

CHARLESTON BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

The Dhammapada

The Path of the Dhamma



A New Rendering by
Allan R. Bomhard



Intermediate Series (Scripture)

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CHARLESTON BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP
Charleston, SC USA

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This rendering of the *Dhammapada* was originally completed in October 2007.

In April and May 2008, the entire work was carefully reexamined, and numerous corrections, especially of typographical and punctuation errors, were made. At the same time, refinements were made to the translation of individual verses.

Additional corrections were made in November and December 2011 and in March 2013.

The doctrinal positions expressed in this book are based upon the original teachings (*aggavāda*) of the Buddha.

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Foreword

The Dhammapada, “The Path of the *Dhamma*,” is so well known that it almost needs no introduction. It is by far the most widely translated Buddhist text. Therefore, I will keep my remarks to a minimum.

The Dhammapada is the second book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, which is, itself, the fifth and last collection (*nikāya*) of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. *The Dhammapada* consists of 423 verses spoken by the *Buddha* on various occasions. These verses are arranged according to topic into 26 chapters. Though most of the verses were spoken to *Bhikkhus*, they are, nonetheless, of universal applicability. Indeed, they provide an incomparable guide on how to live a noble, rewarding, and useful life.

In addition to the text of *The Dhammapada*, there also exist the stories of the events that prompted the *Buddha* to utter these verses as well as commentaries on the individual verses. The stories provide the context. The Commentary contains much useful material and, in some cases, provides the only means to understand the underlying meaning of the point that the *Buddha* was trying to get across.

I had several goals in mind when I undertook the task of preparing yet another translation of *The Dhammapada*. The first was to prepare a version that was doctrinally accurate, that is, fully in accord with the doctrinal positions of Theravādin Buddhism. The second was to reduce sexist language as much as possible. The third and final goal was to render the verses into English that was fresh, alive, and easy to understand, and that would appeal to a modern reader. Consulting the Commentary made the first goal easy to achieve. Much of the commentarial material is included in the footnotes that accompany each chapter. In a number of cases, I followed the common practice of incorporating the commentarial material into the translation itself, especially when a word-for-word translation would have been incomprehensible by itself. The second goal required careful wording. I used two devices to reduce sexist language: (1) I used plural pronouns and (2) I used indefinite pronouns. In those cases where it was obviously males who were being spoken to or spoken about, I made no changes. As for the final goal, I will let the readers judge for themselves whether I have succeeded.

As a final check on the accuracy of my translation, I compared it against several other popular translations. ■

ALLAN R. BOMHARD
Charleston, SC
October 2007

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1 • Twin Verses

(*Yamakavagga*)

1. All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner;¹ they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made.² If one speaks or acts with evil intentions, suffering³ will follow, just as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen that pull it along.
2. All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with pure intentions, happiness will follow, like a shadow that never leaves one's side.
3. “He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me,⁴ he robbed me” — those who dwell on such thoughts will never become free from hatred.
4. “He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me” — those who do not dwell on such thoughts will truly become free from hatred.
5. Returning hatred with hatred will never bring hatred to an end in this world; only by replacing hatred with love will hatred come to an end. This is an ancient and eternal law.⁵
6. People⁶ do not understand that quarrelsome behavior leads only to self-destruction; for those who realize this,⁷ quarrels quickly come to an end.⁸

¹ All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner in the sense that mind is the most dominant and is the cause of the other three mental phenomena: (1) feeling (*vedanā*); (2) perception (*saññā*); and (3) predisposing mental formations or mental concomitants (*saṃkhārā*). These three have mind or consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as their precursor because, although they arise simultaneously with mind, they cannot arise if mind does not arise.

² “Mind as their chief,” “mind-made” here means intention or volition (*cetanā*). In those who are deluded worldlings, volition leads to the performance of volitional actions, both good and evil. This volition and the resultant actions constitute *kamma*, and *kamma* always follows one to produce results (*vipāka*). A more colloquial translation of the opening lines of the first two verses might be: “Mind is the starting point in shaping who we are — as we think, so we become.”

³ Physical or mental pain, misfortune, unsatisfactoriness, evil consequences, etc., and rebirth in lower planes of existence or in the lower strata of society if reborn in the human world.

⁴ “[H]e defeated me” means that he got the better of me by bearing false witness, by argumentation and cross talk, or by retaliatory acts.

⁵ An ancient principle followed by the *Buddhas* and their disciples. The meaning is not to return hatred by more hatred but to conquer it through loving-kindness (absence of hatred).

⁶ Here, “people” refers to those who are not wise. Because they forget that death awaits them, they behave as though they were never going to die and keep on quarrelling. Therefore, they are sometimes referred to as “the ignorant” or “the foolish.”

⁷ The wise understand (or realize) that all are mortal, that all must die.

7. Just as a strong wind uproots a weak tree, so, whoever lives strictly for pleasure, who exercises no restraint over the senses, who eats to excess, who is lazy, who is inactive, such a one is easily overpowered by *Māra* — the Tempter, the Evil One.⁹
8. Just as the wind cannot blow away a rocky mountain, so, whoever does not live strictly for pleasure, who exercises restraint over the senses, who does not eat to excess, who is full of faith,¹⁰ who disciplines the will, such a one is not overpowered by *Māra*.
9. Though one may put on the saffron-colored robe,¹¹ if one has not removed impurities from the mind, if one is lacking in self-discipline and truthfulness, then such a one is not worthy of wearing the saffron-colored robe.
10. Whoever has purified the mind, who is firmly established in moral behavior,¹² who possesses self-discipline and truthfulness, that one is indeed worthy of wearing the saffron-colored robe.
11. Those who imagine trivial things to be important or important things to be trivial are blinded by such wrong views and will never realize what is truly essential to living the Holy Life.
12. Those who have correctly understood what is trivial and what is important are not blinded by wrong views and have realized what is truly essential to living the Holy Life.
13. Just as rain seeps through an ill-thatched roof, so does lust¹³ seep through an ill-trained mind.¹⁴
14. Just as rain cannot seep through a well-thatched roof, so can lust not seep through a well-trained mind.
15. Perceiving the results of past wrong actions, those who have done evil suffer — those who have done evil are afflicted; indeed, they suffer here and now, even after death they suffer — they suffer in both places.

⁸ This verse was uttered by the *Buddha* in connection with a quarrel that arose between two parties of *Bhikkhus*.

⁹ The term *Māra* is used here in the sense of defilements hindering the realization of *nibbāna*. A more colloquial translation might be: "...such a one is easily overpowered by the slightest temptation."

¹⁰ Unshakable faith in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha* as well as faith or belief in *kamma* and its results.

¹¹ The yellow or reddish robe worn by members of the Buddhist monastic Order.

¹² Who has discarded all moral defilements by means of the four Path Knowledges.

¹³ Not only lust, but all defilements, such as ill will, lack of mindfulness, conceit, etc.

¹⁴ A mind not cultivated in calm abiding and insight meditation.

16. Perceiving the results of past wholesome actions, those who have done good deeds rejoice, they rejoice exceedingly; indeed, they rejoice here and now, even after death they rejoice — they rejoice in both places.
17. Those who have done evil suffer here and now, even after death they suffer — the evildoers suffer in both places. Realizing the results of the wrong they have done, the evildoers suffer; and still more suffering awaits them in the next life.
18. Those who have done good¹⁵ are happy here and now, even after death they are happy — those who have done good are happy in both places. Realizing the results of the good they have done, they are happy; and still more happiness awaits them in the next life.
19. Though one may be well-versed in the scriptures¹⁶ and be able to recite them from beginning to end, if one does not put into practice their teachings, then such a heedless one may be likened to a cowherd who counts someone else's cattle — that one will gain none of the benefits of living the Holy Life.
20. Though one may know little of the scriptures, if one nonetheless puts into practice their teachings, forsaking lust, hatred, and false views, truly knowing, with a disciplined mind, clinging to nothing either in this life or the next, then that one will surely gain the benefits of living the Holy Life. ■

¹⁵ Meritorious deeds.

¹⁶ This signifies the words of the *Buddha* preserved in the three *piṭakas*.

2 • Vigilance (*Appamādavagga*)

21. Vigilance¹⁷ is the way to the deathless.¹⁸ Those who lack vigilance cannot escape death.¹⁹ Those who are vigilant will go beyond death; those who are not vigilant are as if already dead.²⁰
22. The wise fully understand this. They rejoice in being vigilant and find delight in the wisdom of the Noble Ones.²¹
23. Meditating²² earnestly and striving for *nibbāna*, the wise attain the highest joy and freedom.²³
24. If one is energetic, mindful, and pure in thought, word, and deed, and, if one does everything with care and consideration, restraining the senses, and earning a living in accordance with the *Dhamma*, then the fame and fortune of such a one will steadily increase.
25. Through diligence, mindfulness, discipline (with regard to the moral precepts), and control of the senses, let those who are wise make an island²⁴ of themselves which no flood²⁵ can overwhelm.
26. The immature²⁶ lose their vigilance, but the wise guard it as their greatest treasure.

¹⁷ *Appamāda*, “zeal, earnestness, diligence, thoughtfulness, watchfulness, vigilance, conscientiousness, heedfulness, non-laxity,” is considered to be the foundation of all progress.

¹⁸ “Deathless” does not mean eternal life or immortality here. Rather, it means *nibbāna*.

¹⁹ One who is not diligent cannot be liberated from rebirth; when reborn, one must grow old and die. Hence, lack of diligence is the cause of death.

²⁰ Those who are not diligent are like the dead, because they never think of giving in charity, or keeping the moral precepts, etc., and, in the case of *Bhikkhus*, because they do not fulfill their duties to their teachers and preceptors, nor do they cultivate calm abiding and insight meditation.

²¹ Here, *Ariyas* “Noble Ones” means the pure ones like *Buddhas* and *Arahats*.

²² In this verse, meditation means both calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*).

²³ *Nibbāna*.

²⁴ “Island,” in this context, stands for Arahatsip. Arahatsip is likened to an island because it enables one to escape from the stormy waters of the round of rebirths (*samsāra*).

²⁵ “Flood” is used as a metaphor for the evils and passions that can overwhelm humanity.

²⁶ Those who are spiritually immature, that is, both ignorant and ill-disciplined. The foolish and ignorant ones mentioned in this story were hooligans who were engaged in wild revelry and disorder during a particular festival. They were not mindful of others or of the consequences of their actions either in this world or the next.

27. Therefore, do not be negligent, do not become addicted to sensory pleasures. Those who meditate earnestly attain the highest happiness.
28. Overcoming negligence through mindfulness, the wise climb beyond suffering to the peaks of wisdom. They look upon the suffering multitude²⁷ as one standing on a mountaintop looks upon the plains below.
29. Diligent among those who are negligent, awake among those who slumber, the wise advance like a racehorse, leaving others behind.
30. It was through earnest effort²⁸ that *Magha* became *Sakka*, lord of the gods.²⁹ The diligent are always respected, the negligent never.
31. A *Bhikkhu* who takes delight in vigilance³⁰ and who sees danger in negligence³¹ advances like a fire, burning all fetters, great and small.
32. A *Bhikkhu* who takes delight in vigilance and who sees danger in negligence cannot fall away.³² He is, indeed, nearing *nibbāna*. ■

²⁷ Worldlings.

²⁸ Diligence in performing meritorious deeds. In this story, Magha, a young man from Macala village, by diligently performing the meritorious deeds of cleaning and clearing land and making roads, was reborn as *Sakka*, lord of the gods.

²⁹ Gods, or *devas*, are celestial beings. They are inhabitants of higher realms of existence and, as a rule, are invisible to human beings. They are neither omnipotent nor omniscient. They are subject to ever-repeated rebirth, old age, and death and, thus, are not freed from cyclic existence and suffering. There are many classes of celestial beings. They are not to be confused with the gods or deities of Western religions.

³⁰ That is, who takes delight in the practice of calm abiding and insight meditation.

³¹ The danger in negligence is that it leads to continued existence in the round of rebirths.

³² Cannot fall away from the practice of calm abiding and insight meditation and the benefits thereof (Path and Fruit attainments).

3 • The Mind (*Cittavagga*)

33. The mind is excitable and unsteady; it is difficult to control³³ and difficult to restrain.³⁴ As an archer aims an arrow, the wise straighten their restless thoughts.³⁵
34. As a fish thrashes about in agony when it is taken out of the water and thrown onto dry ground, the mind taken out of the world of sense pleasures³⁶ to escape the grip of *Māra*³⁷ trembles³⁸ all over.
35. The mind is difficult to train — it goes where it likes and does what it wants.³⁹ It is good to tame the mind, for a well-trained mind brings happiness.
36. The mind is very difficult to perceive — it is both delicate and extremely subtle. It goes where it wants and settles where it wants. The wise should guard their minds, for a guarded mind brings happiness.⁴⁰
37. The mind wanders far and moves about alone; it is formless; it lies in the cave.⁴¹ Those who control their mind will be free from the bonds of *Māra*.
38. For those whose minds are unsteady, who are ignorant of the *Dhamma*, and whose faith is wavering, their wisdom will never grow.

³³ It is difficult to keep the mind fixed on a single object when meditating.

³⁴ It is difficult to restrain the mind from drifting towards sense pleasures.

³⁵ The wise train their excitable, unsteady mind by means of calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*).

³⁶ When it is being trained in meditation.

³⁷ Mental defilements.

³⁸ The mind trembles, attached to its “home” of the fivefold strand of sensuality, being taken out of it and subjected to the ardor of mental and physical enterprise of insight and meditational exertion for the purpose of discarding the whirl, which is the sway of *Māra* — that is, it is not able to hold itself steady in that condition. Even though this is so, the wise make the mind straight, competent in the task, in the manner stated.

³⁹ Moving about wherever it pleases, landing on any sense object without control.

⁴⁰ It brings about the ease of the Paths, of the Fruits, and of *nibbāna*.

⁴¹ *Guhāsayaṃ*, that is, the seat of consciousness. The *Buddha* did not assign a specific physical location for the seat of consciousness as he did with the other senses. It was the cardiac theory (the theory that the heart is the seat of consciousness) that prevailed at the time, and this was evidently supported by the Upanishads. Though the *Buddha* could have adopted this popular theory, he did not commit himself. In the *Paṭṭhāna*, the *Book of Relations*, the *Buddha* refers to the seat of consciousness in indirect terms as “depending on that material thing.” What that “material thing” was, the *Buddha* did not positively assert.

- 39. They are wise whose thoughts are steady and minds serene, whose minds are not affected by lust and hatred, and who have abandoned both good and evil. They are awake and free from fear.
- 40. Remember that this body is like a fragile clay pot. Make your mind a fortress and conquer *Māra* with the weapon of wisdom. Even after defeating *Māra*, one should still continue to guard one's mind and feel no attachment to what has been gained.⁴²
- 41. Remember that this body will soon lie in the earth without life, without value, useless as a rotten log.
- 42. More than those who hate you, more than all your enemies, an undisciplined mind does greater harm.⁴³
- 43. More than your mother, more than your father, more than all your family, a well-disciplined mind does greater good. ■

⁴² In this context, not to be attached to *jhāna* ecstasy and serenity gained through meditative absorption, but to proceed further with insight meditation practices until the attainment of Arahantship.

⁴³ According to the Commentary, the mind, wrongly established in the ten kinds of evil, will cause ruin and destruction not only in this life but also even in a hundred thousand future existences. The ten kinds of evil are: (1) killing; (2) stealing; (3) sexual misconduct; (4) false speech; (5) slander; (6) harsh speech; (7) idle gossip; (8) covetousness; (9) ill will; and (10) false views.

4 • Flowers (*Pupphavagga*)

44. Who will conquer this earth,⁴⁴ this realm of *Yama*,⁴⁵ and this world,⁴⁶ along with the world of the gods? As a garland-maker chooses the right flowers, choose the well-taught Path of the *Dhamma*,⁴⁷ and go beyond the realms of death and of the gods.
45. A disciple in training⁴⁸ will conquer this earth, this realm of *Yama*, and this world, along with the world of the gods. As a garland-maker chooses the right flowers, such a disciple will choose the well-taught Path of the *Dhamma* and go beyond the realms of death and of the gods.
46. One who remembers that this body is as impermanent as froth,⁴⁹ as insubstantial as a mirage,⁵⁰ will break the flower-tipped arrows of *Māra*⁵¹ and pass beyond the sight of the King of Death.
47. Like those who spend their lives gathering flowers, those whose minds are attached to sense pleasures are swept away by death, just as a flood sweeps away a sleeping village.
48. Like those who spend their lives gathering flowers, those whose minds are attached to sense pleasures, whose desires are insatiable, are swept away by death.

⁴⁴ This body.

⁴⁵ The four states of woe (*duggati*): (1) hell; (2) the animal kingdom; (3) the *Peta* or hungry ghost realms; and (4) the *Asura* or demon realms. Hell is not permanent according to Buddhism. It is a state of misery, as are the *Peta* realm and the *Asura* realm, where beings suffer for their past evil actions.

⁴⁶ Namely, the world of human beings and the six celestial planes. These seven are regarded as states of bliss (*sugati*).

⁴⁷ *Dhammapada*: the well-taught Path of Virtue; here, it means the thirty-seven Requisites of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya*).

⁴⁸ *Sekha* or *sekhapuggala* “one who is still undergoing training.” This term is applied to disciples who have attained any of the first three stages of holiness: (1) Stream-Winner (*Sotāpanna*); (2) Once-Returner (*Sakadāgāmi*); and (3) Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*). Those who have totally eradicated all of the passions and attained the fruit stage of an *Arahat* are known as *asekhas* “those who have completed their training.”

⁴⁹ This body, that is, the aggregate of form or corporeality, is like froth or foam in that it is powerless and weak and does not last a long time — in other words, it is transient, fleeting, soon to perish.

⁵⁰ From a distance, a mirage appears to be real, but, up close, one realizes that it is empty, hollow, and intangible. In like manner, the body is like a mirage in the sense of passing away and reappearing at every instant.

