

# The Dhammapada

## The verses of the dharma

### Introduction

The Dhammapada is a collection of verses (pàda) from a collection of texts : « Khuddaka Nikàya » (small texts), fifth and last part of the « Sutta Pitaka », the second of the three sets of writings (baskets) of the Canon Pali « Tipitaka », the «Theravada», main stream of Buddhism.

The Dhammapada consists of 423 verses classified into chapters. These verses are supposed to be the faithful transcription of the words of the historical Buddha, Sri Gautama, of the Sakya clan who lived between the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.

The author of this version of the Dhammapada has been observing the Buddha's Dharma since 1975, when he was introduced to this knowledge in India.

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## I. The twin verses

1. The mind is the origin of karma, it is its leader. If with a deranged mind someone speaks or acts, suffering\* follows him as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox.

\* Dukkha, the first of the noble truths.

2. The mind is the origin of karma, it is its leader. If with a healthy mind someone speaks and acts, bliss follows him, like the shadow that never leaves him.

3. « He has mistreated me, he has beaten me, he has defeated me, he has robbed me », the animosity of those who cherish such thoughts does not subside.

4. « He has mistreated me, he has beaten me, he has defeated me, he has robbed me », the animosity of those who do not cherish such thoughts is appeased.

5. Animosity never extinguishes animosity. Only forgiveness can, it is an ancient law.

6. Many forget their impermanence, those who remember them calm their quarrelsome spirit.

7. The one whose senses are out of control and who devotes himself to pleasures, the greedy, the lazy, the idle, this one, in truth, Màra (Death, the Evil One, the tempting spirit) will overthrow him, as the wind overthrows a frail tree.

8. Whoever, frugal, keeps his senses under control and observes the dharma with confidence and constancy, this one ; Màra cannot overthrow it, as the wind cannot overthrow a mountain of rock.

9. He who, corrupted, without self-control or deep consciousness, would wear the ochre (monk) robe, would not be worthy.

10. He who, with a deep conscience, has rid himself of corruption, who is well established in virtue, controlling his mind and senses, is truly worthy of wearing the ochre robe.

11. Those who regard illusion as truth and truth as illusion will never reach nirvana,

for they wander in confusion, desire and blindness from false opinions (drishti).

12. What is essential, they recognize as essential, what is non-essential, they recognize it as non-essential. Those who observe the dharma, are in the truth.

13. Just as rain enters a house with the wrong roof, desire penetrates the mind of the inconstant adept (of the dharma).

14. Just as rain does not enter a house with a roof in good condition, desire does not enter the mind of the constant adept (of the dharma).

15. He who acts evil (outside the dharma) laments in this life, laments after this life, laments in every world. Considering his actions, he laments and perishes.

16. He rejoices in this life, he rejoices after this life, in every world, he who acts well (in the dharma) rejoices. Considering his virtuous acts, he rejoices infinitely.

17. He laments in this life, he laments after this life, in every world, he who does evil laments. « I'm doing bad », he laments, settling in the « unhappy states ».

18. He is joyful in this life, he is joyful after this life, in every world, he who does well is joyful. « I'm doing well », he rejoices, settling in the « blessed states ».

19. Although he recites many texts, he does not act in harmony with them ; this careless man is like a herdsman who counts the animals of others. He doesn't know bliss.

20. Although he recites little of the texts, he acts in accordance with the Dharma and abandons desire, hatred and ignorance, knowing the truth, with a free spirit, clinging to nothing here and after, this vigilant Man knows bliss.

## **II. Vigilance**

21. Vigilance is The Path to the right conscience, neglect is the way to death. The vigilant will not die, the careless is already dead.

22. Understanding this clearly, the vigilant rejoices in vigilance and revels in the field of aryas\*.

\* Metaphor of heaven. The word « arya », meaning « noble », means not only the ethnic group of Gautama, but in Pali and, for Buddhism, it also means the equivalent of Christian saints. That is why, here, it takes an « s » in the plural.

23. Those who meditate with constancy, with assiduous observance, know nirvana (perfect awareness of bliss).

24. Gradually the merit of the energetic vigilant, who controls his mind, who has a

virtuous life, grows in detachment and discernment.

25. Through constancy, vigilance, discipline and self-control, may the vigilant make for himself an island (a refuge) that no flood can submerge.

26. The ignorant, the foolish, delight in neglect. The vigilant regard vigilance as his greatest treasure.

27. Do not give in to the nonchalant inclinations of your nature. Do not yield to desire. He who meditates and remains vigilant knows the consciousness of bliss.

28. When the vigilant, with a sound and fearless mind, rejects nonchalance, he reaches the palace of wisdom and casts his gaze on the ignorant who are suffering, as a mountaineer looks at the people of the plain.

29. Vigilant among the careless, awake among the sleepers, the vigilant advances like a fast horse, distancing the weaker mounts.

30. Through vigilance, Sakka\* became the leader of the devas. Vigilance is always rewarded, negligence always despised.

\* Sakka (pàli) is the lord of the thirty-three worlds (Tràyastimsa). Through vigilance he overcomes the kingdom of desire, lower incarnations and samsara (Kàmaloka). In other words : The vigilance overcomes desire, death and frees from samsara.

31. The vigilant who delights in vigilance and fears negligence goes forth like fire, burning all bonds, large and small.

32. The vigilant who delights in vigilance and regards neglect with fear, is not exposed to the fall, he is close to the Realization\*.

\* When the observer has made dharma his daily routine.

### **III. The mind**

33. This vacillating, fickle, difficult-to-control mind, observing it rectifies it as the arrow-maker makes an arrow right.

34. Like a fish taken out of the water and thrown on the earth, this mind is agitated to escape death.

35. The mind is difficult to contain, fast, it flits where it desires. Its control allows consciousness of bliss.

36. The mind is difficult to perceive, extremely subtle, it flits where it desires. Let the adept keep him under control, if he seeks the consciousness of bliss.

37. Going off, wandering alone, impalpable, hiding in a cave, this is the mind. Those who keep it under control are freed from vanity.

38. The one whose mind is not under control, who does not know the right way, the one whose confidence falters, will not know the perfection of bliss.

39. He whose mind is not imbued with desire, he who remains detached, he who has discarded both good and evil, for whom is thus vigilant, there is no fear.

40. Knowing that the body is as fragile as a jar, keeping its mind firm as a fortified city, it must attack Māra with the weapon of observance, keep control of the mind and remain without attachment.

41. Soon, alas, this body will be lying on the earth, thrown aside, devoid of consciousness, like a useless log.

42. Whatever harm an enemy may do to an enemy, a hater to a hater, a misdirected mind may cause an even greater evil.

43. No mother, father or other parent can do us as much good as a mind under control.

## **IV. The flowers**

44. Who will dominate this world of illusion, of hell and paradise ? Who will discover the dharma, as the skilled gardener discovers the rarest flowers ?

45. The adept of the dharma will dominate this world of illusion, hell and paradise. He will discover the dharma, as the skilled gardener discovers the rarest flowers.

46. Knowing that his body is ephemeral in nature, like the foam, and illusory like a mirage, the observance of the dharma will break the five flowered arrows of Māra and rise beyond the reach of the king of death\*.

\* We must destroy the five obstacles that desire raises before us and thus remain out of sight of the King of death. These obstacles are : arrogance, ignorance, blindness, lack of vigilance, unconsciousness. Māra, the King of Death would be the false ego or « the separatist », the devil.

47. Death takes away the man who gathers flowers\*, just as torrential floods take away a sleeping village.

\* Falls into the five desire traps described above.

48. Death gathers those who seek only flowers before they are satisfied.

49. Let the adept go from door to door in his village\* to beg, as the bee collects the

honey from the flowers without even having damaged their colour or perfume.

\* This village is probably the world where being embodied, the seeker of truth leads his existence and goes from experience to experience as one goes from door to door begging for his pittance. The house, image also used in this work, being the body, the incarnation. A village is a collection of houses.

50. We must not examine the faults of others, nor what they did or did not do, but consider our own actions, what we did or did not do.

« Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye »? » (Luke 6:41).

51. As a beautiful flower is resplendent but without perfume, so are the beautiful words of him who does not act accordingly.

52. As a beautiful flower is resplendent and fragrant, so are the beautiful words of him who acts accordingly.

53. Just as many garlands can be made of a pile of flowers, so a mortal being can accumulate many merits.

54. The fragrance of jasmine, or even of sandalwood or incense, cannot go against the wind but that of the just consciousness\* goes against the wind. All around, the realized spirit\*\* spreads the scent of its virtue\*\*\*.

\* Intelligence, understanding from Dharma observance.

\*\* Realisation is the purpose, before the Liberation of the chains of samsara, of an adept who practices the Buddha's dharma (his teaching in practice or sadhana).

