328. If you find a wise companion to associate with you, one who leads a virtuous life and is diligent, you should lead a life with him joyfully and mindfully, conquering all obstacles.

329. If you do not find a wise companion to associate with you, one who leads a virtuous life and is diligent, then like the monarch who has renounced his conquered kingdom, and like Matanga the elephant in the forest, you should live alone.

330. It is better to lead a solitary life; there is no companionship with a childish person! Let one live alone committing no sin, having few wishes, like Matanga the elephant in the elephant grove.

331. Companions are pleasant to have when a need arises; contentment is pleasant when it is mutual; merit is pleasant at the last hour; pleasant is the extinction of all suffering.

332. To be a mother in this world is bliss; to be a father in this world is bliss; to be a homeless recluse in this world is bliss, and to be a Brahman in this world is bliss (*sukha*).

This stanza may also be translated as follows:

To render service unto a mother in this world is bliss; to render service unto a father in this world is bliss; to render service unto a homeless recluse in this world is bliss, and to render service unto a Brahman sage in this world is bliss.

333. The virtue that lasts to the end of life is bliss; steadfast faith is also bliss; the attainment of wisdom is bliss, and not to commit sin is bliss.

***Thirst or Craving* — Canto XXIV**

334. The craving (*tanha*) of a heedless man grows like the maluva creeper. He jumps (from life to life) like a monkey eagerly seeking fruit in the forest.

335. Whosoever is overcome by this shameful craving which creates entanglements in this world, his sorrows increase like the luxuriant birana grass (in the rainy season).

336. But whosoever overcomes in this world this shameful craving, which is difficult to suppress, finds his sorrows fall from him, as drops of water from a lotus leaf.

337. This I say unto you! May all of you, who are gathered here, be blessed! May you dig up the root of craving as one who digs up the birana grass for the fragrant usira root. (1) Let not Mara destroy you again and again, even as the current of the river destroys the reeds.

338. Just as a tree when cut down sprouts up again if the roots remain firm and uninjured, even so this suffering (of life) returns again and again if the root of craving is not completely destroyed.

339. The man in whom the thirty-six streams of craving flow strongly towards pleasurable objects, the waves of passions carry off. He is of confused vision and erroneous thoughts.

340. Streams flow everywhere; the creeper (of passion) sprouts and remains fixed. If you see that creeper springing up, cut its root by means of wisdom.

341. In creatures there arise pleasures extending towards sense objects. Immersed in various enjoyments they hanker after them. Verily, these people are subject to birth and old age.

342. People beset by craving circle round and round, like a hare ensnared in a net; held fast by the (ten) fetters and shackles (that bind man to the wheel of life), they undergo suffering for a long time, again and again.

343. People beset by craving circle round and round, like a hare ensnared in a net; therefore, let the monk who desires freedom from passion abandon craving.

344. He who has renounced the forest (of craving), and having liberated himself from that forest, yet runs back into it — behold this man! Although once freed, he runs into bondage.

345. The wise do not call strong that fetter which is made of iron, wood or hemp. Rather do they call attachment to jewels, ornaments, children and wives a far stronger fetter.

346. That fetter is strong, say the wise, which drags a man down; which, although slack, is difficult to escape from. Severing even this, they set forth, desiring nothing and abandoning all sensuous pleasures.

347. Those beings who are infatuated with the fire of lust fall into the current (of thirst for life), as the spider into its self-spun web. The wise, having curtailed the current, go off, leaving all sorrow behind.

348. Renounce the craving for the past, renounce the craving for the future, renounce the craving for what is between, and cross to the opposite shore. With the mind fully emancipated you will not return to birth and old age.

349. Craving (*tanha*) steadily grows in the mortal whose mind is agitated by (evil) thoughts, who is full of strong passions and ever yearning for what is pleasant. Such a one makes his fetters strong.

350. He who delights in controlling his thoughts, who ever

absorbs himself in contemplation on what is not pleasant (the impurity of the body), such a one will put an end (to craving) and cut the bonds of Mara.

351. He who has arrived at the goal, who is fearless, devoid of craving, passionless, has destroyed the arrows of existence. For such a person this is his last physical form.

352. He who is devoid of craving and attachment, who is an expert in etymology and terminology, who knows the systematic arrangement of letters (in their prior and posterior relations), is called a foremost sage, a great man. He bears a physical body for the last time.