⁵¹ These “flower-tipped arrows of *Māra*” represent the *tivaṭṭam* or the three kinds of rounds (*vaṭṭam*): (1) the round of moral defilements (*kilesavaṭṭam*); (2) the round of volitional action (*kammavaṭṭam*); and (3) and the round of resultant effects (*vipākavaṭṭam*).

49. As a bee drinks nectar and then flies away without harming the flower, so should a *Bhikkhu* wander through a village.⁵²
50. Do not give your attention to what others do or fail to do, whether they are doing what is right or what is wrong. Rather, give your attention to what you do or fail to do, whether you are doing what is right or what is wrong.
51. Just as a lovely flower, full of color but lacking in fragrance, cannot give anyone the benefit of its scent, the well-spoken words of the *Buddha* are of no benefit to those who do not put the *Dhamma* into practice.
52. Just as a lovely flower, full of both color and fragrance, will give the benefit of its scent to all, the well-spoken words of the *Buddha* will benefit those who put the *Dhamma* into practice.
53. Just as many garlands can be made from a heap of flowers, many good deeds can be done in this life (through the sharing of one's wealth with others⁵³).
54. The scent of flowers cannot travel against the wind, nor can the scent of sandalwood or rhododendron or jasmine; but the fragrance⁵⁴ of those who do good spreads everywhere.
55. Neither the scent of sandalwood nor rhododendron, neither the scent of lotus nor jasmine, can come near the fragrance of those who do good.
56. Faint is the scent of sandalwood and rhododendron, but the fragrance of those who do good rises high, even to the abode of the gods.
57. *Māra*⁵⁵ cannot find the path⁵⁶ taken by those who are endowed with virtue, who live mindfully, and who have been freed from moral defilements by Right Knowledge.⁵⁷
- 58–59. A true follower of the *Buddha* shines among blind mortals,⁵⁸ as the fragrant lotus, growing in the garbage by the roadside, brings joy to all who pass by. ■

⁵² Seeking alms, without inconveniencing anyone.

⁵³ Out of faith and generosity.

⁵⁴ That is, the reputation of those who do good.

⁵⁵ The personification of evil.

⁵⁶ *Arahats*, having eradicated moral defilements, are no longer subject to rebirth. So *Māra*, for all his power, cannot find where such *Arahats* go after death.

⁵⁷ Those who, having understood the nature of phenomena by perceiving cause, by inference, by reason, have attained liberation through the fivefold release: (1) release through elimination (*vikkhambhana-vimutti*); (2) release through cultivating the opposite (*tadaṅga-vimutti*); (3) release through cutting off (*samuccheda-vimutti*); (4) release through subsidence (*patippassaddhi-vimutti*); and (5) release through moving away (*nissaraṇa-vimutti*).

⁵⁸ Mortals (worldlings) are like the blind because they are lacking in wisdom.

5 • The Immature (*Bālavagga*)

60. Long is the night to those who cannot sleep; long is the road to the weary. Long is the cycle of birth and death⁵⁹ to those who do not know the *Dhamma*.
61. If, as you travel through life, you do not find another whose understanding of the *Dhamma* is either equal to or greater than your own,⁶⁰ walk on alone.⁶¹ One cannot advance by associating with those lacking wisdom.⁶²
62. The immature⁶³ think, “These children are mine; this wealth is mine.” They cannot even call themselves their own, much less their children or wealth.
63. The immature who know they are immature have a little wisdom. But the immature who look on themselves as wise are utterly foolish.
64. Those who are immature cannot understand the *Dhamma* even if they spend their whole life with the wise. How can the spoon know the taste of soup?
65. If the mature⁶⁴ spend even a short time with the wise, they will understand the *Dhamma*, just as the tongue knows the taste of soup.

⁵⁹ *Samsāra*, literally, “wandering again and again.” It is the ocean of life or existence. *Samsāra* is defined as the unbroken flow of the stream of aggregates, elements, and sense-faculties.

⁶⁰ Someone equal to or better than one in the qualities of virtue, integrity, and wisdom.

⁶¹ Coming across one’s better, one will grow in virtue, integrity, and wisdom; coming across one’s equal, one will not degenerate; but living and sharing one’s daily life with an inferior causes one to degenerate in virtue and the like.

⁶² Out of compassion (*karuṇā*), to work for their betterment, one may associate with them. In other words, if it is possible to help such people grow in virtue, integrity, and wisdom without expecting anything from them in return, then one may associate with them. But, if it is not possible to help them, one should be firmly set on being by oneself and living by oneself in every mode of deportment.

⁶³ *Bāla* — this is often translated as “fools” or “the foolish,” sometimes even as “childish persons.” It is the opposite of *pañña* “(the) wise” and refers to those who are ignorant, stupid, and mentally dull. Here, it is translated as “the immature.” Fools are not likely to change their behavior, while someone who is simply immature, given time and experience, can always learn and grow. They are spiritually immature inasmuch as they do not know what is good for this world and the world beyond, they are not able to put an end to the whirl of *samsāra*, and they do not know the noble *Dhamma* of the *Buddha*. Due to ignorance (*avijjā*), they act foolishly, creating fresh *kamma*, leading to repeated rebirth in cyclic existence.

⁶⁴ If one associates with a wise person even for a short time, then such a one, learning from the wise person and inquiring, will come, little by little, to understand the *Dhamma*. Thereafter, through deepening one’s knowledge and putting what one has learned into practice, striving on with diligence, one will advance like a racehorse and will, inevitably, transcend the world.

66. The immature⁶⁵ are their own enemies, doing selfish deeds which will bring them sorrow.
67. That deed is poorly done⁶⁶ if one feels remorse for having done it and if it brings suffering in its wake.
68. But good is that deed which brings no remorse, only happiness, in its wake.
69. As long as the evil deed does not bear fruit, the immature think it is sweet like honey.⁶⁷ But when the evil deed ripens, they suffer.
70. Even if the immature fast month after month, taking food sparingly with only the tip of a blade of grass, they are not worth a sixteenth part of those who truly understand the *Dhamma*.⁶⁸
71. As fresh milk⁶⁹ needs time to curdle, an evil deed needs time to bear its fruit. It follows the immature, eventually burning them, like fire smoldering under the ashes.
72. Even if they pick up a little knowledge, the immature misuse it and break their heads⁷⁰ instead of benefiting from it.
73. The immature *Bhikkhus* desire praise for qualities they do not have, preeminence among fellow monks,⁷¹ authority in the monasteries,⁷² and veneration from those not related to them.⁷³
74. “Listen, monks and householders, I can do this; I can do that. I am right, and you are wrong. Obey me.” Fools, thinking thus, only increase their desires and pride.

⁶⁵ Those of little intelligence, those who are ignorant.

⁶⁶ Having done a deed that can produce rebirth in states of woe, and so on, whose outcome is painful, remembering which one feels regret and grieves at the very instant of remembrance — that is, a deed which is not good, not admirable, not gainful.

⁶⁷ To those who are doing a bad (*pāpa*), unwholesome (*akusala*) deed, the deed appears desirable, pleasant, and attractive, like honey, like a sweet drink. Hence, they regard it as if it were sweet like honey.

⁶⁸ The Noble Ones — those who have attained one of the four stages of holiness.

⁶⁹ Warm milk that has just been drawn from a cow’s udder.

⁷⁰ Here, “head” means “wisdom.” The meaning is that their wisdom and merit are brought down, ruined, destroyed.

⁷¹ Such *Bhikkhus* desire to have a following of other *Bhikkhus*, thinking: “Would that the *Bhikkhus* in the entire monastery surround me and go about with me asking me questions.”

⁷² From among the dwellings that belong as common property to the Order, assigning the more comfortable lodging places at the center of the monastery to *Bhikkhus* who are their friends and companions, and reserving the best for themselves, while assigning the least desirable lodgings, those that are farthest away, that are soiled, that are imperiled by vermin, to visiting *Bhikkhus* or to *Bhikkhus* who are not their friends and companions.

⁷³ They wish for reverential gifts of the four kinds of requisites not only from their parents and relatives but also from those not related to them, thinking: “Would that they give only to me and to no one else!”

75. One path leads to worldly gain and pleasure, another to *nibbāna*. Fully realizing this, do not, O disciples of the *Buddha*, take delight in worldly gain and honor, but devote yourselves instead to solitude, detachment, and the realization of *nibbāna*. ■

6 • The Wise (*Pañḍitavagga*)

76. If you find someone wise,⁷⁴ who can steer you away from the wrong path,⁷⁵ follow that person as you would one who can reveal hidden treasures. Only good⁷⁶ can come from following such a person.
77. Those who are wise should admonish others; they should give advice⁷⁷ to others; and they should prevent others from doing what is wrong.⁷⁸ Ones such as these are held dear by the good; they are disliked only by the bad.
78. Make friends with those who are good and worthy, not with those who are bad and low.⁷⁹
79. Those who imbibe⁸⁰ the *Dhamma* live in joy with a serene mind.⁸¹ The wise take delight in the *Dhamma*⁸² expounded by the Noble Ones.⁸³
80. As irrigators channel water where they want, as archers make their arrows straight, as carpenters fashion timber,⁸⁴ the wise shape their minds.⁸⁵

⁷⁴ One who is endowed with insight, one who knows and practices the *Dhamma*.

⁷⁵ That is, a wise person who, out of compassion, respectfully points out your faults in order to make you understand what you have not properly understood, with a desire to increase your virtues, and so forth. Such a one is concerned only with your development, your welfare, your happiness.

⁷⁶ There will be growth, not decay (of wisdom).

⁷⁷ They should give advice in advance, and they should give advice repeatedly.

⁷⁸ One admonishes or counsels others concerning matters that have already taken place; one advises others concerning matters that have not yet taken place; and one prevents or restrains others from doing, thinking, or speaking that which is of an unwholesome nature and also establishes others in doing, thinking, and speaking that which is of a wholesome nature.

⁷⁹ Bad or evil friends are those who are attached to unwholesome deeds, such as physical misconduct. Low friends are those who try to persuade one to perform one or more of the twenty-one kinds of wrong-doing (*dukkata*). Those who have opposite qualities are good friends and worthy friends. One should only make friends with those who are good and worthy.

⁸⁰ Contacting with body the ninefold *Dhamma* that transcends the world, realizing as object, penetratively seeing the Four Noble Truths by means of comprehension, and so forth, through full knowledge — that is how one “imbibes” the *Dhamma*.

⁸¹ Not befuddled, free of defilements.

⁸² *Dhamma* which is conducive to Enlightenment in its many varieties, such as making awareness firm, and which has been expounded by Noble Ones, such as the *Buddhas*.

⁸³ *Ariya* “Noble One” indicates nobility of character. It is typically applied to *Buddhas* as well as to those who have attained one of the four stages of holiness. Here, it refers to *Buddhas* and *Arahats*.

⁸⁴ Carpenters fashion timber into things that people need or want by cutting, sawing, planing, carving, etc.

81. As a solid rock cannot be moved by the wind, the wise are not shaken⁸⁶ by praise or blame.⁸⁷
82. When the wise listen to the words of the *Dhamma*, their minds become calm and clear, like the waters of a still lake.⁸⁸
83. Those who are virtuous surrender all.⁸⁹ They do not engage in idle chatter, nor do they hanker for sense pleasures.⁹⁰ They are the same in good fortune and in bad.⁹¹
84. If one desires neither children nor wealth nor power nor success by unfair means, either for one's own sake or for the sake of others,⁹² know such a one to be good, wise, and virtuous.
85. Few are those who reach the other shore;⁹³ most people keep running up and down this shore.⁹⁴
86. But those who follow the *Dhamma*, when it has been well taught, will reach the other shore, hard to reach, beyond the power of death.
- 87–88. Those who are wise, leaving craving behind and having *nibbāna* as their goal, should abandon evil ways⁹⁵ and cultivate pure, good ones.⁹⁶ They should seek delight in solitude, detachment, and *nibbāna*, which an ordinary person finds so

⁸⁵ In the same way, the wise develop the Paths such as Stream Entry and thus tame their minds. When Arahatsip is attained, their minds have become perfectly tamed.

⁸⁶ Not perturbed or bothered.

⁸⁷ When they are confronted by the eight worldly conditions, the wise are neither attracted nor repulsed, neither happy nor sad, neither elated nor depressed. To them, things and events simply are what they are, no more, no less. The eight worldly conditions are: (1) gain (*lābha*) and (2) loss (*alābha*); (3) fame (*yaśa*) and (4) infamy or ill-repute (*ayasa*); (5) praise (*paramāsa*) and (6) blame (*nindā*); and (7) happiness (*sukha*) and (8) pain (*dukkha*).

⁸⁸ Just as a lake is clear because it is free from impurities and undisturbed when it is motionless, the wise, having heard the *Dhamma* and having attained an undefiled mind by way of the Path of Stream-Entry and the rest, become calm. After having attained Arahatsip, they are perfectly calm.

⁸⁹ Attachment to the five aggregates of existence, etc.

⁹⁰ They do not chatter for their own part, nor do they get others to chatter, for the sake of sense pleasures, for reasons of politeness, to make small talk, etc. The virtuous do neither of these things.

⁹¹ The wise do not manifest either high or low (elation or depression), either in the form of being pleased or displeased or in the form of expressing the satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature of events.

⁹² Those who are wise will not commit a detrimental act, either for their own sake or for the sake of others.

⁹³ *Nibbāna*.

⁹⁴ That is, they cling to the five aggregates of existence.

⁹⁵ Physical misconduct, and so forth.

⁹⁶ Wise *Bhikkhus* should develop the bright *Dhamma*, in all its varieties, such as physical good conduct, and so forth, from the time of going forth into the Holy Life (*brahmacariya*) up until reaching the Path of Arahatsip.

difficult to enjoy. They should also abandon sense pleasures and, clinging to nothing, should cleanse themselves of all impurities⁹⁷ of the mind.

89. Those whose minds are well trained in the Seven Factors of Enlightenment⁹⁸ and who have rid themselves of all clinging,⁹⁹ rejoice in having abandoned craving.¹⁰⁰ Such ones, who have eradicated all moral intoxicants,¹⁰¹ have attained *nibbāna* even in this world.¹⁰² ■

⁹⁷ The five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*): (1) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāmacchanda*); (2) ill will, hatred, anger, aversion (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*); (4) restlessness, worry, agitation (*uddhacca-kukkucca*); and (5) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

⁹⁸ The Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) are: (1) mindfulness (*sati*); (2) investigation of the Truth (*Dhamma-vicaya*, that is, “seeking knowledge,” specifically, knowledge of the Four Noble Truths); (3) energy (*virīya*); (4) rapture, zest, ecstasy (*pīti*); (5) tranquility (*passadhi*); (6) concentration (*samādhi*); and (7) equanimity (*upekkhā*). The Seven Factors of Enlightenment are the requisites for attaining Path Insight.

⁹⁹ Clinging (*upādāna*) is an intensified degree of craving (*taṇhā*). There are four kinds of clinging: (1) sense-desires (*kāmuṇāpādāna*); (2) false beliefs (*diṭṭhupādāna*); (3) adherence to wrongful rites and rituals (*sīlabbatupādāna*); and (4) personality belief (*atta-vādupādāna*).

¹⁰⁰ Craving (*taṇhā*) is the chief cause of suffering (*dukkha*) and of the ever-continuing cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*).

¹⁰¹ *Āsavas* (literally “influxes”) “cankers, taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases.” There are four kinds of cankers: (1) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāmāsava*); (2) desire for eternal existence (*bhavāsava*); (3) wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*); and (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*). The first *āsava* is attachment to the sentient realm; the second is attachment to the Realm of Form and the Formless Realms.

¹⁰² On attaining Arahantship, the final stage of holiness, one eradicates all impurities and realizes *nibbāna* in this very life. This is known as *sopādisesa nibbāna*, that is, experiencing the bliss of *nibbāna* with the body (that is, the five aggregates [*khandhas*]) remaining. The *Arahat* lives as long as the power of his rebirth reproductive *kamma* lasts, just as a spinning wheel keeps rotating even after the hand has been removed. After death, he attains *anupādisesa nibbāna*, that is, *nibbāna* without the body (that is, without the aggregates).

7 • The *Arahat*¹⁰³ (*Arahantavagga*)

90. They have completed their journey;¹⁰⁴ they are freed from sorrow¹⁰⁵ and from all else.¹⁰⁶ The bonds¹⁰⁷ of life have fallen from them, and the fever (of passions) no longer exists in them.¹⁰⁸
91. The thoughtful strive diligently.¹⁰⁹ They take no delight in home-life,¹¹⁰ but forsake home after home,¹¹¹ as swans leave the lake.
92. *Arahats* accumulate nothing.¹¹² When taking food, they reflect over it with full understanding of its nature.¹¹³ Their sole goal is liberation,¹¹⁴ which is void and signless.¹¹⁵ Like the flight of birds in the sky, their path cannot be traced.¹¹⁶

¹⁰³ An *Arahat*, literally, “worthy one,” is one who has destroyed all passions such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and ignorance (*avijjā*). After the death of their physical bodies, *Arahats* are not reborn but attain *parinibbāna*.

¹⁰⁴ Here, “journey” means the round of rebirths (*saṃsāra*).

¹⁰⁵ One becomes freed from sorrow on attaining the third stage of holiness, Non-Returner (*Anāgāmi*), one who is not born again in this world.

¹⁰⁶ They are freed in regard to all phenomena (*dhamma*), such as the five aggregates (*khandha*) and the like.

¹⁰⁷ There are four kinds of bonds or ties (*ganthas*): (1) covetousness (*abhiññhā*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) indulgence in wrongful rites and ceremonies (*śīlabbataparāmāsa*); and (4) adherence to one’s dogma or dogmatic fanaticism (*idaṃ saccabhinivesa*). “These things are called ‘bonds,’ since they bind this mental and material body” (*Visuddhimagga* XXII, 54).