\*\*\* Is a living example that inspires researchers and adepts. The word « virtue » is also to be taken in the sense of « property », as the property of chamomile is to calm, for example. The virtue of a realized spirit is to enlighten.

55. Sandalwood, valerian, lotus, jasmine, of all these fragrances, the fragrance of virtue (of the realized spirit) is by far the best.

56. Weak is the fragrance of sandalwood, valerian, lotus or jasmine, compared with that of the realized man who reaches the highest deities.

57. Māra cannot comprehend The Path of the adept followed by those who lead a perfectly pure life and who, by the observance, will be liberated.

58-59. As the beautiful fragrant lily emerges at the roadside, so too can the disciple of the Buddha grow in the midst of the waste of beings and shine in the ignorant and blind mass.

## V. The fool

60. Long is the night, for the insomniac, long is the way, for those who are tired, long is the wandering (samsara), for those who do not know the dharma.

61. If the walker does not meet a companion who is superior or equal to him, let him strengthen himself in his lonely way, rather than going with an ignorant.

62. The fool is moved , thinking, « This son is mine, this fortune is mine. » How can he possess son and wealth when he does not own himself ?

63. The fool who knows his folly is at least wise in this. But the fool who thinks he is intelligent is indeed a fool.

64. Even if a fool associates with a wise all his life, he will not understand the dharma any more than a spoon perceives the flavour of the soup.

65. If only for a moment an intelligent person associates with a wise, he will quickly understand the dharma, as the tongue immediately perceives the flavour of the soup.

66. Fools and ignorants have no worse enemies than themselves ; bitterness is the fruit of their actions.

67. An action is not done well, when it is done, one repents of it and reaps the fruits of it with tears in one's face.

68. An action is well done, when it is done, one does not repent of it and reaps its fruits with pleasure and satisfaction.

69. As sweet as honey, so thinks the fool of a bad deed that has not matured, but when it does, then he reaps only suffering.

70. Although for months the fool eats his food on the tip of a blade of kusa\* grass (koussa, kusha), it will not even be worth the sixteenth of the one who made dharma his daily life.

\* Eating food on the tip of a strand of kusa (koussa, kusha) is symbolically taken here as an act of asceticism. The Buddha used this herb to make the sitting on which he meditated when he reached awakening. (See «adamantin seat»).

71. An act that has not been done well does not reap its fruit immediately, just as milk does not turn immediately. Like the fire covered with ashes, likewise smolders the act that was not well done.

72. Whatever vain knowledge the fool may have acquired, it only leads him to ruin.

73. The fool thirsts for reputation and high rank among the monks, for having all authority over the monastery and the veneration of the laity.

74. « May everyone greatly appreciate what I have done; may they be submitted to me! » This is the aspiration of the fool, whose pride only increases.

75. A road leads to earthly goods, and a completely different one leads to Nirvana. Knowing this, the monk, observing it realized, no longer aspires to honors, but instead cultivates solitude.

## **VI. The Wise**

76. Let us seek the company of the wise who shows us our faults, as if he were showing us a hidden treasure ; it is better to cultivate relations with such a man, for the best will be, not the worst, for the one who will follow such a person.

77. He who exhorts us to good and dissuades us from doing evil is appreciated by the watchful man and hated by the careless man.

78. Do not bind yourselves to corrupt men, but rather to upright men and seek the friendship of the best among them.

79. He who drinks from the source of the dharma (who meditates deeply), remains at peace. With his enlightened mind, the wise always rejoices in The Path of the Honourable.

80. Irrigators guide the waters where they are needed. Arrows make them straight. The carpenters bend the wood, the wise controls himself.

81. Just as a rock is not overthrown by the wind, neither praise nor blame moves the wise.

82. The wise, after imprinting himself with Doctrine\*, becomes perfectly peaceful, like a deep, calm and clear lake.

\* Dharma, the set composed of the sadhana of The Path of the Buddha, the Buddha himself and the community of his followers, the sangha. This is the fourth of the noble truths, the màrga.

83. The wise are detached from all things. They do not listen to thoughts and ignore desire. Neither sorrow nor joy can affect them.

84. Neither for his own account, nor for that of others, the wise man desires children, fortune, kingdom, nor succeeds unjustly. Such a man is certainly wise, virtuous and just.



85. Few are the Men who pass on the other shore\*. The majority only come and go along this shore (life embodied).

\* Liberation from the chains of samsara. This verse reminds of the cycle of « the river of eternity », by Philip José Farmer.

86. Those who act in accordance with the good teaching of the Dharma will reach the other side, through the kingdom of Māra, so difficult to cross.

87. The wise will abandon the dark ways of existence, going to the light Path. He must seek bliss in the shelter\* so hard to find.

\* The Observance of Dharma. The wise takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (monk community). See verse 192 of chapter 14; « the awakened ».

88. Freely abandoning the pleasure of the senses, the wise will wash away all the impurities of the mind.

89. The one whose spirit is well trained in the practice of dharma, who, detached from all things, rejoices in the renunciation of sensual (sexual) pleasures, is radiant and, in this very world, reaches Nirvana.

## VII. The pure

90. There is no pain or worry for those who have completed their journey, who have freed themselves from passions and attachment.

91. The pure works on himself, without a home\*, he is like the swan abandoning his lake.

\* Keep in mind that Sri Gautama, the Buddha, was, as always, addressing his bikkhus (monks). Some of these monks were sannyâsin or « parivrâjaka » (perigrinator). The sannyâsin led a wandering life, passing from monastery to monastery, devoting his life to the realization of the dharma.

92. Those who amass nothing, who are frugal, who see the emptiness\* of everything and who live their last incarnation, leave a trace\*\* as difficult to follow as that of a bird in the air.

\* Sunyatà (« void »): the illusory character (mâyà) of the idea of self (âtman), from the point of view of absolute or ultimate Reality, and its conditioned character in relation to the five aggregates (skandha), from the point of view of relative or conditioned Reality.

\*\* The old schools distinguish between two nirvâa: that reached by the arhat (The realized) during this life « with residues », when remain certain aggregates (skhandas), and the complete nirvâna (parinirvâna or liberation), at biological death, when no aggregate of attachment perpetuates the physico-mental process of existence. To leave a trace, imperceptible means not to generate karma, residues, thanks to the diligent and enlightened practice of dharma. This is the realization.

93. Those who amass nothing, who are frugal, who see the emptiness of everything

and who live their last incarnation, have a path that cannot be bounded\*, free as that of birds in the air\*.

\* The reference to birds, in this verse as in others, comes from the « Parama-Hamsa Upanishad » dedicated to the most rigorous of all sannyâsin. Literally parama-hamsa means « the highest wild goose ». Indeed, this migratory bird symbolizes a renunciation that from birth to birth has reached the threshold of deliverance (moksha).

94. Those whose senses are subdued, like horses of war trained by the chariot driver, whose vanity is destroyed and unclean, such firm men, even the devas hold them dear.

95. He who does his duty is unwavering like the earth itself. He is firm as a pillar, pure as a pond not soiled by mud. For such a being, there is no more wandering.

96. Tranquil are the thoughts, words and deeds of him who by true knowledge (dharma) has freed himself and achieved perfect calm.

97. He is the greatest among men who is not gullible but has the sense of the uncreated, who has broken all his chains, who has destroyed every element (The aggregates, skhanda) of new birth.

98. Whether it be in a village or in a forest, in the valley or on the hill, wherever the pure remain, delicious, truly, is this place.

99. Delightful are the forests that the crowd despises. There, the pure without passion will find his happiness, because he does not seek sensual pleasures.

## **VIII. Thousand**

100. A single word that brings peace to those who hear it is better than a thousand meaningless words.

101. A single sentence, which brings peace to those who hear it, is better than a thousand meaningless sentences.

102. It is better to recite a single verse of the teaching that brings peace to those who hear it than to recite a hundred verses without meaning.

103. The greatest of the conquerors is not the conqueror of thousands of men in battle, but the conqueror of himself.

104. The victory over oneself is more important than the victory over others.

105. Neither a perfect, nor a near-perfect, nor the Evil One could change this

victory into defeat.

106. If, month after month for a century, sacrifices are offered by the thousands, and if for a single moment one pays homage to the realized Man (arhat), this homage alone is better than countless sacrifices.

107. If, for a hundred years, a man keeps the flame on the altar of Agni\* and pays homage for a single moment to the realized man (arhat), this brief homage is more valuable than his long devotion (practices, rituals).

\* One of the ten « Protectors of Directions ». He is the devourer of offerings. It allows to transmit to the gods the offerings that the faithful make to the gods by fire. The gautama buddha did not practice a ritual by fire. These rituals of purification are of Hindu inspiration (homa). They are rituals of offering dedicated to fire and the god Shiva.