353. I am the conqueror of all, I am the knower of all, in all the states of life. I am unattached, I have relinquished all, and with the destruction of craving I am liberated. Having comprehended everything by myself, whom shall I call my teacher?"

354. The gift of Truth (*dhamma*) excels all other gifts; the flavor of Truth excels all other flavors; the delight in Truth surpasses all delights. The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering.

355. Riches destroy the ignorant, yet not those who seek the further shore. Through his craving for material wealth, he destroys himself as if (destroying) others.

356. Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of passion; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of passion bring forth abundant fruit.

357. Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of hatred; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of hatred bring forth abundant fruit.

358. Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of delusion; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of delusion

bring forth abundant fruit.

359. Fields have the blight of weeds; mankind has the blight of desire; therefore, offerings given to those devoid of desire bring forth abundant fruit.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Andropogon Muricatus, cuscus grass. ([return to text](#))

[Canto XXV](#)

[Contents](#)

***The Mendicant* — Canto XXV**

360. Restraint through the eye is good; good is restraint through the ear; restraint through the nose is good and good is restraint through the tongue.

361. Restraint in body is good and good is restraint in speech; restraint by the mind is good and good is restraint in all things. The mendicant who is restrained in every respect is liberated from all suffering.

362. He who is controlled in hand, foot, and in speech, who is well disciplined and practices the utmost restraint; he who delights inwardly, in concentration, who leads a solitary life and is content — him they call a bhikkhu (mendicant).

363. The mendicant who restrains his tongue, who speaks with wisdom, who is not conceited, who illuminates the inner meaning (and letter) of the Law (*dhamma*), sweet indeed is his utterance.

364. The mendicant who dwells in the Law, who glories in the Law, who meditates on the Law, who ever follows the Law, does not fall away from the true Dhamma.

365. Let the mendicant not underestimate the gift he has received; let him not feel envy for others. The mendicant who envies others does not attain tranquillity of mind.

366. Even the gods praise that mendicant who does not underestimate what he has received, however little, if he is pure and energetic in his life.

367. He who has not any attachment to name and form (mind and body), and does not grieve for what does not really exist — he, indeed, is called a real bhikkhu.

368. The mendicant who lives compassionately, who takes delight in the doctrine of the Enlightened One, will attain that exalted state of peace and happiness, which is the cessation of conditioned existence.

369. Empty this boat, O monk! When emptied, it will go lightly. Cutting off lust and hatred, you will reach nirvana.

370. (Of the fetters) cut off the five, renounce the five, and (of the virtues) cultivate the five. He who has gone beyond the five attachments is called a bhikkhu who has crossed the stream.

Note — The five fetters that one should cut off are: self-allusion, doubt, clinging to mere rules and rituals, sensuous craving and ill will.

The five fetters to be renounced are: craving for material existence, craving for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

To destroy the fetters, the vigilant monk has to cultivate the five virtues: faith, mindfulness, energy, concentration, and wisdom.

The five attachments are: lust, hatred, delusion, pride, and false views.

371. Meditate, O monk! Be not heedless! Let not your mind wander among the pleasures of the senses, lest through your heedlessness you swallow the red-hot iron ball (in hell) and cry out, as you thus burn — "This is suffering."

372. There is no perfect contemplation for him who is not wise, and no wisdom for him who does not concentrate. He in whom there is both perfect contemplation and wisdom is, indeed, close to nirvana.

373. The mendicant who has withdrawn to a lonely spot, whose heart and mind are tranquil, who clearly perceives the Dhamma, his bliss (of contemplation) is more than human.

374. Whenever one clearly comprehends the origin and destruction of the five aggregates (*khandha*), he experiences bliss and happiness. (1) This is as the nectar (of immortality) to those who truly comprehend it.

375. In this world this becomes the first requisite for a wise monk: control of the senses, contentment, restraint according to the fundamental code of monastic law; cultivation of noble friends whose lives are pure and who are not indolent.

376. The mendicant who is hospitable and friendly, who really lives his ethics and is full of spiritual joy, thereby makes an end of his suffering.

377. Just as the jasmine sheds its withered flowers, even so, O mendicants, you should cast off passion and hatred.

378. That mendicant is called truly tranquil, who is calm in body, calm in speech, calm in mind, who is well-regulated in thoughts and has renounced all worldly allurements.