¹⁰⁸ This verse refers to the ethical state of an *Arahat*. Heat is both physical and mental. *Arahats* experience bodily heat as long as they are alive, but they are not worried by it. They do not, however, experience the mental heat (fever) of passions.

¹⁰⁹ In calm abiding (*samatha*) and insight meditation (*vipassanā*).

¹¹⁰ That is, the life of sense pleasures.

¹¹¹ *Arahats* wander wherever they like without attachment to any particular place, inasmuch as they are free from the concept of “I” and “mine.” The meaning here is that they have relinquished all attachments.

¹¹² There are two kinds of accumulation: (1) accumulation of *kamma* and (2) accumulation of possessions. One’s wholesome and unwholesome deeds amount to accumulation of *kamma*. A *Bhikkhu*’s four requisites constitute accumulation of possessions. In this regard, a *Bhikkhu* dwelling in a monastery, keeping one lump of sugar, four portions only of clarified butter (ghee), and one measure (*nālī*) of uncooked rice is not accumulation of possessions, but keeping more than that is.

¹¹³ In accordance with the three *pariññās*. *Pariññā* means “full comprehension, full understanding”. The three *pariññās* are: (1) full understanding of the known; (2) full understanding of investigating; and (3) full understanding as overcoming.

¹¹⁴ *Nibbāna*.

¹¹⁵ It is called “void” because it is free from greed, hatred, and ignorance. It is called “signless” because it is free from the signs of greed, hatred, and ignorance. *Arahats* experience the bliss of *nibbāna* while alive.

¹¹⁶ Just as the track of birds that fly through the sky is hard to trace, is impossible to know, because they leave no visible sign or mark (such as a footprint) that one can see, similarly, those in whom the twofold

93. *Arahats* are free from cankers;¹¹⁷ they are not attached to food. Their sole goal is liberation, which is void and signless. Like the flight of birds in the sky, their path cannot be traced.
94. Even the gods cherish such steadfast ones,¹¹⁸ whose sense faculties are calm, like horses well-trained by charioteers, and who are free from pride and cankers.
95. Like the earth, *Arahats* are patient and cannot be provoked to respond in anger. They stand firm and steady, like a column.¹¹⁹ They are serene¹²⁰ and pure, like a lake without mud.¹²¹ They are free from the cycle of birth and death.
96. Wisdom has stilled their minds, and their thoughts, words, and deeds are filled with peace. Truly knowing the *Dhamma*, they are free from moral defilements and are unperturbed by the ups and downs of life.
97. Those who are not credulous,¹²² who have realized the unconditioned,¹²³ who have cut off the links of the round of rebirths, who have destroyed all consequences of good and bad deeds, who have discarded all craving, are indeed the noblest of all.¹²⁴
98. They make holy wherever they dwell, in a village or a forest, in a valley or on a hill.
99. With their senses at peace and their minds full of joy, they take delight in secluded forests,¹²⁵ where worldlings are loath to go. ■

accumulation is not found, who understand food by the three forms of understanding, whose goal is liberation, in their case too, the path by which they have departed is hard to trace; it cannot be followed, due to lack of indications.

¹¹⁷ *Āsavas* (literally, “influxes”) “cankers, taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases.”

¹¹⁸ Even the gods — and also human beings — eagerly long for the sight and arrival of ones such as these, who are steadfast in self-control and freedom.

¹¹⁹ *Indakhīla* “Indra’s column.” The commentators mention that *indakhīlas* were firm posts, stakes, or columns which were erected either inside or outside a city as an embellishment. Usually, they were made of bricks or durable wood in octangular shapes. Half of the column was embedded in the ground, hence the metaphor “as firm and steady as an *indakhīla*.” Another possible translation is “threshold.”

¹²⁰ That is, they have neither attachment to desirable objects nor aversion to undesirable objects. Nor do they cling to anything. Amidst the eight worldly conditions, they remain unperturbed, manifesting neither attachment nor aversion, neither elation nor depression. The eight worldly conditions are: (1) gain (*lābha*) and (2) loss (*alābha*); (3) fame (*yasa*) and (4) infamy or ill-repute (*ayasa*); (5) praise (*paramāsa*) and (6) blame (*nindā*); and (7) happiness (*sukha*) and (8) pain (*dukkha*).

¹²¹ The lake water, being free from mud, is unpolluted; *Arahats*, being free from defilements, are also unpolluted (“serene and pure”).

¹²² Inasmuch as they have understood and experienced the Truth for themselves, they do not take things upon faith from the words of others. They do not believe things which they know are not true.

¹²³ *Nibbāna*.

¹²⁴ *Arahats*.

¹²⁵ They do not seek sense pleasures. Hence, *Arahats* prefer secluded forests, far from the allure of sense objects.

8 • Thousands (*Sahassavagga*)

100. Better than a speech of a thousand words that are senseless and unconnected with the realization of *nibbāna* is one thoughtful word that brings peace to the mind.
101. Better than a poem of a thousand verses that are senseless and unconnected with the realization of *nibbāna* is one thoughtful line of verse that brings peace to the mind.
102. Better than the recitation of a hundred verses that are senseless and unconnected with the realization of *nibbāna* is one word of the *Dhamma* that brings peace to the mind.
103. One who conquers oneself¹²⁶ is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand men on the battlefield.
- 104—105. It is better to be victorious over yourself than to conquer others. When you attain victory over yourself, neither the gods nor *Māra* can turn it into defeat.
106. Better than performing a thousand rituals month after month for a hundred years is paying homage, even if only for a moment, to one living in wisdom.¹²⁷
107. Better than tending the sacrificial fire in the forest for a hundred years is paying homage, even if only for a moment, to one living in wisdom.
108. Making gifts¹²⁸ and sacrificial offerings,¹²⁹ great and small, for a whole year to earn merit is not worth a quarter of the honor paid to the Noble Ones who walk the right path.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Those who contemplate on internal subjects of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*), by day as well as by night, and who conquer themselves through the conquest of their defilements such as greed, and so forth.

¹²⁷ A *Bhikkhu* who has practiced insight meditation and is, therefore, self-composed, self-disciplined.

¹²⁸ That which is prepared and given either to invited guests or with a belief in *kamma* and its results (such as, for instance, giving charitable donations with the thought of gaining merit by so doing).

¹²⁹ This generally means offerings given in connection with festive activities.

¹³⁰ *Ariyapuggalas*, that is, *Sotāpannas* (Stream-Winners), *Sakadāgāmis* (Once-Returners), *Anāgāmis* (Non-Returners), and *Arahats* (Worthy Ones). The idea conveyed by this verse is that reverence paid to Noble Ones is far superior to gifts and offerings given to worldlings. “Stream-Winners” (*Sotāpannas*) are also called “Stream-Enterers,” that is, “one who has entered the stream (of liberation),” and the first stage of holiness is known as “Stream-Entry” (*Sotāpatti*).

109. To those who respect and honor the wise¹³¹ and follow them, four gifts will come in increasing measure: health,¹³² happiness,¹³³ beauty, and long life.
110. Better than living for a hundred years with those who are immoral and who have no control over their senses is one day living with those who are virtuous and who cultivate calm abiding and insight meditation.
111. Better than living for a hundred years with those who are ignorant and who have no control over their senses is one day living with those who are wise and who cultivate calm abiding and insight meditation.
112. Better than living for a hundred years with those who are idle¹³⁴ and inactive is one day living with those who make zealous and strenuous effort (to cultivate calm abiding and insight meditation).
113. Better than living for a hundred years with those who do not perceive the arising and dissolution of the five aggregates¹³⁵ is one day living with those who perceive the arising and dissolution of the five aggregates.
114. Better than living for a hundred years with those who do not perceive the deathless state¹³⁶ is one day living with those who perceive the deathless state.
115. Better than living for a hundred years with those who do not comprehend the Noble *Dhamma*¹³⁷ is one day living with those who comprehend the Noble *Dhamma*. ■

¹³¹ Those who are advanced in age, wisdom, and virtue.

¹³² Physical and mental vigor.

¹³³ Physical and mental happiness.

¹³⁴ According to the Commentary, those who are idle pass their time immersed in unwholesome thoughts.

¹³⁵ The rise and decay of mind and matter — that is, the impermanent nature of all conditioned things. The disciples of the *Buddha* are expected to contemplate the fleeting nature of life in order not to be attached to illusory material pleasures.

¹³⁶ The unconditioned state of *nibbāna*, free from birth, decay, and death.

¹³⁷ That is, the nine supramundane states, namely, the Four Paths, the Four Fruits of holiness, and *nibbāna*.

9 • Evil

(*Pāpavagga*)

116. Hasten to do good;¹³⁸ restrain your mind from evil; for the mind of one who is slow in doing good tends to take delight in doing evil.¹³⁹
117. If you do what is evil, do not repeat it or take pleasure in making it a habit. An evil habit will cause nothing but suffering.
118. If you do what is good,¹⁴⁰ keep repeating it and take pleasure in making it a habit. A good habit will cause nothing but joy.
119. Even though those who are evil¹⁴¹ may still find happiness as long as they do not reap what they have sown, when they do, sorrow overcomes them.
120. Even though those who are good¹⁴² may still encounter suffering as long as they do not reap what they have sown, when they do, joy overcomes them.
121. No one should think lightly of evil, imagining: “Sorrow will not come to me.” Little by little, a person will be filled with evil, as a pot is filled by drops of water.

¹³⁸ There should be no hesitation in doing good deeds. One must avail oneself of every opportunity to do good. Every effort should be made to control the mind, inasmuch as it is prone to evil. The unpurified mind rejoices in evil thoughts.

¹³⁹ *Pāpa* “evil” is that which defiles one’s mind. It is that which leads to woeful states. That which is associated with greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) is evil. There are ten kinds of evil deeds: (1) killing; (2) stealing; (3) sexual misconduct; (4) false speech; (5) slander; (6) harsh speech; (7) idle gossip; (8) covetousness; (9) ill will; and (10) false views.

¹⁴⁰ *Puñña* “merit” is that which cleanses one’s mind. *Kusala* “karmically wholesome or profitable; salutary; morally good; skillful” is another term for *puñña*. There are ten kinds of meritorious deeds: (1) generosity (*dāna*); (2) morality (*sīla*); (3) meditation (*bhāvanā*); (4) reverence (*apacitti*); (5) service (*veyyāvacca*); (6) transference of merit (*pattānuppadāna*); (7) rejoicing in other’s merit (*abbhanumodana*); (8) teaching the *Dhamma* (*desanā*); (9) hearing the *Dhamma* (*savana*); and (10) straightening one’s views (*diṭṭhujukamma*).

¹⁴¹ The wicked may lead prosperous lives as a result of their past good deeds. They will experience happiness owing to the potentiality of their past good over the present evil, a seeming injustice that often prevails in this world. When, according to the inexorable law of *kamma*, their evil deeds begin to ripen, they will perceive the painful effects of their wickedness.

¹⁴² The virtuous, as it often happens, may meet with adversity owing to the potentiality of their past evil actions over the present good deeds. They are convinced of the efficacy of their present good deeds only when, at the opportune moment, they begin to ripen, giving them abundant joy.

The fact that, at times, the wicked are prosperous and the virtuous are unfortunate is itself strong evidence to believe in *kamma* and rebirth.

122. No one should think lightly of good, imagining: “Joy will not come to me.” Little by little, a person will be filled with merit, as a pot is filled by drops of water.
123. As a rich merchant traveling alone avoids dangerous roads, as one who loves life avoids poison, let everyone avoid evil deeds.
124. If you have no wound on your hand, you can touch poison without being harmed. No harm comes to those who do no harm.
125. If you harm a person who should not be harmed,¹⁴³ one who is pure and free from moral defilements, you harm yourself, as dust thrown against the wind comes back to the thrower.
126. Some are born again as human beings.¹⁴⁴ Those caught in evil ways go to a state of intense suffering; those who have done good go to a state of joy; but those who are free from moral intoxicants¹⁴⁵ realize *nibbāna*.
127. Not in the sky, nor in the middle of the ocean, nor in mountain canyons, nor anywhere else in the world is there a place where one can escape from the consequences of one’s evil deeds.¹⁴⁶
128. Not in the sky, nor in the ocean, nor in mountain canyons, nor anywhere else in the world is there a place where one can hide from death. ■

¹⁴³ *An Arahāt*.

¹⁴⁴ According to Buddhism, there are four kinds of birth: (1) egg-born (*aṇḍaja*); (2) womb-born (*jalābuja*); (3) moisture-born (*samsedaja*); and (4) spontaneous birth (*opapātika*).

¹⁴⁵ *Āsavas* (literally, “influxes”) “cankers, taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases.”

¹⁴⁶ It is impossible to escape the law of moral causation, nor can one avoid the woeful consequences of one’s bad deeds by hiding in any place. No god or even a *Buddha* can intervene in the operation of *kamma*.

10 • Punishment (*Daṇḍavagga*)

129. Everyone fears punishment; everyone fears death, just as you do. Therefore, do not kill or cause to kill.
130. Everyone fears punishment; everyone loves life, just as you do. Therefore, do not kill or cause to kill.
131. If, hoping to be happy, you strike at others who are also seeking happiness, you will be happy neither here nor hereafter.
132. If, hoping to be happy, you do not strike at others who are also seeking happiness, you will be happy here and hereafter.
133. Speak quietly to everyone, and they too will be gentle in their speech. Harsh words¹⁴⁷ hurt and come back to the speaker.
134. If you can keep your mind calm and quiet, like a broken gong which is no longer resonant, you are sure to realize *nibbāna*, leaving all harsh speech behind you.
135. As, with a staff, a cowherd drives cattle to fresh pastures, so also, old age and death drive the life of all beings.
136. While they are performing evil deeds, the immature do not know what is in store for them.¹⁴⁸ They will suffer for their evil deeds, like one who is burned by fire.
- 137—140. If one harms those who are innocent¹⁴⁹ and who should not be harmed, suffering will come in one of these ten ways: they may suffer severe pain, or poverty, or injury to the body (such as, for example, loss of limbs), or serious illness (such as, for example, leprosy), or insanity, or misfortunes,¹⁵⁰ or wrongful or serious accusations,¹⁵¹ or loss of relatives, or loss of wealth, or the burning down of

¹⁴⁷ Malicious talk. According to the Commentary, it means belittling others.

¹⁴⁸ The meaning is that, while performing detrimental or evil deeds under the influence of hatred, ill will, or aversion, they are not aware that there will inevitably be consequences for their actions.

¹⁴⁹ Those who have caused no harm, either toward themselves or toward others. The reference here is to *Arahats*,

¹⁵⁰ Such as the loss of one's position or one's job or one's reputation.

¹⁵¹ Slander.

their house by fire or lightning, and, after death, they will be reborn in a place of continuous suffering.¹⁵²

141. Not by going about naked,¹⁵³ nor by having matted hair,¹⁵⁴ nor by smearing oneself with mud, nor by fasting, nor by sleeping on the ground, nor by covering oneself with dust, nor by sitting motionless — no amount of penance¹⁵⁵ can purify a person who has not overcome doubt.¹⁵⁶
142. But those whose mind is serene, who are free from moral defilements, who have their senses controlled, who are established in Path Insight,¹⁵⁷ who are perfectly pure,¹⁵⁸ and who have laid aside violence towards all beings¹⁵⁹ — these are true *brāhmaṇas*, true ascetics, true monks,¹⁶⁰ even if they wear fine clothes.
143. It is rare to find in this world those who, out of a sense of shame, refrain from doing evil and who have trained their minds. As a well-trained horse needs no whip, a well-trained mind needs no prodding to be good.¹⁶¹
144. Like a well-trained horse, touched by the whip,¹⁶² be diligent and zealous. Through confidence,¹⁶³ virtue, effort, concentration, and investigation of the Truth,¹⁶⁴ be endowed with knowledge and firm in the practice of morality; with mindfulness, leave this great misery¹⁶⁵ behind.
145. As irrigators channel water where they want, as archers make their arrows straight, as carpenters fashion timber, the wise shape their minds. ■

¹⁵² Even after having come by one of these ten conditions in the present life, suffering does not end but continues ever onward until all of one's evil actions have been expiated.

¹⁵³ Naked asceticism is still practiced in India. External dirtiness is regarded by some as a mark of holiness. The *Buddha* denounced such external forms of asceticism. The members of the celibate Order (the *Saṅgha*) follow a middle path, avoiding the extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence. Simplicity, humility, and poverty should be the marked characteristics of *Bhikkhus* as much as cleanliness.

¹⁵⁴ In India (*Jambudīpa*), unwashed, matted hair was (and still is) regarded as a sign of holiness.

¹⁵⁵ Austerities, self-mortification.

¹⁵⁶ With regard to the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha*.

¹⁵⁷ The four paths are: (1) the path of Stream-Entry (*Sotāpatti*); (2) the path of Once-Return (*Sakadāgāmi*); (3) the path of Non-Return (*Anāgāmi*); and (4) the path of Arahantship (*Arahatta*).

¹⁵⁸ In their conduct.

¹⁵⁹ Absolutely harmless to all in thought, word, and deed.

¹⁶⁰ Because they have overcome all impurities, all passions.

¹⁶¹ A self-respecting *Bhikkhu* or lay person, when obsessed with evil thoughts, tries to eradicate them then and there. This verse indicates that such persons are rare.

¹⁶² A well-trained horse, having been touched by the whip due to being negligent, will make an earnest attempt thereafter not to be so neglectful.

¹⁶³ *Saddhā* "faith, confidence."

¹⁶⁴ The *Dhamma*.

¹⁶⁵ Cyclic existence (*samsāra*).