108. In this world, any gift or alms that a person seeking merit offers for a year is not worth a single quarter of the homage paid to man.

109 For those who usually honour and respect seniors, four things increase: longevity, beauty, happiness and health.

110. A single day lived in wisdom and deep meditation (Dhyana or jhàna) is better than a hundred years spent in the vice and desire of pleasure of the senses\*.

\*\* Sexual pleasure. Don't forget that the master was addressing monks.

111. A single day lived in wisdom and deep meditation is better than a hundred years spent in ignorance and blindness.

112. A single day lived in wisdom and deep meditation is better than a century lived in laziness and inertia.

113. A single day lived in the feeling that everything is ephemeral is better than a century lived in ignorance of emptiness\*.

\* Sunyatà: principle of impermanence, birth and death, illusion.

114. A simple day lived in contemplation of the path that leads to what does not die, is better than a century lived in ignorance of The Path of Nirvana (dharma).

115. A single day lived in contemplation of the supreme Truth is better than a century lived in ignorance of the supreme Truth.

## **IX. Demerit**

116. Hasten to good, abandon desire and bad thoughts (not mastered), for to do

good without ardour is to have a spirit that revels in evil (confusion, suffering, blindness, vanity).

117. If a person acts badly, he must not continue or find pleasure in it. Remaining in confusion increases confusion and causes suffering.

118. If a person acts well, he must continue in this way and find pleasure in it. Staying always in the good strengthens the good.

119. Even a person who does evil believes in his luck, as long as the fruits of his acts do not show him that he is wrong.

120. Even a person who acts well is confused about good and evil, but when his acts bear fruit, then he knows he has done well.

121. Do not underestimate the evil, saying, « It will not reach me ». A jar also fills with drips. Thus the fool fills himself with evil little by little.

122. Do not underestimate the evil, saying, « It will not reach me ». A jar is also filled with drops. Thus the wise man is filled with good little by little.

123. As a rich merchant, who transports rich goods with too little escort, avoids dangerous paths and as a man who loves life is careful against poison, so must we act against evil.

124. A healthy hand without injury can touch poison with impunity. Evil does not affect the one who acts well.

125. To offend a pure, innocent and defenceless person is to expose oneself to the return of insult (karma), as if one were throwing dust against the wind.

126. The wicked go into the spheres of Niraya (purgatory, reincarnation) ; the righteous go into the heavenly spheres ; but those who have freed themselves from all desire reach nirvana.

127. There is no place on earth, in the air, in the middle of the ocean, at the bottom of a deep cave, where one can hide to escape karma.

128. There is no place on earth, in the air, in the middle of the ocean, at the bottom of a deep cave, where death cannot be escaped.

## **X. Torment**

129. All tremble in the face of torment ; all fear death. Considering the other as

yourself, do not be the cause of murder.

130. All tremble in the face of torment ; to all life is dear. Considering the other as yourself, do not be the cause of murder.

131. Whoever desires to be in the blessed state, strikes the debauched with a stick\*, will not obtain the blessed state after his death.

\* The danda (title of the chapter) is a splendid stick with which the earth can sink into its depths, but which also soothes pain and misery with its touch.

132. Whoever desires to be in the blessed state, does not strike the debauched with a stick, will obtain to be in the blessed state after his death.

133. Do not speak hurtful words to anyone ; they would be returned to you. Words of anger are hurtful. Whoever says them suffers the consequences.

134. If you remain as silent as a broken gong, it is because you have already entered nirvana and all violence has subsided in you.

135. Just as with a stick, the cowherd leads the cows to pasture, so do death and age, which lead to their ends lives.

136. The fool does evil without realizing it ; he is consumed and tormented by his actions as by fire.

137-140. He who with a stick wounds the one who is without a stick, will soon come to one of these ten states : he will be subject to acute suffering, disaster, bodily harm, or even to a serious illness, or to the loss of his own feelings, or he will be subject to oppression, or has a heavy charge, or loss of his parents or the destruction of his property, or the devastating fire that will burn his houses. With the destruction of the body, this man without wisdom will be reborn in the spheres of the world of suffering

141. Neither naked\* wandering, nor braided hair, nor filth, nor fasting, nor lying on the ground, nor dust, nor mud, nor squatting on the heels, can purify a man who has not overcome doubts.

\* Some ascetics, the « digambhara » live naked (« dressed with space »).

142. Though richly clothed, if a man cultivates peace of mind, if he is calm, consenting, master of himself, pure, if he does not do evil, he is a brāhmaṇa, an ascetic, a monk.

143. Is there a man in this world who is blameless enough to deserve no blame, like a thoroughbred deserving no lash ?

144. Like a well-trained horse, touched by the whip, redouble your vigilance, likewise, by trust, morality, effort, concentration, teaching practice, true knowledge

and vigilance, get rid of suffering.

145. Irrigators conduct the waters. Arrowheaders shape arrows. Carpenters bend the wood. Righteous men control themselves.

## **XI. Old age**

146. Why this joy, this joy, when the world is ravaged by torment ? O you who are enveloped in darkness, why do you not seek light (knowledge of dharma) ?

147. Look at this poor disguised form, this mass of suffering, infirmities and vain desires, where nothing is permanent or stable.

148. This fragile body is but a nest of misery, decay and corruption ; for life ends in death.

149. His grey bones will be thrown like squash in the fall. What pleasure is there in looking at them ?

150. Bone is made this house (the incarnation, body), dressed in flesh and blood. In it pride and jealousy, decay and death have settled.

151. Even the pompous tanks of rajahs end up wearing out. So it is with this very body that eventually wears out with age, but the dharma (the good law) never wears out, and it is thus that one awakened can transmit it to another awakened.

152. The ignorant man grows old like an ox ; he grows in weight, but not in wisdom.

153. Many times I have crossed in vain the cycle of rebirth, in search of the architect of this house. How painful is this cycle of rebirth !

154. O I have finally discovered you, architect ! Never again will you build this house which is my body. All the beams are broken and the ridge collapsed. My deliverable spirit has reached the extinction of all desire.

155. Those who have not lived a deserving life, and who during their youth have not been able to gather the true riches (of dharma), are wasting away like old herons in a lake without fish.

156. Those who have not lived a meritorious life, and who in their youth have not been able to gather the true riches, are like broken arches ; they lament on their lost strength !

## **XII. Self**

157. If we know that the « self » has value, we must protect it well. During each of the three vigils\*, the adept must remain vigilant.

\* Important moments of meditation (dhyana and samadhi) through which the mind reaches awakening. For Gautama, the Awakening took place on three night watches of the month vaishakha (April-May).

158. We must first establish ourselves in what is right (dharma). Only then can we teach. A wise who behaves like this cannot be blamed.

159. The wise must act according to his teaching. Only when it controls itself, it can teach others to control themselves, as difficult is self-control.

160. The « self » is the protector of the « self », for what else could be a protector ? Through a fully controlled « self », one builds a hard-won refuge.

161. By the « self » alone, evil is done, it is born of itself, caused by the « self ». Evil crushes the careless, as the diamond crushes the hardest stone.

162. He who is corrupted to excess, like ivy strangling a neglected tree, does to himself what an enemy himself would like to do to him.

163. Easy to do are things that are bad and not beneficial to oneself. But in truth, very hard to do what is good and good.

164. The foolish man who, because of false opinions (drishti), despises the dharma of realized beings (Arahant) and the righteous, fructifies, like the kashta reed, only for his own destruction.

165. Through the « self » alone, evil is done ; through the « self » one is defiled ; through the « self » evil is not done ; through the « self » one is purified. Purity and impurity depend on the « self ». No one purifies another.

166. Because of the well-being of others, as great as it may be, one's own well-being must not be neglected. Knowing, for oneself, well-being, one can become involved in the goal of dharma.

## **XIII. The world**

167. Do not be interested in common things, do not cultivate the laziness of the mind, do not embrace false opinions\* (drishti), do not be materialistic.

\* One of five Buddhist impediments and one of four Jain torrents that prevent Dharma realization.

168. Wake up. Do not be careless. Live the teaching of the dharma fully. The adept knows bliss in this world and the one after.

169. Do not be lukewarm ; live a pure life, not a life of debasement. The adept knows bliss in this and the next world.

170. If a person considers the world as a bubble, a mirage (mâyà), the king of death will not see it.

171. Come, consider this world as the multicolored chariot of a rajah, which attracts fools, but where, in truth, there is nothing worth attracting you to.

172. Whoever was negligent (about truth) and is no longer negligent, he lights the world like the moon rising from the clouds.