379. Rouse the self by the Self, restrain the self by the Self, self-guarded and mindful, O monk, you shall live happily.

380. For Self is indeed the protector of oneself; Self is indeed one's destiny. Therefore, curb yourself even as a wise merchant curbs a noble steed.

381. The mendicant who is full of spiritual delight and faith in the doctrine of the Enlightened One will attain the peaceful state (nirvana), the cessation of conditioned existence.

382. The mendicant, though young in years, who applies himself

to the teaching of the Awakened One (Gotama), illumines the world, even as the moon when freed from the cloud.

FOOTNOTES:

1. The five aggregates (Skt. *skandhas*) are: 1) bodily form; 2) feeling; 3) perception; 4) mental formations; 5) consciousness. (See verse 202.) ([return to text](#))

[Canto XXVI](#)

[Contents](#)

Who is a Brahman? — Canto XXVI

383. Cut off the stream of craving. Strive hard and renounce the sense pleasures, O Brahman. When you comprehend the secret of the destruction of all composite things, O Brahman, you will know the Uncreated (nirvana).

384. When the Brahman has reached the farther shore of the two states (of tranquillity and insight), then all the fetters of that knowing one disappear.

385. He for whom there exist neither the farther (the external six senses), nor the hither (the internal six senses), nor both of these, and who is devoid of fear and free from fetters him I call a Brahman.

386. He who is contemplative, lives without passions, is steadfast and has performed his duties, who is free from sensuous influxes and has attained the highest goal — him I call a Brahman.

387. The sun shines by day, the moon by night; the warrior is resplendent in armor and the Brahman radiant in meditation. But Buddha, the Awakened One, illumines both day and night by the splendor of his wisdom.

388. Because a man has discarded all evil, he is called a Brahman; because of his balanced conduct, he is called a monk (*samana*); because he has rid himself of all impurities, he is called a recluse (*pabbajita*).

Note — The impurities are ten in number: greed, hate, delusion, conceit, speculative views, doubt, mental torpor, restlessness, shamelessness, and lack of moral scruples.

389. One should not strike a Brahman; neither should a Brahman

give way to anger against him who strikes. Woe to him who slays a Brahman; but greater woe to the Brahman who vents his wrath (on the aggressor).

390. It is no small advantage to a Brahman to restrain the mind from clinging to pleasurable things. In proportion to the degree that he abstains from wishing to injure others, to that degree will suffering cease.

391. He who has not committed unwholesome deeds through body, speech, or mind, and who is restrained in these three avenues — him I call a Brahman.

392. Even as the (orthodox) Brahman bows down to the sacrificial fire, so one should make obeisance to him who understands the Dhamma as proclaimed by the Fully Enlightened One.

393. Not by matted hair, by lineage, nor by birth (caste) does one become a Brahman. But the one in whom there abide truth and righteousness, he is pure; he is a Brahman.

394. O fool, what is the use of matted hair, and to what avail is raiment made of antelope skin? (1) Outwardly you cleanse yourself, but within you is a jungle of passions.

395. He who wears the cast-off garments (of a hermit), who is emaciated with the veins of his body standing out, who is solitary and contemplative in the forest — him I call a Brahman.

396. I do not call him a Brahman merely because he is born in the caste of the noble ones, or of a Brahman mother. If he is a possessor (of passions), he becomes known by the appellation *bhovadi*. But one who is free from possessions (craving) and from worldly attachments — him I call a Brahman.

Note — Bhovadi is a familiar form of address used by the Brahmans during the time of Buddha for equals and for

inferiors. When the haughty Brahmans and Jains came to discuss metaphysical problems with the Buddha, they often addressed him simply, "Bho, Gotama!" Therefore, the Buddhists used to designate the Brahmans by this appellation which involves a certain amount of contempt. Bhovadin literally means one who uses the term "bho!"

397. He who has cut off all impediments and does not tremble with fears, who has passed beyond attachments and is free from shackles — him I call a Brahman.

398. He is enlightened who has cut the strap (of ill will) and the thong (of craving), who has broken the chain (of heretical views) with its appurtenances (latent tendencies), and has removed the crossbar (of ignorance) — him I call a Brahman.

399. He who with forgiveness bears up under reproach, abuse and punishment, and who looks upon patience as his army and strength as his force — him I call a Brahman.