11 • Old Age (*Jarāvagga*)

146. Why is there laughter, why merriment, when this world is on fire?¹⁶⁶ When you are living in darkness,¹⁶⁷ why do you not look for light?¹⁶⁸
147. Behold this lovely body,¹⁶⁹ this mass of sores, supported by bones, subject to illness, highly thought of.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, this body is neither permanent nor enduring.
148. Quite worn out is this body,¹⁷¹ a nest for disease, subject to decay. This putrid body will eventually disintegrate; life, indeed, ends with death.¹⁷²
149. What pleasure can there be for those who see that their white bones will be cast away, like gourds in the autumn?
150. Around the bones is built a house, plastered with flesh and blood, in which dwell pride¹⁷³ and scorn,¹⁷⁴ old age and death.
151. Even the ornamented chariot of a king loses its glitter in the course of time; so, too, the body loses its health and strength. But the *Dhamma* of the righteous does not grow old with the passage of time. Thus do the righteous¹⁷⁵ reveal it to those ready to listen.

¹⁶⁶ Burning with the fires of passion, etc.

¹⁶⁷ Here, “darkness” means ignorance of the Four Noble Truths.

¹⁶⁸ Visākhā, the chief lay benefactress of the *Buddha*, once visited Him accompanied by some women, who, without her knowledge, brought liquor with them and drank it all. Visākhā asked the *Buddha* to teach them the *Dhamma*. By that time, however, the women had become drunk. Shamelessly, they began boisterously singing, dancing, clapping, and jumping about in the monastery. By using His psychic powers, the *Buddha* created a darkness which brought them to their senses. He then uttered this verse.

This world is perpetually consumed with the flames of the passions. It is completely shrouded in the veil of ignorance. Being placed in such a world, the wise should try to seek the light of wisdom (*paññā*).

¹⁶⁹ Made lovely, beautiful, attractive on account of clothing, jewelry, perfume, etc.

¹⁷⁰ As good and pleasant.

¹⁷¹ Worn out due to old age.

¹⁷² It is important to remember that this body will soon disintegrate. Why so? Because the life of all beings has death as its end.

¹⁷³ Smugness, conceit, self-estimation, self-importance, arrogance, haughtiness, etc. This means regarding one’s own virtues, reputation, accomplishments, intelligence, importance, abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, religion, nationality, and so forth as superior to others.

¹⁷⁴ Disdain, contempt, etc. This means regarding the virtues, reputation, and so forth of others as inferior to one’s own.

¹⁷⁵ Such as the *Buddhas*.

152. A man who does not learn from life grows old like an ox; his body grows, but not his wisdom.
153. I have gone through many rounds of birth and death, seeking, but not finding, the builder of this house.¹⁷⁶ Sorrowful, indeed, is birth and death again and again!
154. But now I have seen you, O house-builder; you shall not build this house (for me) again — its rafters are broken; its ridgepole is shattered. My mind has reached the unconditioned;¹⁷⁷ the end of craving¹⁷⁸ has been attained.¹⁷⁹
155. Those who have not practiced spiritual disciplines,¹⁸⁰ who have not acquired wealth in their youth,¹⁸¹ pine away, like old herons in a lake without fish.
156. Those who have not practiced spiritual disciplines, who have not acquired wealth in their youth, lie like worn-out bows, sighing over the past. ■

¹⁷⁶ The “house” is the body, the “house-builder” is craving. “Seeking, but not finding,” means failing to attain Enlightenment.

¹⁷⁷ *Nibbāna*.

¹⁷⁸ The Fruit of Arahatsip.

¹⁷⁹ Verses 153 and 154 are the expressions (paeans) of the intense and sublime joy that the *Buddha* felt at the moment He attained Enlightenment. As such, they are replete with a wealth of sublime meaning and deep feeling. Here, the *Buddha* admits His past wanderings in cyclic existence, which thus proves His belief in rebirth. He was compelled to wander, and, consequently, to suffer as long as He could not find the builder of this house, the body. In His final birth, He discovered, by His own intuitive wisdom, the elusive builder residing not outside but within the recesses of His own mind. It was craving (*taṇhā*), or attachment, a self-creation, a mental element latent in all. The discovery of the builder is the eradication of craving by attaining Arahatsip. The rafters of this self-created house are the defilements (*kilesas*). The ridge-pole that supports the rafters is ignorance (*avijjā*). The destruction of the ridge-pole of ignorance by wisdom (*paññā*) results in the complete demolition of the house. With the demolition of the house, the mind attains the unconditioned, which is *nibbāna*.

¹⁸⁰ Those who have not lived the Holy Life.

¹⁸¹ Not having acquired wealth at the time when it was possible to obtain it or to maintain the wealth that had been acquired.

12 • The Self¹⁸² (Attavagga)

157. If you hold yourself dear,¹⁸³ guard yourself diligently. Keep vigil (against evil) during one of the three watches of the night.¹⁸⁴
158. One should first learn for oneself what is right; then only should one teach others. By wisely following this course of action, one will be beyond reproach.¹⁸⁵
159. One should also do what one instructs others to do.¹⁸⁶ Before trying to train others, one should first train oneself. It is difficult to learn to train oneself.
160. You alone are your own refuge; who else could be? With yourself thoroughly controlled, you gain a refuge¹⁸⁷ very difficult to find.
161. The evil done by oneself, arising in oneself, and caused by oneself crushes those who lack wisdom, as a diamond crushes the rock from which it was formed.¹⁸⁸
162. As a vine overpowers a tree, suffering overpowers those who do evil,¹⁸⁹ trapping them in a situation that only their enemies would wish them to be in.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² According to Buddhism, there is no permanent soul or unchanging entity (*atta*), either created by a god or emanating from a *paramātmān* “universal soul.” Here, the term *atta* “self” is applied by the *Buddha* to the whole body, or one’s personality or mind or life flux.

¹⁸³ That is, if one values oneself, if one values one’s own spiritual development.

¹⁸⁴ In ancient India, the night was divided into three watches. According to the Commentary, the “watches” in this context refer to the three stages of one’s life: (1) childhood; (2) youth; and (3) old age.

¹⁸⁵ Those who attempt to teach others without first having purified themselves, receive criticism (contempt, insults, blame, and the like) from others. On the other hand, those who attempt to teach others only after having purified themselves, receive praise from others and are, therefore, not subject to pain.

¹⁸⁶ One should practice what one preaches.

¹⁸⁷ The Fruit of Arahantship. It is with reference to Arahantship that it is said here that one gains a refuge that is difficult to find.

¹⁸⁸ The unwholesome deeds done by oneself, which originated in oneself, grinds into those who are lacking in wisdom; it grinds them in the four states of woe and destroys them, just as a diamond grinds into the rock-gem, which, too, is made of the very same material — it grinds into the very place out of which it originated, perforates it thoroughly, cuts it to bits, and makes it unsuitable for use.

¹⁸⁹ This refers to a lay person who, from birth, does (and keeps doing) one or more of the ten wrong actions or a monk who falls into grave lapses in discipline from the day of his higher ordination.

¹⁹⁰ The Pāli reads: *Yassa accantadussīyam māluvā sālāṃ iv’otataṃ karoti so tath’attānaṃ yathā naṃ icchatī diso*. A word-for-word translation would be: “Whose extreme unvirtue strangles him, as a *māluvā* creeper strangles a *sālā* tree, he does to himself, just as an enemy wishes him to do.”

163. It is easy to do things that are bad and unbeneficial to oneself, but it is extremely difficult, indeed, to do things that are beneficial and good.
164. Foolish people who scoff at the teachings of the wise, the noble, and the good, and who follow false doctrines¹⁹¹ instead, bring about their own destruction, like the bamboo tree,¹⁹² which dies after bearing fruit.
165. By oneself is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil not done; by oneself is one purified. Everyone has the choice to be pure or impure. No one can purify another.¹⁹³
166. Do not neglect your own duty¹⁹⁴ for another, however great. Know your own duty and perform it. ■

¹⁹¹ *Diṭṭhi* (or *micchā-diṭṭhi*) “wrong views.” This would include any religious, philosophical, or political system that supports or promotes violence, ill will, or bigotry, in any form whatsoever, as well as any other corrupt, false, or evil doctrine (such as eternalism, nihilism, annihilationism, hedonism, etc.). In the first discourse of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, sixty-two types of wrong view concerning the world and the self taught by other teachers of the time are listed and described.

¹⁹² *Kaṭṭhaka* tree.

¹⁹³ One can neither purify nor defile another.

¹⁹⁴ One’s own personal spiritual growth — the reference here is to the practice of insight meditation. One must not misunderstand this verse to mean that one should not selflessly work for the welfare of others. Selfless service is highly recommended by the *Buddha*.

13 • The World (*Lokavagga*)

167. Do not pursue sense pleasures; do not be heedless; do not believe false doctrines; do not prolong the world.¹⁹⁵
168. Do not be heedless in standing (at the door for alms); scrupulously observe this practice. One who observes proper practice¹⁹⁶ lives happily both in this world and the next.
169. Observe proper practice; do not observe improper practice.¹⁹⁷ One who observes proper practice lives happily both in this world and the next.¹⁹⁸
170. Look on the world of aggregates as a bubble; look on it as a mirage.¹⁹⁹ Then, the King of Death will not find you.²⁰⁰
171. Come look at this world! Is it not like a painted royal chariot? The immature are immersed in this world of aggregates, but the wise are not attached to it.
172. When those who were formerly heedless become mindful, they give light to the world, like the full moon breaking free from behind the clouds.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ *Loka* “world” refers to the five aggregates of existence (*khandhas*), the continuity of which in the round of existences (*samsāra*) is prolonged by the pursuit of sense pleasures, by heedlessness, and by believing false doctrines.

¹⁹⁶ The Commentary states that proper practice (*dhammāṃ sucaritaṃ*) means stopping for alms at one house after another in the course of the alms-round except where it is not proper to go (such as the house of a prostitute).

¹⁹⁷ Improper practice (*na naṃ duccaritaṃ*) means not observing the rules listed in the preceding footnote.

¹⁹⁸ Shortly after His Enlightenment, the *Buddha* returned home to Kapilavatthu. On the day after His arrival, He went in quest of alms in the city. King Suddhodana, his father, hearing that his son was seeking alms in the city, anxiously ran up to Him and said that he was disgracing him by begging alms in the streets where He formerly used to travel in golden palanquins. Thereupon, the *Buddha* remarked that it was the custom of all His predecessors to go seeking alms door to door, and He uttered these verses (168 and 169).

¹⁹⁹ This psychophysical organism we call our “self” is to be regarded as a bubble, in the sense that it comes into being and breaks up (that is, it is impermanent), or as though it were a mirage or an illusion, that is, as empty and unreal. Those who see thus have put an end to the ills of life.

²⁰⁰ The King of Death does not see those who perceive the world of aggregates (*khandhas*), and the like, as though it were a bubble or as though it were a mirage or an illusion.

²⁰¹ Those, spending their time in the comfort of the Path and Fruit, light up this world of aggregates, and so forth, with understanding obtained by the Paths, just as the full moon, breaking free from behind the clouds, lights up the world.

173. When their good deeds²⁰² overwhelm the bad ones that they have done, they give light to the world, like the moon breaking free from behind the clouds.
174. The people of this world are blind; in this world, only a few can see clearly (with Insight). Just as only a few birds are able to free themselves from a net, only a few find their way to the world of the gods²⁰³ (and *nibbāna*).
175. Swans fly on the path of the sun; those with psychic powers fly through space;²⁰⁴ the wise are led away from this world,²⁰⁵ after conquering *Māra* and his train.²⁰⁶
176. Those who transgress the central law of life,²⁰⁷ who speak falsely or scoff at the life to come, are capable of any evil.²⁰⁸
177. Misers²⁰⁹ do not go to the celestial realms. Fools²¹⁰ do not praise generosity. The wise rejoice in generosity and so gain happiness in the life to come.
178. Better than ruling this world, better than going to the realm of the gods,²¹¹ better than being lord of all the worlds²¹² is one step taken on the path to *nibbāna*.²¹³ ■

²⁰² Here, “good deeds” (*kusalena*) refers to the Path of Arahantship, the fourth and final Path Knowledge.

²⁰³ *Sagga* “blissful states” — not places of eternal happiness.

²⁰⁴ Through mental development, it is possible to fly through the air, walk on water, dive into the earth, etc. Such powers are psychic and supernormal, but they are not miraculous.

²⁰⁵ That is, they realize *nibbāna*.

²⁰⁶ The “train” or “host” of *Māra*, the Evil One, is described as ten kinds of passions: (1) sensory pleasures; (2) aversion for the Holy Life; (3) hunger and thirst; (4) craving; (5) sloth and torpor; (6) fear; (7) doubt; (8) distraction and obstinacy; (9) gain, praise, honor, and fame; and (10) extolling of oneself and the contempt of others.

²⁰⁷ Truthfulness.

²⁰⁸ An untruthful person, with no self-respect, who has no belief in an after-life and who has no fear for the attendant consequences of evil behavior, is liable to commit any evil. Such a person does not see earthly bliss or heavenly bliss or *nibbānic* bliss.

²⁰⁹ Those hardened by stinginess.

²¹⁰ Those who know neither this world nor the world beyond.

²¹¹ Internal purification is far superior to fleeting worldly possessions or transitory heavenly bliss.

²¹² Better than the regal status of a “universal monarch.”

²¹³ *Sotāpatti*, attainment of the first stage that leads to *nibbāna*. Stream-Winners are not reborn in woeful states, but those who strive after wealth and power in this world are not exempt from them.

14 • The Awakened One (*Buddhavagga*)

179. All moral defilements have been completely conquered in the Awakened One; no further moral defilements can arise in Him in this world.²¹⁴ By what track can you lead the *Buddha*, the Awakened One, whose wisdom is infinite, into your trap?²¹⁵
180. The *Buddha*, the Awakened One, whose wisdom is infinite, who is free from the net of desires and the pollution of moral defilements and from all conditioning, by what track can you lead Him into your trap?
181. The wise who are established in meditation²¹⁶ take delight in the peace of liberation from sensory pleasures and moral defilements.²¹⁷ Such wise and mindful ones, who truly understand the Four Noble Truths, are cherished even by the gods.
182. It is hard to obtain human birth,²¹⁸ harder is the life of mortals,²¹⁹ harder still to get the opportunity to hear the true *Dhamma*. Rare is the appearance of a *Buddha*.
183. Avoid all evil, cultivate the good, purify your mind: this sums up the teaching of the *Buddhas*.
184. Cultivate patience and forbearance, and attain *nibbāna*, the highest goal of life, according to the Awakened Ones. A spiritual aspirant does not harm others; one who harms others is not a true spiritual aspirant.²²⁰
185. One should neither find fault with others²²¹ nor injure them.²²² Rather, one should live in accordance with the Fundamental Moral Code.²²³ One should be moderate

²¹⁴ Of sensory attachments, and so forth, there is not so much as a single defilement remaining of the mass of defilements He has conquered; the conquest is complete — the eradicated defilements can never arise in Him again.

²¹⁵ By what track, by what path, by what way, by what method can you lead the *Buddha* into your trap (into temptation)? This means that the *Buddha* cannot be lured by any temptation whatsoever.

²¹⁶ Those who are engaged in and are devoted to the two kinds of meditative absorption (*jhāna*), by turning to, attaining, staying in, emerging from, and retrospective analysis of them. The two kinds of meditative absorption are: (1) meditative absorption that is concerned with realizing the characteristics of phenomena (insight meditation) and (2) meditative absorption that is concerned with concentrating on objects.

²¹⁷ *Nibbāna*.

²¹⁸ Rebirth as a human being is hard to come by due to the fact that it can only be obtained with great effort through plentiful moral wholesomeness.

²¹⁹ The life of mortals is hard, because it lasts only a short time. Moreover, one must be engaged in constant activity in order to sustain that life.

²²⁰ *Samaṇa* — one who subdues one's passions; an ascetic.

in eating and sleeping, should dwell in a secluded place, and should devote oneself to higher concentration.²²⁴ This sums up the teaching of the *Buddhas*.

- 186—187. Even a shower of gold cannot quench sense desire;²²⁵ sense desire gives little pleasure and is fraught with evil consequences. Knowing this, the true disciples of the Fully Enlightened One find no delight even in celestial pleasures, but, instead, rejoice in the cessation of craving.
188. Driven by fear, people run for safety to mountains and forests, to sacred spots and shrines.
189. But none of these is a safe refuge, none is the highest refuge, because they cannot free one from suffering.
- 190—191. Take refuge²²⁶ in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha*, and, with full insight, you will grasp the Four Noble Truths: suffering; the cause of suffering; the end of suffering; and the Noble Eightfold Path that takes you beyond suffering.
192. This, indeed, is a safe refuge, the highest refuge. Having come to this refuge, one is liberated from all suffering.²²⁷
193. One like the *Buddha* is hard to find; such a one is not born everywhere. Wherever those established in wisdom are born, the community flourishes.
194. Blessed is the birth of the *Buddha*, blessed is the teaching of the *Dhamma*, blessed is the *Saṅgha*,²²⁸ where all live in harmony.

²²¹ One should neither find fault with others oneself nor cause others to find fault.

²²² One should neither inflict injury oneself nor cause others to inflict injury.

²²³ *Pātimokkha* — the 227 disciplinary rules that every *Bhikkhu* is expected to observe.

²²⁴ *Adhicitta* — the eight absorptions (*aṭṭhasamāpatti*): the four fine material absorptions (*rūpajjhāna*) and the four immaterial absorptions (*arūpajjhāna*). The absorptions are higher stages of mental concentration, which enable one to gain supernormal power.

²²⁵ *Kāma* (also *kāmacchanda*) “sense desire.”

²²⁶ One’s best refuge is oneself. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha* as the Teacher, the Teaching, and the Taught in order to gain liberation (*vimokkha*). The *Buddha* is the supreme Teacher, who shows the way to liberation. The *Dhamma* is the Unique Way. The *Saṅgha* represents the Taught who have followed the Way and have become living examples. One formally becomes a Buddhist by seeking refuge in this Triple Gem (*Tisarāṇa*, “three-fold refuge”).

²²⁷ All of the suffering of cyclic existence (*samsāra*).

²²⁸ The *Saṅgha* is the world’s oldest historic celibate Order, founded by the *Buddha* some 2600 years ago. It is “democratic in constitution and communistic in distribution.” Strictly speaking, the Pāli word *Saṅgha* refers only to those noble disciples (*ariya*) who have realized the Four Paths and Four Fruits. The ordinary *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunīs* are merely their representatives. The Pāli word *parisā* is used to refer to the larger Buddhist community, including ordinary *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunīs* as well as lay followers.