173. Whoever by suitable actions covers evil does, that illumines the world like the moon emerging from the clouds.

174. Blind is this world ; few here see clearly. As birds\* that escape from a net are those that go to heaven.

\* Only sannyâsin (renouncers), sadhus (saints), can escape from the net. The Parama-Hansa Upanishad is dedicated to the most rigorous of all sannyâsin. Literally parama-hansa means « the highest of wild geese ». Indeed, this migratory bird symbolizes a renunciation that from birth to birth has reached the threshold of Liberation (moksha).

175. Swans fly in traces of the sun. Some, by their powers, fly through the air. The wise are led out of this world, escaping evil.

176. There is no evil that cannot be done by someone who lies, who has transgressed even one anga of the Buddha, indifferent to the truth.

177. Avaricians do not enter the celestial kingdoms. Those who despise generosity are fools. The wise man, for his part, is happy to give and this virtue alone assures him of happiness forever.

178. Better than a single sovereignty on earth or better than going to heaven, even better than power over all the worlds, is the fruit of « one who has entered the flow.\* »

\* Here we are talking about the incarnate. The current is that of the great river of samsara. He must be incarnate, the one who makes this river pass through men and women, renouncing monks and nuns, thus making them reach the Liberation, parinirvâna (definitive extinction). If he went into the flow, it's to help others get through it. During the awakening process, « Mâra » tempts Gautama by offering to remain in the sky of the awakened, but the Buddha refuses and prefers to teach. On The Path to the Liberation, Siddhartha Gautama takes his monks across the Ganges by the « Gautama ford » at the exit of the future imperial city of Pâtaliputra (now Patna). « The blessed has crossed the river of transmigrations which takes away other men, he has reached the Other Shore which is nirvana and, out of compassion, he helps men to reach it in their turn. »



## **XIV. The awakened**

179. What path will you follow to find the awakened for whom the mastery of passions is a reality, that the desires of the world cannot reach, he who is without traces\* ?

\* Without aggregates (skhanda). Leaving a trace that is minute, imperceptible, seeing more traces means not generating karma, residues, thanks to the diligent and enlightened practice of dharma.

180. In what way will you be this thirsty awakened person, free from all ambition, free from confusion ?

181. The gods themselves envy the wise absorbed in meditation, the awake, the vigilant, who live with delight in the refuge of renunciation.

182. It is difficult to obtain birth as a man. It is difficult to live this mortal life. It is difficult to have the opportunity to hear the true doctrine and difficult, in truth, is the coming of the Buddhas.

183. To abstain from all evil, to cultivate good, to purify one's spirit, is the teaching of the awakened.

184. In spiritual practice, constancy and perseverance are essential. The awakened say that the consciousness of bliss is the most perfect. He who harms others is not a monk ; he who oppresses others is not a true ascetic.

185. Following the teaching by not insulting or shocking anyone, controlling oneself, being frugal, living in a secluded place, meditating deeply, up to states of deep consciousness, this is the dharma of the awakened.

186. Even a shower of gold cannot quench desires, for they are insatiable and cause pain ; this is what the wise know.

187. Even the heavenly pleasures are tasteless to the wise ; the disciple of the Buddha, the perfectly awake, rejoices only in the abolition of all desire.

188-189. Men struck with fear go in many shelters, in the hills, woods, gardens, trees and temples. But such shelters are not safe or supreme. With them, we are not immune to evil.

190-191-192. He who seeks refuge in the teaching of the awakened and the community of monks\*, with perfect knowledge, perceives the four truths, namely: suffering, the origin of suffering, the annihilation of suffering and The Path that leads to its annihilation. This is the safe haven\* ; the ultimate refuge that frees from suffering.

\* After the buddha has entered the parinirvâna (Liberation), in his absence, the monks still have the dharma to make their salvation: « They take refuge in the buddha, in the dharma and in the sangha. »

193. The accomplished man is hard to find, he is not born anywhere. The family where such a wise man was born prospers fortunately.

194. The birth of an awakened is a happy event, as is the teaching of the dharma, the unity of the sangha and blessed are the observance of the adepts.

195-196. He who reverences those who are worthy of reverence, be it the awakened ones or his disciples, who has overcome passions and got rid of sorrow and lamentations, who reverences such peaceful and fearless beings, has merit that cannot be measured.

## **XV. The happiness**

197. Happy\*, let us live without hatred among the haters. In the midst of men who hate, we remain without hate.

\* The happiness of the mystic (sukha, opposed to dukkha, suffering) comes from meditation. It is a happiness associated with a state of deep tranquility (upeksà). In the early stages of dhyàna (deep meditation), this state of deep tranquility is associated with joy. Note that the word "sukha" also refers to pleasure.

198. Happy are we, living healthy among the suffering. Among the suffering, we remain healthy.

199. Happy, let us live, without desiring the pleasures of the senses, among those who desire them. Among those who desire them, we do not desire them.

200. Happy are we, we who have no attachments, we are nourished with bliss, like the radiant devas.

201. Victory breeds hatred. The defeated lives in suffering. The peaceful is happy, abandoning victory and defeat.

202. There is no fire comparable to lust, no crime comparable to hatred, no evil comparable to the desire of the senses, no welfare higher than the peace of nirvana.

203. Hunger is the greatest disease, conditioning, the greatest evil. Conscious of this reality, the adept know nirvana, the perfect awareness of bliss.

204. Health is the greatest benefit, satisfaction is the greatest wealth, loyal people make the best family, Nirvana is consciousness of bliss.

205. Having tasted the taste of perfect shelter and peace, the adept is without sorrow or defilement, savoring the taste of the high joy of the dharma.

206. Excellent is the view of the àrya\* ; their company is always beneficial. Not frequenting senseless, we will remain blessed.

\* A word of Sanskrit origin, the language of the Aryas, whites from the Iranian plateaus and Bactria, importers of Vedism (original) and meaning « noble ». Buddhism has given this word the equivalent of « holy » in our country. This word means holy people, mahatmas.

207. In truth, he who walks in the company of senseless is sad for a long time, the association with them is always painful, like the association with an enemy. Happy is the association with a wise, as is the encounter with relatives.

208. In truth, the aryas (saints) have knowledge, are wise, educated, sincere and respectful, so it is well to follow such virtuous and intelligent men, as the moon follows the path of the stars\*\*.

\*\* A metaphor for samsara and the Vedic principle of the paths of heaven.

## **XVI. The pleasure**

209. Focusing on what must be avoided and not on what must be preserved, abandoning the effort, the reason for life, the one who is attached to pleasure, envy the one who observes the dharma.

210. So do not seek pleasure, much less what is unpleasant, because if it is painful to be deprived of what is pleasant, it is also painful to see what is unpleasant.

211. Therefore, hold nothing dear, for the separation from what is dear is painful. The bonds do not exist for the one to whom nothing is dear.

212. Thinking about what is dear to us breeds sorrow and fear. He who has broken away from the bonds has no sorrow and what would he fear ?

213. From (sexual) pleasure comes sorrow and fear. For the one who is completely free from pleasure, there is no sorrow and what would he have to fear ?

214. From attachment comes sorrow and fear. For those who are completely free of attachment, there is no sorrow and what would he have to fear ?

215. From desire (sexual) comes sorrow and fear. For the one who is completely freed from, there is no sorrow and what would he have to fear ?

216. From greed comes sorrow and fear. For those who have completely freed

themselves from greed, there is no more sorrow and what would they fear ?

217. He who is perfect in morality and knowledge, who is established in the dharma, who has fulfilled the truth, and who fulfils his duties, the people hold him dear.

218. The one who has developed a thirst for the ineffable (bliss), the one whose mind is imbued (by the three jewels\*), the one whose mind is not bound by the desires of the senses, such a person is called « the one who is in the higher stream ».

\* Three main angas of Buddhism: the awakened, its teaching and the community of disciples.

219-220. Just as, after a long absence, a man who returns home safely is received by his relatives and friends, who welcome him, so is he with the one who has done well ; when he passes from this world to the other, his own good deeds welcome him when he arrives as a parent.

## **XVII. Anger**

221. Renounce anger, renounce pride, free yourself from all attachment. He who is detached, who does not yield to passion or desire, cannot be affected by suffering.

222. He who holds his anger, as the Maharatha\* leads the horses of his chariot\*\*, I call him a real driver, the others are only tenors of reins.

\* Names of the great fighters on chariots.

\*\* Krishna, an awakened man like the Gautama Buddha of the Sakya, is often depicted driving Arjuna's chariot, one of his disciples (see Bhagavad-Gita). He leads four horses, symbolizing the five senses (taste and smell are only one sense in the brain). Allegory of Arjuna's mastery of his senses, through the Observance of dharma (practice of Buddha's teaching). The chariot represents the body, the horses, the senses and Krishna the strength of the dharma.

