

Dhammapada, a great world classic, is the spiritual testament of the Buddha. An anthology of perennial inspiration, it is a practical handbook as well for right living it is an uplifting document acting as a friend, philosopher and guide. Flashes of insight that illumined the Buddha's mind are strung together, as it were, into a garland of luminous sayings of pure wisdom.

Each verse of the *Dhammapada* has a significant historical incident as the backdrop. The stories, therefore, are not mere legends or tales, as some would try to make out.

The present rendering is a humble attempt at reconstructing that period of Indian history about which very little is known.

A whole world of new facts emerge from the stories, outlining a picture of the then society, very different from the one now known. Here we find an eternal India that is not merely a geographical or historical entity, but something that is the very substratum of man's aspirations for self-purification. These stories are deeply ingrained in the hearts of at least one-fourth of the world's population; men from India to Japan to Mexico, from Scandinavia to Australia, white men, black men, brown men, orientals, occidentals—all are alike inspired!

Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita
Vesakha Purnima,
May 1971

AN UNFORGETTABLE INHERITANCE

*Being the
Stories of Dhammapada*

PREAMBLE

**Homage to Him, the Blessed Lord, the Perfect One,
the Supremely Enlightened Buddha!**

In a world shrouded with the darkness of ignorance,

The seer of the World's Beyond.

Who by his resplendent Supermundance Power,

Has kindled the radiant light of Dhamma;

I prostrate unto His feet, the All-Auspicious, the All-Awake!

To worship with joined palms, held on my forehead,

His Holy Dhamma and His Holy Saṅgha.

And the Knower of Truth He alone is the Lord of All Wisdom,

The Supreme Master,

Moved by His Heart of All-embracing Compassion,

On occasions varied, Pronounced these noble Teachings

of the Sacred Dhammapada!

Ever pouring unto Gods and Men, joy and rapture.

This superbly composed commentary of the Dhammapada

Has been handed down, from generation to generation,

To people of Tambapanni's, in the language of the island.

Since it's conducive to the larger interest of all people,

And so that it may bring about the well-being of all mankind,

And as earnestly wished by that Elder of steadfast resolve,

Kumāra Kassapa, ever tranquil with self-mastery,

And so that the Sacred Dhamma may long endure,

Discarding its unfamiliar and diffused idiom, I shall

Restore the work to its original Pāli form,

The delightful language of the Sacred Texts:

Only elucidating that word or phrase not clear in the verses,

Leaving the rest in accordance with the spirit of the verses;

So that by causing understanding both in letter and spirit,

I may bring joy and happiness,

In the hearts of the discerning people.

Contents

Introduction

Preamble

Chapter 1 - Yamaka Vagga (The Pairs)

Verse No.		Page No.
1	The Elder Cakkhupāla	1
2	Maṭṭhakuṇḍali	29
3-4	Tissa the Stubborn	47
	Devila and Nārada	50
5	Kāḷī, the Ogress	57
6	The Kosambian monks	66
7-8	Elder Mahākāla	81
9-10	Devadatta	95
11-12	The Chief Disciples	103
	Kāla Brothers	120
	Yasa and His Companions	124
	The Thirty Princes	126
	Jaṭila Brothers	127
	Sārada and Sirivaḍḍha	135
13-14	The Elder Nanda	150
15	Cunda, the Pig Butcher	164
16	The Upāsaka Dhammika	169
17	Devadatta	175
18	Sumana Devi	196
19-20	Two Fellow Monks	201