195—196. When one pays homage to those who are worthy of homage — to the *Buddha* and His disciples, who have overcome obstacles²²⁹ (to the development of insight) and have rid themselves of sorrow and lamentation —, the merit gained by such a person cannot be measured by anyone as “this much” or “that much.” ■

²²⁹ Such as craving, pride, and wrong view.

15 • Happiness (*Sukhavagga*)

197. Ah, happily do we live, indeed, not hating anyone among those who hate. Among those who hate, we live without hating anyone.
198. Ah, happily do we live, indeed, never falling sick among those who are sick. We live without disease²³⁰ even among those who are ill.²³¹
199. Ah, happily do we live, indeed, never yearning for sense pleasures among those who yearn for them. We live without yearning even among those who yearn.
200. Ah, happily do we live, indeed, free from impurities.²³² We live in happiness, like the gods of the Radiant Realm.
201. Conquest breeds hatred, for the conquered live in sorrow. Those who are peaceful live happily, having renounced both conquest and defeat.
202. There is no fire like lust, no vice²³³ like hatred, no sorrow like the burden of the aggregates, no happiness higher than the peace of *nibbāna*.
203. No disease is worse than hunger,²³⁴ no suffering is worse than attachment to compound things.²³⁵ Those who are wise, knowing these things as they really are, realize *nibbāna*, the highest happiness.
204. Health is the greatest gift, contentment is the greatest wealth,²³⁶ the trustworthy are the best kinsmen,²³⁷ *nibbāna* is the greatest happiness.

²³⁰ Free from moral defilements.

²³¹ Those who are afflicted with moral defilements.

²³² *Kiñcana*, literally, “something evil that sticks to one’s personality,” is a name for the three unwholesome roots (*mūla*): (1) greed (*lobha*); (2) hatred (*dosa*); and (3) delusion (*moha*).

²³³ *Kali* “an unlucky throw at dice; bad luck, misery; bad quality.” Here, the reference is to “bad quality,” that is, “an evil or wicked habit or characteristic; a vice” — it is sometimes translated as “demerit” or “sin” (in the moral sense).

²³⁴ Whereas other diseases are eliminated when medically treated, hunger (*jighacchā*) has to be “treated” constantly; hence, it is said to be more severe than all other diseases.

²³⁵ Here, *samkhārā* “compound things” is used in the sense of the five aggregates: (1) corporeality (*rūpa*); (2) feelings (*vedanā*); (3) perception (*saññā*); (4) (predisposing) mental formations (*samkhārā*); and (5) consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

²³⁶ To be content with what one has is a treasure greater than other riches.

²³⁷ Whether related or not.

205. Having tasted solitude and the peace of *nibbāna*, those who drink in the joy of the essence of the *Dhamma* become free from fear and evil.
206. It is good to see the Noble Ones — it is always a pleasure to be in their company. It is also always a pleasure not to be in the company of the immature.
207. Those who associate with the immature grieve for a long time.²³⁸ Keeping company with the immature is always painful — it is like going on a long journey with an enemy. The company of the wise is joyful, like being reunited with one's relatives.
208. Therefore, one should associate with the wise, who are virtuous,²³⁹ dutiful,²⁴⁰ noble,²⁴¹ learned,²⁴² and steadfast.²⁴³ Keep company with them, as the moon moves among the stars. ■

²³⁸ Those who associate with the immature become like-minded and engage in unwholesome deeds which inevitably lead to states of woe. Hence, it is said that they “grieve for a long time.”

²³⁹ Of high moral character; ethical.

²⁴⁰ Regular in their practices.

²⁴¹ Those who are noble (*ariya*) are far removed from defilements.

²⁴² Endowed with textual learning and spiritual attainments.

²⁴³ Resolute in their determination to attain the highest.

16 • Pleasures (*Piyavagga*)

209. Do not run after sense pleasures and neglect the practice of meditation.²⁴⁴ If you forsake the practice of morality, concentration, and insight and get caught up in the pleasures of the world,²⁴⁵ you will come to envy those who put meditation first.²⁴⁶
210. Seeing those whom you hold dear brings pleasure, while not seeing them brings pain. Seeing those whom you do not hold dear brings pain, while not seeing them brings pleasure. Therefore, associate with neither, and go beyond both pleasure and pain.²⁴⁷
211. Therefore, do not get selfishly attached to anyone or anything, for separation from whomever or whatever you hold dear will bring you pain. There are no bonds for those who hold no person or thing dear or not dear.²⁴⁸
212. Endearment²⁴⁹ brings grief; endearment brings fear. For those who are free from endearment, there is neither grief nor fear.
213. Affection²⁵⁰ brings grief; affection brings fear. For those who are free from affection, there is neither grief nor fear.
214. Selfish attachment²⁵¹ brings grief; selfish attachment brings fear. For those who are free from selfish attachment, there is neither grief nor fear.
215. Lust²⁵² brings grief; lust brings fear. For those who are free from lust, there is neither grief nor fear.

²⁴⁴ That is, the practice of careful attention (*yoniso manasikāra*).

²⁴⁵ That is, by frequenting places not befitting *Bhikkhus*.

²⁴⁶ Separated from the monastic Order (*Saṅgha*) on account of such conduct and having returned to lay life, one comes to envy those who obtain the respect of both gods and humans by developing morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

²⁴⁷ Applicable to both animate and inanimate objects (that is, to both persons and things).

²⁴⁸ They to whom no person or thing is dear, the physical bond of attachment is discarded; they to whom no person or thing is not dear, the physical bond of aversion is discarded. These being discarded, other bonds are also as good as discarded. Hence, no person or thing should be held dear or not dear to oneself.

²⁴⁹ Attachment to either persons or things held dear.

²⁵⁰ The meaning is: on account of affection engendered in regard to sons, daughters, and so forth.

²⁵¹ Attachment to sense pleasures.

²⁵² Selfish desire (*kāma*) for objective sensuality (*vatthu*) and for subjective sensuality. Suffering arises on account of this twofold desire. “Objective sensuality” refers to the physical base, that is, the sensory objects, while “subjective sensuality” refers to sensuality considered as defilement (*kilesa*). The texts often

216. Craving²⁵³ brings grief; craving brings fear. For those who are free from craving, there is neither grief nor fear.
217. Those who are endowed with virtue and insight,²⁵⁴ who are established in the *Dhamma*,²⁵⁵ who have realized the Truths,²⁵⁶ and who fulfill their own duties,²⁵⁷ win the respect of all the world.²⁵⁸
218. Those who have developed a desire to know the unconditioned,²⁵⁹ whose minds are thrilled with a desire to reach that state,²⁶⁰ and who are no longer attached to the sensory world,²⁶¹ are known as those who are “headed upstream.”²⁶²
- 219—220. As your family, friends, and well-wishers receive you with joy when you return home from a long journey, so will your good deeds receive you when you go from this life to the next, where they will be waiting for you with joy, like your kinsmen. ■

stress the fact that what fetters mankind to the world of the senses are not the sense-organs nor the sense-objects but lustful desire (*chandarāga*).

²⁵³ Here, “craving” (*taṇhā*) refers to selfish desire that arises at the six doors (*dvāra*); that is, craving for visible objects, for sounds, for smells, for tastes, for bodily impressions, and for mental impressions; in other words, it is craving for sensory stimulation. Craving is the source of suffering (*dukkha*) and of the ever-continuing cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*).

²⁵⁴ Those endowed with the four virtues leading to purity and also with right insight, which is combined with Path and Fruit.

²⁵⁵ That is, the nine supramundane states, namely, the Four Paths, the Four Fruits of holiness, and *nibbāna*.

²⁵⁶ The Four Noble Truths are implied here.

²⁵⁷ The three modes of training: (1) morality (*sīla*); (2) concentration (*samādhi*); and (3) wisdom (*paññā*).

²⁵⁸ The world holds such as these dear and wants to see them, to honor them, and to make offerings to them.

²⁵⁹ *Nibbāna*.

²⁶⁰ By being filled with thoughts pertaining to the first three Paths and Fruits.

²⁶¹ *Kāmaloka* “sensory world; the world of sensory pleasures.”

²⁶² *Uddhamsoto* “going upstream,” that is, those who are bound for the Pure Abodes (*Suddhāvāsa Brahma-loka*). The reference is to Non-Returners (*Anāgāmis*), who are reborn in the *Avihā Suddhāvāsa* and from there pass upwards until they reach the *Akaniṭṭha Suddhāvāsa*, the highest of the five Pure Abodes.

17 • Anger (*Kodhavagga*)

221. Give up anger, give up pride,²⁶³ and free yourself from worldly bondage.²⁶⁴ No sorrow can befall those who do not cling to mind and body,²⁶⁵ who are free from moral defilements, and who never try to possess people and things as their own.
222. One who holds back rising anger like a skillful charioteer checks a speeding chariot — that one I call a true charioteer. Other charioteers merely hold the reins.
223. Conquer those who are angry through loving-kindness, those who are evil through goodness, those who are greedy through generosity, and those who tell lies through truthfulness.²⁶⁶
224. One should speak only the truth, should not yield to anger, and should give freely when asked,²⁶⁷ even if it is only a little. By means of these three things, one may go to the world of the gods.
225. Injuring no one, always self-controlled in their actions, those who are wise²⁶⁸ go to the deathless state²⁶⁹ beyond all sorrow.

²⁶³ *Māna* “pride, conceit, arrogance.”

²⁶⁴ This refers to ten fetters (*samiyojana*) which bind beings to cyclic existence: (1) personality belief (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) — the delusion of “selfhood”; (2) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*); (3) attachment to rites and rituals (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*); (4) desire for gratification of the senses (*kāmarāga*); (5) ill will (*paṭigha*); (6) craving for fine-material existence (*rūparāga*); (7) craving for immaterial existence (*arūparāga*); (8) conceit (*māna*); (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*); and (10) ignorance (*avijjā*). The first five are regarded as “lower fetters,” the rest as “higher fetters.”

²⁶⁵ *Nāma-rūpa* “name and form; mind and body; mentality and corporeality.” *Nāma-rūpa* is the fourth link in Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), where it is conditioned by consciousness (*viññāna*) and, for its part, is the condition of the six-fold sense base (*saḷāyatana*). Dependent Origination is the doctrine of the conditionality of all physical and mental phenomena. Together with the doctrine of the impersonality (*anattā*) of all physical and mental phenomena, Dependent Origination forms the indispensable condition for a real understanding and realization of the Teaching of the *Buddha*.

²⁶⁶ Those who are prone to anger are to be won over by oneself being free from anger; those who are evil are to be won over by oneself being good; those who are excessively stingy are to be won over by oneself being generous with one’s own possessions; those who tell lies are to be won over by oneself being truthful. As stated in verse 5 above: “Returning hatred with hatred will never bring hatred to an end in this world; only by replacing hatred with love will hatred come to an end. This is an ancient and eternal law.”

²⁶⁷ To a *Bhikkhu* who stands silently at the door seeking alms.

²⁶⁸ *Arahats*.

²⁶⁹ *Accuta* “changeless; deathless; everlasting; eternal,” that is, *Nibbāna*. It does not mean immortality.

226. For those who are vigilant, who train themselves day and night in the three modes of training,²⁷⁰ and who strive continually for *nibbāna*, the moral defilements come to an end.
227. There is an old saying, Atula — it is not just of today: “People will blame you if you say too much; they will blame you if you say too little; they will blame you if you say just enough.” No one escapes blame in this world.
228. There never was, there never will be, nor is there now anyone who receives all praise or all blame.
- 229—230. Who would criticize those whom the wise praise day after day, knowing them to be truly faultless,²⁷¹ wise themselves, and endowed with knowledge and virtue? They shine like a coin of pure Jambonada gold.²⁷² Even the gods praise them, even Great Brahmā.
231. Guard yourself against bodily misconduct; control your body. Give up evil deeds, and cultivate good deeds.
232. Guard yourself against evil speech; control your tongue. Give up evil speech, and cultivate good speech.
233. Guard yourself against evil thoughts; control your mind. Give up evil thoughts, and cultivate good thoughts.
234. Those who are wise are disciplined in body, as well as in speech and in mind. They are well controlled indeed.²⁷³ ■

²⁷⁰ The three modes of training: (1) morality (*sīla*); (2) concentration (*samādhi*); and (3) wisdom (*paññā*).

²⁷¹ Faultless in conduct; in morality.

²⁷² The Pāli reads: *Nikkham jambonadass’eva* and means “like a *nikkha* of Jambonada gold.” Jambonada gold comes from the Jambū River and is considered to be the finest gold. A *nikkha* can be a weight-unit of gold, an ornament, a ring, or a coin.

²⁷³ Those who are wise are restrained in body, not resorting to violation of life, not causing harm, and so forth; restrained in speech, not resorting to false speech, vulgar speech, sarcasm, gossip, and idle chatter; and restrained in mind, not allowing covetousness, and so forth, to arise. In this world, they, indeed, are well guarded, well controlled; their “doors” (*dvāra*) are well closed. There are six “doors,” namely: (1) the eye door; (2) the ear door; (3) the nose door; (4) the tongue door; (5) the body door; and (6) the mind door. The term “doors” is used metaphorically in the *Abhidhamma* to denote the portals through which the mind interacts with the objective world. For more information, cf. *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha*, Chapter 3, §§12—15.

18 • Impurities (*Malavagga*)

235. You are now like a withered leaf; the messengers of death are near to you. You are about to go on a long journey,²⁷⁴ but you are so unprepared.²⁷⁵
236. Make a lamp for yourself; strive on earnestly; be wise.²⁷⁶ By removing impurities and freeing yourself from moral defilements, you shall live in the world of light.²⁷⁷
237. You are now well advanced in age, and you are in the presence of death. There is no place for you to stop along the way,²⁷⁸ and you are so unprepared.
238. Make a lamp for yourself; strive on earnestly; be wise. By removing impurities and freeing yourself from moral defilements, you will no longer be subject to rebirth and old age.²⁷⁹
239. Little by little, instant by instant, remove your own impurities,²⁸⁰ as a silversmith removes the dross from silver.
240. Just as rust corrodes the iron from which it is formed, evil deeds lead those who do them to a state of woe.
241. Non-recitation weakens the scriptures;²⁸¹ a house falls into ruin when not repaired; the body loses health when it is not exercised; the watchman fails when vigilance is lost.
242. Sexual misconduct is a taint in women; lack of generosity taints those who give. Bad qualities, indeed, are taints both in this world and the next.

²⁷⁴ “About to go on a long journey,” that is, you are standing face to face with death.

²⁷⁵ You have not built up a store of merit for the next world.

²⁷⁶ “Lamp” means a store of wholesome *kamma* to support you; “strive on earnestly” means to start quickly to accumulate wholesome *kamma*; and “be wise” means to perform wholesome deeds whenever you are able to do so, without waiting for the approach of death.

²⁷⁷ *Suddhāvāsa* — the Pure Abode where *Anāgāmis* (Non-Returners) reside. The *Buddha* spoke this and the preceding verse to a dying old man, when his son performed a meritorious act in his name.

²⁷⁸ Those who travel on a journey are able to stop for a rest along the way. Not so, however, for those going to the world beyond — it is not possible for those going to the next world to say to death, “Be patient for a few days while I do this or that.” As soon as one has left this world, one is reborn in the next.

²⁷⁹ This refers to Arahantship.

²⁸⁰ Moral defilements.

²⁸¹ Repetitious recitation of the scriptures is the key to committing them to memory. Non-recitation is the enemy of learning — through non-recitation, one gradually loses the ability to recall them without error.

243. But there is no taint worse than ignorance (of the Truth), the greatest taint. Remove this taint through wisdom, and you will be taintless.
244. Life is easy for one without shame and as bold as a crow, a mischief-maker who slanders others and is pretentious, aggressive, and corrupt.
245. Life is hard for one with a sense of shame, who is humble, gentle, contemplative, and detached, and who tries to live in purity.
246. Those who kill, lie, get drunk, take what is not given, or commit adultery dig their own graves, even in this very life.
247. Those who drink to intoxication are digging up their own roots.
248. Know this, dear fellow! Not restraining yourself brings evil in its wake. Do not let greed and ill will drag you into prolonged suffering.²⁸²
249. Some give out of faith, others out of devotion.²⁸³ Do not envy others for the gifts they receive, or you will have no peace of mind²⁸⁴ by day or night.
250. Those who have destroyed the roots of envy have peace of mind by day and night.
251. There is no fire like passion,²⁸⁵ no grip like hate,²⁸⁶ no net like delusion,²⁸⁷ no river like craving.
252. It is easy to see the faults of others; we broadcast them, like winnowing chaff in the wind. It is hard to see our own faults; we hide them, as a crafty gambler hides a losing draw.
253. When one keeps dwelling on the faults of others and is always disparaging them, one's own moral intoxicants grow worse, making it harder to overcome them.²⁸⁸
254. There is no path in the sky;²⁸⁹ outside the Teachings of the *Buddha*, there is no refuge.²⁹⁰ All beings delight in fetters.²⁹¹ But the *Tathāgatas*²⁹² are free from them.

²⁸² In states of woe.

²⁸³ That is, they give only to those whom they admire among elders, novices, and others.

²⁸⁴ That is, they are unable to achieve *samādhi* — mundane or supramundane concentration.

²⁸⁵ Passion (*rāga*) burns internally without showing any external signs, such as smoke. *Rāga* may be translated as “lust; greed; excitement; passion.” It is synonymous with *lobha* “greed.”

²⁸⁶ Seizure by a predator such as a python, a crocodile, a tiger, and so forth, grips a person only in a single existence, but seizure by ill will (*vyāpāda*) continues on and on, life after life after life.

²⁸⁷ There is no net (or snare) comparable to delusion (*moha*) in that it binds and entangles one all around.