223. Contains anger by serenity, evil by good, correcting greed by generosity, overcoming falsehood by truth.

224. Speak in truth, do not get angry, give your provisions to those in need. By these three attitudes you can approach the divine.

225. The adept without any violence, masters of their senses, reach the perpetual state where suffering is not possible.

226. Those who are ever watchful, who control themselves day and night and whose spirit is always directed towards nirvana, will see their stains disappear forever.

227 This is an old saying, Atula\*, that it is not only of today : They blame those who sit silent and those who speak too much, those who speak little, they also blame them. In this world, no one is blamed.”

\* The Buddha speaks to one of his disciples; « Atula », a native of « Srāvastī », one of the main cities of « Kosala », one of the sixteen most powerful states of India around 600 BC. The Buddha spent more than half of his life there as a monk, especially in the monastery of Jevatna, which has become a place of pilgrimage. Jevatna was one of the two main monasteries of the Buddha, offered to the master by one of his disciples ; Anathapindika, a rich merchant, relative of one of the master’s first disciples.

228. There never was, never will be, and now there is no one totally blameworthy or totally commendable.

229. If a man is praised by the wise, who have observed him day after day, as being intelligent and blameless, as endowed with intuition and purity, who would dare to blame him, he who is as pure as gold? The devas and Brahma themselves praise him.

230. Who dares to criticize him who is like refined gold ? Even the Deva praise him, also by Brahma he is praised.

231. Be on guard against insubordination of your body. Control your actions, and having abandoned the wrong ways of acting (contrary to Dharma), practice perfect conduct in actions.

232. Be on guard against the insubordination of language. Control your words. Abandoning the bad ways of speaking, practice good conduct in words.

233. Be on guard against insubordination of the mind. Control your thoughts. Abandoning bad ways of thinking, practice good conduct in right thoughts.

234. The adept control their actions, their words, and their minds. Indeed, they control themselves fully.

## **XVIII. Impurities**

235. Here you are like a parched leaf; the messengers of death are waiting for you. You are on the eve of departure and you don’t even have provisions\* for the trip!

\* Here, we are talking about the balance of his life to be asserted in order to gain access to the Liberation of the chains of samsara. A person who has not fulfilled the purpose of life, through the diligent observance of the dharma (the Buddha’s path), comes to death without deserving Liberation. She will be reincarnated.

236. Quickly become an island for your shelter, work hard and become wise. When

you have washed and cleansed yourself of all defilement, then you can enter the heavenly abode of the Noble Beings (aryas).

237. Your days are now numbered, you are in the presence of the god of death. No rest for you on the road, no recourse either.

238. Quickly make yourself an island for your shelter; give yourself trouble and become wise. When you have washed and purified yourself of all defilement, you will no longer be reborn and you will no longer be compelled to decay.

239. By degrees, little by little, from moment to moment, a adept must remove his own impurities, as a goldsmith removes the slag from the silver.

240. When rust appears on the iron, the iron itself is eaten away. Likewise, the wrong acts (outside the dharma) of man gnaw at him and expose him to suffering.

241. The absence of constancy is the rust of the Observance. The absence of effort is the rust of the houses (the body, the incarnation). Indecency is the rust of beauty. Inattention is the fault of vigilance.

242. Depravity is the impurity of woman. Greed is the impurity of the donor. Impurities, in truth, are all bad things in this world and the next.

243. An even worse impurity is ignorance (of dharma). Leaving this impurity, be unclean, oh bhikkhus (monks).

244-245. Easy to live is the life of one who is unscrupulous, who is cheeky like the crow, the vile, the insolent, the arrogant and the corrupt. Hard is the life of one who is modest, who constantly seeks purity, being detached, humble, intelligent, leads a life of his own.

246-247. He who, in this world, destroys life, tells lies, takes what is not given, goes to the wife of others, devotes himself to intoxicants, such a man unearths his own root in this world.

248. Know thus, O brave man ! « The bad things are difficult to control ». Don't let lust and perversity drag you into prolonged suffering.

249. People give according to their confidence and contentment. Anyone who is envious of the food and drink of others does not reach Samadhi (ecstasy) either by day or by night.

250. But, the one who cut this completely : emotion, which uprooted it, destroyed it, reaches bliss day and night.

251. There is no fire like desire, no vice like hatred, there is no net like illusion, no influx like thirst.

252. Easily seen, the faults of others, difficult to see, our own faults ; Like little straws, we sort out the fault of others, but we hide our own as a clever birdcatcher hides.

253. He who sees the sins of others and is always irritable, his rot will grow. It is far from the purification of its decay.

254. In the world there is no way, no ascetic outside the community (sangha) ; men find their delight in obstacles, the Tathàgata\*\* are free of obstacles.

\*\* Awakened (Buddhas) through dharma Observance.

255. In the world there is no parth, no ascetic outside the community ; there is no conditioning (embodied being) that is eternal. There is no instability in the awakened.

## **XIX. The Just**

256-257. A man is not Just if he arbitrarily judges. The just man is the one who distinguishes the just from the unjust, who judges others knowingly, according to the Law and fairness; this wise, established into the dharma, is called a Just.

258. He is not a Just simply because he speaks much. He who is established in the dharma, without hatred and without fear is called a Just.

259 He is not established into the dharma simply because he speaks a lot. He who listens little and understands dharma through body and mind is truly established into the Dharma. So it is with those who do not neglect the dharma.

260. No more is he an Elder, simply because his head is grey and his age is ripe. « Old in vain », he would be called.

261. He who is righteous, dharma, non-violent, controlling, and disciplined, this Just, who has rejected impurities, is truly called an elder.

262-263. Neither loose speech, nor a beautiful appearance, honors an envious, stingy and false man. But he in whom these defects are extinguished, this Just who has rejected hatred is called, in truth, « of good nature ».

264. It is not by shaving one's head that an indocile man who utters lies becomes an ascetic. How could he be an ascetic, who is full of desire and lust ?

265. He who has totally dominated evil, great and small, is called an ascetic, because he has overcome all evil.

266. Nor is he a monk simply because his food is found by alms. By adopting offensive manners, one certainly will not become a monk.

267. In that he has given up merit and demerit, that he is chaste and diligent in the practices of dharma, that he lives in this world with understanding, truly he is called a monk.

268-269. He who is inert and ignorant will not become a Just only by silence. As if he were grasping a scale, the true wise takes the best and flees from evil. For this reason, he is a Just. He who thinks intelligently about this world and the other is a Just.

270. Nor is he an honorable (arya), the one who wounds living beings. Through non-violence towards all living beings, we are called honorable.

271-272. Monk, do not just follow the rules, or even study assiduously, obtain states of deep concentration, lead a reclusive life, or even say, « I am fortunate to know the bliss of the forsaken that ordinary man cannot know ». None of this must satisfy you Until they are erased, completely and ever, all desires.

## XX. The Path

273. The best path is The Path of the eight angas\*; the best of truths is The Path of the four\*\*. The state without passions is the best of the states. Beings with two feet, the one who sees clearly (one of the eight angas) is the best.

\* Sanskrit meaning « subdivisions », « members ». Currently it would read « items ». The eight angas of the Noble Path all turn around what is right : right sight or understanding ; right thought, speech, action, means of existence, effort, attention, concentration (in meditation).

\*\* The four truths are : 1 : Dukkha, the nature of life, suffering, sorrows and fleeting joys, its imperfection, impermanence and lack of substance, reality (illusion or m $\grave{a}$ y $\grave{a}$ ). 2 : «Samudaya», emergence of prajna (the consciousness of truth), of the origin of evil being (dukkha). This consciousness is not enough ; we must reject this desire, eliminate it, uproot it. 3 : «Nirodha», the cessation of this dissatisfaction inherent in the incarnation, the cessation of the mental fluctuations (vrttis): « Yogas citta vrtti nirodhah. Freedom (or rest\*\*\*) is indifference to mental variations. (Yogas $\acute{u}$ tra 1.2). 4 : « Marg $\grave{a}$  », The Path. It is the dharma or spiritual path and the teaching of the living Buddha, the help of the community (sangha) of the adepts and the diligent practice of the angas (sadhana) of The Path.

\*\*\* « Freedom , « rest » is what the word « yoga » meant at the time of the compilation of the Yogas $\acute{u}$ tra (Patanjali) sutras. The word « yoga » meant « unity » long after, with the intervention of Adi Shankara, a wandering monk of the eighth century. Therefore, the second part of the first book must, if it is to be translated, take this fact into account.

274. This is the only path, and there is no other way for the purification of understanding. Follow her and overcome the illusion of the world, the work of M $\acute{a}$ ra\*.



\* Dead. The Buddha's tempter, during his meditation, his samadhi that led him to awakening. Jesus experienced this with the devil in the desert. We could also talk about the false ego, the abhimàna .

