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This translation is dedicated to my teachers

Better than reciting a hundred meaningless verses

Is one meaningful line of Dharma

(102)

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FOREWORD

You hold in your hands the most beloved of all Buddhist texts, both poetic and profound. These verses of the Dhammapada sum up in the simplest language the core teachings of the Buddha. Memorized and chanted by devoted followers for thousands of years, these words remind all who hear them of the universal truths expounded by the Buddha: Hatred never ends by hatred. Virtue and wise action are the foundation for happiness. And the Buddha's teachings offer the possibility of a thoroughly unshakable peace and liberation of heart for those who follow the way of the Dharma and free themselves from clinging.

This new translation is both carefully and honorably literal and beautifully modern. Through it, Gil Fronsdal, a deeply respected Western meditation teacher and Buddhist scholar, conveys in English the life of these timeless words. The Dhammapada's elegant verses, many spoken by the Buddha over the long years of his teaching, were assembled by his senior monks and nuns to express his essential wisdom. Indeed, had you been there, seated under the canopy of a banyan tree, listening closely to the Buddha as he directly pointed the way for you to live a compassionate, wise, and totally free life, you might have realized enlightenment then and there.

But it is not too late. These teachings in the Dhammapada are as true now as the moment they were offered from the Buddha's own lips. One page, one verse alone, has the power to change your life. Do not merely read these words but take them in slowly, savor them. Let them touch your heart's deepest wisdom. Let your understanding grow. Seeing what is true, put these words into practice. Then, as the text says, let the fragrance of your virtue spread farther than the smell of rosebay and jasmine, farther than even the winds can blow. Let the practice release your heart from fear. Let the quieting of your mind and the clear seeing of the truth release you from confusion and clinging.

May these verses and the liberated and compassionate heart to which they point awaken you. May they bring you peace, wisdom, joy, and the gift of unshakable inner freedom.

May all who open this book be blessed.

Jack Kornfield

Spirit Rock Center, 2004

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Many years after the first edition of this Dhammapada translation was published, I remain inspired and fascinated by this anthology of poetry. My ongoing study of the early teachings of the Buddha continues to provide me with an ever-richer understanding of the verses and their spiritual value. I return to these verses often and find that many of these simple four-line poems evoke new reflections, applications, and food for meditation.

Over the last twenty years I have greatly appreciated the Dhammapada as a sacred text. I call it sacred because the anthology has remained a sourcebook inspiring the faith and religious life of many Buddhists down through the centuries. In this sense, it is a living text animated and renewed by those contemplating and applying its teachings. The poems are also brought to life in new ways by those who translate the text. As culture changes, so does the matching of ancient concepts with new beliefs, cultural assumptions, and values. This second edition continues the more than two-thousand-year-old tradition of renewing the Dhammapada.

One of the main changes to the translation in the second edition is a greater thoroughness in using gender-neutral pronouns. The original Pali only uses male pronouns. In the first edition, while most of these are conveyed with neutral pronouns, in some paired verses I used male pronouns for one verse and female ones for the other. In this current edition, I have rendered all of these in gender-neutral language.

Other changes result from a newer—and hopefully improved—understanding of the original Pali words. For anyone interested in these changes, the most noteworthy are those in verses 3, 4, 153–154, 221, 266, 275, and 367.

I hope that readers of the second edition will find continuing value from reading, re-reading, and reflecting on the wisdom contained in the verses of the Dhammapada.

Gil Fronsdal

February 2023

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Dhammapada was first introduced to the non-Buddhist modern world during the second half of the nineteenth century. It has come to be recognized as a great religious classic, one bearing an uncompromising message of personal self-reliance, self-mastery, and liberation.

As there are now well over fifty English translations of the Dhammapada, I want to explain briefly why I felt another translation was merited, and say a few words about the principles and perspectives underlying this translation.

One of the most influential English translations is by the historian of religions F. Max Müller, first published in 1870. Many succeeding “translations” are simply adaptations of Müller’s work, often by people unfamiliar with Pali. Some of these are beautiful, even inspiring, but not accurate. At the same time, the language of some of the most accurate translations can be clumsy or opaque. Furthermore, the axiom that a translation mirrors the viewpoint of the translator applies to many English Dhammapada translations. Hindu concepts appear in English translations done in India; Theravada viewpoints have shaped translations made in such countries as Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand; and in the West, translations have often reflected Western viewpoints and Western preferences and interpretations of Buddhism.

A translator often has to strike a balance between literal but clumsy language and elegant but inaccurate language. I have tried to be as literal as possible while keeping the text both readable and enjoyable. Still, no one can make a completely literal translation, completely free of bias, of a text from a distant culture and a very different language. As a Western Buddhist teacher, I am acutely aware that Buddhism has been adapted and reinterpreted in the West. I believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with this tendency; indeed, it points out how Buddhism has been adapted over time and across cultures. However, I believe it is important that we be conscious of and responsible for just how we might be changing Buddhism. And to do this, we need to know what we are changing it from.

In this translation, I have tried to put aside my own interpretations and preferences, insofar as possible, in favor of accuracy. In attempting a literal translation, I am trying to understand early Buddhism on its own terms so I can better evaluate our modern versions of Buddhism. After nearly thirty years of practice, I remain inspired by the teachings of the Buddha, and I hope to understand better what the Buddha taught by going back to the original text and rendering it into modern English.

Although I have not been able to replicate the melodiousness and beauty of many of the Pali verses, I hope that readers will still get some sense of the poetry of the original text.

My English renderings of some Pali words may be controversial. Probably the most debatable choice will be my translation of dhamma as “experience” in the opening two verses. Another is my choice to translate saṃsāra as “wandering.”

One of the most difficult words to translate is the title itself, a compound made up of the words dhamma and pada, each of which has a number of meanings. Dhamma can mean, among other things, religious teachings, religious truth, justice, and virtue. Pada means “foot” and, by extension, footstep, track, path, place, and mental state. As in English, where “a foot” sometimes refers to a unit of verse, pada also means a line of verse, and, by extension, a saying. Besides functioning as the title of the collection, the expression Dhammapada occurs three times in the verses themselves. Twice I have translated it as “Dharma teaching” (verses 44–45) and the third time as “line of Dharma” (verse 102). The Sanskrit equivalent “Dharma” is used because it is in this form that the term has begun to find a place in the lexicon of the English-speaking world—see, for example, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (tenth edition)—and because left untranslated it better retains the multivalent meanings of the original. If we translate the title based on how the term dhammapada is used in the verses, it should probably be translated “Sayings of the Dharma,” “Verses of the Dharma,” or “Teachings of the Dharma.” However, if we construe pada as “path,” as in verse 21 (where amatapada is translated “the path to the Deathless”), the title could be “The Path of the Dharma.” Ultimately, as many translators clearly concur, it may be best not to translate the title at all.

It is standard convention to number the verses sequentially. I have provided this number in parentheses following each verse, with two exceptions. Sometimes verses that are paired together are numbered together. For example, for verses one and two, the numbering for both verses appears after the second verse. The other exception is where I have combined two or more closely related verses. In these cases, the verse numbers appear at the end of the combined verse. The verses have been typeset to avoid breaking any stanzas.

Every translation necessarily reflects the concerns, background, and understanding of its translator. I have been a Buddhist practitioner for nearly thirty years, including many years spent in monasteries in America, Japan, and Southeast Asia. I teach in both the Soto Zen and Theravada traditions. I received a PhD in Buddhist studies from Stanford University, where my research focused on the early Indian Bodhisattva ideal. The present translation thus reflects three perspectives: that of a practitioner, seeking in the Dhammapada a deeper understanding of my own Buddhist practice; that of a Buddhist teacher who finds in the Dhammapada the inspirational words of early teachers and a useful sourcebook for teaching material; and finally that of a scholar with an appreciation of the complexities of translation and the difficulties of understanding texts across time and cultures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In his foreword to the 1898 edition of his English translation of the Dhammapada, Max Müller explains that his translation was dependent on the pioneering work of the Dutch scholar Victor Fausböll, who in 1855 had published the first translation into a Western language (Latin!). Müller writes:

> There is between a scholar such as Fausböll and the ordinary scholars who can read what has been read and translated before, about the same difference as between a Stanley exploring the darkest Africa and a tourist who now goes to Egypt personally conducted by Messrs. Cook & Co.
>
> —The Dhammapada, The Sacred Books of the East, vol. 10, part 1, 1924, p. xii.

Max Müller and many more recent scholars laid the foundation that allowed me to translate the Dhammapada. I am reluctant to guess how Müller would have extended his analogy to those of us working more than a century after his time!

The English translations and studies that I found most helpful are listed in the bibliography. I am grateful to the scholars who produced them, and I would encourage anyone who is interested in further study of the Dhammapada to read their works.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge and offer my deep gratitude to the people who read my drafts and offered suggestions throughout the translation process. Thanissaro Bhikkhu and Professor Jan Nattier offered invaluable assistance, helping me to understand the original Pali text and to make the English translation more readable. I am also very grateful for the careful editing of the translation and the introduction done by Nancy Van House, Andrea Fella, and Barbara Gates. Angie Boisevain, Ronna Kabatznik, and Peter Dale Scott also generously read over the translations and made many helpful suggestions. Professor John Strong generously offered helpful suggestions for the introduction.

I also extend my thanks to Peter Turner, Tom Bonoma, Emily Bower, and Karen Ready at Shambhala Publications for their interest in this project and their great support in bringing it to its finished form.

I offer whatever merit that has come from producing this translation to all my teachers. May they all be happy.

INTRODUCTION

The Buddha taught a path of liberation. To understand his teachings is to understand how to walk that path. Though he described it as an ancient pathway, hidden and forgotten until he rediscovered it, it remains as relevant today as it was in his time, twenty-five hundred years ago.

By far the most popular text teaching how to walk this path is the Dhammapada, a collection of verses from the earliest period of Buddhism in India. I was introduced to this sacred text when my first Zen teacher gave me my first copy. In the twenty-five years since receiving that gift, I have read and re-read the Dhammapada many times. I have found its teachings to be direct, wise, and inspirational. The verses point to a possibility of peace and freedom that I find breathtakingly simple in its profundity.

My appreciation and understanding of the Dhammapada has grown over the years that I have lived with it. This has been especially true over the four years spent translating it from Pali, the ancient Indian language in which it is preserved. In this introduction I share some of what I have learned, in the hope that this will help the contemporary English reader better appreciate the beauty and wisdom of the text.

The Dhammapada originated in a time, culture, and spiritual tradition very different from what is familiar to most Western readers today. We might be alerted to this difference if we compare the beginning of the Dhammapada with the opening lines of the Bible, which emphasize God's role as Creator and, by extension, our reliance on God's power. In contrast, the first two verses of the Dhammapada emphasize the power of the human mind in shaping our lives, and the importance and effectiveness of a person's own actions and choices. This theme reappears throughout the text. We are told, for example, that we are our own protectors and the shapers of our own destinies (verse 380). What we do, especially with the mind, determines our future happiness or unhappiness (verses 1–2). Each of us must make our own effort along the Buddhist path; teachers can only show the way (verse 276). Ethical and mental purity—important ideals in the Dhammapada—cannot be achieved through the intervention of others: "By oneself alone is one purified" (verse 165).

The Dhammapada, like the early Buddhist tradition, offers two distinct goals for what, in Western terms,

could be called the spiritual life. The verses can frequently, even suddenly, switch to emphasize one or the other goal.

The first goal focuses on attaining happiness and welfare in this life or future lives. In future lives, a good rebirth could be as a human being in fortunate circumstances or as a heavenly being (deva), while a bad rebirth could be in hell (verse 126). To attain the former goal, the verses emphasize virtuous actions and basic ethical teachings. So, for example, there are teachings on living by ethical precepts (246–247), watching and disciplining one's own mind (35–36), being without hate (4), being respectful (109), avoiding evil deeds (123), being nonviolent (129–130), and curbing one's anger (231–234). Many of these are not uniquely Buddhist teachings. In fact, scholars have suggested that some verses in the Dhammapada may have been adapted from poetry, songs, and teachings already current in ancient India before and during the Buddha's time.

The second, ultimate, and uniquely Buddhist goal described by the Dhammapada is liberation. This is a form of spiritual freedom that involves a radical personal change. It consists of a purification, often described forcefully in these verses as the elimination or destruction of one's mental defilements, attachments, and hindrances. Since these mental forces keep a person bound to the cycles of rebirth, when they are overcome the practitioner is liberated from these cycles. For those who don't share the Buddhist belief in rebirth, it is hard to appreciate the central importance that Buddhism has traditionally placed in stepping off the wheel of life and death.

In line with this emphasis on purification, most of the descriptions of the ultimate goal are worded in the negative, describing what the liberated person has become freed from. So, for example, the enlightened person is free of death (86), bonds (90), conceit (94), the potential to be reborn (97), craving (154), fear (216), obsessive thinking (254), the toxins (272), suffering (354), and mental defilements (386). The more positive descriptions of the enlightened person can also be seen as descriptions of absence: such a person is someone who has gone to the Unconstructed (154) or to the immovable state (225).

Even when liberation is equated with peace (96), this can perhaps be understood in terms of the absence of conflict, agitation, or suffering.

Describing the ultimate attainment by what is absent or eliminated is common in the oldest Buddhist scriptures. Sometimes this attainment is associated with "Nirvana," a word that in ancient Indian languages (e.g., Sanskrit nirvāṇa; Pali nibbāna) suggests an extinguishing or a release. I can imagine a number of reasons why positive descriptions were avoided. First, Nirvana may be indescribable in terms of our experience and language. Second, the experience of the ultimate may not be one thing. Rather, it may be like the condition of prisoners released from prison: each ex-

prisoner shares the same freedom from incarceration, but the individual prisoners may vary widely in how they live with that freedom.

Contrasting Moods: Energy and Peace

As I became familiar with the Dhammapada in its original language, I noticed that, in addition to teachings, the text also conveys two prominent moods, in keeping with the ancient Indian theory that poetry expresses one or another “flavor” (rasa) or emotional attitude. I find that the Dhammapada not only awakens these moods in me as the reader, but also helps me to ˜ feel closer to the ancient Buddhists who composed the text. Through the Dhammapada I get a sense of the emotional inspiration that early Indian Buddhists may have had for their spiritual life.

The first mood or emotion is energetic effort (viriya), characterized by the heroism and self-control required to walk the Buddhist path. Some verses exhort us to action with expressions such as “Rouse yourself! Don’t be negligent! Live the Dharma” (168). The directness and crispness of many of the verses convey this sense of energy. The spirit comes across most strongly in the second chapter, “Vigilance,” where the Dharma life is described as a purposeful life in which one actively cultivates a high degree of self-mastery.

The second prominent “flavor” expressed in the Dhammapada is the state of peace (santi) that comes with the fulfillment of the path of practice. At times the text explicitly contrasts this with the effortful activity of someone still on the path (e.g., verse 23). Associated with this peace are tranquility, rest, purity, happiness, and freedom. The chapters that most clearly express the peace and its associated qualities are chapters 15 and 25.

Themes

Many of the important themes found in the Dhammapada are presented as dichotomies: for example, being vigilant versus being negligent, having self-control or not having it, having ill will and not having it, being truthful or not, developing the mind or not developing it, grief versus joy. Even the poetic structure of the Dhammapada is

often built around dichotomies. Many verses are paired to present the two sides of a distinction. This is most pronounced in the first chapter, appropriately titled “Dichotomies.” Some pairs of chapters seem to represent dichotomies as well, for example a chapter on “The Fool” followed by one on “The Sage.”

In other texts, this characteristic might be of only casual interest. In the Dhammapada, however, it is a manifestation of how important simple distinctions are in the pragmatism of the early Buddhist tradition. What matters is whether something does or does not work, is or is not helpful in the spiritual quest. All the dichotomies in the Dhammapada can be seen as extensions of this simple pragmatic concern. One of the most explicit expressions of this tendency is found in verse 282, which focuses on the distinction between what increases or decreases a person’s wisdom:

Wisdom arises from [spiritual] practice;

Without practice it decays.