400. He who is free from anger, who vigilantly performs his religious practices, who is virtuous, pure, self-restrained, and bears his physical body for the last time — him I call a Brahman.

401. He who, like water on a lotus leaf, or a mustard seed on the point of an awl, does not cling to sensuous pleasures him I call a Brahman.

402. He who while in this world realizes the end of his suffering, who has laid aside the burden (of his skandhas) and is free from attachments — him I call a Brahman.

403. He whose wisdom is deep, who is expert in knowledge and in discerning the right from the wrong path; he who has realized the supreme goal — him I call a Brahman.

404. He who does not associate closely either with householders

(laymen) or with the homeless (mendicants), who does not frequent houses and who is content with few wants — him I call a Brahman.

405. He who has laid aside the cudgel that injures any creature whether moving or still, who neither slays nor causes to be slain — him I call a Brahman.

406. He who is tolerant amongst the intolerant, who is calm amongst the violent, and who is unattached amongst those who are attached — him I call a Brahman.

407. The one from whom lust and hatred, pride and hypocrisy have fallen away, like a mustard seed from the point of an awl — him I call a Brahman.

408. He who speaks gentle, instructive and truthful words, whose utterances offend no one — him I call a Brahman.

409. He who takes no object in this world that is not given to him, be it short or long, small or great, fair or ugly — him I call a Brahman.

410. He who has no desires regarding this world or the next, who is free of longings and without fetters — him I call a Brahman.

411. He who is free from craving and free from doubt through the realization of truth, and who has reached the depth of the deathless state (nirvana) — him I call a Brahman.

412. He who has transcended the bonds of both merit and demerit, who is sorrowless, free from passions, and pure him I call a Brahman.

413. He who like the moon, is stainless, pure, serene and unruffled, in whom desire for existence is extinguished — him I call a Brahman.

414. He who has traversed this miry path of samsara, difficult to pass; who has rid himself of delusion, crossed over and reached the other shore; who is absorbed in contemplation, free from craving and doubts, not grasping, and inwardly calm — him I call a Brahman.

415. He who in this world has relinquished all sensuous pleasures, wanders homeless (for the welfare of the many), and has destroyed all desire (*kama*) for existence — him I call a Brahman.

416. He who in this world has extinguished all craving, wanders homeless, and has destroyed all thirst (*tanha*) for existence — him I call a Brahman.

417. He who has abandoned all human ties and transcended even the celestial ties; who is truly free from all attachments — him I call a Brahman.

418. He who has put aside what gives pleasure as well as what gives pain, who is passionless and free from the causal seeds of existence (*nirupadhi*), the hero who has conquered all the worlds — him I call a Brahman.

419. He who has all knowledge concerning the death and rebirth of all beings, is unattached, who is content in himself (*sugata*), and enlightened (*buddha*) — him I call a Brahman.

420. He whose path is unknown to devas, gandharvas and men, who has nullified all sensuous influxes and is a Holy One (*arahant*) — him I call a Brahman.

421. He who has no longing for what is ahead, behind, or in the middle, who possesses nothing and is attached to nothing — him I call a Brahman.

422. He who is fearless (as a bull), distinguished and heroic, a

great sage, a conqueror; who is entirely free from craving and who has washed off all impurities, an Enlightened One — him I call a Brahman.

423. He who knows his former abodes (his lives), who perceives (through spiritual insight) both heaven and hell, who has reached the end of all births, who has perfected himself in wisdom; such a sage who has accomplished all that ought to be accomplished (on the sublime path) — him I call a Brahman.

THUS ENDS THE DHAMMAPADA

FOOTNOTES:

1. Worn by forest-dwelling mendicants of ancient India. ([return to text](#))

[Contents](#)

Glossary

Commonly used Pali terms and their Sanskrit equivalents.

Many words that are similar in Pali and Sanskrit have in the course of time acquired divergent connotations. This Glossary is intended merely to aid readers, who have some acquaintance with Sanskrit philosophical terms, to recognize their etymological parallels in the Pali text of the *Dhammapada*.

In the transliteration of both Pali and Sanskrit, the character *c* represents the sound *ch* as in the English word chair. The aspirate consonants (*kh*, *th*, *ph*, etc) are pronounced (as in blockhead or godhead).