275. By following it, you will end the pain (Dukkha). This path was taught by me, when I knew the cure for the thorns of existence.

276. Therefore, begin to practice (the dharma) with zeal. Priests are content to preach. Once you enter this path, meditation frees you from the bonds of Màra (death and/or false ego, the devil).

277. « Impermanent are all created things ». When we understand this wisely, we detach ourselves from dissatisfaction, from suffering. This is The Path of truth.

278. « All created things are subject to pain ». When one is well penetrated by this, one is delivered from pain. This is The Path of truth.

279. « All created things are in the realm of illusion ». When one is well penetrated by this, one is delivered from pain. This is The Path of truth.

280. The nonchalant who does not struggle when he must struggle, who, though young and strong, is indolent, whose aspiration intent is weakened, who is lazy, will not realize The Path.

281. Watch over your language ; keep your mind under control and do not act in the wrong way. The one who would act faithfully by following these three councils would be on The Path to realization.

282. Truly, from meditation comes understanding. Without meditation, understanding vanishes. Knowing this double reality, let us choose the one that makes our understanding grow.

283. Cut by the foot the whole forest of desire, for from it comes suffering. When you have cut the forest and the brush, then be without desire, O monks.

284. As long as the man has not cut by the foot the desire\*, even the smallest, which pushes him towards women, so long is his spirit chained, as the calf which still sucks is bound to his mother.

\* Here the Buddha speaks to the monks, not the laymen. The monks made vows of chastity.

285. Cut from yourself the love of yourself, like a lilac of autumn. Cultivate this way of peace. Nirvana was shown to you by the well-come (the awakened). Aspire after The Path of tranquility, after the nirvàna taught by the blessed.

286. « I want to stay here in the rainy season, here in autumn and summer », thus the ignorant dream that does not realize its impermanence.

287. The man possessed by desire, whose mind is obsessed with children and

herds, death seizes him and carries him like a great flood a sleeping village.

288. Children, a father, allies are not protection. Parents are not protection against death.

289. Understanding this fact, the wise man, master of his mind, will see The Path to nirvana clear.

## **XXI. Miscellaneous**

290. If it is enough to give up a little happiness to find a greater happiness\*, let the intelligent man give up the first for the second.

\* The beatitude found in the Observance of Dharma.

291. Those who seek pleasure at the expense of others are prisoners of the consequences of their actions, slaves of duality and stupidity.

292. Neglecting one's duties in order to do what should not be done is to increase the damage done to the mind by arrogance and neglect.

293. Those who always pay attention to the traps of the senses, who ignore what is evil (contrary to the Dharma) and who always do what is good, are wise and free from the sufferings of illusion.

294. Having killed his father (pride), his mother (pleasure) and the two kings (false opinions or drishti) ; after having destroyed the kingdom of pleasure and all its dependence, Man realized\* is virtuous.

\* Arhant, or Brahmane, in the Buddhist sense. In contrast to Hinduism, for whom the Brahman comes from a caste, for the first Buddhism and the Upanishads, a Brahmane is the one who has integrated the Veda (knowledge, coming through the Dharma Observance, sadhana, the teaching of the Gautama Buddha). He is also a « realized » person, that is, one who has made the virtues of Veda (or knowledge) the reality of his life.

295. Having killed father, mother, the two kings and tigers, who are the mental shackles, the man realized is serene.

296. The adept of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for day and night their attention is focused on the Buddha.

297. The adepts of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for their attention, night and day, remains attached to the Dharma.

298. The adepts of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for their attention, night and day, remains attached to the Sangha\*.

\* The Dharma community. These considerations come from the fourth noble truth : « Margà » or « The Path » in which the dharma, the living Buddha, the community (sangha) of the adepts and the assiduous practice of the angas (sadhana) are important.

299. The adepts of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for night and day they remember the ephemeral nature of all that has been created.

300. The adepts of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for their minds, night and day, delight in the knowledge of Grace.

301. The adepts of the Dharma are ardent and conscious, for their minds, night and day, delight in meditation.

302. It is hard to renounce the world; it is also hard to live in the world. Harsh is the monastic life, difficult is the family life. It is painful to associate with those who are not our equals and it is painful to be in the cycle of incarnations. Do not remain aimless in the suffering of samsara.

303. 303. The Man full of confidence and virtue and who has money and good reputation, is revered wherever he goes.

304. Good men shine from afar, like the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. While the deceivers are no more visible than arrows fired in the night.

305. The man who eats alone, sleeps alone, walks alone\*, tirelessly in self-control, will rejoice in the lonely life of the forests.

\* Parivrājaka (perigrinator, wanderer), a sort of hermit, a wanderer.

## **XXII: the unhappy state**

306. The liar is in unhappy states (dukkha), as is the liar who, having done wrong, says, « I did nothing ». Both, at the time of death, will look alike.

307. Those who wear the monk's orange robe and have no control over their actions or thoughts, who are weak in practice, these receive the right fruit of their actions (karma) today and tomorrow.

308. It is better for a monk without control or assiduous practice to swallow a burning metal ball than to eat alms\*.

\* It was customary for Buddhist monks to go through the streets and ask for their food from people who were honored to give it to them. That is still the case today.

309. Four misfortunes overwhelm the careless who commits adultery: demerit, disturbed sleep, blame him in the third, the unhappy state in the fourth.

310. The accumulation of demerits causes an unhappy future life. Brief is the joy of a frightened adulterous man and woman, to whom the king provides severe punishment. That's why no one should date another's wife.

311. Like a cutting grass, if it is badly held, wounds the hand that grips it, a deep spiritual life, if it is badly lived, generates suffering and confusion.

312. Neither negligent gestures (of the dharma) nor false devotions, nor a feigned chastity will bear great fruit.

313. If anything is to be done, let it be with vigour and firmness, for an indolent spiritual life only raises dust.

314. It is better not to hurt an action, then we worry about it. It is better to do an action well: having done it, we have no regrets.

315. Like a border town guarded outside and inside, beware of yourself. Do not let the moment pass, for those who do not grasp the present moment feel the suffering of the unhappy state.

316. Shameful without reason to be ashamed and shameless when they should be ashamed, those who have a mistaken vision of things know the suffering of the unhappy state.

317. Worried about danger when there is nothing to fear and without fear when there is danger, those who have a mistaken vision of things know the suffering of the unhappy state.

318. Imagining error when it is absent and not seeing error when it is present, those who have an erroneous view of things know the suffering of the unhappy state.

319. However, knowing that a mistake is a mistake and that a correct thing is correct, those who have a correct view of things know the bliss of the dharma accomplished.

## **XXIII : the elephant**

320. As an elephant in battle endures the arrow springing from the bow, so shall I patiently endure slander and insult; for, verily, there are many malevolents in this world.

321 Most people are like trained elephants in battle. Rajah rides the best elephants, however, the man who endures slander and insult is better than anything.

322-323. Excellent are Sindh's trained mules\* and tamed bloods. Excellent also the well tamed elephants, with big tusks. Better still are the Men who know how to dominate, for none of these mounts could lead a Man to nirvana. Man who controls himself, who tames himself, is on The Path to nirvana.

\* region of India, now southern Pakistan, where Karachi is located. It is also the ancient cradle of the Indus civilization, with the town of Mohenjo-Daro. Region irrigated by the Indus, very rich in agricultural production, probably famous for its horses.

324. At the time of the rut, it was difficult to master the powerful elephant. When chained, he refuses all food and aspires only to become an elephant of the forest.

325. Whoever is amorphous, greedy, asleep, wandering aimlessly, remaining in his mud like a fat pig fed with dirty waters, this poor fool is called to be reborn again and again.

326. In the past, my mind wandered from object to object as long as it pleased it; but today, like the cornac, I am completely in control of its sting, the elephant in rut.

327. Rejoice in being watchful, control your mind, and free yourselves from the cloaca of evil, as the elephant clears the mud of the swamp.

« By mastery (in inspiration) one stands unattached above the mud of swamps, thorns and death. » (Yogasûtra, 3.39).

328. If, as a friend, you find someone prudent, leading a decent, intelligent life and master of him, do not hesitate to go along with him and overcome all difficulties.

329. If you do not meet such a prudent friend, leading a decent, intelligent life and master of him, then, like a king leaving a conquered country, or like the elephant in the forest, go your own way.

330. It is better to live alone than with a madman, like a free elephant in his forest, going without worries.

331. It is good to have friends when you need them. It is good to be content with what we have. It is good, at the time of death, to have acquired merits as it is good to be able to leave all sorrow behind.

332. It is good to honour one's mother. It is good to honour one's father. It is good to honour the monks. It is good to assist the deserving.

333 It is good to lead a pure life throughout life. It is good to keep an unshakable faith. It is good to acquire wisdom. It is good to refrain from all evil.