Knowing this two-way path for gain and loss,

Conduct yourself so that wisdom grows.

A common dichotomy in the text is the contrast between action that is meritorious and that which I have mostly translated as “evil.” “Merit” is a relatively unproblematic translation of pāpa; certainly it is preferable to “good,” as the word is sometimes translated. I have used “evil” to translate pāpa. The concept is perhaps closer to “demerit” (as I translated it in verse 39), but I felt that word was usually too mild. Pāpa is what causes suffering in oneself as well as harm to other people. It is the causal condition for an unfortunate rebirth (117–118).

The theme of evil also appears in recurring references to Māra. A person bent on liberation needs to battle Māra (40), avoid being overpowered by him (7–8), and ultimately conquer him (175). Western readers sometimes see Māra as the Buddhist version of the devil, especially when he is called pāpimā, “the Evil One.” But because pāpa relates to demeritorious action, pāpimā could perhaps be understood as one who pulls people downward in the cycles of rebirth. The word Māra, derived from the verbal root mṛ “to die,” refers to that which kills. Verses that speak of not being seen by Māra (e.g., 46, 170) mean, I suggest, that one overcomes death. This does not mean that liberated people don’t die. Rather, it suggests first, that the person is no longer susceptible to the deadening forces of Māra, such as fear, anger, and clinging; and second, that a liberated person is free from the forces leading to further rebirth and thus to further death.

Another common contrast in the text is between the wise person and the fool, or perhaps between the wise person and a childish one; bāla, the fool, also means “child” or

“childish.” The fool acts in ways harmful to him or herself; a wise person, in ways that are beneficial. Furthermore, the wise person clearly sees these dichotomies:

Not by silence

Does an ignorant fool become a sage.

The wise person, who,

As if holding a set of scales,

Selects what’s good and avoids what’s evil

Is, for that reason, a sage.

Whoever can weigh these two sides of the world

Is, for that reason, called a “sage.” (268–269)

Such verses can come across as judgmental and lacking compassion. However, I believe that the purpose is not to denigrate some people as fools, but rather to describe the difference between skillful and unskillful behavior, between what leads to desirable outcomes and what does not. Fools are sometimes presented as people who are evil, but more often as people who are oblivious or distracted by worldly attachments (see, e.g., 286–287).

On Reading the Dhammapada

During many years of reading the Dhammapada, I have spent a lot of time pondering two issues related to the text and their meaning for the modern lay practitioner: first, the emphasis on renunciation, solitude, and the monastic life; and second, what may appear to be a denial or rejection of the world.

The major audience for the Dhammapada historically has been the ordained Buddhist community. Thus a number of the verses understandably address issues of monastic life. However, many of these verses can apply to anyone who seeks a life dedicated to Dharma practice. The challenge for lay practitioners is to discover how to appropriately incorporate into lay life the renunciation and purity that characterize monastic life. I have taken them that way for myself. When verses 9 and 10 state that the monastic form is useless unless the monk or nun is virtuous, self-controlled, and honest, I translate that for myself as saying that

the lay life is similarly worthless without these qualities. Anyone who lives in this way may figuratively be called a monastic, as is done in verse 142.

The second issue—whether the text has a world-rejecting message—is more challenging, perhaps because the text was meant to challenge our relationship to the world. An initial reading of a number of the verses seems to reveal a negation or an aversion to the world (in fact, some English translations seem to translate the entire text based on this impression). For example, the text encourages us not to "be engrossed in the world" (167). Certainly, for many readers, the following verse seems to deny ordinary human relationships:

Affection gives rise to grief;

Affection gives rise to fear.

For someone released from affection

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (213)

However, if affection is here understood as a form of clinging—which I believe was the original intent—then what is being criticized is not warm or caring relationships but clinging to those relationships. Similarly, it is not the world that is negated in the Dhammapada, but rather attachment to the world (as in verse 171).

Stated differently, what is rejected in the text is saṃsāra, the self-perpetuating cycles of suffering arising from clinging. Becoming free from wandering endlessly in these cycles is the essential goal of the Dhammapada. The world and saṃsāra are not the same, even though it is the world that provides most of the objects of samsaric clinging.

In contrast to the seemingly world-negating verses, the Dhammapada places a strong emphasis on joy, with an entire section, chapter 15, devoted to happiness. Here we find many expressions of joy, including exclamations of joy from those who have freed themselves from attachments. They say, "We shall feast on joy" (200).

For these reasons, I have come to understand that the overall message is not to avoid the world, but rather to avoid being attached. While initial appearances may sometimes suggest a world-negating message, I believe that the issue in the Dhammapada is neither negating or affirming the world. The issue is becoming free of clinging to the world. For those who take on this challenge, the resulting freedom helps us live in the world as wisely as possible, which includes experiencing joy.

Over the years I have read the Dhammapada in a variety of ways, sometimes casually and sometimes with great care. I have calmed my mind in meditation so that I could encounter the text in creative and intuitive ways. I have read it out loud. I have memorized verses. Some passages I have reread many times until they revealed new understandings or insights. I have read the verses for my own inspiration as well as to discover what inspired ancient Buddhists in their religious life. At times I have approached the text with an inquiring attitude, sometimes to see how the text might address a particular question I've had and sometimes to allow the text to question my own views and biases.

Each way of reading the text gives me a different impression of the Dhammapada. Using a variety of approaches has enriched my experience of the text. My hope is that my translation will enable other readers to be enriched by it as well, perhaps showing them something of the happiness toward which this religious classic is a guide.

ONE

Dichotomies*

All experience is preceded by mind,

Led by mind,

Made by mind.

Speak or act with a corrupted mind,

And suffering follows

As the wagon wheel follows the hoof of the ox.

All experience is preceded by mind,

Led by mind,

Made by mind.

Speak or act with a peaceful mind,

And happiness follows

Like a never-departing shadow. (1–2)*

"They abused me, attacked me,

Defeated me, robbed me!”

For someone hostile like this,

Hatred does not end.

“They abused me, attacked me,

Defeated me, robbed me!”

For someone not hostile like this,

Hatred ends. (3–4)

Hatred never ends through hatred.

By non-hate alone does it end.

This is an ancient truth.

Many do not realize that

We here must die.

For those who realize this,

Quarrels end. (5–6)*

Whoever lives

Focused on the pleasant,

Senses unguarded,

Immoderate with food,

Lazy and sluggish,

Will be overpowered by Māra,

As a weak tree is bent in the wind.

Whoever lives

Focused on the unpleasant,

Senses guarded,

Moderate with food,

Faithful and diligent,

Will not be overpowered by Māra,

As a stone mountain is unmoved by the wind. (7–8)*

Whoever is defiled
And devoid of self-control and truth,
Yet wears the saffron robe,
Is unworthy of the saffron robe.
Whoever has purged the defilements,
Is self-controlled, truthful,
And well established in virtue,
Is worthy of the saffron robe. (9–10)*

Those who consider the inessential to be essential

And see the essential as inessential
Don’t reach the essential,
Living in the field of wrong intention.
Those who know the essential to be essential
And the inessential as inessential
Reach the essential,
Living in the field of right intention. (11–12)*

As rain penetrates
An ill-thatched house,
So lust penetrates
An uncultivated mind.
As rain does not penetrate
A well-thatched house,
So lust does not penetrate
A well-cultivated mind. (13–14)*

One who does evil grieves in this life,

Grieves in the next,

Grieves in both worlds.

Seeing one’s own defiled acts brings grief and affliction.

One who makes merit rejoices in this life,

Rejoices in the next,

Rejoices in both worlds.

Seeing one’s own pure acts brings joy and delight. (15–16)

One who does evil is tormented in this life,

Tormented in the next,

Is tormented in both worlds.

Here one is tormented, knowing, “I have done evil.”

Reborn in realms of woe, one is tormented all the more.

One who makes merit is delighted in this life,

Delighted in the next,

Is delighted in both worlds.

Here one is delighted, knowing, “I have made merit.”

Reborn in realms of bliss, one delights all the more. (17–18)∗

One who recites many teachings

But, being negligent, doesn’t act accordingly,

Like a cowherd counting others’ cows,

Does not attain the benefits of the contemplative life.

One who recites but a few teachings

Yet lives according to the Dharma,

Abandoning passion, ill will, and delusion,

Aware and with mind well freed,

Not clinging in this life or the next,

Attains the benefits of the contemplative life. (19–20)

∗ An asterisk indicates an associated endnote of explanation or elaboration.

TWO

Vigilance∗

Vigilance is the path to the Deathless;

Negligence the path to death.

The vigilant do not die;

The negligent are as if already dead. (21)∗

Knowing this distinction,

Vigilant sages rejoice in vigilance

Delighting

In the field of the noble ones. (22)∗

Absorbed in meditation, persevering,

Always steadfast,

The wise touch Nirvana,

The ultimate rest from toil. (23)∗

Glory grows for a person who is

Energetic and mindful,

Pure and considerate in action,

Restrained and vigilant,

And who lives the Dharma. (24)

Through effort, vigilance,

Restraint, and self-control,

The wise person can become an island

No flood will overwhelm. (25)*

Unwise, foolish people

Give themselves over to negligence.

The wise

Protect vigilance as the greatest treasure. (26)

Don’t give yourself to negligence,

Don’t devote yourself to sensual pleasure.

Vigilant and absorbed in meditation

One attains abundant happiness. (27)

Driving away negligence with vigilance,

Ascending the tower of insight and free of sorrow,

A sage observes the sorrowing masses

As someone standing on a mountain observes fools on the ground below. (28)

Vigilant among the negligent,

Wide awake among the sleeping,

The wise one advances

Like a swift horse leaving a weak one behind. (29)

With vigilance, Indra became the greatest of the gods.

The gods praise vigilance,

Forever rejecting negligence. (30)*

The monastic who delights in vigilance

And fears negligence

Advances like a fire,

Burning fetters subtle and gross. (31)

The monastic who delights in vigilance

And fears negligence

Is incapable of backsliding

And is quite close to Nirvana. (32)

THREE

The Mind

The restless, agitated mind,

Hard to protect, hard to control,

The sage makes straight,

As a fletcher the shaft of an arrow. (33)

Like a fish out of water,

Thrown on dry ground,

This mind thrashes about,

Trying to escape Māra's command. (34)

The mind, hard to control,

Flighty—alighting where it wishes—

One does well to tame.

The disciplined mind brings happiness. (35)

The mind, hard to see,

Subtle—alighting where it wishes—
The sage protects.
The watched mind brings happiness. (36)
Far-ranging, solitary,
Incorporeal and hidden
Is the mind.
Those who restrain it
Will be freed from Māra’s bonds. (37)*
For those who are unsteady of mind,
Who do not know true Dharma,
And whose serenity wavers,
Wisdom does not mature. (38)
For one who is awake,
Whose mind isn’t overflowing,
Whose heart isn’t afflicted
And who has abandoned both merit and demerit,
Fear does not exist. (39)*
Knowing this body to be like a clay pot,
Establishing this mind like a fortress,
One should battle Māra with the sword of insight,
Protecting what has been won,
Clinging to nothing. (40)*
All too soon this body
Will lie on the ground,
Cast aside, deprived of consciousness,
Like a useless scrap of wood. (41)

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy,
Or haters, one to another,
Far worse is the harm
From one’s own wrongly directed mind. (42)*
Neither mother nor father,
Nor any other relative can do
One as much good
As one’s own well-directed mind. (43)

FOUR

Flowers
Who will master this world
And the realms of Yama and the gods?
Who will select a well-taught Dharma teaching,
As a skilled person selects a flower? (44)*
One in training will master this world
And the realms of Yama and the gods.
One in training will select
A well-taught Dharma teaching,
As a skilled person selects a flower. (45)*
Knowing this body is like foam,
Fully awake to its mirage-like nature,
Cutting off Māra’s flowers,
One goes unseen by the King of Death. (46)
Death sweeps away

The person obsessed
With gathering flowers,
As a great flood sweeps away a sleeping village. (47)*

The person obsessed
With gathering flowers,
Insatiable for sense pleasures,
Is under the sway of Death. (48)*

As a bee gathers nectar
And moves on without harming
The flower, its color, or its fragrance,
Just so should a sage walk through a village. (49)

Do not consider the faults of others
Or what they have or haven't done.
Consider rather
What you yourself have or haven't done. (50)

Like a beautiful flower,
Brightly colored but lacking scent,
So are well-spoken words
Fruitless when not carried out.

Like a beautiful flower,
Brightly colored and with scent,
So are well-spoken words
Fruitful when carried out. (51–52)

Just as from a heap of flowers
Many garlands can be made,
So, you, with your mortal life,

Should do many skillful things. (53)

The scent of flowers

—sandalwood, jasmine, and rosebay—

Doesn’t go against the wind.

But the scent of a virtuous person

Does travel against the wind;

It spreads in all directions. (54)*

The scent of virtue

Is unsurpassed

Even by sandalwood, rosebay,

Water lily, and jasmine. (55)

Slight

Is the scent of rosebay or sandalwood,

But the scent of the virtuous is supreme,

Drifting even to the gods. (56)

Māra does not find the path

Of those endowed with virtue,

Living with vigilance,

and freed by right understanding. (57)

As a sweet-smelling lotus

Pleasing to the heart

May grow in a heap of rubbish

Discarded along the highway,

So a disciple of the Fully Awakened One

Shines with wisdom

Amid the rubbish heap

Of blind, common people. (58–59)*

FIVE

The Fool∗

Night is long for one lying awake.
Seven miles is long for one exhausted.
Saṃsāra is long for fools
Ignorant of true Dharma. (60)

If, while on your way,
You meet no one your equal or better,
Steadily continue on your way alone.
There is no fellowship with fools. (61)

A fool suffers, thinking,
“I have children! I have wealth!”
One’s self is not even one’s own.
How then are children? How then is wealth? (62)

Fools conscious of their foolishness
Are to that extent wise.
But fools who consider themselves wise
Are the ones to be called fools. (63)

A fool associating with a sage,
Even if for a lifetime,
Will no more perceive the Dharma
Than a spoon will perceive the taste of soup. (64)

A discerning person who associates with a sage,

Even if for a brief moment,
Will quickly perceive the Dharma,
As the tongue perceives the taste of soup. (65)

Fools with no sense
Go about as their own enemies,
Doing evil deeds that
Bear bitter fruit. (66)

No deed is good
That one regrets having done,
That results in weeping
And a tear-streaked face. (67)

A deed is good
That one doesn’t regret having done,
That results in joy
And delight. (68)

As long as evil has not borne fruit,
The fool thinks it is like honey.
But when evil does bear fruit,
Then the fool suffers. (69)

The foolish ascetic who month after month
Eats food with the tip of a blade of grass
Is not worth a fraction
Of a person who has fathomed the Dharma. (70)*

Like fresh milk,
Evil deeds do not immediately curdle;
Rather, like fire covered with ash,

They follow the fool, smoldering. (71)∗

Reasoning is harmful
To fools;
It ruins their good fortune
And splits open their heads. (72)∗

Fools will want unwarranted status,
Deference from fellow monks,
Authority in the monasteries,
And homage from good families.
“Let both householders and renunciants
Believe that I did this.
Let them obey me in every task!”
Such are the thoughts of a fool
Who cultivates desire and pride. (73–74)

The way to material gain is one thing,
The path to Nirvana another.
Knowing this, a monk who is the Buddha’s disciple
Should not delight in being venerated,
But cultivate solitude instead. (75)∗

SIX

The Sage
Like someone pointing to treasure
Is the wise person
Who sees your faults and points them out.