Pali (Sanskrit) — Meaning; Verse

accuta (acyuta) — permanent, imperishable (lit, unscattered, unfallen); 225

adicca-[patha] (aditya) — (path of) the sun; 175

agg (agni) — fire; 107, 136, 392

ahimsa (same) — harmlessness, non-violence; 261, 270, 300

akasa (akasa) — "shining": sky, space, ether; 92, 175, 254

akkhara (akshara) — science of sounds, phonetics; also imperishable; 352

amata (amrita) — immortality; 21

anatta (anatman) — nonself; 279

appamada (apramada) — vigilance, conscientiousness; Canto II

arahant (arhant, arhat) — worthy; the worthy one; Canto VII

ariya (arya) — noble; 22, 164, 208

atta(n) (atman) — self; Canto XII

avijja (avidya) — ignorance; 243

bala (same) — orig young, unable to speak; ignorant, foolish;
Canto V

In Sanskrit *bala* means a boy or young one; in Pali, however, Buddha used the word to denote a childish person, by extension, a fool; for boy or child he used *balaka*

bhadra (same) — auspicious, lucky, fortunate; 119-20, 143

bhikkhu (bhikshu) — mendicant, monk; Canto XXV

brahmacarin (same) — leading a pure and holy life; a celibate student; 142

brahmana (same) — one who leads a pure, ascetic life; Canto XXVI

buddha (same) — enlightened; passim

Buddha (same) — Awakened One, Enlightened One; passim

cakka (cakra) — wheel; 1

canda (candra) — the moon; 172-3, 413

candima (candramas) — luminous, shiny; the moon; 172, 208, 387

chaya (same) — shadow; 2

citta (citra) — to be bright, resplendent; 151, 171

citta (same) — heart, mind, attentiveness; Canto III

dalha (dridha, [drilha]) — resolute, strong [to hold fast, bind]; 23, 61, 112, 313

danda (same) — rod, stick; Canto X

dassana (darsana) — sight, vision; 206, 210

adassana — blindness, not seeing; 210

deva (same) — god, divine being; 105, 420

dhamma (dharma) — "foundation, support": law, justice, doctrine, nature, truth, morality, and good conduct; passim

dhammattha (dharmastha) — standing in the *dhamma*, just, righteous; Canto XIX

dhuva (dhruva) — permanent, constant (also name of the Pole Star); 147

dosa (dosa) — anger, ill will; see *raga* and *moha*, cf *nibbana*; 20, 251

dukkha (duhkha) — pain, suffering, diseases, discord; passim

gandhabba (gandharva) — heavenly musician: angelic being, demigod; 105, 420

gutta (gupta) — guarded, protected; passim

hamsa (same) — swan, goose; 175

himsa (same) — injury, hurting, killing; 132

iddh (iriddhi, siddhi) — potency, accomplishment; psychic power(s); 175

jana (same) — creature, entity, people; 99, 249, 320

jara (same) — old age, decrepitude; Canto XI

jhana (dhyana) — meditation, thought, reflection; 181, 372

kama (same) — desire; 48, 186-7, 401, 415

kamma (karman) — doing, action, result of action; passim

kasava, kasaya (kashaya) — "brown": yellow robe of a Buddhist monk; 9-10

khandha (skandha) — collection, mass, aggregates: "elements of sensory existence"; 374

khanti(i) (kshanti) — patience, forbearance, forgiveness; 184, 399

khattiya (kshatriya) — warrior or ruling caste; 294

khetta (kshetra) — field; 356-9

kodha (krodha) — anger; Canto XVII

loka (same) — space, world; 44, 45, Canto XIII

macca (martya) — mortal; 53, 141, 182

maccu (mrityu) — death; also god of death; cf *mara, yama*; passim

magga (marga) — path; Canto XX

mala (same) — impurity, stain, dirt; 239, 243

mana(s) (manas) — mind; 1, 2

mara (same) — death, the evil one, tempter; passim

metta (maitra) — compassionate, friendly; 368

(*mitra*) benevolent

micchaditthi (mithyadrishti) — wrong views, heresy; 167, 316

moha (same) — delusion, folly; see *dosa, raga*; cf *nibbana*; 20, 251

mokkha (moksha) — release, freedom, emancipation; the final deliverance; 37

mutta (mukta) — freed, set free from worldly existence; 20, 90, 348

naga (same) — serpent, elephant of great stature; Canto XXIII

nibbana (*nirvana**) — dousing (of a flame), dying out of *raga*, *dosa* and *moha*, the three basic character defects; passim