## **XXIV. the desire**

334. In the Man without vigilance, desire grows like a vine. This Man, then, passes from existence to existence, as the monkey leaps from tree to tree, in search of fruit.

335. Whoever is dominated by desire, sees his suffering grow like wild grass after rain.

336. Whoever dominates desire, so difficult to overcome, sees suffering slip on him like water on the leaves of the lotus.

337. To all of you gathered here (bikkhus or monks), I give this salutary advice: uproot the root of desire, as you would the root of wild grass. Don't let Mâra (death, the devil, the false-ego) take you like the river in flood rips away the reed.

338. As a fallen tree still throws out buds, if its roots remain intact, suffering springs up again and again, as long as the roots of desire have not been torn away in itself.

339. Unable to resist forcefully the many currents of passions, the Man who is misguided, driven by desire, is carried away by his flow.

340. These currents\* flow in all directions. The vine of desire clings and buds. Seeing her rise like this, be wise and cut her roots.

\* For the Jains, the four « currents » or « torrents », (ogha) are desire (kâma), existence (bhava), ignorance (avidyâ) and false opinions (drishti).

341. Feelings of joy and pleasure are easy to obtain. But those who cling to their desires will have to be born again and again and die.

342. Besieged by uncontrolled desire, man struggles like a rabbit trapped and bound. He will know suffering for a long time.

343. Besieged by uncontrolled desires, man struggles like a rabbit trapped and bound. A monk must therefore renounce desire, if it is to the abandonment of passions that he aspires (nirvana).

344. He who, freed from the jungle of desire, plunges back into it, looks at him as a freed being returning to slavery.

345. It is not a powerful bond, says the wise, that one made of iron, wood or hemp. Far more powerful is this thirst for jewels and ornaments, sons and wives.

346. These bonds that choke you without appearing tight, these are difficult to undo. However, some cut it, and choose the homeless life\* ; they give up pleasure and desire without looking back.

\* It should be remembered that Gautama, the Buddha, most often spoke to the bikkhus, that is to say to the monks who made vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, like our Catholic monks. Thus, for these

monks, the vow of chastity means renouncing the founding of a family, having wife and children, and renouncing desire and even pleasure. For a lay practitioner, family and pleasure are not outlawed. Even the desire, that which one has for his wife, is valid, it is part of the duties of a husband. The parivrājaka (perigrinator, vagant) takes vows of perpetual wandering.

347. Those whom passion has trapped fall back into the restless flow they themselves have created, like a spider trapped in its own web. The wise man, abandoning desire, passes through, without turning back, and leaves all worry behind.

348. Free yourself from the past, free yourself from the future, free yourself from the present\* (present times) to overcome them. Having thus freed your spirit, you will no longer return to be born and to die.

\* Free yourself from the memories, the « old man », the projects and the illusion of the present world. The present moment, which is touched by meditation (dhyana), is another thing. It is not this present moment that the Gautama Buddha speaks of here, but the vicissitudes of today's world.

349. A man obsessed with his thoughts, dominated by passion, sees desire grow in him. He then forged a heavy chain.

350. The Man who loves to dominate thoughts, who is always vigilant, does not run after pleasures, in truth, such a Man will break the chains of Mâra.

351. At the end of the way, fearless, free from desire, this Man has broken the chains of existence and at his death he is the « bearer of the last body\* ».

\* Who will not be reincarnated, freed from the shackles of samsara.

352. Delivered from desire, detached from everything, skilled in etymology and vocabulary, he who knows the assemblage of syllables is the one who is called the wise « bearer of the last body ».

353. I am the one who understood everything and learned everything, that nothing defiles or embarrasses, freed by the destruction of desire, having realized everything alone. Who could I call my master ?

\* This passage suggests that the Gautama Buddha advocated spirituality without a master, but he was a master ! Of course Gautama, the awakened, had no master ! Who could have been ? However, before he was awakened, he had masters.

354. The Grace of Dharma surpasses all graces. The flavor of Dharma surpasses all flavors. Joy born of the Dharma surpasses all joy. The liberation of desire leads beyond all suffering.

355. Riches ruin the foolish but not those who seek what is beyond. By the thirst for riches, the fool is ruined as if he were ruining others.

356. Weed\* is the scourge of cultivated fields\*\*, just as attachment is the scourge of humanity. That is why detachment, Grace of Dharma, produces many fruits.

\* Useless thoughts, vain concepts, desires, vrttis.

\*\* A cultivated field is the adept's spirit who practices dharma, in whom the seeds of knowledge germinate, take root and grow, producing good fruits. Jesus said this in Luke 8:4-21.

357. The weed is the scourge of cultivated fields, as the hate is the scourge of man. Consequently, the gift that frees you from hatred produces many fruits.

358. The weed is the scourge of cultivated fields, like ignorance the scourge of humanity. Consequently, the gift that frees you from ignorance produces many fruits.

359. The weed is the plague of cultivated fields, as the greed the plague of humanity. As a result, selfless action\* frees you and produces many fruits\*\*.

\* Lao-Tzu or Wu Wei's "inaction" who is the "service" or "giving up the fruit of his actions" of the Bhagavad-Gita, the Sikh Sewa.

\*\* Spiritual Virtues Enabling Dharma Realization.

## **XXV, the monk**

360. Mastery (of techniques) of the eyes, ear, nose and tongue is a good thing\*.

\* This is the "secret" message of the three wisdom monkeys. It should be noted that the monkey who hides the mouth, also hides the nose, which corresponds to the breath and the mouth (technique of amrita?). It seems these monkeys say you have to turn your senses inward.

361. It is good to master your thoughts, words and actions. Mastery is a good thing in general. The monk who remains in this mastery frees himself from suffering.

362. The man who controls his hands, his feet and his tongue, who totally controls himself, finding pleasure in turning inward, who is calm and who tastes the lonely life, deserves to be called « monk ».

363. The monk who masters his language is measured in his remarks. Simple, it includes the teaching of the awakened. So he can speak of it clearly and his words, in truth, are as sweet as honey.

364. The monk who makes dharma his life, who revels in it, who meditates according to his techniques, certainly cannot deviate from the dharma.

365. The monk must not underestimate his progress, nor envy the progress of others; because the envious monk cannot reach the concentration necessary for vigilance.

366. Even if the progress made by the monk is small, he should not underestimate



him; if his life is pure and his efforts constant, he will be praised even by the devas.

367. He who is detached from « me » and « mine », from all that is conditioned (Who is born and who dies. The illusion) and who does not complain about what he does not have, deserves to be called « monk ».

368. The monk who lives in a state of bliss, who has faith in the teaching of the awakened, this monk will reach the peace of nirvāṇa, where illusion disappears.

369. Throw the useless and the vain overboard, O monk. The moorings of lust and aversion cast off, you will float to the bliss of nirvana.

370. Slice the five links\* ! Drop the five links\*\* ! And above all, cultivate the five links\*\*\* ! Of a monk who left behind the five impediments\*\*\*\*, it is said that he is : « He who crossed the flow\*\*\*\*\* ».

\* The five « inferior » links that must be severed are ignorance, doubt, blind faith in rites and rituals, sensuality and negativity. Rituals and rituals without the knowledge of the dharma are considered vain. Rites and rituals, in knowledge and practice of dharma are justified.

\*\* The five « superior » bonds that must be unleashed are the desire to attain a paradise with forms, the desire to attain a paradise without forms, the pride, agitation and ignorance of the Dharma.

\*\*\* What needs to be cultivated are the five spiritual faculties : trust, effort, attention, concentration and wisdom.

\*\*\*\* The five barriers are : greed, aversion, misperception, false opinions (drishti) and pride.

\*\*\*\*\* The Enlightened Masters, the spiritual guides of Jainism, were called the Tīrthankaras (in Sanskrit the « ford makers »). They have taught the principles of Jainism since prehistoric times and are, as such, quoted by the Veda of the Brahmins : the Hindus recognize the lineage of the Tīrthankar as authentic and place the origin of Jainism at the beginning of the world, where the god Vishnu lives.

371. Concentrate and meditate, monk ! Don't be so careless. Don't let lust ideas drive your thoughts. Careless, do not swallow a ball of metal red by fire, burn yourself and then lament : « How painful ! »

372. There is no meditation without wisdom and there is no wisdom without meditation. The meditating wise is close to nirvāṇa.

373. A monk in a lonely place, who has soothed his mind and perceived the Dharma in all its depth, sees the joy of bliss awaken in him.

374. He who is continually fully aware of the origin and disappearance of the five aggregates (Skandha) experiences joy and rapture, realizing nirvana.

375. They are, for the wise monk, the very basis of religious life : to master one's senses, to develop attention, to cultivate contentment and moderation, to associate with one's fellow men (Sangha, fourth noble truth of mārga).