Associate with such a sage.
Good will come of it, not bad,
If you associate with one such as this. (76)
Let one such as this advise you, instruct you,
And restrain you from rude behavior.
Such a person is pleasing to good people,
But displeasing to the bad. (77)
Do not associate with evil friends;
Do not associate with the lowest of people.
Associate with virtuous friends;
Associate with the best of people. (78)
One who drinks in the Dharma
Sleeps happily with a clear mind.
The sage always delights in the Dharma
Taught by the noble ones. (79)∗
Irrigators guide water;
Fletchers shape arrows;
Carpenters fashion wood;
Sages tame themselves. (80)
As a solid mass of rock
Is not moved by the wind,
So a sage is unmoved
By praise or blame. (81)
As a deep lake
Is clear and undisturbed,
So a sage becomes clear
Upon hearing the Dharma. (82)

Virtuous people always let go.
They don’t prattle about pleasures and desires.
Touched by happiness and then by suffering,
The sage shows no sign of being elated or depressed. (83)*
A person who would not wish for success by unethical means,
Not for the sake of oneself,
Not for the sake of others,
Not with hopes for children, wealth, or kingdom,
Is a person of virtue, insight, and truth. (84)*
Few are the people
Who reach the other shore.
Many are the people
Who run about on this shore. (85)
But those who are in accord with the Dharma
—with the well-taught Dharma—
Will go beyond the realm of Death,
So hard to cross. (86)
Giving up dark ways,
Sages cultivate the bright.
They go from home to homelessness,
To the solitude so hard to enjoy.
There they should seek delight,
Abandoning sensual desires,
Having nothing.

Sages should cleanse themselves
Of what defiles the mind. (87–88)*
Those who
Fully cultivate the Factors of Awakening,
Give up grasping,
Enjoy non-clinging,
And have destroyed the toxins,
Are luminous,
And completely liberated in this life. (89)*

SEVEN

The Arahant
For someone
At the journey's end,
Freed of sorrow,
Liberated in all ways,
Released from all bonds,
No fever exists. (90)*
The mindful apply themselves;
They don't amuse themselves in any abode.
Like swans flying from a lake,
They abandon home after home. (91)
Like the path of birds in the sky,
It is hard to trace the path
Of those who do not hoard,
Who are judicious with their food,

And whose field

Is the freedom of emptiness and signlessness. (92)*

Like the path of birds in the sky,

It is hard to trace the path

Of those who have destroyed their toxins,

Who are unattached to food,

And whose field

Is the freedom of emptiness and signlessness. (93)*

Even the gods cherish

Those who are without toxins,

Who have abandoned conceit,

And whose senses are calm,

Like horses well tamed by a charioteer. (94)

For a person

Who, like the earth, is untroubled,

Who is well-practiced,

Who is like a pillar of Indra,

Who is like a lake without mud,

There is no more wandering. (95)*

Calm in mind, speech, and action

And released through right understanding,

Such a person

Is fully at peace. (96)

The person who

Has gone beyond faith,

Knows the Unmade,

Has severed the link,

Destroyed the potential [for rebirth],

And eliminated clinging

Is the ultimate person. (97)*

In village, in forest,

In low land, in high land:

Delightful is the place

Where the arahant dwells. (98)

Delightful are forests

Where the public does not delight.

There the passion-free delight,

Not seeking sensual pleasure. (99)

EIGHT

Thousands

Better than a thousand meaningless statements

Is one meaningful word,

Which, having been heard,

Brings peace. (100)

Better than a thousand meaningless verses

Is one meaningful line of verse

Which, having been heard,

Brings peace. (101)

Better than reciting a hundred meaningless verses

Is one meaningful line of Dharma
Which, having been heard,
Brings peace. (102)*
Greater in combat
Than a person who conquers
A thousand times a thousand people
Is the one who conquers oneself. (103)
Certainly it is better to conquer
Oneself than others.
For someone who is self-restrained
And always lives with mastery,
Neither a god, a gandhabba,
Nor Māra and Brahmā together
Could turn conquest into defeat. 104–(105)*
Better than a thousand ritual sacrifices
Offered every month for a hundred years
Is one moment’s homage offered
To one who has cultivated oneself. (106)
Better than a hundred years
In the forest tending a ritual fire
Is one moment’s homage offered
To one who has cultivated oneself. (107)
Whatever sacrifice or offering a merit seeker
Might perform in an entire year
Is not worth one-fourth as much as
Expressing respect to those who are upright. (108)

For the person who shows respect
And always reveres worthy people,
Four things increase:
Life span, beauty, happiness, and strength. (109)

Better than one hundred years lived
With an unsettled [mind],
Devoid of virtue,
Is one day lived
Virtuous and absorbed in meditation. (110)*

Better than one hundred years lived
With an unsettled [mind],
Devoid of insight,
Is one day lived
With insight and absorbed in meditation. (111)*

Better than one hundred years lived
Lazily and lacking in effort
Is one day lived
With vigor and exertion. (112)

Better than one hundred years lived
Without seeing the arising and passing of things
Is one day lived
Seeing their arising and passing. (113)*

Better than one hundred years lived
Without seeing the Deathless
Is one day lived
Seeing the Deathless. (114)*

Better than one hundred years lived
Without seeing the ultimate Dharma
Is one day lived
Seeing the ultimate Dharma. (115)

NINE

Evil
Be quick to do good,
Restrain your mind from evil.
When one is slow to make merit,
One’s mind delights in evil. (116)
Having done something evil,
Don’t repeat it,
Don’t wish for it:
Evil piled up brings suffering. (117)
Having done something meritorious,
Repeat it,
Wish for it:
Merit piled up brings happiness. (118)
Even an evildoer may see benefit
As long as the evil
Has yet to mature.
But when the evil has matured,
The evildoer
Will meet with misfortune. (119)*

A doer of good may meet evil fortune
As long as the good
Has yet to mature.
But when the good has matured,
The doer of good
Will meet with good fortune. (120)
Don’t disregard evil, thinking,
“It won’t come back to me!”
With dripping drops of water
Even a water jug is filled.
Little by little,
A fool is filled with evil. (121)
Don’t disregard merit, thinking,
“It won’t come back to me!”
With dripping drops of water
Even a water jug is filled.
Little by little,
A sage is filled with merit. (122)
As a merchant
Carrying great wealth in a small caravan
Avoids a dangerous road;
As someone who loves life
Avoids poison;
So should you avoid evil deeds. (123)
A hand that has no wounds
Can carry poison;
Poison does not enter without a wound.

There are no evil consequences
For one who does no evil. (124)*
Like fine dust thrown against the wind,
Evil comes back to the fool
Who harms a person who is
Innocent, pure, and unblemished. (125)
Some are reborn in a womb;
Evildoers are reborn in hell.
People of good conduct go to heaven;
Those without toxins
Are fully released in Nirvana. (126)
You will not find a spot in the world—
Not in the sky, not in the ocean,
Not inside a mountain cave—
Where you will be free from your evil karma. (127)
You will not find a spot in the world—
Not in the sky, not in the ocean,
Not inside a mountain cave—
Where death will not overtake you. (128)

TEN

Violence*

All tremble at violence;
All fear death.
Seeing others as being like yourself,

Do not kill or cause others to kill. (129)*

All tremble at violence;

Life is dear for all.

Seeing others as being like yourself,

Do not kill or cause others to kill. (130)*

If, desiring happiness,

You use violence

To harm living beings who desire happiness,

You won’t find happiness after death. (131)

If, desiring happiness,

You do not use violence

To harm living beings who desire happiness,

You will find happiness after death. (132)

Don’t speak harshly to anyone;

What you say will be said back to you.

Hostile speech is painful,

And you will meet with retaliation. (133)

If, like a broken bell,

You do not reverberate,

Then you have attained Nirvana

And no hostility is found in you. (134)

As, with a stick, a cowherd drives

Cows to pasture,

So aging and death drive

The lives of beings. (135)

Even while doing evil,

Fools are ignorant of it.

Like someone burned by fire,

Those lacking wisdom are scorched by their own deeds. (136)

Whoever uses violence to harm

The nonviolent and innocent

Quickly goes to one of ten conditions:

Intense pain or great loss,

Bodily injury or insanity,

Serious illness or vicious slander,

Oppression from rulers or the loss of relatives,

Houses consumed by fire or wealth destroyed.

And with the breakup of the body

The unwise one falls to hell. (137–140)

No nakedness or matted hair,

No filth, dust, or dirt,

No fasting or sleeping on bare ground,

No austerities in a squatting posture

Purify a mortal who has not overcome doubt. (141)

Even though well adorned,

If one lives at peace,

Calmed, controlled, assured, and chaste,

Having given up violence toward all beings,

Then one is a brahmin, a renunciant, a monastic. (142)*

Where in this world does one find

Someone restrained by conscience,

Who knows little of blame,

As a good horse knows little of the whip?
(143)*

Like a good horse alert to the whip,
Be ardent and alarmed.
With faith, virtue, effort,
Concentration, and discernment,
Accomplished in knowledge and good conduct,
Mindful,
You will leave this great suffering behind.
(144)*

Irrigators guide water;
Fletchers shape arrows;
Carpenters fashion wood;
The well-practiced tame themselves. (145)

ELEVEN

Old Age
Why the laughter, why the joy,
When flames are ever burning?
Surrounded by darkness,
Shouldn’t you search for light? (146)
Look at this beautified body:
A mass of sores propped up,
Full of illness, [the object] of many plans,
With nothing stable or lasting. (147)*
This body is worn out—
So fragile, a nesting ground for disease.

When life ends in death,

This putrid body dissolves. (148)*

What is the delight

In seeing these dull-white bones

Tossed away

Like white gourds in autumn? (149)

This city is built of bones,

Plastered with blood and flesh,

And filled with

Aging, death, conceit, and hypocrisy. (150)

Even the splendid chariots of the royalty wear out.

So too does the body decay.

But the Dharma of the virtuous doesn’t decay

[For it is upheld when] the virtous teach [it] to good people. (151)*

The person of little learning

Grows old like an ox:

The flesh increases,

But insight does not. (152)

Through many births

I have wandered on and on,

Searching for, but never finding,

The builder of [this] house.

To be born again and again is suffering.

Housebuilder, you are seen!

You will not build a house again!

All the rafters are broken,

The ridgepole deconstructed;
The mind, arrived at the deconstructed,
Has attained the end of craving! (153–154)*
Those who have neither lived the chaste life
Nor gained wealth in their youth
Waste away like frail herons
In a lake devoid of fish. (155)*
Those who have neither lived the chaste life
Nor gained wealth in their youth
Lie around like [arrows misfired] from a bow,
Lamenting the past. (156)

TWELVE

Oneself
If one knew oneself to be precious,
One would guard oneself with care.
Sages will watch over themselves
All through the night. (157)*
In first establishing oneself
In what is proper
And only then teaching others,
The sage will not be stained. (158)
As one instructs others,
So should one do oneself:
Only the self-controlled should restrain

others.

Truly, it’s hard to restrain oneself. (159)
Oneself, indeed, is one’s own protector.
What other protector could there be?
With self-control
One gains a protector hard to obtain. (160)
By oneself alone is evil done.
Born of oneself, produced by oneself,
It grinds down those devoid of wisdom,
As a diamond grinds down a gem. (161)
They who cover themselves with their own corrupt conduct,
Like a creeper covers a tree,
Do to themselves
What an enemy wishes for them. (162)
It’s easy to do what is not good
And things that harm oneself.
It’s very difficult to do
Things beneficial and good. (163)
The unwise who rely on evil views
To malign the teachings of the noble arahants
Who live the Dharma
Produce fruit that destroys themselves,
Like the kathaka reed that dies upon bearing fruit. (164)*
Evil is done by oneself alone;
By oneself is one defiled.
Evil is avoided by oneself;

By oneself alone is one purified.
Purity and impurity depend on oneself;
No one can purify another. (165)
Don’t give up your own welfare
For the sake of others’ welfare, however great.
Clearly know your own welfare
And be intent on the highest good. (166)

THIRTEEN

The World

Do not follow an inferior way;
Don’t live with negligence.
Do not follow a wrong view;
Don’t be engrossed in the world. (167)*
Rouse yourself! Don’t be negligent!
Live the Dharma, a life of good conduct.
One who lives the Dharma is happy
In this world and the next. (168)
Live the Dharma, a life of good conduct.
Don’t live a life of bad conduct.
One who lives the Dharma is happy
In this world and the next. (169)
If one sees the world as a bubble,
If one sees it as a mirage,
One won’t be seen

By the King of Death. (170)

Come, look on this world

As a beautified royal chariot.

Fools flounder in it,

But the discerning do not cling. (171)

Whoever recovers from doing evil

By doing something wholesome

Illuminates the world

Like the moon set free from a cloud. (172)

Whoever replaces an evil deed

With what is wholesome

Illuminates the world

Like the moon set free from a cloud. (173)*

Blind is this world;

Few see clearly here.

As birds who escape from nets are few,

Few go to heaven. (174)

Swans travel the path of the sun;

Those with psychic powers travel through space;

The wise travel forth from the world,

Having conquered Māra and his army. (175)*

For people who speak falsely,

Who transgress in this one way,

And who reject the world beyond,

There is no evil they won’t do. (176)*

Fools don’t praise generosity;

Misers don’t go to the world of gods.
The wise rejoice in generosity
And so find happiness in the hereafter.
(177)

Absolute rule over the earth,
Going to heaven,
Supreme sovereignty over all worlds—
The fruit of stream entry surpasses them
all. (178)*

FOURTEEN

The Buddha*
The Buddha’s victory cannot be undone;
No one in the world can approach it.
By what path would you guide him,
Who has no path,
Whose field is endless? (179)
The Buddha has no ensnaring, embroiling
craving
To lead him;
By what path would you guide him,
Who has no path,
Whose field is endless? (180)
Even the gods envy
The awakened ones,
The mindful ones,
The wise ones

Who are intent on meditation
And delight in the peace of renunciation.
(181)

It is difficult to be born a human;
Difficult is the life of mortals;
It is difficult to hear the true Dharma;
Difficult is the arising of buddhas. (182)

Doing no evil,
Engaging in what’s skillful,
And purifying one’s mind:
This is the teaching of the buddhas. (183)

Patient endurance is the supreme austerity.
The buddhas say that Nirvana is supreme.
One who injures others is no renunciant;
One who harms another is no contemplative.
(184)*

Not disparaging others, not causing injury,
Practicing restraint by the monastic rules,
Knowing moderation in food,
Dwelling in solitude,
And pursuing the higher states of mind,
This is the teaching of the buddhas. (185)

Not even with a shower of gold coins
Would we find satisfaction in sensual
craving.

Knowing that sensual cravings are suffering,
That they bring little delight,
The sage does not rejoice
Even in divine pleasures.

One who delights in the ending of craving
Is a disciple of the Fully Awakened One. (186–187)

People threatened by fear
Go to many refuges:
To mountains, forests,
Parks, trees, and shrines.
None of these is a secure refuge;
None is a supreme refuge.
Not by going to such a refuge
Is one released from all suffering. (188–189)

But when someone going for refuge
To the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha
Sees, with right insight,
The Four Noble Truths:
Suffering,
The arising of suffering,
The overcoming of suffering,
And the Eightfold Path
Leading to the ending of suffering,
Then this is the secure refuge;
This is the supreme refuge.
By going to such a refuge
One is released from all suffering. (190–192)*

It’s hard to find a noble person;
Such a person is not born everywhere.