²⁸⁸ To achieve the Fruit of Arahatship.

²⁸⁹ There are no tracks, marks, or signs (such as footsteps) in the sky by which they can be traced. The reference is to *Arahats* and *Buddhas*.

255. There is no path in the sky; outside the Teachings of the *Buddha*, there is no refuge.
All conditioned things are impermanent.²⁹³ But the *Buddhas* are unperturbed.²⁹⁴ ■

²⁹⁰ Outside of the dispensation (*sāsana*) of the *Buddha*, there are no recluses who are established in the Paths and Fruits.

²⁹¹ Such as craving, pride, wrong view, etc.

²⁹² Literally, “one who has thus come” or “one who has thus gone.” It is an epithet of the *Buddha*.

²⁹³ Here, “conditioned things” (*samkhārā*) refers to the five aggregates, not one of which is eternal.

²⁹⁴ By craving, pride, and wrong view, according to which they would see conditioned things as eternal.

19 • Established in *Dhamma* (*Dhammatṭhavagga*)

256. Justice is ill-served when one passes judgment capriciously.²⁹⁵ Those who are wise pass judgment after carefully considering both what is right and what is wrong.²⁹⁶
257. Those who do not pass judgment capriciously,²⁹⁷ but, instead, in accordance with the law, safeguard the law. Thus, they are called “those who abide by the law.”²⁹⁸
258. One is not wise merely because one talks a good deal. Only those who are patient, who are free from hatred and fear, and who do no harm to others, are wise.
259. One is not versed in the *Dhamma* just because one talks about it. One is versed in the *Dhamma* who understands it and lives in harmony with it,²⁹⁹ even if one has heard but a little.
260. Gray hair does not make an elder; one can grow old and still be a fool.
261. True elders³⁰⁰ are those who comprehend the Four Noble Truths and the *Dhamma*, who are harmless and virtuous, and who restrain their senses and rid themselves of moral defilements.
262. Neither pleasant words nor good looks can make a person attractive who is jealous, selfish, or deceitful.
263. Only those who have uprooted such impurities from the mind are fit to be called “attractive.”
264. Shaving one’s head cannot make a recluse of one who is undisciplined³⁰¹ and tells lies. How can one who is driven by covetousness and greed be a true recluse?

²⁹⁵ *Sahasā* “hasty, inconsiderate,” “falsely or unfairly influenced by desire, hatred, fear, or ignorance;” the reference is to those who are biased.

²⁹⁶ What is true and what is not true.

²⁹⁷ That is, those who are impartial, fair-minded, unbiased.

²⁹⁸ *Dhammatṭha* “standing in the law, abiding by the law, just, righteous.”

²⁹⁹ By making strenuous effort to put into practice what little one knows, striving hard for penetrative realization.

³⁰⁰ *Thera*, a term applied to *Bhikkhus* who have been in the Order for at least ten years from the date of their higher ordination.

³⁰¹ One who does not practice higher morality (*sīla*) and means of purification (*dhutaṅga*). The latter are strict observances recommended by the *Buddha* to monks as a way to cultivate contentment, renunciation,

265. One is a true recluse who has totally extinguished all evil, large and small.
266. Seeking alms³⁰² from others does not make one a *Bhikkhu*; nor does following a *Dhamma* that is foul³⁰³ make one a *Bhikkhu*.
267. He is a true *Bhikkhu* who lays aside both good and evil, who leads a life of purity, and who passes through the world with detachment.³⁰⁴
- 268—269. Observing silence cannot make a sage of one who is dim-witted and ignorant. Like those who determine weight by holding a pair of scales, those who are wise determine what is good and what is evil — they accept the good³⁰⁵ and reject the evil. For this reason, they are wise. They who also understand both worlds³⁰⁶ are called “sages.”
270. Those who harm living beings are, for that reason, not Noble Ones; only those who do not harm living beings can rightly be called “Noble Ones.”³⁰⁷
- 271—272. Not by mere moral practice,³⁰⁸ nor by acquiring much learning, nor by developing deep concentration, nor by dwelling in seclusion, nor by thinking to oneself “I enjoy the bliss of renunciation³⁰⁹ not experienced by worldlings,” should the spiritual aspirant be content until full liberation³¹⁰ has been achieved. ■

energy, and the like. One or more of them may be observed for a shorter or longer period of time. Thirteen such observances are enumerated in the *Visuddhimaga*, II.

³⁰² Strictly speaking, *Bhikkhus* do not beg. They stand silently at the door, accepting whatever is offered.

³⁰³ A corrupt or heretical *Dhamma*. The Pāli term is *vissam*. *Vissam* has two meanings: “all, whole” and “foul smelling.” The Commentary gives only the latter meaning in this case.

³⁰⁴ One who lives in the world of the five aggregates of clinging (*upādānakkhandha*) without being attached to them.

³⁰⁵ *Varaṃ* “the most excellent, the best, the good, the noble.” In this context, it refers to morality (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

³⁰⁶ *Ubho loke*, literally, “both worlds” — the meaning here is internal and external aggregates, that is, one’s own aggregates as well as those of others.

³⁰⁷ This verse was uttered by the *Buddha* to a fisherman named Ariya.

³⁰⁸ The four kinds of higher morality (*sīla*) observed by *Bhikkhus* and the thirteen kinds of ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*).

³⁰⁹ *Nekkhammasukham*: In this context, the reference is to *Anāgāmi* Fruition, the fruition that follows the attainment of *Anāgāmi Magga*.

³¹⁰ Arahatsip.

20 • The Path (*Maggavagga*)

273. Of paths, the Eightfold³¹¹ is the best; of truths, the Noble Four are best; of mental states, detachment³¹² is the best; of human beings, the All-Seeing One³¹³ is the best.
274. This is the only path; there is no other that leads to the purification of vision.³¹⁴ Follow this path — it will bewilder *Māra*.³¹⁵
275. This path will lead to the end of suffering. This is the path I made known after the arrows³¹⁶ of sorrow fell away.
276. All the effort must be made by you; the *Tathāgatas* can only show the way. Those who enter this path and practice meditation are freed from the bond of *Māra*.³¹⁷
277. All compound things are impermanent; those who realize this through insight-wisdom³¹⁸ are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.³¹⁹
278. All compound things have suffering as their nature; those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.
279. All states are without self;³²⁰ those who realize this through insight-wisdom are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to purity.

³¹¹ The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*) consists of: (1) right understanding (*sammā dīṭṭhi*); (2) right thoughts (*sammā saṁkappa*); (3) right speech (*sammā vācā*); (4) right action (*sammā kamanta*); (5) right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*); (6) right effort (*sammā vāyāma*); (7) right mindfulness (*sammā sati*); and (8) right concentration of mind (*sammā samādhi*). This is the path taught by the *Buddha* for liberation from the round of existences (*saṁsāra*).

³¹² *Virāga* “detachment,” that is, *nibbāna*.

³¹³ *Cakkhumā* “All-Seeing One” (from *cakkhu* “eye”), an epithet of the *Buddha*.

³¹⁴ This path alone, which the *Buddha* called “the best,” is there for purifying “the vision of Path and Fruit.”

³¹⁵ This path, indeed, will confuse *Māra*, that is, it will trick him away.

³¹⁶ This path is the drawing out or removal of all “arrows,” such as desire for the gratification of the senses (sense desire), etc. This is the path made known by the *Buddha*, having understood it Himself by way of self-realization.

³¹⁷ Those who enter the path taught by the *Tathāgatas* and who practice the two kinds of meditation (calm abiding [*samatha*] and insight meditation [*vipassanā*]), are released from the bond of *Māra* known as “the whirl of the three planes of existence.”

³¹⁸ *Paññā* is translated here as “insight-wisdom” (*vipassanā paññā*).

³¹⁹ That is, to the purification of the mind.

³²⁰ Impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and soullessness (*anattā*) are the three characteristics of all things conditioned by causes (*saṁkhārā*). It is by contemplating these three characteristics that one realizes *nibbāna*. A meditator may concentrate on any characteristic that appeals to him or her most.

280. Those who are indolent, who do not put forth the effort when they are young and strong, and who have a weak will and a divided mind, will never attain Path Insight, which can only be perceived by wisdom.
281. Be guarded in speech, well-controlled in mind, and do no evil through your body.³²¹ Purify these three, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.³²²
282. Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Knowing well this twofold path of gain and loss of wisdom, choose the path that leads to wisdom.
283. Cut down the forest of mental and moral defilements — not real trees.³²³ The forest of mental and moral defilements breeds danger.³²⁴ Therefore, cut down this forest, including the undergrowth,³²⁵ O *Bhikkhus*, and be free of craving.
284. So long as the desire of man towards women³²⁶ is not cut down and the slightest trace of it remains, that is how long one's mind is in bondage, as the calf is bound to its mother.
285. Cut off³²⁷ selfish desire, as one would pluck an autumn lotus with the hand. Follow the path to *nibbāna* expounded by one³²⁸ who knows the way.
286. "I will make this my winter home, have another house for the monsoon season, and dwell in a third during the summer." Lost in such fantasies, the immature forget the danger that awaits them.³²⁹

Anattā, that is, soullessness, selflessness, or essencelessness, is the crux of Buddhism. The term *saṃkhāra* "compound," which is applied to any conditioned thing, is used in the two previous verses (nos. 277 and 278), while, in the third verse (no. 279), the term *dhmma* is used in order to show that everything, including the unconditioned *nibbāna*, is without self existence. *Nibbāna* is not included in *saṃkhāra*. It is neither transitory nor sorrowful. *Dhmma* embraces both the conditioned and the unconditioned. *Nibbāna* is, and it is essenceless.

³²¹ Be "watchful in speech" by avoiding the four kinds of verbal misconduct; "well-controlled in mind" by not allowing thoughts of covetousness, etc., to arise; "do no evil through your body" by not taking life, etc.

³²² Thus purifying the three modes of action, one should choose the eightfold path taught by the *Buddhas*.

³²³ When the *Buddha* said, "cut down the forest," some newly-ordained *Bhikkhus* thought He meant cutting down real trees. The *Buddha* corrected their misunderstanding by uttering these words.

³²⁴ Of rebirth.

³²⁵ Here, the large trees are called *vana* "forest," and the small ones are called *vanatha* "undergrowth." In the same way, the bigger defilements (that is, those that drag one into future existences) are called *vana*, while the small ones (that is, those that produce ill effects in this life) are called *vanatha*.

³²⁶ Any kind of sexual desire regardless of what the object is of one's desire.

³²⁷ Cut off selfish desire by means of the Path of Arahantship.

³²⁸ The *Buddha*.

³²⁹ The approach of death.

287. Death carries away a man who is absorbed in his family and his possessions³³⁰ and whose mind longs for and is attached to sense pleasures, as the monsoon flood sweeps away a sleeping village.

288—289. Neither children nor parents nor relatives can rescue one whom death has seized. Indeed, neither kith nor kin can give protection. Remembering this, those who are wise, who are restrained by morality, should quickly clear the obstacles to the path³³¹ that leads to *nibbāna*. ■

³³⁰ A man who, having obtained children and domestic animals (herds of cattle), is absorbed in these things, thinking: “My sons are attractive, strong, learned, and competent in all functions. My oxen are beautiful, healthy, and capable of driving heavy loads. My cows yield much milk.”

³³¹ The Noble Eightfold Path.

21 • Varied Verses (*Pakiṇṇavagga*)

290. If, by giving up a lesser happiness, one may behold a greater one,³³² let those who are wise give up the lesser to gain the greater.
291. Those who seek their own happiness by inflicting pain on others, being themselves entangled by the bonds of hatred, cannot be free from hatred.³³³
292. Do not leave undone what ought to be done,³³⁴ and do not do what ought not to be done.³³⁵ In such conceited and heedless ones, the burden of suffering will only grow heavier.
293. In those mindful and contemplative ones who practice “mindfulness of the body” meditation, who always do what ought to be done³³⁶ and never do what ought not to be done,³³⁷ suffering will come to an end.
294. Having slain mother craving, father self-conceit, and the two warrior kings,³³⁸ and having destroyed the kingdom,³³⁹ along with its revenue collector,³⁴⁰ ungrieving³⁴¹ fares the *brāhmaṇa*.³⁴²
295. Having slain mother craving, father self-conceit, and the two warrior kings, and having destroyed the five hindrances, the fifth of which is perilous, like a journey along a tiger-infested path,³⁴³ ungrieving fares the *brāhmaṇa*.

³³² *Vipulaṃ sukhāṃ*: according to the Commentary, “the greater one” refers to the bliss of *nibbāna*.

³³³ Such as these, indeed, on account of that hatred, constantly come to grief.

³³⁴ For a *Bhikkhu*, “what ought to be done” includes the observance of moral precepts, living in a forest, maintenance of ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*), steadfastness in meditation (*bhāvanā*), etc. In other words, it includes the kinds of tasks that are the proper function of a *Bhikkhu* from the time of “going forth.”

³³⁵ For a *Bhikkhu*, “what ought not to be done” includes decorating umbrellas, shoes and sandals, bowls and beakers, water-pots, waistbands, and shoulder straps, etc. These are not the proper tasks of a *Bhikkhu*.

³³⁶ Those who are constant practitioners, who scrupulously observe the moral precepts, who unceasingly act with diligence to the task to be done, etc.

³³⁷ They never do what is improper.

³³⁸ The two *Khattiya* kings. This refers to the two views of eternalism and annihilationism.

³³⁹ “The kingdom” refers the sense-doors and sense-objects.

³⁴⁰ “The revenue collector” refers to attachment.

³⁴¹ The meaning here is that the one in whom the cankers (*āsava*s) have been extinguished goes without suffering, because the four cankers (desire for gratification of the senses; desire for eternal existence; wrong views; and ignorance) have been destroyed by the sword (*asi*) of the Path of Arahatsip.

³⁴² An *Arahat*.

296. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, with their thoughts focused on the *Buddha* day and night.
297. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, with their thoughts focused on the *Dhamma* day and night.
298. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, with their thoughts focused on the *Saṅgha* day and night.
299. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, with their thoughts focused on mindfulness of the body³⁴⁴ day and night.
300. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, delighting in harmlessness³⁴⁵ day and night.
301. The disciples of Gotama are wide awake and vigilant, delighting in meditation³⁴⁶ day and night.
302. It is hard to leave the world;³⁴⁷ it is hard to live the life of a *Bhikkhu*. It is painful to stay in the world;³⁴⁸ it is painful to have to be in the company of those of an uneven temperament.³⁴⁹ Those who wander in cyclic existence are trapped in suffering. Therefore, do not be one who wanders in cyclic existence; do not be one who is trapped in suffering.
303. Those who are full of confidence³⁵⁰ and pure in conduct, possessed of good repute and wealth,³⁵¹ are honored wherever they go.
304. The good shine like the Himalayas, whose peaks glisten above the rest of the world even when seen from afar. The wicked pass unseen, like an arrow shot at night.

³⁴³ *Veyyagghapañcamaṇi* — this term is used to denote the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), of which skeptical doubt or indecisiveness is the fifth. A dangerous and perilous path which is infested with tigers is called *veyyaggha*. Skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) or indecisiveness is comparable to such a path.

³⁴⁴ The mindfulness arising on account of the contemplation of the thirty-two component parts of the body, the ten cemetery contemplations, the analysis of the four elements, or the contemplation of the fine-material sphere, such as the internal blue *kaṣiṇa*, and so forth.

³⁴⁵ Delighting in the meditation on compassion (*karuṇā*).

³⁴⁶ Specifically, the meditation on loving-kindness (*mettā*).

³⁴⁷ It is difficult to leave the world and go forth into the homeless life of a *Bhikkhu*. It is difficult to abandon one's wealth, one's possessions, one's home, one's occupation, one's friends, one's family, one's relatives, and so on, and go forth into the homeless life.

³⁴⁸ The life of a householder is also difficult. The obligations associated with the household life are also difficult to fulfill and a source of suffering.

³⁴⁹ An "uneven temperament" refers to those who are argumentative and ill-tempered.

³⁵⁰ *Saddhā*, trustful confidence based on knowledge. Blind faith is discouraged in Buddhism.

³⁵¹ "Fame" such as the "lay fame" of householders like Anāthapiṇḍika, and others. Wealth is twofold: (1) grains and so forth and (2) the sevenfold "noble wealth."

305. Those who sit alone,³⁵² sleep alone,³⁵³ go about alone, who are unwearied, and who vanquish the ego by themselves alone³⁵⁴ will find delight in a forest grove.³⁵⁵ ■

³⁵² Those who maintain proper posture and steadfast attention on the meditation topic even though they may be in the midst of a thousand *Bhikkhus* are said to be “sitting alone.”

³⁵³ Those who lie down on their right side with unfaltering mindfulness and with attention focused on the meditation topic are said to be “sleeping alone.”

³⁵⁴ The meaning here is: disciplining oneself, all by oneself, by means of attaining the Paths and Fruit, having duly engaged in concentration on a meditation topic, at the places of resting at night, and so forth.

³⁵⁵ The meaning here is: thus disciplining oneself, one would take delight in a forest grove, which is secluded from the sounds of men and women and so forth, for it is not possible for one to be so disciplined when living a crowded life.

22 • The Downward Course

(*Nirayavagga*)³⁵⁶

306. Those who say what is not true (about others),³⁵⁷ those who do evil and then deny what they have done, both choose the downward course. After death, they become equals in the netherworld.³⁵⁸
307. Those who put on the saffron robe but remain ill-mannered and undisciplined in thought, word, and deed are dragged downward by their evil deeds.³⁵⁹
308. It is better for a monk who is without morality and undisciplined in thought, word, and deed to swallow a red-hot ball of iron than to eat the alms-food offered by the devout.
309. Four misfortunes befall those who, unmindful of right conduct, commit adultery: loss of merit, loss of sleep, condemnation, and rebirth in a state of woe.
310. On this downward course, what pleasure can there be for the frightened man lying in the arms of his frightened lover, both going in fear of punishment? Therefore, do not commit adultery.
311. As a blade of *kusa* grass³⁶⁰ can cut the finger when it is wrongly held, asceticism carelessly practiced³⁶¹ can send one on the downward course.
312. An act carelessly performed, a vow not kept, conduct unbefitting a *Bhikkhu* — these things bring little reward.
313. If anything is worth doing, do it well; do it firmly and energetically. Half-hearted ascetics merely cover themselves with more and more dust (of moral defilements).