*This is not a negative state, but a condition beyond ordinary comprehension. It is the annihilation of craving, hatred, and ignorance.

nicca (*nitya*) — constant, perpetual; 23, 109, 206, 293

niraya (same) — destruction, hell; Canto XXII; passim

pabbajita (*pravrajita*) — a homeless monk; 74, 388

pada (*pad*, *pad*) — foot, step, path, track; 179, 273

pakinnaka (*pakirnaka*) — scattered, miscellaneous; Canto XXI

pana (*prana*) — breath of life, vitality; 246-7

pandita (same) — wise, sage; pandit; Canto VI

panna (*prajna*) — intelligence, wisdom, insight; 38, 111, 152, 372

pannasila (*prajnasila*) — higher intelligence and virtue; 229

papa (same) — suffering, evil; Canto IX

parinibbana (*parinirvana*) — complete extinction of *khandas*-life; final release of an Arhat after destruction of physical body; 89

Patimokkha (*Pratimoksha*) — monastic precepts; discipline (Vinaya) for monks; 185, 375

phala (same) — ripe fruit, result, consequence; 66, 178

piya (*priya*) — dear, friend, amiable; Canto XVI

puja (same) — honor, reverence, devotion; 73, 106-7

puppha (*pushpa*) — flower; Canto IV

putta (putra) — son, young of animal, offspring; 62, 84, 345

raga (same) — passion, lust; see *dosa* and *moha*; cf *nibbana*; 20, 251

raja (same) — king; 295

sabba (sarva) — all, whole; 129-30, 183, 353-4

sacca (satya) — real, true; truth; 393, 408

saddha-assaddha (sraddha) — faith, trust, devotion not credulous or dependent on faith; 8,144, 97

sadhu (same) — virtuous, honorable, meritorious; 35, 67-8, 206

sagga (svarga) — heaven; 174

sahassa (sahasra) — a thousand; Canto VIII

samadhi (same) — concentration; exalted state of consciousness; 271

samana (sramana) — religious recluse; 184, 265

samsara (same) — "moving about continuously": the chain of births and deaths; 95, 302, 414

sannojana-samyojana (samyojana) — fetters that bind one to the wheel of rebirth; 221

sarira (sarira) — physical body; 151

sota (srotas) — stream; 339-40

Sugata (same) — "happily gone": after death; faring well; Buddha; 18, 419

sukha (same) — happy, pleasant, blessed; 118, 194, Canto XV, 331

sukka (sukla) — light, pure, bright, white; 87

sunyata (sunyata) — emptiness (*nibbana*), the Void; 92

tanha (trishna) — thirst, craving; 154, 334, 349

thana (sthana) — condition, state, stance; 137, 225

vaca (vak, vac) — voice, word, speech; 232, 281

vagga (varga) — chapter, section; all chapter headings

vana (vrana) — wound, sore; 124

vana (same) — forest, jungle (of desires); 283-4, 324, 344

vijana (same) — understanding, knowing; 6, 64-5

vinnana (vijnana) — cognition, consciousness, one of the five *khandhas*; 41

viriya (virya) — vigor, energy, exertion; 112

yama (same) — god of death; *passim*

yamaka (same) — double, twin; Canto I

yoga (same) — "yoke": connection, bond, means; 282, 417

The Four Noble Truths

Pali (Sanskrit) — Meaning

cattari ariyasaccani (catvari aryasatyanī) — four noble truths

1) *dukkha (duhkha)* — ill, pain, sorrow

2) *samudaya (same)* — origin, cause of ill

3) *nirodha (same)* — destruction of ill, cessation of ill

4) *magga (marga)* — road, way

The Noble Eightfold Path

Pali (Sanskrit) — Meaning

ariya atthangika magga (aryashtagā marga) — noble eightfold path

1) *sammaditthi (samyagdrishti)* — right insight, right understanding, right vision

2) *sammasamkappa (samyaksamkalpa)* — right aspiration, right thoughts [right thoughts in the Theravada terminology denote the thoughts free from ill will, hatred, and jealousy]

3) *sammavaca (samyagvac)* — right speech

4) *sammakammanta (samyakkarmanta)* — right action

5) *sammajiva (samyagajiva)* — right livelihood, right living

6) *sammavayama (samyagvyayama)* right effort

7) *sammasati (samyaksmriti)* — right memory, right mindfulness

8) *sammasamadhi (samyaksamadhi)* — right concentration

[Contents](#)

Appendix

Dhammapada palm leaf manuscripts (750-1815 A.D.)