When such a wise one is born,
The family flourishes in happiness. (193)
Happy is the arising of buddhas;
Happy is the teaching of the true Dharma;
Happy is the harmony of the Sangha;
Happy is the ardent practice of those in harmony. (194)*
The merit of worshipping those worthy of worship,
Be they buddhas or disciples
Who have transcended their obsessive thinking,
Passed beyond sorrow and grief,
Gone to peace,
And who have nothing to fear,
Can never be calculated by any estimation. (195–196)*

FIFTEEN

Happiness

Ah, so happily we live,
Without hate among those with hate.
Among people who hate
We live without hate. (197)*
Ah, so happily we live,
Without misery among those in misery.
Among people in misery
We live without misery. (198)

Ah, so happily we live,
Without ambition among those with ambition.
Among people who are ambitious
We live without ambition. (199)*
Ah, so happily we live,
We who have no attachments.
We shall feast on joy,
As do the Radiant Gods. (200)*
Victory gives birth to hate;
The defeated sleep in anguish.
Giving up both victory and defeat,
Those who have attained peace sleep happily. (201)

There is no fire like lust,
No misfortune like hate,
No suffering like the aggregates,
And no happiness higher than peace. (202)*
Hunger is the foremost illness;
Saṅkhāras the foremost suffering.
For one who knows this as it really is,
Nirvana is the foremost happiness. (203)*
Health is the foremost possession,
Contentment, the foremost wealth,
Trust, the foremost kinship,
And Nirvana, the foremost happiness. (204)
Tasting the flavor
Of solitude and peace,

One becomes free of distress and evil,
Drinking the flavor of Dharma joy. (205)
It’s good to see the noble ones;
Their company is always a delight.
Free from the sight of fools,
One would constantly be happy. (206)
One who keeps company with fools
Will grieve for a long, long time.
Living with fools is painful,
As is living with foes.
Living with the wise is delightful,
Like relatives gathered together. (207)
Therefore:
You should follow a good, intelligent person
Who is wise, insightful, learned,
Committed to virtue, dutiful, and noble,
As the moon follows the path of the stars. (208)

SIXTEEN

The Dear*
Practicing what one shouldn’t,
Not practicing what one should,
Having abandoned the goal,
Clinging to what is dear,
One comes to envy those who practice. (209)*

Don’t get entangled

With what you long for or dislike.

Not seeing what you long for is suffering;

So also is seeing what you dislike. (210)*

Therefore, do not turn anything

Into something longed for,

For then it’s dreadful to lose.

Without longing or dislike,

No bonds exist. (211)

Longing gives rise to grief;

Longing gives rise to fear.

For someone released from longing

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (212)

Affection gives rise to grief;

Affection gives rise to fear.

For someone released from affection

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (213)

Infatuation gives rise to grief;

Infatuation gives rise to fear.

For someone released from infatuation

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (214)

Sensual craving gives rise to grief;

Sensual craving gives rise to fear.

For someone released from sensual craving

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (215)

Craving gives rise to grief;

Craving gives rise to fear.

For someone released from craving

There is no grief;

And from where would come fear? (216)

People hold dear those

Who have done their own work,

Complete in virtue and vision,

Established in the Dharma,

And who speak the truth. (217)

Anyone who aspires to the Indescribable,

Whose mind is expansive,

And whose heart is not bound to sensual craving

Is called “one bound upstream.” (218)*

Relatives, friends, and companions

Rejoice

When a long-absent person

Returns from afar.

Just so, in passing from this world to the next,

The merit we have made

Receives us,

As a family does the return of a beloved relative. (219–220)

SEVENTEEN

Anger

Give up anger, give up conceit,
Pass beyond every fetter.
There is no suffering for one who possesses nothing,
Who doesn’t cling to names and appearances. (221)*

The one who keeps anger in check as it arises,
As one would a careening chariot,
I call a charioteer.
Others are merely rein-holders. (222)

Conquer anger with non-anger;
Conquer wickedness with goodness;
Conquer stinginess with giving,
And a liar with truth. (223)

If one speaks the truth,
Is not angry,
And gives when asked, even when one has little,
Then one comes into the presence of the gods. (224)

Sages who do no harm,
Constantly restrained in body,
Go to the immovable state
Where they do not grieve. (225)*

For the ever-wakeful—
Training day and night,

Intent on Nirvana—

The toxins disappear. (226)*

Ancient is this [saying], O Atula,

It is not just of today:

They find fault in one sitting silently,

They find fault in one speaking much,

They find fault in one speaking moderately.

No one in this world is not found at fault. (227)*

No person can be found

Who has been, is, or will be

Only criticized

Or only praised. (228)

Who is worthy enough to find fault

In one who is like a coin of the finest gold—

Blameless in conduct,

Intelligent,

Endowed with insight and virtue,

Praised by the wise after being observed day after day?

Such a one is praised even by the gods,

Even by Brahmā. (229–230)*

Guard against anger erupting in your body;

Be restrained with your body.

Letting go of bodily misconduct,

Practice good conduct with your body. (231)

Guard against anger erupting in your speech;

Be restrained with your speech.
Letting go of verbal misconduct,
Practice good conduct with your speech.
(232)

Guard against anger erupting in your mind;
Be restrained with your mind.
Letting go of mental misconduct,
Practice good conduct with your mind. (233)
The wise are restrained in body,
Restrained in speech.
The wise are restrained in mind.
They are fully restrained. (234)

EIGHTEEN

Corruption
You are now like a yellowed leaf;
Yama's henchmen are standing by.
You stand at the door of death
With no provisions for the journey.
Make an island for yourself.
Be quick in making effort. Be wise.
Unblemished, with corruption removed,
You'll enter the divine realm of the noble
ones. (235–236)*

You are now at the end of life;
You're headed for Yama's presence
With no resting place along the way,

No provisions for the journey.

Make an island for yourself.

Be quick in making effort. Be wise.

Unblemished, with corruption removed,

You’ll experience birth and old age no more.

237–(238)*

As a smith does with silver,

The wise one

Gradually,

Bit by bit,

Moment by moment,

Removes impurities from oneself. (239)

As rust corrupts

The very iron that formed it,

So transgressions lead

Their doer to states of woe. (240)*

Oral teachings become corrupted when not recited,

Homes are corrupted by inactivity,

Sloth corrupts [physical] beauty,

Negligence corrupts a guardian. (241)

Bad conduct is corruption in a person;

Stinginess, corruption in a giver.

Evil traits corrupt people

In both this world and the next. (242)*

More corrupt than these

Is ignorance, the greatest corruption.

Having abandoned this corruption,

Monks, remain corruption-free! (243)

Easy is life
For someone without conscience,
Bold as a crow,
Obtrusive, deceitful, reckless, and corrupt.
Difficult is life
For someone with conscience,
Always searching for what’s pure,
Discerning, sincere, cautious, and clean-living. (244–245)

One digs up one’s own root
Here in this very world
If one kills, lies, steals,
Goes to another’s spouse,
Or gives oneself up to drink and intoxicants. (246–247)*

Good person, know this:
Evil traits are reckless!
Don’t let greed and wrongdoing
Oppress you with long-term suffering. (248)

According to their faith,
According to their satisfaction,
People give.
This being the case,
If one is envious
Of the food and drink [given] to others,
One does not attain samādhi
By day or by night.

But by cutting out, uprooting, and discarding

This [envious state]

One gains samādhi

By day or by night. (249–250)*

There’s no fire like lust,

No grasping like hate,

No snare like delusion,

No river like craving. (251)

It’s easy to see the faults of others

But hard to see one’s own.

One sifts out the faults of others like chaff

But conceals one’s own,

As a cheat conceals a bad throw of the dice. (252)

If one focuses on others’ faults

And constantly takes offense,

One’s own toxins flourish

And one is far from their destruction. (253)

No path exists in space;

No contemplatives exist outside [the Buddha’s path];

People are enamored with obsessive thoughts;

Tathāgatas are free of obsessive thinking. (254)*

No path exists in space;

No contemplatives exist outside [the Buddha’s path];

No created things are eternal;

No agitation exists for buddhas. (255)*

NINETEEN

The Just*

One is not just
Who judges a case hastily.
A wise person considers
Both what is and isn't right.
Guiding others without force,
Impartially and in accord with the Dharma,
One is called a guardian of the Dharma,
Intelligent and just. (256–257)*
One is not wise
Only because one speaks a lot.
One who is peaceful, without hate, and fearless
Is said to be wise. (258)
One does not uphold the Dharma
Only because one speaks a lot.
Having heard even a little,
If one perceives the Dharma with one's own body
And is never negligent of the Dharma,
Then one is indeed an upholder of the Dharma. (259)
Gray hair does not
Make one an elder.

Someone ripe only in years
Is called “an old fool.”
It’s through truth,
Dharma, harmlessness, restraint, and self-control
That the wise one, purged of impurities,
Is called “an elder.” (260–261)
Not through talk alone or by good looks
Does someone envious, stingy, and treacherous
Become a person of good character.
But with these cut off, uprooted, and destroyed,
A person wise and purged of faults
Is called “of good character.” (262–263)*
Not by means of a shaven head
Does someone dishonest and undisciplined
Become a renunciant.
How could someone filled with longing and greed
Be a renunciant?
Someone who has pacified evil
Small and great,
In every way,
Is, for that reason, called a renunciant. (264–265)
One is not a mendicant
Just because one begs from others.
Nor does one become a mendicant

By taking on a wrong Dharma.

But whoever sets aside

Both merit and evil,

Lives the chaste life,

And goes through the world deliberately

Is called “a mendicant.” (266–267)*

Not by silence

Does an ignorant fool become a sage.

The wise person, who,

As if holding a set of scales,

Selects what’s good and avoids what’s evil

Is, for that reason, a sage.

Whoever can weigh these two sides of the world

Is, for that reason, called “a sage.” (268–269)*

Not by harming living beings

Is one a noble one.

By being harmless to all living beings

Is one called “a noble one.” (270)

Not with

Virtue or religious practice,

Great learning,

Attaining samādhi,

Dwelling alone,

Or [thinking], “I touch the happiness

Of renunciation unknown by ordinary people,”

Should you, monk, rest assured,

Without having destroyed the toxins. (271–272)*

TWENTY

The Path

The best of paths is the Eightfold [Path];
The best of truths, the Four [Noble Truths].
The best of qualities is dispassion;
And the best among gods and humans
Is the one with eyes to see.
This is the path
For purifying one’s vision; there is no other.
Follow it,
You’ll bewilder Māra.
Follow it,
You’ll put an end to suffering.
This is the path I have proclaimed,
Knowing the arrow is pulled out. (273–275)*
It is up to you to make strong effort;
Tathāgatas merely tell you how.
Following the path, those absorbed in meditation
Will be freed from Māra’s bonds. (276)*
“All created things are impermanent.”
Seeing this with insight,
One becomes disenchanted with suffering.

This is the path to purity. (277)*

“All created things are suffering.”

Seeing this with insight,

One becomes disenchanted with suffering.

This is the path to purity. (278)*

“All things are not-self.”

Seeing this with insight,

One becomes disenchanted with suffering.

This is the path to purity. (279)*

Inactive when one should be active,

Lazy [though] young and strong,

Disheartened in one’s resolves,

Such an indolent, lethargic person

Doesn’t find the path of insight. (280)*

Watchful in speech and well-restrained in mind,

Do nothing unskillful with your body.

Purify these three courses of action;

Fulfill the path taught by the sages. (281)

Wisdom arises from [spiritual] practice;

Without practice it decays.

Knowing this two-way path for gain and loss,

Conduct yourself so that wisdom grows. (282)*

Cut down the forest [of desire], not [real] trees.

From the forest [of desire], fear is born.

Having cut down both the forest and the underbrush,

Monks, be deforested [of desire]. (283)*

As long as even the slightest underbrush of desire
Between man and woman is not cut away,
For that long, the mind is bound
Like a suckling calf is to its mother. (284)

Destroy attachment to self
As you could an autumn lily in your fist.
Cultivate the path to peace,
The Nirvana taught by the Well-Gone-One. (285)*

“Here I’ll live during the rainy season,
And here during the winter and summer.”
So the fool ponders,
Unaware of danger.
Intoxicated by children and cattle,
That addict
Is swept away by Death,
As a sleeping village is by a great flood. (286–287)

Children, parents, and relatives
Are not a protection;
For someone seized by Death,
Relatives are no protection.
Knowing this,
The wise person, restrained by virtue,
Should quickly clear the path
To Nirvana. (288–289)*

TWENTY-ONE

Miscellaneous

If, by giving up a lesser happiness,
One could experience greater happiness,
A wise person would renounce the lesser
To behold the greater. (290)*

Those who seek their own happiness
By causing suffering for others
Are entangled with hostility.
From hostility they are not set free. (291)

The toxins multiply
For the insolent and negligent
Who reject what they should do
And do instead what they should not.
But the toxins come to an end
For those who are mindful and alert,
Who are constantly well-engaged
With mindfulness of the body,
Who don’t resort to what they should not do
But persist in doing what they should. (292–293)

Having killed
Mother, father,
Two warrior kings,
A kingdom and its subjects,
The brahmin, undisturbed, moves on. (294)*

Having killed

Mother, father,

Two learned kings,

And a tiger,

The brahmin, undisturbed, moves on. (295)*

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Who constantly, day and night,

Are mindful of the Buddha. (296)

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Who constantly, day and night,

Are mindful of the Dharma. (297)

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Who constantly, day and night,

Are mindful of the Sangha. (298)*

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Who constantly, day and night,

Are mindful of the body. (299)

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Whose minds constantly, day and night,

Delight in harmlessness. (300)

Always wide awake

Are the disciples of Gotama

Whose minds constantly, day and night,

Delight in [spiritual] practice. (301)*

Going forth [into homelessness] is difficult—it's hard to enjoy.

Household life is difficult—it's painful.

Living with discordant people is suffering.

A traveler is subject to suffering,

So don't be a traveler

And don't be subject to suffering. (302)*

People endowed

With faith, virtue, fame, and wealth

Are revered

Wherever they go. (303)

From afar, good people shine

Like the Himalaya mountains.

Close up, bad people disappear

Like arrows shot into the night. (304)

Sitting alone, resting alone, walking alone,

Untiring and alone,

Whoever has tamed oneself

Will find delight in the forest. (305)

TWENTY-TWO

Hell

Those who assert what is not true go to hell,

As do those who deny what they’ve done.
Both these people of base deeds become equal
After death, in the world beyond. (306)
Many who wear the saffron robe
Have evil traits and lack restraint.
By their evil deeds are these wicked people
Reborn in hell. (307)*
Better to eat a flaming red-hot iron ball
Than to be an immoral and unrestrained person
Feeding on the alms-food of the people. (308)*
Four results come to the careless person
Who consorts with the spouse of another:
Demerit,
Disturbed sleep,
Disgrace,
And hell.
For the frightened pair
Delight is brief
[And then comes]
Demerit,
Rebirth in an evil state,
And harsh punishment from the king.
Therefore a person should not consort with another’s spouse. (309–310)*
Just as kusa grass cuts the hand
That wrongly grasps it,
So the renunciant life, if wrongly grasped,

Drags one down to hell. (311)
A lax act, corrupt practice,
Or chaste life lived dubiously
Doesn’t bear much fruit. (312)*
With steady effort
One should do what is to be done
Because the lax renunciant stirs up
Even more dust. (313)*
A foul deed is best not done—
The foul deed torments one later.
A good deed is best done—
For, having done it, one has no regret.
(314)

Just as a fortified city
Is guarded inside and out,
So guard yourself—
Don’t let a moment pass you by.
Those who let the moment pass
Grieve when they’re consigned to hell. (315)
Ashamed of what’s not shameful
And not ashamed of what is,
Those who take up wrong views
Go to a bad rebirth. (316)*
Seeing danger in what’s not dangerous
And not seeing danger in what is,
Those who take up wrong views
Go to a bad rebirth. (317)

Finding fault in what’s not at fault
And seeing no fault in what is,
Those who take up wrong views
Go to a bad rebirth. (318)
But knowing fault as fault,
And the faultless as the faultless,
Those who take up right views
Go to a good rebirth. (319)

TWENTY-THREE

The Elephant
As an elephant in battle
Endures an arrow shot from a bow,
So will I endure verbal abuse;
Many people, indeed, lack virtue. (320)
The tamed elephant is the one
They take into a crowd.
The tamed elephant is the one
The king mounts.
Best among humans is the tamed person
Who endures verbal abuse. (321)
Excellent are tamed mules,
Thoroughbreds, horses of the Indus valley,
Tusked elephants and great elephants.
But even more excellent
Are people who have tamed themselves.