³⁵⁶ *Niraya* refers to a state of woe, a place of punishment and torture, where evil *kamma* is worked out. It is usually translated as “purgatory” or “hell.” Here, it is translated as “the downward course” (*duggati*), since the verses in this chapter mostly discuss courses of action that lead downward to a state of woe and to avoid being confused with concepts of Purgatory or Hell in other religions. According to Buddhism, rebirth in a state of woe is not eternal.

³⁵⁷ Those who, without having actually seen any fault in another, tell lies and accuse another falsely.

³⁵⁸ Those who say what is not true and those who deny what they have done, having gone to the world beyond, become equal so far as their destination is concerned, both going to a state of woe.

³⁵⁹ That is, they will be reborn in a state of woe.

³⁶⁰ Here, *kusa* (Sanskrit *kuśa*) refers to any type of grass with a sharp blade. In Hinduism, it refers to the sacred grass used in certain religious ceremonies.

³⁶¹ Due to broken moral precepts, and so forth.

314. It is better to refrain from evil deeds; evil deeds torment those who perform them later on. It is better to perform good deeds, which will not lead to sorrow.
315. Guard yourself well, both within and without,³⁶² like a well-defended fort. Do not waste a moment, for wasted moments send you on a downward course.
316. Those who are ashamed of what is not shameful,³⁶³ who are not ashamed of what is shameful,³⁶⁴ and who hold wrong views³⁶⁵ are headed on a downward course.
317. Those who see danger in what is not dangerous, who do not see danger in what is dangerous,³⁶⁶ and who hold wrong views are on a downward course.
318. Those who see wrong where there is none,³⁶⁷ who do not see wrong where there is,³⁶⁸ and who hold wrong views are on a downward course.
319. But those who see wrong where there is wrong, who see no wrong where there is none, and who hold right views are on an upward course. ■

³⁶² This means to guard both the internal and the external senses. The six internal senses (sense bases) are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; the six external senses (sense objects) are visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and thoughts or ideas.

³⁶³ *Bhikkhus*, for example, should not be ashamed of their begging bowls.

³⁶⁴ One should be ashamed of having one's private parts exposed in public, for example.

³⁶⁵ Those who believe what is contrary to reality, contrary to the truth, contrary to the facts. Wrong or evil views (*diṭṭhi* or *micchādiṭṭhi*) are condemned by the *Buddha*, inasmuch as they are a source of wrong and evil aspirations and conduct and lead a person to woe and suffering.

The wrong view that has, everywhere and at all times, most misled and deluded humanity is ego-delusion or personality belief. Personality belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) is of two kinds: (1) eternity belief and (2) annihilation belief. The belief in an *ātman* or soul usually goes hand-in-hand with the belief in the Creator God of theistic religions, who is considered to be the first, most perfect, and most powerful of the "souls." Buddhism utterly rejects the concept of a Creator God — a "first cause" — as being "impossible."

Another listing of wrong beliefs includes the following: (1) there is no such virtue as generosity — this means that there is no good effect in giving alms; (2) there is no such virtue as liberal alms giving; (3) there is no such virtue as offering gifts to friends — here, too, the implied meaning is that there is no effect in such charitable actions; (4) there is neither fruit nor result of good or evil actions; (5) there is no such belief as "this world"; (6) there is no such belief as "a world beyond"; (7) there is no mother — that is, there is no effect in anything done to her; (8) there is no father — that is, there is no effect in anything done to him; (9) there are no beings who die and are being reborn; (10) there are no righteous and well-disciplined recluses and *brāhmaṇas* who, having realized by their own super-intellect this world and the world beyond, make known the same — the reference here is to *Buddhas* and *Arahats*.

In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (the first discourse of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*), sixty-two false views are listed and described, comprising all conceivable wrong views and speculations about humanity and the world.

The so-called "evil views with fixed destiny" (*niyata-micchādiṭṭhi*) include: (1) the fatalistic view of the uncausedness of existence (*ahetukadiṭṭhi*); (2) the view of the inefficacy of action (*kiriya-diṭṭhi*); and (3) nihilism (*natthikadiṭṭhi*).

³⁶⁶ Sources of danger include: desire for gratification of the senses (sense desire), ill will, confusion, self-estimation (arrogance, conceit, etc.), speculative opinions, moral defilements, misconduct, and so forth.

³⁶⁷ *Avajja* — this refers to the ten kinds of right belief.

³⁶⁸ *Vajja* — this refers to the ten kinds of wrong belief.

23 • The Elephant (*Nāgavagga*)

320. Patiently, I shall bear harsh words directed at me, as an elephant bears arrows shot from a bow on the battlefield. Alas, most people are undisciplined.³⁶⁹
321. Only the trained (horses and elephants) are taken to gatherings of people; the king mounts only the trained (horse or elephant). Best among men are those who have trained the mind to endure harsh words patiently.
322. Mules, thoroughbred horses, horses from Sindh, and great elephants are good animals when they are trained. But even better are those with well-trained minds.
323. Indeed, no means of transport³⁷⁰ can take one to the place where one has never been before;³⁷¹ only those with a well-trained mind³⁷² can go to this untrodden land.
324. When in must and difficult to control, the elephant named *Dhanapālaka*, being held in captivity against his will, will not eat so much as a morsel;³⁷³ he yearns to return to his forest home.³⁷⁴
325. Those who are dim-witted, who eat too much, who sleep too much, who are lazy, and who wallow about like an overfed hog, are born again and again.
326. Long ago, my mind used to wander as it liked and do what it wanted. Now, I can control my mind, as a mahout controls an elephant with his goad.
327. Delight in vigilance; guard your mind well.³⁷⁵ Raise yourself out of the mire of moral defilements, as an elephant raises itself out of the mud.
328. If you find friends who are virtuous, wise, and loyal, joyfully and mindfully walk with them and overcome all dangers.

³⁶⁹ The majority of people, being undisciplined in morality, speak without thinking and create conflict.

³⁷⁰ Such as elephants and horses.

³⁷¹ *Nibbāna*.

³⁷² Those who, having first controlled the senses, have later developed Path Insight.

³⁷³ When in heat, elephants are by nature fierce and difficult to control. The elephant *Dhanapālaka* was exceptionally fierce.

³⁷⁴ The story associated with this verse is that of a captive elephant named *Dhanapālaka* who had been caring for its parents in the forest.

³⁷⁵ Against negative thoughts.

329. If you cannot find friends who are virtuous, wise, and loyal, walk on alone, like a king who relinquishes his kingdom³⁷⁶ or an elephant roaming at will in the forest.
330. It is better to be alone than to associate with those lacking wisdom. Be contented, turn away from evil, and walk alone, like an elephant roaming in the forest.
331. It is good to have friends when the need arises; good to be content with whatever is available. Good deeds³⁷⁷ are friends at the time of death. But best of all is going beyond sorrow.³⁷⁸
332. In this world, it is good to attend to the needs of one's mother; good to attend to the needs of one's father; good to attend to the needs of *samanas*.³⁷⁹ But best of all is to attend to the needs of *brāhmaṇas*.³⁸⁰
333. It is good to live in virtue till old age; good to have unshakable faith; good to attain the highest wisdom; good to do no evil. Joy will be yours always. ■

³⁷⁶ Who abdicates the throne and becomes a recluse by “going forth” into homelessness.

³⁷⁷ Merit.

³⁷⁸ *Dukkha*.

³⁷⁹ Ascetics.

³⁸⁰ *Buddhas* and *Arahats*.

24 • Craving (*Taṇhāvagga*)

334. The compulsive urges³⁸¹ of those who live heedlessly³⁸² grow like a creeper. They jump from one life to another, like a monkey looking for fruit in the forest.
335. In this world, when one is overwhelmed by this vile craving that tenaciously clings to the senses, sorrow spreads like wild grass.
336. In this world, sorrow falls away from the life of one who has overcome this vile craving — so hard to get rid of —, as drops of water fall away from a lotus leaf.
337. Therefore, I say to all of you assembled here, dig up craving root and all, as you would uproot *bīraṇa* grass.³⁸³ Do not allow *Māra* to crush you again and again, as a stream crushes reeds on its banks.
338. As a tree, though cut down, recovers and grows again if its roots are not destroyed, suffering³⁸⁴ will come to you again and again if these compulsive urges are not rooted out.
339. Those who hold wrong views,³⁸⁵ in whom the thirty-six streams (of craving) that flow³⁸⁶ toward pleasurable objects are strong, are swept away by the currents of their deluded thoughts connected with passion.
340. The currents of craving flow towards all sense objects. The creepers of craving arise (at the six sense doors) and fix themselves (on the six sense objects). Whenever you see these creepers of craving growing in your mind, uproot them with wisdom.³⁸⁷

³⁸¹ That is, craving. Craving is threefold: (1) craving for sense-pleasures; (2) craving for birth in a world of separateness; and (3) craving for existence to end. Craving for personal sense fields, such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and for external sense objects such as forms, sounds, scents, tastes, contact, and mind objects, when viewed in terms of these three aspects, divides itself into thirty-six varieties.

³⁸² Those who live a life that is heedless, with heedlessness characterized by slackened awareness, develop neither meditative absorption, nor insight, nor path and fruit.

³⁸³ A type of wild grass known for its fragrance.

³⁸⁴ *Dukkha* — of birth, ageing, and death.

³⁸⁵ Those whose views are debased due to defective understanding.

³⁸⁶ Through the six sense doors.

³⁸⁷ Path Insight.

341. In all human beings, sense pleasures arise that are drenched with craving. All are attached to sense pleasures; all seek happiness. Hankering after such pleasures, they are caught in the cycle of birth and death.
342. Those driven by craving are terrified, like a hare caught in a trap; held fast by fetters and bonds,³⁸⁸ they undergo suffering³⁸⁹ again and again, for a very long time.
343. Those driven by craving are terrified, like a hare caught in a trap. Therefore, those who wish to free themselves should overcome this craving.³⁹⁰
344. Even though he left the forest of desire for the household life and entered the grove of the life of a *Bhikkhu*, he rushed recklessly back to that very forest. Behold that man! Though free,³⁹¹ he ran back into bondage.³⁹²
345. Fetters of wood, rope, or even iron, say the wise, are not as strong as selfish attachment to wealth and family.³⁹³
346. Such fetters drag us down (to lower planes of existence) and are hard to break.³⁹⁴ Break them by overcoming selfish desires, and turn from the world of sensory pleasure without a backward glance.
347. A person driven by fierce cravings is like a spider caught in its own web. Break out of the web, and turn away from the world of sensory pleasure and sorrow.
348. If you want to reach the farther shore of existence,³⁹⁵ give up what is before,³⁹⁶ behind,³⁹⁷ and in between.³⁹⁸ Set your mind free from everything,³⁹⁹ and go beyond birth and death.

³⁸⁸ There are five kinds of bonds (*saṅga*): lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), pride (*māna*), and false views (*diṭṭhi*).

³⁸⁹ In repeated rebirths.

³⁹⁰ Because beings are surrounded and entwined by craving, those who are striving for *nibbāna* should dispel that craving by means of the Path of Arahatsip.

³⁹¹ From desire for the household life.

³⁹² This verse was uttered about a young man who, through faith, entered the Order, but later, tempted by sensory pleasures, returned to the household life.

³⁹³ Longing for the things of this world, such as jewels, ornaments, children, spouses, etc.

³⁹⁴ The bondage of defilements, once arisen due to greed, is hard to break.

³⁹⁵ When this is so — having gone to the farther shore (*bhavassa pāragū*) of the whole threefold existence (that is, the past, the present, the future), by way of higher knowledge, full understanding, relinquishment, meditational development and realization, living with mind liberated in regard to the totality of conditioned existence with its divisions such as aggregates (*khandhas*), elements (*dhātus*), and spheres (*āyatanas*) —, one does not come again by birth, decay, and death. That is the meaning.

³⁹⁶ Let go of attachment, longing, clinging, desiring, (mental) possession, obsession, grasping, craving — with reference to the aggregates (*khandhas*) of the past.

³⁹⁷ Let go of attachment and so forth with reference to the aggregates of the future.

³⁹⁸ Let go of attachment and so forth with reference to the aggregates of the present.

349. In those who are disturbed by deluded thoughts, whose passions are strong, and who see only what is pleasurable, craving grows more and more. Indeed, they only keep strengthening their fetters.
350. One who takes delight in calming thoughts, who is ever mindful, who meditates on the loathsomeness (of the body)⁴⁰⁰ will get rid of craving. Such a one will break the bonds of *Māra*.
351. Those who have reached their goal,⁴⁰¹ who are free from fear, craving, and moral defilements, have cut off the thorns of existence.⁴⁰² This body is their last.⁴⁰³
352. One who is free from craving and attachment, who understands the deeper meaning of what is written,⁴⁰⁴ is rightly called “bearer of the final body,” “one of great wisdom,” “a great being.”
353. I have conquered myself and live in purity. I know all that there is to be known.⁴⁰⁵ I have left everything behind and live in freedom. Having comprehended the Four Noble Truths by myself, to whom shall I point as my teacher?⁴⁰⁶
354. There is no gift better than the gift of the *Dhamma*, no gift more sweet, no gift more joyful. It puts an end to cravings⁴⁰⁷ and the sorrow they bring.
355. Wealth harms those who are greedy but not those who seek the other shore.⁴⁰⁸ By their caving for wealth, the greedy harm themselves and those around them.
356. Greed ruins the mind, just as weeds ruin fields. Therefore, honor those who are free from greed.
357. Hatred⁴⁰⁹ ruins the mind, just as weeds ruin fields. Therefore, honor those who are free from hatred.

³⁹⁹ All conditioned existence.

⁴⁰⁰ The purpose of this meditation is to get rid of attachment to this so-called “body.”

⁴⁰¹ *Arahats*. Arahatsip is the final goal of those who have gone forth in the monastic Order.

⁴⁰² Here, “thorns” refers to the three unwholesome roots (*mūla*): (1) greed (*lobha*); (2) hatred (*dosa*); and (3) delusion (*moha*). They have cut off the “thorns” that lead to continued existence.

⁴⁰³ That is, this is their final existence.

⁴⁰⁴ One who is skilled in the four kinds of analytical knowledge: (1) meaning (*attha*); (2) text (*dhamma*); (3) etymology (*nirutti*); and (4) understanding (*paṭibhāna*).

⁴⁰⁵ Attained Arahatsip.

⁴⁰⁶ The *Buddha* gave this answer to Upaka, a wandering ascetic, who questioned Him about His teacher. Even though the *Buddha* had teachers before His Enlightenment, He had none for His Enlightenment.

⁴⁰⁷ The eradication of craving leads to the cessation of the aggregates, which means the end of rebirths.

⁴⁰⁸ *Nibbāna*.

⁴⁰⁹ Hatred, ill will, aversion, etc.

358. Ignorance ruins the mind, just as weeds ruin fields. Therefore, honor those who are free from ignorance.
359. Selfish desire⁴¹⁰ ruins the mind, just as weeds ruin fields. Therefore, honor those who are free from selfish desire. ■

⁴¹⁰ Covetousness.

25 • The *Bhikkhu*⁴¹¹ (*Bhikkhuvagga*)

360. Restrain your eyes and ears; restrain your nose and tongue. The senses are good friends when they are restrained.
361. Restrain your body in deeds; restrain your tongue in words; restrain your mind in thoughts. Good is restraint in everything.⁴¹² Those restrained in everything are freed from all sorrow.⁴¹³
362. He is a true *Bhikkhu* who has trained his hands, feet, and speech to serve others. He meditates deeply, is at peace with himself, and lives alone.
363. He is a true *Bhikkhu* who is restrained in speech, who speaks softly, who is modest, and who explains the *Dhamma* in sweet words.⁴¹⁴
364. He is a true *Bhikkhu* who follows the *Dhamma*, meditates on the *Dhamma*, delights in the *Dhamma*, and, therefore, never falls away from the *Dhamma*.
365. He is a true *Bhikkhu* who is content with what he receives and is never jealous of others. Those who are jealous cannot do well in meditation.⁴¹⁵
366. Even the gods praise the *Bhikkhu* who is contented with whatever he has and who lives a pure life of selfless service.
367. Free from the desire to possess people and things,⁴¹⁶ a *Bhikkhu* does not grieve over what is not.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹¹ *Bhikkhu* is exclusively a Buddhist term. “Mendicant Monk” may suggested as the best rendering in English for *Bhikkhu*. Here, the term is left untranslated. The female counterpart is *Bhikkhunī*, usually translated as “Nun.”

⁴¹² *Sabbattha*, “in every way; in every sense.”

⁴¹³ Freed from suffering (*dukkha*); freed from cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*).

⁴¹⁴ Who speaks in moderation, who is not boastful, and who patiently explains the meaning of the *Dhamma*.

⁴¹⁵ *Samādhi*, both mundane and supramundane concentration.