376. May he bond with his fellow men, noble, healthy and full of energy ; May he

conduct himself justly and kindly ; he will derive great joy from it and put an end to suffering.

377. Just as jasmine drops its faded petals, so too does the monk strip himself of desire and hatred.

378. Moderate in action and in speech, calm, calm, well centered and empty of any appetite for the world, this monk is said to be serene, deeply at peace.

379. Control must be that of self »\* over oneself. The vigilant monk who watches over himself will live in bliss.

\* The « true self », the spirit, not the « illusion self », the false ego of mind and vanity.

380. In truth, the « self » protects the « self ». In itself there is the best refuge\*. Know how to control yourself as the rider masters a noble stallion.

\* « Men in fear go to many shelters, in hills, woods, gardens, trees and temples. But such shelters are not safe, nor supreme. With them, we are not immune to evil. He who seeks refuge in the teaching of the awakened and the community of monks, understands the knowledge of the dharma, which leads to the cessation of suffering. This is the safe haven ; the supreme refuge that frees from suffering. » (Dhammapada, Ch. 14, The Awakened, 188-192).

381. Full of joy, full of faith in the Buddha's teaching, the monk reaches the state of peace, the bliss of the cessation of conditioned things.

382. The young monk who devotes himself to dharma, illuminates this world, just like the Moon that emerges from the clouds.

## **XXVI the bràhmana**

383. O bràhmana\* ! Wrestle, quench the whiffs of desire, quench passion. Realizing the end of all created things, the wise man knows nirvana.

\* This is not the Sanskrit word: "Brahmane" for Hindu priests. Gautama, Sakya, spoke the Pali. In this language, the word "Bràhmana" has a completely different meaning. According to the major branch of Buddhism, the «Mahayana», and chapter 32 of the «Mahàprajñàpàramitàsàstra» (2nd century), the word «bràhmana» describes virtuous men. Here, the word «virtuous» refers to the chaste Man, who has overcome the desire of the flesh, often monks (bikkhus) having made vows of chastity (among others). The fact of having overcome sexual desire is called «brahmacarya», «celibacy», and the one who has overcome sexual desire is called «bràhmana».

384. When bràhmana has arrived at perfect meditation (samadhi) and inner vision, all attachments fall. Then he reaches knowledge.

« To project oneself through meditation into the inner light gives knowledge of the hidden subtleties, close and distant. » (Yogasûtra 3:25).

« Meditating on the inner light makes perfection known. » (Yogasûtra 3:32).

385. He for whom there is neither the subjective, nor the objective\*, nor anything else, to be without fear and without hindrance, this one is a brâhmana.

\* Who considers only the uncreated (Dao for Lao-Tzu) as worthy of attention.

386. He who abandons himself to meditation and is freed from desire, all baseness gone, who has reached the ultimate goal, this one is a brâhmana.

387. The sun shines in the day, the moon shines in the night, the warrior shines in his armor, the wise in meditation shines. Day and night, at any time, the awakening shines.

388. The man who rejected evil, is a brâhmana The one whose conduct is disciplined is a adept and the ascetic is the one who has purged himself of his impurities.

389. Don't hit a brâhmana, and don't make the brâhmana angry if you hit him. Shame on the one who hits a brâhmana. Shame on the brâhmana getting angry.

390. For the brâhmana, there is nothing better than the control of mind and desire. The more he gets there, the more his pain will subside.

391. He who does not harm in thought, speech and action, who masters these three modes, this one is a brâhmana.

392. The person who has transmitted the dharma taught to you by the awakened\* deserves your homage. Honor him as the priest honors the flame of sacrifice\*\*.

\* It is very possible that the Gautama Buddha has delegated to some of his deserving disciples (monks) the care of initiating and teaching (via the sermons) the dharma.

\*\* Agni, the flame is a ritual « object » that is widely used by Buddhism. The instruments of sacrifice are thrown into the flames after the ritual.

393. Neither twisted hair\*, nor caste, nor birth make a brâhmana . He in whom truth and righteousness reside, this one is a brâhmana.

\* Usual hairstyle of priests at that time.

394. What's the use of raising your hair, lazy ! What's the use of wearing antelope skin ? Evil is in you and you disguise the outside.

395. The man who wears worn clothes, whose face is emaciated, his veins protruding, and who meditates in secret, this one is a brâhmana.

396. But I do not call Brâhmana the one who, though a Brahmin (caste of priests) by birth, is rich and arrogant. He is the one who possesses nothing, who attaches himself to nothing, this one is a brâhmana.

397. He who has no attachment, no fear, and is completely under control, this one is a brāhmana.

398. He who has severed the bonds of hatred, has broken the knots of attachment, has rejected the prison of ignorance, and has awakened, this one is a brāhmana.

399. He who, without anger, bears reproach, lashes and punishments, who has made patience his powerful support, this one is a brāhmana.

402. He who, in this life, has realized the cessation of suffering, who has laid down his burden and who has freed himself from the yoke of attachment, this one is a brāhmana.

403. His understanding is profound, he is a wise capable of discerning truth and what is not. He has reached the ultimate goal, in him, this one is a brāhmana.

404. He stands apart, both lay people and monks\*. Without remaining, almost without need\*\*, this one is a brāhmana.

\* This passage is paradoxical in view of the teaching of Gautama, the Buddha : why would a brāhmana stand apart from monks ? The teaching of the Buddha, his four noble truths, in this case the fourth ; « mārga », does she not recommend to encourage the attendance of the monks of the sangha ? No doubt this is a category of monks who have taken a vow of solitude.

\*\* Needs are not in the order of desire. A need is legitimate and must be met ; it is a sacred duty to take care of your body, so that you can realize the dharma. That said, frugality is a good thing and it is good to see what is needed and what is desire. Eating is a need. Eating expensive food is a desire.

405. He who does no harm to any creature, whether weak or powerful, who does not commit or cause to commit murder, this one is a brāhmana.

406. He has renounced all violence against the weak, as against the strong. He does not kill or encourage others to do so, this one is a brāhmana.

407. He from whom lust and hatred, pride and envy have fallen, as the mustard seed falls from the tip of the needle, is a brāhmana.

408. His words are instructive, kind and true. He never assaults anyone, this one is a brāhmana.

409. He who in this world receives only what is given to him, be it little or much, short or long, good or bad, this one is a brāhmana.

410. He who has no desire for this world or the other, who has no attachment or yoke, this one is a brāhmana.

411. He who no longer has desire, who has attained the perfection of the dharma, who has removed all doubt and knows the depths of nirvāna, this one is a brāhmana.

412. He who has transcended, in this world, good and evil, who is free from torment, lowliness and impurity, this one is a brāhmana.

413. Spotless, pure, calm and clear like the Moon, he has no more attachments in existence, this one is a brāhmana.

414. His road allowed him to cross the hard path of samsara. He passed on the other side, free from desire and doubt. Concentrated in his meditation, without attachment, awake, this one is a brāhmana.

415. The one in whom all lust has disappeared, who, having renounced worldly life, has become a homeless person\*, leading the wandering life, this one is a brāhmana.

\* Samnyâsin, a synonym for bikkhu, is a term for a man or woman who has received the initiation (diksha) of his spiritual Master. The sannnyâsin leads a wandering life, passing from monastery to monastery, dedicating his life to the realization of the dharma. He is the Man who desires nothing, projects nothing, possesses nothing, who lives in a state of continuous meditation (service).

416. He in whom all desire is dead, who has devoted himself to wandering life and who has dried up all ambition, this one is a brāhmana.

417. He who has rejected all the attachments of the world, even divine attractions, and who has detached himself from all ties, this one is a brāhmana.

418. He who has put aside pleasure and displeasure, who is appeased and without substrate\*, free from all attachment and hindrance, who has mastered the illusion of the world and the consciousness of truth, this one is a brāhmana.

\*Substrate (upadhi), « remnants » : 1, agregats (khanda), 2, soiling (kilesa), 3, determinative or karma-forming activities (abhisankhara), 4, desire.

419. He who possesses the perfect knowledge of birth and death and is detached from every bond, this one is a brāhmana.

420. He whose future state is known neither to the gods, nor to the demigods, nor to mortals, without desire and without defilement, and who has become an arahant, this one is a brāhmana.

421. He who no longer possesses anything, past, present or future, who has freed himself from everything, who is no longer attached to anything in the world, this one is a brāhmana.

422. The noble, the excellent, the hero, the great sage, the victorious, the impassive, the pure, the awakened, that one, this one is a brāhmana.

423. He who knows his old homes, who sees the heavens and the underworld, who has reached the end of births, who has wisely realized the dharma, this one is a

brāhmaṇa.

**The End**