Not by means of these animals could one go
To that place not gone to,
Where a self-tamed person goes
By means of a well-tamed, disciplined self.
(322–323)*

The elephant called Dhanapālaka
Is hard to control when in rut;
Tied down, the tusker doesn’t even eat,
Remembering the elephant forest. (324)*

The sluggish and gluttonous simpleton
Who sleeps and rolls about
Like a fat, grain-fed hog
Is reborn again and again. (325)*

In the past, this mind went wandering
Where it wished, as it liked, and as it pleased.
Now I will retrain it wisely,
As an elephant keeper does an elephant in rut. (326)*

Delight in vigilance.
Protect your own mind.
Lift yourself from a bad course
Like a tusker sunk in mud. (327)

If you find an intelligent companion,
A fellow traveler
A sage of good conduct,
You should travel together,
Delighted and mindful,

Overcoming all dangers. (328)

If you do not find an intelligent companion,
A fellow traveler
Of good conduct and wise,
Travel alone,
Like a king renouncing a conquered kingdom,
Like the elephant Matanga in the forest. (329)*

There is no companionship with a fool;
It is better to go alone.
Travel alone, at ease, doing no evil
Like the elephant Matanga in the forest. (330)

Happiness is having friends when need arises.

Happiness is contentment with whatever there is.

Happiness is merit at the end of one’s life.

Happiness is the abandoning of all suffering.

In the world, respect for one’s mother is happiness,
As is respect for one’s father.

In the world, respect for renunciants is happiness,
As is respect for brahmins.

Happiness is virtue lasting through old age.

Happiness is steadfast faith.

Happiness is the attainment of wisdom.

Not doing evil is happiness. (331–333)

TWENTY-FOUR

Craving

The craving of a person who lives negligently

Spreads like a creeping vine.

Such a person leaps ever onward,

Like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest. (334)*

Sorrow grows

Like grass after rain

For anyone overcome by this miserable craving

And clinging to the world. (335)*

Sorrow falls away

Like drops of water from a lotus

For anyone who overcomes this miserable craving

And clinging to the world. (336)

This I say to you:

Good fortune to all assembled here!

Dig out the root of craving

As you would the fragrant root of bīraṇa grass.

Don’t let Māra destroy you again and again,

As a torrential river [breaks] a reed. (337)

Just as a felled tree grows again

If the roots are unharmed and strong,

So suffering sprouts again and again

Until the tendency to crave is rooted out. (338)

With the thirty-six streams [of craving]
Flowing mightily toward anything pleasing,
The person of wrong views
Is carried away on the currents of lustful intent. (339)*

The streams flow everywhere;
The creeper [of craving] sprouts and remains.
Seeing that the creeper has sprouted,
Use insight to cut it at the root. (340)

When desire flows,
Pleasure arises.
Attached to happiness, seeking enjoyment,
People are subject to birth and old age. (341)

Surrounded by craving,
People run around like frightened hares.
Held by fetters and bonds,
They suffer, repeatedly, over a long time. (342)

Surrounded by craving,
People run around like frightened hares.
Seeking dispassion,
A monastic should dispel craving. (343)

[Though] clear of the underbrush
And out of the forest,
Someone attached to the forest

Runs right back to it.
Come, see that free person
Run back into bondage. (344)*
It’s not a strong bond, say the wise,
That is made of iron, wood, or grass.
A strong bond, say the wise,
Is infatuation with jewels and ornaments
And longing for children and spouse—
That bond is weighty, elastic, and hard to loosen.
Having cut even this, they go forth,
Free from longing, abandoning sensual pleasures.
Those attached to passion
Are caught in a river [of their own making]
Like a spider caught in its own web.
But having cut even this, the wise set forth,
Free from longing, abandoning all suffering. (345–347)*
Let go of the past, let go of the future,
Let go of the present.
Gone beyond becoming,
With the mind released in every way,
You do not again undergo birth and old age. (348)*
For people who
Have agitated thoughts
And intense passion,
And who are focused on what’s pleasant,

Craving grows more and more.
Indeed, they strengthen their bonds.
But those who
Delight in calming their thoughts,
Are always mindful,
And cultivate a focus on what’s unpleasant,
Will bring an end [to craving].
They will cut Māra’s bonds. (349–350)*

Fearless, free of craving, and without blemish,
Having reached the goal
And destroyed the arrows of becoming,
One is in one’s final body. (351)*

Free of craving and grasping,
Skilled in words and their usage,
Knowing the order of the teachings—
What precedes and what follows—
One is said to be “a great person of much wisdom,
In one’s final body.” (352)*

“I am all-conquering, all-knowing,
Stained by nothing.
Letting go of everything,
Released through the destruction of craving
And having known directly on my own,
Whom could I point to [as my teacher]?” (353)*

The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts.

The taste of Dharma surpasses all tastes.
The delight in Dharma surpasses all delights.
The destruction of craving conquers all suffering. (354)

Wealth destroys those who lack in wisdom,
But not those who seek the beyond.
Craving wealth, those lacking wisdom
Destroy themselves
As well as others. (355)

Weeds are the ruin of fields;
Passion is the ruin of people.
So offerings to those free of passion
Bear great fruit. (356)

Weeds are the ruin of fields;
Ill will is the ruin of people.
So offerings to those free of ill will
Bear great fruit. (357)

Weeds are the ruin of fields;
Delusion is the ruin of people.
So offerings to those free of delusion
Bear great fruit. (358)

Weeds are the ruin of fields;
Longing is the ruin of people.
So offerings to those free of longing
Bear great fruit. (359)

TWENTY-FIVE

The Bhikkhu*

Restraint of the eye is good,
Good is restraint of the ear.
Restraint of the nose is good,
Good is restraint of the tongue.
Restraint of the body is good,
Good is restraint of speech.
Restraint of the mind is good,
Good is restraint in all circumstances.
Restrained in all circumstances,
The bhikkhu is released from all suffering.

(360–361)*

The one with
Hands restrained,
Feet restrained,
Speech restrained,
Who is foremost among the restrained,
Inwardly delighted,
Composed,
Solitary,
And contented,
Is called a bhikkhu. (362)

Sweet is the speech
Of bhikkhus who
Restrain their mouths,
Speak insightfully,

Are not conceited,

And illuminate the teachings and the goal. (363)*

The bhikkhu who

Dwells in the Dharma,

Delights in the Dharma,

Reflects on the Dharma,

Recollects the Dharma,

Doesn’t fall away from the true Dharma. (364)

One shouldn’t scorn what one has received,

Nor envy others.

The mendicant who envies others

Doesn’t become concentrated. (365)*

The gods praise the mendicant

Who lives purely and untiringly

And who doesn’t scorn

What he or she receives,

Even if receiving just a little. (366)

Anyone who doesn’t cherish as “mine”

Anything of name or appearance

And who doesn’t grieve for that which doesn’t exist,

Is indeed called a bhikkhu. (367)*

A bhikkhu dwelling in loving-kindness

And pleased with the Buddha’s teachings

Attains happiness, the stilling of formations,

The state of peace. (368)

Bhikkhu, bail out this boat.
Emptied, it will move quickly for you.
Cutting off passion and aversion,
You will go to Nirvana. (369)
Cut off the five [lower fetters];
Let go of the five [higher fetters];
Above all, cultivate the five [faculties].
A bhikkhu who surmounts five attachments
Is called “someone who has crossed the flood.” (370)*
Bhikkhu, be absorbed in meditation;
Don’t be negligent;
Don’t let your mind whirl about
In sensual desire.
Don’t be negligent and swallow a [molten] iron ball,
And then, being burnt, cry out,
“This is suffering!” (371)
There is no meditative absorption
For one without insight.
There is no insight
For one without meditative absorption.
With both,
One is close to Nirvana. (372)*
For a bhikkhu with a peaceful mind,
Who enters an empty dwelling
And clearly sees the true Dharma,
There is superhuman joy. (373)*

Fully knowing
The arising and passing of the khandhas,
One attains joy and delight.
For those who know, this is the Deathless.
(374)*

The starting point for an insightful bhikkhu
is

Guarding the senses,
Contentment,
Restraint according to the monastic rules,
And associating with good spiritual friends
Who live purely and untiringly. (375)
If one is friendly by habit
And skillful in conduct,
One will have much delight
And bring an end to suffering. (376)
As jasmine sheds its withered flowers
So, bhikkhus, shed passion and aversion.
(377)

Peaceful in body, peaceful in speech,
The bhikkhu peaceful and well-concentrated
Who has rejected the world's bait
Is called "one at peace." (378)*
Admonish yourself.
Control yourself.
O bhikkhu, self-guarded and mindful,
You will live happily. (379)
Oneself, indeed, is one's own protector.
One does, indeed, [make] one's own destiny.

Therefore, control yourself
As a merchant does a fine horse. (380)
A bhikkhu filled with delight
And pleased with the Buddha’s teachings
Attains happiness, the stilling of formations,
The state of peace. (381)
Engaged in the Buddha’s teachings,
Even a young bhikkhu
Lights up this world
Like the moon
Set free from a cloud. (382)

TWENTY-SIX

The Brahmin*
Strive and cut off the stream.
O brahmin, dispel sensual craving.
Knowing the ending of all formations,
You, brahmin, will know the Unmade. (383)
When, with tranquility and insight,
The brahmin reaches the other shore,
Then for that “knowing one”
All fetters come to their end. (384)*
Whoever is
Untied and free of distress,
And for whom neither a “beyond,” a “not-

beyond,”

Nor a “both beyond-and-not-beyond” exist,

I call a brahmin. (385)*

Whoever is

Seated, absorbed in meditation,

Done what had to be done,

Free of contaminants,

Who has reached the highest goal,

I call a brahmin. (386)

The sun shines by day.

The moon glows at night.

The warrior shines in his armor.

The brahmin shines in meditative absorption.

But all day and all night,

The Buddha shines in splendor. (387)

Having banished evil,

One is called a brahmin.

Living peacefully,

One is called a renunciant.

Having driven out one’s own impurities,

One is called “one who has gone forth.” (388)*

One should not strike a brahmin

And a brahmin should not set [anger] loose.

Shame on the one who hits a brahmin

And greater shame on the one who sets [anger] loose. (389)*

For the brahmin, nothing is better

Than restraining the mind
From what it cherishes.
Whenever one turns away from the intent to harm,
Suffering is allayed. (390)
Whoever does no ill
Through body, speech, and mind,
And is restrained in these three areas,
I call a brahmin. (391)
As a brahmin worships a ritual fire,
One should respectfully worship
Anyone from whom one might learn
The Dharma of the Fully Self-Awakened One. (392)*
Not by matted hair, not by clan,
Not by birth does one become a brahmin.
The one in whom there is truth and Dharma
Is the one who is pure, is a brahmin. (393)
Fool! What use is matted hair?
What use is a deerskin robe?
The tangled jungle is within you
And you groom the outside! (394)
Someone robed in discarded rags,
Lean, with veins showing,
Alone in the forest, absorbed in meditation,
I call a brahmin. (395)
I call no one a brahmin
For being born from a womb, from a mother.

Someone who has anything

Is called “self-important.”

Whoever has nothing and does not cling,

I call a brahmin. (396)*

Whoever, having cut off every fetter,

Does not tremble,

Is unbound and beyond attachment,

I call a brahmin. (397)*

Whoever, awakened, has cut

The strap, thong, cord, and bridle,

And lifted up the crossbar,

I call a brahmin. (398)*

Whoever endures abuse, assault, and imprisonment

Without animosity,

And who has forbearance as one’s strength,

As one’s mighty army,

I call a brahmin. (399)

Whoever is without anger or craving,

Observant in spiritual practice and virtue,

Self-controlled, and in one’s final body,

I call a brahmin. (400)*

Like water on a lotus leaf,

Or a mustard seed on the tip of an awl,

Whoever does not cling to sensual craving,

I call a brahmin. (401)

Whoever knows, right here,

The ending of suffering,

Who is unburdened and unbound,

I call a brahmin. (402)

Whoever is wise,

Of profound insight,

Understanding what is and isn’t the path,

And who has attained the highest goal,

I call a brahmin. (403)

Whoever is not mixed up with

Householders or renunciants,

Who has no abode and few desires,

I call a brahmin. (404)*

Having given up violence

Toward beings both timid and strong,

Whoever neither kills nor causes others to kill,

I call a brahmin. (405)*

Whoever is unopposing among those who oppose,

Peaceful among the violent,

Not clinging among those who cling,

I call a brahmin. (406)*

Whoever lets passion, aversion,

Conceit, and hypocrisy fall away

Like a mustard seed from the tip of an awl,

I call a brahmin. (407)

Whoever speaks

What is true, informative, and not harsh,

Who gives offense to no one,

I call a brahmin. (408)

Whoever in this world

Takes nothing not given,

Whether it is long or short,

Large or small,

Beautiful or not,

I call a brahmin. (409)

Whoever has no longing

For this world or the beyond,

Who is unbound and without longing,

I call a brahmin. (410)

Having no attachments,

And, through understanding, free of doubts,

Whoever is established in the Deathless

I call a brahmin. (411)*

Whoever here has overcome attachments

For both merit and evil

And who is sorrowless, dustless, and pure,

I call a brahmin. (412)

Whoever, like the moon,

Is spotless, pure, clear, and undisturbed,

In whom the delight for existence is extinct,

I call a brahmin. (413)*

Whoever has passed beyond this troublesome road,

This difficult path, this saṃsāra, this delusion,

Who has crossed over, gone beyond,
Who is a meditator, free of craving and doubt,
Without clinging, released,
I call a brahmin. (414)*
Whoever, having given up passion here,
Would go forth as a “homeless one,”
In whom the passion for existence is extinct,
I call a brahmin. (415)*
Whoever, having given up craving here,
Would go forth as a “homeless one,”
In whom the craving for existence is extinct,
I call a brahmin. (416)*
Whoever, having given up human bondage,
Has gone beyond heavenly bondage,
Is unbound from all bondage,
I call a brahmin. (417)
Whoever, having given up liking and disliking,
Has become cooled, without attachments,
A hero overcoming the entire world,
I call a brahmin. (418)*
Whoever knows in every way
The passing away and reappearing of beings,
And is unattached, awakened, and well-gone,
I call a brahmin. (419)*
An arahant, whose destination is not known

By gods, gandhabbas, or humans,

Whose toxins are extinct,

I call a brahmin. (420)*

One for whom nothing exists

In front, behind, and in between,

Who has no clinging, who has nothing,

I call a brahmin. (421)*

Whoever is most excellent, a bull,

A hero, a great sage, a conqueror,

Free of craving, cleansed, awakened,

I call a brahmin. (422)

Whoever

Knows [one's own] former lives,

Sees both the heavens and states of woe,

Has attained the end of birth,

Is a sage, perfected in the higher knowledges,

And has perfected all perfections,

I call a brahmin. (423)

AFTERWORD

About the Text

The Dhammapada is one of the texts that have come to comprise the canon of Theravada Buddhism. This extensive body of scriptures is organized into three major collections (tipiṭaka, literally "three baskets"): the Vinaya Piṭaka ("basket of discipline"), which is concerned with monastic discipline and regulations; the Sutta Piṭaka ("basket of teachings"), which records teachings and discussions by

the Buddha and some of his chief disciples; and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka (“basket of special teaching”), which consists of detailed philosophical and psychological analyses of the teachings found in the Sutta Piṭaka. The Sutta Piṭaka is itself divided into five collections of texts, or nikāyas. The Dhammapada is one of fifteen texts belonging to the collection known as the Khuddaka Nikāya, or “Section of Short Sayings.”

In addition to holding a place within the Theravada canon, the Dhammapada belongs to a family of closely related texts that have been called the Dharmapada genre of literature (using the Sanskrit word), with the Dhammapada being the only representative of this genre preserved in Pali. Other members of this family belonging to the canons of Buddhist traditions other than the Theravada have survived in Gāndharī, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese. All are anthologies of verses, although they do not use all the same verses or the same ordering of verses and chapters. Some of the anthologies have considerably more verses than does the Pali Dhammapada. The bibliography provides references for some of the extant works of this family of texts.