⁴¹⁶ One who has no sense of “I” or “mine” and no attachment to any part of “name-and-form” (*nāma-rūpa*), that is, all the varied aspects of the human personality, occurring as the five aggregates of existence (*pañcakkhandha*) — also known as the “five aggregates of clinging.” The five aggregates consist of: (1) material form or corporeality (*rūpakkhandha*); (2) feeling (*vedanākkhandha*); (3) perception (*saññākkhandha*); (4) (predisposing) mental formations (*samkhārakkhandha*); and (5) consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*). What is called “individual existence” is, in reality, nothing but a mere process of those mental and physical phenomena (that is, the five aggregates of existence), a process that has been going on since immemorial time and that will also continue after death for an immemorial period of time. These five

368. With loving-kindness toward all⁴¹⁸ and with confidence⁴¹⁹ in the *Buddha's* Teachings, a *Bhikkhu* will reach the holy state where all is peace.⁴²⁰
369. *Bhikkhu*, bail out⁴²¹ your boat! When it is bailed out, it will go faster.⁴²² Cast out greed and hatred, and reach *nibbāna*.
370. Cut off the five lower fetters,⁴²³ cut off the five higher fetters,⁴²⁴ cultivate the five faculties,⁴²⁵ and you will cross the river of life.
371. Meditate, *Bhikkhu*, meditate!⁴²⁶ Do not be heedless! Do not run after sense pleasures! Do not swallow a red-hot iron ball⁴²⁷ and then cry, "I am in great pain!"
372. There can be no concentration in those who lack wisdom, and no wisdom in those who lack concentration. Those in whom there is both wisdom and concentration are, indeed, close to *nibbāna*.⁴²⁸

aggregates, taken either singly or collectively, do not constitute a self-dependent real ego-entity, self (*attā*), soul, or personality, nor is there to be found any such entity apart from them.

⁴¹⁷ He does not grieve, is not tormented, when that "name-and-form" comes to decay and degeneration, but, instead, dispassionately perceives thus: "What has decayed in me is, by its very nature, subject to decay and to degeneration — this is simply the way it is."

⁴¹⁸ One who has exerted oneself in loving-kindness (*mettā*) as a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) as well as one who has attained the third (according to the *suttanta* method) or fourth (according to the *Abhidhamma* method) stage of meditative absorptions (*jhānas*) by developing loving-kindness. With this practice, one extends unconditional loving-kindness to "whatever living beings there may be, without exception, whether weak or strong; long, large, or middling; short, subtle or gross; visible or invisible; living near or far; born or coming to birth" (Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta — Discourse on Loving-Kindness).

⁴¹⁹ He is pleased with the *Buddha's* Teachings. Indeed, he takes great delight in, relishes, rejoices in being pleased with the *Buddha's* Teachings.

⁴²⁰ The stilling of all conditioned things — the Tranquil, the Unconditioned, the Blissful, in short, *nibbāna*.

⁴²¹ Bail out the ship of personality of the water of wrong thoughts — throw that water away.

⁴²² Just as a ship on the ocean, heavy with water that has seeped in through a hole, is able to reach a harbor quickly, without sinking, after the crew has closed up its fissures and emptied it of water, in the same way, when, by means of restraint, one closes up the fissures of sense outlets such as the eye, this ship of one's personality, filled with the water of wrong thoughts, will go quickly to *nibbāna* without sinking in the whirl of *saṃsāra*, after it has been emptied of the water of the wrong thoughts that had arisen.

⁴²³ Cut off, through the Paths of Stream-Entry (*Sotāpatti-magga*), Once-Return (*Sakadāgāmi-magga*), and Non-Return (*Anāgāmi-magga*), the five lower fetters (*saṃyojana*) that lead one to states of woe. The five lower fetters are: (1) personality belief; (2) skeptical doubt; (3) attachment to wrongful rites and rituals; (4) sense-desire; and (5) hatred.

⁴²⁴ Abandon, relinquish, indeed, cutoff, through the Path of Arahantship (*Arahatta-magga*), the five higher (more subtle) fetters that lead one to the celestial worlds above. The five higher fetters are: (6) attachment to the form realm; (7) attachment to the formless realms; (8) conceit; (9) restlessness; and (10) ignorance.

⁴²⁵ The five faculties are: (1) faith or confidence (*saddhā*); (2) mindfulness (*sati*); (3) effort (*virīya*); (4) concentration (*samādhi*); and (5) wisdom (*paññā*).

⁴²⁶ By the two kinds of meditative absorptions: (1) fine-material absorption and (2) immaterial absorption.

⁴²⁷ For those who are heedless and relinquish mindfulness (*sati*), it is as if they have swallowed a metal ball heated in hell. One should not swallow a metal ball by being heedless. Such heedlessness will only lead to a state of woe.

373. The *Bhikkhu* who goes to a secluded place to meditate, whose mind is calm, who clearly perceives the *Dhamma*,⁴²⁹ experiences a joy that transcends that of ordinary people.
374. Whenever he reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates that make up the body, he experiences joy and happiness. To the wise, that is the way to the deathless.
375. For a wise *Bhikkhu* in this Teaching, this is the beginning of the practice leading to *nibbāna*: train your senses, be contented, strictly observe the fundamental moral code,⁴³⁰ and keep pure and noble friends.
376. Be a friend to all. Perform your duties well.⁴³¹ Then, with your joy ever growing, you will put an end to sorrow.
377. As the jasmine creeper sheds the withered flowers that blossomed the previous day, so should you, O *Bhikkhu*, shed blemishes such as attachment to sensory pleasures and to hatred.
378. A *Bhikkhu* who is calm in body,⁴³² speech,⁴³³ and mind,⁴³⁴ who is well-composed, and who has turned his back on worldly pleasures,⁴³⁵ is called a “peaceful one.”
379. Raise yourself by your own efforts, O *Bhikkhu*; be your own critic. Thus, self-reliant and vigilant, you will live in joy.
380. Be your own master, guide, and protector. Be your own refuge. Train your mind, as merchants train their noble horses.⁴³⁶
381. Full of peace and joy is the *Bhikkhu* who follows the *Dhamma* and reaches the other shore beyond the flux of mortal life.⁴³⁷

⁴²⁸ Those who do not meditate cannot develop insight. However, those in whom both meditative absorption and insight are developed understand and see reality as it is. Those in whom both of these exist are close to *nibbāna*.

⁴²⁹ Who gains insight into the *Dhamma* by understanding cause and condition.

⁴³⁰ The *Pātimokkha* — the code of conduct consisting of 227 disciplinary rules followed by *Bhikkhus* in the Theravādin tradition.

⁴³¹ What is referred to here is virtuous conduct as well as skillful performance of due rites and rituals.

⁴³² Due to the absence of violence to life, and so on, in one’s actions.

⁴³³ Due to the absence of false speech, vulgar speech, sarcasm, gossip, and idle chatter.

⁴³⁴ Due to the absence of craving, and so on, in one’s thoughts.

⁴³⁵ Literally, “who has vomited worldly pleasures.” Here, “vomited” means “given up.”

⁴³⁶ Ever mindful, one should restrain oneself, guard oneself, train oneself, protect oneself, by preventing unarisen unwholesome mental states from arising, by abandoning unwholesome mental states that have already arisen, by developing wholesome mental states that have not yet arisen, and by maintaining and perfecting wholesome mental states that have already arisen.

⁴³⁷ Reaches *nibbāna* — the tranquil, the unconditioned, the blissful.

382. Though young in years, a *Bhikkhu* who devotes himself to the *Dhamma* lights up the world, as the moon lights a cloudless sky. ■

26 • The *Brāhmaṇa*⁴³⁸ (*Brāhmaṇavagga*)

383. O *brāhmaṇa*, cut off the stream of craving with diligence, and abandon sense desires. Go beyond the world of conditionality, and know the deathless ground of life.⁴³⁹
384. Those *brāhmaṇas* who are well established in the two types of meditation⁴⁴⁰ will go beyond likes and dislikes, and all their fetters will fall away.
385. Who is a true *brāhmaṇa*? That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is attached neither to the nether shore⁴⁴¹ nor to the farther shore,⁴⁴² and who is free from moral defilements.
386. Who is a true *brāhmaṇa*? That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who dwells in seclusion, practicing both calm abiding and insight meditation, who is free from moral defilements, and who has reached the supreme goal of life.⁴⁴³
387. The sun shines in the day; the moon shines in the night. The warrior shines in battle; the *brāhmaṇa* shines in meditation. But, day and night, the *Buddha* shines⁴⁴⁴ in radiance of love for all.
388. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who has shed all evil. I call that one a recluse whose mind is serene — a wanderer, whose heart is pure.
389. One should never harm a *brāhmaṇa*. A *brāhmaṇa* should never become angry and should never cause harm to others even when harmed by them.
390. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who does not retaliate. When the intention to harm others is brought to an end, suffering will wane.

⁴³⁸ In this chapter, the term *brāhmaṇa* is used instead of *Brahmin*. The term “*Brahmin*” refers to a member of the priestly caste, while “*brāhmaṇa*” refers to a person who lives a pure, sinless, and ascetic life, which is what is meant here. In the literature, the term *brāhmaṇa* is often used as a synonym for *Arahat* (as in verses 294 and 295 above).

⁴³⁹ The unconditioned, *nibbāna*.

⁴⁴⁰ Calm abiding or tranquility meditation (*samatha*) and insight or analytical meditation (*vipassanā*).

⁴⁴¹ That is, the sense bases.

⁴⁴² That is, the sense objects.

⁴⁴³ *Arahatship*.

⁴⁴⁴ The *Buddha* outshines immorality by the power of morality, vice by the power of virtue, ignorance by the power of wisdom, demerit by the power of merit, unrighteousness by the power of righteousness.

391. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who does not hurt others with unkind acts, words, or thoughts, and who is restrained in these three aspects.
392. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who learns the *Dhamma* of the Fully Enlightened One and who respectfully pays homage to the Holy One, as a *Brahmin* pays homage to the sacrificial fire.
393. It is not matted hair, nor family background,⁴⁴⁵ nor caste that makes a *brāhmaṇa*. Only those who have realized the Truth⁴⁴⁶ and the *Dhamma*⁴⁴⁷ can rightly be called *brāhmaṇas*. They are the pure ones.
394. What use is matted hair, O foolish one? What use is a deerskin on which to sit for meditation if your mind still seethes with lust?
395. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is content with ragged robes gathered from a dust heap, who is lean, with veins standing out,⁴⁴⁸ and who meditates alone in the forest.
396. I do not call one a *brāhmaṇa* just because one is born from the womb of a high caste mother. One is merely a “*bho*-sayer”⁴⁴⁹ if one is not free from moral defilements. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is free from moral defilements and selfish attachments.
397. The true *brāhmaṇa* has thrown off all fetters⁴⁵⁰ and does not tremble in fear.⁴⁵¹ No selfish bonds can ensnare such a one,⁴⁵² no impure thoughts pollute the mind.
398. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who has cut through the strap (of ill will), the thong (of craving), and the chain (of wrong views together with latent defilements), and who has lifted the bar that fastens the door (of ignorance). Such a one has gotten up from sleep and is fully awake.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁵ *Gotta* “ancestry, lineage, clan.”

⁴⁴⁶ The realization of the Four Noble Truths.

⁴⁴⁷ Here, *Dhamma* refers to the nine supramundane states, namely, the four Paths, the four Fruits, and *nibbāna*.

⁴⁴⁸ *Bhikkhus* who wear rags for robes, who are thin and lean (literally, “of little flesh and blood”), and whose veins are visible from following a rigorous practice that befits them.

⁴⁴⁹ “*Bho*” is a familiar form of address, which even the *Buddha* uses when addressing lay people. The meaning here is that such a one merely knows proper etiquette in greeting others.

⁴⁵⁰ The ten fetters (*samyojana*) which bind beings to cyclic existence (*samsāra*): (1) personality belief — the delusion of selfhood; (2) skeptical doubt; (3) attachment to rites and rituals; (4) desire for gratification of the senses; (5) ill will; (6) craving for fine-material existence; (7) craving for immaterial existence; (8) conceit; (9) restlessness; and (10) ignorance.

⁴⁵¹ Due to craving.

⁴⁵² Who has transcended attachments and gone beyond the passions, and so forth.

⁴⁵³ Who is awakened from having realized the Four Noble Truths (*Ariya-sacca*): (1) suffering (*dukkha*); (2) the origin (*samudaya*) of suffering; (3) the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering; and (4) the path or way (*maggā*) leading to the cessation of suffering, namely, the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-aṭṭhangika-maggā*).

399. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who endures abuse, beating, and imprisonment without anger.⁴⁵⁴ Such a one has the power of patience no army can defeat.⁴⁵⁵
400. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is free from anger, who practices austerity,⁴⁵⁶ who is virtuous and free from craving, and who controls the senses. This body is the last.⁴⁵⁷
401. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who does not cling to sensory pleasure, just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf or a mustard seed to the tip of a needle.
402. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, even in this life, realizes the end of suffering,⁴⁵⁸ who has laid down the burden,⁴⁵⁹ and who is free from moral defilements.
403. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* whose wisdom is profound and whose understanding deep, who knows the right path from the wrong path, and who has reached the highest goal.⁴⁶⁰
404. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* whose wants are few, who is detached from sensory desire, and who associates with neither householders nor homeless mendicants.⁴⁶¹
405. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who has put aside weapons and renounced violence toward all creatures, the perturbed⁴⁶² as well as the unperturbed.⁴⁶³ Such a one neither kills nor helps others to kill.⁴⁶⁴
406. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is never hostile to those who are hostile toward him, who is detached⁴⁶⁵ among those who are selfish,⁴⁶⁶ and who is at peace⁴⁶⁷ among those who have taken up weapons.

⁴⁵⁴ One who bears, without anger, the abuse that is heaped upon one through the ten ways of abusing, assault with hands, weapons, and so forth, and even being bound with fetters, and so forth.

⁴⁵⁵ Who has the strength of an army due to being endowed with the power of patience, which has been reinforced by its springing up again and again.

⁴⁵⁶ *Dhutaṅga*, ascetic or austere purification practices recommended to monks by the *Buddha* as a means to cultivate contentment, renunciation, energy, detachment, moderation, etc.

⁴⁵⁷ Who is in the final body, because the present life is at the termination of cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*).

⁴⁵⁸ *Nibbāna*.

⁴⁵⁹ Who has laid down the burden of the *khandhas*, the five aggregates of clinging.

⁴⁶⁰ Arahatsip.

⁴⁶¹ Who is not contaminated by either lay persons or homeless ones.

⁴⁶² Those who are not engaged in spiritual practices, whose minds are restless and senses undisciplined.

⁴⁶³ Those whose minds are calm and senses controlled — *Arahats*.

⁴⁶⁴ One who has laid down arms in regard to all sentient beings, by virtue of hatred having been destroyed, and who never kills any living thing oneself, or who never helps others to kill.

⁴⁶⁵ Who is free of grasping at “I,” “me,” or “mine.”

⁴⁶⁶ Those who grasp at a sense of self.

⁴⁶⁷ Due to having laid aside the use of force.

407. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* from whom passion and hatred, along with arrogance and deceit, have fallen away, like a mustard seed that has fallen from the point of a needle.
408. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who speaks gentle, instructive,⁴⁶⁸ and true words, and who does not offend anyone by his speech.
409. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, here in this world, takes nothing that is not given, whether long or short, small or great, pleasant or unpleasant.
410. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who has no desire either for anything of this world or for anything of the next, and who is free from craving and moral defilements.
411. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is free from craving, who, through knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, is free from doubt, and who has realized the deathless.⁴⁶⁹
412. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, in this world, has gone beyond good and evil,⁴⁷⁰ who is free from sorrow, and who, being free from the taints of moral defilements, is pure.
413. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is pure,⁴⁷¹ clear,⁴⁷² serene,⁴⁷³ and unagitated,⁴⁷⁴ and in whom craving for existence has come to an end. Such a one shines like the moon in a cloudless sky.
414. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, having crossed the dangerous swamp (of passion), the difficult road (of moral defilements), the ocean of life,⁴⁷⁵ the darkness of ignorance,⁴⁷⁶ and the fourfold flood,⁴⁷⁷ has reached the other shore. Such a one practices both calm abiding and insight meditation, is free from craving and doubt, clings to nothing, and remains in perfect peace.
415. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, in this world, has given up attachment to sense pleasures and who, having left the life of a householder, has become a *Bhikkhu*. Such a one has eradicated sense desires and has come to the end of existence.

⁴⁶⁸ Causing others to understand what is right, proper, virtuous, wholesome, true, etc.

⁴⁶⁹ *Nibbāna*.

⁴⁷⁰ Who has discarded both wholesome and unwholesome states of mind.

⁴⁷¹ Free of moral impurities.

⁴⁷² Stainless.

⁴⁷³ Of calm mind.

⁴⁷⁴ Free of defilements — in whom there is not the agitation of defilements.

⁴⁷⁵ *Samsāra*.

⁴⁷⁶ “Ignorance” means not having realized the Four Noble Truths.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ogha*, “flood” refers here to the *āsavas*, “cankers.” The four *āsavas* are: (1) the canker of sense desire (*kāmāsava*); (2) the canker of desiring eternal existence (*bhavāsava*); (3) the canker of wrong views (*diṭṭhāsava*); and (4) the canker of ignorance (*avijjāsava*).

416. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who, in this world, has given up craving and who, having left the life of a householder, has become a *Bhikkhu*. Such a one has eradicated craving and has come to the end of existence.
417. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who has given up attachment to the sense pleasures of human life, who has transcended attachment to the sense pleasures of celestial life, and who is completely free from attachment.
418. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who no longer takes delight in sense pleasures but, rather, takes delight in solitude. Such a one has attained perfect peace, is free from moral defilements, has overcome the five aggregates of existence, and is diligent.
419. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who knows the passing away and rebirth of beings, in every detail, who is detached, who is well-gone,⁴⁷⁸ and who is enlightened.⁴⁷⁹
420. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* whose destination no one can know. Such a one has eradicated moral defilements and is an *Arahat*.
421. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who does not cling to the aggregates of the past, future, and present and who is free from moral defilements and attachment.
422. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who is fearless like a bull, who is noble and diligent, who strives for high moral virtues, who has conquered *Māra*, who is free from craving, who has been cleansed of moral defilements, and who knows the Four Noble Truths.
423. That one I call a *brāhmaṇa* who knows past existences, who sees both the celestial and the lower worlds, who has reached the end of rebirths, and who, with Path Insight, has become an *Arahat* — one who has accomplished all that had to be accomplished for the eradication of moral defilements. ■

⁴⁷⁸ *Sugata*, gone to *nibbāna*.

⁴⁷⁹ Due to understanding the Four Noble Truths.