The following are some of the rarest *Dhammapada* manuscripts, their commentaries, subcommentaries, and also commentaries on commentaries, with the monastery libraries where they are housed. The translator elected to visit the easily accessible Vihara libraries. The student may be interested to note that there are more than 950 recognized monastery libraries where he may find other compilations on *Dhammapada* which have never seen the light in print. Even in the British Library are different compilations of this scripture; and photostat copies of them may be obtained in Sinhalese script, Burmese script, or in Cambodian characters. Their reference numbers are:

- a) Sinhalese-Pali, I - 151 b and II - 551 W II (I).
- b) Burmese, leaves 126 (K-T) Or 6454 A.P.
- c) Cambodian characters, 360 leaves incomplete Or 1273 P.

I. *Dhammapadam* (Pali)

Subadrarama Vihara Monastery of Rt. Venerable Dharmapala
Nayaka Thera, Batapola
Abhinavaramaya, Kosgoda
Pushparama Maha Viharaya, Balapitiya

There are more than 236 monastery libraries where palm leaf manuscripts of this work are preserved.

II. *Dhampiya* (Sinhalese)

Totagamu Raja Maha Viharaya, Telwatta
Rankoth Viharaya, Ambalangoda

Gintota Purana Pirivena, Gintota, near Galle

III. *Dhammapada Attha Katha* (commentary on the legends of *Dhammapada*)

Gangarama Viharaya, Pitigala

Bodhimalu Raja Maha Viharaya, Bentota

Siri Sobhanaramaya, Kahawa, Telwatta

This text is available also in 265 other monastery libraries.

IV. *Dhammapada Sannaya* (verbatim Sinhalese translation of *Dhammapada* with the Pali text)

Paramananda Viharaya, Minuwangoda, Galle

Thuparamaya, Gintota

Vijayananda Maha Viharaya, Galle

The same palm leaf manuscript is available at 230 other monastery libraries.

V. *Dhammapada Vyakhyava* (commentary on *Dhammapada*)

Svetabimbaramaya, Bope, Galle

Ahangama Maha Viharaya, Ahangama

Saddharmakara Pirivena, Pinwatta, Panadura

Available at eight other monastery libraries.

VI. *Dhammapada Varnana* (explanatory commentary on *Dhammapada* in Sinhalese)

Vevurukannala Maha Viharaya, Dikwella

Ambarikkaramaya, Balapitiya

Naradda Purana Viharaya, Hakmana

Available at about four other monastery libraries.

VII. *Dhammapada Katha* (*Dhammapada* stories)

Ratna-Giri Purana Viharaya, Ganegama, Baddegama

Sudarshanarama, Denipitiya
Jayarnaha Viharaya, Rekawa, Netolpitiya

There are only two other places where the palm leaf manuscript of this work is available.

VIII. *Dhammapada Atuvava* (Sinhalese commentary on *Dhammapada*)

Abayasinharamaya, Maradana, Colombo
Sailabimbaramaya, Dodanduwa,
Ananddramaya, Kitulampitiya, Galle

There are more than 270 other monasteries where palm leaf manuscripts of this work are housed.

IX. *Dhammapada Purana Sannaya* (ancient Sinhalese commentary on *Dhammapada*)

Ganegodalle Raja Maha Viharaya, Kosgoda
Jetavana Pirivena Raja Maha Viharaya, Akuressa

There are only two places where this work is available.

X. *Dhammapada Gatha Desu Aya* (individuals to whom the *Dhammapada* Gathas were preached)

Only one copy of this palm leaf manuscript is available. It is housed in the monastery library of Nyagrodharamaya, Gonapeenuwala, Hikkaduwa.

XI. *Dhammapada Vistara Sannaya* (a comprehensive verbatim Sinhalese rendition with copious notes)

This rare manuscript is available only at the monastery library of Sunandarama Viharaya, Unawatuna, Galle.