From the existence of the various Dharmapada texts we can conclude that ancient Indian Buddhist editors made many such verse anthologies, the contents of which were fluid. The process of selecting, excluding, and arranging the verses continued over an extended period of time within diverse Buddhist communities. It is not possible to discern which anthology is of greatest antiquity or which may have served as a basis for others. Scholars of the Dharmapada literature generally believe that the process of compiling Dharmapada texts began well before any of the surviving versions were finalized, and that there was a complex interplay of influence among the different anthologies that were being composed. It may well be that the work of selecting and arranging verses began during or soon after the time of the Buddha. The surviving records do not reveal when any of the existing Dharmapada texts, including the Pali version, attained their present form.

Later Theravada commentaries take for granted that the Dhammapada is a collection of verses spoken by the Buddha and recount stories, mostly apocryphal, of the occasion on which the Buddha spoke each verse. Only 166 of the verses have parallels elsewhere in the Sutta Piṭaka and the Vinaya Piṭaka (see the appendix on this page). Though most of these 166 parallel verses are presented as the words of the Buddha, more than 30 are presented as spoken by one of his disciples or by a god. One might argue that these speakers are simply repeating verses the Buddha spoke on another occasion. However, in the sutta passage containing the parallel to verse 383, the Buddha praises a god for this verse and encourages people to memorize it, which suggests that the Buddha did not consider the verse to be his own (Saṃyutta Nikāya 1.49–50). In another passage, the Buddha explains that lines now found in verse 204 of the Dhammapada did not originate with himself but were already current in the society of his day (Majjhima Nikāya 75.19–21). Furthermore, a number of verses appear independently in non-

Buddhist Indian sources, suggesting they were selected from a wider body of poems circulating in ancient India. Although the great majority of verses may have originated with the Buddha, the evidence argues against the claim that they have all so originated. But as a body of verses selected and organized by followers of the Buddha, the Dhammapada is valuable in part because it helps us to understand how ancient Indian Buddhists presented their understanding of how to be Buddhists.

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Some scholars have tried to discern logic in the arrangement of verses and chapters of the Dhammapada. Most common is the suggestion that the opening two verses appear at the start of the text because they emphasize the basic principle of the central role of one's own mind and behavior, which is the basis for all the other verses. A more obvious logic is that most of the verses in each chapter (except for chapter 21, "Miscellaneous") are linked to a particular concept or word that is represented by the chapter title. However, verses in a chapter may have little in common with one another except for a (sometimes minimal) connection to the chapter title. As discussed in the introduction, some chapters seem to be paired to present the two sides of a dichotomy, e.g., the wise and the fool, Buddha and the world, craving and the monk who overcomes craving. Aside from this, there is little to indicate what, if any, significance is to be found in the arrangement of verses and chapters. In various Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the Dharmapada texts, the chapters and verses appear in very different orders. For example, the first two verses of the Dhammapada do not appear until the middle of the thirty-first chapter of the Udānavarga, one of the Sanskrit Dharmapada texts.

Yet the lack of a coherent logic or order does not necessarily mean that the Pali text is a random collection of dissociated pieces. Its development over time suggests that various editors have worked with the text to try to express their understandings of the Buddha's path. To the degree that the Dhammapada is a consciously selected anthology of verses, it is important to take the text as a whole. Removing any part of the Dhammapada, selecting the stanzas one finds inspiring and removing or rewriting the difficult or uninteresting ones, would leave a skewed picture of how ancient Buddhists understood their lives and spiritual practice.

Down through the centuries Buddhism has been transmitted from person to person, from warm hand to warm hand. No matter how much Buddhism has evolved and changed over time, it

remains a descendant of the ancient Indian Buddhists who laid the foundation for the tradition. I have translated the Dhammapada with the idea that it is valuable to try to understand these ancestors.

NOTES

Numbers refer to verse number. DhpA refers to the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, the standard, traditional Theravada commentary on the Dhammapada.

Pali translations in parentheses follow the English chapter titles below.

Chapter 1. Dichotomies (Yamaka)

Yamaka is usually translated as “pairs” or “twins.” I have chosen “dichotomies” to highlight the fact that the paired concepts in this chapter and through much of the Dhammapada are opposites, e.g., good and evil, wise and foolish.

1–2. The opening lines of both verses are among the more difficult lines in the Dhammapada to translate into English because of the ambiguity of dhamma (here rendered as “experience”) and mano (“mind”). In the traditional Buddhist list of the six senses and their respective objects (āyatana), mano refers to the sixth sense, cognitive consciousness, and dhamma refers to what is cognized, that is, anything within the sphere of empirical experience. Dhamma can also refer more specifically to mental states, as the word has been rendered in some other English translations of these verses.

The expression “made by mind” translates manomaya. Among the family of Dharmapada anthologies, the Pali Dhammapada is unique in using this expression. All the other anthologies use “impelled by the mind” (manojavā in the Patna Dharmapada). Even the Chinese Fa Jyu Jing, the Dharmapada most closely related to the Pali text, gives a word meaning “mind-impelled.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 1–2

5. Vera, here translated as “hatred,” can also be rendered “enmity” or “hostility.” It is less clear how to translate avera, because in Pali the negative prefix a- can refer either to the absence of what is being negated or to its opposite. In the few occurrences of avera elsewhere in the Pali discourses of the Buddha, the term refers simply to the absence of hate. DhpA explains that avera refers to the absence of hate, as well as the presence of patience and loving-kindness. To translate avera as “love” probably does not do justice to the original. (See Ivo Fiser, “Pāli averam, Dhammapada 5,” in A. K. Narain, ed., Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Memorial Volume in Honor of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kasyap [New Delhi: B. R. Publishing, 1979], pp. 93–97.) “Truth” in the final line is a translation of dhammo.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 5

6. It is unclear what yamāmase means, here translated as “we here must die.” It may be derived from the root yam, “to restrain.” In this case the first two lines might read “Others do not realize that we should be restrained.” Or, if read yamaamase, it may stem from Yama, the name of the ruler of the kingdom of death, in which case it could mean “going into the presence of Yama (Death).” The commentary allows for both meanings (DhpA 1.65–66).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 6

7–8. “Focused on the pleasant” is a translation of subhānupassiṃ. To focus on or contemplate the unpleasant (asubhānupassiṃ) is a classic mindfulness exercise used to overcome lust and attachment to the body.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 7–8

9–10. These verses contain a word play between kāsāva (the yellow or ocher robe of a Buddhist monastic) and kasāva (meaning either “defilements” or a reddish yellow color). “Purged” in verse 10 is a translation of vanta, literally “vomited.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 9–10

11–12. Sāra, here translated as “essential,” also refers to that which is most excellent.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 11–12

13–14. “Lust” is a translation of rāga, often translated as “passion.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 13–14

17–18. Duggatiṃ gato (“reborn in realms of woe”) literally means “gone to a bad destination.” Sugatiṃ gato (“reborn in realms of bliss,” i.e., the heavenly realms) literally is “gone to a good destination (sugatiṃ).” Gati (“destination, course”) refers to one’s destination after death.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 17–18

Chapter 2. Vigilance (Appamāda)

Appamāda could also be translated as “diligence, heedfulness, watchfulness.” It is often taken to be a form of energetic mindfulness. DhpA explains that it is a synonym for constant mindfulness. It could perhaps be translated as “attentiveness.”

21. “The Deathless” (amata), a favorite synonym for the state of liberation, is a very important and powerful word in the early Buddhist tradition. The person who attains final liberation is freed from the cycles of rebirth. If one is not reborn, the dying that inevitably follows birth will not occur, and so it can be said that the person has attained the deathless state. In the Dhammapada, the term “Deathless” stands in

contrast to the frequent references to Māra, the one who brings death.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 21

22. The “noble ones” are those who have attained any one of the four traditional stages of Liberation, or Awakening: stream entry, once-returning, non-returning, and arahantship. People attaining any of the stages have the experience of Nirvana in common. The stages are distinguished by the degree to which the experience of Nirvana frees a person from the fetters that bind one to the cycles of rebirth. An arahant (a person who is fully awakened) is liberated from all the fetters and so will not be reborn again. A non-returner is freed from enough attachments that he or she will not return to a human birth; rather he or she will be reborn in a heavenly realm in which to complete the process of liberation. A once-returner retains enough attachments to be reborn as a human one last time before attaining final liberation. While the stream-enterer retains the most attachments, that person is said to have entered the stream of the Dharma that will inevitably lead to final liberation within seven lifetimes at the most.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 22

23. “Absorbed in meditation” is a translation of jhāyino. Some translators understand the term to be limited to the practice of jhāna (meditative absorption). While this may be the case here, I understand the term to also mean meditation in general. My translation attempts to accommodate both meanings.

“Rest from toil” is a translation of yogakkhema. Yoga here means either bonds/attachments or undertaking/effort (see, e.g., Dīgha Nikāya 3.230). Khema can mean “peace, calm, safety, security.” An alternative translation could be “safety from bondage.” I choose “rest from toil” to highlight the strong contrast between the effort of practice described earlier in the verse and the goal of that effort.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 23

25. “Flood” symbolizes the flood of ignorance and craving that overwhelms humanity. Various lists of “floods” are given in the discourses of the Buddha found in the Pali canon, the most common being attachment to sensuality, becoming, views, and ignorance (Dhīgha Nikāya 3.230).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 25

30. The text uses the somewhat unusual epithet Maghavan (literally, “the Munificent”) to refer to Indra, the king of the gods.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 30

Chapter 3. The Mind (Citta)

37. Ekacaram, here translated as “solitary,” literally means “walking or roaming alone.” Using later Buddhist theories of mind, the DhpA commentary explains that consciousness occurs singularly, meaning no two conscious states occur simultaneously. Another possible explanation for the solitary nature of the mind is that a person’s consciousness does not directly touch or interact with someone else’s consciousness.

Guhāsayaṃ, (literally “lying in a cave”) is translated here as “hidden.” In addition to meaning “a cave,” guhā can refer to any hiding place. The DhpA explains that the cave refers to the heart as the seat of consciousness and to the body made up of the four physical elements (earth, water, heat, and wind).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 37

39. Anavassutacittassa is traditionally understood to be a mind not overflowing, oozing, or soaked with lust. Ananvāhacetaso is taken to refer to a heart or to thoughts not afflicted by hate.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 39

40. Anivesano (“clinging to nothing”) could also be rendered “without settling [for what has been gained].”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 40

42. Pāpa is here translated as “harm.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 42

Chapter 4. Flowers (Puppha)

44, 45. Yama is the ruler of the unfortunate realms of birth, such as the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, the jealous demon-gods, and animals. Sometimes he is understood to be the same as Māra. “Dharma teaching” translates dhammapada. See preface for a discussion of this word and other possible English translations. “One in training” (sekho) refers to someone still training to become an arahant, or fully awakened person.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 44, 45

47. DhpA compares flowers in this verse to the objects of sense desire.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 47

48. Antako, here rendered as “Death,” literally means “the end-maker” and is a synonym for both Māra and death.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 48

54. “Virtuous person” (sappuriso).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 54

59. “Common people” (puthujjane). The “Fully Awakened One”

refers to the Buddha.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 59

Chapter 5. The Fool (Bāla)

Bāla originally meant a young child who is not yet able to speak. It is therefore sometimes translated as “the childish.”

70. Bāla (fool) is here translated as “foolish ascetic” for purposes of clarity. In the original text, the grass is referred to as kusa grass; its Latin name is given in the Pāli Text Society Dictionary as Poa cynosuroides. Monier-Williams says it is a sacred grass with long pointed stalks, used in certain ceremonies.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 70

71. “Curdle” is a translation of muccati. It is not obvious whether this verb should be read as a variant spelling of mucchati (“congeal, curdle”) or as the passive present of muñcati (“release, emit”). The Pali commentarial tradition reads it as “curdle,” whereas most non-Pali Dharmapada texts have it as “release.” In the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣa-śāstra this verse appears with this verb meaning “curdle.” Here I go along with the commentarial interpretation of this verb. If the verb were to be translated as “release,” the line could read “Evil deeds done are not like fresh milk that comes out quickly.” In other words, the karmic products of evil deeds do not appear immediately.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 71

72. Ñattaṃ, translated here as “reasoning,” refers to one’s intellectual faculty. The DhpA commentary (ii.73) explains that it means understanding, knowledge, intelligence, learning, or skill. The commentary also says that it refers to the fame the fool attains based on his or her ability.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 72

75. Viveka (“solitude”) is sometimes translated as “seclusion” or “detachment.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 75

Chapter 6. The Sage (Paita)

79. “Drinks in the Dharma” is a translation of dhammapīti. Since pīti can also mean “delight,” the phrase could also be rendered “delights in the Dharma.” Perhaps both meanings were originally intended. “Noble ones” is a rendering of the word ariya, which is the most common title for those people who have attained one of the four stages of liberation.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 79

83. “Let go” is a translation of cajanti. Instead of cajanti, a number of the editions of the Pali Dhammapada have vajanti, “go,” in which case the first line could be translated “Virtuous people go everywhere.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 83

84. “Truth” translates dhamma. Because dhamma has a broader meaning than just “truth,” perhaps the term should be left untranslated.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 84

87. Dhamma, here translated as “ways,” could, in this verse, also mean “activities,” “qualities or states of being,” or “teachings.” “Dark” is anything that is unskillful, evil, or deadening.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 87

88. “Having nothing” translates akiñcano. It is uncertain what this term means. Kiñcana literally means “something” or “anything.” Since a few of the early Buddhist discourses (e.g., DN 3.217) define kiñcana as “lust, hatred, delusion,” akiñcano could also mean something like “without defilements.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 88

89. The Factors of Awakening are mindfulness, investigation of dharmas, effort, joy, tranquillity, concentration, and equanimity. The personal cultivation of these factors was considered important in the spiritual practice taught by the Buddha. “Toxins” translates āsava, which is sometimes rendered into English as “effluents,” “intoxicants,” or “cankers.” It seems that the word originally meant both the intoxicating juice of a plant and the discharge from a sore. In the psychological meaning used in Buddhist texts, it usually refers to the craving for sensuality, becoming or existence, views, and ignorance. “Having destroyed the āsavas” is the most common description of an arahant, a fully liberated person.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 89

Chapter 7. The Arahant (Arahanta)

90. Gataddhino, here rendered “someone at the journey’s end,” refers to someone who has completed the journey or course of Buddhist practice.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 90

92–93. “The freedom of emptiness and signlessness” is a translation of suññato animitto ca vimokkho. Here, emptiness and signlessness are attributes of Nirvana; in other words, Nirvana is empty of self and of greed, hate, and delusion, and it has no attributes or signs that awareness can focus on.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 92–93

95. Subbato, translated here as “well-practiced,” derives from the prefix su meaning “good, well,” and vata, meaning a religious practice, rite, observance, duty, or vow. The commentaries explain that the phrase “a pillar of Indra” refers to the main column that stood at the entrance to a city, with half its length buried underground. The pillar is thus a metaphor for firmness; it is also taken as a metaphor for imperturbability, because the pillar was indifferent to either worship or disrespect given to it. Here I have translated saṃsāra (literally, “faring on”) as “wandering.” Saṃsāra refers to the process of transmigration, i.e., being reborn in repeated cycles of birth and death. A more literal translation of this line would be “[For such a one] saṃsāra does not arise/occur.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 95

97. “Unmade” (akata) is a synonym for Nirvana. “Severed the link” (sandicchedo) refers to the link between death and rebirth. This verse is filled with puns and is sometimes taken as a riddle. In addition to having literal value as translated here, it may have also been composed for shock value, as it could alternatively be translated:

The person who is without faith and gratitude,
Who breaks into homes,
Who has destroyed opportunities,
And who has vomited,
Is an audacious person. [Or perhaps: Is the ultimate servant.]

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 97

Chapter 8. Thousands (Sahassa)

102. Dhammapada is here translated

as “a line of Dharma.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 102

105. A gandhabba is a heavenly musician. Brahmā is the chief of the gods in the early Buddhist pantheon.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 105

110–111. Asamāhito, here rendered as “unsettled,” also may mean “unconcentrated,” “uncomposed,” or “uncentered.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 110–111

113. “The arising and passing of things,” a translation of udayavyayaṃ, refers to one of the important insights leading to wisdom and liberation. The ancient commentary interprets it to mean the arising and passing of the five component aspects (khandhas) of the human being that are commonly clung to as some form of self-identity. When their transitory nature is seen, the clinging tends to be released. The five khandhas are form, feelings, perceptions, formations, and consciousness.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 113

114. “Deathless” translates amataṃ padaṃ (literally, “the Deathless state” or “the path to the Deathless”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 114

Chapter 9. Evil (Pāpa)

119. In the last line, pāpa is translated as “misfortune” rather than “evil.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 119

124. The last line could more literally be translated “Evil doesn’t exist for someone not doing it.” The word pāpa (“evil”) refers both to the cause and the result, that is, both the bad deed and the unfortunate karmic results.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 124

Chapter 10. Violence (Daa)

Daṇḍa literally refers to a stick or rod that might be used for administering punishment or for fighting. I have taken the term to represent violence in general, though in verse 135 I have translated it as “stick.”

129–130. Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā, here translated as “seeing others as being like yourself,” literally means “having made oneself the example/comparison.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 129–130

142. Niyata, which I have translated here as “assured,” is usually understood as the certainty that comes with the attainment of one of the four stages of liberation. (See note to v. 22.) As such it also refers to the certainty of final release from saṃsāra. “Peace” translates sama, which could also be translated as “harmony.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 142

143. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya (1.18), this verse is followed by the following verse that answers the question asked in the first.

Few are those restrained by conscience,

Who are always

mindful;

Few, having brought suffering to an end,

Are in harmony among those who are not.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 143

144. Saṃvega (“alarmed”) describes a deep religious stirring or agitation of the heart in the face of the magnitude of the world’s suffering.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 144

Chapter 11. Old Age (Jarā)

147. “Beautified body” is a translation of cittakata (“adorned, dressed up, painted”) and bimba (“shape, image”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 147

148. “Body” (rūpa).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 148

151. The meaning of the last two lines is unclear. I interpret them to mean that the Dharma does not decay because it is renewed in the lives of good, virtuous people.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 151

153–154. According to the commentarial tradition, these two verses were the first words the Buddha spoke after his Awakening. The commentaries explain that “house” refers to individuality, selfhood, or the body. The builder is one’s craving. The rafters are the defilements. The ridgepole is ignorance. Interestingly, there is no canonical evidence that the Buddha spoke this verse. The verse does appear in the Theragāthā, a collection of verses spoken by the liberated disciples of the Buddha. There the verse is attributed to a monk named Sivaka (Theragāthā 183–184).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 153–154

155. In the Buddhist discourses, gaining wealth through ethical means was considered an appropriate goal for the laity.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 155

Chapter 12. Oneself (Atta)

157. “In any part of the night” could more literally be translated, “During one [or: any] of the three watches of the night.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 157

164. The kaṭṭhaka reed may be a kind of bamboo.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 164

Chapter 13. The World (Loka)

167. “Engrossed” is a rendering of vaddhano. DhpA does not explain this word, and modern translators express uncertainty as to how to translate it. It seems to mean something along the lines of both increasing and being attached.

Lokavaddhano has been translated variably as “busy with the world” (Thanissaro), “a world-augmenter” (Carter), “worldly” (Norman), “world-upholder” (Nārada), and “linger in worldly existence” (Buddharakkhita).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 167

173. Kusala (“wholesome”) is more literally translated as “skillful.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 173

175. “Psychic powers” (Pali: iddhi; Sanskrit: siddhi).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 175

176. “In this one way” is a translation of ekaṃ dhammaṃ. Where this same verse appears in Itivuttaka 25, ekaṃ dhammaṃ clearly refers to the principle of truthfulness.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 176

178. “Stream entry” refers to the attainment of the first of the four stages of Awakening, or enlightenment. (See note to v. 22.)

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 178

Chapter 14. The Buddha (Buddha)

In the early Buddhist literature, Buddha is an epithet mostly used to refer to Gotama Sakkamuni (Sanskrit: Gautama Shakyamuni), the historical Buddha. Occasionally the early literature uses it to refer to fully enlightened disciples of the Buddha and to previous buddhas who lived eons ago. As an epithet the word can be translated as “the Awakened One.”

184. “Contemplative” is used to translate samaṇa (spiritual renunciant).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 184

190–192. For many Buddhists these three verses refer to the central elements of their faith. The Triple Refuge of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is the main focus of inspiration and reverence. The Four Noble Truths are the essential orientation or framework used to find and engage in the path to liberation. The Eightfold Path (the fourth of the Four Noble Truths) describes the practices that make up the path to be walked, namely, Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Acton, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 190–192

194. Tapas, here translated as “ardent practice,” in this context could perhaps simply be translated as “practice.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 194

195–196. “Obsessive thinking” is a translation of papañca. This is a difficult term to translate. Some other translations have been: proliferation, elaboration, exaggeration, complications, preoccupying tendencies, and diversified world.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 195–196

Chapter 15. Happiness (Sukha)

197. “Ah” is used to translate the particle vata, an utterance of strong emotional expression or exclamation. It is sometimes translated as “surely,” “indeed,” “alas,” or “I say!”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 197

199. Ussuka, here translated as “ambition,” is defined by the Pāli Text Society Dictionary as “endeavoring, eager.” Other translations have been: “busyness, restlessness, striving, full of care.” Its negative, anussuka, means “free from greed.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 199

200. Radiant Gods (ābhassarā) are a class of gods (devā) found in the Brahma heavens whose existence is characterized by the boundless joy of loving-kindness.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 200

202. “Aggregates” (khandha; Sanskrit: skandha) refers to the five categories of psycho-physical phenomena from which one’s sense of self is created: form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 202

203. Saṅkhāras refers either to all compounded, fabricated things or, more specifically, to the mental world of dispositions, intentions, memories, and thought. It is often translated into English as “formations.” In verses 277 and 278 I have translated it as “created things,” and in verse 368 as “formations.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 203

Chapter 16. The Dear (Piya)

Piya is a difficult word to translate, and I have rendered it differently in different verses. As an adjective it is used to describe something or someone as dear, beloved, liked, agreeable, or pleasing. The verbal root pṛ, from which it derives, means “to hold dear, to like, to be fond of.” In verse 157 I have translated piya as “precious.”

209. Some form of the word yoga appears five times in this verse. Yoga has a range of meanings but here could mean exertion, striving, application, spiritual practice, or task. I have translated it as “practice” with the idea that it refers to Buddhist spiritual practice. “Goal” translates atthaṃ, a word that can also mean “purpose, aim, meaning, gain, welfare, benefit.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 209

210. “What you long for” (piya); “what you dislike” (apiya).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 210

218. “Indescribable” is a translation of anakkhāte and is synonymous with Nirvana. The commentaries explain that a person who is “bound upstream” refers to someone who has attained the third stage of Awakening and is thus a non-returner (see note for verse 22). Such a person will be reborn “upstream” in the stream of life and death into one of the more elevated heavenly realms and from there attain the final stage of Awakening.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 218

Chapter 17. Anger (Kodha)

221. “Possesses nothing” (akiñcana; see note to verse 88). Nāma-rūpa (here translated as “names and appearances”; usually translated as “name-and-form”) originally referred to two ways of knowing objects of perception; in later Buddhism it refers to all mental and physical functions of a person.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 221

225. “Immovable state” (accutaṃ ṭhānaṃ) is understood in the Theravada tradition as referring to Nirvana. Other translation choices have included “unshakable abode” and “unwavering state.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 225

226. Toxins (āsavā). See note to verse 89.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 226

227. The commentarial tradition names Atula as a lay follower of the Buddha. The tradition preserves a story that the Buddha spoke this verse to Atula after he was critical of discourses given by a number of the Buddha’s senior disciples.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 227

230. Brahmā is the god who rules over the heavenly realms above the sensual-realm heavens.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 230

Chapter 18. Corruption (Mala)

235. Yama is the god of the underworld. (See note to verses 44–45.) “Door of death” (uyyogamukhe; literally, “door of departure”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 235

238. Dīpa, here translated as “island,” also means “lamp” and could be so translated. I give “island” because it seems in keeping with the image of floods used elsewhere in the Dhammapada, e.g., verses 25 and 47. It is also how the traditional commentary understands it.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 238

240. “States of woe” translates duggatiṃ (“bad destination or course”) and refers to rebirth in the lower realms of existence, i.e., in the realms of animals, hungry ghosts, and hell. The entire verse is more literally translated thus:

As rusts springs from iron
And then corrodes that from which it has sprung,
So the deeds of one who transgresses
Lead one toward a bad destination.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 240

242. Itthiyā, here rendered as “person,” literally means “a woman.” “Evil traits” translates pāpakā dhammā.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 242

246. “Goes to another’s spouse” translates paradāraṃ ca gacchati, which more literally means “goes with another’s wife.” It is possible that dāraṃ here refers to any woman who is under the protection of a man (e.g., a daughter living with her father).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 246

249. “Envious” translates maṅku, which is usually taken to mean “troubled, confused, discontented.” The verse seems to be referring to monastics who eat only the alms-food that the laity offer every day. Being troubled by comparing one’s own alms with what other monastics had received was probably a real issue in the early Buddhist monastic community. Samādhi refers to a state of intense concentration. It is usually associated with meditation.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 249

254. Padaṃ, here translated “path,” could also be translated as “footprints.” “Contemplative” is a translation of samaṇo, elsewhere translated as “renunciant.” “Obsessive thoughts” translates papañcā (discussed in note to verses 195–196).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 254

255. “Created things” translates saṅkhārā. (See note to verse 203.)

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 255

Chapter 19. The Just (Dhammaha)

The Pali word dhammaṭṭha could also be translated as “established in the Dharma,” “firm in the Dharma,” or simply “righteous.”

256. Sahasā, here translated as “hastily,” also can mean “inconsiderately.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 256

262–263. “Of good character” (sādhurūpa).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 262–263

266–267. “Wrong Dharma” translates vissaṃ dhammaṃ. There are a wide range of translation choices used for this expression. I have relied on the explanation in the Dhammapada commentary (3.393) that it means visama (“uneven,” “contrary,” or “wrong”). The commentary also offers vissangandha (“smelling like rotten meat”) as a meaning. John Ross Carter and K. R. Norman suggest it is derived from visma, meaning “house” or “domestic.”

Bhikkhu (the term for a Buddhist monk) is here translated as “mendicant” in order to convey the relationship between bhikkhu and the verbal root from which it derives, bhikṣ, “to beg,” thus bhikkhati, “to beg.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 266–267

268–269. The words “silence” (monena) and “one weighs” (munāti) play off the word for a sage, muni (literally, “silent one”). In ancient times a muni was someone who took a vow of silence as a form of religious practice.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 268–269

271–272. “Ordinary people” (puthujjana). “Virtue or religious practice” (sīlabbata).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 271–272

Chapter 20. The Path (Magga)

273–275. “Gods and humans” is a rendering of dipadānaṃ (two-footed beings). A more literal translation of the last line is “Having known (or experienced) the removal of the arrows.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 273–275

276. Tathāgata is a title for a buddha. It is not clear what the word literally means; possibly it was meant to have several meanings. Buddhaghosa, perhaps the most important ancient commentator of the Theravada tradition, gives eight derivations for the word. In modern times tathāgata is often explained as a compound made up of two words: tathā (“thus”) and either gata (“gone”) or āgata (“come”). Because the term can be understood either way, it

means either “the one thus gone” or the “the one thus come.” In Itivuttaka 112, the Buddha suggests several other explanations of the title based on the word tatha.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 276

277–279. Together, the first lines of each of these three verses are known as the “three characteristics (tilakkhana).” These three characteristics are often understood as the key insights of “insight meditation” (vipassanā). The first two characteristics are about created things (saṇkhārā), while the third is about all things (dhammā), that is, both created and uncreated things. “The uncreated,” often translated as “the unconditioned,” is a synonym for Nirvana. The third characteristic states that both Nirvana and created things cannot be identified with one’s self. Since it is not possible to say that Nirvana is impermanent or that it has some inherent characteristic of suffering, the first two characteristics refer only to “created things.”

“Disenchanted” (nibbida).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 277, 278, 279

280. “Path of insight” is a translation of paññāya maggaṃ; paññā usually is translated into English as “wisdom.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 280

282. “Wisdom” (bhūri). “From [spiritual] practice” (yogā).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 282

283. This verse seems to contain a number of word plays and so is difficult to translate. For example, it plays on the two meanings of vana, “forest” and “desire.” The commentaries explain that once, when the Buddha told his monks to cut down the vana, they started to clear the forest. He then had to clarify that he meant them to “cut down the forest of desire, not the forest of trees.” One tradition takes the forest to refer to the gross defilements that have consequence in one’s future lives, and the underbrush to refer to defilements that have consequence in one’s current life.

The verse also might be punning between nibbanā (“free of forest”) and nibbāna (“Nirvana”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 283

285. “Cultivate” (brūhaya). The Well-Gone-One (Sugata) is an epithet for the Buddha.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 285

288. “Death” (antekena; literally, “end-maker”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 288

Chapter 21: Miscellaneous (Pakiaka)

290. It is not clear how to translate mattā (here translated as “lesser”). It more literally seems to mean “measured” or “moderate.” K. R. Norman believes the original meaning was “material things,” and he translates it so (Norman, 1997, p. 43 and note 290).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 290

294–295. TThe shock of the literal meaning of these verses adds force to whatever metaphoric message they carry. DhpA explains that “mother” refers to craving, “father” to conceit, the two warrior kings to metaphysical views of eternalism and an-nihilationism, the kingdom to the twelve sense spheres (āyatana), and the subjects of the kingdom to the passion for pleasure dependent on the sense spheres. “A tiger” is a translation of veyyagghapañcamaṃ, literally, “with a tiger as fifth” or “that of which its fifth element pertains to tigers.” The DhpA commentary describes this as referring to either the five hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and doubt) or just to the fifth hindrance, doubt. For a definition of brahmin, see the note to the title of chapter 26, below.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 294–

298. Saṇgha (assembly) refers to the monastic community and to the people who have attained one of the four stages of liberation.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 298

301. Bhāvanā, here translated as “[spiritual] practice,” literally means “cultivation” or “development” and is a common word for engaging in the practices taught by the Buddha, especially meditation practice.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 301

302. The traditional commentary explains that “a traveler” is someone wandering through saṃsāra.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 302

Chapter 22. Hell (Niraya)

307. Kāsāvakaṇṭhā, here rendered as “who wear the saffron robe,” literally means “yellow necks,” that is, those who wear the yellow Buddhist robe around their necks or those whose necks are stained yellow from the dye contained in the monastic robes.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 307

308. “The alms-food of the people” is a translation of raṭṭhapiṇḍaṃ (literally, “alms-food of the realm”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 308

309–310. I have taken the liberty of translating para dārā as “the spouse of another.” Dārā often means “wives” but may include any women under the protection of a man.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 309–310

312. “Much fruit” (mahapphalaṃ, literally, “great fruit”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 312

313. Dust (rajaṃ) figuratively refers to greed, hate, and delusion.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 313

316. “Bad rebirth” translates duggatiṃ, which more literally means “bad destination” or “bad existence.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 316

Chapter 23. The Elephant (Nāga)

322–323. “To that place not gone to” is a translation of gaccheyya agataṃ disaṃ. Agataṃ disaṃ is usually understood to mean nibbāna (Nirvana). Translating agataṃ as “not gone to” gives the double connotation of a place not yet reached and a place not reachable with any conventional ideas of going or progress.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 322–323

324. The commentaries state that Dhanapālaka (“Guardian of

the Wealth”) was an elephant that, while being held in luxurious captivity by the king of Kasi, only longed to return to the forest to care for his mother.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 324

325. The Pali for “is reborn again and again” literally says “comes into a womb again and again.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 325

326. “Elephant keeper” (aṇukusaggaho; literally, “one who handles the goad [of an] elephant driver).”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 326

329. DhpA explains that Matanga was an elephant who had had enough of the difficulties of living with a herd and so went off to enjoy a solitary life in the forest.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 329

Chapter 24. Craving (Tahā)

334. “A creeping vine,” literally, “a māluvā vine,” which apparently strangles the trees it grows on. The simile thus refers to something that both spreads quickly and eventually kills its support. “Ever onward” is a translation of hurāhuraṃ. Hurā seems to mean “there” or “beyond.” Hurāhuraṃ could perhaps be translated more literally as “onward and onward again.” The expression is sometimes understood to mean “from existence to existence” or “from life to life.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 334

335. Literally, “Like bīraṇa grass after rain.” The Pāli

Text Society Dictionary explains that bīrana is a fragrant grass with the Latin name Andropogon muricatum. It is possible that it is a fairly tall grass that grows quickly.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 335

339. The commentarial tradition understands the “thirty-six streams” as referring to three forms of craving in relation to each of the six internal and the six external sense spheres (āyatana; see note to verses 1–2). In the “Discourse on Turning the Wheel of the Dharma,” recorded as the Buddha’s first sermon, the three forms of craving are craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming or existence, and craving for non-becoming or nonexistence.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 339

344. One traditional interpretation understands “underbrush” and “forest” to be synonyms for craving.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 344

345–347. “Go forth” refers to leaving the household life for that of a renunciant.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 345–347

348. Literally, “Let go in front, let go behind, and let go in between.” The DhpA explains that “in front” refers to the past, “behind” refers to the future, and “in between” refers to the present.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 348

350. “Cultivate a focus on what’s unpleasant” is a translation of asubhaṃ bhāvayati. This refers to a traditional Buddhist practice of focusing on the unappealing or foul parts of the body as a means to reduce attachment for the body.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 350

351–352. “In one’s final body” refers to the idea that since people who are fully liberated will not be reborn again, their current physical body is the last body they will have.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 351–352

353. This verse quotes the Buddha talking about himself. For the context of the quote, see Majjhima Nikāya 1.171 and Vinaya 1.8.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 353

Chapter 25. The Bhikkhu (Bhikkhu)

Often translated as “monk,” bhikkhu could more literally be translated as “mendicant,” as I have done in verses 365 and 366. I have sometimes translated it as “a monastic” so it can refer to monastics of any gender. The ancient Theravada commentaries state that anyone engaged in Buddhist meditation practice, whether man or woman, can be called a bhikkhu.

360–361. Sādhu, here translated as “good,” can also mean “excellent, virtuous, profitable, meritorious.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 360–361

363. “And illuminates the teaching and the goal” is a translation of atthaṃ dhammaṃ ca dīpeti. Both atthaṃ (“goal, meaning, purpose, message”) and dhammaṃ have a range of meanings, and probably no one English choice does either of them justice.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 363

365. “Mendicant” (bhikkhu).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 365

367. “Name and appearance” (nāma-rūpa). See note to verse 221.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 367

370. The explanation for the three references to “five” given in brackets comes from DhpA. The lower fetters are (1) views pertaining to self or what belongs to self, (2) doubt, (3) grasping at precepts and practices, (4) sensual passion, and (5) ill will. The higher fetters are (1) attachment to phenomena of form, (2) attachment to the formless phenomena, (3) conceit, (4) restlessness, and (5) ignorance. The five faculties are faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom or insight.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 370

372. “Insight” (paññā). “Meditative absorption” (jhānaṃ).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 372

373. The DhpA commentary states that “an empty dwelling” refers to any solitary place.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 373

374. Khandha: the aggregates; see note to verse 202. “The Deathless”: see note to verse 21.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 374

378. “The world’s bait” is a translation of lokāmiso, a

compound word made up of loka (“world”) and āmiso. Āmiso originally meant “raw meat.” It came to have the additional meanings “of the flesh,” “worldly,” and “food.” Lokāmiso could also be translated as “the physical/material world,” “worldly gain,” or “the object of worldly appetites.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 378

Chapter 26. The Brahmin (Brāhmaa)

The brahmins were the members of the hereditary priestly class. In this chapter, however, the word brāhmaṇa is redefined to refer not to someone born into that class but rather to someone of worthy conduct and spiritual maturity.

384. “Tranquillity and insight” is an explanatory translation of dvayesu dhammesu (literally, “with two dharmas [practices]”). I have translated this expression according to the explanation for it given by the DhpA.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 384

385. “Not-beyond” (apāra) is this world as opposed to the world beyond (pāra; literally, “the other [shore]”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 385

388. The last two lines contain a wordplay between pabbājeti (“drives out, makes go away, banishes”) and pabbajati (“goes forth into the renunciate life”). It is likely that there is an additional wordplay between samacariyā (“living peacefully”) and samaṇo (“renunciant”).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 388

389. The addition of “anger” is based on the commentaries’ explanation of this verse.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 389

392. “The Fully Self-Awakened One” is a common epithet for the Buddha. He was “self-awakened” because he found the path to liberation on his own, without the help of another teacher. He was “fully self-awakened” because his liberation was complete.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 392

396. This verse dismisses the traditional understanding that one became a brahmin by being born into a brahmin family. “Is called ‘self-important’ ” translates bhovādi nāma so hoti, which could be translated more literally as “he has the name ‘bhovādi.’ ” A bhovādi is literally “someone who says bho” (a vocative interjection used to address someone of lower or equal status to oneself). Someone who uses this frequently is claiming a high status and is thus seen as filled with self-importance. Cf. Sutta Nipāta 620.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 396

397. It has been proposed that na paritassati, here translated as “does not tremble,” could be better translated as “does not feel any desire.” The Chinese translations of the same term support this suggestion (Dhammajoti, p. 272).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 397

398. According to DhpA, the strap refers to hatred, the thong to craving, the cord to the sixty-two wrong views (see Brahmajala Sutta, DN 1), the bridle to the latent tendencies, and the crossbar to ignorance.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 398

400. See note to verses 351–352 for a definition of “final body.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 400

404. What is here translated as “whoever is not mixed up with” could also be rendered “whoever does not associate with.” “Renunciants” is literally “homeless ones” (anāgārehi).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 404

405. Tasesu thāvaresu, here translated as “both timid and strong,” might more literally be rendered as “frightened and firm,” “moving and unmoving,” or “perturbed and unperturbed.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 405

406. “Whoever is unopposing among those who oppose” is a translation of aviruddhaṃ viruddhesu.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 406

411. “Established in the Deathless” translates amatogadhaṃ anuppattaṃ. Different opinions exist whether ogadhaṃ is related to ogathati, “to plunge into,” or to ogadhati, “to be established.” The commentaries connect it to the former. Pali usage seems to indicate the latter. See Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), pp. 1093–1094, note 243.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 411

413. “The delight for existence is extinct” is an attempt to translate the compound nandībhavaparikkhīṇaṃ. I am unsure how to understand this expression. It could possibly mean “whose delight and process of becoming are extinct,” “whose existence based on delight is extinct,” or “whose delight for further becoming is extinct.” Bhava, the middle word in the compound, is often translated as “becoming” and sometimes as “existence” or “life.” It refers to the active functioning of life that generates further existence or being.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 413

414. Nibbuta, here translated as “released,” has been rendered by other translators as “pacified,” “attained Nibbāna,” “has waned away,” and “content.” In choosing “released,” I am relying on Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s discussion of nibbāna in his work Mind Like Fire Unbound (Barre, Mass.: Dhamma Dana Publications, 1993).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 414

415. “Passion for existence is extinct” (kāmabhavaparikkhīṇaṃ).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 415

416. “Craving for existence is extinct” translates taṇhābhavaparikkhīṇaṃ. I am unsure how to translate this. Other possible translations are “whose existence based on craving is extinct” and “whose craving for becoming is extinct.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 416

418. “Without attachments” (nirūpadhi). Upadhi can mean “attachment” as well as “substrate” or “basis” (for rebirth).

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 418

419. “Well-gone” (sugataṃ) refers to someone who is liberated.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 419

420. Gandhabbas are heavenly musicians. “Toxins”: see note to verse 89.

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 420

421. “In front, behind, and in between” is a translation of pure ca pacchā ca majjhe. Sometimes this has been rendered into English as “past, future, and present.” “Has nothing” (akiñcanam); the word kiñcanam, meaning “anything,” is sometimes understood to refer to the defilements. Akiñcanam could then mean “not having defilements.”

BACK TO NOTE REFERENCE 421

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APPENDIX

Cross-Reference to Parallel Verses in Other Buddhist Texts

This appendix provides the references for Dhammapada verses that have parallel verses elsewhere in the Pali canon. References preceded by the abbreviation cf. (“compare”) indicate passages that are similar enough to the Pali verses to be noteworthy. This concordance should not be taken as complete.

Names in italics refer to the speaker of the verse if other than the Buddha.

Abbreviations used:

AN

Anguttara Nikāya

DN

Dīgha Nikāya

Dhp

Dhammapada

It.

Itivuttaka

Jāt.

Jātaka

MN

Majjhima Nikāya

SN

Saṃyutta Nikāya

Sn.

Sutta Nipāta

Thag.

Theragāthā

Thig.

Therīgāthā

Vin.

Vinaya Piṭaka

Ud.

Udāna

2. Cf. Thag. 1041–43 (Ven. Ānanda).

3–5. Jāt. 3.488.

3–6. Vin 1,349; Jāt. 3.212.

3, 5–6. MN. 3.154.

6. Thag. 275 (Ven. Sabhiya); Thag. 498 (Ven. Kaccāna).

9–10. Thag. 969, 970 (Ven. Phussa); Jāt. 2.198, 5.50.

13–14. Thag. 133–134 (Ven. Rādha).

21. Jāt. 5.99.

23. Cf. SN 2.232.

26. SN 1.25 (a deva).

26–27. MN 2.105 (Ven. Angulimāla); Thag. 883–884 (Ven. Angulimāla).

28. DN 2.39 (Brahmā).

32. AN 2.40; It. 45.

42. Ud. 4.3.

47. Cf. Dhp 287.

49. Jāt. 1.349

51–52. Thag. 323–324 (Ven. Subhūta).

54. AN 1.226.

66–68. SN 1.57 (deva Khema).

69. Cf. SN 1.85.

76–77. Thag. 993–994 (Ven. Sāriputta).

80. MN 2.105 (Ven. Angulimāla); Thag. 877 (Ven. Angulimāla). Cf. Dhp 145.

81. Vin. 1.185; Thag. 643 (Sona Kolivisa).

85–89. SN 5.24; AN 5.232–33, 253–54.

87. Cf. Sn. 526.

93. Thag. 92 (Ven. Vijaya).

94. Thag. 205 (Ven. Brahmāli); cf. Thag. 206.

98. SN 1.233; Thag. 991 (Ven. Sāriputta).

99. Thag. 992 (Ven. Sāriputta).

109. Cf. Sn. 325.

119–120. Jāt. 1.231.

125. SN 1.13, 1.164; Sn. 662; Jāt. 3.203.

129. Cf. Sn. 705.

131–132. Ud. 2.3.

141. Cf. Sn. 249.

142. Cf. Sn. 35.

143. SN 1.7 (a deva).

145. Thag. 19 (Ven. Kula); cf. Dhp 80.

146. MN 2.64 (Ven. Ratthapāla); Thag. 769 (Ven. Ratthapāla); Thag. 1020 (Ven. Ānanda).

148. Cf. SN 1.97.

151. SN 1.71; Jāt. 5.483.

152. Thag. 1025 (Ven. Ānanda).

153–154. Thag. 183–84 (Ven. Sivaka).

163. Cf. Ud. 5.8.

170. Cf. SN 3.140 and Sn. 1119.

172. MN 2.104 (Ven. Angulimāla); Thag. 871 (Ven. Angulimāla).

173. MN 2.104 (Ven. Angulimāla); Thag. 872 (Ven. Angulimāla).

176. It. 25; cf. MN 1.415.

180. SN 1.107.

183–185. DN 2.49–50 (the Buddha Vipassī).

185. Ud. 4.6.

186. Thig. 487 (Ven. Sumedhā).

186–187. Jāt. 2.313.

188–192. Jāt. 1.97.

191. SN 2.185; It. 24; Thig. 186 (Ven. Cāla), 193 (Ven. Upacāla), 310 (Ven. Cāpa); Thag. 321; Thag. 1259 (Ven. Vangīsa).

198. Cf. Thag. 276 (Ven. Sabhiya).

200. SN 1.114; Jāt. 6.55; cf. Jāt. 6.54.

201. SN 1.83.

204. MN 1.508–10.

205. Sn. 257.

210. Cf. Vin. 1.10.

218. Cf. Thig. 12 (Ven. Dhammadinnā).

221. SN 1.23; cf. SN 1.25.

223. Jāt. 2.4.

230. AN 2.8.

238. Cf. Thag. 412.

239. Sn. 962.

241–243. AN 4.195.

246–247. Cf. AN 3.205.

252. Cf. Jāt. 3.223.

266–267. SN 1.182.

273. Cf. MN 1.508.

277–279. Thag. 676–78 (Ven. Añña-Kondañña).

292–293. Thag. 635–36 (Ven. Sona Kolivisa).

305. Cf. Sn. 709.

306. Sn. 661; Ud. 4.8.

306–308. It. 48.

311–314. SN 1.49 (deva Tāyana); SN 1.49 (Buddha quoting deva Tāyana).

312. Thag. 277 (Sabhiya).

315. Thag. 1005 (Ven. Sāriputta); Thig. 5 (Ven. Tissa); cf. Thag. 653 and 403 (Ven. Malunkyāputta); cf. Sn. 333.

320. Cf. Ud. 4.7.

325. Thag. 17, 101.

326. Thag. 77 (Ven. Hatthārohaputta), 1130 (Ven. Tālaputta).

328–329. Sn. 45, 46.

328–330. MN 3.154; Vin. 1.350.

330. Cf. Vin. 1.353.

334–337. Thag. 399–402 (Mālunkyāputta).

339–340. Cf. Thag. 760, 761.

340. Sn. 1034.

345. Cf. Thag. 187 (“a compassionate spirit”); cf. Sn. 38.

345–346. SN 1.77; Jāt. 2.140.

353. MN 1.171; Vin. 1.8. Cf. Sn. 211 and SN 2.284.

361. SN 1.73.

362. Thag. 981.

363. Cf. Sn. 850 and Thag. 2 (Kotthitia the Great); Jāt. 2.350.

364. It. 86; Thag. 1032 (Ven. Ānanda).

367. Sn. 950; cf. Sn. 861.

368. Cf. Thag. 11 (Ven. Gavaccha the Less) and 521 (Ven. Bhūta).

370. SN 1.3; Thag. 15 (Ven. Kunda-Dhāna) and 633 (Ven. Sona Kolivisa).

374. Cf. Thag. 23 (Ven. Gosāla).

379. Cf. Thag. 637 (Ven. Sona Kolivisa).

381. Thag. 11 (Ven. Gavaccha the Less).

382. MN 2.104 (Ven. Angulimāla); Thag. 873 (Ven. Angulimāla); cf. Thag. 203.

383. SN 1.49 (deva Tāyana).

387. SN 2.284; cf. SN 1.15.

388. Cf. Ud. 1.4.

394. Jāt. 1.481.

396–423. Sn. 620–47.

398. Cf. SN 1.16 and 1.63.

406. SN 1.236 (the god Sakka); Sn. 630.

414. Cf. AN 4.290.

421. Cf. Thag. 537 (Ven. Ekavihāriya).

423. Cf. MN 2.144; SN 1.167; AN 1.165; It. 99.

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